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MEDITATION

THE AGONIZING CRY IN UTTER DARKNESS

"Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying Eli, Eli, lama sabachtani? that is to say, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Matt. 27:45, 46

"And about the sixth hour!"

God is a God of wondrous order and precision. He inhabits eternity, but His hand and counsel rules time and the hours. And the Holy Ghost is rather specific about time: He has measured distance in the garden of Gethsemane; here He is measuring the time of the AFTERNOON'S SACRIFICE!

I am going to change one word in a beautiful song, a song which you have sung very often:

"The offering on the altar burned gives *great* delight to Thee!"

Yes, it gave great delight to God, this sorry spectacle of the AFTERNOON'S SACRIFICE.

It is well that we emphasize the time element: God is our Mentor, Teacher.

This awful afternoon, at about the sixth hour is the fulness of time. It is the moment when time is full, the time that God has reserved from all eternities. It is the time when God has shown His sweetest and most glorious manifesto: the groaning and crying Godhead on the cross. You may live to everlasting, but you will never see anything sweeter, more glorious than this spectacle: God going to nethermost hell so that you may sing, sing, sing on and on to all eternity.

Oh my God! Why forsaken by Thee Whom I love with all the love of My pure heart?

It is so that all the world may see how adorable We are!

Hour of the greatest of Divine mysteries!

At about the sixth hour!

* * * *

At about the sixth hour!

Did I speak of mysteries?

Well, what would you? I hear of desolation for Him who is in the bosom of God!

Did God forsake God? God, who is sweetest UNION Personified?

Isn't the union of two natures in the Person of the Son of God, even in this terrible hour?

Do we see the obedient Servant of God forsaken?

Why is obedience so rewarded? Even at this so supreme moment of His obedience? Is God able to forsake virtue personified in His beloved Son?

Moreover, why this questing cry? For what reason does Jesus ask this question of the Godhead, and why does He give it all this terrible publicity? The whole universe has heard, and this question has been repeated on a million tongues. Does He not know? The answer, we may as well anticipate here, the answer is: for My redemption's sake! I, the Triune God, desire to glorify Myself in Thy horrible suffering! Does the Son not know that which was determined in the secret counsels ere the world was?

The Christ of God saw, experienced the awful mysteries of salvation. He knew that obedience was to be rewarded with punishment. He knew, better than any other, that He had come to die. It was the very reason for His coming into the world. Many times He had told His disciples that He would be taken, maltreated, crucified, and, finally, that He would die. Well, He that came to die and knew it, crying out for a reason?

Awful mysteries!

* * * *

We have read many attempted explanations of this cry of Jesus. I say: attempted explanations. And the trouble

lies in that word: *explanations*. We, mortals, do little explaining of anything. I am told that an attempt to explain that two times two makes four is not as easy as it seems. And if that be true, what shall we say of one of the most exalted mysteries of God such as we contemplate at this terrible hour?

No, I am afraid that we shall not be able to explain things here.

However, although we cannot explain, fathom, comprehend, this awful phenomenon of the crying Saviour, we are able to do this only because God has given us His Word. That Word sheds light upon our path. Yes, and also upon the dying Christ.

And listening to that Word, we may safely say that God was not forsaken of God. That is eternally impossible. That militates against all that the Word tells us about God. That Word taught us that the very idea of the Godhead is Union, Oneness, the Covenant! God cannot be forsaken of God. The Father cannot forsake the Son. Such a terrible idea annihilates the Godhead.

Neither cannot it be that we see here a negative separation of God. God cannot forsake His creature, and Jesus is also creature. At the very moment that Jesus cried with a loud voice: My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? at that moment the law of God was applicable to Him which saith: in Him we move and have our being. God was very near to Jesus when He uttered this cry. For Jesus was also a creature, a very man.

If I may speak in a seeming paradox, I would say: the very presence of God causes this feeling of forsakeness of our Saviour. And this awful presence, nearness of God is symbolized by the *three* hour darkness. God was very, very near to Jesus. It was an awful nearness to Jesus.

No, I cannot explain here, but this I know: Jesus tasted at this hour the bitterness of an awful cup: God withdrew the taste of His favor and experience of His blessed communion and fellowship! Remember that Jesus longed for God's communion with all the yearning of His pure soul and body. It was His very life to feel the nearness of His *loving* Father.

But what did He experience?

This God made Him taste the vengeance of righteousness, holiness and outraged truth. God made Him taste that which devils and reprobate men will taste unto all eternity. No, God was not far away from Jesus, He was very near to Him in this woeful hour, but He was near to Him in His wrath.

* * * *

In His wrath!

O God, we must be so careful with our speech. Words are so dangerous! What shall I say?

This I must say at this juncture: God did not hate Him at this hour. When God pours out His wrath upon devils and reprobate men in hell, it is the outpouring of His hatred.

But let me say it a thousand times: God never hated Jesus. That is also impossible. For He was the faithful and loving and obedient Servant, in this hour and in all the time of His sojourning.

And when Jesus must hang there between heaven and earth in the thickness of darkness which spoke of wrath and wrath and wrath of His God, He realizes that this wrath is not *deserved by Him*. He knows that He is not the recipient of all these bruising strokes because of *His own sin*. Hence, the cry.

The cry is really the answer to God's demand: Love Me! Love Me, even when I make Thee experience My hell! Love Me! Thou standest in the room of My beloved people, and they did not love Me. Now love Me in their stead, and do it in Thy very hell in this My darkness.

And Jesus gives the answer: *My* God! *My* God! Oh, note that possessive pronoun. It is more than mere possession. In it throbs the love of Jesus for His Father, even while that Father makes Him taste a hell such as devils shall never taste.

May I be so bold as to add to Jesus' cry? God forgive me if I am wrong. But I understand Jesus to say: My God, My God, Thou knowest that I love Thee so. Therefore, Why forsakest Thou Me now in this dreadful hour?

Well, God might say through David: Terrible things, I will answer thee in righteousness!

And through Isaiah: In these (that is, in sin and wrath) is eternity, that Israel might be saved.

Awful mysteries of the Cross!

* * * *

Why, O My God? Why?

Shall the Divine answer come?

Well, Jesus seems to be without an answer. Time was when the heavens were rent and a VOICE came down from heaven, saying: This is My beloved Son!

But at this hour there seems to be no answer.

And yet there is. I would have you note the great, the Divine TIMEKEEPER AT THE CROSS . At about the ninth hour Jesus cried this pitiful cry. It was the last drop in the bitter cup of an eternity of death. The answer of God is heralded in the departure of the mob from the hill called Golgotha. There they go, beating their breasts. As so many whipped dogs. It is a prophetic spectacle of the judgment day. O yes, Jesus did receive His answer. Only a few moments, and with trembling voice He will say: It is finished!

Oh yes, the answer came. Objectively, for the light returned. Subjectively: it is finished!

The answer came. Ponder that answer of God.

Here is your answer:

For God's sake: justice must be satisfied. And My eternal love must find a way. Thou in all Thy misery art that way!

For Christ's sake: Thou must merit Thy choice reward; Thou must reveal the Father in all His loveliness so that heaven and earth, united, may sing of it forever.

For your sake: your damnable guilt must be borne and borne away; you must be made happy for evermore.

I am going, Lord; I am going. I am going to sing of Thee unto all eternity! Amen and Amen.

G.V.

Notice for Classis West

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet, the Lord willing, in Doon, Iowa, on Wednesday, March 20, 1963, at 9 A. M.

The consistories are reminded of the rule that matters for the classical agenda must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk not later than 30 days before the date of Classis. And all matters that are to be brought to Synod must also be presented at this classis.

Rev. H. Veldman, *Stated Clerk*

Thy strength shall overcome
All those that hate the King,
And under Thy dominion strong
The nations Thou shalt bring.

Thy royal throne, O God,
For evermore shall stand;
Eternal truth and justice wield
The sceptre in Thy hand.

Since Thou art sinless found,
The Lord, Thy God confessed,
Anointeth Thee with perfect joy,
Thou art supremely blest.

Thy garments breathe of myrrh
And spices sweet and rare;
Glad strains of heavenly music ring
Throughout Thy palace fair.

Amid Thy glorious train
King's daughters waiting stand,
And fairest gems bedeck Thy bride,
The queen at Thy right hand.

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EDITORIALS

Rank Arminianism in Calvin Seminary

We still have to examine and discuss what Prof. Dekker in his article in *The Reformed Journal* has to say on the question whether the atonement of Christ is limited or unlimited. In other words: did Christ die for all men, or for the elect only?

As Dekker put the question: "If God's love in giving Christ is universal, is the atonement universal? Or is it limited? . . . Just what is the Reformed doctrine of limited atonement?"

In answer to this question Dekker, first of all, quotes from the *Systematic Theology* of Berkhof. According to the latter, the question of limited or unlimited atonement, negatively, is not whether the satisfaction of Christ is sufficient to save all men, or whether the saving benefits of the atonement are applied to all men, or whether the offer of salvation is seriously made to all men, or whether some of the fruits of the atonement are beneficial for all men. But the question is rather whether God's design in Christ's atonement was the salvation of the elect only or of all men. "If it had been His intention to save all men this purpose could not have been frustrated by the unbelief of man."

For this Berkhof quotes proof from Scripture.

Dekker quotes Berkhof as follows:

"Scripture repeatedly qualifies those, for whom Christ laid down His life in such a way as to point to very definite limitation. Those for whom He suffered and died are called 'His sheep,' John 10:11, 15, 'His Church,' Acts 20:28, Eph. 5:25-27, 'His people,' Matt. 1:21, and 'the elect,' Rom. 8:32-35."

Dekker criticizes Berkhof in regard to the Scripture passages. Writes he: "These passages do not adequately support Berkhof's argument. In none of them is the predication regarding those for whom Christ died stated exhaustively or exclusively. They do affirm that Christ died for His sheep, His Church, His people, the elect, but about the possibility that He also may have died for others these passages say nothing. Moreover, if the predications made are to be taken as limitations, consistent interpretation of similar passages results in absurdity. Then, for instance, Isaiah 58:8 teaches that Christ died only for Israel and Galatians 3:20 that He died only for Paul. It would appear that the passages used by Berkhof as proof for his position really beg the question. They are relevant to his argument only when they are first interpreted in the light of the doctrine which they are used to prove."

In opposition to these passages quoted by Berkhof, Dekker refers to other Scriptural passages which, according to him, clearly teach the universality of the atonement. Heb. 2:9 teaches the death of Christ "for every man." I John 2:2 says that Christ "died for the whole world." According to Matt. 20:28, He died for "many.' 'I Tim. 2:6, He died "for all."

Dekker also quotes from the Canons. Writes he:

"In addition to Biblical data we should note what the Canons of Dort have to say. The question for Berkhof is the design of the atonement as such. To this detached question the Canons do not speak. They speak of the design of the atonement as far as its 'saving efficacy' is concerned. The relevant statement (from II, 8) is as follows: 'For this was the sovereign counsel and most gracious will and purpose of God the Father that the quickening and saving efficacy of the most precious death of his Son should extend to all the elect, for bestowing upon them alone the gift of justifying faith, thereby to bring them infallibly to salvation; that is, it was the will of God that Christ by the blood of the cross . . . should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation and language . . . all those and those only, who were from eternity chosen to salvation and given him by the Father; that he should confer upon them faith, which together with all the other saving gifts of the Holy Spirit, he purchased for them by his death'."

On this part of the Canons, Dekker comments as follows:

" 'Limited atonement' as taught by the Canons is not precisely the same, it seems, as that taught by Berkhof. Dort did not deal with the design of the atonement in general, as Berkhof does. It dealt rather with the design of the atonement in specific connection with efficacious application of saving grace. Contrary to the Arminians who taught that the atonement was intended to apply enabling grace to all men, Dort insisted that the atonement in no sense was intended to effectuate saving grace for all men. The key phrases in the above excerpt from the Canons are 'saving efficacy,' 'justifying faith' and 'effectually redeem.' But Berkhof deals with the design of the atonement in a broader sense and it seems clear that the Canons of Dort do not demand adherence to the doctrine of limited atonement in exactly the way he sets it forth."

The reader will notice that I quote Dekker rather extensively. I do this on purpose, because, in the first place, I want to do him justice and, secondly, I want our readers to understand what he really teaches. In fact, I am not quite sure that even now our readers will understand him.

But before I quote him further, I must comment on what he wrote in the above quotations.

First of all, then, I must criticize his comments on the texts which he quotes from Berkhof's *Systematic Theology* to prove the latter's view on limited atonement.

They are John 10:11, 15; Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25-27; Matt. 1:21; Rom. 8:32-35.

In John 10:11 we read: "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." Similarly, in vs. 15 of the same chapter: "As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep."

Do not these passages teach as plainly as is ever possible that Christ did not die for all men, that God did not intend that Christ should die for all men, that, therefore the atonement is limited to the elect? Dekker admits that the texts teach that Christ died for His sheep, but he adds "but about the possibility that He may also have died for others these passages say nothing." I am sorry to say that to me this is sheer nonsense. For, who are Jesus' sheep for whom and for whom alone He lay down His life? I will quote from the same chapter of the gospel according to John to show that He did not die for other than His sheep, as Dekker regards it as at least a possibility. I refer to vss. 26-30: 'But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one."

This entire passage teaches very clearly that none but the elect are the sheep of Jesus. But, strange as it may seem, Dekker would not and does not deny this. He speaks of the possibility that Jesus may have died for others. This, of course, is an impossible possibility, a contradiction in terms. But this contradiction is not mine but Dekker's.

However, because of this I must call your attention especially to vs. 26 of the above quoted passage: "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you." Notice:

1. That the Lord does not say: Ye are not of my sheep, because ye believe not, but, on the contrary: "Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep."

2. This implies that only the sheep of Jesus are able to believe and that, too, because no man can believe of himself: faith is the gift of God.

3. Hence, the fact that they do not believe is proof of the fact that they are not of Jesus' sheep, whom the Father has given Him.

4. And since Jesus died only for His sheep and for none other He certainly did not die for the "others" to whom Dekker refers. God did not love them, He did not love all men. Atonement is not for the "others," it is not general but particular; it is not unlimited but limited.

Acts 20:28 is also quite definite and to the point. It reads as follows: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made your overseers to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Dekker is of the opinion that also this passage does not state "exhaustively or exclusively" that Christ did not die for the "others." But notice:

1. That the text states very definitely that Christ died for the Church. It is the Church which He purchased with His own blood.

2. What is the Church? The answer of Scripture is: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will". And then in vs. 7: "In whom we have the redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins . . . . "

And again vs. 23: "Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

3. From these texts we learn:

a. That the Church consists of those whom God has chosen from before the foundation of the world. For that Church and for none other Christ shed His blood. That Church and none other has redemption in the blood of Christ.

b. Moreover, that Church is the body of Christ, a complete organism with all the members occupying their own place in the body. No one can add to that body without marring the whole. The "other" of which Dekker speaks simply do not exist, surely not as possible members for whom Christ shed His blood.

c. The only possible conclusion to which anyone can come is that the atonement in the blood of Christ is particular and limited to the elect only.

The next passage to which Berkhof refers in proof of limited atonement is Eph. 5:25-27:

"Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

Since also this passage speaks of the fact that Christ gave Himself, not for all men, not for others, but only for the Church, we will not repeat what we have written on this subject on the preceding text.

The next passage is from Matt. 1:21, which speaks of the name Jesus and interprets that name by saying: "for he shall save his people from their sins." Also this is clear in itself. Jesus means Jehovah — Salvation or Jehovah — saves. And whom does Jehovah save? All men? No, but "his people," those whom the Father gave to Jesus. For them alone He shed His life-blood. Atonement is not general, but particular; not unlimited but limited.

Finally, Berkhof refers to the text found in Rom. 8:32-35 which reads as follows:

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"

It seems to me that this is not a strong text. I was wondering whether Dekker, perhaps, had the wrong reference, but this is not the case: I looked it up in Berkhof's *Systematic Theology*. Of course, the text certainly speaks of limited atonement in the words: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." Nevertheless, Dekker might argue that the words "for us all" might refer to all men. It is true that the text speaks of the elect, but this is not immediately connected with God's delivering up His Son "for us all." I do not mean to say, of course, that the words "for us all" do not refer to the elect and to them alone for the pronoun "us" cannot possibly refer to all men. But the text does not literally say that Christ died only for the elect, as Berkhof has it.

But it is also true that Berkhof quotes many more texts to support the doctrine of limited atonement. And, besides, he also discusses some of the texts which the opponents adduce in defense of unlimited atonement. And it is rather striking that the "world" as in John 3:16 occupies a large place in the defense of general atonement. According to Berkhof the term *world* has a variety of meanings, but it does not always mean all men.

* * * *

I am not through yet with this discussion, neither is Prof. Dekker as I notice from the *Reformed Journal*. Naturally, I am deeply interested in this discussion, not merely because the view of Prof. Dekker is, to my mind wholly unbiblical and unreformed, but also because I am wondering what the Christian Reformed Church will do about this all. Will they condemn Prof. Dekker? This, I say again, is impossible unless they first retract the error of the First Point of 1924. Will they allow the teaching of Prof. Dekker in the Calvin Seminary? Then it is forever "good-bye" to Reformed doctrine in the Seminary and in the Christian Reformed Church. Then, in other words, the bitter fruit of 1924 has completely become ripe.

I have to add one more item to my present editorial on the view of Prof. Dekker that God loves all men. It is this:

I made the rather bold statement that I challenged Dekker to produce one text in which the term "world" means "all men."

Well, he took up my challenge, and he found one text in which "world" does indeed mean "all men." Now what shall I say about this?

1. First of all, I want to say: *peccavi*: I should not have made such a broad statement. Even though this is probably the only instance in the New Testament in which the term "world" means all men, it certainly has that meaning in Rom. 3:19.

2. Yet, even in Rom. 3:19 the term does not *merely* mean "all men" but it signifies: all men as they are under sin and condemnation before God: "that all the world may become guilty before God." Hence, in my challenge to Dekker I should have written: "I challenge Prof. Dekker to find one text in Scripture in which the term 'world' merely or simply means all men."

3. And do not forget that the chief question is that or whether God loves the world in the sense of "all men." For this Prof. Dekker cannot find any support at all in Rom. 3:19.

Finally, I wish to thank Prof. Dekker for the "nice words" of praise he directs to me. Even though I am probably too old by this time to appreciate this, still, over against all the hatred that has been slung at my head for the sake of the truth (1924 was inspired by hatred, not by love of the truth, of this I am convinced) it is kind of pleasant to hear a different note once.

H.H.

Please, Professor Henry Stob!

In your article in the *Reformed Journal* under the heading "Does God Hate Some Men," you emphasize that words have meaning and this meaning must be defined. I agree with you. Now, I wish to criticize your article in *The Standard Bearer,* as you might well expect. But before I do this, I would like to have you give us a clear definition of the word *hate* or *hatred.* You use many words, but you never come to a clear definition of the term *hatred.*

The definition must, of course, not be philosophical, but Scriptural.

The original words are, as you well know, in the Hebrew SANEE, and in the Greek MISEOO. Kindly look up all the references given in Scripture, form a concept, and then formulate a definition.

Please, Professor Stob! H.H.

SYMPATHY RESOLUTION

The Ladies' Society of the Oak Lawn Protestant Reformed Church expresses its heartfelt sympathy to one of its members, Mrs. C. Haak, and family, in the sudden loss and departure from this life of Mrs. Haak's father,

BERTUS DOORNBOS

who passed away at the age of 79 on February 17, 1963.

"Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side." Psalm 71:21.

Oak Lawn Ladies' Society
Rev. G. Vanden Berg, President
Mrs. G. Vroom, Secretary

Dekker, Berkhof, and H. J. Kuiper — A Comparison

It is rather ironic that Professor Harold Dekker in his current articles in the *Reformed Journal* should find himself criticizing Prof. Berkhof's views on limited atonement, and for that reason should find himself to be the object of no little questioning in Christian Reformed circles. This is ironic, because as far as the fundamental issues are concerned, Prof. Dekker certainly stands in the line of 1924, and therefore in the line of Prof. Berkhof and the late Rev. H. J. Kuiper, two of the foremost defenders of the First Point and its general, well-meant offer of salvation. The chief difference is that Prof. Dekker is more consistent, and carries his views to their logical consequence, i.e., the denial of limited atonement – something which the Protestant Reformed have always insisted was implied in the First Point, but which Berkhof and Kuiper did not quite want to accept.

Anyone acquainted with the writings of Berkhof and Kuiper in defense of the Three Points of 1924 will recognize at once that Prof. Dekker is not essentially deviating. His statements concerning the love of God are strikingly similar to those of Berkhof and Kuiper, though perhaps a little more blunt.

For purposes of comparison I will reproduce some of the statements of Berkhof and Kuiper as quoted in an instructive little brochure by the Rev. H. Hoeksema, "Calvin, Berkhof, and H. J. Kuiper, A Comparison." The quotations from Berkhof in this brochure are translated from his "De Drie Punten in Alle Deelen Gereformeerd." And the quotations from Kuiper are from his "The Three Points of Common Grace." There are also quotations from Calvin's writings against Pighius in the above named brochure, which make it abundantly evident that Calvin agrees with neither Berkhof, Kuiper, or Dekker. But for the present, I merely want to show that Dekker is in the line of Berkhof and Kuiper.

Prof. Dekker writes concerning John 3:16: "Whether taken as the cosmos or as the human race, 'world' in this passage clearly covers all men. By no strain of exegesis can God's redemptive love be confined to any special group." And again: "God loves His enemies; God loves all men." Further: "The universal love of God is also revealed in His invitation of the gospel, sincerely extended to all without reservation or limitation." *Reformed Journal,* Dec., 1962, p. 5.

Now listen to the Berkhof of a few decades ago: "The following link in the argument of Synod is this: The general and well-meant offer of salvation is a sign of God's favour toward sinners, is for them a blessing from the Lord. This must emphatically be pointed out, because they, who cannot agree with the declaration of Synod, maintain that the preaching of the Word is merely intended as a curse for the reprobates that dwell under such preaching. He does not bless them by this, but curses them through it. He uses that preaching, in as far as it concerns them, merely as a means to plunge them more deeply into destruction, hence, as an instrument of His hatred. This is a positively unscriptural thought. The Scriptures teaches us most certainly, that we must consider the offer of salvation a temporal blessing also for those that do not heed the invitation. The following considerations serve to prove this:

"(1) That God calls the ungodly unto conversion is presented in Scripture *as a proof that He desires their salvation.* In the prophecy of Ezekiel we listen to the voice of the Lord in words that speak of tender mercy: 'Have I any pleasure at all (even in any measure) that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God; and not that he should return from his ways and live?' And again: 'For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth (i.e., of him that dieth in his sin) saith the Lord God: wherefore, turn yourselves and live ye.' *These passages teach us as clearly as words are able, that God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked (notice that he does not say 'the elect wicked' but 'of the wicked' entirely in general); and the tender calling, to which we listen in them, witnesses of His great love for sinners and of His desire to save the ungodly."* (italics mine, H.C.H.). *De Drie Punten,* p. 21.

It is to be noted that Berkhof, according to his own statement, applies all this to the wicked entirely in general, and not merely to the elect.

Berkhof also cites Ezekiel 33:11, also, remember, with a view to "the wicked entirely in general," and therefore, the reprobate, as follows: "There is still another passage in Ezekiel in which the Lord expresses the same thought in still stronger language, in which He even confirms it with an oath, viz., Ez. 33:11. 'As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?' Are these not words of tender lovingkindness, in which a Father implores His backsliding children to return to the house and to the heart of father?" *De Drie Punten,* p. 22.

There is surely no difference between this and Prof. Dekker's writings, though the latter are perhaps more blunt.

There are several passages also in H. J. Kuiper's printed sermons on "The Three Points of Common Grace" which remind one strongly of the writings of both Prof. Dekker and Prof. H. Stob, who writes on God's hatred in February, 1963 issue of the *Reformed Journal.*

Wrote the Rev. H. J. Kuiper, pp. 15, 16: "Let us emphasize the fact, that your conception of God depends upon your answer to the question whether God shows any favor to the reprobate. A certain Christian has well said: 'Our God is a just God, but not a cruel God.' He has no pleasure in the misery of any of His creatures. He sends the wicked

earthly blessings as the fruits of His kindness, in order to convince them of His sincere willingness to bestow upon them the *greater* gift of salvation in Christ. God is just and stern but He is not harsh and cruel. He is not a God who reveals to a large part of humanity nothing but His wrath. Even the reprobates are His creatures, the works of His hands; and in His goodness and grace He lavishes blessings upon them as long as they live, even though they perish in their sins. Thus He magnifies His love as well as His wrath in the reprobate; even as He glorifies His justice as well as His grace in the redeemed.

"Neither can you maintain the sincere offer of salvation to *all* who hear the gospel, unless you accept the truth which is formulated in the first point of Synod. If God assumes no attitude of favor to the unthankful and evil, he cannot sincerely offer them the blessings of redemption . . .

"There is no one here in the audience who can say, 'God hates me.' Suppose you knew that you will ultimately be lost; even then you could not say, 'God does not care for me.' The gospel we preach is a gospel for sinners — for all sinners. It is glad tidings also for you. God has no pleasure in your death but therein that you turn and live. He hates your sins but He does not hate you. He invites you to come to Him and be saved. That very fact will make your punishment doubly deserved if you should be lost. You will never be able to say: 'I have not tasted God's goodness and grace; I have never experienced His love.' You will have to say: 'I have spurned His love, rejected His grace; and now there remains for me a righteous judgment, a well-deserved wrath whose flames will burn forever and ever'."

Compare also the following:

Dekker: "The doctrine of limited atonement as commonly understood and observed in the Christian Reformed Church impairs the principle of the universal love of God and tends to inhibit missionary spirit and activity."

H. J. Kuiper: "One of the most serious aspects of the present denial of the doctrine of Common Grace is the denial of the general offer of salvation. It robs the gospel of its evangelical note. It is bound to create an attitude of religious passivism and fatalism which has been the curse of every church where the preaching of election was not counterbalanced by the sinner's responsibility and of God's sincere offer of salvation to all without discrimination." *The Three Points of Common Grace*, p. 13.

Finally, it is to be noted that both Prof. Dekker and the late Rev. H. J. Kuiper take refuge in what they call the mystery. The only difference is that Prof. Dekker, moves that mystery one step farther away, after having accepted the consequence of general atonement, which the Rev. Kuiper did not want to accept.

The Rev. Kuiper wrote on p. 12 of his *The Three Points of Common Grace*, as follows: 'This objection (that Synod virtually committed itself to the Arminian doctrines of the General Atonement and the Free Will, H.C.H.) is as absurd as it is serious. So far as we know, the only argument in support of this astounding charge is that God cannot sincerely offer salvation to reprobate sinners, unless Christ has actually paid for their sins and unless they have a will that is free to choose the salvation offered them. Our answer is that this does not at all follow. It is true that *human logic cannot fully harmonize* the doctrine of election and reprobation, of a particular atonement and of man's total depravity (which implies that our will by nature is free to choose only the evil but not the good) with that of the general offer of grace. But does this mean that both cannot be true? There is not one doctrine in Holy Writ which does not involve us in intellectual difficulties. Think of the mystery of the One Being and the Three Persons, of divine sovereignty and human freedom, of original sin and the sinlessness of Christ, of the union of the two natures in the one divine person of Christ."

Prof. Dekker has accepted the consequence of general atonement, but is not quite ready apparently to accept the equally necessary consequence of free will. And so he also seeks refuge in the mystery as follows: "Those who still bear His image will surely be the objects of His love even though not actually redeemed.

"Of course, no matter how we understand all of these matters, mystery remains. Can we explain that God loves all men while not all men are saved? Surely not. But is there anything that we really can explain about the love of God? Let us carry out our mission to all men according to the plain Biblical givens, leaving the unexplainable where is belongs — in the infinite mystery of the heart of Him who is Himself love. The ultimate mystery for missions is the mystery of divine love."

In the light of the above, I repeat my contention that Prof. Dekker is in essential agreement with the fathers of the First Point. And I add another contention: the adherents of the First Point can hardly criticize Prof. Dekker in good conscience.

H.C.H.

Announcement

TEACHER NEEDED

The South Holland - Oak Lawn Protestant Reformed Christian School is in need of a teacher for Grades 7, 8, and 9, who will also serve as administrator. Any qualified teacher interested in this attractive position for the 1963-'64 term and willing to consider it is asked to correspond with our Board Secretary:

Rev. G. Vanden Berg
9402 S. 53rd Court
Oak Lawn, Illinois

OUR DOCTRINE

CHAPTER VI

PRESERVATION AND PERSEVERANCE

(Continued)

And once more, they quote from Hebrews 6:4-8, where we read: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned."

These passages of Scripture seem to be in opposition to the doctrine of the certain preservation and perseverance of the saints. It seems, therefore, that those who oppose this doctrine have a solid basis in Holy Writ. Arminius, of course, was accused of teaching that the saints could finally fall away. And in answer to that accusation he writes (Cf. *The Writings of Arminius*, Vol I, p. 280, ff.): "I say, that a distinction ought to be made between power and action. For it is one thing to declare that 'it is possible for the faithful to fall away from faith and salvation' and it is another to say, that 'they do actually fall away.' This distinction is of such extensive observance, that even antiquity itself was not afraid of affirming, concerning the elect and those who were to be saved, 'that it was possible for them not to be saved;' and that 'the mutability by which it was possible for them not to be willing to obey God, was not taken away from them,' although it was the opinion of the ancients,' that such persons never would in reality be damned.' On this very subject, true, the greater part of our own doctors lay down a different theory. For they say, 'that it is possible for such persons to fall away, if their nature, which is inclined to lapses and defection, and if the temptation of the world and Satan, be the only circumstances taken into consideration: but that they will not finally fall away, because God will bring back to himself his own elect before the end of life.' If one asserts 'that it is not possbile for believers, in consideration of their being elect persons, finally to fall away from salvation, because God has decreed to save them,' I answer, the decree concerning saving does not take away the possibility of damning, but it removes damnation itself. For 'to be actually saved,' and 'a possibility of not being saved,' are two things not contrary to each other, but in perfect agreement."

It certainly is not very clear what Arminius means in the words we just quoted of him. But this is usually the case with those that want to deny the Reformed truth and still claim to be Reformed and remain in the Reformed churches.

And Arminius writes further: "I therefore add, that in this way I have hitherto discriminated between these two cases. At one time I did say, with an explanation subjoined to it, 'that it was possible for believers finally to decline or fall away from faith and salvation.' But at no period have I asserted, 'that believers do finally decline or fall away from faith or salvation.' This article, therefore, is ascribed to one who is not its author; and it is another offense against historical veracity." Then Arminius explains that there is a vast difference between saying that it is possible for believers to decline from faith and that it is possible for believers to decline from salvation. And he explains this by saying: "For the latter, when rigidly and accurately examined, can scarcely be admitted; it being impossible for believers, as long as they remain believers, to decline from salvation. Because, were this possible, that power of God would be conquered which he has determined to employ in saving believers. On the other hand, if believers fall away from the faith and become unbelievers, it is impossible for them to do otherwise than decline from salvation, that is, provided they still continue unbelievers."

It is, however, evident, no matter what Arminius writes and however much he camouflages the truth, that he believes in the possibility of the saints falling away from faith and salvation.

All this is true not only of Arminius, who died in 1609, but also of the Remonstrants, who followed him and who composed their own Five Articles.

As I said before, it seems that Scripture teaches the possibility of a falling away of those that have been purified by the blood of Christ, that have known the way of righteousness and have walked therein for a time, that were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift and were become partakers of the Holy Spirit and have tasted the good Word of God and the power of the age to come, according to Hebrews 6, the text we just quoted above. According to Scripture, they fall away so definitely and finally that the end is worse than the beginning, that they increase in ungodliness, and that they can never be brought to repentance again. Besides, the Remonstrants argued that the doctrine of the certain perseverance of the saints simply makes careless and profane men. And also this objection appears to have considerable weight. The whole Word of God admonishes the believers to watch and to pray, in order that they may not fall away. They are admonished to be faithful, even unto death, that they keep that which they have, that no one take their crown. The Word of God admonishes the people of God that they shall not be high-minded, but rather fear, seeing that they also may be broken off as branches from the olive tree. H.H.

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

Achor (The Valley of Trouble)

But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel . . .

And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day, So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor (i.e., trouble) unto this day. Joshua 7:1, 26

It was a miracle beyond question. In all of Canaan there was not a city more impressive in size and power, more strongly fortified, more forbidding to an enemy than was Jericho. When Israel approached, its heavy gates were closed up tight, its lofty bulwarks and towers heavily manned, it was a city on guard. But Israel made no attack. Without a display of force, the army merely took to marching around it. Seven days they marched around and on the seventh day seven times led by seven priests with seven great trumpets in their hands, each repetition of that number reminding Israel anew of the covenant of God which the number seven represented. And then it happened; the seven trumpets were lifted to the lips and sounded, as though to announce the approach of Israel's God and King, Jehovah; with a shout of triumph the voices of the people were added; and without the touch of a human hand the walls of the city instantly crumbled. Here was a work that could only be the hand of Almighty God. All that remained was the portion of wall in which Rahab dwelt, a monument to her faith.

Without resistance of any kind, the army of Israel climbed over the rubble into the very heart of the city. Missing were the usual shouts of a plundering army. Instead there hung over the men of Israel a reverential awe, almost as if they were entering a sacred temple. This great demonstration of divine power could not be lightly ignored or even taken for granted, while in their ears still seemed to echo the command which had been given, "And the city shall be accursed even it, and all that are therein, to the LORD . . . And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the LORD: they shall come into the treasury of the LORD." Systematically they went through the city gathering the silver and gold and vessels of metal, to bring them to the priests of God, and destroying everything else, including all living creatures, animals and people. The entire city was presented as one great sacrifice unto Jehovah, by whose power alone it had been overcome. This was the firstfruits of the promised land. To the Lord it was given.

Once Israel turned from the smoldering ruins of that once great city, the enthusiasm of the people began to run high, until they were impatient to be on into the heart of the land. The gates of Canaan had very apparently been thrown open wide before them. Henceforth it seemed nothing would be able to interfere with their advancement. They had seen the power of their God and no one could fail to trust in Him any longer. He would go forth in power before them, and in faith they would follow after. Could anything withhold the power which had brought down this great destruction upon the city of Jericho?

The next logical step in their advancement was quite evident. On the hills overlooking the plains of Jericho was a city named Ai, guarding the way to the mountain plains and passes. But the city was small and one could hardly anticipate from it any real trouble. It almost seemed a shame to send against so small a fortification Israel's entire army. Joshua sent forth scouts to investigate and soon they returned to confirm what he had already suspected. The advice of the scouts was, "Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few."

The whole matter seemed quite simple and quite insignificant compared to Jericho. With confidence the three thousand men of Israel went up to engage the men of Ai in battle. But somehow it did not work out the way that they had expected. Going into battle the first casualites suffered were of Israel and not of the men of Ai. In fact, at every turn of the battle the children of Israel saw that they were being bested. Soon the army of Israel was falling back until at last it turned in full retreat. Israel had been defeated.

The first stragglers from the battle of Ai were met at the camp of Israel with cries of anguished disbelief. How could this have ever happened? In a matter of moments the whole camp of Israel was thrown into utter confusion. What had happened to their faith? Here they had fully expected that henceforth Jehovah would lead them on from victory to vitcory until they had taken total possession of the land. They had all trusted this. No one any more had been holding back. And now this. What was wrong? Had their God deceived them? Was he unable to perform for them all that he had promised. Utter dismay swept like a tidal wave through the camp. No one knew how to explain it.

Even Joshua was beside himself with disappointment. He could not understand it either. No, he would not utter words of open rebellion as the people might, but neither could he keep himself from thinking that somehow God had let him down. In anguish he tore at his clothes, covered

his head with dust and threw himself upon the ground before the ark of the Covenant. Until evening he lay there, and then he prayed, "Alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us unto the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of Jordan. O Lord what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?" Try as he might, Joshua had not been able to keep the discouragement out of his voice. He felt that God had failed them, and it became evident in his prayer.

But for prayers such as that the Lord had no patience. Not as though it wa so strange for Joshua to pray that way; Moses had done much the same in one of the early crises of his ministry (Ex. 14:15). But it was finally a prayer of weakness more than faith. The Lord's answer to it was a harsh rebuke, "Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, and they have also trangressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you." Here was Joshua's trouble. He had looked for Israel's weakness in God instead of in the people. Ought he not to have known that God would not change from His purpose and that the cause of Israel's defeat was to be found in the unfaithfulness of the people. Rather than bring his prayer of bitter accusation, he should have been searching for the transgressor among the people. Exactly, God continued to spell out for him how he ought to be proceeding. "Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against tomorrow' for thus saith the LORD God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you. In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes: and it shall be, that the tribe which the LORD taketh shall come according to the families thereof; and the family which the LORD shall take shall come by households; and the household which the LORD shall take shall come man by man. And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and that he hath: because he hath wrought folly in Israel."

Here was a thing which Israel had not thought to imagine, that in the very face of God's power demonstrated at Jericho anyone should have dared to transgress the holy command dedicating the whole of the city as a sacrifice to God. One can well imagine the tension among the people as they came together wondering who could have done a deed like that, stealing, as it were, directly from the Lord. Hardly a sound was to be heard in the charged atmosphere as Israel went through the formalities in the drawing of lots. Slowly the finger of God began to point. First the tribe of Judah was singled out; then the family of Zerah; then the household of Zabdi; finally it was Carmi, and his son Achan. Before the cold, cutting glance of all Israel the man stood, exposed. Here was a man who had fallen deeply into the way of sin. Not only had he taken of the goods of Jericho, but when the wrath of Jehovah turned against his nation, he had continued not to recognize that he was the cause of this trouble. Even when the nature of the sin was announced by special revelation he had not spoken, half trusting that his care in secrecy would keep him hidden. Closer and closer the finger of God came through the means of the lot until it rested directly upon him, and still he was silent. Finally Joshua spoke, "My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me."

At last, while Israel waited, Achan opened his mouth and explained, 'Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: when I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it." Achan's voice was cold with resignation. He acknowledged his deed but without a real confession. His regret was not for that he had sinned but for that he had been discovered.

Quickly Joshua sent messengers and quickly they returned again. In the ground under Achan's tent they had found the spoil just as he had explained they would. Concerning his guilt there could no longer be any question.

It was a solemn procession that left the camp of Israel that day for the administration of justice. With them was taken Achan, the spoil he had stolen, his family, and all his possessions. There in the presence of all they were stoned to death and all was burned with fire. It was necessary, as Hell is, that Jehovah God might be justified. Over all that remained of Achan was raised up a great heap of stones, and from that time forth the place was known as the valley of Achor. It was the valley of trouble in which Israel first learned that even in the promised land sin would sitll remain to afflict them.

B.W.

Announcement

The Free Christian School of Edgerton, Minnesota, is in need of 2 teachers for the 1963-64 school term. A principal for grades 5-6-7-8 and a teacher for grades 1-2-3-4. Address all correspondence to:

Mr. Arthur Verhey
Edgerton, Minnesota

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of I Timothy

(I Timothy 6:6-10)

b.

We saw in our former installment on these verses that the man of godly contentment is rich in God. And it alone is true riches, affording satisfaction for the entire man, body, soul and spirit, and that, too, for time and for eternity.

When this is applied to our present existence here on earth it can be summed up as is done by the apostle in verse 8 *"But having food and raiment, with these things let us be content."*

It should be observed that the apostle employs the present active participle "having". This underscores that this is a having in the "present time". It is a possession which we have "today". Contentment does not ask any anxious questions about tomorrow. That is a symptom of the life of the world, the nations. They are forever busy with the question of what shall we eat and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed. They have their prophets of doom and their prophets concerning business and prosperity; they endeavor a "controlled" economy. The "ever normal granery" is their ideal. But such is not the concern of the godly man, who is rich in God, trusting in him, expecting all good things from Him alone, knowing that fruitful years and barren years, riches and poverty, sickness and health come not by chance but from the hand of our heavenly Father, who knoweth that we need all these things. The christian, the contented christian, sees faithfulness of God in his slice of bread and in his one suite of clothes. He sees the promise fulfilled: your bread is certain, and your water is sure. And he observes with David: I have been young, and am old, but I have not seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed seeking bread! What he has in the "present moment" is sufficient, for he does not have "faith in the future", which is idolatry, but in the living God!

However, Paul adds the injunction "let us therewith be content."

Such contentment is becoming to us, and it is true wisdom. For our God is not an idol to forget us, but he makes our needs his care. The motto written on our American coins "In God We Trust" must be more than a mere motto. I believe that it has been removed from the coins now. It possibly is better so for it is mostly the Mammom itself of idolatrous man. It is an idol which leaves its devotees in the lurch. It is most deceitful. However, the contentment of godliness says, when it uses the coins: "In God do we trust", and places the filthy lucre in its rightful category.

Now Paul knows very well that underneath the striving of those who would liberate the slaves, or keep them captive, and who did not see all things in relationship to Christ, was the thought of material gain. It meant that these would have this world, the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes and the pride of life.

Hence, Paul will give us a decription of all who "would be rich". The term in the Greek for "would" is *Hoi aboulomenoi*". They are here viewed as a class of men and women in distinction from those who are content with food and raiment. Here is the dividing line between these two classes. It is either contentment of godliness or the discontentment of ungodliness. And there is no-no-man's-land separating these two classes of people. It is either haters or lovers of God, and that concretely mainfested in the attitude towards the world's goods. It is serving God or serving Mammon. It is either-or! Wherefore let it be understood that Paul is speaking of very evil people: they are those who life's ambition it is to be rich in this world's good' That is their plan and strategy. To this class belong the "have not's" as well as the "haves"; both ends of the class of "men". Paul is here speaking definitely of "men". Men *"anthropous"* are cast into destruction. He is not making the very sinful and erroneous distinction of those who speak of the "majority group" in distinction from the "minority groups". The poor man who desires to become rich and the rich man who desires to become richer are both in the same class. They are both on the same highway of sin; essentially there is not any difference. Paul is not interested in a social gospel of equality, nor is he interested in the maintenance of the "status quo" of the white man's supremacy. That is simply outside of the viewpoint of Paul's admonition. He is speaking of the *homo genus,* white or black, or red or yellow or brown. And the dividing line is between those who are godly and those who are ungodly, between *believers* and *unbelievers!!* Two classes of people. And now he will tell us what happens to and is the lot of those whose ambition and striving is to be rich in earthly possessions and prestige and honor.

On which side do you belong; what are you striving for? By our fruits we shall be known! We cannot serve God and Mammon!!

Let us then notice what Paul says about the class who are walking in *ungodly discontent,* who hate the ways and judgments of the Most High, and kick against the pricks of the dealings of Divine Majesty, whether they are socialists and communists who say that the christian religion is the "opium of the people", or the rank and file which simply want a little bigger piece of this world's goods.

Paul says of such that they *"fall into temptation and snares and many ignorant and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition"* I Tim. 6:9b.

We do well to try to understand the implication of this sorry end of those who seek merely earthly riches and are not rich in God, and that, too, for our very life's sake. That they "fall" is really that they become a victim. They do not really attain the end of contentment, security for which they seek. They buy so much life insurance and social security that they worry how to pay the premium – unless you are the United States government who seeems to have the inalienable right to go into debt without paying it! Life insurance agents forever tell you that you must make your future sure. And it becomes a wearisome cycle, the vicious circle, a virtual maelstrom of uncertainty, and anxious asking: when will the bottom fall out of my little basket, and all I've gathered toward my security slips through my fingers! Foolish man falls head-long into the very thing he thinks to avoid, and that, too, in every dimension of society.

Man who desires to become rich (not being contented in godliness) falls into *temptation*. The world's goods allure him. The grass in the neighbor's pastures looks greener than in his own. And so he "reaches" out, and gets "ensnared" in the web of his own plans and aspirations in the judgment of God. He thinks that another has "taken" him. When a "holiday" is proclaimed on the banks he is ready to shoot the banker, preferably the "International Bankers", little understanding that he was ensnared by his own "desire to become rich"! It was the "lust" of covetousness, the fundamental "idolatry" of Mammon that deceived him. His own idol causes him to pass through the fire!

The wrath of God is upon all ungodliness of man. God is not mocked. The earth is still the Lord's and the fulness thereof; He does with it what he pleases and He sits in judgment. And those who will to be rich find that lust is very "hurtful" and very "unwise". They did not have the power of proper understanding of God and true riches, and their very seeking has implicit in it something very hurtful to their soul and body. It wears out their body and spirit. For riches has wings and will take off as do the eagles. It is a wearying business this trying to be rich. Competition is the spice of life, but it drives men to the mental institutions, to wreck and ruin and finally to the grave. It is the sentence of God upon Adam: in the sweat of thy brow thou shall eat bread. Gen. 3. And all these things become so weary that no one can utter them. And in the midst of this mad-house of confusion (go to the Board of Trade) all manner of paneceas are concocted by man, and men cry to each other "it's a great life if you don't weaken", and the "art to relax" is preached, and the need of modern man's vacation is stressed, on some lonely island of Robinson Crusoe.

But they who are not rich in God are very guilty before God. Him they have ignored, the Giver of all things. Him they do not know as a providing Father. And they are cast into destruction from the presence of God, and into eternal perdition. All their riches will be taken from them and will again be sought by those who will follow this same path of all who desire to be rich.

Paul here gives in a capsule form the entire teaching of Scripture on this point. One is here reminded of the vanity of vanities of the book *Ecclesiastes*. Is the sum of all man's endeavors not weariness and vexation of spirit? I hear the preacher repeat it: all is sadness, wrong, a vexation of spirit. Who will show us any good in this vicious circle? It drones like the death-knell: "Behold all is vanity and a vexation of spirit." Here it is true: in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow. And the preacher may look at another facet of human endeavor to gain advantage in this world – without God – this also is vexation and vanity; it is full of travail and vexation of spirit; it is travail of the spirit to no profit! Ecclesiastes 1:14; 2:11, 17, 26; 4:4, 6; 6:9. All is weariness, sadness, a breaking, a destruction!

Small wonder that when "some" of the congregation in the times of the apostles "reached out" for this goal they pierced themselves with many sorrows. All they had was disappointment, torment and anguish in their souls. Yes, they fell from the faith; they were deceived by their own lusts. And their sorrows were many! Everywhere they went, morning, noon and night, it is nothing but bitterness and dissatisfaction. It was poverty in their souls. Joy and peace and contentment they do not have. The continual feast of the righteous they do not enjoy. Their very merriment and laughter is superficial, thin; it is like the crackling of thorns under a pot.

Such is the lot of all who would seek to become rich in this world where the wrath of almighty God is revealed. And no dose of *"Common Grace"* will possibly alleviate this bitterness of man. For this "love of money" is an evil root. On it grows no good fruit, but it breaks out into all manner of evils. They who love money must need be very cruel. Does not the gangster kill his victim, and does not the entire world of "business" live by the principle that the "bread of one man is the death of the other man". Does not the avaricious farmer gloat when he hears that the fruit and vegetables are frozen and have dried out in another region. Does not ever the hire of the laborer cry to the LORD Sabbaoth? And is not the love of money revealed in the evil of "interest rates" which make one pay twice for his property.

The solution? To make this world a perfect social order? God forbid! It is in the contentment of godliness; having food and drink and to be therewith content. A certain artist grasped this point and painted an old woman, bare walls, a bowl of soup, a glass of water, the open Bible and hands folded in prayer and thanksgiving to God. You hasten to assure me that you saw that picture? Did you hear the message, and do you heed it?

G.L.

IN HIS FEAR

Heart Trouble

There is no advantage in giving cold statistics.

It makes no difference either just what the cause of all this increase in the number of heart ailments, heart attacks and deaths due to them is. Whether it is because of our way of life, our soft living, our sheltered life, or whether it is due to the fact that men live longer than in years gone by, and the wear and tear on this ever active muscular organ makes itself evident because man lives to a ripe old age. Maybe others who died of other diseases at earlier ages, if they had been spared from these by antibiotics and new found surgical methods, would have died of some heart trouble later on anyway. I say it makes little difference as far as the fact is concerned that it is our number one killer.

If we knew just what the cause is, we might possible find a way to eliminate it in many cases, and ano another disease would become killer number one. We are not to be careless about such matters. We may not tempt the Lord our God, Jesus told the devil in the wilderness. And when means are at hand to give us cure and care, we must make use of them. We must take the very best care of our bodies that we can. They too are a gift of God over which we are called to be stewards.

Man is concerned about the fact that heart trouble is on the increase. A little twinge of pain in his chest and he considers very seriously the matter of having an examination. Doctors and medical organizations urge you to have a complete physical at least once a year. It is simply considered to be a MUST for a man over forty years of age.

And after all is said and done, even were man able to cure these heart troubles, control the cholesterol in the blood, find ways to eliminate the fatty deposits already choking up the arteries and have blood pressure always completely under control, another disease is sure to appear to baffle man; and by means of a disease in an entirely different part of his body his heart is caused to stop beating. God is not mocked. The curse is not going to be conquered by science and invention, by medicine and surgery. Only the cross is the cure, for it removes the guilt of sin and thus destroys the wages of sin, the effects and fruits of sin. We are not going to get away from death by what men discover and perform. The test tube will not show us the way out of this life which is nothing but a continual death and into a more abundant life. Already we have dreadful and pathetic deformities in new born babes because of what came out of the test tube and seemed to be such a boon to agitated mankind. Horrible mutations are predicted to countless numbers of unborn babes, if atomic radiation – which also came out of the test tube – is increased but a little bit. Doctors who are heart specialists die of heart troubles. Authorities on the "cure" and prevention of cancer are given a few weeks to live before their malignant tumor brings the last beat of their hearts to come and be a matter of history. Diseases once "licked" by penicillin and sulpha drugs bounce back with more power and danger. Disease germs appear which cannot be subdued by antibiotics which formerly were used to destroy them. No, God is not mocked and Christ still is The Way because He is The Truth and The Life. The Lamb of God still takes away the sins of the world, and no disease or death today is taken away in any other way than through the blood of the cross. We are not becoming just a little bit closer to being "like God" by our inventions, discoveries, educational systems and research. We are just as far away from Him now as Adam was in Paradise before Satan whispered the devilish lie in his ear that he could become like unto God. No, we are farther away from God than we were at that time. For we lost all that good content out of the image of God. We lost all our righteousness and holiness, all our true knowledge and fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom. Instead of becoming like unto God, we became like unto the devil. And it may be said too that we look like the devil. Spiritually we certainly do! And it is only by the grace of God that we have the promise of being made partakers of the Divine nature, that is, to be clothed once again with God's righteousness and holiness, to have true knowledge and wisdom.

Really it makes no difference how a man dies and what the cause of the stopping of his heart is. If he does not die of one disease, it will be another. If it is not a disease it is through violence and injury of one sort or another. Or even if he simply is "lived-out" and his body is literally worn out, really what difference does it make HOW we came to that stilling of our hearts? The main fact is that the heart beats no more, and we are dead.

Heart disease: It is the human race's ONLY killer!

Adam, as the head and representative of the whole human race had heart trouble. And his heart stopped beating! It never began to beat again! We all died in him! His heart stopped beating with the love of God; and he really had heart trouble! The love of God, that coursed through his arteries and veins and moved all his being in praise and service of the living God as being pumped by that heart, poured out of that heart in one mighty gush-all of it- when his heart was pierced by the arrow of Satan's lie. Man died!

O, let us not deny that! Scripture is too plain about that. Let us not say that man by nature was spiritually sick and weak, partially paralyzed but yet with enough of a spiritual pulse in his arteries and veins that he can still

will to be saved. His pulse is not weak. His pulse is gone, for he has no love of God coursing through his arteries and veins. He has heart trouble of the worst sort. His heart has stopped beating with the love of God. Paul says to the church at Ephesus that we are DEAD in trespasses and sins. Jesus says that we have to receive life out of heaven before we can even see the kingdom of God. For He said to Nicodemus that except a man be born again-literally: born from above-he cannot see the kingdom. Paul says to the church at Rome that the carnal mind-and that is your and my mind by our natural birth-is enmity against God, is not subject to the law of God, and indeed CANNOT BE subject to that law. And God said to Adam, did He not that in the DAY that he ate of that tree he would die?

Physical death did not overtake Adam for another nine hundred and thirty years. It comes much quicker to you and me. And after Adam there was a man, named Methuselah, who lived even longer: nine hundred and sixty nine years! Another thirty one years and he would have lived to be a thousand years old! But Adam died that day. He died *spiritually* that day, in fact he died the very moment that the shaft of the arrow of the lie of Satan pierced his heart and that love of God gushed out in its entirety. Spiritually Adam became dead. And by that we do not mean that he could do nothing spiritually. It is true that dead men perform no work. And that is absolute! They are not even able to desire to be made alive. Lazarus did not ask Jesus to raise him. His sisters had to do that for him. And Jesus did not first ask Lazarus whether he wanted to come back to this life, He called Him by the irresistible power of His Divine Nature. He called life into him as He called unto him. But the desire did not originate in that dead body of Lazarus. Truly dead men perform no work, not even of hearing or seeing or thinking or willing. But when we speak of spiritual death we do not mean that there is NO spiritual activity at all. Were that the case our spiritual lot would not be tragic. We can do no spiritual good but we are active continually in spiritual evil. That man died spiritually the day-the moment- that he ate of the forbidden fruit means that he is absolutely incapable of doing anything spiritually good until God regenerates him with the life from out of heaven. His heart has stopped beating with the love of God. He has none of it in his veins again until regeneration.

Does that heart trouble concern you at all?

Well, – you have to be spiritually alive to be troubled by it. Except a man be born again he cannot even see that there is such a thing as spiritual death.

But there surely is such a calamity as spiritual death. There is such a disease as spiritual heart trouble so that a man's heart beats only with the hatred of God and sends that hatred into every fibre of his being to lead him into all kinds of wickedness.

According to Scripture the heart of man is the spiritual-ethical center of his being. Scripture does not mean that fleshly, muscular organ that pumps blood throughout your body. But there is a beautiful similarity to be noted between that physical organ and the spiritual heart. Your whole being is connected to that heart, and all the being depends upon that heart. If it does not send a flow of life giving blood to one cell, that cell will die. All must stand in a living and continual contact with that heart. No less true is it that the heart of man-as Scripture speaks of it-is the center of man's life from an ethical-moral point of view. Out of it are all the issues of life. It sends spiritual impulses to every muscle, cell and fibre. Solomon says that as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. And since the heart of man is filled with spiritual poison-he hates God and the poison of Satan's lie is still there-it pumps that hateful poison into every thought and desire, every act and ambition, every faculty and ability. No wonder Paul and the psalmist both say that there is none that doeth good, no not one!

Heart trouble: That is man's whole trouble.

All our griefs and woes, all our diseases and miseries, all death and the grave are due to the heart failure of man in Paradise, when his heart failed to beat any longer with the love of God. Now we have a heart with a definite murmur. It rebels against God and all that pertains to Him and His kingdom. It is a heart as hard as stone. It is cold. It hates God. This must be changed, or there is no hope for us. We need a new heart. We need a pure heart. For the pure in heart shall see God. Indeed we get down to the heart of the matter when we lay our finger on the heart of man as that which caused us all our trouble and as that which must be restored to its former function. The cross is the basis and can be the basis because the Son of God in our flesh had no heart trouble and performed a work of perfect love while suffering our punishment. But salvation *in* us requires a new heart. And God promises that too in Ezekiel 36:26, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put in you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you a heart of flesh."

Then when this physical heart finally is stilled through one disease or another, by one cause or another, the sinful heart is likewise stopped to beat no more with that hatred against the living God. God has taken it away. We will have no heart trouble thereafter. But we shall see God. They who walk in His fear look forward to that day. They long for the day when their spiritual heart gives them no more trouble but throbs only with the love of God.

J. A. H.

"A man's Sunday self and weekday self are like two halves of a round trip ticket – not good if detached."

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

THE TIME OF THE REFORMATION

VIEWS ON THE SACRAMENTS

THE PROTESTANT VIEW

In distinction from the Protestant view, the Roman Catholic Church lays all emphasis upon the sacraments. Whereas the Protestant view stresses the priority of the Word of God, Roman Catholicism assumes that the sacraments contain all that is necessary for the salvation of the sinner, need no interpretation, and therefore render the Word completely superfluous as a means of grace.

According to Rome, the sacrament of baptism is the sacrament of regeneration. They declare accursed who claims that the sacraments do not contain the grace which they signify, or do not confer that grace on those who do not place an obstacle thereunto, but who insist that they are outward signs of grace or righteousness received through faith. According to the Romish Church, the grace bestowed upon him that is baptized delivers, through the external operation of the sacrament, from the guilt of original sin and all the actual sins committed up to the time of baptism. It also delivers from the corruption of the defilement of sin and from eternal punishment. And it incorporates the one baptized into the communion of saints and effects spiritual renewal by the infusion of sanctifying grace.

Rome, therefore, connects regeneration with the water of baptism, and makes all salvation dependent upon the sacrament and upon the Romish hierarchy. According to Rome, the first effect of baptism is the remission of sin. And when Rome speaks of the remission of sin, it means not only pardon, but also the removal of sin. Rome simply connects justification and sanctification. It declares accursed who deny that the guilt of original sin is remitted by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ which is conferred in Baptism, or even asserts that the whole of that which has the true and proper nature of sin is not taken away (Council of Trent, Session V, 5). It is true that there remains in the baptized concupiscence, or an incentive to sin, but this is remedied, according to Rome, by the other sacraments, especially that of penance. And, positively, the sacrament of baptism bestows the grace of a Divine quality which is essentially identical with man's lost gift of donum superadditum (the added gift which God gave Adam in in addition to his natural perfection), and thereby makes man like unto God, incorporates him into the body of Christ, and thus into Christ Himself, and enables him to perform supernatural good works and places him in the position to merit eternal life. Except in very exceptional cases, this infused grace is imparted to the sinner only through the sacrament of baptism; baptism is absolutely necessary unto salvation. The Word of God is no longer important in this conception of Rome; all emphasis is laid upon the sacrament, and, of course, upon the Romish hierarchy which administers it.

THE PROTESTANT VIEW OF BAPTISM

In the Gallican or French Confession of Faith, Art. 35, we read the following: "We confess only two sacraments common to the whole Church, of which the first, baptism, is given as a pledge of our adoption; for by it we are grafted into the body of Christ, so as to be washed and cleansed by his blood, and then renewed in purity of life by His Holy Spirit. We hold, also, that although we are baptized only once, yet the gain that it symbolizes to us reaches over our whole lives and to our death, so that we have a lasting witness that Jesus Christ will always be our justification and sanctification. Nevertheless, although it is a sacrament of faith and penitence, yet as God receives little children into the Church with their fathers, we say, upon the authority of Jesus Christ, that the children of believing parents should be baptized." In this article we are taught that baptism is a sign and seal of our incorporation into the body of Christ, and therefore of its resulting benefits, that is, the washing away of our sins, and the renewal by the Holy Spirit; and this article also informs us that baptism emphasizes that the grace of baptism is not limited to the moment when we are baptized, but continues throughout our whole life.

Article 34 of our Belgic Confession or Thirty Seven Articles reads as follows: "We believe and confess that Jesus Christ, who is the end of the law, hath made an end, by the shedding of his blood, of all other sheddings of blood which men could or would make as propitiation or satisfaction for sin; and that he, having abolished circumcision, which was done with blood, hath instituted the Sacrament of Baptism instead thereof, by which we are received into the Church of God, and separated from all other people and strange religions, that we may wholly belong to him whose ensign and banner we bear, and which serves as a testimony unto us that he will forever be our gracious God and Father. Therefore he has commanded all those who are his to be baptized with pure water, *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;* thereby signifying to us, that as water washeth away the filth of the body, when poured upon it, and is seen on the body of the baptized, when sprinkled upon him, so doth the blood of Christ, by the power of the Holy Ghost, internally sprinkle the soul, cleanse it from its sins, and regenerate us from children of wrath unto children of God. Not that this is effected by the external water, but by the sprinkling of

the precious blood of the Son of God; who is our Red Sea, through which we must pass to escape the tyranny of Pharaoh, that is, the devil, and to enter into the spiritual land of Canaan. Therefore, the Ministers, on their part, administer the Sacrament, and that which is visible, but our Lord giveth that which is signified by the Sacrament, namely, the gifts and invisible grace; washing, cleansing, and purging our souls of all filth and unrighteousness; renewing our hearts and filling them with all comfort; giving unto us a true assurance of his fatherly goodness; putting on us the new man, and putting off the old man with all his deeds.

Therefore, we believe that every man who is earnestly studious of obtaining life eternal ought to be but once baptized with this only Baptism, without ever repeating the same: since we can not be born twice. Neither doth this Baptism only avail us at the time when the water is poured upon us and received by us, but also through the whole course of our life. Therefore we detest the error of the Anabaptists, who are not content with the one only baptism they have once received, and moreover condemn the baptism of the infants of believers, who, we believe, ought to be baptized and sealed with the sign of the covenant, as the children in Israel formerly were circumcised upon the same promises which are made unto our children. And, indeed, Christ shed his blood no less for the washing of the children of the faithful than for adult persons; and, therefore, they ought to receive the sign and sacrament of that which Christ hath done for them; as the Lord commanded in the law, that they should be made partakers of the sacrament of Christ's suffering and death shortly after they were born, by offering for them a lamb, which was a sacrament of Jesus Christ. Moreover, what Circumcision was to the Jews, that Baptism is to our children. And for this reason Paul calls Baptism the *Circumcision of Christ.*" —end of quote.

In this thirty fourth article of our Belgic Confession the Fathers emphasize, first of all, that the sacrament of baptism signifies that we are received into the Church of God and separated from all other people and strange religions. It also emphasizes that we wholly belong to God, whose ensign and banner we bear, and it serves us a testimony that the Lord will forever be our gracious God and Father. Thirdly, this sacrament is not only a sign of the washing away of our sins, as water cleanses the body of its filth, but it is also a sign of regeneration, regenerating us from children of wrath unto children of God. And, in opposition to Rome, the sacrament of baptism emphasizes that all this is effected, not by the external water, but only by the sprinkling of the precious blood of the Son of God, and by the grace of God. And, finally, this thirty fourth article teaches us that this sacrament must be administered only once, inasmuch as we are born only once, and that it must also be administered to the infants of believers.

Our Heidelberg Catechism treats the subject of Baptism in Lord's Days 26 and 27, Questions 69 through 74.

Question 69: How is it signified and sealed unto thee in holy Baptism that thou hast part in the one sacrifice of Christ upon the cross?

Answer 69: Thus: that Christ has appointed this outward washing with water, and has joined therewith this promise, that I am washed with his blood and Spirit from the pollution of my soul, that is, from all my sins, as certainly as I am washed outwardly with water whereby commonly the filthiness of the body is taken away.

Question 70: What is it to be washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ?

Answer 70: It is to have the forgiveness of sins from God, through grace, for the sake of Christ's blood, which he shed for us in his sacrifice on the cross; and also to be renewed by the Holy Ghost, and sanctified to be members of Christ, that so we may more and more die unto sin, and lead holy and unblamable lives.

Question 71: Where has Christ promised that we are as certainly washed with his blood and Spirit as with the water of Baptism?

Answer 71: In the institution of Baptism, which runs thus: Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned. This promise is also repeated where the Scripture calls Baptism the washing of regeneration and the washing away of sins.

Question 72: Is, then, the outward washing of water itself the washing away of sins?

Answer 72: No; for only the blood of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit cleanse us from all sin.

Question 73: Why, then, doth the Holy Ghost call Baptism the washing of regeneration and the washing away of sins?

Answer 73: God speaks thus not without great cause: namely, not only to teach us thereby that like as the filthiness of the body is taken away by water, so our sins also are taken away by the blood and Spirit of Christ; but much more, that by this divine pledge and token he may assure us that we are as really washed from our sins spiritually as our bodies are washed with water.

Question 74: Are infants also to be baptized?

Answer 74: Yes; for since they, as well as their parents, belong to the covenant and people of God, and both redemption from sin and the Holy Ghost, who works faith, are through the blood of Christ promised to them no less than to their parents, they are also by Baptism, as a sign of the covenant, to be ingrafted into the Christian Church, and distinguished from the children of unbelievers, as was done in the Old Testament by Circumcision, in place of which in the New Testament Baptism is appointed.

H.V.

The Voice of Our Fathers

The Belgic Confession

ARTICLE IX

TWO-FOLD PROOF

It is to be noted that this article does not merely present proof from Scripture in support of the doctrine of the Trinity. This is plain from the opening statement of Article IX: "All this we know, as well from the testimonies of holy writ, as from their operations, and chiefly by those we feel in ourselves." Hence, the evidence of which the article speaks is two-fold: proof *from Holy Scripture* and evidence *from experience.*

Undoubtedly this is to be connected with the later statement of this same article: "In all which places we are fully taught, that there are three persons in only one divine essence. And although this doctrine far surpasses all human understanding, nevertheless, we now believe it by means the Word of God, but expect hereafter to enjoy the perfect knowledge and benefit thereof in Heaven." The article therefore emphasizes that this doctrine is a deep mystery: it far surpasses our comprehension. We must remember, of course, that a mystery is not something that is absurd. It is not a contradiction. There are no absurdities and no contradictions in the Christian faith, even as there is only perfect knowledge and wisdom and harmony in God Himself. The Christian faith does not and cannot accept two diametrically opposite propositions. For example, it could never accept the proposition that God is one and that He is three in the same sense. Nor does the doctrine of the Trinity require this. Although it is indeed a mystery, it involves no contradiction. A mystery can be known and accepted; two members of a contradiction can be recognized, but never accepted. As soon as you recognize a contradiction, you must needs reject one member or the other. Never do the Scriptures, therefore, require the believer to believe that which is self-contradictory. But often is the Christian confronted by the mystery in Holy Scripture, that is, by that which can be known only by revelation, and by that which, while it may be known, is unfathomably deep, — in fact, is known exactly as that which is unfathomably deep. Especially is this true when God Himself, in His Being and nature, is revealed to us. Indeed, we may know Him, because He reveals Himself to us. And we also live in the hope that hereafter we shall know God perfectly and enjoy Him forever. For then we shall enter fully into the fellowship of the triune, covenant God. But neither now do we, nor then shall we ever be able to *comprehend* the infinite God, or probe the depths of the unfathomably deep mystery of God as the Triune One.

But we live by faith. And that means that we live by the Word of the Scriptures, also in respect to the truth of the Holy Trinity. Moreover, that faith is not merely the cold acceptance of objective facts set forth in Scripture. It is a living faith. Its knowledge is not merely a knowledge *about* God, and a knowledge *that* God is Triune. It is the knowledge of God Himself, the living, spiritual knowledge of fellowship and experience. Hence, the truth that is objectively set forth in the Holy Scriptures concerning the Trinity is also subjectively known and experienced from the operations of the Triune God, and, therefore, as our Confession has it, chiefly by those we feel in ourselves.

The peculiar emphasis of the opening statement of this article, therefore, is quite in harmony with the fact that our Confession is a *confession of faith,* which must certainly be emphasized in connection with the mystery of the Trinity.

Proof from the Old Testament

When furnishing Scriptural proof for the doctrine of the Trinity, our Confession calls attention to the fact that it is not so necessary to enumerate as to choose out with discretion and judgment those places in the Old Testament which teach us to believe this Holy Trinity. And while it is true, as is stated later in the article, that "that which appears to us somewhat obscure in the Old Testament, is very plain in the New," nevertheless this same rule of discretion and judgment must also be followed in choosing the New Testament passages that teach us to believe the Holy Trinity. For while it is true that the doctrine of the Trinity is a profound mystery, which can be known only from the revelation of the Triune God in Scripture, this does not mean that you will find a ready-made doctrine of the Trinity in the Bible. Directly the Scriptures do not speak of the Trinity, or of the Three Persons in the one Essence, or of the mutual relation of the Three Persons to one another. Scripture is no textbook of systematic doctrine from which you can simply quote literally to prove this dogma. It is revelation. In Scripture you have God Himself condescending to speak to us on our own level, in our own language, of Himself. And when God so speaks to us, He always stands revealed before us as the God Who is One, and also Three, Who through His threeness is made known as the one, only, simple, and spiritual Being Whom we call God, the Triune Jehovah. By the same token, therefore, we should be able to demonstrate this truth clearly from Holy Scripture. And the passages which we must loook for and choose with "discretion and judgment" are not only those passages which show a plurality of Persons, and specifically a threeness of Persons, in God, but also passages which show the unity of the Godhead.

Our Confession immediately cites a classic passage from the book of Genesis which is a striking proof for two reasons. In the first place, this proof is taken from the opening chapter of Holy Writ. And, in the second place, it is a passage which contains at once both of the elements mentioned above, the unity and plurality. The entire passage of Genesis 1:26 and 27 reads: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." To this the Confession adds, without further comment, the text from Genesis 3:22: "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil . . . " A brief word of interpretation is given by the Confession, as follows: "From this saying, let us make man in our image, it appears that there are more persons than one in the Godhead; and when he saith, God created, he signifies the unity. It is true he doth not say how many persons there are . . . " In further consideration of this passage and its interpretation, we may note the following:

1. God is in these words revealed as *addressing Himself*. That this is true is plain from the simple fact that this speech of God concerns the work of creation; and no one but God Himself could have any part in this creative act. Creation is exclusively the work of God.

2. Yet it is the one God Who is presented in the text as speaking and as creating. The objection is sometimes raised that the Hebrew word for "God" is in the plural form, *Elohim*, and that this implies a plurality of gods. This objection, of course, does not arise from faith, but from the critical, unbelieving, evolutionistic view of the Scriptures which tries to find a progress from polytheism (many gods) to monotheism (belief in one god) in the Old Testament. As far as the *fact* of the objection is concerned, namely, that the noun *Elohim* is plural in form, we may concede it. As far as the *validity* of the argument based on the fact is concerned, however, we deny it. And that denial is based on the text. If the meaning of *Elohim* were plural (gods), then the verbs "said" and "created" would also be plural. But the verbs are singular, which means that the subject, "God," is also singular. And this is the common form of speech throughout the Old Testament in the Hebrew. Hence it is, according to the text, the one God speaking and creating.

3. At the same time, however, it is evident from this pasage that there is a plurality in tnat one God. This is indicated by the words "us" and "our." God is one. His creative act is one. His image and likeness are one. And yet He is more than one in such a way that He is able to speak to Himself. This therefore indicates a plurality of Persons in the one divine Essence. It may even be said that this speech of God to Himself indicates a fellowship, or communion, of Persons.

The above is the only proof from the Old Testament which our Confession adduces. At this point Article IX makes the observation that what appears to us somewhat obscure in the Old Testament is very plain in the New. And with that remark it immediately turns to the New Testament and cites a few proofs, to which we shall presently give our attention.

First of all, however, we may ask and answer the question: why is the threeness of Persons in God more obscure in the Old Testament? Our answer is, in general, that this lies in the very character of the old dispensation in comparison with the New. In the first place, we must remember that God's people in the old dispensation lived in a world that was filled with the polytheism of the heathen. The main temptation, and the besetting sin, of Israel in the old dispensation was that of idolatry, and with it, polytheism, the belief in and worship of many gods. And therefore, while the plurality of Persons in the Godhead is by no means missing in the Old Testament, there is a very strong emphasis on the oneness of God throughout the Old Testament Scriptures. In the second place, we must remember that there was a tremendous change with the fulness of time. In the new dispensation the Father sends the Son into the flesh. And on Pentecost Day the Spirit is poured out upon all flesh. And from this viewpoint it is to be expected that both in the New Testament Scriptures and in the experience of the saints of the new dispensation the Trinity is much more clearly revealed than in the old dispensation. There is from that point of view progress in revelation.

Nevertheless, in the second place, we must certainly not have the idea that the truth of the Trinity is no further revealed in the Old Testament than in the passage cited by our Confession. For there are many more passages. The truth of the unity of God is so strongly and frequently emphasized that we need not take the time to cite many passages. Let us merely mention the well-known words of Deuteronomy 6:4, 5: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." But this plurality of Persons in God is referred to in numerous passages. First of all, there are many passages which speak of the Angel of Jehovah in the Old Testament. And we must remember that this Angel of Jehovah, while He is distinct from God, is at the same time Himself God. As such He speaks to Hagar in the wilderness, and Hagar recognizes Him as God too. Genesis 16:10: "And the angel of the Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude." And again, in vs. 11: "And the angel of the Lord said unto

(Continued on page 261)

DECENCY and ORDER

Dealing with Secret Sins

"Secret sins of which the sinner repents, after being admonished by one person in private or in the presence of two or three witnesses, shall not be laid before the consistory." Art. 73, D.K.O.

"If any one, having been admonished in love concerning a secret sin by two or three persons, does not give heed, or otherwise has committed a public sin, the matter shall be reported to the consistory." Art. 74, D.K.O.

It will be evident that Articles 73 and 74 of the Church Order, quoted above, are closely related. They both deal with the manner in which the believer is to deal with or treat the secret sins committed by the brother in Christ and of which he is aware. Article 73 tells us that where repentance is gained the matter need not be laid before the consistory of the church while Article 74 explains that it is mandatory that this be done in the case of impenitence. Both of these articles are in effect a continuation of the 72nd. article in which the principles of Matthew 18 are set forth. We must deal with the matter of sin according to the principles of the Word of God as explained in Matthew 18 and this necessarily involves following through with the instructions given in the two articles quoted above.

Underlying all three of these articles is a fundamental Scriptural principle. That principle is that christian discipline must begin with believers as individuals and not with the consistory. This is very important and the neglect of this principle is very costly to the church. We see the evidences of this most glaringly today. It is, of course, always easier to leave the matter of sin to be dealt with by the consistory and to reason that if the consistory doesn't concern itself with it, I shouldn't or don't need to either. However, this is wrong. It is wrong, first of all, because especially if the matter deals with secret sin, the consistory may not be aware of it and therefore unable to treat it even if it desired to do so. Such sin may not be left to develop until it reaches a proportion where it becomes obvious to the consistory if we have knowledge of it and are able to exercise a labor of love that may be corrective. We become guilty because of our neglect as we explained in our last article. But in the second place, if the matter is left unattended, it may very well be that by the time it comes to the attention of the consistory the matter may be so far developed that it is beyond correction.

"The Church Order Commentary" states that "when church members refuse to do their christian duty toward each other and no longer admonish each other, but desire to leave it all to the consistory, then *the backbone of church discipline is severly injured.*" (Italics is mine, G.V.) Likewise Dr. F. L. Rutgers writes: "The decay of discipline, which began already in the beginning of the 17th. century, should certainly be attributed to a large extent to the fact that in the convictions of the church members this principle of our Church Order has been weakened."

Now this is all very obvious for such neglect is not the mere violation of an order prescribed by man but it is a refusal to walk in the order and decency of the Word of God. This is very serious indeed. To show this we will quote just a few of the many passages of the Word that direct us to our calling as individual believers with respect to sin concerning which we have personal knowledge.

I Thessalonians 5:11 states: "Wherefore exhort one another, and build each other up, even as ye also do."

Hebrews 3:12, 13 reads: "Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God: but exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called Today . . . "

"Brethren," we read in Galatians 6:1 "if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

And finally, in James 5:19, 20, "My brethren, if any among you err from the truth and one convert him, let him know, that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death and shall cover a multitude of sins."

How different from these plain directives of the Word of God is the spirit that is manifest in the church today. It is a spirit of rash individualism. It assumes the attitude that the life and conduct of each individaul is solely a private concern and it resents any attempt or interference by another even though this other is motivated only by the desire to correct faults and lead in the way of righteousness wherein alone the blessings of life can be enjoyed. It is based on an entirely faulty conception of liberty and appeals to the perverted slogan that "conscience is the only guide in all moral conduct". And this attitude reflects itself not only toward fellow members in the church who may still attempt to carry out their responsibilities in the matter of the exercise of christian discipline but, as was stated, it breaks the backbone of christian discipline with the result that the same evil rebuff is met by the office-bearers of the church. Does this perhaps explain why the church in general today has ceased to exercise the power of discipline? Each member is permited to do and to believe what is right in their own eyes so that within the church you find all kinds of conflicting practices. Some say it is permissible to belong to worldly societies while others, members of the same church, affirm that they don't believe

that. Some say they have the right to divorce and re-marry while others admit this is contrary to God's word. Some allow theatre attendance while others disapprove. Some say the Bible is not literally the infallibly inspired Word of God while others then insist that it is. So we might continue, but the point is that none concern themselves with their calling to correct the evils existing, for the church itself is more concerned about numbers than truth. This is fatal for the church. Scripture says, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Sin condoned, left uncorrected, works its way through till the whole is spoiled.

Each member of the church, therefore, must know and realize their calling to "wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Eph. 6:12) This warfare begins with the proper treatment of those sins which are called "secret".

It is rather difficult to differentiate strictly between a secret sin and a public sin. Usually the distinction is made that a secret sin is one that is known to only a few while a public sin is on that has been committed openly and is generally known. But the difficulty with this distinction lies in the fact that in a large church a sin might be known to a half dozen persons and still be regarded as a secret sin while the same trespass in a small church and known to the same number of individuals would be regarded as a public sin.

Perhaps we could say that a sin is private or secret as long as it does not cause or create a general, public offense. A sin, for example, committed against another member of the church and which in itself does not form an offense to the entire church may be considered secret even though it becomes generally known. The matter must be treated according to Matthew 18 and in such a case those responsible for making this secret offense generally known ought likewise to be treated for sin. Similarly a sin that is known only to a very few might be considered public by the very nature of the sin. For example, we might mention such sins as stealing and murder or, for that matter, any crime punishable by the civil magistrates. These are public sins even though they may not be generally known.

Back in 1571 the Synod of Emden ruled that secret sins, though repented of, which constitute great danger to State or Church, such as treason, or the misleading of souls, should be reported to the Minister of the Church, so that, his advice having been gained, one might know what to do. Seven years later the Synod of Dort, 1578, dropped this second provision of the 73rd. Article of the Church Order and maintained only the first provision. Monsma and Van Dellen, however, state: "Common sense still tells us that in case a brother or sister has committed a very grievous and dangerous sin, that then it may be to his own best interest and safety of others, that at least his minister be informed. In such extreme cases the matter should be reported confidentially, and in some cases if possible with the transgressor's consent."

The point of Articles 73 and 74 of the Church Order is very simple. It is simply this. If we know of a secret sin, committed by a brother or sister, it is our christian duty to lead the offender to repentance. This must be done along the way prescribed in Matthew 18 as we wrote in our last article. If all such attempts fail to gain the desired result, we are to report the matter to the consistory so that the office-bearers of the church may labor to save the soul of the erring one. If we, through private labor, succeed in making the transgressor see the error of his way so that he is brought to confession and repentance, the matter does need to go any farther. It then does not need to be reported to the consistory. The brother is forgiven and the matter is dropped.

There is one other matter implied in Article 74. That is contained in the phrase, "or otherwise has committed a public sin". This implies that public sins are always to be reported to and treated by the consistory. The reason for this ought to be evident. A public sin gives public offense. The whole church is affected by such things and not just one or two against whom a sin may be committed privately. If then the public offense is to be removed, it can be done only through the consistory as representing the whole church. The consistory must then deal with the matter and decide what matter of reconciliation is to be effected where there is evidence of repentance. With this matter of the reconciliation of the sinner we will concern ourselves next time, D.V., in connection with Article 75.

G.v.d.B.

THE VOICE OF OUR FATHERS

(Continued from page 259)

her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the Lord hath heard thy affliction." Note that here the angel of the Lord is distinct from the Lord Who heard Hagars' affliction. And notice that the deity of this angel of the Lord is confirmed in vs. 13 of the same chapter: "And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?"

(to be continued)

H.C.H.

Sweeter are Thy words to me
Than all other good can be;
Safe I walk, Thy truth my light,
Hating falsehood, loving right.

ALL AROUND US

PROTESTANT CONFESSIONAL

A committee of the United Church of Canada has recently suggested in a report entitled, "Church Membership, Doctrine and Practice in the United Church of Canada," that Protestants should return to the Roman Catholic practice of making confession to some man. They suggest either a minister or some trusted Christian friend. They quote Calvin and Luther in support of their contention; although neither wanted the confessional of Romish religion. Especially Calvin merely spoke of the need of confessing to one another our sins when we had offended by them. The committee admitted that the idea of confession of sin had been made into a sacrament of penance and had been abused by "tyranny" and "lay exhibitionism"; but insisted nonetheless that it would be worthwhile for Protestants to adopt this practice.

The Roman Catholic insistence upon confession to a priest is closely bound up with their entire theology. The clergy and not the laity constitute the Church. The clergy intervene between God and man; this intervention takes place in all three aspects of the Christian's office. The clergy holds alone the office of prophet so that the people cannot understand the Word of God except through the interpretation of the pope and his under ministers. The clergy holds the office of priest so that there is no forgiveness of sins apart from the sacrifice which the priest makes in the mass, or apart from the power that is given to him alone to forgive sins in the name of Christ. The clergy holds the office of king so that the Church polity of the Romish Church is thoroughly hierarchical and dictatorial without the laity having so much as a word to say in the government of the Church.

No doubt this committee report is but another step among many to try to bring Protestants back to Rome and merge all Churches with the Romish Church. It is but another attempt to cross the chasm of the Reformation.

Yet the matter also goes deeper than that. There is something here against which we must be warned, and with which we must have nothing to do.

Romish religion is very easy. To worship God after the manner of the Romish Church requires no real effort. It is also for this reason that it is a very appealing religion. All the people really have to do is give their souls over to the Church. If they sin, a trip to the confessional wipes their souls clean. If they attend the mass with any amount of regularity they have almost a guarantee of a safe trip to heaven. If the number of their sins requires a brief stay in purgatory, money and masses will buy their way out. The whole matter of the worship of God is patterned for them. All it requires is an external conformity to the code of the Church and absolute reliance upon the institute of the Church. Anything spiritual and of the heart is not, strictly speaking, necessary.

It was against all this that the Reformers, with amazing insight, battled. Luther already saw clearly that all this would never do. He insisted on the Scriptural doctrine of the office of all believers. Believers, who possess the anointing of Christ and the Spirit of Pentecost are all prophets and priests and kings. As prophets they can and do know the Word of God. As priests they pray to God directly through Jesus Christ and confess their sins at the foot of the throne of grace. As kings they are called to fight the battle of faith and to march under the banner of the cross in the armies of the Captain of their salvation.

But all this implies heavy responsibilities. Jesus tells the Samaritan woman that a day is coming when men will worship God neither on Mount Zion nor on Mount Gerazim, but "they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." John 4:24. It is this worship of God in spirit and in truth which is so intensely difficult. It demands that we study diligently the Word of God to grow in the knowledge of Him Whom to know is life eternal. It demands a broken spirit and a contrite heart when we cry out for forgiveness and mercy. It demands a continuous battle against the world not only, but against our own sinful flesh. It demands that in Church we sing with the heart and not only with the lips; that we pray in spirit and not from habit; that we bow in humility and not simply by falling on our knees; that we listen with believing hearts and submissive wills rather than with curious minds and only undeviating and blind devotion to an ecclesiastical institute. It demands that in all our lives, from the heart, there be a constant doxology of praise and glory to God.

Yet there is a constant cry to retreat from these high callings. One hears over and over again a plea for more elaborate ritual in the Church services and so-called improvements in the liturgy. There are, for example, those who say that the sermon is too long and ought to be abbreviated because people have difficulty concentrating for such long periods of time. There are those who would change the congregational prayers because they cannot keep their minds on what the minister is saying and such long prayer is conducive to sleep. There is a constant clamor for choirs, for responsive readings, for a recital of the Apostolic Confession in unison by the congregation, etc., etc. Usually the reason that is given as a basis for these proposed changes is that the form of worship which we now have tends towards habitual worship and therefore lip service rather than worship from the heart. If only the form of worship would be changed, so it is said, the whole worship service would become more meaningful.

But this is emphatically not the case. It may be, for

example, that if the congregation would recite the Apostolic Confession in unison, that it would mean more. But this would last for just a week, and then it would be as habitual as ever. It would once again require as strenuous an effort to worship God in spirit and in truth as it does now. But always the danger is that, once having catered to a trend to make liturgy more elaborate and ritual more extensive, the trend is usually impossible to reverse. It grows, for the clamor continues. And the end is the superficial and meaningless worship of the Romish Church. And we do not want to go back there.

RELIEF IN SPAIN

Recently in Spain there have been some moves towards a lessening of persecution of the Protestants by the Romish Church. The Spanish Catholic heirarchy has agreed to a bill proposed by the government that would give Protestants certain rights which were previously denied them. They would, under the bill, have the right to their own schools; they would be permitted to distribute Bibles; there would be a general relaxation of the now stringent rules that apply to Protestant marriages. The decision of the Spanish heirarchy however will not be final until the bill also receives the approval of the Vatican.

Although we surely can rejoice that there is one step being made towards lessening of persecution, there is a certain irony in it all. In the first place, the Romish Church has never before admitted that there was any such thing as persecution there. If this was always true, why the bill? In the second place, the bill is a govermental bill, but cannot go into effect without the approval of the Romish heirarchy and the Vatican. This is a strange business. In the third place, the relaxation of rules is still limited. The bill says nothing about the rights of Protestants to meet on the Lord's Day or any other day for worship. One gets the impression that this is nothing more than a sop thrown towards the Protestants to lessen world criticism and to make the Romish Church look good in these ecumenical days. Another concession of the devil.

* * *

In Columbia, South America, persecution goes on. In a recent issue of the *Presbyterian Journal* a letter is quoted prefaced by several remarks by the editor. We quote the editor's remarks and the letter in full.

> (Editor's note: Columbia, South America, has received much attention in missionary circles, as missionaries have suffered an unusual amount of persecution in that land . . . at the hand of the Roman Catholic Church. Christians have died, churches have been burned, stonings and beatings have been frequent. The U.S. State Department intervened when U.S. aid funds became involved in the construction of "public" schools dominated by the Roman Church from which Protestant children were barred. Peace Corps members have been used in projects benefitting the Roman Church. In the light of this history and recent promises by Columbian officials that discriminations would cease, the following letter, dated November, 1962 is of interest.)
>
> "Is the anti-Protestant feeling any better in Columbia or are you still persecuted at times?"
>
> This question came last week in a letter from a friend in the U.S., and is typical of many we hear these days, especially in view of the Vatican Council. Recent papal declarations on ecumenicism and unity, plus increased effort for Roman Catholic-Protestant dialogue naturally give rise to such questions.
>
> The very day that I received the above letter, a frightened and disillusioned pastor from a rural church arrived in Cartagena to seek our help. Three weeks previously he had returned to his parish armed with a sheaf of official government documents from top government officials in Cartagena, and municipal officials in the county seat, declaring the right of evangelicals to meet for worship and to build a chapel without being molested for their faith, surrounding him with constitutional guarantees.
>
> However, the local priest had then paid a short visit to that community. The result: that evening the chapel, now under construction, was totally destroyed, and an unruly mob armed with machetes, axes, clubs and rocks attacked the home where the pastor was located, screaming for his blood, while the local police studiously absented themselves from the scene. Miraculously the pastor slipped out through the weeds and escaped into the night, taking a canoe down the river. When the whole event was reported to police headquarters in Cartagena, the commander himself commented that this sounded like a spat between the priest and the Protestants, implying that he had no jurisdiction over such matters and could offer no guarantees or justice.
>
> Present day terminology used by Rome in her dialogue with Protestants call us "separated brethren." In rural Columbia, however, no such terms are heard. The evangelical Protestant is still a "heretic" and therefore an enemy of God. And being in error he has no rights, not even to life itself.
>
> — David M. Howard, Field Director
> Latin America Mission

DUTCH ROMAN CATHOLICS

The latest census taken in the Netherlands, according to *The Banner,* reveals that there are more Roman Catholics in that country than there are members of the Netherlands Reformed Church and the Reformed Churches combined. The Netherlands Reformed Church (Hervormd or State Church) has 3,240,490 members; the Reformed Churches (Gereformeerd) has 1,068,590 members; the Roman Catholic Church has 4,600,00 members. While the Roman Catholic Church itself has claimed to have the majority of the population, this census shows that 40.4% of the population belong to this denomination. This is however, a jump of 1.9% since 1947. In the same period the percentage of the population of the Reformed Churches has dropped.

It always comes as somewhat of a surprise that so many in the Netherlands should become Roman Catholic. Especially is this true when one thinks of the days of bitter persecution that our fathers suffered at the hands of the Romish Church during the 16th Century. Nevertheless, the sad departures from the truth even among the Reformed Churches make this somewhat inevitable. There are few fighting any more the battle for the truth of the Reformation.

H. Hanko

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NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

"All the saints salute thee . . ." PHIL. 4:21

Feb. 20, 1963

Rev. G. Vanden Berg, of Oak Lawn, has declined the call which came to him from Hope Church, in Grand Rapids.

Rev. J. Kortering, of Hull, Iowa, declined the call from Southwest Church in Grand Rapids.

Rev. R. C. Harbach, Lynden's pastor since 1955, has declined the call from Loveland, and has accepted the call from Kalamazoo.

The Publication Committee of Oak Lawn and South Holland churches is regularly mailing pamphlets to outsiders, under the general theme, "Word of Life." The current series is on "The Lord's Prayer" which has been written by Rev. J. A. Heys, the titles of which suggest the content of each petition: "The Upward Look", "As A Little Child", "Top Priority", "Kingdom Zeal", "A Sanctified Will", "Bread For Today", "Paid in Full", "Till Seventy Times Seven", "Fear of a Fiery Trail", "Freedom of Religion". They will mail out some 2,700 copies of each issue, and, as a result of a recent canvass taken, they plan to mail 1,000 copies of past issues in a new area. All this indicates a very effective way of witnessing to others of the truth of Scripture as it lives in our churches.

At a combined meeting of Men's Societies of Oak Lawn and South Holland Rev. Heys was scheduled to answer a question, "Does God's Sovereignty Make Him the Author of Sin?" The same subject, in lecture form, will be treated by Rev. Heys in our Isabel and Forbes churches.

First Church's Feb. 17 bulletin carried this saddening announcement: "Mrs. H. Hoeksema suffered a light stroke during the early part of this week. She is showing a slight improvement". At this writing that "improvement" is still slight, and only intermittently so.

Rev. C. Hanko, of First Church, addressed a Hostess Supper gathering at Hudsonville sponsored by their Mr. and Mrs. Society, Feb. 14. His timely and thought provoking topic was, "Communism".

Hope's entire congregation, men, women and children, came out the evening of Feb. 7 to bid farewell to Rev. H. Hanko and family. Because they lacked facilities to house such a large gathering the social was held in First Church's parlors. Their pastor conducted his farewell service Feb. 3.

Rev. H. Hanko's Installation Service at Doon was scheduled for Feb. 14. Doon's Moderator, Rev. J. Kortering, officiated at this service.

All those who have ever attended our Seminary are well acquainted with Rev. H. Hoeksema's "Dogmatics", a complete systematic treatment of Christian Doctrine. This work was originally mimeographed and bound in six volumes, 100 copies of this monumental work were so prepared. Besides our Seminary students, many other students have obtained copies so that the entire supply of 100 copies have gone into the Reformed church world. Now that the supply has run out, it is desired that the entire work be printed and published in one volume. To that end a committee of volunteers has been organized; some preliminary work has been done, but ways and means must still be found to sponsor this undertaking, which will surely be appreciated by all serious Bible students. This committee seeks expansion and invites our men to join them in this worthwhile endeavor. If interested, contact Mr. Wm. Kamps, 2386 O'Brien Rd. S.W., Grand Rapids, Mich.

Notice that a debate was held in a recent Young People's Society meeting in South Holland on, "Resolved that smoking is wrong" sets one to wondering what argument the negative team could present to claim it to be *right*.

At an Open House Feb. 19 Edgerton congregation helped Mr. and Mrs. Art Bleyenberg celebrate their 65th wedding aniversary. Their family includes seven daughters and four sons, with 150 direct descendants. Edgerton's bulletin said in part, "May their remaining sojourn be spent in confidence and trust knowing that 'all the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep His covenant and His testimonies' ".

Friday evening, Feb. 26, our Missionary, Rev. Lubbers, scheduled a lecture in Houston, Tex., on, "The Church's Calling Toward the Ecumenical Movement."

On the Reformed Witness Hour broadcast for March 3 Rev. H. Hoeksema will preach on II Pet. 5: 10, "Fitted Unto Destruction". March 10 Rev. Hoeksema will begin a series of Lenten sermons under the general theme, "The Rejection of our Lord Jesus Christ", the first being, "Rejected at Nazareth". March 17 the topic will be, "Rejected at Capernaum"; March 24, "Rejected by the Rulers"; and March 31 the speaker will explain that "our Lord Jesus Christ deliberately chose Judas Iscariot to be one of His disciples that He might be rejected by him". The title of that sermon will be, "Rejected by His Familiar Friend". Remember, copies of these sermons may be had for the asking.

. . . see you in church. J.M.F.