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MEDITATIE

De Belofte Des Geestes

Doch over het huis van David, en over de inwoners van Jeruzalem, zal Ik uitstorten den Geest der genade en der gebeden; en zij zullen Mij aanschouwen, Dien zij doorstoken hebben, en zij zullen over Hem rouwklagen, als met de rouwklage over eenen eenigen zoon; en zij zullen over Hem bitterlijk kermen, gelijk men bitterlijk kermt over eenen eerstgeborene. Te dien dage zal te Jeruzalem de rouwklage groot zijn, gelijk die rouwklage van Hadadrimmon, in het dal van Megiddon.

Zach. 12:10, 11.

Te dien dage!

Herhaaldelijk wordt deze bepaling gevonden in dit twaalfde hoofdstuk van de profetie van Zacharia.

En zeker is wel, dat deze uitdrukking telkens doelt op dezelfde periode van de geschiedenis van Gods volk in de wereld, en ook, dat ze zich uitstrekt ver over en na de historie der oude bedeeling.

Want wonderlijke beloften geeft de Heere aan Zijn volk, beloften, die "te dien dage" in vervulling zullen gaan. Te dien dage zou de Heere Jeruzalem stellen tot een lastigen steen allen wolken, een steen des aanstoots; vs. 3. Te dien dage zou Jehova alle paarden met schuwigheid slaan, en hunne ruiters met zinneloosheid, maar over het huis van Juda zou Hij Zijne oogen openen, vs. 4. En dan zouden de leidslieden van Juda kiezen voor den Heere en Zijne zaak, vs. 5. Te dien dage zou de God van Israel de leidslieden van Juda stellen tot een vurigen haard onder het hout, en als eene vurige fakkel onder de schoven, vs. 6. Te dien dage zou de Heere de inwoners van Jeruzalem beschutten; en de zwakste onder hen zou zijn als David, en, o wonder! het huis Davids zou zijn als God, als de Engel des Heeren voor hun aangezicht; een wonder, dat zijn

letterlijke vervulling heeft in Christus, God in het vleesch, Immanuel, vs. 8. Te dien dage zou de Heere zoeken (let daarop: *zoeken*) te verdelgen alle heidenen, die tegen Jeruzalem aankomen, maar Hij zou Jeruzalem redden, want over het huis Davids en over de inwoners van Jeruzalem zou Hij uitgieten den Geest der genade en der gebeden. . . .

Wonderlijke dag!

Dag van vervulling en rijke zaligheid!

Te dien dage!

Belofte des Geestes!

Rijk en van groote beteekenis voor hen, die Gods verbond liefhadden en wilden houden onder de oude bedeeling.

Ach, er waren er ongetwijfeld ook in de dagen der oude bedeeling, die den rijkdom dezer belofte hoegenaamd niet konden inzien en waardeeren. Zij zochten de dingen, die gezien werden, de dingen des vleesch, ook al behoorden ze tot de teruggekeerden uit Babel. Volgens hen was er wel behoefte aan gansch iets anders dan eene uitgieting des Geestes. Ze droomden van een herstel van Davids troon en van de vroegere glorie van Israels koninkrijk. Ze meenden zulk een wederoprichting van het koninkrijk van Israel te mogen verwachten. En met die verwachting waren ze ook teruggekeerd naar het land der vaders. Maar, ach, op zulk een terugkeer van uitwendige macht en heerlijkheid geleek het in die dagen niets!

En nu werd hun door den profeet eene belofte gegeven van de uitgieting des Geestes!

Van den Geest der genade en der gebeden!

En aan die belofte had het vleeschelijke zaad niets.

Doch voor het ware Israel was dit eene heerlijke belofte. Niet alsof ook zij zich eene heldere voorstelling konden vormen van den eigenlijken inhoud en van de volle beteekenis dezer voorzegging. Doch wel verstonden ze, dat juist deze belofte in onlosmakelijk verband stond met den dag van Israels volkomene verlossing, den dag der volle realizeering van Gods verbond, waarin ze volkomene verlossing zouden hebben van alle hunne ongerechtigheden, en Hem zouden kunnen

dienen zonder vreest! Ach, de wet bleek zoo zwaar, te zware laat om te dragen!

Ze had immers wel eene schaduw der toekomstige dingen, en op die schaduw zagen ook de geloovigen der oude bedeeling in hope; maar de werkelijkheid zelf was nog niet gekomen. En naarmate de vervulling der belofte naderde, "den dag des Heeren," werd de last der wet al zwaarder. De bediening der wet kwam steeds meer in handen van het vleeschelijk Israel, dat het voor het vrome Israel steeds moeilijker maakte om onder de schaduwen en naar de wet den Heere te dienen, en Zijn verbond te houden, en om in de schaduwen der wet de belofte der werkelijkheid te zien.

En ziet, nu kwam de belofte des Geestes!

Het was de belofte van de vervulling, van den dag des Heeren, waarnaar ze met verlangen uitzagen, den dag der vrijheid. . . .

Vrijheid van schuld en zonde!

Vrijheid ook van de wet!

Heerlijke belofte!

Uitgieting des Geestes!

Ik zal den Geest der genade en der gebeden uitgieten!

Mysterie des heils!

Opzichzelf genomen zou deze belofte ook zoo kunnen worden verstaan, dat ze niet meer inhoudt dan dat de Heere aan Zijn volk een geest der genade en der gebeden schenken zou, dat Hij in hunnen geest genade en gebed zou werken. Zelfs is het niet onwaarschijnlijk, dat de geloovigen der oude bedeeling haar zoo verstonden. En ook zoo verstaan, en dus meer uitsluitend lettend op de vrucht des Geestes, is deze belofte rijk aan inhoud.

Toch zien wij thans veel meer in dit woord.

Immers leven wij "te dien dage", en is deze belofte hare vervulling ingegaan.

En in het licht der vervulling verstaan wij thans, dat Jehova hier niet slechts beloofde, dat Hij een geest der genade en der gebeden in Zijn volk zou werken, maar dat Hij Zijn Geest zou doen wonen in Zijne Kerk, opdat die Geest, de derde Persoon der Goddelijke Drieëenheid, als de Geest van Christus eeuwiglijk in haar en bij haar zou blijven wonen. Zooals in de volheid des tijds te Bethlehem de Zoon in ons vleesch kwam, om nimmermeer van ons te scheiden, zoo kwam op den dag der eerstelingen de Geest van Christus in de gemeente wonen, om haar te maken tot eene eeuwige woonstede Gods.

Hij is de Geest der genade en der gebeden.

Want Hij is de bewerker van beide.

Hij is de werkmeester der genade. Al de genade, die door Christus voor de Zijnen werd verworven, en die in Christus is, werkt Hij in ons uit. Hij is het, Die ons deelgenooten maakt van alle gaven der genade, van leven en licht, van wijsheid en kennis, van vergeving en gerechtigheid, van geloof en liefde, van

heiligmaking en volharding ten einde toe. De genade van den Heere Jezus Christus komt door den Geest ons toe.

Daarom is Hij ook de bewerker van alle gebeden.

En wederkeerige betrekking is er tusschen genade en alle waarachtig gebed. Want eenerzijds is genade de bron, waaruit alle gebed opwelt. Buiten genade is er geen gebed. Er moge ook bij den natuurlijken mensch een schijn van gebed zijn. Als hij in nood verkeert, weet hij dikwijls tot God te roepen, om hem uit den tijdelijken nood te verlossen. Doch met waarachtig gebed, dat in den grond der zaak altijd is een zuchten tot God en om God, heeft zulk een schijngebed niets gemeen. De natuurlijke mensch staat in vijandschap tegen God over. Hij verlangt niet naar Hem. Hij zoekt ver van God de weelde. Doch door genade roept Gods kind uit diepten van ellenden tot den levenden God, verlangt hij naar God, keert hij zich tot Hem, om te mogen drinken uit de Fontein aller goeden.

De Geest werkt genade in het hart, en door de werking dier genade wordt het gebed geboren.

En toch is die betrekking tusschen genade en gebed ook wederkeerig. Want God geeft Zijnen Geest en Zijne genade immers alleen aan hen, die Hem daarom bidden. In en door het gebed opent zich als het ware het hart om den Geest en de genade Gods te ontvangen. En achter alles staat de Geest, de bewerker van genade en gebed beide. Hij is eerst, en komt met Zijne genade in ons wonen en werken. Doch die werking is zoodanig, dat Hij ons doet hongeren en dorsten naar de gerechtigheid, dat is, naar de genade. En alzoo hongerende en dorstende keeren we ons tot de Bron des levens, en roepen we Hem om Zijne genade aan. En op dat gebed schenkt Hij ons weer genade voor genade. . . .

Geest-genade-gebed.

Gebod-Geest-genade!

Genade doet bidden om genade; en het gebed wordt verhoord in de gave der genade!

Gave des Geestes, van den Geest der genade en der gebeden!

Wonderlijke gave!

Uitgieten zal Ik den Geest!

Hierop valt nadruk in den tekst.

Want de bedoeling is, dat het volle heil, dat in Christus is, door de uitstorting van dezen Geest der genade en der gebeden, zal worden uitgegoten in de gemeente, en dat de Geest in allen zal wonen, en allen zal vervullen.

Zoo immers werd het vervuld op den Pinksterdag.

Zij werden allen vervuld met den Heiligen Geest.

Zeker, ook onder de oude bedeeling was er eene werking van den Geest in de geloovigen. Ook toen was Hij de bewerker van alle heil, van alle genade, van alle gebed. Ook toen werden Gods kinderen wedergeboren en werden ze behouden door het geloof. Ze

werden immers zalig langs geen anderen weg, en op geen andere wijze dan wij.

Doch er was een groot verschil tusschen de be-deeling van toen en van thans. De belofte was nog niet vervuld. Christus was nog niet gekomen. Het bloed der verzoening was nog niet gestort. Er was nog geen verhoogde Heiland aan de rechterhand des Vaders. En "de Heilige Geest was nog niet, overmits Jezus nog niet verheerlijkt was". Joh. 7:39. Er was dus wel een werking des Geestes, maar het was de Geest der schaduwen, niet der vervulling, die in de harten der geloovigen werkte. Er was nog geen volle openbaring, en altijd moest men van de profeten het Woord Gods hooren en leeren. Altijd werkte de Geest door de wet. Aan die wet bond Hij de geloovigen, en door die wet, bediend door menschen, in tempel en bij altaar, gaf Hij hun iets te zien en te smaken van de zaligheid, die straks geopenbaard zou worden. Het was niet de Geest der vrijheid, maar de Geest der dienstbaarheid tot voortdurende vreeze, die werkte in de harten der geloovigen van het oude verbond. Doch toen de volheid des tijds kwam, en God Zijnen Zoon gezonden had in het vleesch, en die Zoon door den dood der volmaakte gehoorzaamheid alles had vervuld, en was opgewekt, en was verhoogd aan de rechterhand des Vaders, en de belofte des Heiligen Geestes had ontvangen, toen werd de Geest de Geest van den verhoogden Heiland, en werd Hij als zoodanig uitgegoten in de gemeente, met zich brengende den vollen Christus, allen weldaden des Heils, de waarachtige vrijheid, kennis en wijsheid, gerechtigheid en leven, zoals die in de oude bedee-ling niet gekend werden. En de geloovigen waren niet langer afhankelijk van een bijzonder profeet om den Heere te kennen, noch van een gezalfden priester om den Heere te dienen in Zijnen tempel, want zij kennen allen den Heere, van den kleinste tot den grootste, en allen hebben de zalving van den Heilige . . .

Uitgieten!

Stroomën, geen druppelkens

Over allen, niet over enkelen!

Over het huis Davids en over de inwoners van Jeruzalem!

Zoo toch is het letterlijk vervuld Want het huis van David werd in Christus verhoogd in den hemel, aan de rechterhand des Vaders. En Hij, de verhoogde Christus, ontving de belofte des Heiligen Geestes eerst. En Hij, "de belofte des Heiligen Geestes ontvangen hebbende", stortte den Geest uit in de gemeente. Hand. 2:33.

En over de inwoners van Jeruzalem

Want zij, die daar in Jeruzalem, als een afgescheiden groep, vergaderd waren, de honderd en twintig, die eendrachtiglijk bijeen waren, waren wel waarlijk Jeruzalem, en niet de priesters en ouderlingen, en Farizeeën en Schriftgeleerden, die zich aan de schaduw-
Zij waren de inwoners van Jeruzalem

Straks groeit reeds dat Jeruzalem. Want ook de duizenden, die op den denzelfden Pinksterdag, en later, als de Heere tot de gemeente toevoegde die zalig worden den Geest ontvingen, behooren bij de inwoners van Jeruzalem

De lijn loopt door.

Het huis Davids wordt verheerlijkt.

Jeruzalem wordt gered bevrijd, gezaligd.

Allen worden vervuld met den Geest!

Stroomen van heil!

Machtige Geest!

Want de kracht Zijner werking wordt in de vrucht gezien!

Door dien Geest komt er waarachtige kennis der zonde!

Zij aanschouwen Hem, Dien zij doorstoken hebben! Mij! God!

Want wel heeft dit woord ook een letterlijke vervulling gehad bij het kruis van Christus, toen men het aanschouwde, hoe een der krijgsknechten, die gekomen waren om de beenen der kruiselingen te breken, de zijde van Jezus met zijn speer doorstak. Toen is immers ook de Schrift vervuld: "Zij zullen zien, in Welken zij gestoken hebben". Joh. 19:37. En nog eens zal dit woord vervuld worden, als Hij komt met de wolken, en "alle oog zal Hem zien, ook degenen, die Hem doorstoken hebben".

Maar toch wordt hier een geestelijk aanschouwen bedoeld.

Een waarachtige kennis van zonde wordt door dit aanschouwen aangeduid, zooals wel duidelijk is uit het verdere van den tekst. Ze hebben Hem, God, doorstoken! Dat is eigenlijk het wezen van alle zonde! Wie zoo op God ziet, als op Dengene, Dien Hij doorstoken heeft, die kent zijne ongerechtigheid. Zoo zag men Hem op den Pinksterdag.

Maar dan komt ook de verdere vrucht des Geestes, de vrucht van boete en berouw, van belijdenis van schuld en bittere rouwklage, omdat zij Hem doorstoken hebben! Een rouwklage bitter en diep, als over een eenigen zoon, als over een eerstgeborene, die men door den dood verloren heeft. En de rouwklage zal groot zijn, want de Geest zal worden uitgestort, uitgegoten over velen, over duizenden bij duizenden, zoodat een groot gewezen zal opgaan, gelijk de rouwklage van Hadadrimmon in Megiddo, waar de geliefde Josia sneuvelde en werd beklagd. II Kron. 35:20vv. Maar ook zal die rouwklage persoonlijk zijn; geslacht bij geslacht afzonderlijk, mannen en vrouwen ieder voor zichzelf, bedrijven rouw, zooals blijkt uit het slot van dit hoofdstuk.

En dan komt er bebed om genade, om vergeving van ongerechtigheid.

En de verhooring van dat gebed.

Gerechtigheid en leven!

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EDITORIALS

Restraint of Sin and War Babies

In more than one way our present times of war and destruction in the whole world shed an interesting light upon those phenomena in human life which the Christian Reformed Churches in 1924 endeavored to interpret by their theory of common grace as officially adopted in the "Three Points". This is especially true of the phenomenon of the apparent good which the natural man performs in this present world. It is the Reformed view that man by nature is totally depraved, which, according to the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day III, means nothing less than that he is wholly incapable of doing any good and inclined to all evil. And this conception is certainly based on and completely in accord with Holy Writ. But there seem to be many phenomena in actual life that contradict this doctrine of man's total depravity outside of the grace of Christ. Every man does not always appear to sin. It appears that he does many good things, not only in a physical and natural, but even in a moral sense. He does not reveal himself as a devil, as the doctrine of total depravity might lead one to expect. There is a good deal of decency and good will among individuals and nations. The world does not appear to run to destruction as fast as possible. All this would seem to contradict the teaching of Scripture and of the Reformed Confessions with regard to the complete corruption of the human nature. This apparent contradiction the Christian Reformed Churches have endeavored to explain and to eliminate by the theory of the restraint of sin in the heart and life of the individual, as well as in the life of the community. According to this conception there is a working of the Holy Spirit in the life of every man, an operation which is not regenerative and, therefore, not unto salvation, but by which all men are so improved that they can perform natural and civil good. This really means that in this world the sinner can do good works.

Now, in times like the present, when sin abounds and men and nations are bent upon destruction, there are many phenomena, many actual facts which give the lie to the entire theory of common grace, and, particularly, to the doctrine of the restraint of sin by a gracious operation of the Holy Spirit, and which suggest an entirely different explanation of the apparent good works of the natural, unregenerated man. One of these phenomena is the recent increase in the birth rate in our country. Time was, when it was simply not in style for young married couples to get babies during the first years of their marriage; and

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it certainly was old fashioned to raise large families. Of course, exceptions to the rule that when people married they could expect children, there had always been. Also children are a gift of God, and in olden times it was not up to man to determine whether or not children would be born to him in wedlock. And God did not always bless the marriage relation with children. But in recent years the phenomenon of childless marriages became so general, that we all knew there was something wrong. People took it into their own hand to live in the relation of matrimony without giving birth to children. They practised the evil of birth control almost without restraint. Recently, however, the tables are turned. An amazing number of new babies are born. One cannot but be struck by the long lists of birth announcements in our daily papers. And no one can fail to notice the numerous expectant young mothers, often, indeed, very young. It is very evident that the sin of birth control is restrained to a great extent.

Now, how can this change be explained? Does the theory of the Christian Reformed Churches apply here? That would mean that before the war there was little or no operation of the Holy Spirit in the world (I am not writing of the people of God, of course; and God forbid that it should ever be necessary to write about this evil in connection with the Church of Christ!) to restrain this evil of birth control, that undermines the life of families and nations; but that today this restraining influence of the Holy Spirit is again operative in an increasing measure. On the very face of it such an explanation would already seem absurd. Why should there be such a restraining operation in one period and not in another, without any apparent reason? Besides, such an explanation would be contrary to the theory itself, for according to it the checking and improving power of common grace is not increased, but rather withheld as time goes on. But even apart from this, we all know what is really the restraining power in this case. We certainly do not have to look for such a pious cause as the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit, in order to understand the present remarkable increase in the birth of children. The cause is to be found in the war, and, more particularly, in the draft. The sin of birth control was abandoned, and children were wanted, partly, because many hoped that in this way they would escape the draft; and, partly, because the parents expect support from the government in case the husband has to join the army, and a pension in case he should not return from the war. In other words, it is not grace, it is not an operation of the Holy Spirit that restrains the evil of birth control, but fear and greed and selfishness. As is very frequently the case, one sin restrains another. And it is evident that the wicked always sins, whether he practises birth control and refuses to have children, or whether

he refrains from practicing this sin, and raises a family. He knows not how to do good. For he departed from the living God. And apart from Him is only death.

H. H.

An Open Door

I am writing these editorials from Waupun, Wisconsin, where I am staying with friends during the brief period that I am appointed to labor in these parts in the interest of our mission. This time Waupun itself is not the center of our activity, although it begins to appear to me that it could very well be made a center. For many of our people that remember the past the name Waupun does not awake pleasant memories. For a little while we had a congregation here, which, however, soon revealed very morbid tendencies of which they stubbornly refused to be converted. They did not remain with us very long. And a small group of them still congregate here on the sabbath and try to feed themselves with their own beloved husks. But in the first place, not all of those that belonged to our former church here were spiritually sick. And some of them remained loyal to our cause to the very last, and are even now attached to the Protestant Reformed Churches. And, secondly, a number of our people have moved to Waupun from Michigan, and have families here. For these the place where we are working at present is too distant. And it might not prove either impossible or undesirable to work in Waupun once again in the future.

However, as stated, we are not making Waupun the center of our labors at present. That center is Randolph, which is about sixteen miles distant from Waupun. That the board of missions decided to labor in this vicinity, and that, too, while we have no missionary, is due to the recommendations of Rev. C. Hanko of Oak Lawn, Ill. He had contact with some of the people in this vicinity and thought that there might be a field for us here. It seemed to him that the Lord had opened a door for us in this community. He, too, was the first to be appointed by the mission board to labor in this vicinity for a few weeks. He established contact with some families in Randolph, as well as in Friesland and East Friesland; secured a place of meeting, preached twice on Sunday and visited several families during the week. After his stay the meetings on Sunday were continued, and some of our ministers have conducted the services here. And so the mission board decided to request of the Fuller Ave. consistory to let me labor here, too, for about three weeks, a request which was readily granted.

At the time of this writing I have preached in Randolph twice. The services, which are held in the language at night, were well attended. In the after-Holland language in the afternoon, and in the English noon the audience numbered between sixty and seventy, and in the evening between seventy and eighty. These are not bad audiences, especially when one considers that they consist mostly of adults. Tonight (Sept. 17) I expect to deliver a lecture, for two more Sundays, the Lord willing, I expect to preach, while for next week two more lectures have been advertised. In the meantime I have visited several families, some in Friesland, some living on the farm, and some in Randolph. So that we may safely say that in this first week of my stay here, I have become acquainted somewhat with this new field of labor.

However, it is too early to express a definite opinion on the prospects of our cause in this community. Surely, it would be premature to speak of organising a congregation. In Randolph there is a fairly large Dutch Reformed church, some of whose members are good Reformed people; and a small Christian Reformed Church. There we have our meetings. The meetings were started in a kind of pavilion or community hall, which offered plenty of room, but had a rather delapidated appearance, and was not the most desirable meeting place. After a meeting with the minister and two board members of the Congregational Church in Randolph, however, we were able to rent their building for our meetings both on Sunday and during the week. Henceforth, therefore, we expect to have our services and lectures there. Not far from Randolph are Friesland and East Friesland, small towns in the midst of a prosperous farming community. As the names indicate, there are many Hollanders of Friesian stock there; and, if I am not mistaken, there are several of these Friesians that are rather sound in faith. They reveal at least an interest in our cause. Even though it is too early, therefore, to say anything definite as to the future of our church here, we may state that the Lord has opened unto us a door. There can be no question about that. If the Lord be pleased to give us another missionary soon, he may well start his labors right here. And if we must struggle on without a missionary for some time, the labors should not be abandoned, nor even discontinued in this community. For the Lord has given us an open door.

H. H.

"God sometimes shuts the door and shuts us in,
That He may speak, perchance through grief or pain,
And softly, heart to heart, above the din,
May tell some precious thought to us again."

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

The second question that must be answered in this connection is: "Can *another* creature, a creature that is *not man*, satisfy for our sin?" The Catechism answers: "God will not punish any other creature for the sin which man committed". This will of God to punish only the creature that sinned and no other creature is not arbitrary. God's will is always in accord with His justice, and justice and righteousness belong to His very Being. And God cannot deny Himself. And He certainly would deny Himself if He would punish another creature for man's sin. This statement does not exclude the possibility of a substitute. For a substitute is not another *creature*, but another *person*, and the relation of one person to another or to others may be such that he is permitted according to justice to take the place of the others in judgment. But here it is the question of *another creature*. It is a creature that has not the same kind of nature as man. It is different. It has not the same body, mind, will, experience, life as man. It does not live a *human* life, and it cannot die a *human* death. Now, whether that creature is animal or angel, it could never receive man's punishment for man's sin in his stead. For if the justice of God demands that an evil be inflicted upon the sinner which is commensurate with or equivalent to the sin committed, "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," then it is evident that only *human death*, i.e. the suffering of death in and by human nature can be the proper punishment for the sin of a human being. Hence, God will not punish the sin which man committed in any other nature than that of man. Besides, it must not be forgotten, that the ultimate purpose of punishment is that the sinner must acknowledge that God is good. Sin is really an attempt to deny the goodness, i.e. the holiness, righteousness and truth of God. It is transgression of the law. It is the realization of the intention to set up another standard of goodness than the will of God. And God maintains His goodness, and compels the

sinner to acknowledge that He is the only good by inflicting the punishment of death upon him, by thus causing him to experience the unspeakable misery of departing from and rising in rebellion against the living God. But this purpose could not be attained by punishing another creature, a creature that exists and lives outside of the scope of man's experience, for the sin of man. It is in the experience of human nature, of the human body and the human soul, of the human mind and will, that God's holy wrath must be felt, and that He must make Himself known, even in opposition to sin, as the sole Good. Hence, the same creature that sinned must receive the punishment for sin. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Heb. 10:4.

The third question is closely related to the second: can a *mere* creature substitute for us? At first blush it may appear as if this question had really already been answered. If man cannot satisfy for himself, and if another creature cannot take his place, then it stands to reason that there is no mere creature anywhere that is able to satisfy the justice of God with respect to sin. Yet, this last question considers the matter from a different viewpoint. The question now is, not whether another kind of creature is able to take our place, but whether a mere creature, one that is nothing but a creature, one that is no more than a creature, even if it were permitted to substitute for us, would be able to bear our punishment and to restore us to the favor of God. And to this question the Heidelberg Catechism gives a double answer: (1) no mere creature can sustain the burden of God's eternal wrath against sin; and (2) no mere creature could deliver us from that wrath of God. All emphasis should be placed here on the word "sustain". One could not substitute a term like "suffer" here. The German uses the term "ertragen". The word conveys especially two ideas: that of actively bearing any burden, and that of bearing such a burden to the very end. In our discussion of the implications of satisfaction we stressed the fact that the wrath of God must be endured as an act, in the obedience of the love of God. To satisfy the justice of God one must not merely *suffer*, passively bear, the punishment for sin. That is done by the damned in hell, too. Yet they never bring a sacrifice for sin, and they never atone for their guilt, for the simple reason that in suffering the wrath of God they never perform an act of love. God *inflicts* punishment, He *takes* payment from them, but they never willingly *give* it. Now, no *mere* creature can ever so sustain the wrath of God that he performs a willing act of obedience in the love of God. For the punishment of sin is death, utter death, physical and spiritual death, eternal death. In order to be active in death, *to perform the act of death*, one must have a life that he has the power to lay down. And that is not true of any creature. The creature's life is given

to it. It is never its own. He may forfeit that life, and he does, if with it he does not constantly consecrate himself to God in the obedience of love. And if he forfeits it, his life is taken away from him and he suffers death. But never can he have the right and the power to lay it down so as to bring a sacrifice to God. He has the right to consecrate that life to God *in life*; he cannot possibly make it a gift in death. One must be more than a mere creature in order to lay down his life and to perform the atoning act of death. But to sustain, "ertragen", also expresses the notion of *endurance to the end*. In order to satisfy the justice of God, one must be able to *finish* the act of bearing the punishment against sin. He must get through with it. If he does not finish it, he must be crushed under the burden of the wrath of God, and there is no deliverance. In other words, he must have the authority so to lay down his life, that by this act he obtains the right to take it again. And he must also have the power, the ability, the capacity, so to lay down his life that through death he will live. He must be able to live and act even while he is dying, and so performing the act of death he must emerge from all death as the living one. And it is evident that no mere creature can ever emerge from death in his own power. He has no life in himself to overcome death. It is evident, then, that no one who is not more than a creature could ever *sustain* the wrath of God.

Besides, the Catechism reminds us, that a substitute must so bear and sustain the burden of the wrath of God, that he delivers others from it. And this implies, first of all, that by the act of laying down his life such a creature must obtain the *right*, according to the justice of God, to deliver many from that wrath and to restore them to God's favor. And how could a mere creature ever so perform the act of death? Suppose there were a creature that had a life to offer, and that was able to offer it to God in sacrifice; and suppose such a creature was in a position to offer it as a substitute; how could the sacrifice of that one life ever serve as a substitute except for only one other life similar to the life that was offered? A mere creature is never capable of bringing a sacrifice for many. But it implies, secondly, that after the creature has sacrificed his life, he must have the power to actually deliver us from death and impart new life to us. We *are* in death. We are not like prisoners that have been condemned to death and still await the execution of that sentence; we are already in the power of death. We must be delivered. We must be quickened. And one that is to save us, must have the power so to deliver us that the shackles of death are broken and we are quickened unto new life. But to speak of the possibility that a mere creature, that has no life in himself, would have the power to deliver us after he laid down his life as a sacrifice for sin, is absurd.

The conclusion therefore is that as far as we are

concerned the way is closed. There is no possibility of satisfaction. Our case is strictly hopeless. We can sin, but we can never atone. We could fall from a state of righteousness by wilfull disobedience, but we can never return to that state. We can make ourselves worthy of God's wrath and of His just sentence of eternal damnation, but we can never do anything or bring anything to God that will again make us worthy of His favor. We can cast ourselves into the prison of sin and death, as we did through the fall and disobedience of our first parents in paradise; but after we do so the door is locked and we can never unlock it: the justice of God keeps it securely barred. And not only is there no power or possibility in and with us to deliver us, but in all creation there is no hope. Wherever we turn, there is no possibility of satisfaction. There is no way out?

The Possibility of Satisfaction

Where, then, must we look for salvation? If there is no hope in self, and if in all the universe there cannot be found a creature that is able to bring satisfaction for sin and to deliver us from the guilt and power of sin and death, whither shall we turn? That is the next question asked by the instructor in our Heidelberg Catechism. What sort of a mediator and deliverer then must we seek for? It would seem that there is no longer room for a question such as this. The way has been closed. It would appear that all possibilities have been considered and thoroughly investigated. We must satisfy the justice of God, and we cannot. Unless that justice of God is fully satisfied we cannot be received again into the favor of God. We have no right to be delivered from the power of sin and death, no right to life, unless the justice of God be first completely satisfied. But it seems that this is an impossible demand. The condition of satisfaction, so we have seen, we can never meet. Nor is there another creature, a mere creature that can take our place in the judgment of God and satisfy in our stead and in our behalf. Must we, then, not give up all hope? And is it not absurd at this point to ask the question: what sort of a mediator must we then look for? It certainly would be, if the question meant that we should investigate once more the possibility of salvation on our part. But this is not the intent of the question. It is not the natural man, but the believer that asks this question concerning a possible mediator and deliverer after all creaturely possibilities have been exhausted. It is a question of faith. And faith is an evidence of things unseen, the substance of things hoped for. It regards not the things that are seen, but the things that are not seen. It clings to God as seeing the Invisible. It is not desperate, it does not hopelessly give up the search after salvation when it

is proved that there is no hope in the creature. It knows that with God all things are possible. It understands that it is the glory of God to reveal His power and wisdom exactly there where human power is utterly inadequate. And so, it is not dismayed, but rises from the creature to the almighty God. And it is that faith that continues the search for salvation and asks: what sort of a mediator and deliverer must we then seek for?

We must understand that the Catechism here does not yet speak of the real, but only of the possible mediator. It intends to demonstrate in the next Lord's Day the necessity of the incarnation. It would give an answer to the question of Anselm: *Cur Deus homo?* why must God become man? This answer is supplied in the first two questions of the next Lord's Day. It might appear as if logically this question should have been the first question of Lord's Day VI. Yet, this is not the case. The question as it appears here, at the end of Lord's Day V is a summary and conclusion. The instructor of our Heidelberger considers, as it were, once more the condition of the sinner with a view to possible salvation. It measures carefully the gap caused by the fall of man, in order to ask the question what kind of a deliverer would be able to fill that gap. And it reaches the conclusion that only a mediator that is real and righteous man, and that is at the same time very God, would be able to fulfill all the conditions of a deliverer from sin and death. We must look: "for one who is very man, and perfectly righteous; and yet more powerful than all creatures; that is, one who is also very God".

This, then, is the conclusion after careful consideration of the condition of the sinner in the light of God's demand for satisfaction of His justice, and after investigation of all possible creaturely mediators and deliverers. For, as we consider our condition and measure the gap made by our fall into sin and our rebellion against the living God, we find that we must have a mediator, one who mediates in our behalf, who takes our place in judgment and makes satisfaction in our stead, for we ourselves could never bring that satisfaction. He must, therefore, be a representative person, for otherwise he had not the right to substitute himself for us. We found, too, that he must be a man, for only in the human nature will God punish the sin man committed. He must be very man, flesh of our flesh, blood of our blood, living our human life, and entering into our human experience. He must be able to bring the sacrifice of his life and enter into all the suffering of death *willingly*, and make of death an act of love. He must, therefore, not be a sinner, but a perfectly righteous man. However, we found, too, that a mere creature is not sufficient, for he must be able to deliver many, and his sacrifice must have infinite value. Besides, he must be able to die and live, to lay down his life and to take it again, and to deliver

us from the power of death and impart eternal life to us. He must, therefore, be more than mere creature, that is, he must be very God. And so the Catechism draws the conclusion that our condition is such, that, if we are to be saved, there is only one "sort of mediator" that can meet all the requirements and fulfill all the conditions: Immanuel, God with us, the Son of God in the flesh!

The reasons for the necessity of the incarnation with a view to our salvation we need not now discuss in detail, for the Catechism considers them in the next Lord's Day. But surely, the question forces itself upon our minds and hearts: how must it be explained that the condition of fallen man is such that his salvation requires the incarnation of the Son of God? Here we meet with a striking phenomenon! The state of fallen man is exactly such that only a divine-human mediator can save him! The gap which he caused by his fall and disobedience is exactly of such size and shape that the incarnated Son and He alone fits in it! How must this be explained? Surely, one cannot be so blind as to attribute this striking fact to mere accident or coincidence? There must be a plan and purpose behind all this. The one must be adapted to the other. When you see a large building erected, and you notice that as the walls are being built by the masons large rectangular gaps are left therein; and as you continue watching the construction of that edifice you discover that in those holes left in the walls window frames are placed that fit exactly in the gaps to fill them, you do not conclude that it is a happy accident that those windows exactly fill those holes in the walls, but you know that the latter were intentionally built into the wall, in order that there might be room for the former. There is purpose, there is design in the work of the builders. Well, here you behold a condition of fallen man that requires the incarnation of the Son of God, if man is to be saved. Would you conclude that this is a mere coincidence? Or shall we say, that the incarnation of the Son of God is an afterthought of the Most High, and that it is *determined* by the fall and disobedience of man? Would you say that the shape and size of the windows in the edifice of our illustration were determined by the shape and size of the holes that were left in the walls by the builders? You reply, of course, that exactly the opposite is true: the latter are determined by the former; the architect had designed exactly those particular windows for that building, and the holes were left in the walls accordingly. But would you, then, speak differently of the work of the Most High? Would you say that it is a terrible accident that man by his disobedience caused the gap of sin and death, and that afterwards the incarnation of the Son of God was designed to fill that gap? You know better. How then could God be GOD? Rather, when you examine the condition of man from every aspect from the viewpoint of the question of his

salvation; and when you discover that there is one and only one possibility of his salvation: the coming of the Son of God in the flesh; you draw the conclusion that the former must serve the latter: the fall and disobedience of man, the temptation of the devil, and all the work of darkness must serve the purpose of opening the way for the coming of Immanuel. For, He is the Firstborn of every creature. And by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell. Col. 1:15-19. And, therefore, as we stand by the gap caused by the fall and disobedience of man, and discover that only Immanuel fits into that gap to save us, we know that divine wisdom so designed all things that even our sin must serve the purpose of opening the way for the coming of the Son of God in the flesh. O the depth of riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

H. H.

The Manna

Having delivered the people of Israel from their Egyptian bondage, the Lord led them into a region of deserts, waterless tablelands, barren mountain chains and valleys where streams ran dry—the Sinai Peninsula. By bringing them into this tractless wilderness, the Lord took from them every natural resource and in particular bread—such bread as is the product of man's own industry. It thus seemed as though they were doomed to perish from hunger. The carnal Israel so judged. They said, "Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth in this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger". The Lord immediately put the rioting of this unbelief to shame. "Then the Lord said to Moses, behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you . . . And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar-frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, it is manna. For they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, "This is the bread that the Lord hath given you to eat!" (Ex 16:4-15-16)

It is the manna that forms the subject of this essay. We arrange our remarks under these two points: (1) The purpose of its being sent; (2) Its typical significance.

(1) The purpose of its sending is set forth by the following language contained in one of the final discourses of Moses: "... And he fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee to know that man does not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live". (Deut. 8:3). The meaning of this scripture is perceived only through a thoughtful consideration of the language here employed. There are two interpretations of this text. The one: Man does not live upon bread alone, i.e., all by itself, solitary, but he lives *also* by the will of God. Here the contrast is inspired and uninspired earthly bread, such bread as man obtains from the soil through his own industry, so that what, according to this interpretation, the scripture under consideration is held to teach is that ordinary bread cannot nourish life irrespective of God's will or that he can support life without it or without any means at all. This, certainly, is very true. Ordinary bread, apart from the operation of the word or will of God in it, avails nothing at all. But the context shows that this is not the point to the reasoning of the sacred narrator, not *the* truth that was meant to be demonstrated by the working of God with which we here have to do.

So we come to the other interpretation. It is this: Man does not live by bread *only* i.e., by the earthly, nature, but he lives *only* by the word that proceedeth out of the mouth of Jehovah or, as we have it in the original, by every outgoing of the mouth of Jehovah. With this construction upon the text, the contrasts which it presents are: common bread on the one hand and the word of God and the manna on the other. Such are, assuredly, the contrasts, as is evident from this: The Lord, so we read (Deut. 7:3), suffered His people to hunger, that is, through leading them into a trackless wilderness, He deprived them of ordinary bread. In the place thereof He gave them the manna; and by His Word as operative in it, He fed them. Thus the truth set forth, the point to Moses' argument, is this: Man's life, his bread of life, is not that ordinary bread at all. Such is the vain imagining of the carnally minded, who say to bread, to the earthly, Thou art my God. Man's life is Jehovah. It is by His Word that he lives. So, to be pitted against God is certain death. It is, therefore, the part of true wisdom to keep His commandments to walk in His ways, and to fear Him even though the result be that a man lose his earthly bread. For, if Jehovah is man's life and not that earthly bread, what will it profit a man, though he gain the whole world, and have not God.

So then, the point at issue here is not whether common bread, as uninspired by the Word of God, sup-

ports man's natural life, (it does, certainly) but whether this bread, even as so inspired, is man's true life. And the teaching here encountered is that it is not. Man's true life is the Lord, every outgoing of His mouth, as dwelling in the true manna, which is Christ. It was with the view to preparing His Church for the revelation and reception of this truth that the Lord fed the people of Israel with the manna—the bread from heaven—during the period of their residence in the wilderness.

But why did this doing of God—His suffering the people to hunger and His feeding them with the manna—so wonderfully demonstrate to them that man lives not by bread only but by every outgoing of the Lord's mouth? Firstly, because it was a bread that the Lord rained for them from heaven. Thus it was not from below but from above. It was not brought into being by the ordinary working of God's providence i.e., it was the product not of the earth—a bread that man obtained from the soil by his own labor—but of a special working of God's power. It was one of His wonders, a new thing, which, in the language of Scripture "thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know". It was therefore so remarkably evident that to live by it was to live by a bread whose appearance could be explained only by the fact that the Lord had spoken, by a bread that was the product of His creative word, and thus an outgoing of His mouth.

But now it seems that there is found in the place where for the first time the bread of heaven was given by Jehovah to His people, a substance—the juice or gum of a sort of tamarisk tree—that resembles this bread in color and form and also bears its name. On the ground of this fact, modern rationalists have denied the miraculous character of the manna of Holy Writ. What the Israelites collected and used was, it is said, merely the natural product of the region where they for a season sojourned. What this reasoning shows is that the natural man is utterly incapable of spiritually apprehending the things which are of the Spirit of God. The plain testimony of the Scriptures is to the effect that there was a miracle performed in the matter. How were the people of Israel made to know that man lives by the outgoing of the Lord's mouth if not by the production of the manna by His wonder-working power, if not by this bread from heaven? Yet it is not amiss to take the stand that this natural manna formed the natural substratum of the manna from heaven, that, in bringing into being as a substitute for common bread, the Lord took some natural production of the desert and miraculously increased and modified it and so performed a miracle identical to that which Christ performed when he availed Himself of a few loaves of bread and fishes to provide a hungry multitude about Him with a miraculous supply of bread.

There is contained in the books of Exodus and

Numbers a rather detailed description of the manna. It is stated that it fell upon the ground round about the camp by night with the dew; that it consisted of small whitish particles, compared to hoar-frost, coriander seed, and pearls; that it melted when exposed to the heat of the sun, and tasted like wafers made with honey, or like fresh oil, that the people went about, and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in mortar, or baked it in pans, and made cakes of it. Num. 10:7-9; Ex. 16:13-14.

It is easily discernable that in giving this description it was the aim of the sacred narrator to set forth the virtues of the manna. It was a food most pleasant to the taste—it “tasted like wafers made with honey or fresh oil”. It was as pure and wholesome as the dew upon which it, during the night, would fall—it “tasted like *fresh* oil”. That it corrupted if kept beyond a day and melted when exposed to the sun was not due to its being a light food lacking in substance. It was of such consistence that, like the corn of cultivated lands, it could be ground in the mills and did not melt when subjected to the heat of the ovens. Fact is that its nutritional value was so high as to be phenomenal. It formed the sole article of diet during the period of Israel’s sojourn in the wilderness. By this bread *alone* they lived and living by it enjoyed perfect health. And the abundance in which it was given was so immense, that there was bread enough for all. The manna of the Scriptures was truly a miracle of the first magnitude. Such being its excellencies, and being a bread rained from heaven by the Lord, thus a bread that was so plainly the very outgoing of His mouth, it was certainly calculated to make known that man lives by every outgoing of the Lord’s mouth alone.

Yet, though a bread of such virtue, and though witnessing for a truth so vital and glorious, the people of Israel in their carnality despised it. On one occasion they said, “Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick; but but now our soul is dried away; there is nothing at all besides this manna before our eyes,” and on another, “Wherefore have ye—Moses and Aaron—brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread . . . and our soul loatheth this light bread” (Num. 21:5). So, they were willingly ignorant of the all-sufficiency of the manna and thus declined to acknowledge that man’s true bread is the Lord. They lusted after foods that powerfully stimulate the sense organs: onions and leek; and after the luscious melon and the hardy foods, such as meat. Thus they wailed not for nourishment—they had this—but for sensual gratification, for the appeasement of their carnal lusts. It was, in a word, for the things below that they cried. Their

turbed digestion but of sick hearts.

(2) The manna was not the true bread, however a miraculous supply of food it was. Its imperfections are indicated by Christ. “Your fathers,” said Christ to the Jews, “did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead”. The reason that the fathers, despite their eating the manna, died was that the manna was for the support of the body and not of the soul. As such, however, it was a type of Christ. The truth of this statement is born out by these very words of Christ, by what He says of himself in connection with the manna and of the manna in connection with the fathers.

Being a type of Christ, the manna conveys certain points of instruction about Christ, namely, the following:—

(a) As the manna, so Christ. He is bread. Hence, in His own words, “except ye eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you”. But, in distinction from the manna, He is the *true* bread. Hence, whoso eateth His flesh has *eternal* life; and Christ will raise him up at the last day.

(b) The manna was bread from heaven. Likewise Christ in His office of mediator and as to His human nature. As such He is in the true sense “every outgoing” of the mouth of the triune Jehovah, the God and Father of Christ, the heavenly offspring of Jehovah’s creative word, brought into being by His special working, and thus peculiarly the gift of God, coming freely and directly from His hand. For He was born not by the will of man but of a virgin overshadowed by the power of the Highest.

(c) As the manna on the low earthly plane, so, too, Christ on the heavenly plane, He is the all-sufficient bread of His people. For in Him, in His human nature, dwells the whole fulness of the Godhead. He is, therefore, the sanctification, the justification, the wisdom and the redemption of His people. He is their life. By Him alone do they live and live everlastingly. He is their sole article of diet while they sojourn in this wilderness and forever. For He is *every* word of the mouth of His God,—every word by which His people live. Every word of blessing and life dwell in Him and are spoken by the Father through Him, who Himself, too, is the word of God in whose face we see God as He is. He being the true bread, should God’s people then go to wailing for the fleshpots of this world? Do they grow in grace by what can be brought up out of these pots?

(d) The manna was plentiful. So, too, Christ, as in Him dwelleth all the fulness of which all His people receive as their need requires. No one need to envy his neighbor on account of anything at all, but all may rejoice in the goodness of God.

There are things connected with the giving and receiving of the manna, which have use for us apart from any typical reference that they may bear to the

Every man had to gather according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of his dependents. And he that gathered much had nothing over and he that gathered little had no lack. Undoubtedly what took place is this. Some gathered more than was needful for them and some less. The amount, if too large miraculously diminished; if too small, it was found to have increased. The apostle Paul seizes upon this to arouse the rich in the congregation of Corinth to share their abundance with their needy brethren "that there may be equality . . ." so the apostle wrote.

It required faith to live day by day upon the word of the Lord. Unbelief reasoned that on the morrow the new supply of manna might be wanting. As if the Lord could prove Himself unfaithful! Some who, under the constraint of this doubt, used only a part of their portion, would discover to their dismay and shame that what had been hoarded had during the night bred worms and had thus become unfit for human consumption. So was it shown them that it is folly to labor to heap up treasures that cannot be used.

The manna had to be gathered early in the morning because after sun-rise it would melt and vanish away. The lesson to be drawn from this is that what is required of God's people is that they take diligent heed to do His commandments and be about the business of their Lord with a will. Of the prophets we read over and over that they were wont to rise early in the morning to deliver their messages.

There might be no gathering of the manna on the Sabbath! Neither could there be as on this day no manna fell. But on the sixth day they were commanded to gather twice as much and to lay up the surplus until the morning. Doing so, they found that "it did not stink and neither was there any worm therein". Some there were who nevertheless went forth on the Sabbath to gather, but they found none. The lesson that comes to us here is that God's people receive in the six days what is needful for them that on the Sabbath day they may be freed from the necessity of following their earthly pursuits in order that there may be opportunity for them to avail themselves of the spiritual refreshments with which the Lord provides them on the Sabbath.

G. M. O.

"And shall there be no cross for me
In all this life of mine?
Shall mine be all a flowery path
And all the thorns be Thine?"

God Die Op Aarde Richt

De Heilige Schrift zegt, dat de drukking der melk boter voortbrengt; en dat een broeder in de benauwdheid geboren wordt. Spr. 30:33; 17:17. Naar dien zelfden regel wordt deze psalm een gouden kleinood geheeten. Dat ziet eerst zoo niet. We zouden veel eerder geneigd zijn om den 23sten psalm een gouden kleinood te noemen. In dezen psalm is de vloek en de donder van het Goddelijk gericht. Hier ruikt het al naar sulfur. Om een gezegde van een zeer ouden vriend te gebruiken: "Men moet God zeer veel liefhebben om in dezen psalm een gouden kleinood te zien." David's ervaring met een goddelooze vergadering brengt het goud der waarheid en van het recht naar boven. Onderwezen, zullen we er van zingen.

Er is gegist naar den tijd waarin David al deze smart ervoer. Het dunkt ons te slaan op den tijd die aan de rebellie van Absalom voorafging. Toen toch was er een groote samenzweering op touw gezet tegen God's gezalfde. Ook moeten we niet denken, dat David daar niets van gezien heeft. Hij zag duidelijk, dat de aangezichten van velen veranderden tegen hem, dat men zich meer en meer achter zijn zoon schaarde. Bij ernstige studie kwamen we tot de overtuiging, dat we hier in dezen psalm dezelfde geschiedenis hooren als in de psalmen 55, 56 and 57. Het zijn benauwde dagen geweest voor David.

En toch—alle dingen werken mede ten goede voor allen die God liefhebben. En David had God waarlijk lief. Daarom heeft hij ook wijsheid geleerd zelfs in de dagen die aan zijn smartelijke vlucht vooraf gingen.

Hij zal ons in dezen psalm onderwijzen van de vreeselijke zonde zijner tegenstanders aan de eene zijde: en van God's wrake aan de andere zijde.

De vraag waarmee de psalm aanvangt sluit in zich ook het antwoord. "Spreekt gijlieden waarlijk gerechtigheid, gij vergadering? Oordeelt gij billikheden, gij menschenkinderen?" Ziedaar, in slechts een tweetal vragen de toestand aangewezen. Er was een vergadering, een gemeente, een groep volk die geroepen waren om recht te spreken. Het is niet met zekerheid aan te wijzen waar die vergadering op slaat. Ik hel er sterk toe over om hier te denken aan het hoogste wat op aarde gevonden wordt, namelijk, de rechtbank. Ik noemde dat het hoogste hetwelk op aarde bestaat. En terecht, rechters worden in Gods Woord zelfs goden genoemd. Als de wetgevende lichamen klaar zijn en de uitvoerende machten hun werk deden, is er altijd nog het laatste appel: de rechtbank. Daar wordt dan alles haarfijn onderzocht en als zij gesproken hebben spreken wij niet meer. De uiting, de eindbeslissing van Zijn Edelachtbare is het einde op aarde.

Mocht er echter iemand zijn die ook daar geen recht

meer kan vinden; is de toestand zóó, dat het recht ten eenemale verkracht wordt zelfs in de zalen waar justitia pronkt, dan is er nog slechts één andere uitweg en die uitweg is God!

Zoo stonden de zaken in Israel.

Ze hadden de zaken onderzocht en de uitspraak was gedaan. En omdat hun naam rechter was mocht men "gerechtigheid" en "billijkheden" verwachten. Edoch! wat vindt David? Dit: ongerechtigheden, het geweld der handen, leugensprekers en slangenvenijn. De rechters handelden als jonge leeuwen en erger dan de sluwste slangen. In de natuur had David gezien, dat de slangen bezworen konden worden door lieflijke muziek, doch dit soort slangen waren doof voor den uitnemendsten bezweerder. Ziet ge het verachtelijke tafereel?

Doch David zal zijn oordeel motiveeren; hij zal ons verklaren waarom de Edelachtbare Heeren zulk een verfoeilijk oordeel velden.

Hij speurt naar het hart. Door Goddelijke aanspraak vermaand zijnde en daar wijsheid geleerd hebbende, zal hij afdalen tot afzichtelijke diepten van boosheid en ons vertellen wat hij daar zag.

Als we de harten zien die Gods Geest ons blootlegt, verstaan we waarom rechters leugen spreken. Het komt omdat zij ongerechtigheden werken in het hart. O er is een dwalen ter goeder trouw. Dan wil men werkelijk recht doen; dan zegt het hart: ik heb lust aan waarheid in het binnenste. Sprak men dan onrecht zoo had dit zijn oorzaak in domheid of verkeerde inlichtingen. Doch zóó is het hier niet. David zegt: Gij spreekt ongerechtigheid omdat gij ongerechtigheden werkt in het hart. Dan wordt het bang voor hem die voor den rechter staat. Let op de woorden. Er staat: "Gij *werkt* ongerechtigheden in het hart!" Terwijl men getuigde en sprak, overwoog en geleerd het voorhoofd fronsde, was men in het hart bezig, druk bezig met boosheid. Men overleide daar: "Ja, spreek maar, getuig en pleit maar: 'k geef er niets om; 'k ga toch mijn gang: ge gaat er onder. Mijn uitspraak is al gereed. Niets zal het veranderen!" En wee dan het slachtoffer.

David roept het verontwaardigd uit: "Gij weegt het geweld uwer handen op de aarde! "Dat is in één word vreeselijk. O neen! Men komt niet met zijn boosheid brutaal voor den dag gelijk de boef, die zich niet schaamt voor zijn boosheid. O neen! Men zal trachten om de leugen voor waarheid te verkoopen. Ziet gij het niet? Men weegt zijn geweld. Listiglijk, met gespleten tong als eener slange, sprak men. Voorzigtiglijk, met dubbelzinnige woorden komt men voor den dag.

Ook is dat zoo in eens niet gekomen. Zulk gruwelijk bedrijf heeft een lange en bange historie achter zich. Daarom zegt David: "De goddeloozen zijn vervreemd van de baarmoeder af; de leugen-

verklaring. Er is verschil tusschen zonde en zonde. Gods kind zondigt ook. Hij liegt ook wel eens. Alle zonde vindt ge in beginsel ook bij de Kerke Christi. Doch hier is het verschil U aangegeven. De goddeloozen zijn vuil van de baarmoeder of aan. Nooit deden ze anders dan kwade dingen beramen. Vreemdelingen voor God. Zonder God in de wereld. De zonde is dan ons element. En zoo krijgt ge een ouden zondaar in 't gestoelte der rechters. En dan wordt het bang voor 't onschuldig kindeke Jezus. Denkt aan 't Sanhedrin en Pilatus.

Ook zal David 't karakter van al zulk gedoe kenmerken. En uit de beschrijving daarvan leeren we ook de herkomst van al die boosheid.

Zij stammen af van den duivel. Daarom is hun uiting gelijk aan het venijn der slangen. En dat venijn is vurig: het steekt alles aan waarmee het in aanraking komt. Hun herkomst is de oude slang: Satan en de duivel. Die was immers een leugenaar van den beginne; sprak hij uit zichzelf dan loog hij en de waarheid is in hem niet. En zijn we nu zóó ellendig dat we van dien Satan gebeten zijn, dan spuwen wij ook slangenvenijn. En God helpe het slacht offer.

Het zou ons bijna doen weenen wanneer we aandachtig de werkingen der slangen gadeslaan. Let er op: zij zijn als de doove adder; zij stoppen de ooren dicht bij het zacht gefluit der beweerdens. Wat beteekent dit? Ik zal het U zeggen. Ik heb het bijgewoond; en gij ook.

Die slangen zitten in het gestoelte. Ook staat daar het slachtoffer. In de rechtstaal zou men gezegd hebben: de beklaagde. Welnu, het gericht neemt een aanvang. Na alle beschuldigingen breekt het tijdstip aan, dat de voorspraak, de verdediger zijn schoon werk zal doen. En zijn spreken is als het lieflijk gefluit eens bezweerdens. Er zijn immers menschen die zoo schoon kunnen fluiten, dat de slangen hun vergif inhouden en hun venijn niet verspreiden. Zóó is de verdediger. Hij spant zich in om het spinrag der leugen te ontwinden en der waarheid getuigenis te doen, opdat de onschuldige verlost worde.

Doch al zijn gefluit baat niet. Hij mag waarheid op waarheid stapelen: 't geeft niet. Van voorlang werkte men ongerechtigheden in 't hart; men woog't geweld zijner handen op aarde en het slachtoffer wentelt zich in 't bloed. Zijt ge Stephanus vergeten?

Wat blijft er dan nog over?

Is 't niet hopeloos?

Als men geen recht meer krijgt in 't rechthuis, waar zal men zich dan wenden?

Wel, arme stakkerd, op aarde blijft er niets anders voor U over dan om het hoofd te buigen. Ga dan maar met Jezus naar Golgotha; met Stephanus buiten de poort. Laat U dan maar geeselen, zooals een Paulus te Fillippi, en voorts in 't gevang zetten.

En is dit dan alles wat ge doen moet?

meer doen. Ge moet naar God gaan en Uw nood Hem klagen. Dat doet David ook.

Luistert: "O God! verbreek hunne tanden in hunnen mond . . ."

Merkt ge het, dat het gericht veranderd is in het uitvoeren van 't slangachtig spreken? Eerst waren het slangen. Dat zag op de rechtbank. Nu zijn het jonge leeuwen. Men voerde het vonnis uit op de slachtoffers. Och arme!

Gaat dan maar naar God en klaagt Hem Uw nood. Put troost uit de overweging dat Hij het al van voorlang gezien heeft en zekerlijk zoeken zal. David vraagt om den oordeelsdag.

En daar zit ook Uw troost. God zal eenmaal Zijn eeuwig oordeel openbaren. En dat oordeel zal zijn naar recht.

En mitsdien het recht ook in 't harte van Zijn kind woont, vraagt, bidt David om recht. Breek hunne baktanden, O God!

Neen, zegt nu niet, dat Gods volk bloeddorstig zijn als ze bidden gelijk een David bidt. Ware het bloeddorst zoo zouden zij ook geen troost hebben in zulk bidden. Vergeet niet, dat hunne harten door Gods Geest doorlouterd werden zoodat zij het recht liefhebben. Ze bidden zóó omdat zij God liefhebben. Zaaft gij dat niet in 't eerste vers? Daar staat het toch? Het ging hun aan het harte, dat men het recht verkrachtte. Ook zal het laatste vers ons hetzelfde leeren. Het gaat om God die recht doet op aarde. Daar verblijden zij zich in.

Zóó moet ge ook het afbidden van vreeselijke straffen beoordeelen.

In de volgende verzen leeren we eenigzins hoe vreeselijk het zal zijn om in de hel te zijn.

Eerst: een ieder mensch heeft zijn aanzijn lief. Hij wil er zijn. Wel nu, als de wraakdoende God ons vindt, dan smelten we weg gelijk water dat daarenen drijft. God versmelt ons het wezen. Zulk versmelten vindt ge terug in de voorvoegsels van woorden gelijk verdoemenis, verloren, verdoen, verslinden, enz. Niet vernietigd, doch de gewaarwording, dat men niet meer meetelt, meegerekend wordt, er niet langer is in 't positieve aanzijn en genoeg.

Dan ook: zulk eenen die door God gegrepen wordt is gelijk aan een smeltende slak die zich zelf al gaande verteert. 't ziet op de verbranding, de algeheele verwording der ellendigen.

Of: ze worden gelijk eener vrouwen misdracht: de zon aanschouwden zij nooit meer. Veel zullen we hier niet van zeggen. Wie maakt nu ook een studie der misdracht? Zelfs de vuilnisbak werd erdoor ontreinigd. Angstige gedachte der vervloekten in 't onuitblusschelijk vuur.

Ik moet niet inkomen in wat het zeggen wil om "door Gods heeten toorn weggestormd te worden". 't Zal zoo plotseling, zóó snel plaatsvinden, dat het vergeleken wordt bij een pot die te vuur gezet wordt

en dan wel op den drogen doornstruik. Zou de pot het vuur van de snellijk ontvlambare doornstruik niet terstond gewaar worden? Ja, dat gaat snel, doch Godis nog sneller als Hij eindelijk komt om te richten op aarde. Laat het inzinken in Uw bewustzijn: Hij zal ze in heeten toorn wegstormen! Vreeselijk zal het zijn te vallen in de handen des levenden Gods!

Twee redenen zijn er waarom de rechtvaardige mensch zich hierom verblijdt. Ik zou U willen smeeke om niet te oordeelen, dat de Christen wreed is. Dat is hij niet. Hij heeft het met heete tranen geleerd, dat hij niet beter is dan die Satanskinderen.

Neen, maar de eerste reden, is dat hij God liefheeft. Als er gezegd wordt, dat hij zich verblijdt in de aanschouwing der wrake Gods, dan moet ge dat theologisch verklaren. Hij mag het zien, dat Gods deugden bleven gloren in al hun schoonheid en pracht, zelfs al moet hij zijn voeten baden in het bloed der goddeloozen.

En de tweede reden is, dat bij die vreeselijke bezoeking Gods over de goddeloozen er een belooning komt voor de rechtvaardigen. Een belooning niet naar de werken, doch naar de onuitsprekelijk schoone en liefelijke genade.

En nu?

De goddelooze woelt nog; doch wij weten dat zijn dag komt.

Traant ge in Uw smart en lijden? Schijnt het al donker en bang om Uwe tent? Zaaft ge al weenende?

Ziet naar den gezichtseinder, mijn broeder. De Rechter staat voor de deur.

Daar zal ons 't goede van Zijn woning, verzaden reis op reis.

Onze ziel en lichaam hijgen, hijgen.

G. V.

De Stater In Den Mond Van Den Visch

Matth. 17:24-27

Het is in het ooglopend, dat alleen in het Evangelie van Mattheus; het wonder van den stater in den visch ons wordt medegedeeld. We weten wel, dat geheel opzichzelf genomen dit niet zoo vreemd is, daar tenslotte de vier Evangelisten ons het ééne Evangelie opschreven en we dus niet vier verschillende Evangelien, doch slechts één Evangelie bezitten. Dit neemt echter niet weg, dat er daarom wel terdege redenen zijn, waarom de ééne schrijver verzwijgt, wat door den andere wordt beschreven.

Dat is ook hier het geval met het wonder van den stater in den visch, dat we alleen in het Evangelie van Mattheus vinden. Wel te verstaan, dat niet de idee, het karakter verschilt met de andere wonderen.

Al de wonderen hebben tenslotte slechts één hoofd-

doel, de openbaarmaking van Godsverbond. Ze hebben tezamen slechts één oorsprong en centraal punt: Komen voort van God, zijn teekenen van Zijn tegenwoordigheid, worden in al hun volheid openbaar in het ééne Wonder, de Vleeschwording des Woords, richten zich allen op dat ééne Wonder en dienen tot de hoogste openbaring van Gods Eeuwig Vriendschap Verbond. Alzoodanig zijn het teekenen en krachten der toekomstige eeuw. In verband met Christus zijn het als zoovele getuigenissen, die Zijn Persoon, Geboorte, Woord en Werk bevestigen. Zij zijn de buitenste kant van den cirkel waarvan Hij Zelf het groote centrum is. En alzoodanig zijn zij en staan zij geteekend als: Wonderen, Teekenen, Machten of Krachten en Groote Werken. Maar daarop hebben wij nu het oog niet.

De vraag kan gedaan worden of er een bijzondere reden bestaat en kan aangegeven worden, waarom dit wonder niet verhaald wordt bij Markus, Lukas of Johannes? Hierop kan geantwoord, dat de geschiedenis van dit wonder in nauw verband staat met den opzet en het doel van dit bepaalde gedeelte van het Eene Evangelie. Mattheus Evangelie is geschreven met het oog op de Joden, de heilige linie of het Verbond, het Koninkrijk, zooals dit in den beloofden Messias vervuld wordt. Dat is het antwoord op de hierboven gestelde vraag, terwijl ook het wonder door den Heiland verricht, dit zeer sterk doet uitkomen.

Men heeft wel gemeend, dat het betalen van den schatpenning of belasting, een innen was van het geld door den Keizer geeischt. Deze belasting en tol werden in Romeinsch geld betaald en verzameld door de Tollenaren, die den aanslag aanmerkelijk verhoogden en zich den haat van het volk op den hals haalden. Ware dit het geval, dan zou de geschiedenis zijn geworden, dat ook Christus de Overheid over Hem gesteld (waaronder Hij Zich stelde) gehoorzaam is geweest, evenals Petrus, schoon dit eigenlijk geschiedde, om geen aanstoot te geven. We kregen dan wellicht ook nog een pleidooi, gelijk Rome het doet, dat met Petrus de geestelijkheid vrij moet gesteld worden, zoowel als de Protestantsche leeraars.

Toch is dit niet het geval, het zou trouwens ook niet kunnen. 'Geeft dan den Keizer wat des Keizers is (en Gode wat Godes is)', komt daarmede in strijd. Het gaat hier juist niet over het betalen van de belasting aan de overheid, doch over geheel iets anders. De belasting was ingesteld door Herodus Agrippa I die Jacobus vermoord heeft en Petrus in de gevangenis wierp. De gewone belasting penning was te Rome geslagen, of was één der muntstukken dragende de beeltenis van den Keizer en door den Viervorst Philipus voor het eerst ingevoerd naast de Joodsche muntstukken.

Hier echter hebben we te doen met een bijdrag, die den Tempeldienst betrof. We vinden deze opdracht gegeven aan Mozes in Exodus Dertig en Numeri Een.

afgezonderd moest worden, door iedere Israeliet boven de twintig jaar. Het had mede betrekking op den dienst en de loopende onkosten van den Tabernakel, onkosten, die later werden besteed aan het onderhoud van den Tempel. Het vond eerst plaats bij de gelegenheid van de volkstelling. We lezen, dat onder de regeering van Joas, ditzelfde geld gebruikt werd, opdat de priesters de breuken van het Huis des Heeren zouden verbeteren, naar alles wat daar voor breuk gevonden zoude worden. En het is hier waar de didrachmen ter sprake komen. De halve sikkels is dan vervolgens de helft van den stater, waarvan Mattheus spreekt.

Door het betalen van dien prijs werd men dan vrijgesteld van den bizonderen Tempeldienst. Immers, het geld aldus bijeengebracht, werd besteed voor het koopen van de publieke offeranden, namelijk die in naam der geheele samenkomst werden geofferd: Het morgen en het avondoffer.

Het was ook losgeld, men kocht zich er door vrij van den bizonderen tempeldienst. Het opgaan naar Jeruzalem was dan ook niet noodzakelijk, men kon dan in eigen plaats of stad deze tempel belasting betalen.

Op dit oogenblik bevindt de Heiland Zich te Capernaum. Dit heeft wellicht de nieuwsgierigheid opgewekt, daar men stelling verwacht had, dat Hij was opgegaan naar Jeruzalem, om het Paaschfeest te vieren. Zonder het te willen dat dit openbaar werd, toonde men toch wel bijzonder geïnteresseerd te zijn in Jezus van Nazareth. Men bespiedde Hem zooveel mogelijk, indien mogelijk om toch maar iets te kunnen vinden waardoor men Hem vangen kon.

Het "toeval" wilde, dat Petrus enkelen ontmoete, die wellicht de bijdrage voor den Tempeldienst inde Betaalt ook uw Meester de halve sikkels? Zoo maar langs hun neus weg wordt de opmerking gemaakt. Men wist bij deze tijd wel, hoe geheel anders of hoe geheel De Andere Hij was. Hij week af van *Hunne* voorstelling van Tempel en Tempeldienst. Had Hij niet de Tempel gereinigd, de tafels der wisselaars omverwerpende? Wisselaars, die toch ook bezig waren, om de menschen te helpen, het juiste bedrag te bepalen voor den Tempeldienst en de prijs dusdanig te verhoogen, dat het niet minder dan diefstal was? Hij brak met zoovele gewoonten, die men meende werkelijk tot het wezen van *Hun* godsdienst te behooren. En het was ook nog wel zoo gemakkelijk, om informatie in te winnen bij de discipelen, met Hem kwam men niet veel verder, ook al gaf Hij hen bescheid op gestelde vragen.

Van dat "toeval" maken zij dan ook gretig gebruik. Betaalt uw Meester, ook de prijs voor den Tempeldienst? De vraag klonk zoo geheel natuurlijk, maar is tenslotte niets anders dan een list, om Jezus te vangen. En Petrus, toch al bezorgd en tegelijkertijd voorbarig, zal het maar zoo gauw mogelijk uit den weg ruimen.

om er maar op los te praten, zonder navraag en zonder nadenken. Dan is dat althans geen kwestie meer. Daarom zal hij maar ja zeggen, dan kan er later nog weleens naar geïnformeerd worden, of het werkelijk zoo is. Misschien kan dat vandaag nog wel.

De Heiland voorkomt echter de vraag.

Zij, die Petrus de vraag stelden (en ook Petrus), mogen om verschillende redenen Jezus vragen omtrent de didrachmen, of deze al of niet betaald werden, doch in beider geval verstaat men noch deze betaling, noch Jezus. De belasting-collectanten, omdat zij den Heiland niet willen zien en beoordeelen in het licht der Openbaring, dat toch voldoende sprak omtrent Zijn Persoon en werk, zoowel als Zijn woorden. Men bezag Hem uit het oogpunt van eigen gewilde godsdienst. Hij was een van hen, niet de Andere van God gezonden en daarom moest Hij ook hen gelijk zijn, vooral op het stuk van den godsdienst. Zij wilden niet door Jezus, noch door God en Zijn Woord onderwezen worden, hun eigen duisternis was het licht waarin zij Hem beoordeelden.

Maar ook Petrus verstaat niet, dat de losprijs van den Tempeldienst slechts schaduwwachtig en slechts type is van den Zoon. Die alles in allen vervult. Zijn antwoord geeft blijk en is bewijs, dat hij den Christus niet ziet in het rechte licht van het Woord. Wellicht gedreven door een zondige bezorgheid voor den Meester, geeft hij maar gauw een antwoord, waardoor hij den Heiland beveiligd. Doch tegelijkertijd plaatst ook Petrus Hem naast alle zondaren, met gelijke verplichtingen. Ja, maar Petrus bedoelde dat toch zóó niet, Natuurlijk niet! Maar hij deed het verkeerd. Kwam het wel overeen met de belijdenis, door Petrus namens allen gesproken, en dat nog kort geleden, 'Gij Zoon des Menschen, zijt de Zoon van den levenden God?' Ware dit het geval geweest, dan had hij, of geen antwoord gegeven, of Jezus eerst om een verklaring gevraagd.

Dit belet echter de Heiland niet om Petrus een verklaring te geven, die tot de kern der zaak doordringt en dat langs een opvoedkundige weg.

Allereerst, schoon de discipel het niet merkte, leidt Hij hem terug naar het zoo even voorgevallene. De Heiland zal Petrus laten zeggen, wat hij had moeten zeggen aan de kerkdienaars. Onder de koningen der aarde Petrus, wie zorgt voor het onderhoud van die Koningen, zijn het hun zonen of de vreemden? Wordt de belasting opgebracht door de kinderen of door de overwonnen volkeren? Als het eenigszins kan, laat de Koning het eigen volk betalen, of wordt door de verwonnen volkeren de last gedragen? En het antwoord is niet moeilijk, want in de wereld laat de Koning zich door vreemden bedienen. De Keizer liet ook den Israeliet daar voor betalen.

Maar dan is er ook geen moeilijkheid meer over, want de Zoon is zeker vrij in het Koninkrijk. Wie dan zal Hem lasten opleggen? Echter wat geen betaling

kan zijn voor Hem en door Hem voor Zijne broederen, kan toch wel een *vrijwillige* bijdrage zijn, zoolang de Heiland nog niet de volle heerlijkheid van Zijn Koninkrijk en Koning-zijn heeft ontvangen.

Ware Hij alleen Koning, dan mocht Hij die Tempelbelasting niet betalen. Hij zou belasting hebben moeten eischen van de onderdanen. Doch dan was Hij de Koningen der aarde gelijk geweest, die wel ontvingen, doch niet gaven.

Maar deze Koning is: Profeet-Priester-Koning en dat als de Ambtsdrager door God daartoe niet alleen gezalfd, *doch ook in die orde*.

Daartoe staat Hij nu in de vernedering, gewillig en midden in den arbeid van den door Hem te verrichten Tempeldienst. Daartoe, als de Hoogste Profeet onderwijst Hij den jonger, hem Zijn plaats bekend makende zoowel als die van den discipel—straks heet het: betaal maar voor u en voor Mij, niet voor ons. Als de eenige Hoogepriester, die door Zijne Zelfofferande den Tempeldienst vervuld, den Tempel Gods bouwende door den Geest, welke gij zijt.

Maar daarom is Hij dan ook alleen de Eeuwige Koning en zal er een wonder geschieden, opdat de krachten van het Koninkrijk tot openbaring mogen komen. Neen, is het niet al te onnoozel, om te beweeren, dat dit wonder veroorzaakt werd, door des Heilands armoed? Zoo arm, gelijk men dan wil, dat Hij niet eens aan Zijn werkelijke verplichtingen kon voldoen. Nu, zoo arm is Jezus nooit geweest. We weten met zekerheid, dat er voor het hoogstnoodige altijd voldoende was. En dat niet slechts voor den Heiland alleen, maar ook voor de discipelen en zelfs nog wel voor de armen. Denk maar aan de beurs, die Judas droeg.

Doch de Zoon is in Zijn vernedering, terwijl Hij toch inderdaad Koning is. En voor zoover het de zaak van het Koninkrijk eischt, daar treedt dan ook de Koning op en laat Zijn heerlijkheid zien. Alle macht van dat Koninkrijk, al hare krachten, daarvan is Hij de drager.

Niet voor Zichzelf geschiedt het Wonder, doch voor de Zijnen. Voor hun geloof, opdat zij hun Koning, van Israels God gegeven, zouden zien als dienende.

De groote Tempeldienst word door Hem voltrokken, wordt ook in Hem beeindigd. Hij Zelf is de groote losprijs, waardoor de Zonen vrij worden.

Daarom, voor u en voor Mij, niet voor ons. Hij blijft ook in dezen de Andere, Die door Zijn bloed bevestigd het voor u *door Mij*.

W. V.

CLASSIS EAST

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

D. Jonker, S. C.

The Problems of a Just Peace

The formulation of this subject suggests a book which has recently appeared, written by Ex-President Hoover and the diplomat, Hugh Gibson, entitled *The Problems of Lasting Peace*. However, it will be at once noticed that the present formulation points more to the underlying question with which we must be concerned; it begins at the beginning and it rightly suggests that the difficulty lies not in keeping a peace once attained, but in ever getting a peace that is true to the name.

Now in discussing this problem we must avoid two extremes.

On the one hand is the danger of a simplicistic answer of saying, "Why, sin, that's the only problem—sin." For if we give this answer we are forgetting a principle similar to the one we express when we condemn "a gospel on a thumb-nail". Then we are forgetting that just as the grace and wisdom of God is manifold, so also sin is manifold and complicated, and that the corruption of the best is the worst. Then we fail to see how sin has corrupted the entire organism of which we are members, and in which our whole life must be redeemed by grace.

On the other hand is the danger of making it a purely intellectual problem of economic and political science. For then we forget the principle that is so finely expressed and often quoted: *Op den bodem aller vragen ligt der wereld zondeschuld*.

To the task of this discussion I set myself with a mingled feeling. For firstly there is the consciousness that in God's Word we have the revelation and the wisdom to understand these problems. Especially the Calvinists of the Netherlands have emphasized that all these spheres have their God-ordained laws. Thus we may speak in a sense with confidence.

On the other hand is the immense task of formulating these laws, of applying them to a chaotic world, and then of submitting to them as to an easy yoke. How, in a world of relations and inter-relations that must stagger the intellect of the greatest statesmen and economists, can we hope to restore those relations after sin has reigned there for six-thousand years!

Hence there is every reason for humility and I will only hope that the general thrust of my thesis will be in the right direction.

A Severe Criterion

In speaking of a just peace we must remember that we have to do with a very severe criterion, which is none other than the holy law of God. And although it is true that it is God's law for certain specific relations and spheres, it is nevertheless the justice of God's ordinances which no convention or international law or temporary measures of expediency or utility can

evade. God applies His law and judges today as really as He shall in the day when He brings to revelation what has always been His evaluation.

We may here apply the challenge which God casts down to the people of Israel: Wash you, . . . cease to do evil, learn to do well, and your sins shall be as white as snow . . . and ye shall eat the good of the land. Isaiah 1.

But who is able to respond to that ultimatum? There is only one answer: Zion shall be redeemed in judgment. Isaiah 1:24-28. And thus not this world but a new world shall arise in righteousness and peace.

Some Problems of A Material Nature

I believe that when we try to think into these problems, one that especially strikes us is that between group solidarity and personal, individual rights in the many forms in which these can stand toward each other.

Concretely, this will first appear in the constitution of the body which formulates the terms of peace. There those having the right to a seat will be those considered free from war guilt. Yet how difficult it will be to get a representation that is really representative in that way will appear when we consider that in some instances leaders pushed their people, in other instances the people pushed their leaders. Have we of the Allied powers not talked of aggressing on Sweden to help little Finland, and of aggressing through neutral Russia, (before we knew her strength) to strike Germany from the Near East? Yet our leaders have refrained from such acts and through them we will be represented as innocent. In that final settlement some of the victors who dictate the terms will have become guilty of aggression in fact or in spirit, whereas among the vanquished will be such as Finland and Rumania who are the victims of force and brutality. And then in connection with this we have the rights of neutrals, which through history is a very fluctuating conception. In how far must a nation fighting for its life, respect the neutrality of a nation that is designedly or undesignedly aiding an aggressor? We may think in this connection of the Food Blockade and of Madagascar.

Another problem at the peace conference will be that of Indemnities. Justice we know requires full measure. This is not at all in conflict with the law of forgiveness of the kingdom of heaven. I may, of course forgive my neighbor if he steals or wrongs me, but the judge who in this case would simply absolve him, or compromise the case would be grossly violating justice.

The question before the member of the conference will be that of equity and remuneration to those for whom he as plenipotentiary is called to arbitrate. The quantities there involved are immeasurable, such as national honor violated, suffering incurred, property

destroyed, lives taken, health of the populace permanently affected. And this multiplied by the factor of relative innocence or guilt.

Closely connected with this is the question of new boundaries, which must consider such things as racial background, natural geographic boundaries, majorities and minorities, minorities who were voluntarily integrate or forcefully annexed or even group exiles.

Of confused racial backgrounds we have instances in the Balkans. Who belongs where, according to justice?

Of geographic boundaries we have the Polish Corridor, Ice-free ports for a great nation like Russia in the Gulf of Finland; the right of Italy to have one good harbor on her east coast, i.e., Fiume; the right of Japan to find elbow room for excessive millions.

What in all these cases is the will of the All-Sovereign, who created man to multiply and develop the earth, having determined the bounds of their habitation?

Of the rights of minorities, annexed and exiled groups, we have all the glaring cases of Poland and the Balkan states and peoples.

Lastly a just peace involves, of course, the question of war debts. Both as to the powers adjudged as guilty, and also to the relative burden the victorious powers will have to bear. In this computation, will it be fair, the following will have to be considered:

The advantage accorded to and gained by each power.

The ability to bear.

The comparison of the investments of each.

The comparison of value as between men and material.

That these must all be considered appears from the history of war debts since 1919. We recall the several attempts to help Germany pay her indemnities, then to help the other nations to pay and, finally, the moratorium and stand still agreement after the crash.

We recall how recently, even, moulders of public opinion, in seeking an added reason for good measure, why Britain should fight her own war, suggested she had first let us arm her for the previous war, then induced us to fight her war, and then to climax her perfidy, repudiated her debts and called U. S. Uncle Shylock for still mentioning them. One must not try to analyze such oratory of course. It is not meant for that.

What, e.g., may Russia rightly expect, having borne the brunt in men material and territory destroyed, as compared with U. S. and Brazil who profess to have entered for the same reason as Russia, namely; the defense of hearth and home?

We could continue, citing France, China, The Netherlands, whose sacrifice in men and material whose advantage gained and whose ability to bear all differ.

The Spiritual Problem

But now we come to another dimension in the problem. It is almost like going from the geometry problems of a plane surface to those of a solid.

In the above I have left out of consideration as much as possible the factor of sin. Not that I imagine that even the more material part can be reviewed apart from sin. We know these problems are not as complicated as seen above because they are given with the constitution and development of created things. Not at all! These problems have developed among the nations, under the dominion of sin, and they have developed until they are beyond solution even for the best of intentions.

But now that the factor of sin is introduced by name we may in general have our verdict ready. Politics, so we say, is corrupt and international politics is doubly corrupt and therefore hopeless. And yet such a verdict is too hasty and too one-sided. Not politics is corrupt but man and humanity is corrupt and wholly corrupt. That is the seal of the hopelessness. And I believe it is the failure to see the depth and meaning of this that mars the recent book of Hoover and Gibson. However presumptuous it may seem for a mere layman to criticize such a great authority and charge it with overlooking the main point, yet I am sure that here the Christian may say "I have more wisdom than all my teachers because I observe Thy testimonies". And I believe that statesman and historians of the future will read this book with the same amused smile with which these men review the list of books which attempted to point the way in the past.

Against the six forces which these men see working for war they place one by which they hope to counteract them all. That is "the will to peace". However this will to peace is a false assumption. A careful analysis will reveal that this will to peace is also another side of the destructive forces. It is peace for the sake of gain, of power, of advantage, of security and that is why it has no remedial power.

Thus we have all the inherent problems multiplied by the dimension of willful deliberate greed, hatred, vengeance. Of this we could give as illustration all the diplomatic scheming and bartering that filled the five months required to draft the terms of peace. The history of the past peace conference tells us of a Lloyd George who was retained as minister by his people upon the understanding that he would "Hang the Kaiser" at the peace conference. Clemenceau; ditto and worse. The Italian delegates had inflamed their people to demand Trieste and Fiume so that they might show the people how their party got things done at Paris. And it is shown that Wilson bartered the rights of small nations to buy support for his League of Nations Plan. Competent observers saw

a wind being sown and predicted a whirlwind harvest. Since mankind has not improved it is vain to expect these conditions to improve.

The Christians Conclusion

In such a world the christian has a peculiar calling. Firstly he has no illusion that a just or lasting peace is possible. He bases this sober view on the plain prediction of Scripture concerning wars and rumors of war and on Scripture's constant characterization of the inherent direction of man and mankind. In the second place he will work with all his might for peace. He does so by a necessary urge of an inherent power. Picture an A. Kuyper or an H. Colyn at such a peace conference. Can you imagine anyone working harder for a just peace? And by the same principle that this is true of such men it is true of every christian. He talks peace, he seeks peace, he advocates peace. He teaches his children peace and he lives in the way of peace out of the power of the peace of God which fills his heart and mind through Christ.

A. P.

Our Mission and the Times

In times like these the question presents itself quite readily whether the times are conducive toward continuing our mission endeavors or whether it might not be advisable to discontinue them, at least for the present.

The more so because of the peculiar nature of our mission work.

It is true that the war has practically closed every foreign mission field, and that therefore every available means could well be applied at home, but the fact is that as yet all our effort have been restricted to a home field. We have not yet reached a stage where we were able to send out a foreign missionary, but have felt it our calling as Protestant Reformed Churches to labor first of all in the erring churches which have cast us out, in order to show them the error of their ways.

To the churches which have departed from the truth of God's sovereign grace and fallen victim to the heresies of Arminianism we have directed our efforts, that they might see their error and return to the truth of the Word of God.

But the question might well arise whether the times are not opposed to such efforts, and whether it might not be better to discontinue our mission work, at least "for the duration".

The objection might be raised that we are already so far removed from 1924 that it is almost impossible to create interest in the issues which are all but

buried in the past. What, so it is sometimes asked, do people know about the happenings of some twenty years ago which gave rise to our Churches? How do they know where to lay the responsibility for our separate existence? And, what is more, why should it still interest them?

But an even greater objection might be that the whole world is enveloped in the most extensive and devastating conflict mankind has ever known. Foremost in the minds and on the lips of every person is the present war with its horrors, its sufferings, the accompanying doubts and fears, and the resultant economic disorder. Young men in the prime of their lives are being inducted into service and sent to various distant fields of action, sons and brothers and friends are expected to leave at a moment's notice, and even young husbands and fathers live in uncertainty as to their future. In many cases business is disrupted, laboring hands are hard to find, defense work with its 24 hour program disturbs the routine in many homes, while tire ration and the impending gasoline ration threaten to reduce traveling to a minimum.

With a view to these and similar circumstances, would it not be better to postpone our efforts until a more suitable time?

Yet the objections are hardly raised before we realize that our mission work cannot suffer delay, and, what is more, is now even more important than ever before.

The fact that we are already so far removed from 1924 can only mean that our responsibility grows as time goes on. The history that has led to the final breach between us and the mother church, the circumstances that have given rise to another distinct group of Reformed persuasion, and the reasons for our separate existence may never be lost out of sight.

In the meantime the breach grows between us and them, as we strive to be progressively Reformed in the healthy sense of the word and as those churches continue in the error of their ways. There can be little doubt but that we are farther removed from each other now than we were at the time of the separation, and that the line of demarcation must become increasingly evident as time goes on.

Besides, another generation is arising that knows nothing of the history of some fifteen to twenty years ago. They are not informed about the facts that brought about our separate existence and are kept in ignorance about our teachings. Frequently the information they do receive concerning us is even grossly misleading. They are either told that there is no fundamental difference between us, or that our views are entirely contrary to Scripture and to the Confessions. And, at the same time, the theory of common grace is being inculcated into their receptive minds, both directly and indirectly, so that they become ready victims to its errors.

Our task is not merely church extension, but the calling to defend the truth of the Word of God and to oppose all doctrines repugnant there-to, to strive for the unity of faith overagainst every dissenting heresy, and to seek the pure manifestation of the true Church of Jesus Christ, which is His body, the temple of the living God, founded on that foundation of which Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone.

These peculiar times, instead of interfering with that form of mission work, are in many ways especially favorable to it.

To mention but one aspect, these times certainly belie the whole theory of common grace.

How anyone can maintain that God is graciously inclined to all mankind and at the same time justify our entrance into the present conflict is hardly conceivable. If God's favor rests upon Hitler and his compatriots, upon Mussolini and his actions, upon Japan in their surreptitious assault upon the American possessions, can we afford to be less gracious than God? How can war ever be justified on the basis of common grace? Should we arise in hostility against a nation and snuff out the lives of those whom God favors in His grace? And yet there is no doubt but that the defenders of common grace also justify America's entrance into this war.

However, if human ingenuity and inventions are the fruit of common grace, it must also be conceded that the axis powers have been richly endowed with this grace during the past decade. Hitler's whole war machine which is spewing forth destruction of lives and property from day to day and his military strategy which has beaten down nation upon nation are the products of such human skill and ingenuity as the world has never seen. Every field of science and industry is being called into action to muster enough forces to meet and counteract these powers. But if these things are the fruit of common grace, the results today prove highly unsatisfactory.

More weighty even than that is the question how anyone in times like these can still maintain and teach a restraint of sin through the operation of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the wicked. In times when even the world speaks of universal peace and brotherhood and exercises the friendly neighbor policy toward one another it may prove simple enough to allow ourselves to be deceived into thinking that the human heart is not so bad after all. But these dreams are suddenly blasted when the hearts and secret thoughts of men are revealed. Enmity against God, greed for power, burning hatred and bitter animosity turn this world into a seething cauldron of destruction.

Is it possible that the leaders in the Christian Reformed Church are beginning to realize their error? One might be inclined to hope so, judging from an article appearing in the September 4 issue of *The Banner*, written by Prof. H. Schultze, in which he

writes the following: "War has reached through with its bloody fingers and has modified that which we thought and think should be immuned to all outside forces. It has vitally affected our religious outlook and exercises. It has in many a mind raised doubts about the obligation to love our enemies, if those enemies be Germans, Nipponese or Italians. *It has challenged us to rethink our conception of God.* It tends to make us national rather than universal in our religious evaluations. It tends to modify our conception of the Christian virtues of meekness lowliness, humility, resignation, forgiveness, and so on. Our whole conception of what is the proper way to manifest our Christianity seems to undergo tremendous changes. There is a place for hating and killing now. Vengeance no longer seems to belong to God. It is not easy to be sober minded now. There is obvious confusion all about us; and we share in that confusion. We should be above it, if our Christianity means anything at all."

Note particularly the statement which I underscored above.

The only possible solution to all the problems of our day lies in the fact that God's curse rests upon this world and that He is visiting it with His judgments as never before.

The measure of iniquity is rapidly being filled as the world makes itself ripe for the final judgment to come. Whatever the outcome of this war may be, things are developing with such increasing rapidity that we are literally being swept along toward the last days of the anti-Christian power.

Wars and rumors of wars are, in the meantime, but the beginning of sorrows. Well may we heed the words of Jesus, that we "be not troubled, for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet". These things are only the beginning. They do include the principle of sorrow, the filling up of the measure of sin and the outpouring of the judgments of God, but many more things must come to pass before our final deliverance is reached.

We are living in particularly serious times. Times in which the Church must especially watch in prayer, walk circumspectly, properly evaluating and buying out the time, since the days are evil. Now, if ever, we are called to maintain and live our spiritual isolation. What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness? What concord hath Christ with Belial, or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you.

For the sake of the Church of Jesus Christ in the midst of the world as a chosen and peculiar people, we must strive for the unity of faith which has its one and only foundation in the Word of God.

Our missionary efforts cannot suffer delay, but must continue with even added zeal, also in these times.

C. H.

Current Events

Reports of Missionaries

We refer with this heading to two reports of missionaries who have recently returned from the Orient. These two reports are found in *The Banner* and in the *Presbyterian Guardian* respectively. In the *Banner* of September 11, Rev. S. A. Dykstra writes the first article about their return from Jukao, China, which belongs to that part of China now occupied by the Japanese. He speaks of the "Crises in China", and about this last crisis he writes, "Our third return marks the greatest crisis in mission history. We were shown the door. More than 1,500 Americans were exchanged for the same number of Japanese." From this first hand report we can realize the implications of the present conflict in the Orient for missionary activity among that part of the Yellow race. Another first-hand report is given by Rev. Bruce F. Hunt, Orthodox Presbyterian missionary to Manchukuo. He writes in his letter from the M. S. Gripsholm, August 7, published in the *Presbyterian Guardian* of September 10, the following, "Over one-third, and almost one-half of the passengers on board are missionaries. No Protestant missionaries have been left in Korea of any denomination or country. In Manchuria only Protestant missionaries of non-allied nations, Norway, Denmark, and Hungary, possibly Finland, have been allowed to remain. All American and British Protestants are out even though some of them, including myself, when asked our preference, had said they wished to stay. In China the wishes of the individual were respected in some instances but in other cases those who expressed a preference to stay are being sent out. An exception was made for American Catholics in Manchuria; about half of them are staying and half of them are with us on the boat. In Korea all the American and British Catholics are leaving, "by order of the bishop", but it is a question whether the Korean bishop dared do otherwise without having trouble."

One part of this letter of Rev. Hunt shows a beautiful Christian missionary spirit. He writes, "We are daily praying that when we come to you we will come to you in the fullness of the blessing of Christ, and we are praying for God's guidance as to what His will for us is in wartime America. You have had to face a lot of things and think through a lot of issues that we have not yet had to come up against."

Labor

Along with the promised control of farm prices and wages we are experiencing, already in a measure with a promise of complete control, *conscription* of labor. With the conscription of labor it is promised that all the man power of the country will be controlled by the government. That means that the government can establish an American's pay by decree or executive order, and freeze or chain him to his job. Westbrook Pegler in commenting on this situation, wrote that the general impression was gotten from the President's speech to Congress that collective bargaining has changed a great deal from what it was in peace times. We can see how that this has taken place from the control of the working man's wage and rights on the one hand, and the control of the profits by taxation and regulation on the other. This is indeed a change in our American way of living. But this columnist raises another question with respect to this significant impending legislation which shall change the relation of employee and employer. He raises the question about the future of unions. He wrote, "One very important issue must be met soon. That is the question whether citizens who are compelled to work or fight or to go hungry, shall be forced to join unions. Unions would seem to have lost their reason for being, their role as bargaining agents, under a system of fixed wages and compulsion, but of course they will be kept going, anyway, as a sort of front to balance the representatives of industry in consultations on pay, hours, rate of production and so forth. But as bargaining agents, they can only plead, not demand, and under worker compulsion, their sacred right to strike, would seem to be gone. Why, then, should anyone be compelled to join a union? And why should anyone voluntarily join a union, unless in the determination that when peace comes the united workers will insist on the revival of free competition in industry which is the only system which provides freedom from government control for the worker?"

This question indicates that important changes are going to take place which will require another or a new emphasis of our Christian principles. Our Christian principles will never change but their application to unions may have to be changed. It depends on the interpretation and action of the government. If the government makes of the unions an instrument in its own hands to recruit and regulate the relation of the laborer to his government then they no longer shall fall under the condemnation they now do from our Christian principles, but they become officials of the government itself. If, however, they remain independent with their own creed, but subject to all the regulations of the government, and then also an organization which shall become obligatory to join, the same

The War and Education

It is pointed out to us by leading educators that the schools are directly affected by our war program. Not only are the schools of higher education affected but all the schools. The colleges and universities had to shorten the time of education. This shortening of the time required for education does not necessarily mean a poorer education. It is admitted that now it can be seen that Hutchins of the University of Chicago was right when he accused our educational systems of wasting time. Instead of having a college and university training take eight years he advocated six and seven years. This is now being done. The subject matter has also received a different emphasis. In the high schools and in colleges the emphasis is upon physics and mathematics instead of the social sciences, which formerly received the emphasis. Now it is realized what a bad technical training was given when the army and navy require the best technicians.

Especially in possible danger areas the educational system must take into consideration the horrors of war. Conditions caused by an air raid must be considered. First aid has to be taught for accidents. Preparation has to be made now for the shock which war brings to the children and the weak in an air raid.

For those who are soon to be selected from the schools to enter combat the proper morale has to be kept up, it is warned.

That these things must necessarily be taken into consideration we readily realize. Particularly ought it to be emphasized in our Christian schools and in our Christian homes the spiritual preparation we and the children need, to prepare us for the events that shall shortly take place. The battle is really a spiritual battle. The children must be taught to expect the events that are pictured to us in the Bible. They must be taught why these things must come to pass. What can we expect of the morale and the spiritual condition of covenant children and young people who must inevitably face a more horrible condition than there ever happened in history if the educators are always praying for peace when there is no peace and always speaking of God's grace in the way of dollars and cents and peace and prosperity? May we pray for grace to teach covenant people and covenant children to pray with us for grace to expect and to pray for the coming of the Kingdom of heaven in the way God reveals it must come. For as we ask for this grace of faith and courage we all shall be equipped with that invulnerable armor, according to the promise of God.

Married Men and the Draft

Some men with dependents have already been drafted. The prediction is that in a very short time we must expect to see married men with wives and children drafted for military purposes. Homes have

always been broken up. Christian as well as non-Christian homes have been touched by death, even in "normal times". Divorce has preceeded this war in the breaking up of the American home. So to many Americans it may not seem so dreadful that such is going to take place. Dreadful it is. Departures of the sons has been a beginning of sorrow. Departure of husbands and fathers is another step in that load of sorrow. But all this is only the "beginning of sorrow". Other lands have certainly experienced in a more dreadful degree the chaos and the ravages of war.

It may seem that our Christian homes will be disrupted. We may think, what will become of the Christian instruction and leadership that is dependent upon fathers. Knowing that God's ways are not our ways, we feel assured that nothing can disrupt the Christian home established by God to bring forth His elect, or to be guardians of His elect. When the evil day draws nigh the Christian mothers shall be strong in the Lord to guide their children in the fear of the Lord. Their fervent prayers shall be answered. Now fathers and mothers have time yet to strengthen themselves by the grace of God in their common faith in the eternal and unchangeable God who is their Father in Jesus Christ. This is not particularly a time of grace. This is a time to work while it is day. All time is a time of grace for the Christians. Separated husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, shall enjoy the dreadful times too as a time of grace for them. That is especially the blessed truth they must have straight and firm in their minds. In that they will be sustained. We must be thankful to God for preparing us so long ago, by giving us parents and leaders who have sacrificed much to have us learn the doctrine of eternal and sovereign grace.

L. D.

 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 Meaning of Christ's Intercession In Heaven

There is great need in our day of emphasizing the absolute necessity of Christ's intercession for His people in heaven. Many there are who would present it as though Christ's work as Mediator was finished when by His suffering and death He merited a mere possibility of salvation for all men, and on His work being finished it is up to man whether or not he is willing to accept this salvation which is freely offered unto him in the preaching of the gospel. They do not emphasize or entirely ignore the fact that Christ's intercession in heaven for those given Him by the Father is just as an essential part of His work as Mediator as His suffering and death. The one is the complement of the other. Christ's atonement and intercession in heaven are as inseparably connected as creation and providence. The one cannot exist without the other. But even as Deism separates the work of Divine providence from creation, so the Pelagians and Armenians separate Christ's intercession from His atonement. They deny that Christ is our Mediator unto the very end, that we receive all the blessings of grace only through Him, and that He bestows these blessings only upon those given Him by the Father. They do not understand that without the work of Christ's intercession in heaven, His suffering and death upon the cross would have been in vain. For of what value were the atonement without the gifts of regeneration, effectual calling, justification, sanctification, preservation and final glorification? These are all fruits of Christ's prayer in heaven for us, "Father I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am". John 17:24.

The work of our Mediator, therefore, does not only consist in His atonement upon the cross, whereby He made salvation possible, but also in His intercession for us at the right hand of God whereby He actually accomplishes the salvation of all those given Him by the Father, regenerating, calling, and sanctifying them by His grace and spirit. Therefore He is a complete and perfect Saviour. His work was not finished with His suffering and death, but He continues His Mediatorial work in heaven by interceding for all those given him by the Father, and applying unto them all the blessings of salvation.

Even as the High priest in the Old Dispensation entered behind the veil on the great day of atonement, bearing upon his breast the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, in order to sprinkle the blood upon the mercy seat, even so Christ Jesus, as our High priest, enters into the heavenly sanctuary to present His perfect sacrifice unto God as a propitiation for our sins and maketh intercession for us. Hence Christ did not enter heaven merely to receive glory for Himself and to

wait if there will be some who will accept His meant offer of salvation; but in heaven He is actively engaged in the work of redemption. By His Spirit *He* regenerates, *He* calls, *He* justifies, *He* sanctifies, and *He* glorifies, and He does this by constantly interceding for all those given Him by the Father.

To intercede, in the Scriptures, is to approach a person for another. This is beautifully expressed in 1 John 2:1 "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous". The relation of Christ to His people is here pictured from a judicial point of view as that of an advocate to his client. The word *advocate*, even as the original Greek word *parakletos*, literally means called to one's side, one who pleads another's cause before a judge, a pleader, and therefore an advocate. We still have this original idea expressed in the Holland word *advocaat*. Thus when the apostle says, "we have an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous", he presents Christ as appearing before God for us in order to plead our cause. It is not necessary for us to be personally present, for our advocate takes our place. He pleads our cause.

To thus be our advocate Christ is particularly qualified. An advocate must have certain definite qualifications. In the first place he must have a right to appear in court. He must be admitted to the bar. Because of sin we have no right to enter the courts of our God and appear before Him. This right we have forever forfeited. God has righteously cast us out of His holy presence, for no sinner can stand in His holy presence. We lie in the midst of death, born and conceived in sin. We are in a state of hopeless condemnation. Our sins are more than we can count. We lie in the midst of death, born and conceived in sin. We are in a state of hopeless condemnation. Our sins are more than we can count. We cannot deny them. We cannot atone even for one of them. Hence God's justice and our sins makes our condemnation inevitable. We therefore need an advocate who has a right to appear before God for us, and who is qualified to plead our cause at His tribunal. No one can do this for himself. No man can do it for his fellow-man. No creature can do it for his fellow-creature. There is only one qualified for this office, Jesus Christ the righteous. He alone is entitled to appear before God for us. He alone has the right of entry to the tribunal of God as the representative of His people.

An advocate must also have knowledge of the law and the demands of justice, as well as a complete knowledge of his client's case if he is to successfully plead his cause. Christ as our advocate before the Father had these qualifications, for as the Son of God He knows perfectly the demands of God's justice, and as the Son of Man, clothed in our human nature and in all things tempted like as we are, He knows perfectly our

of our misery. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Hebrews 4:15.

And finally if an advocate is to plead a client's cause successfully he must have a sufficient plea to offer in his behalf. Christ has such a plea in his own perfect righteousness. He has done all that justice and holiness requires for our complete pardon and acceptance. The plea which He is thus enabled to present is a sufficient one. His intercession is based upon righteousness and justice. Hence Christ's intercession does not have the character of a pleading, in the usual sense of the word, but of a righteous and just demand. It is not the asking of grace for a penitent, even as an advocate pleading for clemency for his client, but an authoritative demand on the basis of justice. Even though His people lie in the midst of sin and death, and are worthy of eternal condemnation, He has merited for them regeneration, faith, justification, sanctification, and a full redemption. Therefore upon the basis of His perfect obedience and sacrifice upon the cross He appears before the Father with the demand "Father I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am". John 17:24. That is also the reason why Christ never intercedes in vain. His prayer is always answered. It must be answered. It cannot righteously be disregarded. This demand is not only effectual for some, but for all in whose behalf it is urged, for all those given Him by the Father. And this intercessory prayer is always answered, not in the first place because of the mercy of God, but because of Christ's perfect sacrifice. Indeed the mercies of God are the ultimate source of all the spiritual blessings of salvation, but these mercies only come upon us in the way of justice. "Zion is redeemed through righteousness."

The purpose of an advocate is not only to obtain for his client the verdict of not guilty in order to save him from the infliction of the penalty with which he is threatened, but also to assure for him the quiet enjoyment of his inheritance or property. Thus Christ as our advocate not only secures for us the verdict of not guilty, our complete justification before the bar of God's justice, but also secures for us the enjoyment of all the blessings of grace which he has merited for us. He not only delivers us from the guilt of sin, but also from the power of sin and of the devil, and by His Holy Spirit regenerates our hearts, calls us out of darkness into His light, leads us into all truth, and preserves us unto eternal salvation and blessedness.

This most comforting truth is a pillar of strength for God's children in the midst of doubts and temptations. Thus this truth is ever presented to us in Holy Writ. He, Christ Jesus, "hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, *seeing He ever*

liveth to make intercession for them". Heb. 7:25. And Romans 8:34 "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us". I John 2:1 "My little children, these things write I unto you, that we sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

B. K.

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.

Then I thought of other mornings,
With a keen remorse of mind.
When I too, had loosed the moorings
When the Presence left behind.

O God of the impossible!
Since all things are to Thee
But soil in which Omnipotence
Can work almightily,

The very storms that beat upon
Our little barque so frail,
But manifest thy power to quell
All forces that assail.

The things that are to us too hard,
The foes that are too strong,
Are just the very ones that may
Awake a triumph song.

O God of the impossible,
When we no hope can see,
Grant us the faith that still believes
ALL possible to Thee!

Report of the Meeting Of Classis West held Sept. 10, 1942 at Edgerton, Minn.

MORNING SESSION

Rev. P. Vis, president of the former Classis, opened the meeting with usual preliminaries. Delegations appeared from all the congregations with the exception of Bellflower. Rev. Vos is chairman of the day and Rev. Vis scribe. After extending a word of welcome to the delegates the classis gets down to its routine business. First there appears the report of the committee which was to examine the matter of correspondence with other churches. After hearing the report and weighing the various matters involved in such correspondence, Classis decides to table the matter indefinitely. Next the committee on travelling expenses to Classis reports, Rev. Lubbers reading the advices drawn up. Classis decides to follow the reported advice, among other things, it sets the rate to be paid to them travelling with automobile at 4 cents per mile upon condition that at least two delegates ride in one car, a delegate travelling alone will be entitled to the equivalent of train fare etc. Rev. Lubbers again reads a report, this time for the sermon committee. The ministers of this Classis are requested to send up to the Committee one dutch sermon by Nov. 1 and an English sermon by Feb. 15. This is an official notification to these ministers. Classis also adds a member to this committee, taking the place of Rev. Petter who left for Classis East the newly appointed member is Rev. J. Vander Breggen. Classical Comm. reads its report of activity done.

Now comes the matter of brother H. H. Kuiper in which he requests to be restored to his former status as minister of the Word, and eligible to be called. After careful and lengthy deliberation

Classis decides to instruct the brother to obtain the testimony which Classis in Art. 23 of the Sept. 1940 meeting posted as the necessary condition for restoration, and after obtaining this to come with it to the next Classis. A committee also is appointed in this matter, the comm. composed of Revs. Cammenga, Verhil and Gritters. J. Broek closes this meeting with prayer.

AFTERNOON SESSION

Comes now a double communication from a brother in which he finds fault with a certain action taken by the previous Classis. Classis answers the matter and restates its position. The consistory of Doon asks a financial arrangement in view of their vacancy, it is decided that the consistory confer with the Cl. Comm. which comm. in turn shall request the Syn. Comm. to make the adjustment. Grand Haven requests collection in the Classis West, it is granted. Redlands consistory comes to the Classis with a request that it be permitted to ask a collection in our churches with a view to assisting them in their radio broadcasts over K. P. R. O. It is granted. A request also from Creston asking collections, Creston did not convince Classis of the urgency of this collection and it was not granted.

The consistory of Sioux Center invited Classis to meet there the next time and this was accepted. Decided that the next meeting therefore would be held there, D. V. and that on March 3, 1943.

Pulpit supply for Doon was arranged as follows:—Sept. 13, Lubbers; Sept. 27, Cammenga; Oct. 11, Vis; Oct. 25, Blankespoor; Nov. 8, Verhil; Nov. 22, Vander Breggen; Dec. 6, Gritters; Dec. 20, Cammenga; Jan. 3, Blankespoor; Jan 17, Vis;

Jan. 31, Verhil; Feb. 14, Gritters; Feb. 28, Rev. G. Vos (the Sunday before Classis).

Classis then voted various of its officers and the voting brought the following elections:—Stated Clerk, Rev. M. Gritters, Sub-treasurer, Rev. A. Cammenga. Church Visitators: for the Far West: Revs. Vos and Doezenia; Manhattan: Revs. De Wolf and Doezenia; Iowa and Minn. Revs. Blankespoor and Gritters with P. Vis secundis generalis. Classical Committee: Revs. Gritters and Vis. Rev. De Wolf is instructed to thank the Edgerton consistory for the use of its building and the ladies for their excellent catering. The usual questions of D. K. O. Art. 41 are asked and satisfactorily answered. Classis adjourns after singing from Psalm 75 and prayer by Rev. G. Vos. Next meeting March 3, 1943 at Sioux Center, Ia., D. V.

Rev. M. Gritters S. C.