

THE STANDARD *Bearer* A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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MEDITATION

Far Off . . . Brought Nigh

Wherefore remember that ye being in times past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

Eph. 2:11-13.

Wherefore remember!

Because ye are saved by pure grace

Because it is not of works, lest any man should boast

Because ye were dead through trespasses and sins, wherein ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience

Because there was nothing on your part that made you worthy before God of anything but damnation, while you walked in the lusts of the flesh, and fulfilled the desires of the flesh and of the mind, so that by nature ye were mere children of wrath even as all men

Because it was the revelation of the rich mercy of God, and of His great love wherewith He loved us even then, when we were dead in sins, that we were quickened together with Christ, and raised up together, and placed together with Him in heavenly places; and because the revelation of this exceeding great kindness and grace toward us in Christ Jesus

is the purpose of it all, in order that He alone may be glorified

Therefore remember!

Never forget your past!

Bear constantly in mind from what depth of darkness and hopelessness you have been saved and delivered into your present state of liberty and hope and joy!

Let nothing of yourselves ever enter into the work which was purely a revelation of God's mercy!

Let it be perfectly clear before your consciousness that, when God saved you, your salvation was impossible as far as you were concerned!

And, too, never forget the deep misery of your condition in that former state!

In order that the glorious grace of God may be extolled!

For by grace are ye saved

Wherefore remember!

Far off ye were!

O, how far: absolutely separated!

Even your flesh witnessed to the fact that ye were far off, for in the flesh ye were Gentiles, uncircumcised.

And that which is called the Circumcision, and which is made by hands, which, therefore, was also in the flesh, even that despised you and expressed your despicable state by calling you the Uncircumcision!

Far off ye were from the commonwealth of Israel, and from the covenants of promise, aliens and strangers ye were to that commonwealth and to those covenants, having no part in them whatever!

Such was your legal state.

For God had established His covenant with Israel, exclusively

The *covenants*, the apostle writes, in the plural. Not, indeed, as if there were many covenants, for the covenant is one. There is only one God, and one Christ, and one covenant of God with His people; and this is the everlasting covenant of friendship of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. But this one covenant

is revealed repeatedly and in different forms throughout the old dispensation. It is revealed as a covenant of friendship even in Paradise, when God promises that He will set enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. It is revealed to Noah, who found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and who walked with God, as a covenant that will be made with all creation, embrace every creature, and that will continue in the line of Noah's seed. It is revealed to Abraham, as the covenant that will continue in the line of, and that will be definitely fulfilled in his seed, so that in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed. It is revealed to Isaac and Jacob, to Israel at Sinai, where the seed of Abraham is constituted into the "commonwealth of Israel," it is revealed to the king after God's heart as "the sure mercies of David".

It is finally realized in Christ!

One covenant frequently "covenanted".

And they are "the covenants of promise"! The covenant is called a covenant of promise, not because the essence of the covenant is the promise, the realization of which would be contingent on our acceptance of it. For the essence of the covenant of God is the fellowship of friendship which is a reflection of His own glorious triune life of perfect communion. But, in the first place, the apostle is writing about the dispensation of the Old Testament, when reality had not yet come, when all the blessings of salvation, when the covenant itself still existed in the form of shadows, and the people of God looked forward in hope for the realization of all things. The covenant was a matter of promise. And, secondly, even though God's covenant is centrally realized now, in the new dispensation, through the blood and in the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, with a view to the final revelation of the blessedness and glory of that covenant it still remains a promise, and will remain such until the heavenly commonwealth shall be realized, and the tabernacle of God shall be with men!

That covenant had been established with, and limited to the generations of Abraham!

And it had been very definitely circumscribed and exclusively defined by the law!

Of that definite limitation circumcision had been the sign!

No, indeed, not as if all that were children of Abraham according to the flesh were also children of the promise. Such was never, and such will never be the case. There were, indeed, those that were Israelites in the flesh only, even as by the absence of circumcision the heathen were Gentiles in the flesh. And many there were who boasted of this circumcision made by hands, as if their carnal relation to the commonwealth of Israel had any saving significance. And it was this "so-called Circumcision," that which is called Circumcision made by hands, that

looked with disdain upon the Uncircumcision. But even in the old dispensation no flesh had any reason to glory in the presence of God. The children of the promise only were counted for the seed. Yet, the law of circumcision was exclusive. All that belonged to the commonwealth of Israel received the sign of circumcision in the flesh; and all that lived outside of the scope of circumcision were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel!

This, then, was the state of the Gentiles before they were brought nigh by the blood of Christ.

No right had they to the circumcision.

No part did they have with the blessings of the constituted theocracy.

The covenants of promise did not concern them!

Absolutely separated from it all were they!

Far off, indeed!

Far off!

Far off!

And, O, the misery of it!

The Ephesian Christians knew historically what it meant to be aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise; for they had been Gentiles in the flesh.

In that historical sense, we, who are born in the line of the covenant of God and thus, from our infancy by God's grace, brought nigh through the blood of Christ, cannot remember this state of alienation. But we, too, can remember! For we know what we are by nature: dead through trespasses and sins. And we know the spiritual misery and hopelessness of it all.

Without Christ!

Having no hope!

Without God in the world!

In these three phrases the apostle sums up the elements in the miserable, inexpressibly sad and desperate condition of those that are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel.

Without Christ, separated from Him, having no connection with Him, no claim on Him. This is mentioned first, because it is basic. Of course, Christ, the Messiah, is the promise *par excellence* of the covenant of God with His people. And if the covenant is limited by the law of circumcision, Gentiles in the flesh have no part with this covenant of promise. And if they are strangers to this covenant, they are strangers to the promise: they are separate from Christ. They cannot reach Him, embrace Him, believe on Him, hope in Him. And to be without Christ means to be outside of the sphere in which the blood of atonement and reconciliation is valid, outside of the sphere of the Spirit of Christ, the sphere of life, the sphere of redemption and of resurrection. . . .

Without Christ!

And, therefore, without hope!

O, the unspeakable misery expressed in that brief phrase: without hope! For notice, that the apostle does not specify the expression. He does not say: without the hope of eternal life; or simply: without *the* hope. No, he leaves the matter unlimited: without hope. He that is an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, a stranger to the covenant of promise, and who is, therefore, separated from Christ, what hope has he? He has no hope at all! There is no hope, no ground of hope, no possibility of hope, no room for hope in this world without Christ!

It may seem different.

Or rather, the ungodly, he that is without Christ, may simulate hope, may act as if he, too, is full of hope. "Hope springs eternal in the human breast." We are children of time. And always we move onward. In the present we cannot rest. And because of that very fact, and because death is in every moment of our life, is always in the present moment, the present never satisfies. And so man always looks forward in time. He stretches Himself to some future moment. And always, whenever that future moment has become present, it disappoints: in it, too, is death. And again he looks toward the future to bring him the desired rest and satisfaction. He hopes and always lives in expectation. . . .

But in vain!

For that death, that is present in every moment of his existence, compasses him about on every side!

There is no way out!

The only way out is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

But he is without Christ!

His expectation perishes, always perishes when it seems to be realized; perishes finally in death, eternal desolation!

Without Christ. . . without hope in the world!

Without God!

No, indeed, not without a god the Gentiles were in the world. They were not atheists in the strict sense of the term. Many were the gods they had invented, and in whom they attempted to put their trust. But without God, without the living God, were they in the world. And again, without God they were, not in the sense that anyone will ever be able to rid himself of God. He is everywhere. He encompasses us. He meets us. He demands that He shall be acknowledged as God, glorified and feared with thanksgiving. He surrounds us in His wrath. He is our terror. A consuming fire is He. . . .

But without the God of our salvation, separated from His favor in which there is life!

Without His saving help!

And that, too, in this world, full of sin and death!

O, the misery!

But now!

Ye who were so far off are made nigh!

Ye, who were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel in the past, now have been received as citizens of the kingdom of heaven!

Ye, who were strangers to the covenants of promise, now have been included in the number of those with whom God establishes His everlasting covenant of friendship. And the promises, which in times past were limited to those that were comprised within the law of the circumcision, now have been extended to you!

Ye, that were without God in the world, now may call Him your God, and He will not be ashamed! He is for you! His friendship embraces you! His saving love encompasses you! He is the God of your salvation in the midst of this world of darkness, sin and death! And you seek Him, and thirst after Him as a hart panteth after water brooks!

Ye, that were without hope, now have become heirs of the incorruptible, undefilable inheritance, that never fadeth away, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead! The darkness is passed and the light of hope that maketh not ashamed now shines!

From afar ye were brought nigh; from strangers ye were made citizens; from children of wrath ye were transformed into dear children of God's marvellous love; from death ye were called into everlasting life; from darkness ye were translated into light; from the despair of hell ye were lifted to the heights of the hope of eternal glory!

All in Christ!

O, yes, He is Abraham's seed, the Seed of the promise, the Head of the commonwealth of Israel, the central realization of the covenant of promise. In Him all the promises of God are Yea and Amen! To be in Him means to be reckoned in Him, and to have a right to all the blessings of the covenant. And to be in Him signifies, too, to become one plant with Him, to be ingrafted into Him, to live out of Him, to become partakers of all His benefits. In Him we are brought nigh to the covenant that was established with Abraham and his seed, for in Him we are indeed the seed of Abraham, and children of the promise!

And through His blood!

For in that blood there is the end of the law of circumcision, and the reconciliation of all whom the Father gave Him from before the foundation of the world, not only of the Jews, but also of the Gentiles!

Wherefore remember! Lest flesh should glory in His presence!

By grace are ye saved!

Soli Deo gloria!

H. H.

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CONTENTS

	Page
MEDITATION —	
FAR OFF . . . BROUGHT NIGH	489
Rev. H. Hoeksema.	
EDITORIALS —	
AANGAANDE ONZE ZENDING	492
VOOR ALLEN DIE IN HOOGHEID ZIJN	494
Rev. H. Hoeksema.	
EXPOSITION OF THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM	495
Rev. H. Hoeksema.	
THE DREAM AS A MEDIUM OF REVELATION	498
LUTHER'S DEFENCE BEFORE THE DIET OF	
WORMS	501
Rev. G. M. Ophoff.	
THE VALUE OF SERIES PREACHING	504
Rev. J. Blankespoor.	
CHOOSING A VOCATION	506
Rev. R. Veldman	
CURRENT EVENTS	509
Rev. H. De Wolf	
NIEUWS VAN ONZE KERKEN.....	510
Mr. S. De Vries	
INGEZONDEN	512
Mr. J. B. VanderWal	

EDITORIALS

Aangaande Onze Zending

Het is thans misschien niet een ongeschikte tijd, om iets te schrijven over onze zending, en met name over de beste methode om ons zendingswerk te verichten. We hebben op het oogenblik geen zendeling leeraar in het veld, en of Ds. Vos de roeping zal aannemen, weet ik op dit oogenblik nog niet. We kunnen dus schrijven zonder gevaar te loopen, dat onze ontboezemingen zullen worden opgevat als kritiek op den arbeid van den zendingleeraar, en zonder van verkeerde motieven te worden verdacht, zooals anders zoo gemakkelijk het geval is. Des te gereeder vind ik aanleiding om thans iets over deze zaak, die ons als kerken natuurlijk allen ter harte gaat, iets te schrijven, omdat Ds. Kok in de *Standard Bearer* van 1 Aug. 11 een program van actie aanbeval, waarmee ik het niet eens kan zijn. Het laat zich thans gemakkelijker verstaan, dat dit artikel geen kritiek bedoelt te zijn op den arbeid, die in de laatste vijf jaren door genoemden leeraar werd verricht, doch op het program, dat hij in genoemd nummer van ons blad voor de toekomst aanbeval. En dan heb ik bepaald het oog op het punt den tijd betreffende, dien de zendingleeraar op een bepaalde plaats zou moeten werken, eer het tot organisatie eener gemeente zou mogen komen, zoowel als den tijd, dien de zendeling na de organisatie nog op dezelfde plaats zou moeten werkzaam zijn. Ds. Kok oordeelt het "advisable for the home missionary to labor in a certain community from six months to a year before organizing a new Protestant Reformed congregation." En hij heeft daarvoor hoofdzakelijk twee redenen: "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 gives him time to instruct and indoctrinate those who truly love our Reformed truth, that (to whom? H. H.) we as Protestant Reformed Churches must make our appeal". Ds. Kok acht het dus aanbevelingswaardig, dat wanneer de zendingleeraar een geopende deur vind op eene zekere plaats, hij daar minstens van een half jaar tot een jaar zal werken, en zijn arbeid tot dien beperkten kring zal bepalen, eer het tot het organizeeren eener gemeente kan komen. En ook oordeelt hij het aanbevelingswaardig "that the home missionary stay with the newly organized congregation for some time" nadat de gemeente tot stand kwam.

Nu is het natuurlijk onmogelijk om te bepalen,

hoe lang de zendelingleeraar op een bepaalde plaats en in een beperkten kring zal arbeiden. Dat hangt af van de omstandigheden. Het kan zijn, dat hij zich zijn arbeidsveld ziet aangewezen in eene omgeving, waarin hoegenaamd geen contact met ons was, en waar men van onze zaak niets afweet. En in zulk eene omgeving kan spoeding eene geopende deur den zendelingleeraar worden geboden, of het kan zijn, dat men hem hoegenaamd geen plaats geeft. Het kan ook zijn, dat in de omgeving, waar de zendelingleeraar begint te arbeiden, menschen gevonden worden, die meer of min met onze zaak op de hoogte en haar toegedaan zijn. En zelfs kan het zijn, dat er van eene zekere groep zelf de actie uitging om den zendeling te laten komen, om in haar midden te arbeiden. Al deze verschillende omstandigheden zullen natuurlijk heel wat invloed hebben op den tijd, die noodig is om tot het organiseren eener gemeente te komen. Ook is het zeker eene al te dwaze gedachte (zoals ik ergens meen gelezen te hebben), dat er van onzen zendelingleeraar verwacht zou kunnen worden, dat hij ongeveer elke vijf of zes weken eene gemeente zou organiseren. Deze gedacht is zelfs zoo dwaas, dat het noemen er van zelf dwaas is.

Maar aan den anderen kant meen ik, dat we zeker niet als regel moeten stellen, en als program van actie moeten aanbevelen, dat de zendelingleeraar bepaald van een half jaar tot een jaar op eene zekere plaats zou moeten werken, eer het tot de organisatie eener gemeente mag komen. En ik heb hiervoor ook mijne redenen. In de eerste plaats geloof ik niet, dat het tot den arbeid des zendelingleeraars behoort, om eene zekere groep door en door te indoctrineeren in de Gereformeerde waarheid. Dat is een blijvend werk, dat moet worden verricht door den predikant, die den zendelingleeraar opvolgt. In de tweede plaats geloof ik ook niet, dat dit noodig is, eer het tot organiseren eener gemeente kan komen. Wat wel noodig is, is, dat zij, die tot eene gemeente georganiseerd worden, het verschil duidelijk zien tusschen de gereformeerde waarheid en de Drie Punten. In de derde plaats wil het mij niet aan, dat het van een half jaar tot een jaar vereischt, om menschen, die de gereformeerde waarheid liefhebben en dus kennen, dat verschil duidelijk te maken. Het is best mogelijk, dat ten tijde der organisatie eener gemeente niet allen in gelijke mate de dingen verstaan, en dat meerderen eerst door verder onderwijs door den leeraar, die door zulk eene gemeente wordt beroepen en bediend, een helder inzicht erlangen in de dwaling der Drie Punten. Doch hierop behoeft de organisatie eener gemeente niet te wachten. Er zijn in een zekere groep altijd leidende geesten, die aanstonds de waarheid verstaan, en die daarom ook leiding geven; en anderen, die de waarheid wel liefhebben, maar uit leerstellig oogpunt niet scherp zijn, en die dus achter de leiders aankomen. Dat blijft

zoo. En waar zulk een toestand bestaat, daar moet m.i. eene gemeente worden geïnstitueerd. In de vierde plaats, behoeft het ook geen half jaar of een jaar te nemen om hen te ontdekken, die uit verkeerde motieven zich zouden willen aansluiten. In de meeste omgevingen zijn dezulken wel bekend. En sluiten zich er ten slotte toch bij de gemeente aan, die niet meegaan uit beginsel, welnu, die worden later ook wel ontdekt en gaan weer heen. Dat mag soms eenige moeite veroorzaken. Doch dat is altijd zoo geweest, ook bij de gemeenten, die door middel van den apostel Paulus tot stand kwamen. In de vijfde plaats geloof ik ook niet, dat een zendelingleeraar geruimen tijd na de organisatie in eene gemeente moet blijven. Het is te verstaan, dat er sentimenteele redenen zijn, waarom zulk eene nieuw georganiseerde gemeente de zendelingleeraar liefst geruimen tijd in haar midden houdt. Er zijn banden gelegd. Maar er is aan zijn blijven in de gemeente geen behoefte. Hij toeve tot hij aan de gemeente raad en hulp heeft verleend om op gang te komen; maar indien mogelijk make de gemeente aanstonds een drietal en beroep een leeraar, die haar verder kan onderwijzen en fundeeren in de waarheid. In de zesde plaats meen ik, dat dit ook naar de Schrift is. De verschillende zendingsreizen van den apostel Paulus b.v. hebben slechts betrekkelijk weinige jaren in beslag genomen, maar vele gemeenten kwamen er door zijn arbeid tot stand onder den zegen des Heeren.

Men versta mij niet verkeerd. Ik heb het over een regel van arbeiden. Het kan best zijn, dat met den meest getrouwen arbeid door den zendelingleeraar er in geen jaren nieuwe gemeenten worden geïnstitueerd. Maar daar gaat het niet over. Doch dat we als regel moeten stellen, dat geene gemeente kan worden georganiseerd, totdat de zendelingleeraar een half jaar of een jaar in den te organiseren kring heeft gearbeid, dat wil mij niet aan. In geen geval vind ik het aanbevelingswaardig om zulk een regel vast te stellen.

H. H.

NOTICE

The annual meeting of the R. F. P. A. will be held Thursday, September 17, at 7:45 P. M. Two board members will be chosen from the following nomination: A. Wychers, Wm. Koster, A. Dekker, R. Newhouse. Please assist the agent who will be there at 7:15 by paying your membership or subscription fees at this meeting. Rev. H. Hoeksema will address us with a short speech. All members and subscribers are urgently requested to attend this annual meeting and show their interest by being present. Rev. Jonker and O. Faber were appointed Auditing Committee. The Board.

Voor Allen Die In Hoogheid Zijn

In een "Ingezonden" brengt Mr. VanderWal van Redlands de dikwijls besproken kwestie ter sprake van de roeping van den Christen om te bidden voor "de hooge overheid". Nu is er misschien niets, dat gemakkelijker tot allerlei verschil van gedachten, maar ook tot praktische moeilijkheden leidt, dan de kwestie van het gebed, dat "hoogste stuk der dankbaarheid," en vooral, wanneer het gaat over een publiek gebed, dat één voor allen moet uitspreken, en voor het oor der gansche wereld. Persoonlijke overwegingen, private aangelegenheden, menselijke opinies en overtuigingen, beide van den liturg, die het gebed uitsprekt, en van de hoorders, moeten in zulk een gebed worden uitgeschakeld, om zich alleen te houden aan datgene, wat naar den Woorde Gods vaststaat ten allen tijde en in alle omstandigheden.

Nu heb ik persoonlijk met I Tim. 2:1-4 (vs. 4 hoort er bij) geen moeite. En vooral niet, zooals het door gereformeerden in den regel werd verklaard. Immers beteekent "alle menschen" daar niet allen hoofd voor hoofd, maar "alle klassen van menschen". Naar die verklaring nu wordt in het tweede vers niet op bepaalde personen, noch ook op eene bepaalde overheid gedoeld, maar op de klasse van menschen, die in hoogheid zijn. Er staat dan ook niet "voor den koning", maar "voor koningen". In onze dagen sluit dat in keizers, koningen, presidenten, dictators, etc. En als drangreden voor zulk een gebed, dat *ook* koningen, presidenten, dictators en wat dies meer zij, insluit, wordt dan in ve. 4 gezegd, dat God wil "dat alle menschen zalig worden, en tot kennis der waarheid komen". We zouden dus naar I Tim. 2:1-4 kunnen bidden als volgt: "Heere, wij bidden u voor alle klassen en rangen van menschen, niet alleen voor schoenmakers en vrachtrijders en fabrieksarbeiders en straatvegers, maar ook voor koningen en keizers en dictators en presidenten, al zijn ze nog zoo diep gezonken, want wij gelooven Uw Woord, dat Gij uit die klassen van menschen Uw volk roept en Uwe kerk vergadert. Wij bidden voor de zaligheid van die allen, en voor uwe ontfermende genade over hen, opdat wij niet bekend mogen staan als haters en verwerpers van koningen en overheden, maar als dezulken, die hun wezenlijk heil zoeken, en we een stil en gerust leven mogen leiden".

Maar het wordt veel moeilijker als het gaat over *onze* overheid, en over *onzen* president, en vooral, wanneer we ook een bepaalden inhoud aan zulk een gebed zouden willen geven. En daarover heeft Mr. VanderWal het natuurlijk. Willen we hier een grondslag hebben, en een beginsel aanvaarden, dan zou het dit moete zijn: *De kerk moet bidden om wijsheid en leiding en genade (gemeene gratie) voor de overheid, die regeert in het bepaalde land, waar eene bepaalde kerk zich bevindt, en dat, al is die bepaalde overheid*

naar onze vaste overtuiging ook nog zoo goddeloos. Ben ik dus een Amerikaan, dan bid ik voor onzen president; ben ik een Duitscher, dan bid ik voor Hitler; ben ik een Rus, dan bid ik voor Stalin; ben ik een Italiaan, dan bid ik voor Mussolini; ben ik een bekeerde Japanees, dan bid ik voor den hemelschen Keizer. En als ik voor Hitler bid (niet om zijne bekeering of afzetting natuurlijk, maar om kloekheid en wijsheid als overheid), dan bid ik tegen Roosevelt en Churchill, en bid ik voor de laatsten, dan bid ik tegen de Axis. En ben ik in deze dagen een Hollander, wat dan? Moet in Holland de Kerk in het publiek bidden voor de "hooge overheid" in Berlijn of in Londen? Nu zou ik zulk een gemeene gratie gebed zeker in Duitschland voor Hitler (om hem nu maar als voorbeeld te noemen) nooit kunnen doen. Maar dan deugt het hierboven uitgesproken beginsel ook niet. M. a. w. dan kan onze nationaliteit den inhoud van ons gebed niet moge bepalen.

Art. 36 schrappen? Ik zou daarmee maar een beetje voorzichtig zijn. Over dit artikel is het laatste woord nog niet gezegd, en ook niet zoo gemakkelijk te zeggen. In elk geval gaat het in dat artikel over een beslist Christelijke overheid, die niet neutraal staat tegenover den godsdienst, nog veel minder de kerk uitroeit, maar die de hand houdt aan "den heiligen Kerkedienst, om te weren en uit te roeien alle afgoderij en valschen godsdienst" (en dat was alles, wat niet gereformeerd was, vooral ook Rome) "om het rijk des antichrists te gronde te werpen en het Koninkrijk van Jezus Christus te doen vorderen; het Woord des Evangelies overal te doen prediken, opdat God van een iegelijk geëerd en gediend worde, gelijk Hij in Zijn Woord gebiedt". Het laat zich denken, dat men onder zulk eene overheid, zulk een gereformeerde overheid, zou kunnen bidden, niet slechts "voor koningen en allen, die in hoogheid zijn", maar ook "voor onze hooge overheid," dat ze getrouw moge blijve en ons naar den Woorde Gods moge regeeren.

Men moet ten slotte aan het einde van zijn gebed Amen kunnen zeggen. En Amen wil zeggen: "Het zal waar en zeker zijn, want mijn gebed is veel zekerder van God verhoord dan ik in mijn hart gevoel, dat ik zulks van Hem begeer." En dat wil maar niet zeggen, dat God mij wel het een of het ander zal geven; maar dat ik zeker ben, dat Hij mij precies zal schenken, wat ik van Hem vraag.

H. H.

CLASSIS EAST

will meet in regular session Wednesday Oct. 7 at 9 A. M. at Fuller Ave Church.

D. Jonker, S. C.

The Triple Knowledge

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART TWO

OF MAN'S REDEMPTION

Chapter I

LORD'S DAY V

2.

The Impossibility of Satisfaction

In questions and answers 13 and 14 the Heidelberg Catechism demonstrates that, as far as we are concerned, our work, our efforts, our good intentions, the way is absolutely closed: through our own efforts we can never escape punishment and again be received into favor with God. This must become quite clear, before we can even begin to speak of a divinely wrought salvation through our mediator Jesus Christ. God will give His glory to no other. He does not step in to save man as long as there is any possibility that man can merit and bring about his own salvation. His work is always *His* work and must be acknowledged as such. His glory must be revealed, not only in the work of creation, but also, and even on a higher level and to a more marvellous degree in the work of redemption. His work, therefore, is always in the sphere and on the level where it is impossible for man to work. The camel must go through the eye of the needle. That is impossible, indeed, with man, but what is impossible with man is possible with God. And it is exactly through the accomplishment of the humanly and creaturely impossible that He becomes revealed as God who is really GOD, who as Barth would say is the "wholly other." He is the eternal I AM, the infinite, the Almighty, the All-wise, the absolutely independent, self-existent God. "To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One . . . Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding." Isa. 40:25,28. "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen." Rom.

11:33-36. After all, the self-revelation of God and His glory is the purpose of all His works, even also of the work of redemption. And, therefore, it must become fully evident, that it is His work, and that what He performs is impossible with the creature. From this viewpoint questions 13 and 14 occupy a very proper place in this connection. They must not be considered an illustration of scholastic hair splitting or mere mental gymnastics. Presently, in the next Lord's Day, the Catechism will speak of the mediator, the revelation of God in the flesh. But before this can be done, it is quite proper to set forth the impossibility of salvation by your power or wisdom, in order that it may become evident that this mediator of God steps in only to accomplish that which is impossible with man.

"Can we ourselves then make this satisfaction?" And again: "Can there be found anywhere, one, who is a mere creature, able to satisfy for us?" Thus the Catechism asks. And to both these questions it gives a negative answer, and furnishes the reasons for these answers. Of course, there are other elements in the work of salvation, besides satisfaction, that are impossible with man. But satisfaction is basic. Satisfaction must be made before man, the sinner, can even escape eternal damnation, and be again received into the favor of God. All the rest of the work of salvation hinges on this work of satisfaction. If satisfaction cannot be made, it is of no use to investigate further into the possibility of salvation. And, therefore, the Catechism centers on this question of satisfaction, and asserts that it is quite impossible for man to make this satisfaction himself, or for any creature, a mere creature, to make this satisfaction for him. And to appreciate this instruction of our Heidelberger, to see clearly how utterly impossible it is for man or any other creature to make satisfaction for sin, it is necessary that we keep in mind what in the preceding section we said about satisfaction. It is not the mere passive bearing of the punishment. Suffering of the punishment for sin is, of course, quite possible for man. He will suffer that punishment forever, unless he is saved. It were even conceivable that some other creature, or a group of creatures, would suffer that punishment for man, if the demand of God that His justice be satisfied were not so immutable. It is difficult to see, for instance, that salvation could not be through the suffering and death of an animal, if the only reason for such suffering is that God would teach us that we are worthy of such death, and thus would bring us to the acknowledgement of His righteousness and to sincere repentance. But God will have His justice satisfied. And His justice requires that we fulfill His law. And His law is not that we shall do this or that, that we shall bring this or that offering, that we shall do something for Him; it is not even that we shall suffer and die: it is that we shall LOVE HIM! Hence, satisfaction must

be an act of love, of the pure and perfect love of God! We must love Him as He is, in His eternal perfections of righteousness and holiness. And since over against us sinners, He reveals Himself in His wrath, and His wrath is expressed in the curse, we must be able to love Him in His wrath, and to bear the curse and the suffering of eternal death in love, in the pure love of God! He who can voluntarily, in the perfect obedience of love, bear the wrath of God and suffer the curse to the very end, fulfills the demands of the law of God and satisfies God's justice with respect to sin. This we must bear in mind in order to understand fully the instruction of our Heidelberger on this point.

Can we ourselves make this satisfaction? This question now has come to mean: can we ourselves actively bear the wrath of God against sin in perfect obedience of the pure love of God? How impossible! The Catechism is most emphatic on this point. *By no means*, it says, can we make this satisfaction. In no wise, by no power of our own, by no conceivable method or means, can we make this satisfaction. We have neither the power nor the will to make this satisfaction. Suppose that a man had the desire to be again received into favor with God. Suppose that in his early childhood, as soon as he came to self-consciousness, he deplored his sinful condition, and was filled with a true sorrow after God. Suppose that in this true sorrow over sin he went in sackcloth and ashes, deploring before God and men his sinful state and condition. Suppose that he wept bitter tears day and night, and that all his life he perfectly kept the law of God and lived in perfection before Him. All this is, of course for many reasons absolutely impossible, but let us suppose this impossibility. Would this sorrow and these tears, would this life of perfection satisfy the justice of God with respect to a single sin he may have committed even before he came to self-consciousness; or would it atone for the sin in which he was born? Of course not! If a person trades with a certain grocer and for a long time makes his purchases on credit, and accumulates a debt which he cannot pay; and if after a certain period, he begins to buy cash and pays for whatever he purchases; and if, besides, every time he makes a new purchase he bewails and deplores the debt that is still on the grocer's books; does that debtor, by his wailing and by his paying for what he buys of that grocer, pay one single cent to wipe out his debt? Of course not! No more could any sinner by rendering to God what is God's for fifty or sixty years what he owes Him every moment, and by bewailing that he ever refused to love and obey Him with all his heart and mind and soul and strength, satisfy the justice of God with respect to sin. He *owes* that love, that obedience, that perfection, that repentance over sin, that weeping and wailing, that going about in sackcloth and ashes, *every day of the week, every moment of the*

day. By all this he could never satisfy God's justice. He would still be under the wrath of God. He still would not be received into God's favor. He still would have to experience the wrath of God in eternal death. And in eternal death, in hell, there is no possibility for mere man to satisfy the justice of God. There God *takes* His own satisfaction, but man has nothing to bring. There all is passivity, a being crushed by the wrath of Him who is a consuming fire!

But how absurd is the above supposition! For where, then, is the sinner that even approximates the likeness presented of him in the preceding paragraph? Where is the sinner who, for a time in his life at least, is sincerely sorry for his sin, and lives in perfection for the rest of his life? There is no such man among them that are born of women. The Catechism cuts off the very possibility of harboring the notion of such a possibility by adding to its emphatic negative answer to question 13: "but on the contrary we daily increase our debt". Let us remember what we learned about the sinner from the third Lord's Day. He is so depraved that he is incapable of doing any good and inclined to all evil. He does not love God, but is by nature inclined to hate him. He is corrupt in heart and mind, darkened in his understanding so that he cannot know what is good, and perverse in his will so that he is incapable ever to will that which is in accord with the will of God. He will not, he cannot, he cannot will to love God. He chose against God in paradise, where he was surrounded by the abundance of God's goodness every day; he does not love God in this world, in which things have not yet reached their final and eternal consummation, in which he still eats and drinks and is merry. How, then, shall he ever be able to bring the sacrifice of love to the living God, and satisfy His justice? How shall he be able even to conceive of the possibility of willingly offering himself up to the eternal wrath of God? You see how impossible it is. He does the very opposite: daily he increases his guilt. Every step he takes on life's path (and he must take that step, he cannot stop!) defiles his way; every word he speaks (and he must speak that word, he cannot be silent!) testifies against him; every work of his hand (and work he must, he cannot be idle) is to his condemnation, every thought of his mind, every desire of his heart, every secret inclination in his inmost soul (and he can never stop thinking and desiring) makes him increasingly guilty before God. If (say this were possible) God would blot out all his sins up to a certain moment and give him complete forgiveness, the next moment he would surely have plunged himself once more hopelessly into the state of utter condemnation. How, then, shall that sinner ever bring the perfect sacrifice of love to God, that he may satisfy His unchangeable justice? It is impossible. As far as man is concerned the way is closed.

We daily increase our debt! What does that mean? It means that our life in this world is never anything else, and never can be anything else than a piling up of treasures of wrath for ourselves! For every day, and every hour, and every beat of our heart, we are working, thinking, willing, choosing, deciding, speaking acting. And with all this inner and outward activity we stand in the midst of the world, God's world, in which we find the means to live and move and act. And with all these powers and means, with all this activity of our soul and body, our mind and will, we constantly face the demand of God's living law: love Me! And a thousand times an hour we say: I will not! We increase our debt, each one of us individually, so that, if a man live and act eighty years he piled up for himself much greater treasures of wrath than if he had been taken away in infancy. But we also increase our debt daily collectively, organically, as a human race. For six thousand years men have increased their debt with God, and the treasures of wrath are piled astoundingly, alarmingly high in our present time. That is why it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for Jerusalem and for Capernaum; and it will be more tolerable for the latter in that day than for the final antichristian world. For we increase our debt through the centuries! And as the debt increases the wrath of God increases, even the wrath of God that is revealed from heaven upon our present world; and as the wrath of God increases we are given over into greater sin and corruption! Terrible, you say? O, but indeed, it is terrible to fall into the hand of the living God! But the point is that this dreadful condition is hopeless. For, before we even have the right to be delivered from it, satisfaction must be made. And we can never bring the required satisfaction ourselves. The way is closed!

But how about the possibility of substituting some other creature to satisfy the justice of God in our stead? The Catechism had referred to this possibility in the answer to the twelfth question: "we must make this full satisfaction either by ourselves, *or by another*". And in the fourteenth question it investigates this possibility of making full satisfaction by another: "Can there be found anywhere, one, who is a mere creature, able to satisfy for us?" Ursinus in his "Schatboek" explains that the reference in the question to one, "who is a *mere* creature", is intentional. "In the question there is added: '*mere* creature', in order that the answer may be completely negative. A creature must satisfy for the sin of the creature; but not necessarily such a one who is nothing else than creature, for such a one could not possibly satisfy, as will be shown." We face here a threefold question: 1. Can *we* satisfy the justice of God by substituting another creature? 2. Can *another* creature, who is not man, satisfy for the

sin of man? 3. Can a *mere* creature, one who is nothing else than creature, bring such satisfaction as is required to deliver us? The first of these three questions is not directly answered by the Catechism, but the question is suggested by the answer to question 12: "*we* must make this satisfaction either by ourselves, *or another*." We, therefore, make the satisfaction, even though it be through another. If, then, that "other" is a mere creature, it must be a creature that we bring to God, that we substitute. Now, again it must be emphasized that this is unthinkable as far as man's willingness and spiritual capability to bring such a substitute is concerned. For such a substitute he must bring to God in perfect love and in true repentance. One who daily increases his guilt is incapable of substituting any creature as a sacrifice of love. But, secondly, *we* cannot substitute any other creature, for the simple reason that we have no creature to substitute. Where in all the wide creation shall we find a creature we can so call our own that we can offer it to God in our stead? I may owe a man five thousand dollars, and if I have not the money but own a house, I may offer him the house as a substitute. But what shall I bring to God? Shall I offer Him all my goods? But what goods have I that are not His? All the silver and gold are His! And, besides, I am worthy of hell! Shall I kill a lamb or bullock and ask Him to accept it as a substitute for my life? But the cattle on a thousand hills are His! I have no creature that I can substitute to make satisfaction for my sin. And, thirdly, I have not the *right* to determine upon a substitution. This is even true among men. If I owe a man one hundred dollars, I have no right to decide that he shall take my old car instead. And surely, man has no right to determine that God shall be satisfied with another creature, even if there could be found such a creature, to atone for man's sin.

And do not say that all this is mere abstract reasoning, quite out of touch with real life, for the very opposite is true. Always sinful man attempts to impose a substitute upon God to satisfy for his sins, to take the place of mercy and truth and righteousness. The old Pharisees felt that they did God a favor when they brought their bulls and goats to the temple, and when they gave tithes of all they possessed. And the fundamentally corrupt notion that *we* can bring something to God is still very general. A man gives a million dollars to some charitable institution, and in his heart he tries to feel that by this deed he is giving something to God that will make up for many a sin he may have committed in the past. He is trying to make God accept a substitute of his own. Or he will give large sums to missions to bring the gospel to the poor distant heathen, and probably attempt to smooth his conscience and feel that God may accept this sacrifice as a substitute for the evil he does to

his neighbor next door, or for the hire of his employees whose wages are kept back by him through fraud. Yes, indeed, this notion of substituting another creature, even though it be not by killing bulls and goats, is a very popular one with sinful men. Missions have been established, hospitals have been built, theological schools have been endowed with large sums, in order that men might make satisfaction to God through another creature! The heart in man is deceitful more than anything! It is desperately wicked! For if it were not, man would understand that such a sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord of heaven and earth. If a man is in debt to the amount of one thousand dollars, which he never cares to, nor is able to pay; and if, then, on Christmas he brings to his creditor a dollar necktie, at the same time revealing in his entire attitude that he feels that his creditor ought to be ever so pleased with him, is he not a fool? And will not his creditor utterly despise him? How abominable, then, must man be in the sight of God, the sinner, who owes to God the infinite debt of love, who is worthy of eternal damnation, and who tries to substitute some of God's own silver and gold to make satisfaction for his sin! If, therefore, the question is put in this form: can *we* bring a substitute to God to make full satisfaction for sin? The answer must be negative. We cannot and will not make such a substitution in the love of God; we have no creature that we can possibly substitute and bring to God, for all things are His; and we do not have the right to determine upon our own substitute and expect that God will accept it.

H. H.

NOTICE

The Theological School Committee will hold a special meeting on Tuesday evening, October 6, in the class room of the First Prot. Ref. Church of Grand Rapids, for those young men who have definite intentions of entering our Theological School within the next few years and must obtain deferment from military service in order to complete their pre-theological studies. Such young men are requested to appear at this meeting with a recommendation from their consistory and a statement of health from a reputed physician.

C. Hanko, Sec.

The Dream As A Medium Of Revelation

(Continued from last week)

The significance of dreams. Dreams do have significance. They bespeak the state of the soul and the trend of its thought during waking hours. Now if the trend of thought of a man during his waking hours is in the way of the Lord's commands, then the trend of his thought will be in this way when he is asleep and in his dreams, too, he will have fellowship with God. On the other hand, if, during the waking hours a man's thinking and willing are under the dominion of the law of sin, his dream-life will necessarily be carnal.

Yes, our dreams do have significance. When a man dreams he is turned inside out, so to say, so that, if he is able to recall his dream-experience, he may learn what ordinarily goes on there in his subconscious soul. Dreams show in what strange and frequently unwholesome paths our minds will stray, when freed from the shackles of the will, and what our unbridled fancy is capable of in the way of sinful dream construction. Certainly, then, we are morally responsible for our dreams.

For the rest, our dreams have no more significance than the thought-processes of our waking moments. They are no mediums by which God today reveals to men the mysteries of the kingdom that are not revealed in His word. For when the canon of the Scriptures was closed, special revelation ended. Dreams are no unveiling of the future. Still we are told that it does happen that dreams come true. The predictions that a man makes when awake, may also come true. In the event they do, we do not say of the man that he has received a special revelation from above. So much for ordinary dreams.

II. The prophetic dream. The number of times that the Lord used the dream as a medium of special revelation is rather small. There are, not counting the visions, but sixteen such dreams on record in the entire Scriptures. Let us list them, so that we may have them before our eye.

Abraham's deep, prophetic sleep in which he sees himself overtaken by a great horror of darkness, anticipating, according to the explanatory word of the Lord, the terror of darkness, which, with the Egyptian bondage, should rest upon his seed. Gen. 15:12-21.

Abimelech's dream of the night in which the Lord transacts with him by the spoken word respecting his sin of taking Sarah, Abrams wife, into his harem. Gen. 20:1-8.

Jacob's dream of the ladder and of the Lord's

blessing him. Gen. 37:5-9.

The dreams of the butler and the baker interpreted by Joseph. Gen 40.

Pharaoh's dream interpreted by Joseph. Gen 41:1-7.

The dream of the Midianitish soldier for the encouragement of Gideon. Ju. 7:13.

Solomon's dream by night in which the Lord communed with him respecting what He should give the king. 1 Kings 3:1-14.

Nebuchadnezzar's dreams of the great image and of the great tree. Dan. 2, 4.

The four dreams of Joseph, the husband of Mary, the mother of Christ. Mat 1:20,21; Mat. 2:13; Mat. 2:20.

The dream of Pilate's wife. Mat. 27.

Though Scripture makes mention of sixteen such prophetic dreams, the number of persons who served as the mediums of this species of revelation is but twelve and of this number seven were heathens, namely, Nebuchadnezzar, the Midianitish soldier. Pharaoh, the butler, the baker, Abimelech, and the wife of Pilate. The wife of Pilate and Abimelech, however may have been true believers. Thus the dream was used when God had something special to say also to heathens.

We must also notice that the prophetic dreams divide into three classes: 1. the visual; 2. the auditory; and 3. the semi-visual and the semi-auditory. Visual are the dreams of Joseph, the baker, the butler, the midianitish man, Pharaoh, and Nebuchadnezzar. These dreams are purely visual and thus symbolical, engaging the eye only and not the ear, because no words are spoken by the revealer. They are thus dreams that call for an interpreter.

Auditory are the dreams of Joseph, the husband of Mary. These dreams engage only the ear yet also the eye as the heavenly messenger actually appears. Solomon's dream is solely auditory it seems. The dreams of Abraham and Jacob are semi-auditory and semi-visual. They engage both the ear and the eye. Further, in all these dreams with the exception of two, the mediums are passive. They hear or see or do both but they do not engage in speech. The two exceptions are Abimelech and Solomon.

The prophetic dream occurred also in sleep, and here, too, there was a greater or less degree of unconsciousness due to the same cause that produced ordinary sleep and productive of the same results. The nervous system passed into a state of inactivity. As a result, the intelligence was obscured and the special senses depressed. All contact between the mind of the sleeper—the organ of revelation—and his environment was lost. His sleep isolated him from the world of his waking hours, through closing his soul

to the stream of impressions flowing in from his surroundings through the sense organs. Thus the dream-images that rose before his mind are not to be explained by the action of external objects upon the sensory organs of sight, yet they were as vivid as the external impressions conveyed to the soul by the avenues of these organs.

Then, the prophetic dream had also this characteristic in common with the ordinary dream that though resembling waking experiences in some respects it never exactly reproduced and was in some cases far from reproducing the order of these experiences. Jacob's dream of the ladder; the butler's dream of a vine with three branches, as though budding and shooting forth blossoms and of the clusters bringing forth ripe grapes, and of him taking the grapes and pressing them in Pharaoh's cup and giving the cup in his hand; the baker's dream of the birds, eating out of the uppermost of three baskets poised on his head, the meat for Pharaoh; Pharaoh's dream of the seven well-favored kine that came up out of the river devoured by the seven ill-favored kine; his dream of the seven good ears of corn consumed by the seven thin ears; Nebuchadnezzar's dreams of the great image and of the great tree—all these dreams differed, one more than another, from events known to the dreamers in the waking life. The reason is that these dreams bore upon the future and had reference to the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Yet they also, one more than another, resembled waking experience. This, too, was no meaningless aspect of the prophetic dream. The communication from heaven had to be conveyed in a language of which the recipient had understanding and thus also in connection with symbols—the dream-images were this, namely symbols—that bore some resemblance to objects that were already familiar.

Further, the explanation also of this dreaming includes the negative condition of the suspension of the will. It was more or less involuntary thinking. The ego was no longer active but had become receptive. Attention, the will, instead of dominating the thought-images that presented themselves, was itself dominated by them. Yet, this dreaming, no more than the ordinary dream, is to be regarded as purely the functioning of some spiritual faculty. Here, too, the correct doctrine is that both the body and the mind were involved.

There are still other resemblances. Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar, like man who dream ordinary dreams, could not recall their dream-experience. In their case this was due to a special working of God while in the case of all ordinary dreaming it is due to the transitoriness of the dream-impressions.

The prophetic dreams had also variable features, the same as ordinary dreams. In some of these dreams the dreamer was merely a passive spectator. So Nebuchadnezzar in his dreams. In other of these dreams

the dreamers were active. They talked and moved as they were wont to do in their waking hours, as for example the baker and the butler and also Solomon in their dreams. The other respects in which these dreams differed amongst themselves has already been indicated.

Though the prophetic dream and the ordinary dreams had much in common, they differed essentially. The former belonged to the category of miracles. It is thus not to be ascribed to the ordinary working of divine providence but was the result of a special and extraordinary doing of God, for the benefit of His people and with the design to promote the ends of His kingdom.

But we can be more specific. In the ordinary dream, the dream-structure is the product of the faculty of the imagination or mind. But what is here supplied by the imagination was, in the prophetic dream, supplied by a special working of God. The questions, in what respect and to what extent the Lord, in fashioning the dream-structure, made use of the mind of the dreamer must remain unanswered. But this is certain, no more than the pattern of the tabernacle originated in Moses own mind but was shown him on the mount, no more did this dream-structure originate in the dreamer's own fancy, was it conceived of and constructed by his own mind. It was God's conception, His workmanship, and was made to rise before the mind of the dreamer by His special working.

Further, the prophetic dream was not, as is the ordinary dream, conditioned or caused by antecedent mental or physical states. But it does seem that these states did aid in preparing the dreamer for the revelation that was to be made. There was connection, so it seems, between Peter's vision and his antecedent bodily hunger. The sacred narrative tells us that "Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour. And he became very hungry and would have eaten: but while they made ready he fell into a trance. And saw heavens opened and a certain vessel descending unto him . . . wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts . . ." Here God seemed to link His revelation of the most vital truths of Christianity to the most elementary craving of human nature. We feel warranted to conclude that any bodily or mental emotion led on to the required state. But the dream as such, the voice heard in it, revealing the higher truth, were effected by a special working of God.

There was also a moral preparation of the dream as well as there was a moral preparation of special revelation in general. Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a colossal man seemed but the projection into a figure of his great day-dreams of a universal empire. Jacob's dream was, no doubt prepared by his loneliness and by his need of a helper.

Then there is this question: Whence came the ma-

terials that entered into the make-up of the dream-structure or vision? They were present in the dreamer's soul, having been previously put there by God Himself both by the working of His providence and by special revelation. So, the materials from which He formed the dream-structure were taken from the dreamer's apperceiving mass. What was new in the dream is the dream-structure or vision as a whole. This structure was the very word of God, a special and infallible revelation, in the production of which God used the whole man as He had prepared him.

In the auditory and semi-auditory dream, the dreamer was spoken to either by the Lord directly or by the Lord through the agency of an angel. In ordinary dreaming the speech that is heard is nothing else than the thoughts of the dreamer's own heart which in sleep he hears as a living voice. In the prophetic dream the speech that was heard was the thoughts of God, whispered into the spirit of the dreamer by God Himself and which this dreamer too was made to hear as a living, audible voice. Yet there was no such voice, as it was truly a dream-experience.

The mere fact that the dreamer had dreamed and in his dream had seen visions and heard voices was not allowed to constitute the evidence that the dream was of God and that the dreamer was God's prophet. The word of the dreamer had to be tried. The standard that had to be applied is set forth in the following Scripture: "If there arise among you a prophet or dreamer of dreams, and give a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee saying, Let us go after other Gods, thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love your God with all your heart and with all your soul". And again, "And if thou shalt say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken". Thus the genuineness of prophecy and the prophetic dream could be known only by its results and by its character.

G. M. O.

"Am I Thy friend?

And canst Thou count on me,
Lord, to be true to Thee?

Canst Thou depend

On sympathy and help of mine,

In purpose, aim,

Or work of Thine,

And trust me with the honor of Thy name?"

Luther's Defence Before the Diet of Worms

With Luther's ideas in circulation throughout the empire and also rapidly taking root in the hearts of men—the mass of humans that formed western Christendom—the edifice of the pope, with all that pertained thereto, was tottering on its foundation and seemed already doomed to extinction. The people's attachment to the Romish superstitions was fast diminishing; and at the same time Luther's reputation increased day by day. The people in great numbers turned to him as the defender of truth and liberty. The dominion of the priest and monks was being shaken by his word, for the influence of this word was immense. The Rominists were frantic. Even shortly after the posting of the 95 theses, the pope, under pressure of the monks and the theologians, commissioned the legate De Vio to summon Luther before him and to prevail upon him to retract. Should he persist in his obstinacy, and if the legate could not secure his person, he was authorized to outlaw him in every part of Germany, to banish, curse, excommunicate all those who were attached to him. Luther obeyed the summons but did not retract. On Oct. 31 he fled from Augsburg and thereupon appealed from Wittenberg to a future general council. Rome responded by condemning Luther in a papal bull, which was issued on June 15, 1520, and burned by Luther, with the approving presence of students and citizens of Wittenberg, and without opposition to the civil authorities.

In 1520 the newly chosen emperor, Charles V, came to Germany, and to regulate his government in that land, had called a diet to meet in Worms in November. Among the business to be transacted was also the determination of Luther's case. The papal representative, Alexander, wanted him condemned unheard. He insisted that since Luther had already been condemned by the pope, the sole duty of the diet was to make that condemnation effective by approving it. But Luther's ruler, Elector Frederick the Wise and other nobles, believed that he should be heard before the diet previous to action by that body. The result was that Luther was summoned to Worms under the protection of an imperial safe-conduct. On April 17, 1521 he appeared before the diet and gave a faithful witness for the truth in Christ Jesus. With a courage that deeply impressed the august body before whom he stood—the emperor and the princes and nobles of the Holy Roman Empire—he defended a cause of which he was rightfully convinced that it was the cause of God.

It is this defence of Luther that forms the subject of this essay.

The chancellor of the archbishop of Treves speaker of the diet pointed Luther to a row of books and then

addressed him in the following language: "Martin Luther, his sacred and invincible imperial majesty has cited you before his throne to enquire you to answer two questions: first, Do you acknowledge these books to have been written by you. Secondly, Are you prepared to retract these books and their contents; or do you persist in the opinions you have advanced in them?" The titles of the books having been read to him, Luther acknowledged as his the books that were named. In reply to the second question, he entreated the emperor to allow him time for reflection that he might answer without offending against the word of God. A day was given him, and on the next afternoon he was again before the assembly and delivered in its hearing an address first in German and then in Latin which in part reads as follows:

"Most serene emperor, illustrious princes, gracious Lords, I appear before you this day, in conformity with the order given me yesterday, and by God's mercies I conjure your majesty and your august highnesses to listen graciously to the defence of a cause which I am convinced is just and true.

"Yesterday two questions were put to me on behalf of his imperial majesty: the first, if I were author of the books whose titles were enumerated; second, if I would retract or defend the doctrine I had taught in them. To the first question I then made answer, and I persevere in that reply.

"As for the second, I have written works on many different subjects. There are some in which I have treated of faith and good works, in a manner at once so pure, so simple, and so scriptural, that even my adversaries, far from finding anything to censure in them, allow that these works are useful and worthy of being read by all pious men. The papal bull, however violent it may be, acknowledges this. If therefore I were to retract these, what should I do? . . . Wretched man! Among all men alone should abandon truths that friends and enemies approve, and I should oppose what the whole world glories in confessing. . . .

"Secondly, I have written books against the papacy, in which I have attacked those who, by their false doctrines, their evil lives, and their scandalous example, afflict the Christian world, and destroy both body and soul. The complaints of all who fear God are confirmatory of this. Is it not evident that the human doctrines and laws of the popes entangle, torment, and vex the consciences of believers; while the crying and the perpetual extortions of Rome swallow up the wealth and the riches of Christendom, and especially of this illustrious nation? . . .

"Were I to retract what I have said on this subject, what should I do but lend additional strength to this tyranny, and open the flood gates to a torrent of impiety? . . .

"Lastly, I have written books against individuals

who desired to defend the Romish tyranny and to destroy the faith. I frankly confess that I may have attacked them with more acrimony than is becoming my ecclesiastical profession. I do not consider myself a saint; but I cannot disavow these writings, for by so doing I should sanction the impiety of my adversaries, and they would seize the opportunity of oppressing the people of God with still greater cruelty.

"Yet I am but a mere man and not God; I shall therefore defend myself as Christ did. 'If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil,' John 18:23, said He. How much more should I, who am but dust and ashes, and who may so easily go astray, desire every man to state his objections to my doctrine?"

"For this reason, by the mercy of God, I conjure you, most serene emperor, and you, most illustrious princes, and all men of every degree, to prove from the writings of the prophets and the apostles that I have erred. As soon as I am convinced of this, I will retract every error, and be the first to lay hold of my books and throw them into the fire.

"What I have just said plainly shows, I hope, that I have carefully weighed and considered the dangers to which I expose myself; but far from being dismayed, I rejoice to see that the gospel, as in former times, a cause of trouble and dissension. This is the character, this is the destiny of the word of God.' I came not to send peace on the earth, but a sword, said Jesus Christ'. Matt. 10.34. . . ."

Luther's address drew forth from the speaker of the diet the following indignant reply: "You have not answered the question put to you. You were not summoned hither to call in question the decisions of councils. You are required to give a clear and precise answer. Will you or will you not, retract?" Luther replied: "Since your most serene majesty and your high mightiness require from me a clear and simple, and precise answer, I will give you one, and it is this: I cannot submit my faith either to the pope or to the councils, because it is clear as the day that they have frequently erred and contradicted each other. Unless therefore I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture. or by the clearest reasoning—unless I am persuaded by means of the passages I have quoted, and unless they thus render my conscience bound by the word of God, I cannot and I will not retract, for it is unsafe for a Christian to speak against his conscience. Here I stand, I can do no other; may God help me. Amen".

In the words of one writer, "Thus spoke a monk before the emperor and the mighty ones of the nation; and this feeble and despised man, alone, but relying on the grace of the Most High, appeared greater and mightier than them all . . . this is the weakness of God which is stronger than man."

The speaker of the diet had still a word for Luther: "If you do not retract," said he, "the emperor and the

states of the empire will consult what course to adopt against an incorrigible heretic." The monk replied, "May God be my helper; for I can retract nothing."

Such then was Luther's defence. There is so much in it to warm the heart of all such consecrated to the cause that he, by the mercy of God, so zealously championed.

There are the expressions that bespeak the humility of the man. He is but a mere man, dust and ashes, one who may so easily go astray. He is thus ready to receive all men as his teachers. He asks but one thing, that it be shown him from the holy Scriptures that he erred. Though he well knows that any such attempt will end in failure, he is very sincere in giving utterance to this sentiment. There burned in the soul of the man a fire—the fire of God—that the adversaries of the truth could not comprehend. Yet he was certainly no lover of contention, one of that class of men, who look upon even theology and religion, as a means of acquiring a worldly reputation. He had desired no quarrel with Rome. It was with so much fear and indecision that he had attacked the indulgence that he was later ashamed of it. So he, himself, confessed. A full year after the posting of his 95 theses, he had actually agreed to keep silence until an enlightened bishop, appointed by the pope, investigated his matter, and pointed out the erroneous articles that he should retract. If they prove to him his error, he will recant. In a letter he wrote at this time to the pope, we come upon statements such as these: "What shall I do, most holy Father? I cannot bear the lightnings of your anger and I know not how to escape them. I am called upon to retract. I would most readily do so, could that lead to the desired result . . . A recantation would only still more dishonor the church of Rome . . . Most holy father, I declare in the presence of God, and of all His creatures, that I never desired, and that I never shall desire to infringe, either by force or by stratagem, the power of the Roman church or of your holiness. I confess that nothing in heaven or in earth should be preferred above that church, except Jesus Christ alone, the Lord of all." So he spake at a time when he had not reached the full light. Yet there is no fundamental discrepancy between the man who stands before us in this epistle and the Luther who declares before the imposing assembly at Worms that he cannot submit his faith either to the pope or to the councils. We should notice the closing clause of this missive: "Jesus Christ alone, the Lord of all". This truth and fact, dwelling, as it did, in Luther's heart, was the essential cause of the Reformation. All that this letter helps to prove is that Luther desired not tumults and revolutions but that he was thrown in the midst of them by God Himself, Who pushed him forward, carried him away. The Reformation, as concentrated in Luther's soul, was not a movement representative of a quest

for worldly fame. It was not the working of pride but of a living faith. Faith, the love of God and of the Gospel of Christ, was its subjective principle.

Something more must be said about Luther's declaring that he cannot submit his faith either to the pope or to the councils and that unless they render his conscience bound by the word of God, *he cannot and will not retract*. The Scriptures, he wants his judges to know, are supreme. Councils and popes can err but not so the Scriptures. They are moreover, all sufficient, as they fully contain the will of God and whatsoever men ought to believe unto salvation. Thus they form the *only* rule of faith. So let them judge his works by the Scriptures. Let them prove from the Scriptures that he erred and he will retract every error.

The Reformation loved the Scriptures. It emancipated the Scriptures from the reign of dogma and tradition and subjected both to the reign of the Scriptures.

To Luther's request that his judges prove from the Scriptures that he erred, their only response was, "Retract, retract." This the Romanists had been screaming in his ears from the day of the posting of 95 theses three years and five months ago now. They could not prove from the Scriptures that he erred, so they simply demanded of him that he retract.

But Luther was firm. He stands immovable like a rock. He will retract nothing. He will yield not the breadth of a hair. To the threat of his judges that they will kill him, if he continues obstinate, his only reply is, "May God be my helper; for I can retract nothing". *Obstinacy*, they called it. But we know that it was determination born of sanctified conviction. Conviction of what? From where did the man derive his strength? Listen to him pray in the quiet of his retreat between the two sessions of the diet, and you will know. "O Almighty and everlasting God, how terrible is this world! Behold, it openeth its mouth to swallow me up, and I have so little trust in thee . . . How weak is the flesh and Satan how strong! If it is only in the strength of this world that I must put my trust, all is over. . . . My last hour is come, my condemnation has been pronounced . . . O God, O God . . . do thou help me gainst all the wisdom of the world. Do this; Thou shouldest do this . . . thou alone; for this is not my work, but thine. I have nothing to do here, nothing to content for with these great ones of the world. I should desire to see my days flow on peaceful and happy. But the cause is thine. and it is a righteous and eternal cause. O Lord help me! . . . Thou hast chosen me for this work. I know it well . . . Act then, O God; . . . stand at my side, for the sake of thy beloved Jesus Christ, who is my defence, my shield, and my strong tower."

The cause is God's. God chooses him for this work. He knows because God tells him. And the Lord is his

helper, the source of his strength. Hence, he *cannot* be moved. For he abides in that place—the secret places of the Most High—where the warriors of God are replenished with the strength that is needful to war His warfare even to the death.

The Romanist will not reason with Luther from the Scriptures. They demand of him simply that he retract. The fruits of his pen fill them with a great dread. This can be explained. The issues that these writings raised were vital. They were issues such as this: Who forgives or remits sin, i. e., frees a man from the condemnation of God and imputes to him the righteousness and the satisfaction of Christ, God or the pope? And, who justifies a man before the bar of his conscience, God through the gospel of Christ as preached by His servants or the pope through some such pronouncement as, "I absolve thee"? Not the pope, answered Luther, but God. The pope (and the priests) had put himself in the place of God to efficaciously bless or curse whomsoever he would and as he chose. And in his fierce anger he had assigned Luther to the place of eternal torment because one of the propositions he refused to retract is that the pope has not this power—the power of dispensing at his pleasure the merits of the Saviour. And because men had come to believe that Christ had actually delegated to him this power, they trembled when he threatened. Rather than risk a conflict with the pope, men chose to hearken to his voice, to honor his pronouncements, and to subject themselves to his will; for they feared his curses, as when he cursed it was to them all the same as when God cursed. As long as this belief in the false claims of the pope persisted, his hold on the consciences of men was secure. On the other hand, the destruction of this belief would be certain to result in the breaking of this hold. Now it is precisely at men's belief in this usurped authority, thus at this very authority, that Luther struck. "The pope's indulgences," said he, "cannot take away the smallest sin, as far as regards the guilt or the offence." (Thesis 76 of the 95 theses). "Every christian who truly repents of his sins, enjoys an entire remission both of the penalty and of the guilt, without need of indulgences" (Thesis 36).

In these writings of that humble and despised monk, the Romanists had come upon passages also such as this: "The Roman's have raised around themselves three walls to protect them against every kind of reformation. Have they been attacked by the temporal power? they have asserted that it has no authority over them, and that the spiritual power was superior to it. Have they been rebuked by the Holy Scriptures? they have replied that no one is able to interpret it except the pope. Have they been threatened with a council? No one, said they, but the pontiff has authority to invoke one." And then this: "First of all we must expel from every German state those papal

legates, with their pretended benefits which they sell us at their weight in gold, and which are downright impositions. They take our money, and for what? to legalize their ill-begotten gains, to absolve from all oaths, to teach us to be wanting in fidelity, to instruct us how to sin, and to lead us direct to hell. Hearst thou this, O pope, not most holy, but most sinful pope? May God from His throne in heaven soon hurl thee from thy throne into the bottomless pit." And then finally also this: "Now after reading all the subtleties on which these gentry have set up their idol, I know that the papacy is none other than the kingdom of Babylon, and the violence of Nimrod the mighty hunter."

In those works, which he is asked to retract, Luther breaks down those three walls. He attacks the abuses and the corruptions of the Roman hierarchy and also this hierarchy as such. He commands the pope and all the lesser dignitaries—archbishops and bishops—to renounce their positions and the wealth and worldly glory that goes with them, and become humble elders, pastors and deacons in the churches. In a word, he demands of the hierarchy nothing less than that it destroy itself, lay itself level with the ground.

Need it surprise us then that the pope demanded of the diet that it render his condemnation of Luther effective?

G. M. O.

HIS PRESENCE

I met God in the morning
When the day was at its best,
And His presence came like glory
Of the sunrise in my breast.

All day long the Presence lingered,
All day long He stayed with me,
And we sailed in perfect calmness
O'er a very troubled sea.

Other ships were blown and battered,
Other ships were sore distressed.
But the winds that seemed to drive them,
Brought to us a peace and rest.

And I think I know the secret,
Learned from many a troubled way:
You must seek God in the morning
If you want Him through the day.
Ralph Cushman

The Value of Series Preaching

The very subject of this article suggests that it deals with the means of grace, and more particularly with the most important means of grace,—the preaching of the Word. To be still more specific it treats not the preaching itself as to idea, requisites, methods, etc., but the method and manner in respect to the subject matter of the preaching. Series preaching. And the purpose of this article is to show the value of such preaching. This indicates that the first question is not how we like series preaching, but what is its value, its spiritual value. Only too often do we evaluate things according to our likes and dislikes, tastes and distastes, not taking into consideration their benefit and value. But the all important question in respect to matters as these is—what is its import for the militant church upon earth? Therefore such must be our criterion.

The first question that arises is: what is series preaching? We presume that most of us have a general idea. Therefore we will not take up too much space in answering this question. We can say in passing that we have various kinds of preaching, such as preaching on passion texts; preaching for special occasions such as funerals, weddings, and others. But these have no direct relation to series preaching. To state it negatively series preaching is the very opposite of preaching on texts of Scripture which are chosen at random. The very opposite of that which in the holland language is called "vrije stof" preaching.

To state it positively series preaching is successive preaching on a certain book or character or concept of Scripture. The minister then has a series of connected successive sermons on that one subject. The most common series preaching is that on certain books of Scripture. But it is also possible to preach a series on certain characters of Scripture, such as John the Baptist, Elijah, Moses and others, or on a prevalent concept of God's Word, such as faith, God's judgments or the return of Christ.

Preaching on the Heidelberg Catechism really is series preaching too. But plain it has become that series preaching stands directly opposed to "vrije stof" preaching.

In our last article we wrote on the value of expository preaching. In it we tried to show that expository preaching is exegetical preaching, preaching that exposes the detailed meaning of the text. But now we must not distinguish series preaching from the latter nor confuse it with it, nor think that series preaching stands next to expository preaching. Far from it. The very opposite is true. Series preaching is expository preaching. Exegesis is absolutely essential to series preaching. In reality series preaching is

successive expository preaching on one subject, being applied to the congregation.

But, shall we see and know the value of such preaching, we must keep before our minds one fundamental element of Scripture. And that is that Scripture is a unity and that there is a unity in the different parts of Scripture. Scripture with its many different kinds of books, historical, poetical, prophetic, evangelical, and epistles is one whole. It is the one complete revelation of God. In Scripture there is a unity, and all the different books tend to reveal that one revelation of God in Christ Jesus. But there is also a certain unity *in* Scripture. Various books and groups of books form a unity by themselves. And these different unities form that one grand unity. Quite plain it is, e. g. that the first five books of the Bible, called the Pentateuch form a unity, so also the four Gospel narratives, and also that individual books teach one main idea, e. g. the epistle to the Romans, the Ephesians, etc. In these the apostle has in mind one main idea and that he treats from various viewpoints. But the concepts of Scripture are one too. Faith, love, judgments of God we find mentioned in many, many different places and connections. Nevertheless each one when all the different passages are explained in the light of the whole convey to us one main idea.

Series preaching, then, is a preaching on one of such unities, treating it from beginning to end. A series on the whole of Scriptures, which is quite impossible, would reveal to us the one idea of Scripture, the one unspeakably glorious revelation of God in Christ Jesus. Such we do have, however, in a compendium, n.l.—the treasure of the Heidelberg Catechism. But so series preaching on an individual subject of Scripture also exposes the one main idea and truth of God embodied in it.

Seeing that we must admit that series preaching is of incalculable value for the church. (We say of value for the church because we presume that such is the intent of the subject given us. Series preaching also has much value for the preacher, but since the value for the church is meant here, we will pass that by).

First of all, by means of it the church maintains the truth. We do not mean to say that other preaching can be of no value or relative value. It certainly does have. But we do think it safe to say that *without any* series preaching whatsoever, including that of the Heidelberg Catechism, the church will soon wander away from the truth and be found drifting in dangerous waters. Series preaching expounds the truth and certain truths of God's Word which the church can receive in no other way. If the minister from Sabbath to Sabbath and year to year preaches on text's chosen at random there is a real danger that he will certainly omit some and most probably many fun-

damental truths. By means of series preaching, however, he is bound to the subject treated, and therefore must preach on all the truths expressed in it in connection with the whole of the Word.

Series preaching also presents the Christ in all His riches, boundless grace and unfathomable love. Each book and each subject centers around that Christ, viewing Him from its own peculiar viewpoint. And no more than we can see the beauty of a painting without seeing the whole, no more can we see that Christ in all his glory in that subject without series preaching.

In the third place the unity of Scripture and of the subject treated is shown to the congregation. It gives the congregation the impression of its unity but also shows her what that unity is. And in close connection with this we can say that such preaching drives home the one prevailing idea of the subject treated, be it a book or a character or some other subject.

We must all admit that we forget much of that which we hear in church, even most of it. To turn the question about; how much do we really remember? And the answer is really nothing short of appalling. But series preaching, by means of its necessary repetition and emphasis of the one idea of the subject at least drives one thought home and quite likely will make an indelible impression upon the attentive listener. Such we do with our children. When we try to teach them many things at one time they are very apt to forget all of them. Better it is therefore to dwell on one point at a time. Then we can be quite sure of some lasting fruit upon our work. In that way a congregation after many years of frequent series preaching will retain and know something about certain subjects or books of Holy Writ, which "vrije stof" preaching would not give her. Let me make a very plain and concrete comparison. Suppose that there are two congregations, both with ministers of somewhat equal qualities. The one for twenty years has had series preaching at many times on various books of Scripture, say on the epistle to the Romans, Ephesians, the book of Revelation and a few others. But in the other the minister or ministers have preached no series at all, but for twenty years on texts chosen at random. The former, beyond a shadow of doubt, will have more lasting benefit and profit than the latter.

In the fourth place series preaching edifies the congregation as no other preaching can do. Each congregation has its own weaknesses and needs. Such was true of the seven churches of Asia Minor, and also of those to whom the apostles wrote. The church at all times is still far from the stage of perfection. Now it certainly must be admitted that the minister doesn't always see those peculiar needs and weaknesses, even with the best attempts. Therefore without any series

preaching he is apt to overlook or forget some and leave some needs in dire want. Another factor that enters here is that the minister himself also has his own tastes and distastes for texts, and without any series preaching he is apt to preach on nothing else but the things that please his taste. But by doing so all the time he very likely will build up the congregation only in part, leaving much unstrengthened, and possibly without necessary admonition. But series preaching tends to build up and strengthen and supply from all viewpoints. Not that the minister who preaches on series much of the time will strengthen all the weaknesses, and all the needs, omitting none, but will certainly do more than if there is no series preaching at all. It gives a better "balanced diet" with all the necessary "vitamins". Besides Scripture lends itself to this. As mentioned, the churches spoken of and to in the New Testament also had weaknesses. Now it is not accidental that the apostles wrote to just these churches and not to others. These churches in their weaknesses and needs and conditions are the picture of the one church of all ages. Many similar weaknesses and conditions can be found today. Therefore God determined the apostles to write them, not only for their benefit, but for the benefit of the church of all ages. And so series preaching on some of these epistles can also be of much value to us.

Not that the congregation will always like it. Some members prefer series preaching, others not. Each has his likes and dislikes. But so do our children. They don't like spinach, or many other substantial foods, which are less palatable. But it isn't a question what we like (at least shouldn't be) but what we need. That should be our attitude in respect to the kind of preaching our minister gives us.

And finally by means of series preaching the congregation knows from week to week, before each Sunday what the minister is to preach on. When he preaches at random such is impossible, for one Sunday may find him in Paradise and the next in Rev. 22. But not so with series preaching. And this knowledge means much to the attentive church attendant. He wants to know, want to learn and grow. Therefore he by means of this is enabled to read and study the text to be preached on at home. I know, in general this is done very little, even where it is possible, but its real benefit is undeniable. As it is necessary for the child to know the arithmetic problem before it can understand the solution given by the teacher so we must really know the text, shall we understand it and have lasting benefit.

J. B.

Choosing A Vocation

There comes a time in the life of every person when he or she must choose a vocation.

For various reasons this is necessary. A living must be earned and a settled occupation is simply the accepted manner of doing this. Besides, definite and steady employment, whether in or outside the home, is essential to man's happiness. Without the former the latter would be impossible for one who has been created an active creature. Therefore a prisoner invariably prefers to pound rocks day by day in the prison yard to being placed in solitary confinement, where he is deprived of every opportunity to be active. Therefore most men, though wealthy or aged, seek some form of physical or mental activity. Moreover, there are countless human needs, of the individual or the family or society in general, physical or mental or spiritual, which must be satisfied. We need houses wherein to live, food to eat, clothing to wear, means of transportation, recreational facilities, spiritual guidance, education and numerous other things. All these can and must be produced, maintained, provided in the only possible way of—WORK. Finally, the Christian realizes that he is made for a purpose and that he has been endowed with gifts and talents and is given strength and opportunities in order that he may be active, to the advantage of himself and others, and to the glory of the God, Who created him. Whence the necessity, in due time, of seeking a definite vocation.

Now the vocations from which one can and must choose are numerous and various. The United States Census Report for 1930 lists no less than 557 occupational groups which, in turn, could be divided into some 20,000 specific jobs. Today this number is even greater. As life develops it becomes increasingly complex and specialized. There was a time when occupations were comparatively few in number and each family provided for most of its own needs. That was the age of the Jack-of-all-trades. Think of the days of our early pioneers. The man was carpenter, mason, tool-maker, hunter, farmer, soldier, sheep-shearer, butcher, tanner and what not. The woman, too, had to be adept in many things, which today she can leave to others. Life then was simple and individualistic. All this, however, has changed. Today society functions more as a unit. The age of the Jack-of-all-trades is past. The occupational world has become so complex, that one can hope to become expert in only a fraction of a single field of human endeavor. Our age is one of specialization and mass production of single commodities for society as a whole. In this system each individual does not do many things for himself, but each seeks the vocation wherein he can make his small contribution to society as a whole. Thus each member of society works

God never hastens, and He never tarries!

for all the others, and all the others work for him. In this way those 20,000 or more jobs, listed in the 1930 Census Report, came into existence.

From this great number and variety of occupations it follows, that our pursuit of a specific vocation should be for us a matter of careful and deliberate *choice*. This it must be for also another reason. Think of the great difference in the people themselves, the diversity of gifts and talents and aptitudes in them who must be busy in these various vocations. Obviously, all men are not fit for any and all occupations. Each person has his own peculiar combination of physical and mental capacities. Also herein great diversity marks the work of our Lord, Who has endowed all men according to His infinite wisdom. Some are physically strong, others are weak; some are brilliant, others are mentally inferior; some have the gift for music, others have propensity for drawing, etc. Thus the need of being careful and deliberate in our choice is doubled.

How important that this choice be a wise one and that each man spend his few years on earth in a vocation for which he is best fit! Now more than ever this is necessary. The crushing competition of our present age and the ever increasing difficulties on the way of success make it more imperative than ever that we labor with all the enthusiasm and energy, which is possible only when we are doing the kind of work we desire to do and for which our native capacities and acquired abilities best qualify us. Besides, think of how much more hinges on a right choice of vocation. On it depends your entire life, your welfare and contentment in life as well as those of your dependents. Whether you face each new day with joyful anticipation, morbid indifference, or positive dread depends to an appreciable extent on the type of work you must do each and every day. Hence, much depends on a wise choice of vocation, and the latter you make only when there is the necessary harmony between the requirements of the occupation you select and your personal talents and aptitudes.

One must *choose*, therefore, sanely and deliberately. Let no one permit this vital issue to be decided without due consideration of everything involved. Know the difference between merely hunting a job and choosing a vocation. And beware of the tendency to simply allow yourselves to *drift*. Many plunge blindly into the first job that presents itself. The folly and danger of this method lies at the surface. Such people seldom succeed in the work they have selected. More often than not they drift from one job to another. Doing so they never become established, never attain to any degree of proficiency in any specific line of endeavor, often find themselves unemployed, usually remain in the low wage bracket and invariably derive a minimum of satisfaction from the work they do. Let us

avoid this error so many make. Here is one reason at least for all the discontent in the occupational world of our day. In this way we get an army of misfits, who skip from job to job and eventually contract a distaste for all manner of profitable labor in general and their own specific occupations in particular. Let our choice of a vocation, therefore, be the fruit of calm deliberation.

In this matter of choosing a vocation there is usually need of guidance by others, older and more experienced than we are. As a rule this choice must be made at a comparatively tender and inexperienced age. Parents, therefore, must shoulder their responsibility in this matter and strive to aid the child as much as possible in the selection of a life's vocation. You must not choose his occupation for him, for in the last analysis the person himself must make the choice. You must advise, give sane and loving guidance. That advice should be motivated by the desire to seek the good of the child, not your own convenience and temporal advancement. The Christian parent does not seek to get out of his children what he can, but he aims to prepare the covenant child for his place in life.

The school, too, should recognize the crying need of giving our growing boys and girls sound vocational guidance. What a service the Christian school could render here! The school as an institution has failed miserably until now in this respect. Yes, here and there, especially in the Vocational schools, courses are offered in various vocations. Even then, however, little or nothing is done to help the individual student make a wise choice and to aid the individual in selecting a vocation for which he is fit. Overburdened though our school curriculum may be, nothing could be more desirable and more in harmony with the purpose of the school, than a comprehensive, Christian course in Vocational Guidance, which would treat the whole problem from the viewpoint of the Word of God. What a concrete, practical purpose the school would then serve!

Which, now, are the things to be considered by the school, the parent and in the last analysis the one choosing the vocation? Which are some of the factors to be considered in selecting one's occupation? How must we go about this?

We might begin by mentioning some things we should *not* do when selecting our life's vocation. *Don't* choose a certain occupation merely because one of your friends has chosen that field. *Don't* drift from job to job, but map out a specific plan and pursue it. *Don't* enter a field of employment without securing essential information concerning all it involves. *Don't* permit your future to be determined by the wages offered at the start. Look ahead. Many jobs look promising enough at the beginning, but offer no opportunity for

advancement. *Don't* select work for which you have no liking at all. Seek *your* field. *Never* let some single superficial and incidental factor influence you toward a certain occupation. Generally speaking, *don't* let any single factor determine your choice, unless that factor be so vital that nothing else matters. One may certainly decide on a certain vocation, like the ministry or teaching or mission work, because he feels himself called by God to enter that field. Even then, however, one's abilities and gifts must be considered. If avoidable, *don't* seek a field that is overcrowded. Last but not least, *don't* choose a vocation that will be detrimental to your spiritual welfare, by involving you in practices and associations that are contrary to the Word of God, by depriving you of your Day of Rest or by robbing you of the preaching you are convinced you should have. Whatever vocation you select may never stand in the way of your calling to glorify your God above all and to seek first, always first, the kingdom of God and its righteousness. Parents, teachers, impress this on the minds and hearts of our covenant children!

In choosing a vocation four things are essential. First, you must study yourself, so that you may know your individual qualifications. Then, you must obtain some acquaintance with the vocational world in general. Seek, by reading and observation, a bird's eye view of the occupational world. Thirdly, study thoroughly the specific occupations you have selected for a final choice. Finally, compare your personal qualifications with the requirements of the vocation you finally chose as your life's occupation.

First, therefore, know yourself. Know your likes and dislikes, your ability to do a certain work, your natural aptitudes, your interests, your resources, but also your limitations. Know your character, disposition, and temperament. All this is necessary even where one feels himself called by God Himself to a specific work. There is something about being called to the ministry or the mission field that is different than with ordinary vocations. One feels that he has no other choice. Yet, also then we must examine ourselves and determine in a measure at least whether that calling is being verified by the qualifications God has given us. This self-knowledge must and can come to us only in the way of careful self-analysis. It cannot be gathered from things we did when we were babes. Don't be like the father who decided his son should be a chemist, merely because as a little boy he had been fond of pouring water from one bottle into another. Neither can this knowledge of self be gained by examining the shape of the head or the size of the skull. Because one has a large head one is not yet brilliant. Many criminals and imbeciles have large heads, too. No, true knowledge of self can be gathered

only in the way of careful self-analysis. But, this is not all.

We must have vocational knowledge as well as knowledge of self. Know something about vocations in general. Young people are often woefully ignorant of the vast number and variety of vocations open to them. In one school 66% of the boys confined their choice of occupation to only five vocations. They simply left thousands of occupations out of consideration. Know all you can learn about the vocational world in general. Then study in detail the three or four vocations you have selected as a possible choice. Know the conditions under which you must work. Know what these vocations require of a person, physically, physiologically, mentally, economically. Ascertain what is needed in the way of education and special training. In short, know the advantages and disadvantages, the pleasures and the hardships involved. Know above all what is involved spiritually. Must we work on Sunday? Must we belong to worldly unions or associations? Are we separating ourselves from our church? etc. All this should be ascertained before hand.

Working along these lines, as parents and teachers and children, we may hope to find a vocation, wherein we can be happy in our daily work, wherein our spiritual life can prosper and God may be glorified also in the sphere of our vocation.

R. V.

What though the way may be lonely,
And dark the shadows fall;
I know where'er it leadeth,
My Father planned it all.

The sun may shine tomorrow,
The shadows break and flee;
'Twill be the way He chooses,
The Father's plan for me.

He guides my halting footsteps,
Along the weary way,
For well He knows the pathway
Will lead to endless day.

A day of light and gladness,
On which no shade will fall,
'Tis this at last awaits me—
My Father planned it all.

I sing through shade and sunshine,
And trust what'er befall;
My Father planned it all.
His way is best—it leads to rest

Current Events

I suppose it is almost expected of anyone who writes on current events that he write about the war or matters relating to it. At the same time it must be apparent that it is extremely difficult to write about something that is subject to sudden change as is this present conflict. That is especially difficult when one must write weeks in advance.

There is, however, one thing that we might comment on and that is the much-talked-about necessity of a second front. It seems as though the Russian army is in a worse condition than the general public has been led to believe by newspaper reports. There are many who are of the opinion that Russia can keep on fighting indefinitely but recent reports from Moscow plainly state that this is not the case. Due to the destruction of the war Russia faces starvation in the coming winter. Its grain fields have been burned, many of its coal mines have been destroyed, while most of its great industries have been crippled. Moreover Russia is not receiving any vast amount of war materials from the U. S. and Britain. In the light of these facts it is very well possible that Russia will be forced to make a separate peace with the Axis. The only way to relieve the Russians is to begin a second front somewhere in Europe, thereby forcing Hitler to move many of his troops. It seems also to be highly urgent that such a second front be established very soon before Russia has become too weak to continue.

Perhaps by the time this article appears in print such a front will have become a reality.

Of course we all understand what this would mean. A second front can be established only at a tremendous cost of human lives. Not only does that mean that all our young men, for many of whom the war thus far has simply meant a period of training, will be called into action but there will also be many more called, first the younger ones and then possibly even those who have families.

Even now the Allies have started an offensive in the Pacific. And it is possible that the Allies will choose to make this a second front. It is still a question just where the great offensive will be launched but that it must come is inevitable. There can be no doubt but what we face very serious times and we may prepare ourselves to hear much "bad news".

What a comfort it is for the Christian to know that all these things are under the control of our heavenly Father and that not a hair can fall from our head without His will. In that comfort we are also assured that He causes all things to work together for our good. May God give us grace that we may look unto Him by faith in Jesus Christ; that our young men may be strong in the Lord and that our parents

may cast all their burdens on Him and that we as His children may have our expectation of Him alone.

For some time there has been much talk on the part of many so-called religious leaders about amalgamating the various religions into one national church, or even a world church. It stands to reason that as Protestant Reformed people we have no sympathy with such a movement but would, if necessary, feel constrained to oppose it with all our might. Apart from the fact that it would undoubtedly be a thoroughly modern church in which man would be glorified, it would in any case be impossible for us to take such a step.

But that we may someday have to face such an issue does not at all lie in the realm of the impossible or even the improbable. It seems to be entirely in harmony with the plans of the Antichrist to have such a church. It could be very useful to him especially with a view to his work of deception and persecution. In the light of such a church he could make it look very foolish and unnecessary to maintain a separate church organization and with the power of the government on his side he could make it well nigh impossible to do so.

The movement at present is very weak but who knows how rapidly it may gain impetus in the post-war period? Let us be on our guard constantly that we be not deceived by the power of darkness.

Considered from a human point of view, it is too bad that the Church in the world is always regarded in the light of the modern church and its leaders. It is no wonder that the Church is evil-spoken of and is mocked as powerless and a big failure. More than once we have come across an article that dealt with the church as a great failure because of its inability to give its members anything stable to which they may hold. And no doubt that is correct. The modern church is as a church nothing but a failure. It has cast aside the only Hope, it denies the only Power, it is without any true Comfort and it misses the only Purpose of all things.

Too bad that also the true Church must bear that scorn.

For as people of God we know that that is not true. It is true that the church has of itself nothing to give its members but it is also true that through His Church our Lord Jesus Christ gives them all things. We know that it is not vain to serve God. We know that it is the only thing that gives us any comfort and hope.

Of course the world does not understand this. It classifies all churches alike and so we must suffer that reproach.

But may it never be true in respect to us!

H. D. W.

Nieuws van onze Kerken

De Standard Bearer

Zooals ge weet lezer, gaat de jaargang van ons blad van af October tot October. Ook dit jaar mocht de Vaandeldrager geregeld verschijnen; en het heeft ook in dit afgelopen jaar weer gezegende vruchten voortgebracht voor de lezers, die waarlijk meeleeften, en onze beginselen liefhebben. Dit kan, dunkt me, niet uitblijven. In de verscheidenheid van schrijven kwam toch altijd weer uit de éénheid van gevoelen; en het ging altijd om de eere Gods, en het welzijn van Zion, en zoo ook alleen is 't altijd goed, en zal het onder ons moeten blijven zullen we een Gode aangenaam volk mogen worden genoemd.

Het is voor het welzijn van ons blad dat de laatsgehouden vergadering heeft besloten om onze Redakteur weer te benoemen als "dictator-redakteur," en dat hij de benoeming aannam, en het volgend jaar, zoo de Heere wil, de Standard Bearer weer zal redigeeren.

Het is zeer goed dat de "Board" besloot om ons blad te zenden naar de verschillende kampen, alwaar onze jongelingen hun intrek moesten nemen als soldaat om zich voor te bereiden voor 's lands diénsten. Ze ontvangen dit gratis. Het is dan ook de wensch, dat er vlijtig gebruik van wordt gemaakt, en dat ook door het lezen van de Standard Bearer ze beter geschikt mogen zijn als strijders voor 's Heeren Naam.

De "Board" meende er ook eventjes op te moeten wijzen dat het envelop systeem goed werkt. Lezers, die vergaten om hun lesgeld te betalen, kunnen dit nu meer systematisch doen. Het kost een niet geringe som om ons blad twee maal per maand te doen verschijnen, maar met de collecten die er in al onze kerken zoo nu en dan worden gehouden, bestaat de mogelijkheid er toch.

De "Board" klaagt ook telkens weer dat er geen genoeg "Subscribers" zijn. Ieder huisgezin moest inschrijven op onze Standard Bearer. Er werd dan ook een plan beraamd om ook vooral ons jong-getrouwde volkje te bereiken, en de verschillende kerkeraden worden vriendelijk, doch tevens dringend verzocht om de behulpzame hand te bieden. Zend s.v.p. al de adressen van deze jonge-getrouwden naar R. Schaafsma. De "Board" is van plan om hen die nog geen betalende lezers van ons blad zijn, de Standard Bearer half jaar gratis te sturen, met de stille wensch dat zoo'n jong paar er op in zal schrijven. Het mag redelijk worden verwacht, dat dit ook niet zal uitblijven. Zij die Protestant Gereformeerd zijn willen toch ook gaarne kennis vergaderen, en hiervoor is ons blad zeer geschikt. Dit zal door vriend en vijand wel niet kunnen worden ontkend. We moesten allen de

Vaandeldrager hebben als onze vriend. Dit is goed voor ons geestelijk leven, scheeve dingen worden er in recht gezet; en het helpt ons ook dat we de vaste spijs van Gods Woord beter kunnen verteren, en niet meer met melk behoeven te worden gevoed. Laat er bij ons een streven zijn om meer gefundeerd te worden in de waarheid, die leidt tot de godzaligheid.

Onze toekomstige School

Daar mag nog wel eens een klein woordje over worden gescheven in ons blad.

Ge herinnert zeker nog wel, dat in het korte verleden werd besloten om land te koopen voor dit doel. Er was een perceel grond dat kon worden gekocht, en dit land ligt zoo ongeveer $\frac{3}{4}$ mile ten Zuiden van onze Fuller Ave. kerk, en het kon worden gekocht voor de som van \$4000.

De "Board" beraamde dan ook een plan om dit geld bij één te verzamelen door intekening kaarten. Er waren tot zoo ver 40 personen die hunne kaarten hebben ingezonden; en het bedrag was de magere som van \$1200. Zoo ongeveer de helft er van deden hun plicht en betaalden de intekening som. Als er nu 400 personen waren die deze gemiddelde som betaalden zou dit het bedrag zijn van \$12,000.

De "Board" heeft de vrijmoedigheid dan ook nog niet gehad om deze loten te koopen. Hij is van oordeel dat er niet genoeg enthousiasme wordt gevonden voor dit doel in onze kerken, en dit is zeer jammer en niet prijzenswaardig.

De één weet U te vertellen dat het niet de tijd is voor een onderneming als deze, in kretieke dagen als de onze. Weer anderen zijn van oordeel dat de bestaande Christelijke scholen voldoende zijn voor onze kinderen; en weer anderen zijn met vreeze bevangen dat ge met deze onderneming, indien ge er in slaagt, een school b.v. als Baxter street in Grand Rapids er door verwoest.

Ik ben echter een beetje bang dat die redematies niet opkomen uit een ziel die brandt voor onze Prot. Geref. school beginselen. Het houdt me geen steek. Men is goed Prot. Geref. Dit lijde geen twijfel, doch op het gebiedt der school worden de lijnen scheef getrokken.

Ik meende altijd dat huisegezin, school en kerk niet van elkander kunnen en mogen worden gescheiden. Te behooren bij elkaar en er mag niet aan worden getornd.

Er wordt toch plechtig beloofd, toen het kleine verbondskindeke het zegel des heiligen doops ontving, ook dat kindje te onderwijzen, of te doen en te helpen onderwijzen in de leer die is begrepen in het Oude en Nieuwe Testament, en in de artikelen des Christelijken

geloofs, in de Christelijke kerk alhier geleerd. Nu deze Christelijke kerk is voor ons de Prot. Geref. kerk en deze leer de onvervalschte leer van Gods genadeverbond met ons.

Men verandere dat heilig doops ja-antwoordt dan ook niet in een ondag neen orakeltaal, ons als Christen ouders niet waardig en Gode onteerend.

Defense en de Christen

Defense: dit woord is tegenwoordig zoo niet op aller dan toch wel op veler lippen. Niemand neme het iemand dan ook kwalijk dat hij spreekt over deze alomvattende dingen in de tegenwoordige samenleving. Velen, uit de verschillende natien der wereld spreken dan ook in den geest dat de overwinning de hunne moet zijn. 't Is echter zichtbaar duidelijk, dunkt me, dat de koninkrijken der aarde de maat der ongerechtigheid hebben vol gemaakt, en ook ons land zal met dien maat moeten worden gemeten, alhoewel wij zeer godsdienstig zijn.

Nu, we maken ons hier in Amerika zoo langzamerhand gereed voor "defense werk," en de tijd schijnt niet ver meer of te zijn dat alles word gecontroleerd door de Regeering, en men duide deze dit niet euvel. Het is zeker niet vaderlandlievend, maar wel communistisch-goddeloos, dat ook nu nog in deze kretieke dagen de C. I. O. en de A. F. L. hun ver nielend-laag werk verrichten. Ierwijl de geheele wereld schreeut voor werk tot eigen behoudt, port men aan tot "strikes". De Christen lette hier op!

Het is jammer dat over het algemeen niet word begrepen wat het eigenlijk inhoudt om defense werk te verrichten. Er word uitsluitend over gesproken in verband met de dollar. Het meeste moet worden betaald; en wat meer uren wat beter, want over de 40 uur is een extraatje, en meer verdiensten spelt meer vermaak. Ook de Zondag geeft men er gaarne aan op maar meer geld to verdienen. Ik zou zeggen: laat de goddelooze wereld maar werken. Dit is teminste beter dan in allerlei uitspattingen zich te bezondigen. Het wordt echter meer dan ooit duidelijk dat de wereld van onzen dag materialistic is en hier alles aan op offered.

Ge hebt er zeker wel van gelezen in de dagbladen dat eenige weken geleden de groote generaal Knudson de zondag gang deedt om te inspecteeren hoe het eigenlijk wel ging met ons defense werk? Werdt er wel genoeg gewerkt? Hij deedt de rondgang natuurlijk op Zondag. Dit kon niet anders worden verwacht. Zaterdag voor de Zondag werdt dan ook een ieder aangezegd om op dien bepaalden dag te werken. En het werdt niet toegepast alleen op "defense" werk. De generaal moest zien dat er ook op Zondag werdt

gewerkt, ook al was het dan ook niet bepaald werk van noodzakelijkheid waaronder "defense" werk wordt gerekend. Zoo ging het teminste op de fabriek alwaar mijn persoon werkzaam is. Op dien bepaalden dag werkten er dan ook vele Christenen, die, terwijk ze er op werden gewezen, dat ze dien dag doorbrachten in de zonde, het ongeloovig woord uitspraken: we willen ons job niet verliezen, alsof at van de grootste beteekenis is. Er was ook iemand die vervelend-vroom zeide toen hij op dien bepaalden dag moest werken: 't gaat voor ons goede land om Gods wil, doch het bleek echter dat 't ging om de dollar, en om zijn zelfs wil. Hij rekende dien dag niet met God, ook niet met zijn goede Vaderland, anders was hij zeker met Gods volk kerkwaarts getogen. Wanneer een Christen echter word gevraagd of geboden om Zondags werk te verrichten dan dient hij er goed van overtuigd te zijn dat het noodzakelijk "defense" werk is. Dan moet hij er wel van overtuigd zijn dat het "Government" dit van hem eischt, en niet een fabriek-eigenaar die zijn eigen beurs er mee smeert, en er tenslotte ook nog niet om geeft of het al of niet noodzakelijk is voor het welzijn van 's werelds samenleven.

Het is ook mijn gedachte dat een Christen niet alleen mag, doch moet werken op Zondag wanneer hem dit van Governments wege word op-gelegd. Zoo goed als de soldaat op Zondag moet werken is er ook noodzakelijk werk te verrichten op dien dag voor de gewone burger. Als het nu zoo ver komt, laat ons dan dit werk biddend doen. Dan blijftde dollar er wel buiten, want daar gaat het ook heelemaal niet om op Zondags "defense" werk. Dit moet goed duidelijk zijn.

Ik ben er wel wat bevreesd over dat we de zaak een beetje te licht opnemen. Er word dikwijlsgeredeneerd als volgt: De kerk laat Zondags werk toe wanneer dit noodzakelijk is; en men doet niet eens de moeite om het uit te vinden.

Staande echter op de Christus-Rots zal 't wel gaan. Dan lijden we geen schipbreuk op de zandgrond van eigen zondig denken.

S. D. V.

Beyond thy utmost wants,
His power can love and bless;
To trusting souls He loves to grant
More than they can express.

"Let thy soul walk softly in thee
Like a saint in heaven unshod,
For to be alone with silence
Is to be at home with God."

Ingezonden

Mijnheer de Redakteur:—

Mag ik s.v.p. een klein plaatsje voor onderstaande Bij voorbaat mijn dank.

In deze ernstige tijde komt nog al eens de vraag naar voren, "Zal men ook in 't openbaar gebed in 't midden der gemeente bidden voor onze hooge overheid?"

Wanneer de tijden normaal zijn, en alles zijn gewonen gang gaat, dan gevoelt men er zoozeer geen behoefte aan, dan is er in hen kerkelijk leven vaak zooveel dat de aandacht en voorbede vraagt, doch nu de tijden zoo ontzettend ernstig zijn, en de taak onzer regeering zoo ontzachlijk zwaar is, en de verantwoordelijkheid groot is in deze dagen is het, dunkt ons, niet meer dan roeping en plicht ook hen te gedenken in onze gebeden, en dan wel in de eerste plaats onze President.

Temeer daar het een bevel Gods is. We lezen immers in I Tim. 2:1-2: Ik vermaan voor alle dingen, dat gedaan worden smeeingen, gebeden, voorbiddingen, dankzeggingen, voor alle menschen.

Voor Koningen, en allen die in hoogheid zijn, opdat wij een gerut en stil leven leiden mogen in alle Godzaligheid en eerbaarheid.

Waar wij nu als Gereformeerden gelooven in de onfeilbaarheid van Gods Woord, en altijd de volle nadruk leggen op het: "Zoo Zegt de Heere", zal het toch een vanzelfheid zijn op grond van Gods Woord ook onze overheid in 't openbaar te gedenken in onze gebeden.

Nu weten we wel dat vroeger in Nederland het bidden voor de hooge overheid zoo gemakkelijk ging, Nederlands koningin is een belijder, en er is een tijd geweest, dat haar Cabinet voor een groot deel bestond uit stoere Calvinisten, doch dat neemt toch niet weg, dat Paulus woordgeschreven is voor alle tijden en landen.

En dan was het ook niet zoo dat in Paulus dagen de overheid zoo vroom was, en hij het daarom voorschrijft: Integendeel, Pilatus was een rechtsverkrachter, Herodus, een kinder-moordenaar, en de Keizer van Rome een Christen vervolger.

En voor die overheid moest men bidden.

Wat staat ons nu te doen, het nalaten in 't midden der gemeente? Noodwendig zullen we Art. 36 uit onze geloofsebelijdenis dan ook moeten schrappen.

J. R. VanderWal.

WE MAY FORGET; GOD DOES NOT!

God's time is never wrong,
Never too fast nor too slow;
The planets move to its steady pace
As the centuries come and go.

Stars rise and set by that time,
The punctual comets come back
With never a second's variance,
From the round of their viewless track.

Men space their years by the sun,
And reckon their months by the moon,
Which never arrive too late
And never depart too soon.

Let us set our clocks by God's,
And order our lives by His ways,
And nothing can come and nothing can go
Too soon or too late in our day.

—A. J. F.

CORNERS

This morning, Lord, I pray
Safeguard us through the day,
Especially at corners of the way,

For when the way is straight,
We fear no sudden fate,
But see ahead the evening's open gate.

But few and far between
Are days when all is seen
Of what will come, or yet of what has been.

For unexpected things
Swoop down on sudden wings
And overthrow us with their buffetings.

And so, dear Lord, we pray,
Control and guard this day
Thy children at the corners of their way.

—M. G. L.