

REFORMED

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*For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion:
in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me;
he shall set me up upon a rock.
—Psalm 27:5*

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And the LORD spake unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me. And if thou refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all thy borders with frogs: and the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into thine house, and into thy bedchamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneading troughs: and the frogs shall come up both on thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy servants.

And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch forth thine hand with thy rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt. And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt. And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt.

Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Intreat the LORD, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the LORD. And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Glory over me: when shall I intreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee and thy houses, that they may remain in the river only? And he said, Tomorrow. And he said, Be it according to thy word: that thou mayest know that there is none like unto the LORD our God. And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people; they shall remain in the river only. And Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh: and Moses cried unto the LORD because of the frogs which he had brought against Pharaoh. And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the villages, and out of the fields. And they gathered them together upon heaps: and the land stank. But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

—Exodus 8:1–15

God's word to Pharaoh was clear, unmistakable, and persistent: "Let my people go, that they may serve me." Pharaoh knew that word very well, for by now God had sent his word to Pharaoh several times by Moses and Aaron: "Let my people go, that they may serve me." Pharaoh knew that word better than the Israelites knew it by now, for the Israelites had given up hope in their weariness and pain. But God continued to speak his word to Pharaoh: "Let my people go, that they may serve me." Pharaoh knew God's word deep, deep, deep down in his heart. God's word sat deep in Pharaoh's heart like a bag of cement, turning Pharaoh's heart into stone against God and

against God's command, "Let my people go, that they may serve me."

Pharaoh would not hearken. According to God's eternal decree and by the operation of God's sovereign will, Pharaoh would not hearken. In order that God might show his wrath and make his power known against the Egyptian vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, Pharaoh would not hearken. Upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt, God continued to rain down the stroke of his wrath in the plagues.

Second plague: frogs.

At God's command by the mouth of Moses, Aaron raised the rod of God's power over the

Nile River. A revolting scene unfolded. The water of the Nile—only recently returned to water from being blood—now brought forth frogs abundantly. The frogs crawled and hopped and sprang out of the water onto the shore. More and more they emerged. The more they came ashore, the more there were to follow. Frog after frog. Frogs upon frogs. A company, then a platoon, then a battalion, then a brigade, then an army of frogs. Frogs croaking. Frogs hopping. Frogs blinking. Frogs hopping. Frogs ribbiting. Frogs hopping. Frogs discharging. Frogs hopping. Frogs hopping. Frogs hopping...right into the homes of the Egyptians. The whole great, green, wet, quivering mass of frogs filled the land. Frogs in all the houses. Frogs in all the bedrooms. Frogs in all the beds and on all the pillows and between all the sheets. Frogs in the kitchens. Frogs in the ovens. Frogs on the rolling pins and on the kitchen counters and on the food. Frogs underfoot when people walked. Frogs on the laps when people sat. Frogs on the faces when people slept. Frogs! FROGS!! FROGS!!!

The plague of frogs cannot be explained naturally. The frogs were a miraculous creation of God. The Nile River had no frog eggs. The Nile River had no tadpoles. The Nile River had been blood. All the fish had died, along with everything else that had lived in the waters of the river. The only way for a plague of frogs to rise from the river and engulf the land was by the mighty and miraculous operation of God.

For the Egyptians the plague of frogs was a devastating blow. Just as the Nile was Egypt's god, so also the frog was Egypt's god. The name

of Egypt's frog-god was Kek. Kek had the body of a man, the head of a frog, and control of the darkness. But now the true God turned the frog into a mighty plague upon Egypt. The Egyptians were helpless. Kek was helpless. Even Jannes and Jambres and the magicians could only make more frogs, as God made the magicians instruments in his plague upon Egypt.

Finally Pharaoh relented. Pharaoh was not repenting but only relenting. He intreated Moses to take away the frogs. Moses let Pharaoh have the honor of choosing the hour of relief so that Pharaoh would know that the plague was not stayed by any natural means but by the hand of Jehovah. On the day Pharaoh had appointed, the plague ceased. All the frogs died. Their carcasses made heaps and heaps and heaps that stank and stank and stank.

But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite from the plague, he hardened his heart. Instead of letting the people go as he had promised, he kept them in bondage. But while Pharaoh went back on his word, God kept his word. For Pharaoh's heart was hardened "as the LORD had said" (Ex. 8:15). God kept his word regarding Pharaoh's hard heart. And God would keep his word regarding Israel's deliverance. "Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land" (6:1). God's promise of Israel's deliverance could not fail, for the promise of deliverance was essentially the promise of Christ. And all the promises of God in Christ are yea and in him amen (see II Cor. 1:20).

—AL



FROM THE EDITOR

It is that time of year when one wants to do one's reading under a blanket with a steaming mug at hand. *Reformed Pavilion* is hot off the press, so settle in for a cup or two.

Our God sent the season's first treasures of the snow to *Reformed Pavilion's* headquarters here in West Michigan this week. For one glorious day the Lord picked out every limb, branch, and twig in the finest tracery of pure white ice and snow. This is the same God who has traced our every sin and transgression in the blood of the Lamb, so that though our sins be as scarlet, they are made as white as snow. Whereas the trees wore their crown of winter's glory for a day, God has given us to wear our white robes of Jesus' righteous glory for ever and ever. Who can fathom it? How mighty and how good is our God!

This issue features an article that appeared in the October 14, 2023, issue of the magazine *Christian Renewal*. The article is reprinted in full for the benefit of the readers of *Reformed Pavilion*. The article was written by the editor of *Christian Renewal*, Mr. Jon Van Dyk, and it is the second time that the magazine has reported on the Reformed Protestant Churches (RPC).¹ In response to the October 14 article, the undersigned submitted two letters to Mr. Jon Van Dyk

for publication in *Christian Renewal*. The first letter is a brief thank you for taking note of the happenings in the Reformed Protestant Churches (and Remnant Reformed Church by implication). The second letter is a brief article explaining exclusive psalmody, which Mr. Van Dyk mentioned in his article. I do not know if *Christian Renewal* will run one or both or none of the letters. However, both letters are printed here for the benefit of readers of *Reformed Pavilion*.

The article in *Christian Renewal* has some barbs in it. For example, the title of the article is meant to poke fun at the Protestant Reformed Churches', the Reformed Protestant Churches', and Remnant Reformed Church's denial of common grace, while at the same time rebuking the RPC for how it has handled controversy over the last few years. Something could have been said about this, but the letters of response entirely ignore the barbs for the sake of sticking to the issues that were raised in the article. Perhaps some will read and be led to learn more about the grand matter of exclusive psalmody.

Well, enough introduction. The sofa is calling, so grab your blanket and your mug and read on.

—AL



¹ John Van Dyk, "A Division That Continues to Shake the Protestant Reformed Churches," *Christian Renewal*, February 18, 2023. See *Sword and Shield* 3, no. 14 (May 2023): 21–23, where this article was reprinted, along with a response by Rev. Andy Lanning.

Common Grace Missing in RPC Division

By JOHN VAN DYK

A handful of congregations and ministers who just a few years ago left the Protestant Reformed (PRC) denomination over purported “doctrinal strife” have fallen into yet more difficulty and division in their tiny, new denomination.

One of the Reformed Protestant Church’s (RPC) key ministers, Rev. Andrew Lanning, was suspended from his ministerial office in the spring by his own consistory. His congregation, First Reformed Protestant Church, has since split in two over the suspension and Lanning has left the RPC with a remnant. He now leads an independent congregation called the Remnant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, MI.

The reason for the action of consistory was Lanning’s entrenched position on “exclusive psalmody,” a strict understanding of the “regulative principle of worship” and his efforts to enforce that position in the fledgling RPC he was instrumental in forming.

According to articles Lanning has written, only psalm singing can be permitted in formal worship, thus eliminating, for example, the traditional and favorite doxology (*Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow*), which became a significant point of contention in the dispute. It’s a position he says he has held over the past two years.

A majority of his consistory, however, disagreed with their minister, and the resultant clash and backlash led to Lanning’s suspension, a suspension that

was upheld by a sister RPC consistory.

Lanning’s suspension and subsequent departure from the RPCs, along with a portion of his congregation, also resulted in his decision to resign from involvement in a magazine for which he served as editor in chief, called the *Sword and Shield*, the organ of the RPCs.

For Lanning, (from material gleaned from his public writing), a denominational magazine was foundational to the development of the Protestant Reformed Churches initially, back in 1924 with the formation of *The Standard Bearer* when the new denomination began, coming out of the Christian Reformed Church and led by theologian and minister Herman Hoeksema. *The Standard Bearer’s* website dubs itself “North America’s oldest continuously published subscriber-based Reformed magazine!”

With that commitment to the significance of a church publication for the sake of reformation, the prolific writer Lanning launched yet another magazine, begun on April 15, 2023, to defend his cause and make his case, this one called *Reformed Pavilion*. The magazine so far has appeared in digital form weekly, with articles and editorials primarily from his own pen, along with regularly reprinting a series of articles by the Protestant Reformed standard bearer, Herman Hoeksema, to both provide content each week, and to perhaps stake a claim to the Hoeksema heritage and its continuation.

Lanning’s last sermon at First Grand Rapids, as a minister in

the RPC, was on March 19, 2023. On March 12, 2023 he preached a sermon on “The Regulative Principle of Worship” based on 2 Samuel 6:1-11 and Colossians 2:18-23. On January 8, 2023 he preached on “The Unity of the Church” from 1 Corinthians 1:10. He is now ministering to under half of his previous RPC congregation as a two-time suspended minister.

What does all this mean for the fledgling Reformed Protestant Churches?

Other than the initial euphoria that comes after a rocky departure, the Reformed Protestant Churches have had a bumpy transition as a relatively new denomination, and it soon fell into conflict with one of its three key ministers.

Earlier, one of the three founding ministers, Rev. Martin Vander Wal, was declared “unreformed” for his views on Christian education, when he refused to say that enrolment in Christian school was mandatory, according to the confessions. Vander Wal clashed sharply with the understanding of the other two RPC leaders and at a classis meeting, which included a “Form of Subscription” examination, he was removed from his teaching position with

the seminary and was deemed to be “unreformed.” Vander Wal, the pastor of the RPC in Edmonton, Alberta and who previously served in a PRC in Wingham, Ontario, was also removed from his co-editorship position, shared with Lanning and Rev. Nathan Langerak. A brief explanation in *Sword and Shield* written by Andrew Lanning explained: “The editors have also made a change in the staff of *Sword and Shield*. Rev. Martin Vander Wal has been removed as an editor of the magazine, on the ground that his Formula of Subscription examination at the Reformed Protestant classis in January revealed that he is not Reformed according to the confessions” (from the March 2023 issue).

Sword and Shield was now down to ministers, namely Lanning and Langerak. Yet this arrangement would also not last long. With Lanning’s insistence on psalm singing only in worship, a view which led to his suspension from ministry, Lanning resigned as editor in chief in April of 2023, leaving Langerak to provide regular content. A follow up letter of resignation Lanning wrote for *Sword and Shield* was not published. So the sword he once wielded against what

he considered the enemies of truth in the PRCs was now being wielded against him.

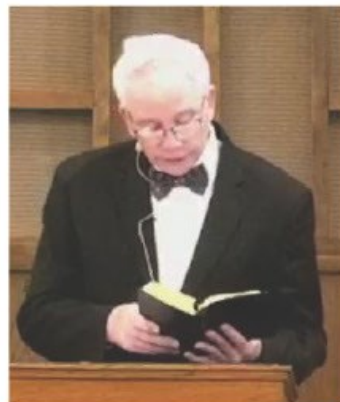
In the June 2023 issue of *Sword and Shield*, Rev. Langerak was now identified solely as the editor.

So instead of clashing theological swords solely with *The Standard Bearer* and its writers over what is true and faithful, those who left the Protestant Reformed churches for greener pastures for their flocks have now turned those swords on each other in skirmishes that are decidedly cut and thrust. Judging by the tone of the articles published and the accusations they contain, there does not appear to be much grace expended or extended in what looks to be more and more like an ongoing ecclesiastical bloodbath. ♦

Editor’s Note: *This article provides just an overview of events that have taken place over the last number of months since we last reported on developments. It would take a book to address the underlining concerns of each party in these theological disputes.*



Andy Lanning



Martin Vander Wal



Nathan Langerak

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF *CHRISTIAN RENEWAL*

This brief note is to thank editor John Van Dyk for his article “Common Grace Missing in RPC Division” in the October 14, 2023, issue of *Christian Renewal*. It would be understandable if a magazine of *Christian Renewal*’s stature would take a pass on reporting on events in the Reformed Protestant Churches (RPC). The denomination is “tiny,” as Mr. Van Dyk rightly notes, and therefore would be easy to overlook. The denomination also engaged in an “ecclesiastical bloodbath,” which doesn’t necessarily make for pleasant reading. Therefore, it is much appreciated that Mr. Van Dyk has reported knowledgeably on events in the RPC for the readers of *Christian Renewal*.

Although I didn’t agree with all of Mr. Van Dyk’s characterizations of the history in the RPC, I thought his summary was accurate as far as the facts are concerned. However, as always, there is more to the story. As the editor himself notes, “This article provides just an overview of events that have taken place over the last number of months since we last reported on developments. It would take a book to address the underlining concerns of each party in these theological disputes.” If any readers of *Christian*

Renewal would be interested in reading further about the doctrinal issues involved in the Reformed Protestant split, they can find that information in several places. The church that was newly formed out of the Reformed Protestant Churches is called Remnant Reformed Church, which maintains a website at remnantreformedchurch.org. The magazine that Mr. Van Dyk mentions is *Reformed Pavilion*, which can be found at reformedpavilion.com. The magazine *Sword and Shield* can be found at reformedbelieverspub.org.

Finally, Mr. Van Dyk mentions “Lanning’s entrenched position on ‘exclusive psalmody’” and “a strict understanding of the ‘regulative principle of worship.’” I would love to explain that “entrenched position” and “strict understanding” for the readers of the magazine, so I have submitted an article on exclusive psalmody to *Christian Renewal*. Whether or not the readers of the magazine agree with exclusive psalmody, it will at least give them an idea of what that position is.

Thanks again.
Rev. Andrew Lanning



ARTICLE ON EXCLUSIVE PSALMODY FOR *CHRISTIAN RENEWAL*

What Is Exclusive Psalmody?

Exclusive psalmody maintains that the church in her corporate, public worship must sing the psalms. Exclusive psalmody includes only the 150 psalms in worship and excludes any songs other than the psalms. Exclusive psalmody excludes all hymns of human invention, whether those hymns are doctrinally sound or not. Exclusive psalmody also excludes all canonical songs. Canonical songs are passages of scripture, such as the ten commandments, that are set to music in order to be sung as part of the public worship of the church. As the name indicates, exclusive psalmody excludes from corporate worship any song other than the psalms.

Exclusive psalmody is an application of the second commandment. The second commandment forbids the church from making images of God: “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image” (Ex. 20:4). This commandment teaches the church that she may not worship God according to her notions of God or according to her notions of what pleases God. Left to herself the church would invariably settle on what pleases her—graven images, with all their stimulation of man’s senses—and the church would pretend that what pleases her also pleases God. Rather, the church is to reject entirely her own will worship and worship God strictly according to his requirements.

Reformed and Presbyterian churches sometimes speak of the second commandment as the *regulative principle of worship*. The regulative principle of worship means that the church may only worship God as he has commanded in his word and that she must reject any worship that God has not commanded in his word. The regulative principle is taught in the Reformed confessions in Belgic Confession 7: “The whole manner of worship which God requires of us is written in [the Holy Scriptures] at large.” Also in Belgic Confession 32: “We reject all human

inventions, and all laws which man would introduce into the worship of God, thereby to bind and compel the conscience in any manner whatever.” Also in the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord’s Day 35, question and answer 96: “What doth God require in the second commandment? That we in no wise represent God by images, nor worship Him in any other way than He has commanded in His Word.”

Therefore, when the question of congregational singing comes up, the question must be decided by what God has commanded in his word. The question is not what pleases the church but what pleases God. The question is not even whether God has *forbidden* this or that song. The question is what God has *required*. Anything beyond what God has required is forbidden. Redeemed by grace, the church is delivered from her own ignorant ideas of what is pleasing to God, and she is liberated to worship God according to what God has said is pleasing to him.

When it comes to congregational singing, God has revealed very clearly in his word what he requires. God not only requires *that* the church shall sing, but he requires *what* the church shall sing. To speak foolishly, God has gone to great lengths to make it obvious to his church that he requires her to sing psalms. The psalms are a special book in scripture, composed by God as a songbook for his church. God inspired each song in the book (II Sam. 23:1–2). God inspired the placement of each song in the book (Acts 13:33). God called the songbook the “songs of Zion” (Ps. 137:3), indicating that these are the songs the church sings. God called the book “the LORD’s song” (v. 4), indicating that these are the songs the people of Jehovah sing. The songs in the book are Jesus’ songs, for he is the sweet psalmist of Israel (II Sam. 23:1). Jesus sang from this songbook while he was on earth (Matt. 26:30). Jesus sings from this songbook now in the midst of his church (Heb. 2:12).

God commands his church to sing this book: “sing psalms” (Ps. 105:2). The apostles instructed the church to sing from this songbook (James 5:13; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16—where “psalms,” “hymns,” and “songs” all refer to the titles over the 150 psalms). From all of that comes this principle: sing psalms in corporate worship.

What more could men want from God in order to know clearly God’s will for their singing? Do men want God to say it in a direct command? Here: “sing psalms” (Ps. 105:2). Do men want God to hand them a book? Here: the book of psalms. Do men want God to show by Jesus’ example and institution? Here: “in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee” (Heb. 2:12, which is a quotation of Ps. 22:22). The term *exclusive psalmody* simply expresses what God has revealed: sing psalms in corporate worship.

God has commanded his church to sing psalms in her public worship, and God has not commanded the church to sing any songs other than the psalms in her public worship. The regulative principle teaches that what is not commanded is forbidden. If other songs than the psalms are not commanded, they are forbidden in public worship. Therefore, exclusive psalmody excludes hymns from worship, including doctrinally sound hymns, not because doctrinally sound hymns are wicked in themselves but because God has not commanded the church to

worship him with hymns of human invention. Exclusive psalmody excludes canonical songs from worship not because the songs are wicked in themselves (God forbid!) but because God has not commanded the church to worship him by singing selections other than the psalms. The wickedness is not in the canonical songs or the doctrinally sound hymns. Rather, the wickedness is in man’s introducing into worship what God has not commanded.

Exclusive psalmody is often portrayed by its opponents as a narrow, negative, restrictive, legalistic, mechanical, joy-killing, conscience-binding approach to congregational singing. But exclusive psalmody is anything but! Singing exclusively psalms in church is a privilege of grace. God has united his people to himself in Jesus Christ, redeemed them from their sin and death through his Son’s blood, brought them into his presence and fellowship to worship him, and given them the very songs of their savior to sing with Christ to the glory of God. Hallelujah, praise Jehovah! And singing exclusively psalms in church is gratitude. Just as all of the believer’s obedience to God’s law is his grateful service for God’s salvation, so singing exclusively psalms according to God’s command is grateful service. There is nothing legalistic about that. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

—Rev. Andrew Lanning



Article XXX. The Fallen King and His Kingdom (continued)

In attempting to solve the problem that occupies our attention we proceed, of course, from the basis of the truth that God is going to save His entire world, that by His grace in Christ Jesus He will lead the entire kingdom He originally created on to the full manifestation of glory to which He destined it in His eternal counsel.

Salvation is not a matter of snatching a few individual souls from the universal conflagration and destruction caused by sin.

It is the restoration of all the world, the reuniting of all things in Christ Jesus as the King-servant; it is the lifting up of the entire kingdom of the world to the state of eternal glory from the which it will never be able to fall again.

This fundamental truth must first of all be emphasized, for it is this which is able to give us the true world-view, the true and scriptural “broad-mindedness.”

There is also a false broad-mindedness much advocated in our day. Characteristic of this modern broadmindedness is that it has a natural dislike for definite lines and principles. In fact, broadness of mind is to it the very antithesis of adhering to principles, and of refusing to depart from them. It would ultimately wipe out all lines of distinction. It begins by obliterating the lines of demarcation which are called denominational and emphasizes the fact that the church of Christ which is essentially one as the Body of the Lord, must also manifest that oneness in outward unity here upon the earth. The different churches must do away with their creeds and confessions; or if this is not possible, they must at least cease to emphasize their points of

difference and lay stress on that which they all have in common. Surely each church retains the right to keep its own standards, but the peculiar features of these must be forgotten, at least, they must not be impressed, in order to make room for this spirit of broadmindedness that will ultimately merge all churches into one. This would, in practical life, mean that many of the sharp edges of the truth would be worn off, and the most fundamental truths of Christianity would soon be matters of the past, still perhaps exciting the curiosity of the lover of antiquities, but no more living in the consciousness of the church. But even this is not the limit of this false broad mindedness. Not only would it obliterate the distinction between church and church, but also the lines of separation between church and the world would it wipe out. The church must no more insist upon its distinct character as the manifestation of the body of Christ in the world. It ought not to emphasize the claim that it only embraces the true humanity, and even such doctrines as the divinity of Christ and the infallibility of Scripture must not be placed in the forefront over against the world. The church must rather look for the point of contact with the world, must seek for the common ground on which all humanity stands, and ultimately realize her calling as an institution that exists for the good of humanity and the realization of the universal brotherhood of man. Thus we will arrive at a view broad enough to embrace the whole world and all men.

This so-called broad-mindedness is sweeping over the world of our time like an epidemic. It is a regular disease. Symptoms of the disease are:

1. A sort of spiritual indigestion which incapacitates us for the assimilation of the more distinct doctrines of the church in which God has given us a place. A more or less chronic lack of appetite for specific doctrine.
2. In connection with (1) there may be a strong tendency to return to the spiritual milk-bottle, a craving for light spiritual food, a delight especially in spiritual narcotics or anything that temporally quickens the emotions.
3. In the more advanced stage there is a tendency to find the sphere of our church-life too narrow and to discover all sorts of signs of narrow-mindedness among our own people. In this period there is a frequent inclination to make light of, to mock at "principles" accompanied by a general tendency to harp on "broad-mindedness."
4. In connection with all these symptoms the spiritual temperature is generally abnormal; sometimes it is decidedly below normal so that inaction and listlessness is the result, but more generally it is above normal so that a feverish emphasis on action in the world, regardless of principle, follows.

Over against this false broadmindedness, however, which is really nothing but a lack of conscious love for the truth, we must place ourselves foursquare on the basis of broadness which is in harmony with Scripture. And this basis is expressed in the statement that God will save all the world, re-unite all things in heaven and on earth under one Head, Jesus Christ.

We must be cured of the one-sidedly soteriological conception of God's work and make room for the cosmological. Our conception of salvation may not be limited to the snatching of our soul from the bondage of sin and death and its transfer to the sphere of heavenly bliss. To our soul belongs our body and to our body belongs the entire world. And it is not so, that Christ came to leave the world as such in the power of sin and the devil, in order to save a few individuals and place them outside of the sphere

of general destruction; but this is the truth, that God Almighty will show His power and the glory of His Name by leading all creation, the entire kingdom up to the height of glory He purposed for it in His counsel and that in spite of all the attempts of the devil to frustrate His plan. Not our soul, but also our body is to be saved. Not only our individual existence, but that individual existence in connection with the Body of Christ, the New Humanity if you please, is to be perfected and consecrated unto God. The organism of humanity is surely to be saved. Humanity is not like a flowerbed from which Christ gathers a few select flowers for a bouquet in heaven, while the bed as such is doomed to destruction, but much rather like such a bed in which the seeds are first sown at random in order later to weed the superfluous plants that the beauty of the original design may show forth. It is not like a tree from which a few branches are cut off in order to be kept alive miraculously, while the organism of the tree is left to die; but rather like such a tree from which the superfluous branches are removed in order that the tree may ultimately stand in the full beauty of its symmetry. And what is true of humanity is true of the world in its widest sense. God cannot let go the work of His hands. The devil cannot be allowed to spoil God's creation, nor even to mar it to any extent. It will not be said in eternity, that although satan did not succeed to destroy all the works of God yet he was successful in spoiling part of it, perhaps disturbing its harmony. What will be manifest in eternity is that even the devil and sin have served as instruments in the hands of the Almighty to enhance the glory of His Name, to realize His counsel, to bring to manifestation the beauty of His Kingdom. And, therefore, all the world, every integral part of the Kingdom will be saved and led on to eternal glory. Christ Jesus is a complete Saviour.

Only in the light of that truth can you understand such passages as Col. 1:16-20: "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created by

him and for him. And he is before all things and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it has pleased the Father that in him should all the fullness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven.” The work of the reconciliation has cosmological significance. It embraces all things. Then also can you understand that sublime passage in Rom. 8:19–22: “For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same, in hope that the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.” Not only the children of God, but all creation expects the grand realization of the ultimate kingdom and shall participate in its glory. Then once more we can comprehend the words of Paul in I Cor. 15:22–28: “For as in Adam all die even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order; Christ the firstfruits, afterwards they that are Christ’s at

his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all things under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, All things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted that did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.”

This first of all. God, in his eternal counsel gave all things to Christ Jesus, in order that he might bring the kingdom of the world to complete subjection under Him and then subject Himself with His kingdom to God, that God may be all in all.

And when, in the first Adam, that world fell in the power of sin, it sank down upon the Christ, who was destined to become the king of creation.

It was nothing but the power of this grace in Christ Jesus, the power of “special grace” if you please, that kept the world from utter ruin from the beginning.

About this next time.

—Holland, Mich.

