

THE STANDARD *Bearer* A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XVIII.

AUGUST 1, 1942

NUMBER 20

MEDITATION

His Workmanship

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.
Eph. 2:10.

Lest any man should boast!

God alone is God. And as such He must be acknowledged by every creature.

Of Him, and through Him, and unto Him are all things. Never is anything of us and through us. Nor is anything partly of us and through us. Hence, His alone is the glory for ever and ever. And this glory must be attributed to Him. He will give it to no other.

And therefore, salvation is of the Lord.

It is by grace, from beginning to end by grace only; not of works, lest any man should boast!

To boast, to claim part of the glory that belongs to God only, and, therefore, to claim all the glory that is His alone, is the tendency of sin, the inclination of the sinful heart. "Ye shall be as God" is the slogan that expresses the deepest motive of the natural man. He refuses to glorify God as God, and to be thankful.

And so he is always inclined to deprive God of His glory, to say that salvation is of works, of his own works. It is hard for him to confess that sovereign grace alone is the source and ground and power of salvation. Somehow he always attempts to introduce his work into the work of God, to share in the glory of the divine work that delivers him from guilt and clothes him with an eternal righteousness, that cleanses him from the pollution of sin and sanctifies him unto the service of the living God, that lifts him out of the depth of the misery of death and hell into the glory of eternal life and heavenly bliss.

In various ways he seeks to escape the consequences

of salvation by grace and to maintain that he is saved by works. Sometimes he attempts to work out his own righteousness, and to make this righteousness of works the basis of his salvation. Sometimes he apparently is willing to confess that he is saved by grace, but he contends that it is works that make him worthy of this grace. But in the measure that he introduces his own works into the wonder of salvation he deprives the God of salvation of His glory.

He boasts!

Yet, no man may boast in the presence of the Most High!

His alone is all the glory. He alone calleth the things that are not as if they were; and He alone quickeneth the dead. He alone is Lord, the Creator and the Redeemer; Jehovah of hosts is His name!

Therefore, all works as a cause, a ground, a reason, a means of salvation, or as contributing anything whatsoever to this divine wonder, must be excluded.

By grace are ye saved!

Not of works, lest any man should boast!

He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord!

Created unto good works!

This must have all the emphasis.

It is not of works, or *by* works, or *because of* works, that we are saved, but *unto* works, and that, too, unto good works! Our works are never first but always last; they are never the cause but always the result. God is first, and our work can never begin except where God's work is finished. We work out our own salvation, yes, but only because God is working within us to do and to will of His own good pleasure.

Created unto good works!

So it was in the beginning: man was created unto, with a view to, with his purpose in the performance of good works.

He was made a *working* being. By this he was adapted to reflect the likeness of his Creator, to bear the image of his God. He was so created that, even as God works, so he might also work. In this he was distinguished from, stood exalted above all the rest

of the earthly creation. All the works of God's hand function, operate, move, each in its own place and with its own purpose: the sun, moon, and stars move in their orbs, and fill the universe with their light and energy and glory; the clouds gather and empty themselves upon the thirsty land; the lightning flashes and the thunder roars, the tempest rages and mighty waves of the ocean rise mountain high, rivers flow and brooks murmur; the beasts of the field rejoice and the birds of the air sing their songs of gladness and cheer; the earth yields its increase and the trees bear their fruit,—all things move and operate and function in their place and according to their purpose. . . .

But man *works*!

He was made a rational living soul, a being capable of reflecting the very virtues of God, with mind and will and heart. Consciously and willingly he performs his deeds: he labors and toils and exercises dominion over all the rest of the earthly creation, subjecting them unto himself and employing them as his servants; he beholds all the works of God in the light of his rational eye, he ponders them and interprets them and reads the Word of God in them; he loves and hates, he rejoices and grieves, he sings and prays, as a rational and moral being, related to all the world and to God. . .

He *works*!

A working being he was created in the beginning. And he was so made that he was capable of performing *good* works.

And good works are those, and those only that serve their proper purpose, God's purpose: the glory of His name. For that glory man had to work. From a heart moved by the love of God he was to reach out for that glory of His Creator, to behold it with his eye, to perceive it with his ear, to know with his mind, to desire it with his will, to speak of it with his mouth, to work for it with his hands, to devote himself unto that sole purpose, and to consecrate all things unto it, and thus to declare the praises of the Most High before all creation and before His face,—such was man's purpose, the purpose of his creation. And only those works that are performed with that purpose in view are *good*. . .

But man fell.

And he became evil, dead through trespasses and sins, darkened in his understanding, perverse of will and heart, impure in all his desires and longings and aspirations. An enemy of God he became, motivated by hatred against the Lord of heaven and earth, incapable of doing aught that is pleasing to God, seeking to destroy the glory of God and to exalt himself as the god of the universe.

His nature is corrupt, wholly in the power of sin and death.

And his works are evil!

For still he works. Work he must inevitably. Work he does with all his soul and mind and power.

But the works he performs are evil, always evil, ever coming short of the glory of God!

But God!

God, Who is rich in mercy, according to the great love wherewith He loved us, freely, divinely, sovereignly. . . .

God, Who calleth the things that are not as if they were, and Who quickeneth the dead. . . .

God, Who creates, always creates; Who creates when He calls out of nothing, and Who creates when He calls out of death. . . .

He created us, His people, His Church, once again!

For we are His workmanship, created. . . .

Unto good works!

Adorable wisdom of God!

For His workmanship we are, created unto good works *which He before ordained*!

The very works of the Church as a whole and of believers severally are ordained for them, predestinated in infinite wisdom from before the foundation of the world!

But of course!

Does not even man ordain beforehand the work which a certain mechanism which he constructs is to perform for him? And does he not adapt each part of the mechanism to the function of the whole?

Does not a great composer, creating a grand oratorio, ordain beforehand the parts which the various voices of a mighty choir are to sing, in order that the beautiful harmony may be attained which he had in mind?

And would not God, then, Who is infinite in wisdom and might, when He chose unto Himself a Church that would be to the praise of the glory of His grace in the Beloved, and that would forever declare His glorious virtues, ordain the good works that Church would have to perform before His face and before all the world? Would He not ordain in minutest detail each part of the grand oratorio that is to sing His praises, and assign to each voice its own place in the mighty chorus that will forever cause the new creation to rebound with glad hallelujah's? If the Church is to reflect the fulness of His own glory in Christ, must He, then, not ordain just how the whole and just how each member is to serve that purpose?

But of course!

We are created unto good works, yes, but lest any man should boast at all, even these works are not of our creation, of our conception, of our determination, but of His own ordination and predestination. We do not invent them, but He ordained them. We do not bring them to Him, but He brings them to us! He does not become obliged to us when we perform them,

but we owe Him our everlasting gratitude for the part we may perform!

He ordained it all!

All the good works the Church may perform in this world, as it is redeemed from sin and guilt by the blood of Christ, as it is raised from death to life and called from darkness into His marvellous light, as it becomes His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, are ordained by Him. All the praises they sing, all the prayers they utter, all the glories of God they confess, all the suffering and death they endure, all their patience and tribulations, all their expressions of faith and trust and love of God in this present world, they are all ordained of God from before the foundation of the world. There is a fulness of good works the Church must perform even in this present time, and in this present evil world, a fulness of testimony which it must bear, a fulness of suffering it must endure, according to God's eternal counsel. And so the part each individual believer is to perform in the realization of this fulness of good works is ordained by infinite wisdom.

Which He before ordained!

Yes, and the good works which presently the Church in glory is to perform in the new heavens and the new earth unto the everlasting ages that will be necessary to perform them, even these are before ordained by the allwise artificer and builder of the New Jerusalem!

He designed it all!

He chose His Church and predestinated her to be conformed according to the image of His Son.

And He ordained before the good works by means of which that Church should shew forth the praises of her God!

O, depth of wisdom!

His workmanship!

Created in Christ Jesus!

For He not only predestinated His Church and ordained her good works, but He also forms His people and enables them for the good works He ordained for them.

In the good works He ordained they must *walk*.

For He did not ordain a mechanism, that would function according to His design and purpose, but a Church of living believers, a living organism of rational and moral beings, that would willingly perform the good works He ordained for them, and sing His praises and show forth the glory of His infinite virtues from the love of their heart.

That it is *to walk* in good works.

To be busy in the works God prepared for His

people, ordained for them from eternity, each in his own place, willingly, consciously, motivated by the love of God in the heart, and with the avowed purpose to glorify the God of our salvation,—that it is to walk in good works.

And unto this end He created us in Christ Jesus!

It is evident that this term "created" does not refer to our original creation in the beginning. For originally we were not created in Christ Jesus, but in the first man Adam. And the apostle is not speaking of the human race, but of the Church, saved by grace. Nor is this term "created" to be considered as a hyperbole, exaggerating what actually is accomplished when God forms His people unto the good works He ordained for them. Rather is this work of God to be considered a creation that is more wonderful still, a more marvellous revelation of His divine power than that whereby He called into existence the first world. For then He called the things that were not as if they were; but in the work of salvation He calls life out of death, light out of darkness, righteousness out of corruption, heavenly glory out of the depth of hell; and those that are only capable of bringing forth fruit unto death He forms into willing agents of the good works He ordained for them!

Yes, His workmanship we are, created, re-created out of death into life!

Created in Christ Jesus!

Christ He ordained to be the Firstborn of every creature, and the First-begotten of the dead, the Head of the Church. And in Christ He chose us, making us one with Him forever. One we are with Christ, by His eternal election, both juridically and organically. And in Christ, and in Him only, He gives us all the blessings of salvation and makes us a new creation, fit unto all the good works He ordained for us.

In Christ He gives us the right to become new creatures, for by our sin we had forfeited the right of the unspeakable blessing to walk in His good works. But through the blood of Christ He cleanses us from the guilt of sin and clothes us with an eternal righteousness.

In Christ He makes us partakers of all the wonders of His grace, and makes us new creatures. Out of Christ He gives us new life, the eternal life of His resurrection; in Christ He calls us out of darkness into his marvellous light; in Christ He gives us the living faith, so that we may be rooted in Him and draw our all from Him; in Christ He justifies and sanctifies us and makes us willing to walk in His good works.

And presently He will give us the eternal glory of His heavenly covenant in Christ.

His workmanship! Created in Christ Jesus!

Glorious work of God!

H. H.

The Standard Bearer

Semi-Monthly, except Monthly in July and August

Published by

The Reformed Free Publishing Association
1101 Hazen Street, S. E.

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Communications relative to subscription should be addressed to MR. R. SCHAAFSMA, 1101 Hazen St., S. E., Grand Rapids, Mich. All Announcements and Obituaries must be sent to the above address and will not be placed unless the regular fee of \$1.00 accompanies the notice.

Subscription \$2.50 per year

Entered as second class mail at Grand Rapids, Michigan

EDITORIALS

Als In De Dagen Van Noach

Wie in deze dagen een eenigszins lange reis maakt door ons land per trein, en dus genoodzaakt is een paar dagen te verkeerren in het gezelschap der wereld (want, ofschoon het natuurlijk niet met noodzakelijkheid volgt uit het feit, dat ge in een trein zit, dat ge daar hoofdzakelijk het gezelschap der "wereld" aantreft, toch is dit *de facto* het geval),—wie alzoo een reis maakt door ons land, wordt getroffen door het feit, dat de tegenwoordige oorlog oogenschijnlijk nog geen diepen indruk maakt op het leven en den geest van ons Amerikaansch volk in het algemeen. Alles, 't is waar, herinnert u wel aan den oorlog, en geen oogenblik kunt ge het vergeten, dat ook wij in den vreeselijken oorlog zijn gewikkeld. De treinen zijn stampvol, en dagen voordat ge op reis gaat, moet ge reservaties maken, wilt ge een plaats hebben. Een aanzienlijk gedeelte van dit reizend publiek bestaat uit soldaten en matrozen, die óf overgeplaatst worden naar een ander kamp, óf met verlof uit zijn. Anderen reizen, omdat ze man en vader, broeder of zoon in het leger hebben, dien ze willen bezoeken. En nog anderen zijn op vakantie en maken een plezier-reis. Die stampvolle treinen herinneren u aan den oorlog. Enkele jaren geleden waren de passagierstreinen zoo goed als leeg. Wie reisde, ging meestal per auto. Thans reist men nog, doch dan per trein. Men moet zijn car, en vooral zijn wielbanden sparen! De stations zijn vol menschen, en overal ziet men soldaten. En bovendien, ook op de trein leest men de bladen en hoort men de radio, en altijd weer is de oorlog de hoofdschotel. Maar, ofschoon alles onophoudelijk aan den oorlog herinnert, aan de houding van het publiek zou men het niet kunnen merken, dat we als volk in een wereld-catastrophe zijn gewikkeld, en door een oordeel Gods worden getroffen. Men spreekt over den oorlog bijna niet. Een oorlogsgeest, zooals die tot uiting kwam in den eersten wereldoorlog, openbaart men niet. Dat men onder den indruk verkeert van het vreeselijke van den huidige oorlog, laat zich niet merken. Het tegendeel is eerder waar. Men openbaart een geest van lichtzinnigheid. Men eet en drinkt, men lacht en zingt, men leeft in dronkenschap en brasserij, men speelt kaart en zoekt allerlei zingenot. En als men dit alles in verband brengt met de werkelijkheid van den tegenwoordigen toestand der wereld, dan moet men wel tot de slotsom komen, dat velen leven uit het beginsel uitgedrukt in het motto: "Laat ons eten en drinken, want morgen sterven wij." Ze doen

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denken aan het woord des Heilands aangaande het laatst der dagen, dat het zal zijn als in de dagen van Noach en als in de dagen van Sodom en Gomorrha. Men eet en drinkt, men trouwt en geeft ten huwelijk en wordt ten huwelijk uitgegeven, totdat het einde komt! Laat ons nuchteren zijn en wandelen als kinderen des daags!

H. H.

Vrijheid Van Gebrek?

We hooren dezer dagen nog al eens gewagen van de "vier vrijheden", voor de handhaving waarvan we gezegd worden in den tegenwoordigen wereldoorlog gewikkeld te zijn. Zooals we in den eersten wereldoorlog tot motto hadden, om de wereld veilig te maken voor de democratie, zoo hebben we ons thans tot doel gesteld, tegenover het Nazisme en Fascisme, om alle volken te doen deelen in de "vier vrijheden", de vrijheid van godsdienst, de vrijheid van het woord, vrijheid van vrees, en vrijheid van gebrek. Dat er aan deze vier vrijheden geen waar beginsel van vrijheid ten grondslag ligt, dat het veeleer het vrijheidsbegrip der Fransche Revolutie is, dat men huldigt, gaan we thans maar stilzwijgend voorbij, ofschoon het o.i. tot de taak der Kerk behoort om luide te verkondigen, dat er in deze gewaande vrijheid van den Mensch, van den zondigen mensch, geen heil te verwachten is. We willen thans de aandacht vestigen op het feit, dat, terwijl we strijden voor deze vrijheden, het beginsel van "vrijheid van gebrek" in verband met vrijheid van godsdienst in ons land met voeten wordt getreden. Vrijheid van gebrek wil zeker zeggen, dat ieder het recht zal hebben, zoowel als de gelegenheid, om zich een maatschappelijke positie te kunnen verwerven, waarin hij in de behoeften van zichzelf en de zijnen ruimschoots zal kunnen voorzien. Door niemand zal hij daarin worden belemmerd. En dit houdt natuurlijkerwijze in, dat niemand het recht zal hebben, om hem te verhinderen, om het hem onmogelijk te maken, om werk te vinden en zijn plaats in de maatschappij in te nemen, zoolang hij zulk werk en zulke positie in den gewettigden weg zoekt en inneemt. En deze vrijheid van gebrek zal de zijne zijn, wat ook zijne godsdienstige overtuiging zijn moge. Want immers, ook voor godsdienstvrijheid strijden we in dezen oorlog. En vrijheid van godsdienst wil zeker niet slechts zeggen, dat we ongehinderd op den rustdag als gemeente des Heeren mogen samenkomen, om God te dienen naar Zijn Woord en naar de inspraak van ons hart, maar ook, dat we onze godsdienstige

overtuiging mogen openbaren en in praktijk brengen in ons dagelijksch leven, in staat en maatschappij, zonder daarin belemmerd te worden, hetzij dan door de macht van het zwaard of door den dwang van menschen. Intusschen nemen de unions echter steeds toe in macht, en worden ze in haar machtsuitoefening gesteund door onze regeering. Het is niet langer een zaak van vrije keuze of men zich bij de wereldsche en antichristelijke unions zal aansluiten ja dan neen; althans niet in den zin, dat men in die vrije keuze door de macht dezer unions niet wordt belemmerd. De "closed shop", de werkplaats, waarin men niet het recht heeft te werken, tenzij men lid is van een union, wordt hoe langer zoo meer algemeen. En deze "closed shop" staat niet op den basis der vrijheid, maar op dien van dwang der menschen. Dit wil echter zeggen, dat de getrouwe Christen-belijder in ons land feitelijk geen vrijheid van godsdienst meer heeft, en dat deze vrijheid hem hoe langer zoo meer zal worden ontnomen. Er kan toch zeker geen twijfel aan bestaan of de wereldsche union is revolutionair en antichristelijk. Wie daaraan mocht twijfelen herinnere zich slechts, wat in Michigan plaats greep ten tijde van de beruchte "sit-down strikes." Een Christen kan zich niet aansluiten bij de unions, zonder zijn beginsel te verloochenen, en zijn conscientie geweld aan te doen. Dit is wel duidelijk uit de argumenten, die zij aanvoeren, die trachten om hun lid worden van de union in overeenstemming te brengen met hun Christelijk beginsel. Ze verdedigen de union niet, maar rede-neeren uit het beginsel, dat nood wetten breekt, en dat ze toch moeten eten om te leven. En hieruit wordt dan voorts reeds duidelijk, dat thans reeds in ons land "vrijheid van gebrek" niet meer gepaard gaat met "vrijheid van godsdienst." Het moge waar zijn, dat we nog de vrijheid hebben, om op Zondag den Heere te dienen in Zijn huis naar de inspraak van ons hart, en dat niemand ons het recht kan ontzeggen, om den Naam des Heeren ook in het publiek te belijden, de vrijheid om onze godsdienstige overtuiging uit te leven op alle terrein des levens, ook in de maatschappij, is den Christen feitelijk reeds ontnomen. Hij behoeft zich natuurlijk niet bij de unions aan te sluiten. Is hij getrouw, dan zal hij dit ook volstandig weigeren. Maar doet hij dit, dan zal hij in vele werkplaatsen geen positie meer kunnen vinden. En ofschoon hij thans nog wel een andere plaats zal kunnen vinden dan in de "closed shop", wordt het streven der union niet door de regeering verhinderd, dan zal de plaats van den getrouwen belijder steeds enger worden, en zal de tijd komen, waarin hij zijn godsdienstige vrijheid niet meer zal kunnen handhaven, zonder gebrek te lijden. In beginsel wordt in ons land dus de "vrijheid van gebrek" in verband met "vrijheid van godsdienst" met voeten getreden. En zoo is de tijd in 't zicht, ons door de Heilige Schrift voorzeggd, waarin niemand

zal kunnen koopen of verkoopen, tenzij hij het teeken van het beest draagt. Wie echter dit laatste aanvaardt, en zich het teeken van het beest op zijn voorhoofd laat drukken, moet wel verstaan, dat hij daarmee de waarachtige vrijheid, die alleen in Christus is, heeft prijs gegeven.

H. H.

den drukker, maar aan mij. En eindelijk rekene men met zijn eigen plaatsruimte. Een paar regels minder dan de opgegeven ruimte is beter dan een halve bladzijde te veel, zooals ieder gemakkelijk zal kunnen verstaan. En voorts gevoele een ieder zijn verantwoordelijkheid, om de hem opgedragen taak zoo getrouw mogelijk te verrichten. Dan zal ook een volgend jaar door Gods genade ons blad ten zegen kunnen zijn voor velen.

H. H.

Ons Blad

Ten tijde onzer laatst gehouden Synode werd er ook een vergadering gehouden van de redactie en medewerkers van onze Standard Bearer, om de belangen van ons blad te bespreken, en met name, om regelingen te maken voor een nieuwen jaargang. Zij, die tegenwoordig waren, spraken het als hunne opinie uit, dat de nieuwe regeling, die een jaar geleden gemaakt werd, metterdaad in vele opzichten een verbetering was, reden waarom er dan ook besloten werd, om naar dezelfde methode voort te werken. Ondergeteekende had liever gezien, dat voor een volgend jaar iemand anders zijn taak als "dictator-redakteur" had overgenomen. Doch de vergadering was van oordeel, dat hij die plaats moest blijven innemen. En aan het oordeel der vergadering onderwierp hij zich, zoodat hij althans voor het volgend jaar, zoo de Heere wil, de Standard Bearer weer zal redigeeren. De vergadering besloot om ook Ds. John Heys te verzoeken voor ons blad te schrijven. ZEW. neme hiervan notitie, en beschouwe dit als de officieele kennisgeving van zijne benoeming tot medewerker aan ons blad. Op enkele punten wil ik nog nadruk leggen in verband met de redigeering van de Standard Bearer, vooral ten behoeve van hen, die op onze vergadering niet tegenwoordig konden zijn. Allereerst zou ik gaarne van al de schrijvers aan ons blad verbonden suggesties willen hebben in verband met de te behandelen onderwerpen. Een rooster van onderwerpen zal, zoo de Heere wil, weer verschijnen in het volgend nommer van ons blad. Misschien zijn er, die voor sommige onderwerpen een zekere voorliefde hebben. Gaarne hoor ik van hen. Ik kan natuurlijk niet beloven, dat de behandeling van zulke onderwerpen ook metterdaad aan hen, die ze opgegeven, zal worden opgedragen, daar ik moet rekenen met het geheel van ons blad voor een jaargang; maar wel zal ik ze in ernstige overweging nemen. In de tweede plaats is het niet overbodig om nog eens te herinneren, dat de copie voor elk artikel in mijn bezit moet zijn elken vijftien en twintigsten der maand. Vooral niet later. Men verzende zijn copie niet aan

The Triple Knowledge

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

Part Two.

OF MAN'S REDEMPTION

Chapter I.

LORD'S DAY V.

Q. 12. Since then, by the righteous judgment of God, we deserve temporal and eternal punishment, is there no way by which we may escape that punishment, and be again received into favor?

A. God will have His justice satisfied: and therefore we must make this full satisfaction either by ourselves, or by another.

Q. 13. Can we of ourselves then make this satisfaction?

A. By no means; but on the contrary we daily increase our debt.

Q. 14. Can there be found anywhere, one, who is a mere creature, able to satisfy for us?

A. None; for, first, God will not punish any other creature for the sin which man hath committed; and further, no mere creature can sustain the burden of God's eternal wrath against sin, so as to deliver others from it.

Q. 15. What sort of a mediator and deliverer then must we seek for?

A. For one who is very man, and perfectly righteous; and yet more powerful than all creatures; that is, one who is also very God.

1.

The Necessity of Satisfaction.

This fifth Lord's Day introduces the second part of our Heidelberg Catechism. We recall here that the Catechism, according to its subjective, experimental viewpoint of the truth, divides its subject-material into three main parts: the first treating of sin and misery, the second of redemption and deliverance, the third of Christian gratitude. This second part extends through the eighty fifth question and answer, and is, therefore, by far the largest of the three divisions of our instructor. It treats of many subjects. After a few introductory questions and answers, setting forth the necessity of a divine-human mediator for the deliverance of the sinner, it follows the line of the so called Apostolic Confession in the discussion of the contents of the Christian faith, which is concluded by a chapter on the justification by faith in Lord's Day 23 followed by a Lord's Day on good works in relation to that justification; and to this is appended a rather elaborate discussion of the means of grace, especially of the sacraments, while the whole is closed by the treatment of the subject of Christian discipline, or the "keys of the kingdom of heaven."

The first main part of the Catechism had left the natural man in an absolutely hopeless state and condition. He is guilty and worthy of damnation. By nature he stands opposed to the law of God, for he is prone to hate God and the neighbor, while the demand of the law is love. He is wholly incapable of doing any good, and inclined to all evil, member of a corrupt race in which he is conceived and born in sin. From the moment of his birth every man lies under guilt and condemnation, and is dead through sin. And there is no way out. In his sinful state he cannot hopefully look to God. God is the terror of the sinner. The living God is unchangeable. He is God—not man. The sinner may seek consolation in his own conception of God, but in this attempt there is no salvation: he cannot change God. He is a Rock in all His virtues. He cannot deny Himself. Upon the rock that is God the sinner and all his vain hopes must needs suffer shipwreck. Unalterably God demands that man shall love Him with all his heart and mind and soul and strength. And this demand is not changed or retracted because the sinner is incapable of meeting the requirements of the law: God once endowed him with all the gifts necessary to keep God's commandments, but man squandered these gifts by his wilful disobedience. And God punishes sin in His just wrath, temporally and eternally, in body and soul. Nor is it effective

to appeal to the mercy of God in opposition to His righteousness and justice, for God is one in all His attributes, and even His mercy is forever a righteous mercy. It is exactly because God is as He is that there is no hope for the sinner in his guilty state and corrupt condition. His plight is absolutely desperate.

Such is, in brief, the truth concerning sinful man as expounded in the first part of the Heidelberg Catechism.

And now the second part, which treats of the redemption of man, is introduced. The question still is: Is there no way out? Granted that man's condition is as was described in the first part of the Catechism, and that "by the righteous judgment of God we deserve temporal and eternal punishment," is there no hope even then? How can we escape this punishment and be again received into favor? This question may seem to center around man. It does not appear to be theological in scope or viewpoint. It is concerned with man, or rather, in it man is concerned with himself. It might be objected, as some have done, that the Catechism does not assume a high standpoint. A more exalted and sounder standpoint would have been concerned with the question of the glory of God, rather than with the sinner's desire to escape punishment. However, let us not overlook the fact, first of all, that no matter how strictly theocentric may be the standpoint we assume, the salvation of man remains a very important subject, the fear of death and hell is very real, and the Catechism certainly takes its standpoint foursquare on the basis of this reality, when it asks the question: how can we escape this punishment? We must be careful lest we pretend to be able to assume the attitude that we are wholly indifferent what becomes of us, whether we go to heaven or to hell, if God only is glorified. Secondly, we cannot separate the glory of God from our salvation. The two are inseparably connected. Even though the question of the Heidelberg here is concerned immediately with a possible escape from temporal and eternal punishment, it does not follow that it is not concerned with the glory of God. Certainly the escape from this punishment is only the negative side of that state in which we will be able to enjoy God's fellowship and to glorify Him forever. And, thirdly, the Catechism itself reveals that its view of the matter is quite sound by the addition: "and again be received into favor." By the escape from punishment it does not refer to a mere escape from temporal suffering and eternal hell, but to deliverance from the wrath of God and from the state of being forsaken of Him. And, therefore, the positive content of the question is: how can we be restored to the favor of God? And the search and longing after God that is implied in this question is certainly theocentric. It is the yearning that is expressed in the well-known words of Ps. 42:1, 2: "As

the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?"

The answer of the catechism to this twelfth question may seem rather disappointing. It is really evasive. Instead of giving a direct reply to the question the Catechism answers: "God wills that his justice be satisfied; therefore we must make full satisfaction!" And many a modern preacher would probably grow somewhat impatient with the Heidelberg Catechism, and complain that it makes no progress at all. Especially if he would have to preach to his congregation on the basis of one Lord's Day at a time, as is the custom in Reformed Churches, the "evangelistically inclined" preacher of today, anxious to "bring souls to Christ", might conclude that the Catechism is altogether too slow in its progress of developing the truth, that by this time we have heard enough about the hopelessness of the sinner's condition and the unchangeable justice of God, and that it is high time a full and direct answer were given to the question: is there no way of escape? But one who would so reason would make a serious error. Before the question as to a possible way of escape may be answered, it must become quite clear that as far as man's efforts are concerned to open such a way the matter is quite hopeless. And this truth the Catechism demonstrates and emphasizes by stressing at this point the *necessity of satisfaction*. God will have His justice satisfied! Somehow we must make satisfaction, full satisfaction of the justice of God. Yes, but this means that we can never escape the punishment of sin, for to make satisfaction implies that the punishment be endured to the end. And again, this also implies that on the sinner's side the way is closed forever. He cannot make this full satisfaction. We cannot even see a possible way of escape. If salvation is to come to us, it must come from above, and it must come in the way of a wonder of grace. The way of escape, if there be any, belongs to those things which eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard, and that have never arisen in the heart of man. It must be opened by Him Who quickeneth the dead, and Who calleth the things that are not as if they were. Salvation does not lie within the scope of humanly conceivable possibilities. And this we must learn to acknowledge, not only as a matter of doctrine, but in true, heartfelt humiliation. We must indeed become nothing; Christ, the revelation of the wonder of God's grace, must become all. We must come to the hearty confession that with us the way of escape is impossible, and that all our works and efforts, all our wisdom and philosophy, even all our piety and religiousness, mean absolutely nothing and are of no value whatever as far as obtaining again the favor of God is concerned. All boasting must be excluded.

No flesh must glory in the presence of God. We must cast ourselves unconditionally upon Him Who alone doeth wondrous things. But then we must not speak too lightly of a way of escape. And, surely, we must not speak too superficially of "saving souls." To save a soul is an amazing wonder, higher than the highest heavens, deeper than the abyss. For God will have His justice satisfied, and we must make this full satisfaction before we can ever be restored to the favor of God!

Satisfaction is a term that expresses one of the main themes of Holy Scripture. The word denotes the same idea as the Dutch "voldoening", or, better still, "genoegdoening". It means "to do enough", "to make sufficient", to comply with a certain demand, particularly with respect to a debt accumulated or an offense committed. And the truth that God will have His justice satisfied is a theme that runs all through the Word of God from beginning to end. All through history God instructed His people in the truth of the necessity of satisfaction. As soon as they had fallen into sin He taught them that they could be restored into His favor only in the way of satisfaction, for it was He that made for them "coats of skins" presupposing sacrifice and the shedding of blood, instead of the aprons of fig leaves with which they themselves had attempted to cover their nakedness before God and before one another. He it was that taught Abel to bring a sacrifice "of the firstlings of the flock and of the fat thereof", Gen. 4:4, and thus to bring a better sacrifice than Cain, "by which he obtained witness that he was righteous," Heb. 11:4. He plainly taught His people, by means of all the shadows and of the service of the tabernacle and of the temple, that there was no way into His favor, no approach into His presence as He dwelt in the Holiest of all, except by means of perfect satisfaction for sin. And in the New Testament it is the same truth that is emphasized throughout its teaching. Christ gives His life as a ransom for many. He is the propitiation for sin. And as "almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission", so Christ, "once in the end of the world hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Heb. 9:22, 26. Surely, that God will have His justice satisfied, and that there is no other way to be received again into His favor, is one of the fundamental truths of the Bible.

What is this satisfaction of God's justice? In general, satisfaction implies that a person has certain obligations with respect to another, that he has failed to fulfill these obligations, that he is in arrears, that he owes a debt, and that now he makes a full payment of that debt, and so restores the proper relationship between himself and him to whom he was obligated. Applied to our relation to God, this means that we have

an unchangeable obligation to love Him. The obligation is a moral, ethical one. It never changes, for God does not change. Always He says to us: "Love Me with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength." Never may we do anything that is not motivated by the love of God. If we love Him we are the objects of His favor. The moment we fail in the payment of this love-debt, we are no longer in His favor, but become the objects of His just wrath. This cannot be emphasized too strongly and repeated too often. Nothing can take the place of this love of God to make us the objects of His favor. Nothing else than this love of God with all our being is righteousness. All our imaginary piety, our Phariseism, our work-righteousness, our willingness "to do something for God", our humanitarianism, is of no avail to take the place of this one obligation to love God. To love God with our whole heart, to love Him in all that we do, in the very thought of our mind, in every desire of our soul, with every word we speak, in every deed we perform, with every step we take on life's pathway, in every relationship of life,—that is our sacred and unchangeable obligation before God. And nothing else can possibly take its place.

In that obligation we have failed and do fail continuously. Hence we are in arrears, we are in debt with God! And let us not be deceived by this word *debt* so that, perhaps, we think of our relation to God in terms of a financial obligation. A man may owe a debt of money and think little of it. He is going to pay it sometime, at his convenience! And as long as his creditor does not trouble him too much, there is little for him to worry about. But with our relation to God this is quite different. We owe a love-debt. And our creditor is not someone who lives far away from us, and occasionally knocks at our door to demand payment, but he is the living God, the Lord of heaven and earth, in Whom we live and move and have our being! He is the Lord of life and of death. In His favor there is light and life and joy; in His displeasure there is darkness and death and everlasting desolation. And He is not far from us. He surrounds us. He encompasses our whole being. And the moment we fail to love Him, that moment He is terribly displeased, filled with holy and just wrath against us. He makes us feel His just wrath. He punishes us with death. He makes us unspeakably miserable. He does this, not in some future state only, but now, at once, the moment we are in debt and fail to love Him. His hand is heavy upon us, and by His wrath we pine and die. But let us not forget, that even so, even while He pursues us and encompasses us in His wrath, and inflicts the punishment of death upon us, He still demands: "love Me!" It is quite essential to understand this clearly, in order that we may comprehend somewhat the terrible reality of satisfaction. Our obliga-

tion is to love God Who is GOD! We must love Him as He is, because He is good! He is good when we love Him and He causes us to taste His blessed favor. But He is good, too, when we fail to love Him and He causes us to taste His goodness by inflicting upon us the punishment of death, by making us unspeakably miserable! Hence, we must still love Him, even while He lays His heavy hand upon us! To love God was our obligation in Paradise, where man was surrounded by the favor of God. To love God remained his obligation when God executed the death sentence upon him, and he was driven out of paradise and from the fellowship of God. To love God is man's obligation even in the eternal desolation of hell. Even there God says to man: "Love Me as I reveal Myself to thee here in my righteousness and justice through the agonies which I cause thee to suffer in outer darkness!" The love-demand never ceases, never changes. The love-debt remains forever!

To understand the implication of satisfaction for sin we must bear in mind this unchangeableness of our love-debt to God. Not the mere bearing of the punishment for sin, even in hell, is satisfaction. Surely, the damned in hell fully suffer the punishment for sin in eternal death and desolation. Yet they never atone, they never make satisfaction for sin; their suffering never becomes a sacrifice that blots out sin and restores them to the favor of God. When capital punishment is inflicted upon a murderer, we may often read in our daily papers that the murderer atoned for his crime. But this is not correct. Justice satisfied itself by inflicting the punishment of death on the murderer, but the murderer did not atone for his crime. He did not offer his life. He did not willingly seek the punishment that he might atone. He probably sought the help of an attorney in order to escape the electric chair. But his life was taken away from him by force, against his will. His death is no satisfaction. So God will surely punish sin even with eternal desolation, and glorify Himself in the damnation of the wicked. But the suffering of hell is no satisfaction, for even there God's demand remains unchanged: "Love Me!" And this demand they cannot fulfill. Hence, the act of satisfaction is the payment of the love-debt to God as He reveals Himself to the sinner in the depth and darkness and unspeakable misery of hell! If there were a sinner that could perform this act of love, that could pass through the woes of eternal desolation, through the darkness of the depth of hell and be motivated by the love of God, that sinner would satisfy the justice of God with respect to sin. Or, to express this truth more vividly still, if there were a man that would be so motivated by the love of God that he would seek that punishment, that for God's name's sake and to fulfill His righteousness would desire to descend into deepest hell, and realize that desire,—that

man would make full satisfaction for sin. Such is the sinner's love-debt to God. He is obligated to say to God: "For Thy righteousness' sake let all the billows of Thy wrath pass over me, and even then I shall love Thee!" If he performs this act of love He makes full satisfaction. And in the way of this full satisfaction he will be the object of the favor of God! And this satisfaction is absolutely necessary. The Arminian, who, because of his denial of limited atonement, cannot and does not maintain the truth of satisfaction, may claim that God can accept something else instead of this perfect sacrifice of atonement, a tear, a prayer, a temporal affliction, an example,—but he misleads the sinner. The modernist may make light of this truth and speak of it mockingly as "blood-theology", he only mocks at most dreadful realities. For God cannot deny Himself. He will have His justice satisfied. Satisfaction for sin is the indispensable condition to be restored to the favor of God.

H. H.

De Hope Des Ellendigen

(Psalm 56)

De achtergrond van dezen psalm is welbekend. David was vluchtende voor het aangezicht van Saul en had onderkomen gezocht doch niet gevonden bij de aartsvijanden van Israel, Koning Achis der Filistijnen te Gath.

Doch de knechten van Koning Achis mompelden onder elkander en straks kwamen ze ook tot hun koning met de vraag: Is deze niet de gevreesde held Israels van wien de dochters Israels zongen: Saul heeft zijn duizenden verslagen, doch David zijn tien-duizenden? Is deze niet de held die onze kampvechter Goliath verslagen heeft?

Ook heeft David al dit mompelen gemerkt. Het staat te lezen in I Sam. 21:12. Daar lezen we: "En David leide deze woorden in zijn hart, en hij was zeer bevreesd voor het aangezicht van Achis den Koning van Gath."

Toen is David aan 't razen gegaan. Hij stelde zich aan als een waanzinnige: al krabbelende aan de poorten en hij liet zijn speeksel in zijn baard afloopen. Hij hield zich alsof hij gek was. En gelijk het ook nog heden ten dage is met wilde volkeren: men is bang voor de krankzinnigen. In elk geval, men doet hen geen kwaad.

Deze slimheid van David heeft ook het begeerde resultaat. Koning Achis liet hem ontvluchten. In

hoofdstuk 22:1 van Samuel I merken we, dat hij ontkwam in de spelonk van Adullam.

Heeft hij misschien daar dezen psalm gedicht?

Het is een psalm die gedicht werd in dagen van groote spanning. De drukking der melk brengt boter voort en het goud wordt gezuiverd in het vuur der smeltkroes. Zoo is het ook hier. David zelf noemt den psalm een gouden kleinood Davids. De inhoud is kostelijk en kan dienen tot troost voor Gods volk in groote benauwdheden.

Het tweede opschrift is teekenend. Jonath elem rehokim, hetwelk beteekent: de stomme duive temidden van hen die verre weg zijn. In de vorige psalm had David gevraagd of iemand hem toch vleugelen eener duive gawe, opdat hij mocht wegvliegen en rust vinden. Welnu, dit vers is het gezang eener duive die stom was temidden van de ver verdrevenen.

Eigenaardig is de aanvang: Wees mij genadig, O God! Eigenaardig en toch beantwoordend aan de wetten van het Koninkrijk der hemelen. Alle smart en ellende verbindt Gods kind aan de zonde. Hij weet, dat hij niet lang te zoeken heeft naar oorzaken van Goddelijke kastijding. De zonde is een dagelijksch kwaad. Daartegenover vraagt hij den Heere om genade. Vraagt hij of de Heere Zich liefelijk nederbuigen wil naar hem toe en de zonde vergeven. En hem teruggeven de rust en den vrede van voorheen.

Daarom: want de mensch zoekt mij op te slokken, enz. Dan volgt een beschrijving van Davids vijanden. Uit die beschrijving blijkt, dat hij werkelijk niet alleen aan Koning Achis der Filistijnen denkt. O neen, Koning Saul en zijn handlangers vinden hier ook een plaats. Daarom die algemeene term: de mensch. Het scheen wel of de geheele wereld het op David voorzien had. Daarom is David dan ook zulk een ongeëvenaarde type van den Christus. Het historische Israel, verbonden met Pilatus en Herodus, dus de geheele wereld keerden zich ten slotte tegen Jezus. Leest maar het gebed van Petrus, na de uitstorting des Heiligen Geestes: Want in waarheid zijn vergaderd tegen Uw heilig Kind Jezus, welken Gij gezalfd hebt, beide Herodus en Pontius Pilatus, met de heidenen en de volken Israels. . . . Het is de vervulling van Davids lijden vanwege Saul en Filistijn, de zwakke schaduw van der wereld haat tegen God.

Let op het algeheele van Davids bestrijding. Hij begon met den mensch bij God aan te klagen. Die mensch heet voorts de bestrijder, doch even later zucht David dat hij vele bestrijders heeft. Ook jagen zij hem "den ganschen dag". Het staat er zeer benauwd bij voor den man naar Gods hart.

En het karakter van de bestrijding is dan ook vreeselijk. Zij verspieden hem, zij verdraaien zijn woorden, om toch de haat maar wakker te houden tegen David; zij dreigen hem den ganschen dag op te slokken. En de laatste vooral karakteriseert Davids leed. Men

haat hem zoo intensief, dat men hem gelijk smakelijk eten wil verslinden. David moet verdelgd worden van den aardbodem. Het is zoo vreeselijk gesteld met die haat der menschen, dat "alle hunne gedachten tegen hem ten kwade zijn". Dan wordt het waarlijk benauwd. Als er geen greintje medelijden of erbarmen meer voor ons overig is.

't Is dan ook geen wonder, dat David vreest. Och, wie en wat zijn we op zijn best. O, als 't ons voor den wind gaat, als alle menschen ons vriendelijk toeknikken of ons weldoen, ons welgezind zijn, dan is het zoo gemakkelijk om te leven het leven der gemeenschap. Dan glimlacht alles om ons en in ons. Dan zijn we zoo gelukkig. En zoo schiep God den mensch. Om in elkaar's gezelschaap genot te hebben. Ziet men elkan- der dan aankomen, dan is het gulle woord van verre al, men kan niet wachten met de begroeting totdat men vlak bij elkander aankwam. Alles gaat dan onge- kuns- teld. Als van zelf spraken we en lachten, genietende de liefde der menschen.

Doch als alle menschen U tegen zijn, zooals met David, dan wordt het anders. Als men schier niemand meer kan vertrouwen, als de aangezichten tegen U ver- keerd zijn, als men overal zwarte gezichten ziet, of, erger nog als men zwarte harten bespeurt achter den glimlach, en de duivel hoogtij viert tusschen de men- schen, dan wordt het bang.

Zou David dan niet vreezen?

Doch hier is zijn sterkte. Ten dage als hij moet vreezen, zal hij op God vertrouwen. Er zijn menschen geweest die dit niet kunnen verstaan, die niet kunnen zien, dat men vreezen en betrouwen op God in één zin kan neerschrijven als de ervaring van het kind van God. Ik zou zeggen, dat het niet anders kan, dat het altijd zoo in zijn werk gaat. Vrees drijft Gods volk altijd naar God uit. En, ach, wanneer is er geen vreeze? Wat is het leven, ons leven, op aarde anders dan een gedurige vreeze. Daar zijn de duivel, de wereld en de zonde.

Op God vertrouwen. Wat is het?

Het is dit: dat ge U eenvoudig laat zakken en zin- ken op God, als op de Rots der eeuwen die van geen wankelen weet. Op God vertrouwt men als er niets meer over blijft waarop men kan steunen en leunen. Op God vertrouwt men eerst recht, wanneer alle andere pseudo-gronden onder U wegzakken en ge dreigt te vergaan in al Uw smart en leed. Dan roept zulk eenen tot God: Wees mij genadig, O God! Begeef mij niet! O verlaat mij niet!

En dan wordt het stille. Dan gaat men zeg- gen en leven: "In God zal ik Zijn Woord prijzen!"

Wat ontzagelijke diepte en rijkdom ligt in die be- lijdenis!

Dat Woord is zonder twijfel het Woord, dat God gesproken had over David. Hij had dat Woord opge- vangen toen Samuel hem gezalfd had tot Koning

over het volk des Heeren. En toen hij zich gesterkt had in God, hoorde hij dat Woord weer: Ik, David, ben Uw God en gij zult onder Mij Mijn volk zegenrijk re- geeren! Toen werd het stil in den spelonk van Adullam!

Och, ga nu met mij mee naar Gethsemane!

Daar ligt de vervulling van David in tranen die rood zijn als bloed. Alles was tegen Hem. De wereld en de hel en de historische kerk van God wilde Hem den ganschen dag opslokken. Petrus gaat Hem straks ook nog verlooehenen. Judas verkoopt Hem voor een handvol gelds. Herodus zal lachen, Pilatus Hem ver- zaken. Tot de moordenaar toe zal ieder Hem bespot- ten.

Werkelijk, de stomme duive is onder die verre, zeer verre zijn!

Dan gaat Hij op God vertrouwen. En sterk roepen en weenen in het gras van den hof der olijven.

Straks ruischt er nog iets anders dan de avond- koelte: het is een Engel Gods die o zoo gaarne komen wilde naar den beteren David. Die Engel mocht Hem versterken. Jezus heeft in dien nacht op God ver- trouwd. Hij heeft zelfs snikkende Zijn Woord ge- prezen. Mijn Zoon Jezus: Ik heb gesproken! Het mag bang wezen in Gethsemane en banger worden in den eeuwigen spelonk van Adullam op Golgotha. Ik heb gesproken! Ik heb zelfs gezworen: Zoo ik aan David lieg'! Gij, Mijn Zoon, zult up den troon van Juda en Israel zitten om Mijn volk te regeeren tot in eeuwigheid.

En beide David en Jezus hebben in God Zijn Woord geprezen.

Dat deden ze *in* God!

Ja, ook hier blijkt het weer, dat God alleen in Zijn Eigen werk verheerlijkt wordt. Alleen als men in God is, als men in de atmosfeer van Goddelijke kracht en majesteit en genade opgenomen wordt, kan men God prijzen om Zijn Woord, Zijn openbaring van eeuwige liefde.

En de vijand gaat voort te haten.

Luistert maar: "Zij rotten tezamen, zij versteken zich, zij passen op mijne hielen, als die op mijne ziel wachten!"

Wat een beschrijving van de God-haters. Want dat is de oorzaak, dat men David zoo vervolgt. David staat voor de zaak Gods en daarom kan Saul en Filis- tijn hem niet staan.

Zij rotten te saam. Wonderlijk hoe men altijd elkander vindt. Soort zoekt soort. In een oogwenk heeft men de zielen geproefd. En degenen die David haten vinden elkaar. Daar worden verbonden der hel gesmeed.

En dan moet David aan 't onzwerfen. En gaat Jezus van Juda naar Samaria en eindelijk naar het verachte Galilea. O, Jezus moet vaak aan David gedacht hebben bij Zijn onmzwerving in Palestina.

Gedoopt Voor De Dooden

I Cor. 15:29.

't Gevolg is dan dat men weent. Kostelijke tranen die om Godswil geschreid worden. Zij zijn kostelijk, o God! Daarom, leg mijne tranen in Uwe flesch! Kostelijke tranen van Jezus! Weggelegd tot in eeuwigheid. Het zijn Gods paaren en robijnen van ongekende liefde!

Ja, Gods paaren; dat wil zeggen, als ge ze beziet uit het oogpunt van Zijn eeuwig verbond. Bewonderingwekkend! 't Is de hemel der zaligheden. De diepe weg van Golgotha en al de smart van Gods volk is dierbaar in Zijn oog. Hij heeft dien diepen weg gewild om Zijn Koninkrijk in al zijn schoonheid te openbaren.

Doch die tranen zijn ook vreeselijk dingen! 't Zijn onbetaalde rekeningen voor de duivelen en de goddeloozen. 'k Moet er niet inkomen.

Ik zou mijzelf en allen willen toeroepen: Ziet toe wie het is dien ge doet weenen! Maak toch geen rekening bij God!

David heeft het beseft. In 't zelfde verband waarin hij zijn tranen bij God wegbergt schreeuwt hij het uit: "Stort de volken neder in toorn, O God!" Dat is het roepen om Gods oordeel over alle goddeloosheid en ongerechtigheid die de menschenkinderen gieriglijk bedreven. En 't einde daarvan is de tweede dood in den poel die brandt van vuur en sulfur.

Daarom kan David rusten en zingen en prijzen. In God en in den Heere zal hij Zijn Woord prijzen.

In 't bangst gevaar had David den Heere geloften gegeven. Die geloften waren dan ook voorts van God. En zij wachten op mij, zegt David. Op mij zijn die geloften. En ik zal ze blijde betalen, o Allerhoogste. Ik zal zingen, ja psalmzingen den Heere. Want Hij heeft vreeselijke dingen gedaan.

Mijn nood en dood zijn weggenomen door mijn Zoon, Jezus van Nazareth. Alle aanstoot is van voor mijn voeten weggenomen.

Voorts zal ik in 't vroolijk levenslicht wandelen.

Met slechts één doel: ik zal U dankzeggingen vergelden.

En weet ge wat een dankzegging is?

't Is dit, dat ge zegt: Hoe groot, hoe lieflijk zijt Ge alom! Uit Uw verheven heiligheid. Aanbidd'lijk Oppervezen!

G. V.

"Hoe zeggen sommigen, dat er geen opstanding der dooden is"?

Gelijk de Schrift het altijd doet, zoo ook hier wordt in het woord van den Apostel, den hartader aangetast tegen een ingeslopen dwaling. Er waren er in Corinthes gemeente, die op opstanding der dooden loochenden. Nu is het in het ooglopend, dat de Apostel niet begint met de opstanding van Christus, om dan, van uit dat oogpunt, de opstanding der dooden te verdedigen. Dat zou natuurlijk wel gekund hebben. Doch daarmede begint hij niet.

Hiervoor, zoo heeft men gemeend, bestonden zeer gewichtige reden. De voornaamste zou wel wezen, dat men de tegenwerping kon maken, dat Christus' opstanding iets op zichzelf was en niet onder den algemeenen regel kon worden gebracht. Het bezwaar zou kunnen worden ingebracht, dat Christus de Zoon van God is en dat daarom Zijne opstanding niets anders was, dan een voortzetting van Zijn leven, als de Zoon.

We hechten aan deze verklaring weinig waarde, omdat zij op een gissing rust waarover in het geheel niet gesproken wordt. Daarbenevens, de ketters in Corinthes konden met de loochening van de lichamelijke opstanding van den Heiland weinig uitrichten. Men stond nog veel te dicht bij Zijn opstanding. Er was niet slechts een enkele, doch vele getuigen, die den Heiland na Zijn opstanding hadden ontmoet, met Hem gesproken en van onderscheidene verschijningen konden spreken.

Daarom, omdat dit getuigenis ruste op niet te ontkennen feiten en geloofwaardige getuigen, durfde men het niet aan, om het eenparig getuigenis der Apostelen (het getuigenis der Kerk dus) tegen te spreken. Ook al bestaat er de mogelijkheid, dat sommigen der Apostelen alreeds gestorven waren, we mogen aannemen, dat er van de "Meer dan vijfhonderd broederen", die Hem op eenmaal gezien hadden en van welke het meerendeel nog overig is, het toch wel wat te kras zou zijn geweest, om dit hun getuigenis tegen te spreken. De ketters zijn meestal heel voorzichtig met de dwaling, waarmede zij Gods Kerk trachten binnen te dringen. Ketterij komt niet met veel vertoon en kenmerkt zich niet door klaarheid en duidelijkheid. Veeleer is het tegenovergestelde waar.

Alle ketterijen beginnen te tornen aan den zoom der waarheid. En vanaf den buitensten rand werkt men op het hart aan. Aldus scheurt men niet het hart aan flarden, doch langzaam maar zeker werkt men naar de hoofdwaarheid heen. Denk slechts aan de kwestie van de Souvereine of Particuliere genade. Kwam men slechts met de ontkenning en verwerping

ATTENTION DELEGATES

Delegates to the September meeting of Classis West, desiring lodging, are requested to write the Clerk. The meeting is to be held in Edgerton, Minn.

G. Mesman, Sr., Clerk,
R. R. 1, Edgerton, Minn.

van dit leerstuk, een ieder Gereformeerde zou naar de wapenen grijpen en een op krachtig protest zou kunnen gerekend worden. Doch gelijk we weten, men ontkent eerst niet wat Gereformeerd is, maar plaatst daar iets naast. En wat er bijkomt is dan een loochening van wat in de Belijdenis en Schrift geleerd wordt. Dat maakt de strijd ingewikkeld en van langen duur. Kwam men dan ook plotseling met het eigenlijke van de dwaalleer met al de implicaties te voorschijn, dan zou een ieder het direkt zien en was de zaak spoedig beslist.

Men was te Corinthe begonnen met te zeggen: De dooden staan niet op, Met den dood moet men dan ook verder niets meer verwachten. Hier tegenover nu plaats de Apostel, niet allereerst, dat Christus is opgestaan, maar het feit, dat Christus gepredikt wordt, dat Hij uit de dooden opgewekt is.

Christus mag niet opzichzelf worden beschouwd, maar moet altijd gedacht en gepredikt worden in nauw verband en gemeenschap met de Zijnen. Welnu, als er geen opstanding der dooden is, dan is dat, omdat er tusschen Christus en de Gemeente geen band der levensgemeenschap is. Maar dan komt ook onmiddellijk de vraag op, Waarom dan nog den Christus gepredikt? Een Christus, die niet als Hoofd aan Zijn Gemeente is verbonden, heeft geen beteekenis. Van Hem is niets te verwachten. Hij heeft geen eeuwig leven verdiend, is voor hen niet gezalfd als Middelaar, van voor de grondlegging der wereld.

De prediking van een gestorven en opgestanen Heiland komt, met het oog op de gemeente, Gods volk niet ten goede, tenzij ook dat volk uit en door de kracht Zijner opstanding, met Hem wordt opgewekt. Indien dit niet het geval is, dan is die prediking zonder vrucht. Zij is ijdel, heeft geen inhoud van blijvende waarde en is op zijn best een schoon geklank. Alles is dan vergeefs.

Welnu, wat profijt zit er in een ijdele prediking? Wat geeft zulk een geloof, dat van die bepaalde prediking de vrucht is? Een geloof, dat zich niet uitstrekt tot den opgestanen Christus en met Hem niet werkelijk een is tot in het feit der opstanding toe, is tevergeefs. Het heeft geen vruchtdragende gevolgen. Maar wat waar is van de prediking, is ook waar van de predikers. Die met de prediking optreedt, dat Christus is opgewekt, terwijl er van de opstanding der dooden geen sprake is, die liegt en is een bedrieger. Er is een opstanding der dooden, indien niet, dan is Christus ook niet opgestaan. Doch indien dat niet waar is, dan is de prediking een verschrikkelijk bedrog. Er blijft hier geen uitweg over.

Wat dit voor de gemeente beteekend wordt door den Apostel verder uitgewerkt als hij zegt: Dat geheel het verlossingswerk wegvalt. Het heil voor de geloovigen is vernietigd. Als Christus gestorven is, terwijl er dan geen opstanding der dooden is, dus ook

Christus in den dood bleef, dan is er niets betaald—"Zoo zijt gij nog in uwe zonden". De zaak is dan over alle kanten gezien hopeloos. Hopeloos voor die in Hem gelooven, doch ook voor Christus Zelf. Hij is gestorven, is zonde voor ons gemaakt. Doch, terwijl Hij met den zondenlast beladen den dood inging, daar verrees Hij niet uit het graf. Hij kwam dus met onze zonden niet verder dan het graf. Hij kwam niet verder, dan wij kunnen komen. En ons blijven in het graf, is bewijs van niet betalen, niet voldoen aan den eisch der gerechtigheid Gods, een nog liggen onder denzelfden toorn Gods. Christus kon dan niet de zonde der wereld wegdragen, zij worden u nog toegerekend. We weten, het kan niet, het is zelfs Godslasterlijk om het te denken, doch op grond van de loochening der opstanding der dooden, is het toch waar, Christus kwam met onze zonden om, blijvende in den staat des doods. De dood hield Hem beklemd en de Kerk zal nooit kunnen roemen in de verlossing, doch eeuwig onder de verdoemenis blijven liggen. Dan zijn ook zij die ontslapen zijn voor eeuwig verloren.

Alles is dus nauw verbonden aan de opstanding der dooden.

Allereerst, in verband met den Christus.

Indien er geen opstanding der dooden is, wat zou het baten, om te prediken, dat Christus uit de dooden is opgewekt? Zijn opstanding moet die der dooden voorafgaan. Zij moet de grond zijn, waarvan de opstanding noodzakelijker wijze het gevolg is. Geschiedde de laatste niet, dan kan ook de eerste niet waar zijn. Christus toch is het Hoofd Zijns volks. Als het Hoofd niet uit het graf verrijst, dan blijft ook Zijn lichaam daar verborgen. Omgekeerd, staat het Hoofd op, dan volgt met het Hoofd ook het Lichaam.

Ten tweede, met het oog op de Apostolische prediking.

Indien er geen opstanding der dooden is, hoe dan hebben de predikers de moed, om er in de prediking des Evangelies den nadruk op te leggen, dat Christus is opgewekt. En dat ook alweer om dezelfde reden als bovengenoemd. Geen opstanding der dooden, geen opgestane Christus mag dan gepredikt worden. Indien men het dan toch predikt, dan is die prediking niets minder dan bedrog.

Vervolgens, wat is de bate des geloofs.

Het geloof, zal het werkelijk iets beteekenen, moet op grond van Christus verdienste, uit kracht Zijner opstanding, kunnen roemen. Roemen, dat de schuld betaald, dat er geen verdoemenis is, dat het durft heenblikken over dood en graf en uitzien naar den oordeelsdag met den jubel der volkomene verlossing op de lippen, "dat ook wij door Zijne kracht opgewekt worden tot een nieuw leven en ons de opstanding van Christus een zeker pand onzer zalige opstanding is". Dat alles is dan een verzinsel en herschensschim, die zelfs voor dit leven geen waarde kan hebben.

En eindelijk, wat blijft er dan over voor hen, die met het oog op de dooden gedoopt worden? Indien het waar is, dat de dooden ganschelijk niet opgewekt worden, waarom worden zij voor (met het oog op, in reference to) de dooden ook gedoopt?

De apostel heeft tot dusver gesproken over het nuttelooze der prediking (dat Christus opstond, terwijl de dooden niet opstaan). De zaak is dan heel eenvoudig deze, dat er tusschen den Christus en de dooden geen levensverband of gemeenschap is, indien de dooden niet opstaan. Daarna wees hij er op, dat het geloof, zooals het door de prediking gewerkt wordt, geen vrucht ontvangt en geen voordeel trekt uit die prediking.

In dit vers wijst hij er tenslotte op, dat ook de Doop voor de gemeente geen teeken en zegel kan zijn van het ingelijfd worden of het inzijn der leden in het Lichaam onder het Hoofd Christus en daarom ook geen teeken en zegel kan zijn van de opstanding, noch voor hen die leven, noch ook voor hen die alreeds stierven. Het heeft voor levenden geen zin, om een teeken en zegel te ontvangen, als er achter die teekenen geen beteekende zaak is. Daar toch de dooden niet worden opgewekt, kan de Doop niet zijn een teeken en zegel van de levensgemeenschap met Christus. En wat nu waar is van het Hoofd in verband met het Lichaam, is ook waar van de leden van het lichaam onderling. Want gelijk de loochening van de opstanding der dooden moet uitloopen op een loochening van Christus opstanding, zoo ook is de Doop voor de gedoopten met het oog op de dooden, die toch niet opstaan, even ijdel en te vergeefs, als de prediking van Christus opstanding. Met het oog nu op die dooden, die niet opstaan, met wien men als leden van Christus lichaam nooit levensgemeenschap zal smaken, waartoe zou dan de Doop nog kunnen dienen? Zeker niet om het geloof te versterken, ook niet om te troosten, dat we Christus zijn ingelijfd en gemeenschap des levens met Hem hebben, noch minder, dat we die gemeenschap als leden onderling, nu, maar ook straks met hen die gestorven en in Christus ontslapen zijn zullen genieten. Alles is te vergeefs.

Want, gelijk de loochening der opstanding niets minder beteekend of beteekenen kan, dan het nog zijn in onze zonden, in het oordeel Gods en onder Zijn vloek, zóó ook zijn de dooden voor eeuwig uit de gemeenschap Gods verwijderd. Ge kunt dan ook met het oog op de dooden, den Doop achterwege laten, hij is al even bedriegelijk als de prediking, die komt met de pretentie, dat Christus opgewekt is, terwijl Zijn opstanding niet in staat blijkt te zijn, om de Zijnen dat opstandingsleven te geven.

W. V.

Gods grootheid en macht kunnen wij niet begrijpen, maar wij kunnen het gelooven.

Organisation Of A New Church

The reader must not be misled by the title of this article. No, the number of our Protestant Reformed Churches has not been increased by the addition of another congregation. In this article we wish to write in a general way on the question of how a new congregation is organized. During the past year we have written on various phases of our mission work. Among others we have written on such subjects as "The Right of our Mission", "The Choice of a Mission Field", and, "Seeking Contact". Hence the subject of this article is, "The Organization of a New Church".

During the course of time that we were privileged to serve as the Home Missionary of our churches, we might be instrumental, by the grace of God, in the organization of two new congregations. The one at Edgerton, Minnesota, and the other at Manhattan, Montana. It is not our purpose, however, to write about the organization of these congregations as such. This has already been done in the past, by the Rev. C. Hanko in the Standard Bearer of June 1, 1938, on the organization of Edgerton, and by the Rev. G. Vos, on the organization of Manhattan. In this article we would point out the methods used in bringing about the organization of a new congregation, and also discuss some of the difficulties involved. It is a commendable trait of our Holland Reformed people, that as a rule they are very loyal to their church. I say this is a very commendable trait providing it is based upon knowledge and love of the Reformed truth. There are very many that remain loyal to their church merely upon the basis of tradition, or of family ties, etc. Such loyalty is not to be commended, and I fear that the latter is more often the case than the former.

Due to this commendable trait of church loyalty, it is not an easy matter to get our Holland Reformed people to exchange one church home for another. Indeed, there are always those who very easily and readily jump denominational fences, but these are not at all desirable as members of our Protestant Reformed Churches. They are usually men without principles, and without definite convictions. They are often dissatisfied because they have been involved in some personal difficulties, or because they dislike a certain minister. A home missionary must always be on his guard against such undesirables. Therefore I deem it very advisable for the home missionary to labor in a certain community from six months to a year before organizing a new Protestant Reformed congregation. And that especially for two reasons. In the first place, this gives him an opportunity to discover any undesirable members, who because of ulterior motives seek to be organized as a new congregation, and secondly it also gives him time to instruct and indoctrinate those

who truly love our Reformed truth, that we as Protestant Reformed Churches must make our appeal. It is our firm conviction that there are still many in the Christian Reformed, and also some in the Reformed Church, who truly love our Reformed heritage, and who are averse to all Pelagianism and Arminianism. There are many that feel that there is something fundamentally wrong in a preaching of the Word that is saturated with the heresy of a "well-meaning offer of salvation", even though they cannot always rightly distinguish this error from the doctrine of the external calling which comes to all that hear the gospel. Neither are they always able to see the difference between the glorious and comforting truth of Divine providence, and the God dishonouring heresy of "Common Grace". Therefore they must be instructed in sound doctrine through the preaching of the Word, public lectures, Reformed pamphlets and literature, and through personal conversation. Once they have learned to see the grave dangers of the error of a "general well-meaning offer of salvation" an error which dethrones God and enthrones man, as well as the awful implications of the false doctrine of "Common Grace," they will become very staunch supporters of our Protestant Reformed Churches.

After six months or a year of such intensive labours of preaching, lecturing, distributing of our literature, and of personal visits, we would send a letter, which I used at Manhattan, Montana. It is dated July 21, 1939. This was just exactly a year to the day after our arrival there. It was written in the Holland language, as follows:

Manhattan, Montana.
July 21, 1939.

Geliefde Broeder en Zuster in den Heere:

Maandag avond Juli 31, om 8 uur, zal er, D.V. een vergadering gehouden worden met het doel om maatregelen te nemen tot het organiseren van een Protestantsch Gereformeerde gemeente.

Indien het, na ernstige en biddende overweging, uw overtuiging is, dat de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk, in de leer der "Drie Punten" is afgeweken van de aloude gereformeerde waarheid dat de genade altoos particulier is;

En indien het uwe begeerte is om weder te keeren naar de aloude Drie Formulieren van Eenigheid, die in alles gegrond zijn op Gods onfeilbaar Woord, namelijk de Nederlandsche Geloofs Belijdenis, den Heidelbergschen Catechismus, en de Canones van Dordrecht;

Dan verzoeken wij u ernstiglijk en drin-

gend, om Christus wil, en om der waarheids wil, om met ons te vereenigen als een Protestantsche Gereformeerde Gemeente. Opdat de Zendingscommissie onzer Kerken moge weten hoevelen daartoe gezind zijn, verzoeken wij u het volgende te onderteekenen, vóór Maandag avond, den 31sten Juli.

Wij, ondergeteekenden, geven hiermede te kennen, dat het onze ernstige begeerte is, dat alhier de Manhattan er een Protestantsche Gereformeerde gemeente, onder des Heeren zegen, tot stand mag komen.

Mr. en Mrs.....

met gedoopte kinderen.

It is indeed difficult to come to such a final step of separation from the church in which one has been born and reared, and in which one has had his joys and sorrows. It is also hard to separate the ties of fellowship and friendship, which is almost always the case when one leaves one church for another. This is hard for the parents, but also for the entire family. Another great difficulty which confronts the missionary as well as those that are contemplating taking such a final step of separation, is the question whether or not there will be a sufficient number of families to organize a new church. It is true that where two or three are gathered together in Christ's name, then He will be in the midst of them, but if at all possible it is desirable to have a sufficient number to bring to manifestation the church as an institute, with its office-bearers, and its ministry of the Word and Sacraments. But all these difficulties are of minor importance if there is but the conviction that it is our calling before God to maintain the truth over against the heresy of the "Three Points".

If there are a sufficient number that express their desire to be organized into a Protestant Reformed congregation, then the missionary presents their request to the mission committee of our churches, it being their duty to decide whether or not the new congregation shall be organized. If after careful consideration they decide that the new congregation be organized, they appoint a committee out of their midst, or delegate one or more of the ministers to assist the home missionary in the organization of the new church. In the organization of Edgerton's congregation the mission committee was represented by the Reverends, H. Hoeksema, P. De Boer, and C. Hanko, and elder N. Yonker, while at the organization of Manhattan's congregation the home missionary was assisted by the Rev. G. Vos.

After having gained the consent of the Mission Committee to organize a new congregation, then all those that are interested and have already expressed the

desire to be organized, are advised to ask for their membership credentials or certificates of membership. The date for organization is then set. Upon the evening of organization either the home missionary or one of the ministers of the Mission Committee functions as chairman, and another as Clerk. The membership credentials of those desiring organization are then read, and if there are no objections they are approved. Officebearers are then elected and if there are no objections raised against the brethren, they are immediately installed into office. After the congregation has been thus organized, one of the ministers present preaches a sermon applicable to the solemn occasion.

In many ways it is advisable that the home missionary stay with the newly organized congregation for some time. During my work as home missionary I sometimes felt that the time of organization was postponed because they feared that immediately after organization the home missionary would leave. Therefore I think the home missionary should remain for some time after the new congregation has been organized, which would give the newly organized group a bit of added confidence. He can also give valuable direction and help to the new church, also from a political viewpoint. Many difficulties can often be avoided by careful leadership during the infancy of the new congregation.

B. K.

IN MEMORIAM

The consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, hereby wishes to express its heartfelt sympathy to our brother-elder, O. Van Ellen, in the loss of his sister,

MRS. J. SCHILDHOUSE

May the God of all grace comfort the brother and his family in this their bereavement, by the assurance that she has gone to her Lord and Saviour.

The Consistory of the First Prot. Ref. Church,
Rev. R. Veldman, Pres.
Mr. G. Stonehouse, Clerk.

In His love I am abiding,
Everything to Him confiding;
'Neath His wing my soul is hiding,
He is all in all to me.

Concerning The C.L.A.

Dear Mr. Editor,

My attention was called to an article appearing in the Standard Bearer of June 15 in which the C.L.A. is criticised rather severely. Will you please allow me, as secretary of the organization, to reply to it? I shall greatly appreciate that.

There is much in the article of brother C. H. with which I fully agree. His stand in regard to membership of Christian workers in unchristian organizations I endorse. All the more reason why I regret that he has considered it necessary to attack the C.L.A., the one organization in which Christian workers, regardless of their doctrinal differences, should and can work together.

It is my conviction that the criticism of the brother is not well founded. He gives as a reason for the fact that the growth of the C.L.A. has not been phenomenal that it has not been distinctive enough. That is rather surprising. Up to this time we have always been told that the C.L.A. is too distinctive, places too much emphasis upon the demands of the Word of God and insists too strongly upon the application of Christian principles. Now I do not think that the C.L.A. can ever too strongly emphasize those things, but, I do believe that its distinctiveness is the reason why most workers, even among those called Christians, are not interested in it, as they ought to be. I am very much afraid that it is true that it is first of all because of the spiritual degradation of our day that Christians have not rallied to our cause as they should have.

But, what about that so-called lack of distinctiveness as charged by the brother? He has quoted a few sentences from a C.L.A. propaganda booklet, for which the organization assumes full responsibility. Allow me to quote the complete article on Basis and Aim. It reads as follows:

"The C.L.A. believes that all efforts for the improvement of Labor and industrial conditions must be prompted and guided by Christian principles. These principles being grounded in the Bible, the revealed will of God, the C.L.A. recognizes that as its basis.

The aim of the C.L.A. is, on that basis to promote the material and moral interests of its members, and to further the establishing of justice, righteousness and good will in the sphere of labor and industry, through the practical application of the aforesaid Christian principles."

Is there really any ground for the charge of lack of distinctiveness when that whole article is quoted? Why did the brother omit to state that the C.L.A. in its promotion of the material and moral welfare of its members does so *on the basis of the Word of God*? And did not the brother take note of other distinctively

Christian expressions in that same booklet in regard to authority, Sunday observance, class conflict, conduct, etc.? Those things are very important. It is really not doing justice to the C.L.A. to take a few expressions here and there, out of their setting, and to judge the organization on them, interpreting them at will.

The main burden of the brother's contention is that the C. L. A. is materialistic. That is a very convenient term, used rather freely by many people to condemn something when another term cannot readily be applied. The C.L.A., so it is charged, is materialistic. And why? Because it has stated that it seeks improvement in labor conditions, promotes material interests on the basis of the Word of God; to be guided and prompted by Christian principles in so doing. And what did brother C. H. write in the third paragraph of his article? This: "Even if they organize with a view to problems confronting the workingman in the sphere of labor and industry, there can be no real objection raised as long as they actually do so as Christians". That is just fine! Since in the field of labor and industry the problems confronting the workers are largely in connection with material and moral interests, as brother C. H. well knows, he admits that organizing for the purpose of meeting those problems in a Christian way is not wrong. Why then try to condemn it in the C. L. A., which has done just that, and which has indeed done all those things which the brother has summarized as being characteristic of a Christian labor organization?

Just a little more about this materialism. One cannot escape the impression that brother C. H., in spite of the quotation given above, wants to drive home the point that to be interested in material things, to seek the advancement of one's material interests, is sinful. In a sense that is true, of course. But, let us remember that it is sinful only when such advancement, such interests, are first in life, when material things become the god of the individual. That is condemned by the Scriptures. And to be so concerned about food and drink and raiment that it crowds out concern about the soul's welfare, about spiritual things, that also is sinful.

Let us, however, be careful to preserve a proper balance. Let's remember this too: that God has so created this universe, and has so ordered it, that control of a certain amount of material things is necessary for men, also for the Christian. Also the proper development of man created in the image of God, the bringing into fruition of the talents God has entrusted to him, requires control of a certain amount of material things. We may go even further than that and say that, humanly speaking, the extension and advancement of the Kingdom of God is dependent to a large extent upon the material possessions of God's people! I do not want to be misunderstood. I know that God

stands above all, that He is sovereign and that all depends on His blessing. Nevertheless that statement can stand. God works through means. And He has so ordained it, that material possessions are necessary for the establishing and maintenance of churches and schools, the doing of mission work, etc. The money for those causes must be contributed by God's people. Therefore also those people are entitled to wages that will enable them to take proper care of their families and to meet those needs. And they have the right to demand that they be treated at all times as human beings created after the image of God! That is why the Christian may seek advancement of material interests and protection of his rights as a laborer. And that is why we have Christian labor organizations, unitedly to do that which the individual can not accomplish.

Finally there is the brother's objection to the C.L.A. stand in regard to the strike. He expresses surprise because a statement on it is found in the C.L.A. Constitution when it is not found in the Constitutions of many other labor unions. Actually the brother himself has supplied the answer. Just because other unions take the use of the strike-weapon, in all kinds of evil forms, for granted, the C.L.A. considered it necessary to have a clear statement on it, not in its Constitution but in its Program of Action and propaganda literature. The C.L.A. wants its distinctive stand on that question to be known.

The brother makes the charge that there is a glaring contradiction in the C.L.A. statement because it, in the first part, condemns all violence in labor disputes, destruction of property, seizure of property, etc., and in the last part justifies the strike as a last resort after all other means of settlement have failed and there is apparently no other way to remove a grave injustice. I see no contradiction whatever. The trouble lies here: brother C. H. takes for granted that the C. L. A. when it justifies the strike as a last resort, also justifies violence and other evils usually associated with the strike. And that is all wrong. The C.L.A. would never justify the use of violence, seizure or destruction of property, molesting of other workers, etc. Of course not. What then do we mean by a strike as a last resort? Allow me to explain.

We are all agreed, undoubtedly, that a worker who is laboring under unjust conditions has the right to take it up with his employer, to get the conditions changed. And, if he cannot prevail upon his employer to remove the injustice he has the right to refuse to continue to labor under such a condition. He has the right to tell the employer that he is willing to return to work when the employer is willing to meet his just demands. He has the right also to tell others, truthfully, why he has refused to continue to work and under what conditions he will return. There is nothing

unchristian in that, nor does it violate the civil laws.

Now apply that to a large number of workers, in an organization. They also have grievances, and present them. But, after continuous attempts, through conferences, mediation and even arbitration, rejected by the employer, they have failed to get justice. Then those workers have the right to refuse to continue to work under the unjust conditions. It is called the strike, but technically those workers are quitting their jobs, with the understanding that they are willing to return to their jobs if their just demands are met. They have the right to give the public notice to that effect. They have no right to seize the employer's property, or to destroy it, or to attack those who want to continue to work. Surely such a "strike" cannot be called violent. In so far as it can be called the use of force, which is almost inconceivable, it is that to no greater degree than that of the individual who refuses to work under unjust conditions.

This point also must be remembered: if a large number of workers refuse to continue to work under unjust conditions, but express willingness to return when the injustices have been removed, they are still manifesting a spirit of loyalty to the employer. What if they absolutely refused to return under any conditions? A trained crew of workers could thus ruin an employer's business. It might take a manufacturer years to train new workers. All those angles must be remembered when such a subject is discussed.

It ought to be clear that the C.L.A. stand on the strike is not radical in any sense. And, its use would be very unlikely at any time. In all C.L.A. agreements provision is made for settlement of grievances through mediation or arbitration. So we are really arguing about a dead issue. Yes, brother C. H., the C.L.A. is willing to leave the final verdict to God. But, that does not mean, does it, that we may not in this life fight for the protection of our rights? Even Matthew 18 does not teach that. And did not Paul appeal to Caesar? And have not even churches been known to take certain matters to the courts? Is it fair than to condemn the C.L.A. because of its stand in regard to the strike question, after having presented it in an unfavorable light?

Brother C. H. finally asks the question: what must be done? That is a serious question. The unchristian unions are developing ever more power. The C.L.A.'s strength is insignificant compared to theirs. Its numbers are not anywhere near as large as the brother suggests. It will still be small even if all the workers of Reformed persuasion join it. That is not to discourage us, however. A small organization can do great things with the help of God. The way is still open for us to do much. The laws of our land are not entirely unfavorable to a Christian labor movement. Therefore the answer to the brother's question is:

JOIN US. Exert your influence in our organization, and through it upon the world around us! We welcome you.

Joseph Gritter,

Secretary, Christian Labor Association.

Calvin And The Burning Of Servetus

Upon the summit of the hill Champel, about a half hour journey from Geneva, stands a stone of granite, placed there to mark the spot where Servetus, the Spaniard was burned at the stake. There on a bright summer day of October 1553, out of a thick cloud of smoke that rose from a pile of smouldering wood, strewn with sulphur, screamed the tortured man: "Jesus, thou Son of the eternal God, have mercy on me!"—and died. In this cry we detect his blasphemy, as the reformer William Farel called to him: "Direct thy plea to the *Eternal* Son of God. Servetus denied the essential divinity of Christ. This pyre with its victim represented the final verdict of a bitter strife between Calvin and Servetus. "Just who was this man Servetus?" is one of three questions that will be answered in this writing, the other two being: "Was the apprehension, trial and punishment of the man also the work of Calvin?" and, "What is to be our appraisal of this affair?"

I. Servetus was perhaps one of the most remarkable men in the history of heresy. Quoting Schaff, "he was of medium size, thin and pale, like Calvin, his eyes beaming with intelligence, and an expression of melancholy and fanaticism. Owing to a physical rupture he was never married. He seems never to have had any particular friends, and stood isolated and alone."

His mental endowments and acquirements were of a high order, and placed him far above the heretics of his age and almost on an equality with the Reformers. He was a theologian, philosopher, geographer, physician, scientist and astrologer. His discoveries, writes Schaff, have immortalized his name in the history of science. He knew Latin, Greek, Hebrew as well as Spanish, French, Italian, and was well read in the Bible, the early fathers and the schoolmen. His style is frequently obscure. He accumulates arguments to an extent that destroys their effect. He gives eight arguments to prove that the saints in heaven pray for us; ten arguments to show that Melancton and his friends were sorcerers, blinded by the devil; twenty

arguments against infant baptism; twenty five reasons for the necessity of faith before baptism.

But Servetus was a heretic and a blasphemer. He denied and railed against the trinity. Thus he was a Socinian and Unitarian with leanings toward Pantheism. He was terribly bitter toward Calvin and frightfully abusive of him. In his notes to the council on the eighteenth of September, he over and over calls Calvin a liar, an imposter, a miserable wretch, a hypocrite, a disciple of Simon Magnus. Expressions as these occur: "Do you deny that you are a man-slayer? I will prove it by your acts. You dare not deny that you are a Simon Magnus. As for me, I am firm in so good a cause, and do not fear death. You deal with Sophistical arguments without Scripture. You do not understand what you say. You howl like a blind man in the desert. You lie, you lie, you lie, you ignorant calumniator. Madness is in you when you persecute to death. I wish that all madness were still in the belly of your mother. I wish I were free to make a catalogue of all your errors. Whosoever is not a Simon Magnus is considered a Pelagian by Calvin. All therefore who are in Christendom are damned by Calvin; even the apostles, their disciples the ancient doctors of the church and all the rest. Thou liest thou liest, thou liest, thou miserable wretch."

In setting forth the orthodox view of the Trinity, Servetus was equally as abusive. His fundamental doctrine was the absolute unity, simplicity and indivisibility of the Being of God in opposition to the tri-personality of Orthodoxy. He calls all Trinitarians "trithiests" and "Atheists". They have not one absolute God but a three-parted, collective, composite God, which is no God at all. They worship three idols of the demons—a three-headed monster.

2. We must read Calvin's own letters to determine whether he had a hand in the death of this heretic and if it appears that he did, to what extent he must be held co-responsible. There is first of all to be consulted Calvin's letter to Farel on the 26th of October, in which Calvin gives a brief summary of the result of Servetus' trial. The letter reads: "The messenger has returned from the Swiss churches. They are unanimous in pronouncing that Servetus has now renewed those impious errors with which Satan formerly disturbed the church, and that he is a monster not to be borne. Those of Basel are judicious. The Zurichers are the most vehement of all. They of Schaffhausen agree. To an appropriate letter from the Bernese is added one from the Senate in which they stimulate ours not a little. Caesar the comedian (so he sarcastically called Perrin), after feigning illness for three days, at length went up to the assembly in order to free that wretch (Servetus) from punishment. Nor was he ashamed to ask that the case be referred to the council of Two Hundred. However, Servetus was without

dissent condemned. He will be led forth to punishment tomorrow. We endeavored to alter the mode of his death, but in vain. Why we did not succeed, I defer for narration until I see you."

Mark the statements: "He (Servetus) is a wretch not to be borne. . . . Caesar went up to the assembly in order to free that wretch. . . . We endeavored to alter the mode—mark you, the mode—of death, but in vain." The attempt of Calvin was thus not to free Servetus. These expressions prove that Calvin approved and thus advised Servetus' death. For to approve, to consent to, is certainly to advise.

Not only dissenters and personal enemies, writes Schaff, but also, as Bazel discloses, some orthodox and pious people and friends of Calvin were dissatisfied with the severity of the punishment, and feared that it would justify and encourage the Romanists in their cruel persecution of the Protestants in France and elsewhere. So under these circumstances Calvin felt it to be his duty to defend his conduct, which he did in his work against Servetus. This work contains a paragraph that reads, "Whoever shall now contend that it is unjust to put heretics and blasphemers to death will knowingly and willingly incur their very guilt." Calvin is here writing in defence and justification of the death of Servetus.

This defence of Calvin did not altogether satisfy even some of Calvin's best friend. Zurkinden, the state secretary of Bern, wrote Calvin Feb. 10, 1554.

Calvin's reply reads: "I am aware that I have been more concise than usual in this treatise. However, if I should appear to have faithfully and honestly defended the true doctrine, it will more than recompense me for my trouble. But though the candor and justice which are natural to you, as well as your love towards me, lead you to judge of me favorably, there are others who assail me harshly as a monster in cruelty and atrocity, for attacking with my pen not only a dead man, but one who perished by my hands. Some wish that I had never entered upon the subject of the punishment of heretics and say that others in like situations have held their tongues as the best way of avoiding hatred. It is well however that I have you to share my fault, if a fault it be; for you it was who advised and persuaded me to it. Prepare yourself, therefore, for the combat."

Mark the sentence: "for attacking with my pen not only a dead man, but one who perished by my hands. . . ." This ought to be conclusive in the way of evidence that Calvin must be held wholly responsible for Servetus' death. Servetus, according to Calvin's own statement about himself, died by the hand of Calvin. Further investigation shows that the established facts are the following: 1) Calvin wished for a capital sentence: he had intimated this as early as 1546 in his letter to Farel. 2) He informed the Council

of Servetus arrival in Geneva. 3) He drew up the articles of indictment from the writings of Servetus at his own instance. 4) He maintained these when face to face with Servetus before the syndics. 5) The only power in Christendom that wished an acquittal were the Libertines. 6) Their object was the overthrow of the Reformation in Geneva. 7) The sentence of the council was grounded mainly on the political and social consequences of Servetus' teaching. 8) Calvin labored to substitute decapitation for burning.

3. What is to be our appraisal of this doing of Calvin? Some though they deplore the transaction and the share that Calvin had in it, are nevertheless reluctant to mete out to him the just amount of condemnation. The men of Calvin's world, they say, having just emerged from the night of ignorance and superstition of the Middle Ages, were still unaccustomed to the dazzling light of the Reformation and were thus blinded by it. They were unsteady in their going and sometimes stumbled. And Calvin was a child of his time. Attention is further called to the perverse influence brought to bear upon Calvin by his friends, by Bucer, Melancthon, Farel, Viret, and others. They were all along urging him to insist on the extreme penalty of death. Further, account must be taken of the madness of Servetus—his assailing with such atrocious blasphemy the persons of the trinity, and the horror of his abuse of Calvin's person. However, if the transaction was wrong, and if Calvin had a share in it, then he must not be exonerated on the grounds of attending extenuating circumstances, if such there were. As to Calvin's being a child of his time, fact is that he was far ahead of his time.

If it is wrong to minimize Calvin's guilt, if guilt he had, it is just as wrong to magnify his guilt by holding him responsible for the riotings of Servetus. And some do this. Calvin, it is said, had introduced in Geneva an order so theocratic, despotic, and destructive of personal freedom, that it is a marvel that he was not torn in pieces by the citizenry. He ruled with an iron hand saint and sinner alike. His set-up spelled religion by constraint. His aim was to fetter the licentiousness of the godless through the institution of the church. His striving was not according to the Scriptures, it is said. His zeal was carnal. The result was that men hated him. And he had no one to blame but himself.

These statements in their totality give us a wrong picture of Calvin's work in Geneva. It is not true that he strove to repress sin through the offices in the church. His set-up in Geneva was not, rightly considered, theocratic. His zeal was not carnal. He was no despot. But he was firm, unmoveable. If he had not been, the Reformation would soon have been driven out of Geneva. Let us present the facts. We first refer to the constitution—civil and ecclesiastical—of Geneva.

The civil-constitution. First came a convention of all citizens, termed the Council-general. To obviate the confusion incident to so large an assembly, a Council of two hundred was chosen by the people, termed the Great Council. Next came the Little or Ordinary Council, consisting of twenty five members and representing the four wards of the city. This last, the Council of twenty five, was the executive, judicial, and legislative power. This constitutional machinery was summed up thus—the People, the Council, and Senate of Geneva. Such was the republic of Geneva. The people, as was said, elected the Council of Two Hundred. This was changed and the election given to the council of twenty five. Calvin was strongly opposed to the change and urged the magistrates to again allow the Two Hundred to be voted by the people. And still Calvin is accused of introducing in Geneva a despotic constitution. But with what right?

Next to the Republic was the ecclesiastical authority introduced by Calvin. It was composed of five ministers and twelve elders. It had power only over the members of the church. It could only visit sins with censure and excommunication, by which is meant expulsion from the church. Calvin would not allow a particle of civil power to the Consistory nor, rightly considered, a particle of ecclesiastical power to the civil council. Thus he grasped the distinction between things civil and things ecclesiastical and placed the two under distinct powers. In this great question he stood ahead of all his predecessors. It is thus not true that in Geneva Calvin founded a theocratic state after the pattern of the Israelitish theocracy of the Old Testament dispensation. In a theocracy the civil power and the ecclesiastical power are one, the elder in the church is the king in the state and the king in the state is the elder in the church.

However, according to Calvin's conception, the civil magistrate derives his power from God. The Bible, that is, the first as well as the second table of the law, is the supreme code also of the state, and thus it is the calling of the civil magistrate to punish the blasphemer as well as the murder and the thief. Yet the Romish idea that heresy is to be punished as heresy—is to be smitten by the sword, though it should exist only in the depth of one's bosom, was not Calvin's. He would have the heretic punished only when he promulgates his opinions to the disturbance and great hurt of society. Thus Calvin was also tolerant. And this accounts for it that even while advising Servetus' death at the hand of the civil magistrate, he tolerated the unitarian Socinius. This discrimination must not certainly be ascribed to Calvin's bitterly hating Servetus on account of the latter's abuse of his person. Calvin was the kind of a man, who would have gone through with Servetus's case, though the latter had been his very son. Attend to these words from Calvin's pen:

"It is not in vain that He (God) banishes all those human affections which soften our hearts; that he commands paternal love and all the benevolent feelings between brothers, relations, and friends to cease; in a word, that He almost deprives men of their nature in order that nothing may hinder their holy zeal. Why is so implacable a severity exacted but that we may know that God is defrauded of His honor, unless the piety that is due to him be preferred to all human duties, and that when His glory is to be asserted, humanity must almost be obliterated from our memories". (Quoted from Calvin's work against Servetus). Truly, these are remarkable words, that came from one of the most remarkable saints of all time. Calvin, let it be repeated, was a god-intoxicated man. In advising Servetus' death, he was constrained by the love of Christ and devotion to his calling. And his conviction was that he acted out of right principle. "Whoever", wrote Calvin, "shall now contend that it is unjust to put heretics and blasphemers to death will knowingly and willingly incur their very guilt."

That it is the calling of the civil magistrate to maintain both tables of the law of God, that it is thus his duty to punish also heretics, was with Calvin a vital principle of truth. It was out of this principle that he consciously acted, when he advised Servetus' death. Did Calvin do wrong? Was he in error? He was if this principle is a lying principle. But is it? Before we condemn Calvin for advising Servetus' death, this will first have to be proven.

Now a word about Calvin's iron yoke with which he provided the magistracy of Geneva that the latter might impose it upon the citizenry. This yoke was Calvin's code of morals. It forbade games of chance, oaths and blasphemies, dances, lascivious songs, farces and masquerade. Taverns had to close at nine o'clock, and every one was to be at home at this time. All were enjoined to attend sermon. Geneva had great need of reform when Calvin arrived. They indulged here in all sorts of excesses. This then was Calvin's theocratic state—a state founded on the principle that its rulers derive their authority from God and have the calling to enforce the whole moral law of God. At the time of Calvin's death, the city of Geneva had become an ideal community, as all the libertines had moved out, and as their places had been taken by people of an opposite spirit who had come to the city from all over Europe.

G. M. O.

NOTICE

As is customary, the Standard Bearer is not published on the 15th of July and the 15th of August.

The Living Creatures (Cherubim) In Ezekiel 1 And 10

In my previous article I presented what may be collected from the scripture on the above-cited subject—arranging my remarks under the following divisions:

1. The description of the structure of these creatures.
2. The names applied to them.
3. The position assigned to them.
4. Their function.

The first three of these divisions have been adequately dealt with. Thus we now pass on to division 4. The function or agency of the cherubim is set forth in the following statement: As the constant attendants of Jehovah, their task is to champion, vindicate and guard His holiness. Hence, when the Lord is in His holy temple, they are there, saying day and night, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was and is and is to come. And when He cometh forth out of His place—the most holy place of His sanctuary—to tread in His anger upon the high places of the earth on account of the transgressions of His people, the cherubim come with Him and exercise instrumentally His sovereign authority in judgment.

Let us now show how that the truth of these statements is born out by all that is known of the cherubim from Ezekiel's visions and from other portions of Holy Writ. We turn first to these visions. In the year 597 B. C., a Babylonian army, with Nebuchadnezzar at its head, stood before the gates of Jerusalem. The siege ended in capitulation. A large portion of the people of Judah—the king and his mother, the army and the nobility, a section of the priests and the prophets, and all the skilled artisans—were transported to Babylonia. So was the nation broken up into two parts, the one in Judah and the other in Babylon. Between the two sections of the people, there was not much to choose, in point of religious belief and practice. In both places the majority were steeped in idolatry. Many were conformed to the heathen around, and only a small minority were steadfast in their allegiance to Jehovah. False prophets appeared in Babylon to assure the exiles that Jeremiah had taken too gloomy a view of matters, spoken with exaggeration of seventy years' bondage under Babylon. They prophesied of a speedy restoration to their place among the people of God in Judea. Those who remained behind boasted of the enjoyment of the holy land, of the possession of the temple at Jerusalem; they boasted of being the faithful worshippers of Jehovah; while upon the captives, who had given ear to Jeremiah there might fall the suspicion of being traitors, or at least persons who had been unconsciously misled. The foolish imaginings of the captives were thoroughly

welcome to those still dwelling in Palestine; they dreamt like dreams, the power of Egypt to bring deliverance had currency with them too, and false prophets and soothsayers found acceptance also in their midst. Thus the Israelites would not understand the meaning of God's judgments by which they already had been overtaken, nor take to heart the lessons which the prophecy of nearly two centuries had striven to inculcate. Even after this first deportation in 597 B.C., the Israelites in Palestine persisted in defiling God's sanctuary with all their detestable things, and with all their abominations (Ezek .5:11), and in filling the land with violence (8:17). "Son of man", said the Lord to Ezekiel, "I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation. . . . they and their fathers have transgressed against me, *even unto this very day*. For they are impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thus shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord. . . . And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house. And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious." chap. 2). Therefore shall Jerusalem be destroyed. Woe to the bloody city! The Lord will make the pile for fire great (24:9). He will set the point of a sharp and bright sword against her, the sword of the king of Babylon (chap. 21). Her inhabitants and the inhabitants of the land of Israel "shall eat their bread with carefulness, and drink their water with astonishment, that her land may be desolate from all that is therein, because of the violence of all them that dwell therein. And the cities that are inhabited shall be laid waste, and the land shall be desolate; and ye shall know that I am the Lord" (12:19, 20).

Only eleven years after the first deportation these prophecies began to go into fulfillment. In 586 B. C., the final capture of Jerusalem took place. Then the community of the exile was greatly increased by means of the still more extensive deportation which was decreed for Judah by Ezekiel and the other prophets. What during the preceding eleven years had upheld the sinful pride of the nation, now came to the ground. Stern reality blasted the hope of which they had dreamed. Their trust in human help received a deadly blow.

Ezekiel was one of the priests who went into captivity in the year 597, and the whole of his prophetic career falls after that event and was followed in exile. He was thus a prophet of the exile. But it was not till the fifth year of his captivity that the Lord by vision and by word of mouth communicated to him an independent message. The prophet tells us that he was

among the captives by the river Chebar, when the heavens were opened and he saw visions of God. It was a terrifying picture that presented itself to him. He saw approaching a storm that brought together great clouds, the interior of which was formed of a strong brisk fire, which spread its brightness round about. The storm-cloud coming as it did from the north was an allusion to the Chaldeans coming from the north against Jerusalem. It thus served, did this cloud, as a visible symbol of the impending judgments of God. It was out of the intensive fire of this cloud—this herald of divine judgment and token of the holiness of God in its reaction against sin—that the four "living creatures" were formed. And as in the holy of holies of the tabernacle and of the temple, the vision culminates in the *enthronement of Jehovah in His glory*. A thrice-repeated advance makes itself known. The first time the fire-cloud (vs. 4). The second time the fire-picture of the cherubim (vss. 13-17). The third: The likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creatures (vs. 22) and the throne above the firmament (vs. 26) and the fire-bright appearance of the *Glorious One* thereon, the description of which terminates in: "As the appearance of the bow. . . ." If in the tabernacle God's throne—the mercy-seat—was bounded on either side by the cherubim and covered with their wings, in the vision of Ezekiel the position given to the throne is above the cherubim, and high above the heavens, the reason for this being that the latter manifestation was for betokening the sovereignty and universality of the dignity and the power of God in judgment and the cherubim as God's submissive and willing agents in the exercise of this power. So the cherubim appear again in the 10th chapter of Ezekiel, namely, as the co-workers of God in the revelation of His wrath over all ungodliness of the carnal Israel that still dwelt in Palestine after the first deportation. What is presented in this chapter is to be regarded as the second act in the prophet's vision, the first act of which (chap. 9) was a massacre of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, without distinction of age or rank or sex. But the judgment discriminates carefully between the righteous and the wicked. The Lord called to the "man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side to go through the midst of Jerusalem and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof." The man is followed by the six destroyers whom the Lord had summoned to His side to execute His purpose. They smite, do these destroyers. Their eyes do not spare, neither have they pity. But they come not near any man upon whom was the mark.

The second act of judgment consists in the destruction of Jerusalem by fire (chap. 10). The prophet looked and, behold, in the firmament that was above

the head of the cherubim there appeared over them as it were a sapphire stone, as the appearance of the likeness of a throne. And he—the Lord—spoke unto the man clothed with linen and said, Go in between the wheels, even under the cherub, and fill thine hand with coals of fire from between the cherubims and scatter them over the city. . . . and it came to pass, that when he had commanded the man clothed with linen, saying, Take fire from between the wheels, from between the cherubims; then he went in, and stood between the wheels. And one cherubim stretched forth his hand from between the cherubim unto the fire that was between the cherubims, and took thereof, and put it into the hands of him that was clothed with linen: who took it, and went out."

It is to be noticed that the wrath of God, symbolized by the fire, and by which Jerusalem is destroyed, is between the cherubim, and further that it is one of the cherubim who takes thereof and puts it into the hands of the priestly man, who goes out and scatters it over the city. Needless to say, what in the vision is accomplished through the agency of the destroying angels—the massacre of the Jews and the destruction of Jerusalem—is brought to pass in history through the agency of the Chaldeans.

In chapter 15 of Revelation the action with which the cherubim are connected is entirely similar to that ascribed to them in the vision of Ezekiel. John saw another sign in heaven "great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; And one of the four beasts (cherubim) gave to the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God. . . ." Nor is the action attributed to the cherubim in the 6th chapter of Revelation—the action connected with the seven-sealed book—essentially different. The book is the word of Him who is the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last. Its contents, which we learn from the contents of the seven seals as they are successively disclosed in the following chapters, shows that it represents the coming and triumph of Christ's kingdom over all the opposing forces of darkness. The first seal, when opened, presents the Divine King coming forth conquering and to conquer—the victorious march knows no interruption—and the last exhibits every foe vanquished. As they successively open, each of the cherubim on its turn calls aloud not, as in the Authorized version, "Come and see", but simply, as in the Revised Version "*Come!*"

The call is directed to the symbolic agencies in the vision and is expressive of the desire that they go forth on their destructive course, that the enemies of the kingdom of righteousness may be subdued and the kingdom established among men. The same zeal characterizes the cherubim in the further use made of them in the Revelation. They ceaselessly proclaim, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and

is to come", and thus show it to be their calling to declare the holiness of God, that virtue of His according to which He is infinitely removed from moral corruption and wholly consecrated to Himself. They give honor and glory and thanks to Him that sitteth on the throne and join in with the elders in the new song that was sung to the Lamb for the benefits of His salvation.

Finally, all this varied action thus far ascribed to the cherubim is in full harmony with the use made of them also in the book of Genesis in connection with the tree of life. As the fallen man was separated from the beholding of God, and from the possession of the essential life, that is, the righteousness that avails with God, the "Lord placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life," i.e. to guard paradise, with the tree of life that was therein, and protect them from the approach of sinners. Though the meaning is not the *cherubim with the flaming sword in hand* (though this is not at all improbable, as there are places in which the Hebrew uses the connective Vau (and) where one would expect the preposition *with*), yet certainly the thought set forth is clearly that the cherubim as well as the sword were for the purpose of rendering the garden and in particular the tree of life inaccessible to fallen man. For only one action—to keep—is predicated of both instruments (the sword and the cherubim). If therefore it is quite arbitrary to say that the cherubim alone had to do the keeping, it is just as arbitrary to say, and this in order to supply with a foundation the view that the cherubim were symbols of hope and mercy, that their office was to occupy the garden—that portion of it that formed the pathway to the tree of life—and that the defense against intrusion was exclusively connected with the flaming sword.

4. No such creatures as the cherubim exist in the actual world. Whom do they then represent? The question has occasioned many different interpretations. There is the *traditional* interpretation of the *ancient school*, viz. *angels*, in which mention is made of the four classes of heavenly hosts, as leaders of which Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, Raphael. The *historical* interpretation, viz. of the four *world-monarchies*, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, which are said to be represented by the wheels, while the cherubim are the heavenly spirits of these kingdoms. According to the interpretation of the ancient church, the cherubim are the four evangelists. According to Luther, the vision of Ezekiel is nothing else than the revelation of the kingdom of Christ here upon earth in all the four quarters of the whole world. Some have even found the four ensigns of the camp of Israel in the cherubim, others Nebuchadnezzar himself; the king as man flew like an eagle, imposed the yoke of an ox, and became cruel like

the lion. Then there is the interpretation according to which the cherubim are "emblematical of the ever-blessed Trinity in covenant to redeem man". According to another opinion the cherubim represent not the Godhead personally, but the attributes and perfections of God. Then there is the view according to which the three animal forms, as grafted on that of man as the trunk, symbolize the raised and ennobled nature of redeemed humanity in the state of glory. Finally, some conceive of the cherubim simply as the images of redeemed humanity.

It ought not to be at all difficult to learn from the Scriptures just what the cherubim represent. For Holy Writ speaks plainly enough. The cherubim were not angels; for in the Revelation they are expressly distinguished from the angels. Nor do they represent the church of the redeemed, the redeemed humanity. For in the vision of John the church is represented by the four and twenty elders, and the cherubim are distinguished also from the latter. Yet the cherubim have an interest in the redemptive work of God, for they join with the elders in singing that new song that was sung to the Lamb for the benefits of His salvation. "And when he—the Lamb—had taken the book, the four living creatures (cherubim) and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb. . . . And they sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book. . . . for thou wert slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation. . . ." Hence it cannot be otherwise than that the cherubim represent the inanimate and the irrational creature of which the apostle says in his epistle to the Romans, that it travaileth in pain until now. (8:19-22). The cherubim represent this creature—the creation exclusive of men and the angels, thus the earth and its fulness—the earth with sea, mountain and valley, with all its treasure of gold and silver, with all its powers both hidden and revealed, with all its products of grain and fruit and herbs, with trees and flowers and plants; with sun, moon and stars; the world with its day and night, light and darkness, spring, summer, fall and winter; the earth with all its irrational creatures, the animals of the field and the beasts of the forests; birds and creeping things and the fishes;—all these thousands together, in connection with one another, as the perpetually active whole of the inanimate and irrational creation. This creature, says the apostle (vs. 10) earnestly expects and waits for the manifestation of the sons of God in glory in the appearing of Christ. For then, too, it will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. And in the Revelation, in the vision of John, the creature, as represented by the cherubim, praises the Lamb. This must not be taken to mean that animals and stones, in reality sing praises to God. Yet in the

vision of John the ox, the eagle and the lion, as well as the fourth creature with the face of man, do praise. But this takes place only in the vision not in reality. The truth conveyed is that also the creature is related to salvation, that from the redemption of the church it, too, profits. Therefore in this vision it is presented as joining with the elders in eulogizing the Lamb. So it is also plain that the creature is incapable of rational expectation. The truth conveyed here is that the creature, now in bondage, will be delivered.

The creature was made subject to vanity by God and on account of man, and this unwillingly, that is, not by its own choice. It was man who chose vanity. Further the creature is in bondage to corruption, lies in the service of death, because it lies in the service of fallen man. Hence, it sighs and groans and suffers, and travaileth in pain until now, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God.

In the visions of Ezekiel and of John the creature is represented as cooperating with Jehovah in the revelation of His wrath over the enemies of the true seed. This is in perfect agreement with its earnest expectation. And the truth set forth is that the inanimate and irrational creature—thus that *all* things—are now in Christ's hands and are used by him for promotion of the ends of His kingdom and are all made to work together for good to them that love God. Hence, the psalmist declares, speaking of this creature in relation to Jehovah, "O Lord, my God, thou art very great. Thou clothest thyself with splendour and glory, wrapping thyself round with light as a garment,—who maketh clouds his chariots, walketh upon the wings of the wind, maketh His messengers wind, His servants flaming fire (Ps. 104)". "Fire devoureth before him, and round about him it is very tempestuous; He calleth the heaven from above and the earth, to judge his people,—and the heavens declare his righteousness (Ps. 100)". "He bowed the heavens and came down, and cloudy darkness was under his feet, and He rode upon the cherub and did fly, and was poised upon the wings of the wind" (Ps. 18). The cherub is the concentrated creaturehood of all the distinct creatures made mention of in these Psalms.

And the Lord, so the psalmist declares, rides upon the cherub. This is but another way of saying that all creatures—the inanimate and irrational creature—are his ministers. The human appearance of the cherubim must signify the animal intelligence of this creature. Next to man this creature attains to the apex of its glory in the ox, the lion and the eagle.

G. M. O.

Het geloof is een ster, die het helderst in den nacht der aanvechting blinkt.