

THE STANDARD *Bearer* A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XIX

NOVEMBER 15, 1942

NUMBER 4

MEDITATION

At Cherith

And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And it shall be that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. So he went and did according unto the word of the Lord: for he went, and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.

I Kings 17:2-6.

Get thee hence . . .

Elijah, the servant of Jehovah, that standeth before God, sent into oblivion!

This, it appears to us, is the main purpose of Cherith, and, at the same time, its significance for us, for you and for me.

O, it is true, he finds a safe place at the brook.

For it must be granted that it was by no means improbable that the wrath of the wicked king, and especially of the fiendishly hateful queen, would make an attempt to persecute and kill him. There are those, indeed, who consider this hardly conceivable. They might, perhaps, try to capture him and put him into prison. But hardly would they put him to death. Did

he not have the power again to open the heavens, and to cause the rain to satisfy the thirsty land? If, then, they killed the prophet of Jehovah, would they not cut off all possibility of the heavens to be reopened? But they that argue thus forget, first of all, that hatred is blind, and that this is especially true of the hatred of the world against the prophets of the Lord. Furiously

the wicked queen was enraged against God's servant. Besides, might they not argue in their folly, that it was Elijah that kept the heavens shut, and that, therefore, to render him powerless would be to open the heavens again automatically? Indeed Cherith was a safe retreat for the servant of Jehovah at this time.

Yet, this hardly explains the whole situation.

Why send the prophet into hiding? Was not his God able to keep him in the midst of the enemy? Had he not just invaded the very palace of the king to bring the Word of the Lord to him? Would he not openly return in due time, again to show himself to Ahab? And would it not have been a far more glorious revelation of Jehovah, and, in fact, a mighty vindication of His servant Elijah, had He commanded him to remain publicly on the stage, and to continue to be the chief character in the drama that was being enacted in the land of Israel?

Get thee hence . . . hide thyself!

Sent into oblivion!

At the brook the prophet is in complete isolation. With no one had he any contact. No news came to him of the effect of the Word of God he had delivered to the wicked king. O, his word was, evidently being fulfilled, for even there, at the brook, it could be witnessed that the heavens were of brass, and slowly, day by day, the brook was drying up. But what was the effect of it all? Was the king terror-stricken? Did the people repent and turn unto the Lord? He knew not . . .

For just a moment the prophet had appeared in the center of the stage.

A very brief message he had delivered: the Word of God to Ahab.

And the next moment the Word of Jehovah sends him into complete oblivion, far away from the center of activity!

Was he not a servant?

And must not a servant of the Most High learn that he is of no significance, that the privilege of serving Jehovah is a gift to the servant, and that the work which it pleases the Lord to accomplish through

the instrumentality of His servant is always God's work? When, therefore, he has performed his calling, he need not, he may not loiter on the stage of action: he may disappear. Some of God's most capable, most highly endowed servants labored but a little while. He than whom there was none greater among those that were born of women at the time of the Lord's public ministry just pointed to the Lamb of God and disappeared. The great apostle among the Gentiles is sometimes taken out of his active ministry and shut up in prison for years.

Get thee hence!

Hide thyself at the brook!

When the servant has performed his calling, he need not be anxious about the result of it. It is not for him to worry about the increase. Always his calling is to bring the Word of God. The rest he may leave safely in the hands of God. O, one can easily imagine that Elijah may have been eager to follow up the word he had spoken to Ahab, and which soon began to become manifest as a Word of the Lord in the drought it had foretold! He might want to apply that word! What an opportunity to stage a great revival, to impress upon the hearts and minds of the nation the vanity of Baal, and to arouse them to return unto the Lord their God!

Get thee hence!

Turn eastward to Cherith!

The servant must be kept humble. He must not stand in the way of the glory of his Master. Yet, even the best of God's servants were in danger of becoming "great men". Paul is given a thorn in the flesh, an angel of satan to buffet him!

Elijah was a man of like passions as we are

Hide thyself!

And, in the meantime, the Lord mercifully provides rest for His servant, and strengthens him for the work still to be performed.

Brief had been the period of labor, indeed! One short message had been delivered in the name of the Lord. Nevertheless, the delivering of that one sermon had been a tremendous battle, enervating, exhausting.

Go, get thee hence!

Turn thee eastward and hide thyself at the brook! Rest awhile!

For the main battle is still to be fought!

Wonderful Cherith!

Marvellous way of God!

For in a land of wrath and judgment God provides for His people, and delivers them out of all their troubles!

At Cherith, that deep and rocky ravine through which the water of the brook playfully meandered its

way to Jordan, God commands the ravens to bring his servant bread and meat!

Unbelief scoffs at this, foolishly, as unbelief is always foolish.

Or "why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" Or what rational explanation could anyone give for his profane mockery at the Word of God, when it assures us that God commanded the ravens to feed his servant Elijah at the brook Cherith? Is He not the Creator of the heavens and of the earth, Who calls the things that are not as if they were? And is not He Who created all things their Lord, their most absolute Sovereign? Does He not command the clouds, and they gather? Is it not the Word of His mouth that causeth the rain to descend, and the sun to shine, and the soil to nourish the seed, and the seed to germinate in the earth, and the grain to ripen in the ear?

Why, then, should it be the object of mockery that He commands the ravens to feed His servant Elijah?

Or does He not know, perhaps, how to save His people from the present world?

(He is the Lord of hosts!

The God of Israel!

Always He keeps and delivers His people in the midst of, and from the destruction of a world of wrath, of sin and death. For, with the first Adam they submerge into corruption, guilt and damnation. Death swallows them up. In a world of wrath, that is delivered up unto destruction, they are born. Yet, He knows how to deliver His own from that world of woe, and to preserve them even unto everlasting glory. Yes, He calls the things that are not as if they were; but He also raises the dead. He calls the light out of darkness, righteousness out of damnation, holiness out of corruption, glory out of shame, life out of death . . .

That is the glory of His grace!

And of the glory of that grace every wonder is a sign, also the wonder of His commanding the ravens to feed His servant at Cherith.

For, was not Canaan, during those three years and six months of terrible drought, the land of God's wrath? Had not the wicked grown mighty in the land, and had not the people followed after the vanities of the heathen? Was not the carnal element, wicked Israel, in power, and did not iniquity reign supreme? And had not the anger of Jehovah been kindled over the whole land? And had not the prayer of the prophet cooperated with the wrath of Jehovah to avenge Himself upon His enemies, and to bring judgment upon the wicked nation? Was it not the wrath of God that kept the heavens shut, that dried up rivers and brooks, that caused the earth to crack with thirst, and that threatened death to every living thing?

But what of God's people?

Were the righteous to be destroyed with the wicked?

Were there not prophets of Jehovah in the land, hid from the fury of the heathen queen in the caves of the earth? And were there, besides, not also the seven thousand that had never bowed their knee to Baal? Were these also to perish under the oppressing wrath of God? . . .

Is God's church to perish with the wicked world?

Perhaps at the brook, as he gazed up at the brazen heavens through the canopy of leaves that overshadowed his retreat, Elijah thought of this. He knew that there must be true people of God in the land even then. What would become of them? And every morning and every evening the answer came to him in the Word of God that was embodied in the ravens that carried his daily provisions: "I am the Lord of hosts. I know how to deliver the godly out of all his temptations, even in the midst of, and from a world that is reserved unto the day of judgment to be punished." . . .

I have commanded the ravens to feed thee!

And as I keep thee, and save thee in the midst of a land of wrath, so I will surely deliver all My people!

Glorious ways of God!

Blessed Cherith!

For there one may commit his way unto the Lord, and be assured that He will bring it to pass!

There one may cast the burden of his daily cares upon the Lord, and experience that He will provide, and that they that trust in the Lord of hosts shall never be ashamed.

There one may seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and see the realization of the promise that all other things shall indeed be added unto him. There he may live out of the hand of God, directly, day by day, in childlike confidence . . .

The ravens shall feed thee there!

O, do not be afraid to go to Cherith, for what is more blessed than to live out of the hand of your God? The ravens shall feed you! No, if you love to follow after your own lusts, if you hanker after the pleasures and treasures of the world and of the flesh, you cannot stand it at the lonely brook. The delicacies of the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, are not there. There you cannot fill your barns for years to come and exhort your soul to eat and to drink and to have no care. For there, at Cherith, you receive your portion, and no more, every morning and every evening. And after every meal you must there look again at the brazen heavens, and at the drying brook, and trust that He Who commanded the ravens once will command them again. . . .

Yet, do not be hesitant to follow up the Word of the Lord, and to go to the lonely, isolated brook!

For the God of Elijah has commanded the ravens to feed you there!

Mark you well; He *has* commanded them. Before you go your provisions are ready!

Be not afraid to obey the Word of the Lord, and to go to your Cherith, for what is more blessed than that childlike confidence whereby we may daily eat out of the Lord's hand? All the abundance of the world, all the prosperity of the wicked, cannot yield the blessed peace and profound joy there is in one day of trust in the Lord, a confidence that is always crowned with the blessed experience that He will surely provide!

Be not afraid to go . . . *there!*

For the ravens are commanded to feed you . . . *there!*

Just *there!* No, the Lord has not commanded the ravens to feed you *everywhere*. Only *there!*

O, the prophet might have foreseen what would be the result, if the prayer he uttered in the wilds of Gilead were heard, and if the Lord would withhold the rain from heaven! And foreseeing the drought and the famine he might have thought of himself and become anxious, and he might have gathered for himself a store of provisions to keep himself alive in the day of famine. Or he might have judged it better to leave the country immediately, and to seek a living elsewhere.

But there was only one Cherith.

An there the ravens would feed him at the command of God.

In the way of the Lord, in the way of obedience alone we can eat the bread of God's lovingkindness, and enjoy the blessed experience of childlike trust, of tasting the goodness of the Lord, of the wonderful peace that passeth all understanding. For there, and there alone, God has commanded the ravens to feed us!

O, indeed, we may find bread elsewhere! We may refuse to obey the word of the Lord and rather than turn eastward to the brook, turn westward into the way of our own lusts. And in that way of disobedience and carnal lusts, in the way of the world and of seeking the things that are below, in the way of unfaithfulness and denial of the name of Christ, we may find bread in abundance. For thus it often appears: the wicked prosper. And, perhaps, you feel no need of the ravens to feed you. . . .

But remember: it is the bread of wrath!

But the bread of God's lovingkindness which is better than life you can eat only at the brook whither God's Word sent you!

Wonderful Cherith!

H. H.

The Standard Bearer

Semi-Monthly, except Monthly in July and August

Published by

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

EDITOR — Rev. H. Hoeksema

Contributing editors—Revs. J. Blankespoor, A. Cammenga, P. De Boer, J. D. de Jong, H. De Wolf, L. Doezeema, M. Gritters, C. Hanko, B. Kok, G. Lubbers, G. M. Ophoff, A. Petter, M. Schipper, J. Vanden Breggen, H. Veldman, R. Veldman, W. Verhil, L. Vermeer, P. Vis, G. Vos, and Mr. S. De Vries.

Communications relative to contents should be addressed to REV. H. HOEKSEMA, 1139 Franklin St., S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

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

Subscription \$2.50 per year

Entered as second class mail at Grand Rapids, Michigan

EDITORIALS

Philosophische Strooporpen

Ge hebt, vertrouw ik, allen wel eens de mop gehoord van de philosophische eieren, lezers. (Is ze niet afkomstig van *van Zeggelen*?)

Een boer had zijn zoon naar de hoogeschool gezonden, zoo luidt, meen ik, het verhaal. En daar bestudeerde de boerenjongen ook de filosofie. En die filosofie, geen wonder ook voor zoo'n boerenknaap, ging hem naar zijn hoofd. Hij waande zich een heele geleerde bol, althans als hij onder de boeren weer kwam. Dat bleek, toen hij op vacantie thuis kwam, en hij op de etenstafel drie eieren zag liggen. Hij begon over die eieren te filosofheeren, zooals boerenphilosophen over alles filosofheeren, en hij kwam tot de slotsom, dat er eigenlijk vijf eieren op de tafel lagen en hij openbaarde zijn diep-geleerde conclusie aan zijn vader. Deze kon echter met den besten wil niet meer zien dan drie eieren.

"Maar vader", sprak de geleerde jonge bol, "zijn daar niet in de eerste plaats drie eieren?"

De vader antwoordde, dat hem dit goed duidelijk was.

De jonge filosoof nam één ei van de tafel, en vroeg zijn vader: "En hoeveel eieren zijn er nu?"

Het was den vader goed duidelijk, dat er twee waren.

"Ergo", sprak de knappe bol, "er zijn drie eieren, er zijn ook twee eieren, twee plus drie is vijf, er zijn dus vijf eieren op tafel."

De vader, die weinig van filosofie afwist, maar meer praktisch was aangelegd, nam toen de drie eieren, at ze op en zei tot zijn knappe jongen: "Eet jij nou met je geleerde kop de philosophische eieren op."

Zoo ongeveer luidt het verhaal.

Ds. E. Van Halsema vertelt in *De Wachter* van 20 Oct. l. l., dat hij onlangs teruggekeerd is van eene vergadering van de Calvinistic Philosophy Club, te Philadelphia gehouden. Een jaar geleden werd eene dergelijke vergadering gehouden. Toen was de spreker Dr. C. Van Til; onderwerp: de algemeene genade. Als ik Van Halsema goed begrijp dan was dit jaar de spreker weer Dr. Van Til; en het onderwerp was weer: de algemeene genade.

En ik krijg den indruk, dat de filosofie dier vergadering ook Ds. Van Halsema een beetje in het hoofd geslagen is.

CONTENTS

MEDITATION

| | |
|-------------------|----|
| AT CHERITH | 73 |
| Rev. H. Hoeksema. | |

EDITORIALS —

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| PHILOSOPHISCHE STROOPOPPEM | 76 |
| JESUS DELIVERS | 79 |
| Rev. H. Hoeksema. | |

| | |
|------------------------------|----|
| BALAAM THE SON OF BEOR | 82 |
| Rev. G. M. Ophoff. | |

| | |
|--------------------------|----|
| DE ROEMENDE KONING | 86 |
| Rev. G. Vos. | |

| | |
|---|----|
| THE DOCTRINE OF CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP | 89 |
| Rev. A. Cammenga. | |

| | |
|--|----|
| DOCTRINAL INSTRUCTION AND THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL | 91 |
| Rev. J. D. de Jong. | |

| | |
|--|----|
| GAMES OF SKILL AND GAMES OF CHANCE | 93 |
| Rev. J. Blankespoor. | |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| THE CHOIR IN PUBLIC WORSHIP | 95 |
| Rev. P. Vis. | |

Want thuis gekomen is hij een filosofisch logement gaan oprichten.

En als ik het allemaal goed begrepen heb (want die diepe filosofie gaat ook mijn nuchteren verstand een beetje boven mijn petje), dan heeft dit logement een filosofisch uithangbord waarop te lezen staat: "Slaapplaats voor Calvinisten en Alle Ketterers."

(Het logement heeft slechts twee bedden. Later zal er wel wat moeten worden vertimmerd, maar als men zoo'n zaakje begint moet er wel eens een beetje worden geschipperd. Bij filosofische voortbouw komen er wel meer kamers en bedden in dit logement.

Het ééne bed is voor de Calvinisten de ware Calvinisten, d.w.z. voor hen, die eene zuivere beschouwing hebben van de algemeene genade filosofie. Het andere bed is voor de ketterers, d.w.z. voor allen, die het niet eens zijn met de Calvinistic Philosophy Club.

Maar nu komt het gekke van 't geval.

Het was haast wel te verwachten, dat de filosofische logementhouder niet veel clandestie zou krijgen voor dat tweede bed. Wie wordt nu gaarne bij ketterers op bed gestopt? En toen heeft Ds. Van Halsema, om reclame te maken voor zijn logement, een aantal filosofische stroopoppen, die hij van Philadelphia had meegenomen, op dat tweede bed gelegd. En zooals een meiske doet met haar poppen, zoo deed Van Halsema met zijn strooien ketterers: hij sprak ze allen toe en gaf hun namen. Hij vertelt hiervan in *De Wachter*, met dit onderscheid, dat hij zijnen lezers vertelt, dat hij werkelijke personen in zijn filosofisch logement te gast heeft.

Midden in zijn filosofisch bed legt hij zijn eerste stroopop. En hij noemt hem—o, schim van 't heidensch verleden!—Parmenides, bij alle lezers van *De Wachter* zeker welbekend: de man van ééne idee, die niet van tegenstrijdigheden weten wilde.

Naast hem, aan elke zijde van den Griekschen heiden, legt hij nu twee zijner andere poppen. En hun geeft hij de namen,—o, tergende herinneringen aan 1924 en aan de Pantlind!—Danhof en Hoeksema, die ook niet willen aannemen, dat zwart wit is, en dat bij God ja neen is, noch in schijn, noch in de werkelijkheid.

En aan den buitenkant, naast de pop, die Herman Hoeksema heet, legt hij nog een anderen strooman, en hij zegt tot hem, met een glimlach op zijn gelaat: "Gij zijt Jacobus Harmsen oftenwel Arminius: hier, naast den loochenaar der algemeene genade, zijt gij op uw plaats, want ge zijt even eenzijdig in uw beschouwingen als hij!"

Maar er zijn nog meer ketterische stroopoppen.

Aan den anderen kant van Parmenides, vlak naast Danhof, legt hij Heraclitus, wiens naam alleen alle goedgeloovige Wachter-lezers van afschuw zal doen beven. Hij is een man, die wel in contradicties gelooft, maar die daarmee veel te ver gaat: voor hem zijn

de tegenstrijdigheden niet slechts schijnbaar, maar werkelijk! En naast hem komen te liggen de stroopoppen van Kuyper, Zwier, en anderen, want ook zij spreken van werkelijke tegenstrijdigheden

Het bed is vol

Maar er is nog één pop, die noodig een plaats moet hebben in het filosofisch bed van dit filosofisch logement. Reeds heeft de logementhouder hem Karl Barth genoemd. En zijn plaats is dicht bij den Herman Hoeksema-pop. Hij bouwt dus een stukje bij het bed aan, iets, dat voor een filosoof heelemaal geen moeite veroorzaakt. En daar komt de Zwitschersche theoloog te liggen.

De zaak is in orde.

Wel voldaan met zijn filosofisch product, roept de logementhouder nu even de schim van wijlen prof. Ten Hoor op.

"Wat denkt u van mijn werk professor?" vraagt hij.

En de professor antwoordt heel nuchter: "Zou 't ook beter wezen, broeder, dat je maar ophield te filosofheeren, en dat ge den Bijbel ook eens liet spreken?"

De logementhouder roept de Wachterlezers binnen.

Met verwondering staren ze naar al die slapende ketterers, zoo eensgezind daar neerliggend.

Maar als ze Arminius daar zoo vredig naast Herman Hoeksema zien liggen, halen ze de schouders op, en zeggen: "Met alle respect heer filosoof-logement houder, maar beging u hier geen fout? Dat gaat nooit goed, want als Hoeksema straks wakker wordt, dan schopt hij Armijn zeker van 't bed. Onze synode heeft gezegd, dat hij eenzijdig gereformeerd is, en dat wil zeggen, dat hij zoover van Arminius af staat, als ge maar komen kunt."

"Ja, ja", antwoordt nu de filosofische stroopoppen vervaardiger, "maar wij hebben pas besloten in Philadelphia, dat Hoeksema in hetzelfde bed hoort als Arminius."

"Maar hoe zoo?", vragen de ongeloovige Wachterlezers.

"Ziet u, dat zit zoo", antwoordt de logementhouder, "Hoeksema is eenzijdig, Arminius is eenzijdig: ergo, ze zijn het met elkander eens. Als de Amerikanen en Japaneezen ieder aan hun eigen zijde vechten, dan leert de filosofie dat ge niet beter doen kunt dan ze met elkander te bed brengen."

"Ja, ja," knikken de meeste Wachter-lezers.

En nu?

Na een laatsten blik geslagen te hebben op zijn

philosophisch wonder-produkt, keert zich de logementhouder naar zijn eigen bed en vleit zich neer.

't Is 't praalbed van de echte Calvinistische filosofie.

Daar ligt hij, zeer zelfvoldaan, temidden van zijn philosophische makkers, predikanten, professoren, dokters en doctoren

En hij droomt!

Hij is op eene vergadering in de Pantlind Hotel te Grand Rapids. Verbaasd ziet hij rond. Hij wil spreken, maar de woorden besterven hem op de lippen. Hier gaat het niet zoo vlot met de filosofie als in Philadelphia

Hier zijn zijn stroopoppen in levenden lijve

En niets anders wetend, roept hij bedremmeld uit:

"Dat de broederlijke liefde blijve!"

Lezer, ge zegt, dat ik den spot drijf met Van Halsema's ontboezemingen in *De Wachter*?

't Is ook zoo.

Maar weet gij er iets beters op?

Zoudt gij dan meenen, dat we zulk armzalig gedoe, dat er op berekend is, om goedgeloofige Wachterlezers en kurken zielen in het geloof te brengen, dat wij behept zijn met allerlei heidensche en moderne ketterijen, nog met een grijntje respekt moesten behandelen?

Let toch even op zulk even oppervlakkig als onzinig geschrijf als het volgende:

"Om nu terug te keeren naar Philadelphia, de eenzijdigheid kwam ook daar ter sprake, vooral in verband met haar consequentie. Het moge den lezers interesseeren, dat de opmerking werd gemaakt, dat Hoeksema en Danhof in hetzelfde bed komen te liggen als de Arminiaan. De broeders, als ze dit lezen, zullen zich misschien de oogen uitwrijven, hoe? zij? zij, wars van alle Arminianisme, zij terecht gekomen in een Arminiaansch bed? Ja, dat staat er en dat werd gezegd. De Arminiaan toch doet de eene lijn van den Bijbel geen recht: de souvereiniteit Gods, en de veroordeelde broeders van 1924 doen de andere lijn van den Bijbel geen recht: de verantwoordelijkheid van den mensch. Beide partijen komen dus te liggen in het bed van eenzijdigheid. Noch de een, noch de ander is op het gezelschap van zulk een slaapkamer raad gesteld, maar moeten is ook wat. En als het bed groot genoeg is, dan wordt Karl Barth er ook ingestopt en gelegd naast Herman Hoeksema, want deze beiden zeggen feitelijk, dat "the essence of revelation is the receipt of the individual."

Waarom zou men toch in ernstig debat treden met iemand, die blijkbaar niet weet, wat hij zegt? Vooral het laatste doet sterk vermoeden, dat hij noch van Barth noch van mij eenige studie heeft gemaakt.

Philosophische eieren! Drie is vijf! Laat hem toch

zijn eigen philosophische eieren opeten!

Ik drijf openlijk den spot met zulk armzalig gedoe!

Slechts op één punt wil ik wijzen om aan te toonen, hoe weinig Ds. Van Halsema's schrijven te vertrouwen is.

Hij schrijft:

"Toen het bezwaarschrift van den kerkeraad van Kellogsville, Michigan, ter classicale tafel lag en toegelicht werd door Ds. M. M. Schans, klonk het telkens van de zijde der broeders, tegen wier leeringen bezwaar werd gemaakt: 'Schans moet andere teksten hebben.' Die uitdrukking klinkt ons, na achttien jaren, nog eigenaardig in de ooren ja, vreemd. Ze is teekennend. Ze spreekt boekdeelen. 'Andere teksten'—alsof de aangevoerde Schriftuurplaatsen niet evengoed deel uit maakten van de openbaring Gods."

Ik vraag: weet Van Halsema nog niet, dat er nooit een verzoekschrift van *den kerkeraad van Kellogsville* ter classicale tafel of ergens anders is geweest? Weet hij niet, dat het geschrift, dat dien leugenachtigen titel droeg, nooit door den kerkeraad van Kellogsville is aangenomen, maar verworpen?

Het wordt dan wel tijd, dat hij de dingen eens onderzoekt.

Ik vraag nog eens: weet Van Halsema niet, dat hij een leugenachtige voorstelling geeft van de zaak, als hij afgaat op iets, dat hem nog in de ooren klinkt en den Wachterlezers wijsmaakt, dat wij sommige teksten verwerpen, als niet evengoed tot Gods Woord behoorend als andere teksten?

Meer philosophische eieren!

Ik heb destijds bedoeld geschrift van Schans (niet van zijn kerkeraad) beantwoord door voor te lezen, wat ik op schrift gesteld had. Dat stuk is nog in mijn bezit. Het eenigste, wat ik daarin vinden kan, dat zoo verdraaid in de ooren van den Philadelphischen filosoof kan naklinken, is het volgende:

"En als we daar dan bij bedenken, dat Schans de leer der verkiesing getoetst wil hebben aan zulke teksten als Deut. 29:29, Ezech. 33:11, etc. dan beklemmt de vrees ons het hart, dat Schans de leer is toegedaan, die door onze vaders te Dordt verworpen werd."

Het is wel duidelijk, wat wij bedoelden. Wij verkondigden in die speech zeker niet, dat wij sommige teksten niet tot Gods Woord rekenden, maar eenvoudig, dat men alle stukken der leer niet aan alle teksten kan toetsen.

En als Van Halsema dit destijds niet heeft begrepen, dan lag dit eenvoudig aan zijn beperkt bevattingsvermogen.

Maar dat de broederlijke liefde blijve!

Ja, ja!

H. H.

Correspondentie

1. Van B. J. M. van Redlands Californië ontving ik een vraag over het gebed, die ik zoo spoedig mogelijk hoop te beantwoorden. Een beetje geduld, s.v.p.

2. Ik heb ook nog twee ingezonden stukken ontvangen, die ik eigenlijk niet mag plaatsen, omdat ze tweemaal zoo lang zijn, als ze mogen zijn. Herhaaldelijk heeft de Standard Bearer er aan herinnerd, dat ingezonden stukken tot duizend woorden beperkt moeten zijn. Zoodra er echter genoeg ruimte is, hoop ik ze te plaatsen. Intusschen zij men nog eens aan regel herinnerd.

H. H.

Jesus Delivers

Radio Address of Oct. 25, over W. L. A. V.
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Salvation has often popularly, yet not inaptly, been defined as that work of God, whereby we are delivered from the greatest evil, and made partakers of the highest good. The greatest evil is our sin and death, our guilt and pollution, our damnableness before God and our incapability of doing anything that is pleasing to Him, our being children of wrath and our separation from God. And the highest good is usually called "eternal life" in the Scriptures. And "eternal life" is not merely unending existence after this present life, but it is the highest possible form of life, and of the most perfect and intimate fellowship of friendship with the ever blessed God on the plane of heavenly perfection. To be delivered from the guilt of sin and to be clothed with perfect righteousness; to be liberated from the bondage of sin and to be made unchangeably holy; to be quickened out of death and to be made heir of eternal life in God's tabernacle,—that is salvation. And when we say that Jesus saves, we mean that He accomplishes all the work that is required to raise us out of the depths of this greatest evil into the glory of the highest good.

Now, for practical reasons we may distinguish this whole work of salvation into two parts: we may speak of the work of salvation that is performed *for us*, outside of us and *in our behalf*; and the work of salvation that is wrought *upon us* and *within us*. Of the former we spoke in our previous lecture. It is the work of redemption. Christ finished it by His perfect obedience on the cross. By it our sins are blotted out, our state before God is changed from that of guilt into perfect and everlasting righteous-

ness. God's justice is satisfied and we are reconciled unto Him. That atoning work of Christ is the basis of all the rest of the work of salvation. By it He obtained for us the right to be delivered from the dominion of sin and the power of death, and the right to eternal life. But we must still speak of the work of salvation performed within us and upon us. This is the work of our actual deliverance. The question that must be answered here is: how do we become actual partakers of the salvation Christ merited for us by His perfect obedience? How do we receive the forgiveness of sin and the righteousness of God in Christ? And how are we delivered from the power of sin so that we become servants of righteousness? In a word: how does the sinner that is dead in sin and misery become a living child of God, rejoicing in all the blessings of salvation Christ merited for him?

Let us approach the answer to this question by saying that we must *come to Christ*. Of this we read often in the Scriptures. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." Isa. 45: 22. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea come, and buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." Isa. 55:1-3. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Is. 55:7. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. 11:28. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink." John 7:37. The man that prepared the supper, and bade many, sent out his servant with the call: "Come; for all things are now ready." Luke 14:17. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Rev. 22:17.

Yes, indeed, we must come to Jesus, in order to be saved, and coming to Him we must receive out of Him all that is necessary unto our salvation. For all our salvation is in Him. In the Christ of the Scriptures Who is the Son of God come into the flesh, Who was born of the virgin Mary, Who tabernacled among us, and revealed unto us the Father; Who died

on the accursed tree for our transgressions, and was raised on the third day for our justification; Who was glorified and exalted at the right hand of God and received the promise of the Holy Ghost; Who poured out that Spirit into the Church, and in the Spirit returned unto His own,—in that Christ is all our salvation. In Him is light and life, knowledge and wisdom, righteousness and sanctification. In Him are all the blessings of grace: He is the bread of life, which we must eat, and “if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever.” John 6:48, 49. Therefore, He could say: “he that cometh to me shall never hunger.” John 6:35. He is the water of life, and could truly say: “he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” John 6:35; 37, 38. And the apostle Paul writes of this “Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption.” It is, therefore, of his fulness that we have all received “and grace for grace.” John 1:16. Even as the light that dispels the darkness in your home when you turn the switch is not originally in the light bulb that distributes the light, but in the power that flows into your home from the central power plant, so the light that dispels the darkness of sin in your soul is in Christ. And even as your home must be properly wired and connected with that central power plant, if you are to have light in the house, so your heart must be connected with the Christ of the Scriptures, if it is to be filled with the blessings of salvation. There is death in you, but life in Him. There is unrighteousness in you, but righteousness in Him. There is darkness in your soul, but there is light in Him. Come, therefore, to Jesus to eat and to drink, and your soul shall live.

But here two important questions arise that must be answered. The first of these is: what does it mean to “come to Jesus?” And the second, no less significant than the first, is: how does a sinner come to Christ? As to the first question, we may remark, first of all, that in some circles the words “come to Jesus” are frequently used without paying any attention to their profound spiritual meaning, and thus have been coined into a superficial slogan, devoid of any real significance. The impression is often given that to come to Jesus is something which any sinner can accomplish at will, at any time, and at a moment’s notice. But what is the implication of this act? What does a man do, when he “comes to Jesus?” Surely, we understand that there is a figure in the words. We cannot come to Jesus bodily, and if we could such coming would be quite vain and fruitless. The Lord is raised, and He is gone into the heavens. The only Jesus we know is the Christ of the Scriptures, and the only way we can have contact with Him and come to Him is through the Scriptures. To come to Jesus surely means to come to the Scrip-

tures. But even so, the mere coming to the Bible, so that we read it, study it, hear it preached and learn about Jesus revealed in it is not the same as coming to Jesus. Not a physical, not an intellectual coming to Jesus is meant, but a spiritual act of faith. And we must ask: what is implied in that spiritual act by which one comes to Jesus and is received by Him?

Four elements may be distinguished in the act of coming to Jesus. These four elements I may denote by the terms: contrition, recognition, aspiration, and reception or acceptance. Let me say a few words about each of these four elements. Contrition is the first step on the way to Jesus. The sinner, who is of himself dead in sin, acknowledges that he is devoid of all good, of righteousness, truth, holiness knowledge, wisdom, life; and that he is filled with darkness, corruption, the lie and rebellion against God; he is sorry after God, not because of the consequences of his sin, but because of the horror that he has sinned and does sin against God; and he humbles himself in true penitence. The second step is recognition. Over against his own emptiness of all good and fulness of corruption, the sinner beholds the Lord Jesus Christ in all the fulness of His grace. He recognizes Him as the bread and the water of life, as the One in Whom is righteousness, wisdom, knowledge, sanctification, life, and complete redemption. Closely connected with the last step on the way to Jesus is the third, that of aspiration or longing. Having discovered and confessed his own emptiness and Christ’s fulness, the sinner desires Christ. He hungers and thirst after righteousness, forgiveness of sin, deliverance from the dominion of corruption, light and life. And realizing that they are all in Christ, and in Him alone, He longs for Christ Himself. He would feign possess Him, lay hold on Him, embrace Him, and call Him his Saviour and Lord. But there is still the fourth element in the coming to Jesus, that of reception or acceptance. It is not enough to remain standing afar, looking at Jesus, and longing after Him. There are, indeed, many that approach thus far, but hesitate to take the last step, and to appropriate the Christ for themselves. They do not really come to Jesus. They always hesitate. They never rejoice in their salvation. And this may not be. We must come to Jesus. And to come to Him, finally and completely, we must once more look at Him as He is revealed to us in the Scriptures. We must hear Him call those that hunger and thirst after righteousness, the poor in spirit, the mourning, the weary and heavy laden; and we must believe His Word, promising them complete satisfaction, the riches of the kingdom of heaven, comfort and rest; and finally, recognizing that we are those whom He calls, and that, therefore, those promises are for us, we must take confidence and lay hold upon the Christ of the Scriptures, so that we may gladly confess

with the Heidelberg Catechism, that it is our only comfort in life and in death that we belong to our faithful Saviour Jesus Christ, with body and soul, for time and eternity! We have come to Jesus!

But how does anyone thus come to the Christ of the Scriptures? It is at this point that we must be quite specific, in order to maintain the truth that Jesus actually saves. Perhaps, we may state without fear of contradiction that the sinner can come to Jesus only by grace. He can do nothing of himself. He is saved by grace. Yet, it was proved more than once that even this statement is not sufficient to avoid the possibility of misunderstanding and error. The question must rather be put, whether in coming to Jesus the sinner is first or Christ. Is it thus, perhaps, that the very will and power to come to Jesus is all the fruit of grace, but that it depends upon the will of the sinner whether or not he receives this grace to come to Christ? Is it true, that Jesus is willing to save the sinner, but that the question whether he actually will be saved is contingent upon the will of the sinner to be saved? Must we present the matter of salvation as if Christ is ready to receive the sinner, earnestly begs him to come to Him, offers him all the necessary grace to come and drink of the water of life freely, but that Jesus can do no more, and is unable to save him if the sinner refuses to receive His grace? Is it correct to present the matter of salvation as if Jesus stands at the door of the heart and knocks, but is dependent upon the will of the sinner to open the door, because the key of that door is on the inside? Does Jesus throw out the lifeline to struggling seamen, that must needs perish if they refuse to take hold of the line?

God forbid! First of all, let us consider that, if such were the case, no sinner could be saved, for the simple reason that no man can of himself come to Jesus, or even will to come unto Him. Salvation is deliverance from the guilt and the dominion of sin, and the sinner is willingly in the power of sin. He is not drowning and struggling to be saved, but he is spiritually dead, and he will not be saved. He loves sin and hates righteousness. He loves darkness rather than light. He may probably be willing to escape the punishment of sin; he may be afraid of hell, and he may be desirous of going to a heaven of his own imagination. But he will not be saved from sin, and he will never receive, still less ask for grace to be converted. If nothing is done to him, he will surely reject Christ. And if the reception of grace on his part depends on the choice of his will, he will resist to the very end. To be sure, whosoever will may come and take of the water of life freely, but the will to come is already the fruit of grace: to the natural man the very water of life is nauseating. Secondly, and in close connection with the preceding, it must be

evident, that if the matter of salvation depended at all upon the choice of the unregenerated sinner, the statement "Jesus Saves" cannot be true. He may be willing to save, but actually He is powerless to deliver the sinner, because of the perversion of the will of man. But the angel said to Joseph that His name should be called Jesus, not because He is willing to save His people from their sin, but most positively because He *shall save* them! Jesus saves! That means, not only that He merited salvation for us by the death of the cross, but also that He actually delivers from sin and gives us eternal life, not because the sinner first wills, but in spite of his unwillingness and resistance. And thirdly, the doctrine that the reception of grace to come to Jesus is dependent on and subsequent to the will and choice of the natural man is contrary to the plain teaching of Holy Writ. For the Bible teaches that "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." Rom. 9:16. Scripture declares that we are saved by grace, through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God. Eph. 2:8. God, the God of our salvation in Christ and not the sinner, is first, for "God, who is rich in mercy for the great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ: by grace are ye saved." Eph. 2:4, 5. To the murmuring Jews in Capernaum the Lord says: "No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." And again: "Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father." John 6:44, 65. And, on the other hand, it is equally certain that "all that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37.

The answer to the question, therefore, which we raised above is: not the sinner, but Jesus is first. Always our act of coming to Him is the fruit of His saving work of drawing us. He enters our hearts, not because we open the door unto Him, but because He has received from the Father both the right and the power to enthrone Himself in the hearts of all His own. He calls by His Word and Spirit, and we hear; He regenerates us, and we live; He opens our eyes, and we see; He brings us to repentance, and we repent; He gives us a new spiritual appetite, and we hunger and thirst after righteousness; He gives us the will to come to Him, and we come. Always He is first, and because He is first, it is certainly true that He shall save His people from their sins. Jesus surely saves!

In this truth there is real joy and a sure consolation for all that do come to Him. What comfort and assurance would there be in the knowledge that you once came to Jesus, if in last analysis your coming

to Him was your own work, contingent upon the choice of your own will? May not that same will of yours that accepted Him yesterday decide today to reject Him? Or what assurance can you have that He will receive you, if your coming to Him was nothing but the decision of your own will? Now, however, it is quite different. For your coming to Him was the fruit of His first coming to you. Your acceptance of Jesus means that He accepted you. And so, in your coming to Him you have the assurance that He accepted you. Even your first prayer, though it were nothing but the prayer of the publican, was first wrought in your heart by the marvellous power of His grace, and in the prayer you have the assurance that He will hear you! For Jesus surely saves!

Yes, indeed, come to Jesus all ye that labor and are heavy laden, for He will surely give you rest. Come unto Him for He will in no wise cast you out. Come to Him as the Bread of life, and He will surely nourish you unto life eternal. Come to Him as the sole Fountain of the water of life, and He will slake your thirst forever. It never happened, and it never shall happen that anyone came to Jesus, and was not received. The Lord Himself assures us, that him that cometh to Him He will in no wise cast out. John 7:37. This means, positively, that if you truly come unto Him for the forgiveness of sin, He will say to you: Your sins are forgiven you; that if you approach Him for righteousness, He will clothe you with His own everlasting righteousness; that if you come to Him for the knowledge of God, He will surely illuminate your understanding, darkened through sin by nature, by His Spirit and Word; that if you seek from Him liberation from the dominion of sin, He will cut the shackles of corruption that keep you bound, and set you free. Come unto Him, and He will impart Himself to you. Jesus never fails. He surely saves.

The reason for this certainty is evident. The Lord says: "All that the Father giveth unto me shall come to me." There lies the secret of this certain acceptance. Christ came to do the Father's will, and it is the Father's will that all He gives to Jesus, to the very last one, shall be saved. For they are not a mere multitude whose number is arbitrary, but they constitute one whole, the glorious Church, the one Body of Christ through which the one glory of the one God in the one Christ must shine forth in all its manifold perfection of beauty. When that Body is all gathered and perfected, each saint will occupy his own place in the whole, and serve his own purpose, reflecting in his own way the glory of God in Christ, and singing his own part in the grand harmony of the mighty choir that will forever cause the new creation to rebound with the praises of the Most High. Of that glorious choir not one voice may be lost, for it would mar the beauty and harmony of the whole. Hence,

it is absolutely sure that all that the Father giveth unto Jesus shall come unto Him. And for the same reason it is equally sure that Christ will never cast out those that come unto Him, but that He will save them even unto the end. Jesus never fails!

H. H.

Balaam the Son of Beor

The people of Israel, after their victory on the east of the Jordan, fell back to the plains of Moab, opposite Jericho. And here the journeyings of the Israelites may be said to have terminated. From this point, in the following spring, they crossed the Jordan and entered the promised land.

The near approach of the people of Israel to Moab and Midian greatly alarmed the kings of these peoples, and, not daring to engage them in battle, they sent messengers to Balaam, a celebrated Chaldean diviner, begging that he would come and curse Israel for them. Balaam took counsel of God on the matter; for he had knowledge of the true God, and had evidently received at times divine revelations. But God would not suffer him to go and curse Israel. When Balaam's refusal was made known to the king of Moab, he sent other and more honorable messengers, with a promise of still richer rewards. Balaam longed to go; for "he loved the wages of unrighteousness." Still, he again asks counsel of God. And God now ordered him to go—in agreement with his desire. Nevertheless, what the Lord should say to him, that only shall he speak.

So Balaam went with the princes of Moab. It was on this journey that the angel of the Lord withstood him twice, and threatened to destroy him. It was at this time that the very ass on which he rode reproved him with a man's voice, and "forbade the madness of the prophet." Still, he was told to finish his journey; but under a strict injunction that he should speak that, and that only, which the Lord should say. Arrived among the Moabites, he was taken by Balak, the king of Moab unto the latter's high places, where he might have a view of the camp of Israel, and, in repeated instances offered up costly sacrifices, while he went aside to ask counsel of God. But in every instance and contrary to his inmost desire to curse the people of Israel, he blessed them. "How shall I curse those who God has not cursed? And how shall I defy those whom the Lord has not defied? Who can count the dust of Jacob, or number the forth part of Israel? Behold, I have received

commandment to bless Israel; and he is blessed, and I cannot reverse it."

It is this man Balaam that forms the subject of this essay. We arrange our materials under the two points: (1) The man as such; (2) the significance of his prophetic activity for the people of Israel.

(1) Balaam is a very remarkable personage. He could therefore not fail to occasion many dissertations. Opinions have always been divided as to the character of this man. To some he was a wizard and a false prophet and as such a thoroughly profligate character, a child of darkness, wholly given over to the worship of idols, who was destitute of any susceptibility for the true religion, and was compelled by God, against his conscious will, to give utterance to blessing upon Israel instead of curses. By others he was held to be a child of (special) grace, and a genuine and true prophet, who simply fell through covetousness and ambition. A third group of interpreters reject both these views as untenable in this exclusive form. It is most important to bear in mind, they say, that we are not considering a fixed character, but one passing through a change, and engaged in a serious conflict. There was a contrast between the man Balaam in the ordinary state of his mind, or his habitual tendency, and the same man in his quickened state, in his striving after ideal heights; between the man in his everyday and in his Sunday life. There was in Balaam, so runs the reasoning, two tendencies, an evil and a good or ideal. But a fissure opened between these two states of the man's soul, which widened at last into a broad chasm, a permanent contradiction, with the result that finally the evil tendency and nature in him triumphed over the ideal.

According to this view, Balaam, at least at the outset, was neither wholly bad nor wholly good but a mixture of both good and bad, a combination of two spiritually diverse selves or natures, involved in a mortal combat from which the one self—the evil self—finally emerged triumphant to the ruin and everlasting doom of Balaam.

Now if the theory of common grace were fact and truth, this view would be meriting some careful consideration. For according to this theory, the totally depraved sinner is not totally depraved at all. He cannot be. He must necessarily be, according to this theory a combination of two such natures or selves, the one inclined to all evil and the other inclined to all that is holy.

Balaam was no true child of God. Nor was he a combination of two such natures as just described. If he were, he would be a true child of God.

Balaam was a child of Satan, thus a thoroughly bad man. There was no grace in him of any sort. (There is, assuredly, but one kind of grace). This is the conclusion to which we are driven by what the

sacred narrator tells us of the man. To begin with, he lusted after material riches, after what the scriptures call "wages of unrighteousness". He was a man with affections set wholly upon the things below. But this is not all. So bent was he to gain possession of these things that he stood ready to curse a people of whom he knew that it was the blessed of the Lord. Nor is this all. Vexed because he had been prevented from bringing himself to curse Israel, he counseled the Moabites and Midianites to send their daughters into the camp of Israel to debauch the young men, and draw them into idolatry; feeling assured that this would be the most likely way to bring down upon them the curses of Heaven. And his artifice succeeded entirely. The very next account we have of the Israelites is, that many of them had been drawn away by these outlandish women, not only to commit whoredom in the literal physical sense, but to be present at their pagan sacrifices, and worship their devil gods. To say that Balaam was thoroughly unscrupulous is putting it mild. Fact is that he recoiled from nothing to achieve his objective. Nothing was too low for him to stoop to, if only he might come into the actual possession of the coveted prize.

How powerful his lusting was after the proffered riches—so powerful that it paralyzed his faculty of reasoning—may be seen from the treatment that he afforded the beast upon which he rode, when the latter reproved him with the voice of a man. Three times the ass starts back affrighted at the sight of the angel of the Lord standing in the way with a drawn sword in His hand, threatening death. And as many times it is beaten by its rider on account of its failure to proceed. Thus at first it starts aside into the field; then when the angel bars the path between the vineyard walls, it presses closely against the wall, thereby crushing the foot of the prophet; and then at last when it must pass through a narrow path, in which there was no room to turn either to the right hand or to the left, with the dread form right before it, the ass falls upon his knees under the rider. Balaam is now the more angry. He wants to be on his way and to reach his destination. The coveted riches might otherwise elude his grasp. It doesn't occur to him that the strange behaviour of the beast is of the Lord and bespeaks the perverseness of his way before Him. Balaam's greed has rendered him insensible to the speech of God's signs. As to the speaking of the ass with the voice of a man, "What have I done unto thee that thou hast smitten me these three times?"—so far is this speaking from bringing Balaam to his senses, that he is now beside himself with rage. He would that there were a sword in his hand, for now would he kill it. Only after he is told by the faithful animal that it has never before behaved in this strange way, does it seem to dawn upon him, that some very unusual cir-

cumstances must be at work. So low has this man sunk, to that extent has he been given over to a mind devoid of judgment, through his lust of filthy gain, to do things that are wicked, that the very beast upon which he rides is made to rebuke him. That he might be enriched, he would consign a whole people—the very people of God—to the place of eternal desolation.

On the other hand, it seems that there is much to say in favor of the man Balaam.

"Come now therefore, I pray thee." Such is the request of the king of Moab to Balaam," Come now, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them . . ." Balaam replies, "Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as the Lord shall speak unto me." Balaam brings the request before the Lord. The Lord tells him that he shall not go with them; and this is precisely what he tells the princes of Moab.

But Balak will not be put off. He sends princes more honorable and with promises of greater riches. The king is persistent. "Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming to me: for I will promote thee unto very great honor . . ." Attend now to Balaam's answer. "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of my God, to do less or more." Once in the king's presence, Balaam says to Him, "Lo, I am come unto thee. Have I any power at all to say anything? The word that God putteth in my mouth that shall I speak." Sorely provoked at hearing Balaam bless the people of Israel instead of cursing them, Balak says to him, "What hast thou done unto me?" Balaam replies, "must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord putteth into my mouth?" I have sinned," says he to the angel of the Lord, who obstructs his way, "I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now therefore, if it pleases thee, I will get me back again." He calls the Lord *his* God, Nu. 22:18. He closes his first discourse with the remarkable statement, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." In his prophetic trances, there proceeds from his lips utterances such as these:

"He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them."

"How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!"

Balaam predicts the crushing of the power of all Israel's approximate and immediate enemies: the Edomites, the Amelekites, the Kenites, and the Moabites, Nu. 24:17-21. He proceeds even further than this and predicts the victory over the Assyrians and the con-

quest of Assyria by some western power. At length, his prophetic vision reaches to the utmost bounds—to Christ whose coming he foretells and to the final consummation of all things. Nu. 24:22, 25.

Verily, these reactions, doings, and sublime sentences seem to compel this conclusion: Balaam is prepared to speak the word that God puts into his mouth and this at all costs even. He declares that if Balak would give him his house full of silver and gold He cannot go beyond the word of the Lord his God. So does he subordinate his own interests to those of God and is thus a man wholly consecrated to his divine calling. His courage is great. He over and over blesses a race of men that a king—mark you, a king—wants cursed. These blessings are pronounced in the very hearing of the king. This, assuredly, takes courage. "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob," is one of his sentences, and another, "Let me die the death of the righteous". Balaam it would seem, loves God's people; and, despite his greed, his soul thirsts after God. He joys in Israel's salvation; and proclaims his blessedness. He is a man of keen insight, having broad glimpses of the truth, and a conscience awakened and his convictions of right and wrong are strong.

But let us not be deceived. Balaam, despite all these ostentations of piety, is a thoroughly bad man, a child of darkness. This is plain enough. His settled and abiding desire is to curse God's people that he might be enriched. Not being able to act upon his desire, and still craving the "reward of unrighteousness", he resorts to the satanic artifice of bringing down upon Israel the curse of God through his counseling the adversary to send his daughters into the camp of Israel, to debauch the young men, and draw them into idolatry. To say that Balaam is a child of grace is preposterous. Such craving and doings are simply inconsistent with grace. He thirsts not after God but solely after gold and worldly honor and position. He loves not God's people at all but thoroughly hates them. How otherwise could he even for a moment entertain the thought of putting this people under the ban of God. This is precisely what he would have done, if God had not turned his curses into a blessing. Deut. 23:5. In the true sense, he cares nothing at all about God's will but is bent on following solely his own corrupt inclinations. He wants his own way, not God's. This certainly is plainly evident. Though he knows that God blesses Israel and that therefore this people is blessed indeed, in that, according to his—Balaam's—own declaration (Nu. 23:19), "God is not a man, that he should lie," he yet, in the madness of his lust, invites the messengers of Balak to remain overnight, assuring them that in the night he will receive instructions from Jehovah, as if God, being, as He is, for His people, could possibly instruct Balaam to curse them. Even his very making known his request to

God, is a terrible insult to God. Balaam thus presents in doubt, what he knows to be certain. What is more, he plainly indicates to the messengers that, as far as he, Balaam, is concerned, there is nothing that he would rather do than to curse Israel. He thus deliberately encourages Balak to send other messengers, and this though the Lord has now told him, "Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse this people: for they are blessed." (Nu. 22:12).

The other messengers arrive and now Balaam has the amazing audacity to repeat his request to God. His deceitful heart allows him to hope that Jehovah will at last grant him his wish. Gold is the supreme good with him. He asks the messengers to tarry another night and thus intimates that he deems it possible that Jehovah will decide differently this time. The Lord does not now permit but commands Balaam to go with them. Thus the irony of divine providence goes on, giving him over to a mind devoid of judgment through the lust of his heart that the measure of his iniquity might be filled. There is thus no actual discrepancy between the command to go and the previous prohibition to remain. The prohibition was to go and curse Israel and in the command to go he is still forbidden to curse. Yet, even in his going he hopes against hope that his wish to curse will be granted him. His way therefore continues in increasing measure to be perverse before the Lord. And so the Lord goes forth to withstand him that he may be wholly without excuse. At the sight of the angel of the Lord, terror and dread overwhelm him. In his fear for his life, he confesses that he has sinned and expresses a willingness to go back again. But God says to him, "Go—with the men. Once in Balak's presence, he affirms that he will speak the word that the Lord puts into his mouth. But this cannot be cited in his favor. Realizing that in himself he has no power to say anything at all, and fearing that the Lord will turn his cursing into a blessing, he only means to warn Balak beforehand for his, Balaam's very own safety. Balak must not become angry with him, should he presently hear him blessing Israel, for "have I now any power at all to say anything?" Nu. 22:38. Always Balaam's sole concern is what he considers to be his own well-being and safety. He thinks only of himself.

Balaam continues to go from bad to worse. He now attempts by magical art, (Nu. 24:1), to control the purpose of God and to induce the Lord by his enchantments to put into his mouth the desired word of cursing, and this in connection with thrice seven altars and thrice seven oxen and seven rams which he, on as many different occasions and in as many different places, orders Balak to build and to prepare him. He thus tries to win God over for his diabolical designs through gifts, nay worse, through mock penitence and contrition and praise of God and a mock confession of

all the truths symbolized by the burnt-offering. This, he thinks, ought to carry weight with God. "I have prepared", says he to the Lord, "seven altars, and I have offered upon every altar a bullock and a ram." But the Lord puts a word into his mouth, and says, "Return unto Balak and thus shalt thou speak". (Nu. 23:4-6).

"And when Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to seek enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness". With what purpose is not stated. Perhaps this new move represents an attempt on his part to shake off the influence of the Spirit in order that he may speak as *he* pleases and curse Israel. It certainly can betoken no true change of heart. Whatever the reason, Balaam now knows definitely the will of Jehovah. If in the beginning he had hoped that Jehovah might allow Himself to be induced to curse His people, he now sees that this hope is utterly vain. The statement, "And when Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel," indicates that what he all along had attempted is not merely to get the Lord to allow him, Balaam, to curse Israel, but to induce the *Lord* to curse Israel through Balaam. Yet He would have had no objection to the Lord's blessing Israel, if, in doing so, the Lord would only have instructed Balaam to speak the word of *his* choice—the word of cursing. This is all that he at first may have requested. It is all that Balak had asked of him, to wit, that he, *Balaam*, curse Israel. The pagan king seemed to think that this would be sufficient. But the request had not been granted. "Thou shalt not curse this people: for it is blessed" i.e., 'I have, am, blessing it.' Balaam now must have reasoned that if he was to succeed in inducing the Lord to instruct him to curse Israel, it was necessary that he turn the *Lord* against His people. This he subsequently tried to do through his enchantments.

Assuredly, Balaam is perhaps the most despicable personage to appear upon the pages of Holy Writ. He is the kind of a man whom we read about at Heb. 6:4-6, a man once enlightend, having tasted of the heavenly gift, made partaker of the Holy Ghost, having tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, and yet reprobated. Assuredly, we need not resort to the theory of common grace to explain Balaam. His prayer, and sacrificing, his penitence and contrition, his confession and praise—in a word, all the so-called good works of the man were—and who will have the courage to deny this—glittering sins and thus an abomination in the sight of God.

But if reprobation can go hand in hand in a man with so much that is seemingly good and admirable, what believer then can be assured of his salvation. Let us not be confused by our study of Balaam. True, Balaam was a man of keen insight into the truth; he

was a true prophet of God in the sense that God spake His word through him; he was contrite, he praised and prayed, he sacrificed and counseled with God; but one thing he would not do, that is, forsake his sin—mark you—forsake his sins. He continued to walk in his abominations, adding insult to injury, until finally, overtaken by the judgment of God, he was destroyed. His whole religion was vain, an abomination. There was not an atom of grace—of holiness—in it. To this man Balaam there was but one self—the wicked self.

But this is not written to deject the truly penitent. And it won't. But we can take warning here. That a man prays and sacrifices, goes to church and builds churches, is yet no sign that he is true believer. But his bringing forth fruits worthy of repentance is. The ungodly will go to church but they will not forsake their sins. Balaam would even go to heaven, if the Lord would have him there. "Let me die the death of the righteous." Indeed! But he wouldn't put away his abominations.

Whether a man's religion—his prayers and sacrificing, his praise and confession—is good or bad, depends upon the motives—the kind of heart—from which it springs. The element of motive and purpose enters in here.

In a following writing we will explain the significance of Balaam for the people of Israel and for the church in general.

G. M. O.

De Roemende Koning

(Psalm 60)

De historische achtergrond van dezen psalm wordt ons in bijzonderheden geschetst. David heeft dit gouden kleinood ons nagelaten vanwege een glansrijke overwinning op zijn vijanden. Wij mogen zelfs spreken van overwinningen, in het meervoud. Hij was naar het Noorden en naar het Westen getogen om de Syriërs te slaan. Ook had de Heere dit vijandige volk in zijn hand gegeven. De slag was geslagen tegen die vijanden van Damascus af tot aan de groote rivier Eufraat toe. Doch terwijl David zijn slag sloeg in het Noorden en in het Westen waren de Edomieten verraderlijk van uit het zuiden in het ontbloote land gevallen en hadden vreeselijk huisgehouden onder de vrouwen, kinderen en oude mensen. Smartelijk klaagt David daarvan in de verzen 3-5. Oogenblikkelijk had David zijn twee krijgsoversten Joab en Abisai met een sterk leger en met versnelde pas naar het Zuiden gezonden. En in het Zoutdal had Joab groote wraak genomen. Hij bleef er zes maanden om al wat mannelijk was

onder de Edomieten met het zwaard uit te roeien. En te zamen met Abisai waren er 18,000 van de hatelijke Edomieten gevallen. Van die achttien duizend versloeg Joab er twaalf duizend. En de geheele achttien duizend worden in II Sam. 8:13 aan David toegerekend omdat hij de Koning Israels was.

Wel, Joab kwam weder. Abisai was alreede teruggekeerd. En toen de krijgsoverste met zijn leger te Jeruzalem aankwam is David gaan dichten en zingen en spelen op 't melodieus instrument. Er kwam een "lelie der getuigenis". Want zóó moet het "Susan eduth" vertaald worden. En de gansche kerk der eeuwen zingt hem zijn zegezing na.

Bij aandachtige studie van dezen psalm merken we op, dat de vervulling ervan gezocht moet in den hof van Jozef. Na het bange Golgotha zingt de Christus Gods van de groote slagen die Hij mocht slaan vooral tegen den hatelijken Esau. Want Edom is Ezau. En Jezus is Jacob.

Bij aandachtige studie: let op die banier van vers 6 en de bevrijding der "beminden" van vers 7. Doch vooral de verzen 9-11 wijzen ons den weg naar Christus Triumfater. Daar deelt Jezus het grondgebied; daar juicht Hij van de van God gegevenen.

Wie denkt niet aan Golgotha bij het lezen van vers 3? Messias klaagt: O God, Gij hadt ons verstooten, Gij hadt ons gescheurd. Gij zijt toornig geweest: keer weder tot ons!

Toegegeven dat David hier het oog heeft op al de smart van de handen der Edomieten ondervonden; doch kan dat ooit vers 3 uitputten? Gij weet beter. Er is slechts een flauwe vergelijking mogelijk. Vele jaren later is dit vervuld in Jezus. Daar heeft Edom zijn slag geslagen en zich gewroken op Jacob. Daar is Jezus door God verstooten zooals niemand tevoren of later ooit verstooten is geweest. God heeft den Messias van Zich geworpen in eeuwige Godsverlatingen. Toen is psalm 60 gezongen in bange duisternis. Terwijl Edom met flikkerend zwaard rondom den kruispaal scheurde en verbrijzelde. De verzenen van Jacob werden verbrijzeld. Edom had zijn dag.

Doch het was de Drieëenige God die achter Edom stond. Dat beseft David en dat weet Jezus. Daarom zegt hij: Gij hadt ons gescheurd; Gij zijt toornig geweest! O die toorn van God! David ervoer er iets van. Jezus heeft met den last van dien toorn geworsteld, doch voelde zich weggedrukt tot in de diepten, de peillooze diepten der eeuwen eeuwigheden! Daar behaagde het de Heere Hem te verbrijzelen. Doch vanuit die diepten hebben wij een schreeuw gehoord. Die schreeuw begint zooals deze psalm: O God!

Nooit heeft Jezus nagelaten om te smeeken tot Zijn God. Mocht Hij Hem niet langer Zijn Vader noemen, dan zal Hij roepen tot Zijn God. De ervaring, de zoete ervaring van een VadersZoon te zijn moest Hij derven: gelijk de groote Vreemdeling van Galilea

moet Hij schreeuwen tot Zijn God. Daar zit de ervaring in van voor den Rechter te staan.

En al wat Messias hoorde van boven was: De eeuwige Dood! Ach! "Want de liefde is sterk als de dood. De Goddelijke ijver der jaloezie is hard als het graf; hare kolen zijn vurige kolen: vlammen van Jehovah!" Als ge commentaar wenscht voor dat vreeselijke Schriftwoord, moet ge eigenlijk naar Jezus gaan. Hij is door die Eigen-Liefde of Zelf-Liefde Gods verteerd met een eeuwige verteering. Een swakke floers of schaduw van dat Golgotha trok over het Zuiden des lands vooraleer Joab zijn zwaard trok. En als David die floers ziet, klaagt hij van verstooting, verscheuring en van den toorn Gods. Doch vraagt het aan Jezus, gaat staan bij den kruispaal: zwijgt en huivert als ge in den donker de schreeuw van Messias hoort. Daar ligt Jacob onder: Hij worstelt met Zijn God. En Edom lacht zijn schaterlach. Doch niet voor lang. Die schaterlach zal voor eeuwig verstommen in stroomen van bloed in 't Zoutdal. "Welgelukzalig zal hij zijn, die uwe kinderkens grijpen en aan de steenrots verpletteren zal!" Die hier moeite heeft met den zang van den Heiligen Geest, doet wel om naar het later getuigenis te luisteren; en dan met verschuldigten eerbied: "en de steenrots was Christus!" Mirakelen van God: voor den een is het de Rots die van geen wankelen weet; op dien Rots mocht men wonen en zingen. Voor den ander is Hij tot verbrijzeling en verplettering. De kinderen Edoms werden verpletterd. Doch voor wien Golgotha de onuitsprekelijke gave is mag zingen: "He hideth my soul in the cleft of the Rock!" Wie durft zeggen: Wat doet Gij, o God?!

Nu mag Israel de smarten van Jezus vooruitlijden. Daarom leest ge: Gij hebt het land geschud, Gij hebt het gespleten! En in het volgende vers: Gij hebt Uw volk eene harde zaak doen zien: Gij hebt ons gedrenkt met zwijmelwijn! Veel later zegt Petrus: "Van welke zaligheid ondervraagd en onderzocht hebben de Profeten, die geprofeteerd hebben van de genade aan u geschied, onderzoekende op welken of hoedanigen tijd de Geest van Christus, die in hen was, beduidde en te voren getuigde *het lijden dat op Christus komen zoude*, en de heerlijkheid daarna volgende."

O ja, het lijden dat op Christus komen zou is te voren geopenbaard in het leven van Israel. Daarom kon Jezus Zijn kruis en eeuwig lijden voor de oogen van de Emmausgangers uitstellen. Leest Lucas 24:25-27.

Israel wordt geschud en ziet een harde zaak, zoodat later Jezus Zijn volk mag wijzen op de Heilige Schriftuur die Hem zoovele jaren van te voren ten voete uit deed zien, beide in Zijn lijden en heerlijkheid. Daarom zuchtte en klaagde Jozef in de put en daarom schittert Salomo in al zijn glorie op den troon van Israel.

Gij hebt Uw volk een harde zaak doen zien! Die harde zaak is veel harder geworden in de jaren die op

David gevolgd zijn. We zien Israel-Jacob-Jezus in Babel; we hooren het gekerm van Israel, dat is, Jezus, als Antiochus Epiphanes het bloed der natie doet vloeien.

Gij hebt Uw volk een harde zaak doen zien! Gaat met me naar Golgotha. Het is het gezicht van een zeer harde zaak. De teederlijk beminde Zoon die de vervulling is van al Gods lieve volk gaat onder in onbeschrijflijken weedom. Waardom hebt Gij Mij verlaten? De liefde waarmede God Zichzelf bemint heeft die harde zaak geëischt. "Sterk als de dood; en hard als het graf!"

Doch, o Goddelijk wonder! Als ik scherp mag zien; als Goddelijk licht mijn dwaze, domme, duistere oog geneest, dan zie ik dat de harde zaak van mijn schouderen glijdt en terecht komt op het arme, onschuldige Hoofd van mijn Jezus. In den donker van Jezus wordt het licht in mijn ziel. Daar verandert het lied der Kerke Gods: Gij hebt ons, Uw volk, een harde zaak doen zien, doch voor Uw volk werd die harde zaak de oorzaak van de teederste ontfermingen Gods. Jezus die weggeworpen wordt is mijn aanname! De wijn der zwijmeling is de dronk voor 't Lam. Doch wij drinken uit de beker Uwer wellusten. Hoe is dat toch ooit zoo veranderd, mijn Vader! Zijt zeer stil nu: de Engelen zullen er van zingen. Ze hebben het gehoord van vader David. "Welgelukzalig is de mensch dien de Heere de ongerechtigheid niet toerekent, en in wiens geest geen bedrog is!" De harde zaak van Israel is de harde zaak van Jezus geworden. Alleen heeft Hij de wijnpersbak van Godes toorn getreden. Voor U blijft er nu voorts liefde! Dezelfde vuurvlammen van Jehovah die Hem verteerden, zullen U tot in der eeuwigheid koesteren.

Eigenlijk liep ik mijn tekst al vooruit. Vers 6-8 zal er van spreken, neen, zingen.

David heeft in 't profetisch licht die harde zaak gezien. Doch nu jubelt hij in een ander klankgeslacht. Luistert: Maar nu hebt Gij dengenen die U vreezen, een banier gegeven, om die op te heffen vanwege de waarheid! Eigenaardig: het woord banier is hetzelfde al het woord *stang* uit de geschiedenis van Numerie 21:8, 9. Ge weet wel, de geschiedenis van die koperen slang die aan een stang gehecht moest worden om de vergiftigde kinderen Gods te genezen. En in Johannes 13:14, 15 wordt die geschiedenis verklaard. Het is dan toch de harde zaak van Golgotha die daar vooruitgeschiedde in de woestijn.

Zoo wordt Golgotha de banier voor Gods volk. Ze zullen die tot in der eeuwigheid opheffen vanwege de waarheid Gods. In de waarheid zijn de rechte lijnen, de lijnen zooals ze voor God getrokken moeten. De tegenovergestelde leugen is immers de kromme, kronkelende lijn van de slang. Alle kromme lijnen van Uwe en mijn gedrag zijn thuis gezocht bij Jezus. Daarom is op de stang een vurige slang. Jezus is

zonde gemaakt. Paulus zal U vertellen wat het beduidde: (Hij is een vloek geworden voor ons. Onbegrijpelijke liefde. Het rechtbuigen van alle lijnen werd thuisgebracht in 't lijf en de ziel van Jezus. Harde theologie van Jehova!

En 't kruis wordt de banier. We behoeven er ons niet voor te schamen. Paulus zeide: Ik schaam mij het Evangelie van Christus niet! Neen, want terwijl God boog en drukte; verbrijzelde en de vlammen van Zelf-liefde deed branden, snikte Jezus: Mijn God! Mijn God! Hij heeft Hem bemind zelfs in de oogenblikken die eeuwen duurden. Oogenblikken waarvan Hij zong: Wat hitte doet Mij branden! Wie noemde daar Jezus een vervloeking? Hoe kan een menschenkind daarvan hooren en niet op de kniën vallen in verrukking? Wie is er die niet wil instemmen met het lied: Gij hebt ons Gode gekocht met Uw bloed?

O, laat ons dan die banier opheffen. Bij het Kruis van Jezus zullen we schuilen.

Door die banier worden de beminden bevrijd. Er staat letterlijk: Opdat Uwe Davids zouden bevrijd worden. David beteekent *bemінде*! Dat is Uw naam, mijn broeder! Dat is Uw eere naam, mijn zuster! Bemінде, teederlijk bemінде van God.

Bevrijd zijn we voorts, want de sterke rechterhand van God heeft zich uitgestrekt naar het graf van Jozef. Neen, ik kan U niet meenemen. Toen God in de verrijzenis van dien Jezus, de fondamente van het nieuwe Jeruzalem schiep, mocht er geen mensch of engel bij zijn. Paulus heeft wederom het woord: "de uitnemende grootheid Zijner kracht . . . naar de werking der sterkte Zijner macht, die Hij gewrocht heeft in Christus, als Hij Hem uit de dooden heeft opgewekt en Hem heeft gezet tot Zijne rechterhand in den hemel . . ."

Daarom heeft David gebeden, toen hij zong: Geef heil door Uwe rechterhand en verhoor ons!

Zeker, zeker, God heeft in Zijn heiligdom gesproken. En toen God uitgesproken was is Jezus van vreugde opgesprongen. Leest vers 8. En wat heeft God in dat heiligdom gesproken? Dit: Het is genoeg, mijn Zoon! Alle lijnen zijn recht getrokken. Uw bloed en Uw tranen en Uw lijden zijn dierbaar in Mijn oog. Ik heb gewogen, gewogen! Kom Mijn Zoon, ge hebt dubbel ontvangen voor alle de zonden die niet van U waren en toch U geschonken zijn. Wondere, hemelsche, Goddelijke theologie!

Toen is Jezus opgesprongen van vreugde en is weer terug gegaan naar Palestina. Hij staat aan deze zijde van den Jordaan. Hij zingt Zijn overwinningslied. Ik deel Sichem en ik meet het dal van Sukkoth af. Het zijn de polen van Jacob's lijden. Waar dan ook Jezus blikte: het is alles het Zijne. Alles behoort Hem nu toe. Van eeuwigheid had God gezegd, dat de aarde gegeven zou worden aan den Zachtmoedige. Zalig zijn de zachtmoedigen, want zij zullen het aardrijk beërven! Ja, maar denkt er toch aan, dat de zachtmoedigen het ont-

wangen, enkel en alleen, omdat Jezus plaatvervangend voor hen de Zachtmoedige Zich betoonde aan dat harde, gevloekte hout des kruises. In diepten der hel was Hij de Zachtmoedige, die Gode nooit iets ongerijms toedacht.

Ja, ja, we kunnen het nu eenigzins verstaan, o Zone Davids, dat ge het zingt: Gilead is Mijn en Manassa is Mijn! Aan deze zijde van den Jordaan en aan de andere zijde: het is alles Uwe. Ge hebt het verdiend in bloedig zweet. Efraim, dat in 't Noorden lag en de sterkte was van Israel, is het geweest van Jezus, Zijn erfenis. Vanuit Juda zal Hij voortz regeeren. En de vijanden? Moab is Mijn waschpot en op den gehaten Edom, dat is, Ezau, zal ik mijn schoen werpen. Jezus zal hen ten eenemale verachten. Zelfs de vreeselijke Filistijnen zullen over Mij moeten juichen.

En zoo gaat Jezus naar de vaste stad. En dat is het hemelsche Jeruzalem.

Jeruzalem, hebt ge die blijde klanken opgevangen?

Vroeger, veel vroeger, hebben we als kinderen wel eens gelachen om den taaltrant van psalm 60. Moab is mijn waschpot! Er zit Goddelijke ironie in dit lied.

Doch we lachen nu niet meer. Vreeselijk is het om des Heeren waschpot te zijn. Hij zal Zijn heilige voeten waden in 't bloed der vijanden. Liever hooren we het Jezus zeggen: O Mijn bemінде Gilead! Gij zijt Mijne!

Een volle beek van wellust maakt hier elk in liefde dronken!

G. V.



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

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

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

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

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

The Doctrine of Christian Stewardship

In the category of Christian doctrines that of Christian Stewardship is not the most difficult to apprehend mentally. In no way does it require mental exertion to understand its fundamental principles. Neither does it require a genius to comprehend its practical significance and exercise. However, simple though this doctrine may be, I cannot think of another doctrine which is wider in scope and involves a greater portion of our Christian life.

Christian stewardship is so wide in scope that it completely covers our entire relation with respect to God, to man, to the world, to time and to eternity and to our very selves. It is the mainspring of our whole life. When, therefore, the sense of stewardship is lacking the possible good which man can do is nil, for its absence makes us self-willed, self-indulgent, self-asserting, God-forgetting. When, on the other hand, its sense is present and we feel our responsibility to it our entire life becomes God-centered.

Stewardship is the Christian's world and life view in a nutshell. It answers all questions with respect to government capital and labor, Church and the world, home-life and that in public, property and charity, and many other relative questions. For an example, the very spectre of Communism troubling every nation of the world to-day finds its root and development in the denial of stewardship. The struggle of capital and labor is caused by the rich and poor alike, both denying that they are stewards. Thus, in the life of the Church, the much debated question of New Testament tithing, as well as the ever troublesome question of good works and their merits are solved by the correct conception of stewardship. In like manner we could go on, naming the one problem after the other, all finding their solution in man being a steward.

The word "steward" is very indicative of what is implied by its concept. The word is derived from the Anglo-Saxon, "stigweard", composed of two words: "stig", meaning, house, hall or sty; and "weard" meaning: ward or guard. Hence a steward is one who has been placed over a house with the very purpose of keeping and guarding it. This, too, is the exact meaning of both the Hebrew and Greek words, employed by Scripture, denoting stewardship. Literally the words could be translated: "house-managers". Stewardship is, therefore, the management of another's business, property or other affairs.

In the study of God's Word we find that Scripture continually emphasizes that man is God's steward. We find this idea in many parables of Jesus, such as of: The Pounds, The Talents, The Unjust Steward and The Unprofitable Servants. Thus Peter, too, reminds

the Christians that they must be "good stewards of the manifold grace of God".

Since our article deals with *Christian Stewardship* we must naturally view this question solely and only from the view point of the Christian and his specific calling as such. But in passing let it be said that not only the believer, but the unbeliever as well, is divinely called and charged to be God's steward. Regardless of man being righteous or wicked, reprobate or elect his calling is that of steward.

True stewardship always presupposes that there is a lord who entrusts in the hands of one of his servants his business, with the injunction that said servant must manage the same to the profit of his lord. The same holds true when we speak of man being a steward of God. God is the Lord who has entrusted into the hands of man the government, the management of God's own house to the glory of God Himself. This house of God is the entire world with all that it contains. Since stewardship emphasizes that the entire business or house belongs to the lord, so too, with respect to man's stewardship in relation to God, everything in God's house belongs positively to God alone. In the whole world there is nothing that man can claim as his own. The whole realm of nature and all that it produces is God's. This, too, is true of man himself. All that man is and can produce belongs to God. Man with his body, time and talents, as well as his food and raiment are the sole property of God the Lord.

How could this be different? Did not God will and give to every creature, great and small, a place and purpose in His divine plan of all things. Were they not all brought forth by the Word of God "Who calls the things that are not as if they were?" Is not man himself the product of God's own making, curiously wrought in the image of the Creator who is blessed forever? And is not every creature upheld by the power of God's providence so that thereby they continue to exist? But by confessing all this, all has not been said! To this Scripture adds: "and *unto* Him are all things". Every creature must perform His will, every tongue must sing His praise, for the purpose of all things is the eternal praise and glory of God Who is most blessed forever.

In the midst of this glorious creation God placed man as king, as steward. God bestows on man the task of utilizing all things to the glory of God. For this reason God had endued man with greater gifts than any other earthly creature, creating him in the very image of God himself that man might be the keystone in that divinely wrought arch which unites all creation with its Creator. As such man became the ward, the keeper, the house-manager of God's earthly creation.

Due to sin man did not abide in this glorious state wherein God had created him. Through the corruption

and depravity of man he becomes a slave of the devil; and the execution of the stewardship becomes impossible. Fallen man can only serve sin, hate God and use all that which is of God to despise and reject the glorious Creator. Spiritually man becomes a Communist, shrieking in the face of God, Who owns all things, "Property is theft". Making God a thief and trying to tear all things from the hands of God man divides God's entire creation among his fellow rebels. Among fallen man there is no room for stewardship, and therefore, try as the world may, all their treaties of peace, governing boundaries and resources, will only result in more and greater wars. Man who robs God and divides the spoils among his fellow rebels shall never find peace.

Stewardship, as ordained by God, is, however, not lost by sin. Sin never alters any decree or ordinance of God. Though man through sin has so deeply fallen that it is impossible to be stewards of God, God, in Christ, through grace changes the hearts of those whom He has eternally chosen to be His stewards. Thus God maintains the calling to and the possibility of the stewardship in His own people. And not only is the stewardship maintained, but in Christ it is raised to a much higher plane, for the Christian becomes a steward of heavenly treasures. Through Christ everything, prosperity and adversity, joy and sorrow, good and evil becomes a heavenly treasure for in them and through them we are heaven-bound.

Thus the stewardship of the Christian is not a burden but a pleasure. A pleasure, not rooted in the mistaken notion that we can now do something for God, who did so much for us, and who sorely needs our help. No; true, faithful stewardship is rooted in gratitude and love. How could we ever do anything for God? Is not all that we are and do dependent on the fact that God first gives it to us so that we can return the same to Him? It should always be borne in mind that God is infinite and, therefore, self-sufficient. How can man or any other being add to Him who is *endless* in all His glorious virtues of wisdom, power, knowledge, bliss and life? Stewardship is the fruit of God's own work in us, the work of redemption in Christ whereby we have been saved from so great a death and have received the glorious life of the sons of God, whereby God Himself has shed abroad His love in our hearts, from which principle the Christian now lives and labors.

Stewardship is, therefore, a privilege given by God to us for our eternal joy and pleasure. What greater joy and honor can any creature receive than that the all-glorious Creator, who needs no help, stoops so low as to permit us to become laborers together with Him! How elated and over-joyed we would be if we would personally be called by the President to become laborers together with him in the affairs of the nation; the

privilege itself would be sufficient reward. How much more so when the God of heaven and earth calls us to be His stewards, laborers together with Him! In heaven nor on earth is there a greater joy and a more glorious privilege; and the privilege as such is a sufficient reward in itself.

For us as Christian stewards, being wards of God's house, wherein all is *of* God and wherein all is *for* God, our duty becomes very evident. In the home and by the way, in Church or in the world, in our work or in our play, in our keeping and giving, it is no longer a question of what is God's portion and what is ours? There is absolutely no sphere in life where we can apportion the things between God and ourselves. The truth is: ALL IS GOD'S. All that we are with heart and soul mind and body, with food and raiment, in life and in death is *God's*. Everything which we can see, feel and touch in the world about us is God's. Today is God's, tomorrow also. The war is God's, peace also, The battlefield is God's, the home is too. Our cradle is God's and so is our grave. Therefore in *all* things we may seek only one, and that is *God*. And wherever we are and whatever we do it must be done faithfully as good stewards of God, that all glory may be His, now and forever.

This also solves the question of what we may and may not do. For as stewards it is not the question of what we *may* do, but of what we *must* do. All *must* be to *God*, to His glory and praise forevermore. Never may we seek ourselves, always must we seek God.

And the reward? Yes, there shall be a reward; but not of merit on our part, but the reward of grace in Christ. He merited for us the right of the stewardship as well as the grace and strength for its execution. Therefore, stewardship as well as the grace and strength for its execution. Therefore, the steward shall have a reward . . . but of grace for grace. And in the measure that we have been faithful, in that measure, too, shall be the reward; for God is faithful and just. Therefore, Christ says: "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching. Verily, I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them sit down at meat, and will come forth and serve them"; for we shall hear our Lord say: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord".

A. C.

Trust not in man who soon must die,
But on the living God rely;
Most blest the man whose help is He
That made the heaven and earth and sea.

Doctrinal Instruction and The Christian School

When one writes an essay on the subject "Doctrinal Instruction and the Christian School," one will undoubtedly be guided by his conception of the main and fundamental purpose of the Christian School. You must have definite convictions on questions such as these: "Is the Christian School an extension of the home or is it an extension of the Church? Does the School find its origin in nature or in grace? Is the School earthly or is it heavenly? Does it deal directly and principally with matters spiritual or temporal? Is it a God appointed institution or is it an institution of man?" etc. On the other hand it seems to me that it would make considerable difference whether a Roman Catholic, a Lutheran, or a Reformed man would write on the above subject. We all know that both the Roman Catholics and the Lutherans are strongly in favor of parochial schools. But then such parochial schools are really extensions of their own churches and confined to a particular parish. It seems to be the contention of the Roman Catholics and the orthodox Lutherans that the School is first of all the business of the Church. If their contention is correct it stands to reason that the School should be sponsored, guided, controlled by the Church. Then the Church is really duty bound to give the children their elementary training. And the parents who are members of such a Church are duty bound to send their children to such a Church-school.

There are also people, even many that call themselves Reformed, who claim that the elementary education is first of all a matter of the State. Consequently they have their children instructed in the Public School. I add immediately however that the conception that the State must instruct our children is not at all Reformed. True, the State certainly is interested in its citizens and can not very well condone illiteracy of its citizens. Hence, it stands to reason that the State should by all means encourage, even demand that our children receive elementary training. But it does not at all follow from the foregoing that it is directly the business of the State to educate its citizens.

But how about the Church then? Quite often one comes into contact with Reformed people, including some Prot. Ref. people, who would favor a Church-school. It stands to reason if we had a Church-school the Church would say to its members: "You must send your children to our School". In other words it would become compulsory for the children of the Church to attend such a Church-school. And to be negligent in this respect would make the parents immediately subject to discipline. For then School atten-

dance and Catechism attendance would be on the same level. I have heard more than once from some of our own people that they would look upon such system as a happy solution to the whole School problem. It is said: let us put the practical difficulties out of the way, make Church-schools, and make it compulsory for our people to send their children to our own Schools. In that way, it is said, we play safe. Usually they add: "In our own Schools our children could and should be indoctrinated in the Prot. Ref. doctrine." And I agree that if Church-schools is the ideal thing by all means let the School indoctrinate our children. However, things are not as simple as they may seem at first glance. To mention one thing, if we want to be consistent a Church-school certainly should by all means use instructors that are office-bearers. Consequently, out go all our girls, and out go most of our men teachers. Hence, from a practical point of view it is well nigh impossible to have a School that is in every respect a Church-school.

However, there is still more, the idea of a Church-school is fundamentally and principally wrong. We all agree of course that there exists and should exist a close relation between Home, Church and School-training. It is even so that the training by the Home, Church and School is overlapping in some respects. But it is equally true that the School is not an extension of the Church but of the Home. The School does not find its origin in grace but in nature. The aim of the Church is that its members, young and old, grow in the knowledge and grace of Christ, the principle aim of the School is to prepare our children for their place in this earthly, temporal life. The Church aims at the world that is to come, the School prepares the children first of all for their place in this world and for the various spheres of life in this present world.

For all the above mentioned reasons we can not favor a Church-school. Of course it stands to reason that the Church is vitally interested in the elementary education of its covenant children, but that does not mean that this is the task of the Church. And I am positive that even the only Prot. Ref. School which we have in our denomination is in that sense of the word not a Church-school. The idea of a Church-school may sound to be a happy solution to our Christian School problem, but it is fundamentally wrong, it is not at all Reformed but it is essentially Roman Catholicism. The School is the extension of the home. And it is the calling of the home, of the parents, to prepare their children for their future life in this world. And to that end they make use of the means of the School to help them in their task. The School is a practical necessity. Today we can not do without it. But the *parents* should sponsor the School, control the School, in other words it is *their* School. And this Reformed principle we must maintain.

Naturally, the parents will by all means endeavor to send their children to such a School which can be of the greatest assistance to them to train and educate their children. That's why Reformed parents who fully understand their covenant obligation toward their children will send their children to a School that is based upon the principles of the Reformed faith. And the purpose is not to have their children instructed in the Reformed doctrine, that is the special prerogative of the Church, but to have their children instructed by teachers that have a Reformed world and life-view. From the foregoing it also follows of necessity that we must come to the conclusion that doctrinal instruction is not the business of the Christian School. The Church teaches doctrine, and although the School teaches Biblical history, the subject of Reformed doctrine has no place on the curriculum of the School. Doctrine is and must be taught our children by the Church and thru the office. You may never make of the Christian School a broader Catechism class. This is a point well to remember, particularly for us Prot. Ref. people. At present, and I am sure also for the future, most of our people will have to send their children to a Christian School which is predominantly Christian Reformed. However, we should insist that also in our present Christian Schools no doctrine shall be taught.

But let no one draw the wrong conclusion. All the foregoing does not mean that the teaching in our Christian Schools has nothing to do with doctrine. It most certainly has. The teaching of the various subjects is based upon doctrine. The School must and does apply the principles of doctrine. If this were not so our Christian Schools would be of no use whatever. Christian education is not colorless and tasteless, without form and lines and principles, but it is rooted in the fear of the Lord. And the spiritual quality of your teaching depends upon the doctrinal conceptions and convictions of the teacher. A Reformed teacher will base his teaching in every branch of study upon the Reformed doctrine. And this of course will have tremendous consequences for his teaching, it will color it. As the humanist and the evolutionist in the Public School necessarily teaches everything in the light of his philosophy, so the Reformed teacher teaches every branch of study in the light of his Reformed principles and convictions. After all doctrine, false or true, determines the religious character of all the instruction, of the life and the discipline in the School.

Therefore, what we need in our present day Christian Schools is not more teaching of doctrine or the introduction of the subject doctrine on the curriculum. But what we need is Reformed people who are Reformed to the core, Reformed in conviction, understanding, loving and living the Reformed truth. That is first of all really the backbone of a good Chris-

tian School. It would be better of course to speak of "Reformed School." Water does not rise higher than its source, therefore the spiritual quality of a Christian School can not in the final analysis be any better than the parents who support and control it.

In the second place we need men and women that are thoroughly trained in the Reformed doctrine, that love the Reformed doctrine and are able to base their teaching upon the Reformed truth.

Naturally we all realize that we are far away from this ideal. And it is also a fact that we need more Reformed people and more Reformed teachers if we are ever even remotely to approach the ideal.

In closing let me say that to my mind we should encourage our children, who have the ability and the inclination, to study for the teaching profession. Not for the money that is in it, but for principles sake. A thorough Reformed teacher is privileged to implant abiding principles into the hearts and minds of our covenant children.

Finally, in view of the foregoing I would strongly encourage our young people who study for the teaching profession, or who perhaps are teaching at present, to see to it that they thoroughly master the Reformed doctrine. This could be done perhaps by following special doctrinal course in our Pre-seminary School. I am sure that they would be more than welcome, and special arrangements could be made for this purpose. After all the Prot. Ref. conception of the truth is truly Reformed.

Therefore, we conclude that the ideal Christian School is based upon the foundation of the Reformed doctrine, although the School itself does not teach doctrine as a subject.

J. D.

IN MEMORIAM

De Hollandsche Vrouwen Vereeniging van de Fuller Ave. Protestantsche Gereformeerde Kerk betreurt het verlies van een haren leden welke de Heere tot zich nam om zijn naam groot te maken

MRS. JENNIE HANKO

in den ouderdom van bijna 70 jaar. En hoewel zij door veel lijden onze vereeniging niet bij kon wonen, steunde zij die altijd met haare gaven.

Moge de Heere ons allen alzoo voorbereiden voor de groote eeuwigheid die aanstaande is om met haar den Heere groot te maken.

Namens de Vereeniging
Miss W. Woudenberg, Pres.
Mrs. Cammenga, Sec.

Games of Skill and Games of Chance

Such is the difficult though timely subject assigned to us for this article. We say, difficult, because it is a subject which, with all its related questions, has occasioned much contention in the past and concerning which there is much difference of opinion even today. And we add that it is timely, because our task as we see it is not merely to bring out the difference between games of skill and games of chance, but also to ascertain as to whether or not these games should have a place in our lives, and if so, to point out how large a place this should be. This we regard to be very fitting and necessary, especially today. For no one can deny that we live in a pleasure-mad world, a world which is characterized by superficiality and worldly-mindedness, and in which there is lack of spirituality and knowledge of the truth. And living in such a world, we as Christians are tempted to go along with the stream and thus lose our distinctiveness in our amusements. Hence the need that with a view to these we learn to see the boundary line more clearly, and that ever again we be reminded of our peculiar calling, so that also in our games and entertainments we may truly be a different people.

In answering the question, what the difference is between games of skill and games of chance, we would say in the first place, that the difference is not this, that in games of skill we determine the outcome, while in games of chance the outcome is determined by mere chance of fortune. Such is the difference according to some. The outcome in games of skill then depends on our own ingenuity and effort, but in games of chance it depends on fortune or good luck. But in reality there is no such entity as chance or fortune. For it is God Who rules over all, and Who determines the end of all, also the end of the game of chance. He directs the turn of the wheel the fall of the cards and the cast of the dice. Actually, therefore, there are no games of chance, and it surely cannot be said in truth, that in so-called games of chance mere fortune or chance determines the outcome. Nor will the distinction hold that in games of skill we determine the end, while in games of chance it is determined by God. For God's providence overrules even our skill and ingenuity, as also every move we make and each step we take. God, therefore, decides the outcome both in games of skill and in games of chance. He does so, however, with this difference: in games of skill we are active, in games of chance we are passive; in the former we are co-workers with Him and we employ every means at our disposal to win the game, in the latter we are inactive and to obtain the coveted prize we rely upon the fall of the cards and the cast of the dice; in the one we exercise our God-given ability and God deter-

mines the game through us, in the other we fail to put forth any effort of our own and God determines the game without us.

This does not mean, however, that every game is solely a game of skill or wholly a game of chance. For taking notice of the various games played today, we soon discover that some of the games consist of an element of both, chance and skill. Think, for instance, of the card-game. The outcome of the game depends not only on our ability and intellectual acumen, but also and largely so on the cards one receives to begin with. Hence it is not only a game of skill, but also of chance. And such games there are many today. In reality, therefore, there are three kinds of games: games of skill, games of chance, and games of skill and chance.

What must be the Christian's attitude toward these games? In answering this question we do well to first answer the question, whether at all we should play any game. For there have always been those in the past, and there are still a few today, who maintain that life is so serious that we should always work and never play. The question therefore arises: are games as such sinful? In answer to this question, we should bear in mind first of all, that diversion, recreation and a change of occupation, either mental or physical, is simply necessitated by a law of human nature. Both the body and the mind become exhausted through being constantly and for any length of time busy at the same task. We crave for a change and except this change be had, life becomes a continual grind and we are not fit for our calling. And then, too, it should not escape our attention, that Scripture itself informs us, that the saints of old often made mirth, played, leaped and danced for joy; and that wise Solomon spurs us on to rejoice and be glad in the days of our youth. Therefore we may safely conclude that the playing of game as such is not sinful, and that recreation and amusement can be either good or bad. The question whether they are good or evil, all depends on the content we give them. Time and place, measure and means our aim and purpose; all these determine the character of our play.

But then how about games of skill and games of chance? Also here God's Word **must** be our only guide. And turning to that Word we read in I Cor. 10:31: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." If we bear this principle in mind, namely, that our entire life must be to the glory of God, it will not be difficult to settle the question as to proper and sinful games. For according to this principle also our games and amusements must be to God's glory. This means that the content of our games must not be in conflict with God's law, so that the playing of these games would be God-dishonoring. Nor may they be empty and vain, so that

God receives no glory and we ourselves derive no benefit. Instead they must be in harmony with the law of God and their nature must be such, that they serve to equip us and make us fit for life's task, namely, to glorify our God. Turning again to the Word of God, we find that in Ephesians 5:16, we are exhorted to redeem the time. This certainly implies, that we must not only use every moment of our lives to glorify God, but above all, that with a view to God's glory and our own edification, we must use every moment in the best possible way. The question for us in general is therefore not: what do I like best? Nor should it be: what pays best? And with a view to games and amusements, the question is not: what is most entertaining and thrilling? Nor should it ever be: what is most to my liking? But always and everywhere the question must be: how and where can I best glorify God. And how can I best prepare myself, so as to be able to do such in an ever greater measure.

With this in mind we may draw the following conclusions. Firstly, that we should play only games of skill. Games of chance should have no place in our lives at all. If for any reason, then surely for the reason that the more serious-minded of God's people in the past have always opposed these games. True, they were not always able to detect and expose the evil of these games, but nevertheless they felt that games of chance should be shunned by the Christian. This general attitude of God's people, as also the fact that indulgence in these games is always on the increase in times of superficiality and worldly-mindedness and that it is generally the less serious who indulge in them, should have something to say to us. It would surely be the height of conceit on our part to indulge in that which the more since in the past, who were also led by the Spirit of God, condemned.

Moreover, games of chance are also a gross waste of very precious time. They require no skill, intellectual acumen or physical adroitness, so that the result is, we ourselves derive no benefit, nor does God receive any glory. They are empty and vain. This is also evident from the fact, that those indulging in them soon become superficial and mind only the things that are seen. But what is even worse, they are a dishonor to God. For God has created man to rule as king over the works of His hands, and He has thereunto endowed him with the necessary talents and ability. But in games of chance, man willingly abdicates and subjects himself to the things to attain his goal. He refuses to earn his possessions by earnest effort and to rule over the things round about him. Instead he sells his soul to the things which he plays and looks to them to determine the end. And the result is, man who was created to be king, has become a slave. For in slavish fear he watches the turn of the wheel and the distributing of the cards. And it often

happens that he responds with passions of anger and disappointment, and not infrequently it is seen that the things to which men sold their souls lead them to suicide. Hence all games of chance we must shun and only games of skill may have a place among us.

Secondly, however, we should use discretion even in choosing our games of skill. For not all games of skill can afford Christian entertainment. Dancing is sometimes also called a game, and surely it is not a game of chance, yet to participate would be a grievous sin. Nor are all proper games of skill of the same order. One is more edifying and constructive than another. And since we are to glorify God also in our amusements and are to redeem the time, we should choose those games which glorify Him most and serve to prepare us best to glorify Him more.

Finally, even these proper and best games of skill should have but a small place in our lives. True, as such they are not sinful, sometimes they are necessary, and often they prove to be refreshing and beneficial. Yet even so, games should be a secondary matter. For redeeming the time we must seek God's highest glory, and there are many other ways in which this is more easily and better attained. Therefore it is a saddening sign if, when families and friends are together, they know of nothing better than to spend an entire evening playing games, regardless whether these be games of skill or games of chance. It reveals that their spiritual life is at low ebb and that to them spiritual things are not worthy of discussion. And the deplorable fact is, it will become worse still, for they seek to feed their souls with husks. Let us then beware to put first things first.

The result will then be: amusement problems we will not present since we have none, the antithesis between light and darkness will be clearly seen and peace with God will be a daily experience.

The conclusion of the whole matter is therefore this: No games of chance at all. Only proper games of skill. And these at the proper time. How true are then the words of Jesus "Straight is the gate, narrow is the way, and few there be that find it".

P. V.

Tho' troubles assail,
And dangers affright;
Tho' friends should all fail,
And foes all unite:
Yet one thing secures us,
Whatever betide;
The Scripture assures us,
The Lord will provide.

The Choir In Public Worship

Singing is a prominent part of our Divine worship. It also finds a place in the daily life of the christian. Many a song is sung by God's children in their homes, and many a soul loves to utter itself in this manner. In our Divine worship it certainly is an integral part. The redeemed child of God immediately feels that his serving God would be incomplete without it. How our older members love those Holland psalms! And I'm sure that the Psalter finds as much favor with many of us.

This truth certainly is not a phenomenon. God has made us to sing. Not only has He created us with a mouth by which we can speak and sing, but has given it as a means for the soul to utter itself. Such the soul of the redeemed child of God does too. Rejoicing in the deliverance from sin, in being a participant of that marvelous grace and love of God it must speak, and does so in this asthetic way by means of song and praise. In heaven there certainly will be much singing. The saints worship by means of singing, according to the book of Revelation. And how often don't we read of the angels singing unto the most High?

The purpose of this article, however, is to show how we must do that, or how not. The question before which we are placed is not whether it should be hymnology or psalmody but whether it should be done by the congregation itself or by a choir. Should the choir *in public worship* be recommended and permitted, or condemned? As Prot. Ref. Churches we condemn such. We must have nothing of it. But why? O it's so easy to condemn such and claim it to be erroneous, but why? Or do we forbid it a place among us merely because it is found in the modern and superficial churches of our day? Do we not enjoy the singing of a good choir? I'm sure most of us do. Suppose once that the choir of Dr. Fuller of Los Angeles would sing some of our psalter numbers. I'm sure we'd all think it to be wonderful. Why do we then deny such choir worship in the church?

Let us first turn to Scripture. From it, it is evident that music has always had a place with God's people. Singing was done both by the people and the choir, and mark you by the choir in public worship. The Israelites sang songs unto Jehovah after the deliverance thru the Red Sea, we read of the song of Deborah and Barak, much singing was done by the great musician David, and also by his contemporaries. And so we can go on. We read of such in connection with the angels in the fields of Efratha, the N. T. church, the saints in heaven praise Him who is worthy to open the book, and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. But during the time of David and other kings

they also had choirs. And, as mentioned, they found their places in public worship, and perhaps almost exclusively. Time and again we read that they sang praises in the house of the Lord. David evidently had many choirs totalling the large number of 4000 singers. These various choirs had leaders as to be expected of whom some were Jeduthun, Heman, Gershon, Kohath, Asaph and Merari. These names often are mentioned in the prologues of many psalms from which it seems that David wrote many psalms in order that they could be sung by these choirs.

No different has it been in the N. T. since the age of revelation. Singing at all times was a part of the worship of God also in the form of choirs. Men like Chrysostom, Ambrose, Ephraem Syrus, and Igan-tius are mentioned in connection with the history of singing in the church. Some raised strong opposition against the songs of the heretics others put songs in rhythm, and still others at that time already strongly opposed all hymnolgy in the church and defended psalmody. The first Council of Braga (353 A. D.) even expressly forbade the use of any human composition in public worship. Nothing was permitted except the psalms and hymns of the Old and New Testament. But interesting it is that choirs at that time already were used in public worship, and that they went hand in hand with the song worship of the church. In the Greek and Latin churches singing has been restricted to the choir and the clergy from the 6th century unto our very day. In the eve of the Reformation, choir singing in public worship seems to have been very prevalent, even to the extent that it general was the only form of singing in the Divine services. But also in respect to this the Reformation brought tremendous changes. The credit for this must be given first of all to Martin Luther. Luther was the man who openly and seriously condemned the choir in public worship and brought singing back to the congregation. And Calvin built upon this foundation. Not only did he also oppose the choir, but he also rooted out all hymnology in Divine worship and introduced psalmody. And is was during the time of Calvin and through his influence that the composition of the rhythm and notes of many psalms took place. In the Dutch language this work was not completed until many years later.

The exponents of the choir in public worship always were many. It is also quite natural that they sang hymns almost exclusively. Result was that the Reformed Church of the Netherlands also found herself placed before this question. She, as we may know, pitted herself against this form of liturgy, and strongly defended the views of Luther and Calvin. This position was also taken by the Synod of Dordt. And what about the choir in public worship since that time? The best and shortest answer I can give

is that history has repeated itself time and again. No different is it in our day. The situations in our day are no different then those of the leaders of the Reformation.

In respect to this matter, history teaches us something in very plain terms. In the first place that the conservative church has always opposed choir singing in public worship. But in the second place that the first step to choir worship is hymnology in the church. These are facts and therefore not to be denied.

The question, however, that arises is: what is wrong with this form of worship from the view point of principle? For what principle reasons do we oppose it? Negatively, certainly not because the choir attempts to beautify the singing of the songs we sing. Harmony and the singing of different parts certainly is proper. We should keep that in mind with our congregational singing too. At some times and some places it is very poor, and therefore could and should be improved upon. Our very form of worship must be to the best of our ability. God is a God of harmony and order. In heaven the singing will be perfect, with perfect harmony and beauty. Such singing we never hear nor will hear on earth. The shepherds near Bethlehem heard a little of it and how they were enraptured and fascinated.

But positively, we oppose the choir in public worship exactly because they bring this very thing to the extreme. All people are not good singers. Some members are very poor singers and monotones sometimes are not a few. Therefore the exponents of the choir worship believe in picking out the best singers in order that they may sing their songs in the most beautiful way according to their ability. The results, however, are evident: (1) That the singing is taken away from the congregation, to whom it has been given. Singing is part of the worship of the congregation; so it has been and will be in heaven. It is a God given means by which the soul can utter itself. Singing is one form of audible response of the soul that has been redeemed from the depths of misery and tasted of that marvelous redemptive grace of God. How proper singing is for him! He must sing and loves to do so. But what a poor soul who is deprived of such actions in public worship, and must listen to some one else do so, here the choir. (2) The second result stands in close connection with the first. The choir has one aim: to beautify and improve upon the singing. That is the very reason for its existence. Result is that the form of singing becomes the worship itself. Songs are no more utterances of the soul. The one and only question is how nice and appealing they can sing. Reality teaches us that in listening to such a choir there is no utterance of the soul, nor a personal praise of God, but one attempt to note the harmony and beauty of the singing itself. After the

service remarks are made: wasn't that singing just wonderful, or some criticism is given. But the one purpose of singing has been lost. Our forefathers felt this very keenly too; even to the extent that every organ-player who attempted to display something extraordinary or exceptional ability was immediately forbidden all playing. And in passing we can remark that we do well to keep this in mind when listening to any singing or any other kind of choir. Isn't it always our first inclination to take particular notice of the singers, the harmony, etc., and pay no or little attention to the words and our worship of God by means of them? I'm sure no can deny this.

One question however, to my mind can still be raised. What about the choirs of the O. T.? To be sure we can't just brush them aside. Fact is that as mentioned, they did sing in public worship, in the house of the Lord, and as it seems to me they only. I can't find a passage in Scripture that speaks of the people doing such. To this question I think there is only one answer, and a very proper one. It is quite evident from the related passages that all the choir singers of the commonwealth of Israel were taken from the tribe of Levi. I Chr. 24:5; 15:16; 25; Ezra 2:41; Neh. 7:44. The singers were thus taken from the Levitical tribe as well as the priests and other workers in the house of the Lord. And like the priests represented the congregation in their service, so the singers represented them with this form of worship. It is natural then that the N. T. brings about a change. We have all become prophets, priests and kings. Now we all worship in the house of the Lord, live with God in the new and more blessed communion, the tabernacle of God is with men in principle, and therefore we all sing. We all must sing. The choir is entirely out of place. And the *church* of the N. T. continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, *praising* God and having favour with all the people.

J. B.

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the Oak Lawn Prot. Ref. Church wishes to express its sincere sympathy to their pastor and family in the loss of his mother

MRS. JENNIE HANKO

May our God comfort them with his abiding grace and the blessed assurance that there remaineth a rest for the people of God.

D. Kort, Vice President

J. Buites, Secretary