

# THE STANDARD

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## MEDITATION

### Returning

*And the shepherds returned . . . .*

*Luke 2:20*

The shepherds returned!

There are moments in our life which we would like to prolong, to perpetuate, perhaps.

Relatively this is true even in our natural life. There are patches of sunshine flecking the prevailing gloom in our present world, that are swallowed up all too soon; moments of joy we would like to eternalize, but which quickly flit away.

How much more would we fain cling to those moments, when through the darkness of our night the eternal flashes into our soul; when in the midst of the toil and sorrow of things earthly we have a fleeting foretaste of the joy of heavenly things; when we seem to be face to face with the kingdom of heaven, and appear to see the promise, not far off, but within our reach!

Moments of revelation, when the heavens rend, and the New Jerusalem seems on the verge of descending!

Is not this what David meant when he sang that he longed to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of his life, to behold the beauty of the Lord perpetually, and to enquire in his temple? Was there not some such desire in Jacob's soul, when he had seen in his dream the angel of God ascending and descending on the ladder, that seemed to connect him directly with the heavenly house of God, when he made a stone of remembrance of the rock that had served as his head-rest and called the name of that place Bethel? Was not a similiar desire the subconscious motive of Peter's impossible proposal to build three tabernacles on the Mount of Transfiguration? And was it not in the soul of the Magdalene to cling to the appearance of the

risen Lord, and thus to have Him with her always? . .

But always there is the return!

The return to normal. Or is it not rather the return to the abnormal? . . .

David cannot really dwell in the Lord's house perpetually as yet: he must be satisfied that the Lord will hide him in his pavillion in a time of trouble. Jacob awakes to the cruel reality of resting his weary head on a hard rock, and of being on the way to Padan Aram to escape the wrath of his profane brother. The glory of the Mount of Transfiguration is not abiding, and the descent from that holy mountain is into the valley of suffering and death. And Mary of Magdala must return without her risen Lord . . .

And the shepherds returned!

Ah, what a night of joy and glory it had been! The fulness of time had arrived, and God had been mindful of His promise. Joseph and Mary, that the word of prophecy might be fulfilled, had been directed from Nazareth to the City of David. The little town already being overcrowded, they had found shelter for the night in a stable. And there the promise of God had been fulfilled as Mary brought forth her firstborn, wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger. Jerusalem, the city of the great King, had been soundly asleep, quite unaware of the wonder of salvation that had been accomplished a few miles distant. But shepherds had been awake, keeping watch over their flock, and watching and praying for the Dawn. And, behold, the heavens rend, and out of the open heavens descends a messenger to them, bringing them the good tidings of great joy that unto them is born this day, in the City of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord. And he had suggested to them that they go and see this wonder of God's grace, when he told them of the sign of the manger and the swaddling clothes. In silent wonder they had listened to the heavenly choir that had descended upon them and sung of God's glory and of peace on earth . . .

Then they had gone to Bethlehem.

They had seen the Word that had come to pass.

They had believed, and worshipped.

And now they returned!

Yes, indeed, they returned from Bethlehem. But they returned, too, from much more: from a night crowded with the most glorious revelation of heavenly things; from a vision of angels that had spoken to them face to face of the realization of the promise, for which the saints had waited throughout the ages; from being audience to a heavenly concert, such as never had been given on earth before; from seeing the salvation of Israel in the manger of Bethlehem, the Word come to pass . . .

They had stood before the very door of the kingdom of heaven; the door had been opened to them, and they had had a glimpse of the beauties within . . .

And now they returned!

O, indeed, they returned to the fields of Ephratah, and to the watch over their flock: had angels kept watch over them in the meantime?

They returned to their daily calling, yes, and to much more: to mere earthly things; to their place among a people of God in bondage; to the rule of a wicked king, carnal and cruel; to a people, whose scribes were indifferent in their religious self-complacency, whose high priest was corrupt and served in the holy place for filthy lucre, and whose temple had been degraded into a den of robbers . . .

How far the kingdom of heaven seemed away!

And how near they had been!

The shepherds returned!

Too bad!

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They returned . . .

But of course!

Where would they go? And what else could they do?

The kingdom of heaven was not yet. It had not yet come. Only a beginning they had seen of the salvation of the Lord.

Heaven had opened only for a moment, not, indeed, to receive them, still less in order to swallow up death and all things earthly; only long enough to let the light of revelation shine upon the thing that had come to pass in Bethlehem: a brief flash of revelation! For this was, indeed, necessary: who would have recognized otherwise the great joy that had come to all the people, the Saviour which is Christ the Lord, in that babe in the manger, wrapped in swaddling clothes?

Heaven had opened upon them, long enough, indeed, to let the heavenly song of the angels rebound through the night over the fields of Ephratah to the glory of God in the highest; long enough to direct their eager steps to Bethlehem, and to enable them to see the Word that had come to pass in the light of the gospel that had been declared unto them. But then, heaven had closed again, the angels had withdrawn themselves be-

hind the still curtain of the dark night, and the fields and their flocks had appeared as they were before: nothing had been changed! Heaven had not enveloped the earth. The kingdom of heaven had not come!

They returned!

But of course! Where else would they go?

For even in Bethlehem, whither they had made their way in that night of all nights, they had not seen the kingdom of heaven in its power and victory over sin and death, and over all things earthly. Even there, the darkness had not been swallowed up of the light, heaven had not transformed the earth: the very opposite appeared to be the case, for the Son of God had come in the likeness of sinful flesh! In Bethlehem the Word does not cause us to dwell with Him, but He dwells with us; He does not take us into His glory, but His glory came to tabernacle in our shame! How, then could they stay in Bethlehem? For them there was no room even in the stable . . .

They returned!

Only a beginning of the salvation of the Lord they had seen. And they had beheld that beginning, not, indeed, because there was any visible show of power and glory, but only because they had looked upon what appeared the very contradiction of salvation with eyes of faith, illumined by the word of the gospel, preached to them by the angels. Yes, truly, they had seen Christ, the Lord, the Saviour, but not in His power to save, neither in the glory of His anointing, still less in the power of His lordship. They had not seen Jesus crowned with glory and honor, neither had they seen all things subjected under His feet . . .

A helpless babe they had seen: the beginning of the promise!

And what a beginning!

For there was no room for this Word that had come to pass, for this realization of the promise of God, in Jerusalem, in Bethlehem, in the inn, in all the world: He was wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger!

Nor could they wait in Bethlehem for the full realization of this beginning of the promise. Much still had to happen before the promise was really fulfilled, before the great joy for all the people, of which the angel of the Lord had spoken to them, had been attained, before the salvation of the Lord had been accomplished through this Saviour of Bethlehem, before this son of David is seated upon the throne of His glory, and this Christ has become the Lord. The glory of God, which was the theme of the angels' song in the fields of Ephratah, was still hid in the likeness of sinful flesh, and a hard battle was still to be fought before the peace that was promised had descended on the earth.

No, indeed, they could not wait. The kingdom of heaven had not yet come.

This babe must grow up, and must tabernacle among us for a while. He must reveal the Father unto us, and become manifest as the Messiah. He must be despised and rejected of men, and be cast out, even out of this inn, and without swaddling clothes; be nailed to the accursed tree, and there shed His life blood for the sin of His own; must rise again on the third day, and be exalted as Christ, the Lord, at the right hand of the Most High in the heavens, crowned with glory and honor, and with all power in heaven and on earth . . .

And then He must be preached as the One in Whom God was reconciling the world unto Himself, and through Whom God will judge the world . . .

Then, finally, He will come again, with power to subdue all things unto Himself!

In that day heaven will open never to shut again!

The kingdom of heaven will then have come to remain!

And those that are privileged to witness the glory of that day, shall never have to return to the darkness of the present humiliation.

But for it the shepherds could not wait.

The Saviour had come to them in the likeness of sinful flesh; by faith they had seen Him and worshipped; a glimpse they had of the realization of the promise.

Now they returned.

Of course!

And the shepherds returned! . . .

How becoming that they should do so!

For they had been witnesses of the great salvation the Lord had wrought for His people.

And having been ear-and-eye-witnesses, they must become mouth-witnesses of what they had heard and seen. Perhaps, they could have wished that they would never have to return to their flock and their lowly tasks, to this dark world and its suffering and sin and death, after they had tasted the goodness of the Lord, and seen a little of the glory of heavenly things, and had learned that the "day of the Lord" had come. Perhaps, they might fain have retreated behind the walls of some cloister, or into some lonely desert, cherishing their precious knowledge in their hearts, waiting for the fulfillment of the promise, for the rising of the Sun of righteousness. . .

But no, they could not so separate themselves and wait.

For the Word of God they had seen and heard was now in them. It had filled their hearts, their minds, their entire soul. It had become a power in them, which they could not possibly have resisted. They had heard the good tidings of great joy which would be to all the people, and now they must repeat them. They had seen the Word that had come to pass,

and now they must witness of it. For this Word must reach out even to the ends of all the world!

And so the shepherds returned!

Yes, no doubt, they returned to their lowly every day tasks, for even these must be performed until He come; and again they watched over their flock by night, with the dawn of a better day in their hearts.

But they had received a new calling, and they returned to fulfill it.

They made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child!

Living witnesses of the Word that had come to pass!

Witnesses to thousands that even as they waited for the realization of the promise.

And witnesses still!

How proper!

What joy! . . .

The shepherds returned.

Yes, but with a new joy in their hearts, and with a new song upon their lips. For they returned "glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them."

The song of the angelic choir still resounded in their hearts as they returned, and now it had become their own!

Glory to God!

Peace on earth in men of good pleasure!

For they had believed!

The Word had been spoken unto them from heaven. And they had made haste to see the Word that had come to pass, which the Lord had made known unto them. And little enough they had seen: a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. What they saw might seem to be the very contradiction of the glorious gospel of joy and salvation and glory that had been proclaimed unto them by the angel of the Lord.

But they had believed the saying concerning this child!

And believing they rejoiced as they returned. No, really, they did not feel the disappointment of returning, for by faith they carried the joy of hope in their hearts; and already the great joy of which the angel had spoken caused their hearts to sing, and their lips to praise and glorify the Lord their God!

For after all, that Babe in the manger was the Wonder of God, the highest revelation of God's power to save, His wisdom inscrutable, His love unfathomable, His mercy abounding!

Let us, too, return from Bethlehem, in faith, rejoicing . . .

Till we shall be with Him forever!

To return nevermore!

H. H.

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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.

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## EDITORIALS

### Over Het Gebed

Van B. J. M. van Redlands ontvingen we het volgende schrijven:

“Geachte Redakteur:—

Er is nogal heel wat verschil over de vraag, of we wel persoonlijk mogen worden in het gebed. Er zijn er, die zeggen, dat wij wel persoonlijk kunnen bidden, als we maar eindigen met ‘Niet mijn wil, maar Uw wil geschiede’. Ik zou gaarne uwe gedachten hebben over het persoonlijk bidden voor de bekeering van een persoon.

U dankend,  
B. J.M. Redlands.”

De bedoeling van deze vraag is eigenlijk niet zoozeer, of we wel mogen bidden voor bepaalde personen, maar of we wel mogen bidden voor dingen, die wij gaarne willen ontvangen of zien geschieden, maar waarvan we niet weten of ze overeenkomstig den wil des Heeren zijn. Voor bepaalde personen bidden we heel dikwijls. Zoo bidden we, dat de Heere in deze dagen alle Gods kinderen mag bewaren en troosten en staande houden temidden der wereld. En ook bidden we wel voor bepaalde, met name te noemen kinderen Gods. We bidden natuurlijk voor den leeraar onzer gemeente, en wel zeer bepaald op Zondag, dat de Heere hem genade wil geven om Zijn Woord te kunnen verkondigen. In het dankgebed na den doop bidden we “dat Gij dit kind met uwen Heiligen Geest altijd wilt regeeren, opdat het Christelijk en godzaliglijk opgevoed worde, en in den Heere Jezus Christus wasse en toeneme, opdat het uwe vaderlijke goedheid en barmhartigheid, die gij hem en ons allen bewezen hebt moge bekennen, en in alle gerechtigheid, onder onzen eenigen Leeraar, Koning en Hoogepriester, Jezus Christus, leve, en vromelijk tegen de zonde, den duivel en zijn gansche rijk strijden en overwinnen moge, om U, en Uwen Zoon, Jezus Christus, mitsgaders den Heiligen Geest, den eenigen en waarachtigen God, eeuwiglijk te loven en te prijzen.” Zoo worden we vermaand in de Schrift om te bidden voor den broeder, dien we zien “zondigen eene zonde niet tot den dood,” en we hebben de belofte dat in dat geval God hem het leven zal geven. I Joh. 5:16. De “kranke” (geestelijk kranke) broeder wordt aangespoord om tot zich te roepen de ouderlingen der gemeente, “en dat zij over hem bidden, hem zalvende met olie in den naam des Heeren. En het gebed des geloofs zal den zieke behouden, en de Heere zal hem op-richten, en zoo hij zonden gedaan zal hebben, het zal

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hem vergeven worden." Jak. 5:14, 15. Het lijdt dus geen twijfel, dat we wel voor bepaalde personen kunnen en mogen bidden, ook wel voor hun bekeering als ze in zonden vallen.

Maar, zooals we reeds zeiden, daarover gaat het toch eigenlijk niet in de vraag van broeder M. Dit is wel duidelijk uit het slot van zijn schrijven: "het persoonlijk bidden voor de bekeering van een persoon." Hier is blijkbaar de bedoeling, niet de bekeering van een broeder, die gezondigd heeft, maar de bekeering van iemand, waarvan we hoegenaamd niet weten of hij een broeder is, van een totaal onbekeerde; m.a.w. de bekeering van iemand, van wien we hoegenaamd geen grond hebben om te gelooven, dat God hem bekeeren wil. En omdat we niet weten of het Gode behaagt hem te bekeeren, en wel verstaan, dat we naar den wil des Heeren moeten bidden, voegen we dan aan ons gebed toe: "niet mijn wil, maar uw wil geschiede". De algemeene bedoeling van de vraag is dus, of we wel voor zulke dingen mogen bidden, waarvoor we geen bepaalde belofte hebben, waarvan we niet weten of het de wil des Heeren is, mits we aan ons gebed toevoegen, dat we ons onderwerpen aan den wil des Heeren.

Het staat natuurlijk wel vast, dat we moeten bidden naar den wil des Heeren. Want "dit is de vrijmoedigheid, die wij tot Hem hebben, dat zoo we iets bidden naar Zijnen wil, Hij ons verhoort. En indien wij weten, dat Hij ons verhoort, wat wij ook bidden, zoo weten wij, dat wij de beden verkrijgen, die wij van Hem gebeden hebben." I Joh. 5:14, 15. Wij moeten "amen" kunnen zeggen op ons gebed. En dat wil zeggen, dat het waar en zeker zal zijn, en dat ik van God zal ontvangen, wat ik van Hem gebeden heb, veel zekerder dan ik zelfs in mijn hart gevoel, dat ik zulks van Hem begeer. Dit wil zeggen, dat, voorzoover ons gebed een begeeren van iets is, we ons zullen houden aan die dingen, waarvan we zeker weten, dat ze naar den wil des Heeren zijn. En dat houdt ook in, dat we in ons gebed zoeken het koninkrijk Gods en Zijne gerechtigheid, en dat we dus uit het geloof, door den Geest, en niet uit en naar het vleesch bidden. We mogen dus maar niet om allerlei vleeschelijke dingen bidden, en meenen, dat we het dan goed kunnen maken door er aan toe te voegen: "niet mijn wil, maar uw wil geschiede." Het gebed is het hoogste stuk der dankbaarheid. Dit moet eerst vaststaan.

Hiermede is echter niet gezegd, dat we nimmer in ons gebed begeerten bij God bekend kunnen of mogen maken, waarvan we niet zeker zijn, of het Gode behaagt ze te vervullen, zoodat we ten slotte ons gebed besluiten met het "Uw wil geschiede." Dat kan wel, mits onze begeerten zelf niet vleeschelijk zijn. Dat dit wel kan en mag, is overvloedig duidelijk uit het gebed des Heilands in Gethsemane. We moeten niet vergeten, dat het gebed veel meer is dan een begeeren van en een vragen om iets. Het is dikwijls

een uitstorten van ons hart, met al zijn nooden en behoeften, met al zijn smart en angst en lijden en droefheid, voor den troon der genade. En dan maken we alle onze begeerten Gode bekend, eigenlijk met het doel om van Hem te ontvangen "den vrede, die alle verstand te boven gaat." In zulke gevallen bidden we om datgene, wat we sterk begeeren (b.v. de bekeering van een kind), maar niet wetende of het kind verkoren is, voegen we aan ons gebed toe: "niet mijn wil, maar uw wil geschiede." Maar men versta dan ook wel, dat, zullen we dit laatste van harte zeggen, het ons juist om dien wil des Heeren te doen moet zijn, en niet om onze begeerten, zoodat we door die toevoeging bedoelen te zeggen: "En als Gij het niet wilt, Heere, dan wil ik het zeker niet." We hebben enkele jaren geleden het geval gehad van iemand, die meende, dat, als hij aan zijn gebed om aardische dingen toevoegde: "uw wil geschiede," dit beteekende, dat hij zijne begeerten beschouwde als in den wil en raad des Heeren begrepen. Dit is natuurlijk precies verkeerdt. Maar de ervaring heeft mij geleerd, dat dit toch dikwijls de bedoeling is van hen, die aldus bidden. Men zegt dan wel: "uw wil geschiede," maar men bedoelt: "ik zou toch gaarne zoo uw wil veranderd zien, dat mijn wil geschiede."

Een zeer sterk voorbeeld daarvan is het volgende. In mijn eerste gemeente was een vrouw, die jaren ziekelijk was en niet ter kerk kon komen, en die ik daarom wekelijks bezocht. Destijds had ik de gewoonte om al mijn preeken uit te schrijven op de schrijfmachine. Ik liet ze dan onze zieken, vooral hun, die lang bedlegerig waren, lezen, en besprak dikwijls den inhoud met hen. Toen bovengenoemde vrouw mijn preek over "Uw wil geschiede" had gelezen, en ik die met haar besprak, vertelde zij mij, dat ze veel bad voor een jongeren broer, die blijkbaar een groote plaats in haar hart had, maar die onbekeerd was, en die, ofschoon hij uiterlijk een oppassend mensch was, in alles toonde, dat hij van God en Zijn dienst niets moest hebben. Ze bad, dat de Heere hem mocht trekken uit de duisternis tot Zijn wonderbaar licht. Ik wees haar er op, dat ze natuurlijk hoegenaamd geen zekerheid had, dat de Heere dit gebed zou verhooren. Eerst meende ze, zooals zoovelen meer, dat zulk een gebed om bekeering voor haar broer niet onverhoord kon blijven, doch na herhaaldelijk met haar over deze zaak gesproken te hebben, verstond ze blijkbaar, dat ze aan haar gebed moest toevoegen: "uw wil geschiede." Ik gevoelde echter wel, dat ofschoon ze dit nu verstandelijk had begrepen, de toevoeging niet van harte ging. De begeerte, dat haar broer bekeerd mocht worden, bleef op den voorgrond. En dat bleek dan ook zeer duidelijk. Want wat gebeurde? De broer, die bij de interurban werkte, kwam op zekeren morgen tusschen twee wagons en werd dood gedrukt. De Heere had wel zeer duidelijk op het gebed der vrouw geantwoord,



dat het Hem niet behaagde haar broer te bekeeren. Toen ik het bericht van dit ongeval in de krant las, haastte ik mij, om de vrouw te bezoeken. En ik vond haar toestand, zooals ik wel vreesde. Ze kon het niet hebben, dat de Heere haar gebed niet had verhoord. Ze had nooit van harte gebeden, dat des Heeren wil in betrekking tot haar broer geschieden mocht. En het vereischte een langen strijd voor haar om in Gods wil te berusten.

En zoo is het dikwijls. Wie dus in gelijksoortige gevallen bidt met de bijvoeging: "Uw wil geschiede," moet wel verstaan, dat hij daarmee in den grond der zaak, niet om de vervulling van eigen begeerten, maar om den wil des Heeren bidt, ook als die wil indruischt tegen hetgeen wij gaarne willen.

H. H.

---

## Common Grace

### 2

According to Van Til, the Christian and the non-Christian philosopher stand opposed to each other, not only in their conception and interpretation of facts, but also in their conception of "law": "abstract and impersonal" or "God-interpreted law". And back of these, they stand opposed to each other in regard to their conception of man: according to the one, man is autonomous, according to the other he is God-controlled. It is only the orthodox Christian thinker that maintains the true creation idea. In fact, only the Reformed thinker is able to offer a consistently Christian philosophy of history. The Roman Catholic is ready to compromise with the non-Christian philosopher in the domain of "Reason". And the Arminian holds that man is autonomous in the matter of salvation. The Reformed thinker only takes the truth of total depravity seriously, as well as the doctrine of sovereign grace.

All this, according to Van Til, is significant for the philosophy of history. For the philosophy of history inquires into the meaning of history, it asks (and here Van Til borrows a phrase of Kierkegaard) "how the Moment is to have significance."

I confess that I was surprised to find that Van Til borrows the term "Moment" from Kierkegaard and from Barthian theology, not only here (p. 5), where he admittedly does so, but frequently, throughout the book. In fact, one cannot understand Van Til's conception of common grace, unless he knows the denotation of this term as Van Til employs it. Surprised, I say, I was to find that he employs this term so freely,

considering the fact that the writer is so thoroughly opposed to everything Barthian that to be branded a Barthian, or even to express doubt as to the justice of some of the criticism of his views, is to be tainted with heresy of a dangerous sort. At the very risk of being put to bed with this dangerous heretic once more, I frankly confess, that although I cannot agree with Barth, I can neither find sufficient reasons for the severe and thoroughly condemnatory criticism of him in some circles. And I have studied Barth, too, I think. But how can Van Til, then, employ so thoroughly and characteristically Barthian a term? He certainly does not give it the same contents, and that is confusing. In Kierkegaard, the term "moment" denotes not "history", nor part of history, nor even a section of time, but "an atom of eternity", figuratively speaking: the point at which the perpendicular line from above dissects the horizontal line of our existence. And Barth borrowed the term from Kierkegaard. According to Barth, the "moment" is the point at which time and eternity touch. It is closely related to his conception of "the two ages" or *Zeiten*, the *aion touton* and the *aion mellon* of Scripture, which, however, receive a new meaning in Barth. For the *aion touton* "this age", is our present life in a qualitative sense, the world of time through which we pass with all things; the *aion mellon*, "the age to come", is the eternal order, the kingdom of God, qualitatively different from the order of time, and breaking in upon our world, always present, yet ever beyond our world. And they stand in no relation to each other, for time is not eternity. And we are "between the times", "zwischen den Zeiten". Römerbrief, 483. And very closely related to this notion of the two *Zeiten* is Barth's conception of the "moment", *das Augenblick*, *das ewige Augenblick*, which crosses our horizontal series of time-moments. The moment, therefore, in Barthian terminology, is the point of contact between eternity and time. Römerbrief, 483.

Now, it is evident that Van Til, though he uses this term, gives it an entirely different content. By it he does not mean a "moment" or "Augenblick" at all. Perhaps, we can discover, by comparing different passages in his book, just what he means by it. We shall have to refer to this again. In the meantime, lest we run the danger of misconstruing his meaning, (and we certainly do not mean to do this), he could do us a real service if he would himself define this term as he employs it.

H. H.

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## CLASSIS EAST

will meet in regular session, D. V., January 6, 1943, at 9 o'clock at the Fuller Ave., Church.

D. JONKER, Stated Clerk.

## Our House of God

Always the subject of the Christian's hope is an important one, but especially in times like the present it should have special interest for the believer. Our times are characterized by turmoil and confusion in the world. The outlook, from a worldly viewpoint, is hardly inspiring confidence for the future. We are involved in a world-war unequalled in scope and intensity by anything ever witnessed before. The idealism of the world is put to shame. The magnificent structure of modern civilization, of culture and philosophy, is crashing down all about us. There is doubt and fear, distress and suffering on every hand. It is true that in the din of a thousand confused noises there is heard the voice of those who speak of a new world order, who assure us that this war will bring lasting peace and equity to the whole world, but their assurances are not very convincing. God is bringing to nought the wisdom of the wise, a wisdom of this world, of mere man; and he is destroying the understanding of the prudent. And loudly He proclaims that He is coming to judge the world in righteousness, and the peoples with equity!

Upon the believer the present catastrophe should have a sanctifying influence through the grace of God. Especially should he learn to turn his eyes away from the things that are seen, in order to fix them stedfastly upon the things that are not seen; to seek the things that are above, rather than the things which are on earth; to expect his Saviour from heaven, "who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." There is, indeed, room for and need of a conversion of this kind among the people of God. We were worldly-minded. There was a mad rush after the things of this world. We were setting our hearts upon the things that are below. But through God's grace we should learn to humble ourselves and to repent of our carnality, and to turn our hopeful gaze on the things that are not seen but are eternal. And times like the present should cause a new interest in the subject of the believer's hope.

The subject has many aspects, and the Lord willing, we expect to treat some of its phases. One can speak of the *object* of the Christian's hope, that which he hopes for: of our house with God, of our hope of the resurrection, of the hope of Christ's coming, and of the new heavens and the new earth in which righteousness shall dwell. One can speak, too, of the act of hope as such: what is it, whence does it spring, and what is its certainty? And one can consider the hope of the believer in the light of its effect on the Christian's life. This time we will take up just one of these aspects of hope. We will ask the question: what is the hope of the Christian with a view to death, and

to the state immediately after his departure from the present life? And the answer to this question, derived from the Scriptures, is expressed in the theme of this lecture: "Our house of God."

Our theme is taken literally from the Word of God in II Cor. 5:1, where the apostle writes: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." The text serves as a reason for something that was stated in the preceding chapter. The apostle had spoken of the sufferings of the present time, which he, too, endured, as a "light affliction, which is but for a moment", and which "worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." II Cor. 4:17. He could speak thus, not, indeed, when he considered the list of his sufferings, which he had already endured as an apostle of Jesus Christ, all by itself. Then it was not light and brief, but severe and long. But that affliction belonged to the things that are seen. And they are temporal. At them, however, he did not look. He had regard to other things, to those things that are not seen. And they are eternal. For he knew that when the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, he had another house, a house of God, eternal in the heavens.

Let us note here, first of all, that the text throws a peculiar light on the reality of temporal or physical death. It speaks of it as the dissolution of our earthly house. Now, what is meant here by our earthly house? What belongs to our earthly house that is dissolved through death? What happens when a Christian passes through the change of physical death? Many have a rather crude conception of the relation of a man's soul and body. To them soul and body are two separate entities. The soul is simply a spirit that for a time dwells in a physical house with several windows through which that indwelling spirit, the soul of man, has contact with the outside world, the windows of his senses. And physical or temporal death consists really in the fact that the soul separates from the body. Accordingly, when the apostle speaks of the earthly house of this tabernacle that is being dissolved in death, they explain quite simply that the earthly house is the body. that is dissolved because at death the soul leaves it. However, things are not quite so simple as this view would make them appear to be. For, let us note, in the first place, that if our earthly house were the present body and nothing else, it would follow because of the contrast, that the heavenly house refers to the glorious body of the resurrection. The text, then, would merely mean: if this present body is destroyed in death, we have another body through the resurrection. Yet, it is evident that this is not the meaning. The apostle does not speak of the resurrection body at all. He does not refer to the distant

resurrection of the dead. He refers to something that will take place at death. We shall never be without a house, he means to say, If the one house, the earthly, is dissolved, we shall at once have another, the heavenly. But if the heavenly house is not the resurrection body, the earthly house is not merely the body. But secondly, let us note, too, that the apostle is not speaking of the phenomenon of death in general, but very specifically of the death of the Christian. Accordingly, he does not have in mind the more or less philosophical distinction of soul and body. And death, or the dissolution of our earthly house, to him is not simply the flight of the soul from the body. It is more. He has another distinction in mind. Of this distinction he had spoken already in the previous chapter, when he wrote: "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." It is that same distinction which he still has in mind when he speaks of the earthly house of this tabernacle in the first verse of chapter 5. The earthly house is that entire outward man, and when it is dissolved in death the inward man remains, and dwells in a house of God, eternal in the heavens. And that inward man of the Christian cannot be designated by the general term "soul", but is the new, regenerated man in Christ Jesus that can never die. That inward man alone remains through the dissolution of temporal death. All the rest perishes.

Let us ask: what belongs to this outward man that is dissolved at death? To be sure the living, physical organism that is called the body belongs to this earthly house, and may be called its basic part. It includes all that God in the beginning formed out of the dust of the ground, and which He formed into the living soul called man by breathing into it the breath of life. And that makes the earthly house thoroughly earthly. Notice, that the text emphasizes this when it speaks of the earthly house of this tabernacle. It is earthly because it is taken out of the earth. It belongs to the earth. It is earthly in character. Through the body man is limited to the earth in every way. In the body he lives an earthly life, nor could he possibly live the heavenly life in the present body. He is bound to the earth. On the earth he is dependent, and from the earth his earthly house must be sustained and preserved for a time. He eats and drinks earthly things; he breathes earthly air. He has earthly senses, through which he can perceive only earthly things. He has an earthly eye and sees earthly things; an earthly ear, and he hears earthly sounds. And there are things which "eye hath not seen and ear hath not heard". When the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, he is taken out of this earthly world of sense. But there is more. Through the body, he stands in various relationships to the world about him, the relations of home and society, of man and wife, of brother and

sister, of parent and child, of man to man, of employer and employee, of government and citizen. There are relations of friendship and love, as well as of hatred and enmity, that are strictly earthly. They belong to the earthly house of this tabernacle, in which the inward man in the Lord Jesus Christ dwells. Through the dissolution of the earthly house, he is taken out of all these relationships. Then, too, there are the sufferings of this present time, the sufferings in general, and the sufferings for Christ' sake, that can be endured only through the body. It is through the body that the Christian is vitally concerned in the present war; that he is connected with a world that lies in darkness, and hates Christ and those that are His. From that entire world of suffering and persecution he is taken away when the earthly house of this tabernacle finally collapses in physical death.

But even so all is not said. To the outward man of the Christian also belongs all that is of sin. It is in and through the body that he stands related to a human race that is dead in sin and misery. He is renewed in principle; he is justified and sanctified in Christ. Sin no more reigns in him. He is a new creature. But there is still his old nature, marred by deep ruts of sin. The motions of sin are still in his members. And through that sinful nature he stands related to the world and its lusts, exposed to its temptations. He has a battle to fight. Daily he is conscious of sin, and always again he needs forgiveness. Also this sinful nature, connected with a sinful world, belongs to his earthly house. And when the Christian dies, when the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, the new man in Christ forever leaves behind him all that is of sin, and is liberated perfectly from the bondage of corruption!

Hopefully the apostle calls this earthly house a tabernacle. A tabernacle is a tent. It is a temporary dwelling place. When the apostle calls the earthly house a tabernacle, he speaks the language of a pilgrim. He who lives in a tent, does not intend to stay. He purposes to tarry but for a night. He does not build foundations. He merely puts the stakes in the ground, so that he may pull them up as quickly as possible, and continue the journey. That is the apostle's outlook on life. And that is the proper attitude of the believer toward the things of this world. He does not tarry. He does not say to his earthly house that it shall stand for aye. He does not consider it a matter to be deplored that he cannot remain here forever, and that soon implacable death must take him away. He looks forward. He does not consider the things that are seen. And he must go on! For he knows that when the earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved, he shall have another house, of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. And he knows, too, that the dissolution of this earthly house is absolutely



necessary to cause him to dwell in that heavenly house with God.

But will he have a house at all, when the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved? Must he not be unclothed until the morning of the resurrection? There are those that would have it so. They speak of a soul-sleep. Others even present the matter, as if death for a time destroys the entire Christian, so that he will be out of existence altogether until the resurrection shall give him new existence. But Scripture knows nothing of all this. On the contrary, the Word of God teaches plainly that death, though it is called sleep with respect to the body, and with a view to the awakening in the resurrection, is certainly no sleep of the spirit. Man continues to exist, to exist quite consciously, and the believer enters through death into a state of immediate bliss and glory. It is not the final glory into which he then enters. With the church on earth the glorified church in heaven looks for the final adoption unto children, the redemption of the body. Without the redemption and glorification of all the elect, without the redemption of the body in the final resurrection, and without the renewal of heaven and earth salvation is not perfect. But the fact remains that the Bible plainly teaches us that the believers after death and through death enter into heavenly glory. Lazarus of the parable is carried into Abraham's bosom. Luke 16:22. To the malefactor on the cross the Lord says: Today shalt thou be with me in paradise. Luke 23:43. The apostle Paul has a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better. Phil. 1:23. And in II Cor. 5 he teaches us, that we shall never be without a house, but that, when the earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved, we shall have a house of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. And to Martha the Lord Jesus says: He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die John 11:26. For the Christian life is continuous. It is, as if with his earthly house of this tabernacle he already stood in the midst of heaven. Only, his present earthly tabernacle intervenes between his inner man and the heavenly glory. All that is necessary is that his earthly house be dissolved, in order that he may consciously experience the blessedness of the heavenly life.

When we ask the question: what is that heavenly house? it is well for us to remember that we can speak of heavenly things only in earthly terms and language. Scripture gives us the example in this respect. It is expedient for this reason that we do not waste too much time in speculating about the exact locality of heaven. Of course, heaven is a place. And the text in II Cor. 5:1 places this house of God in the heavens. It is not a mere condition; how could it be without being the condition of some existence, and how could there be any kind of existence without existing some-

where? Heaven as it is now belongs to the created universe. Like all the created universe, it has a history. It is now much richer and more glorious than when Abel was there alone. The heavenly throng has constantly increased. And above all, since the glorification of our Lord, Christ is there now, and we look forward to meet Him. But for the rest we had better beware, lest we apply our present earthly conception of space and time to heaven. To present the matter as if the departed soul must travel millions and billions of miles in order to reach heaven, is certainly an idle and vain speculation. Let it be established, that when the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, then we are in heaven: when we close our earthly eyes upon the earthly scene of our present life forever, that moment we shall open them in heavenly glory.

Let us rather concentrate upon the essential character of that heavenly glory. Above all, it is a house of God. And that does not merely mean that God is the artificer and proprietor of that house. He is, of course. He designed it before the foundation of the world. He made it. He owns it. But that is true of all the universe, even also of our earthly house. Rather does it emphasize the fundamentally Scriptural truth that it is the house where God dwells. He dwells there, not as He dwells by Himself as the Triune God, but as He lives in the most intimate fellowship of friendship with all His people in Christ. He dwells there, not as by His mere omnipresence He is in all the universe, and in all things, but as He reveals Himself in the highest possible form, on the heavenly plane, in the face of Christ Jesus our Lord. Heaven is our home with God. There all that separates us from God because of sin and imperfection shall be destroyed, and the fellowship of friendship with the ever blessed God shall be raised to the higher, the highest possible plane of heavenly glory. Here we see as in a glass darkly, there we see Him face to face. We now stand with our backs to God, and gaze at a reflection of Him in a mirror; there we shall look upon His face through our Lord Jesus Christ, and we shall know even as we are known. And in that perfect knowledge we shall be conscious of His unfathomable and eternal loving-kindness, and rejoice in His presence for evermore! The profound yearning expressed in Ps. 42:1 shall then be fully satisfied: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee O God!" That is the central and essential blessedness of heaven! It is the house of God, literally, according to the original: *out of God* with us!

It is not made with hands, and, therefore, it is eternal. The expression that the house of God is not made with hands is figurative. The apostle had spoken of the earthly house as a tent. And a tent is made with hands. So he now speaks of the heavenly house as quite different from a tent: it is not made with

hands. The meaning therefore is that the heavenly house is not transient, it does not pass away, it is not temporary, it is an abiding dwelling place. We shall be conscious of this. We shall not enter that heavenly house because we wish to tarry but for a night, but to enter into the rest, to abide there constantly and forever. For there the inner man finds eternal satisfaction in the presence of God. It will, therefore, be an eternal house, that is, not in the sense in which God is eternal, for we shall never be divine, but in the sense that we shall never be rushed and pursued and haunted by the exigencies of time, for that house is everlasting. The end is no more, neither objectively, nor in the consciousness of them that dwell in that house. There will be fulness of joy there, that will not be spoiled with the thought that soon all will come to an end. For there is no more death there, neither sorrow nor crying. It is the everlasting rest that remaineth for the people of God!

We know this, the apostle says. How radically different is this knowledge from the philosophical speculation about immortality! We know, we are certain, we, the apostles, the church of all ages, the believers personally, are absolutely sure that when the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved *we* have a house of God! That is the knowledge of hope! How do we know? How can we be so sure about this? Surely not from the things that are seen, for the last you see of the believer is his corruptible corpse in the undertaker's parlors. We know this nevertheless. How? To be sure from the Holy Scriptures, the Word of God in Christ. Yes, but how do we know, not merely that the heavenly house exists, not merely that it is for believers in Christ, but it is for me? How can you and I live in that conscious assurance, that when the earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved *we* shall have a house of God? Only because, and only when here our conversation is in heaven! There, in the heavenly house, God dwells with His people. That fellowship with God is the essence of heaven. But how shall you or I be consciously sure of our part with that house of God, if here we are far from Him? There, in the heavenly house, is Christ, as the Firstborn among many brethren. But how shall you or I take the language of the apostle on our own lips concerning the house of God, if here we care not about Christ, neither seek Him? There are the perfected people of God. But how can we possibly have the assurance, or even the desire to enter that house of God, if here we care not for the fellowship of the people of God? There, to sum it all up, it is light, and there is no darkness there. If, then, we would rejoice here in the hope of the eternal house of God we must walk in, the light. No, not *because* we walk in the light, but in the way of walking in the light only, we shall be able to say with the apostle and all the saints: *We know* that when

the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we shall have a house of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens!

H. H.

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## Martyrdom Under the Several Roman Emperors

When Christ sent out His disciples to preach God's gospel, He said to them, "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake." This prediction has been going into fulfillment through the ages without interruption and from the day that it was uttered by the Saviour. Always have the true followers of Christ been hated of all men, of the world that lieth in darkness, for the sake of the Word of God. Now hatred is the will to destroy, so that, according to this saying of Christ, the world is always bent on destroying God's believing people. To achieve its purpose—a purpose which assuredly cannot be achieved—the world, as instigated by the invisible powers of darkness, avails itself of means, the chief of which are slander, speaking all manner of evil against God's people falsely, and laying violent hands on their person, with a view to killing them in the event they persist in their belief. But not always does the world destroy the bodies of the believers. But it did so, intermittently, during the first three centuries of our Christian era. It is to these physical assaults which historians refer when they speak of the persecutions of the church, in particular of the primitive church. When in 313 the world, through the edict of Constantine, was prohibited from troubling the church in this sense, persecutions, it is said, ceased. This cessation of persecutions spelled, it is further maintained, "the victory of the christian religion, the triumph of the church over paganism" so that it can be truly said, such is the reasoning, that "this bloody baptism of the church resulted in the birth of a Christian world". Such phrases—the ones included in the quotation marks—make for fine oratory but they do not bespeak a great deal of realistic thinking. But this is a matter not covered by the title of this essay. Its treatment therefore must be postponed.

Persecutions did not cease. How could they if the world continued to hate the gospel of God and the men and women in whose lives this gospel by the power of God's grace was made to bear fruit. What ceased is the violent form—the destruction of the body—in which this hatred was expressing itself during these centuries.

It is especially this form of persecution of the

primitive church with which we have to do in this period. In treating this subject, we arrange our materials under the following points: 1) The history of this martyrdom; 2) The "why" of it; 3) Its significance.

1. The first Roman emperor to assail the Christians was Nero, a tyrant unspeakably vain, vile, and cruel. He committed crime after crime until he became a veritable monster in iniquity. He murdered his mother (Agrippina), his brother (Britannicus), his two wives (Octavia and Poppaea), his teacher (Seneca), and many Romans of high rank. This career of crime, which lasted nine years, was terminated by suicide in the thirty second year of his age.

Nero's greatest sin was that he cast the blame for the conflagration in Rome upon the Christians to free himself from the general suspicion of the crime, that he then ordered their persecution and murdered a crowd of them in sheer sport. The horrible story is quickly told.

It was in the year 64 that a fire broke out in Rome which reduced more than half of the city to ashes. For six days the fire raged, consuming the wooden houses of the poor, and besides these numberless palaces and important buildings. Only four of the fourteen regions of Old Rome remained untouched by the flames. It was not known how this tremendous fire had started. Men therefore had to guess at the cause and their thoughts turned to the demon master of the Roman empire. It was known that for a long time he had been dreaming of a new Rome reconstructed on a vastly enlarged scale. Could he not have resorted to this method for clearing away the old Rome, in particular that portion of it where the streets were narrow and the buildings ancient and squalid? The truth will never be known. But there were rumors in the air, all of which pointed to Nero as the author of the calamity; and they were being believed by the populace. It was then that it occurred to the dark mind of Nero to divert the suspicions of the people from himself by throwing the blame of the crime upon the Christians. He subsequently ordered the Christians to be apprehended and brought to trial.

The police of Rome addressed themselves to their newly imposed task with a will. Many of God's people were sought out. These, says Tacitus, a Roman historian, confessed—confessed certainly, not that they had set fire to Rome, but that they were Christians. For as the investigation of the government was prolonged, it was found that the charge of incendiarism could not be proven. Hence, they were convicted and put to death simply on the general charge of "hatred of mankind". Soon all pretence of their connection with the recent great fire was dropped, and they were condemned on their confession that they were Christians,

But this is not all. It was then also that Nero conceived of the idea of converting the punishment of the Christians into an amusement for the populace. First, on a day, a long line of the condemned were marched round the interior of the great open-air theatre. This was followed by the "hunting scene"—a game in which the victims were forced into mortal combat with wild beasts. Besides, there were dramatic spectacles, the scenery of which provided by the well-known mythological legends. To illustrate, a Hercules was carried to the funeral pyre and then burned; an Icarus was made to fly, and then fall and be dashed to death; a Prometheus was chained to the rock where he underwent his punishment; a Marsyas was flayed alive; and an Ixion was tortured on the wheel. Other scenes were added too degrading to be narrated. All this took place with the multitude gazing on those tortured with fierce excitement. Then night came and still the games went on, only the scene was changed. The principal amusement now was to be chariot racing. As it was night, there was need of artificial illumination. This was plentifully provided. The torches finally flamed up and every torch was a human being crucified on a cross. Thus were Christian people, covered with pitch or with some other combustible materials and nailed to posts of pine, lighted and burned for the entertainment of the mob.

The number of Christians who died in these persecutions in the city of Rome and in the provinces, to which it was extended by the example set by Nero, is uncertain, there being no statistics. Clement of Rome, whose labors fell in the last quarter of the first century, describes them as "a great multitude".

The burden of blame of this and subsequent persecutions rests heavily also upon the multitudes. God's people were hated of *all* men, as Christ had said, and thus not simply of a few Romans of high position. The hostility of the populace, as we shall see, was at all times so fierce that the least encouragement from the successive emperors brought new persecutions. Even without this encouragement tumultuous violence broke out against the Christians over and over.

The years A.D. 68 (the date of Nero's death) to A.D. 81 formed a period of stillness for the harrassed Christians, though recent investigations point to persecutions by the Roman emperor Vespasian (A.D. 69).

Many Christians, including his own cousin, were put to death and many more sent into exile by the blasphemous Domitian (81-96). It is to the reign of Domitian that tradition assigns the banishment of John to Patmos and the martyrdom of Andrew and Mark.

Trajan (98-116) was one of the best of emperors. But he was the first to pronounce Christianity an outlawed religion. This it had been all along in fact. There had been long in existence rigid laws against

private political clubs or unions for party purposes. These Trajan revived; and the police of the provinces enforced them with respect to the meetings for worship of the Christians.

The friend of Trajan was Pliny, governor of Bithynia in Asia Minor from 109-111, and a statesman and lawyer of great reputation. Pliny, to stop the progress of Christianity, which he regarded as a "depraved and immoderate superstition" had condemned many Christians to death and had sent others, who were Roman citizens, to the imperial court at Rome. But there was a perplexing question troubling him. Among the Christians brought to trial there were some who denied that they had ever been Christians at all; others of the accused, afraid of death, burnt incense before the statue of Trajan and spake evil against Christ.

Pliny was at a loss to know how to proceed against such penitents, whether to set them free without the infliction of some kind of punishment. So he asks the emperor to instruct him. In his missive to his master, he also acquaints him with what he has learned of the life lead by these Christians through an inquiry that he had caused to be made. Had these persons, in the exercise of their strange rites, committed any of the crimes with which they had been so freely charged by their enemies, such crimes as child-murder, cannibalism, and immorality? The results of his inquiries he sent to the emperor. He had found these secret charges of wickedness to be absolutely without foundation. The Christians led simple and innocent lives. He also describes their worship. It was their habit to meet at dawn on a certain day, when they sang hymns together in praise of God as Christ. It was also their custom to vow never to commit theft or adultery. When the service was ended they came together for a simple meal. Trajan replied: You have adopted the right course my friend, with regard to the christians, for no universal rule, to be applied to all cases, can be laid down in this matter. They should not be searched for; but when accused and convicted, they should be punished; yet if any one denies that he has been a Christian, and proves it by action, namely, by worshipping our gods, he is to be pardoned upon his repentance, even though suspicion may still cleave to him from his antecedents. But anonymous accusations must not be admitted in any criminal process; it sets a bad example, and is contrary to our age" (i.e. to the policy of Trajan's government).

The instruction embodied in this correspondence with Pliny was followed by the government for all of a century. It was calculated to occasion extreme severity toward the Christians. It forbade the search for the Christians; yet by demanding their punishment it declared them guilty and their worship a crime. It thus encouraged, nay, rendered imperative what it for-

bade. It was evidently inspired by the thought that Christianity could be suppressed sooner by ignoring it, than by attacking it. Especially in Syria and Palestine did this decision awaken in this reign the fury of persecution. The Jews accused Simon, bishop of Jerusalem, with the result that he was crucified and this at the age of a hundred and twenty years. Ignatius, bishop of Rome was condemned to death. Brought to Rome, he was thrown before the wild beasts in the Colosseum.

The position of the followers of Jesus was made more tolerable by the imperial document of the emperor Hadrian (117-138), which followed the conscript of Trajan but changed some of the directions. In the case of Christian persecution, it demanded concrete evidence and ordered that if the complaining party in the litigation failed to prove his case, he should be severely punished. This change, however slight, served as a check upon the popular fury against the Christians in the provinces. For the first sixteen years of his reign, Hadrian himself interpreted the imperial precedents very gently. But in his last years his feelings toward the Christians changed. The testimony of tradition is that during these years many confessors of Christ suffered martyrdom. Among them was the distinguished bishop of Rome, S. Telesphorus.

In the successive reigns of Antonius Pius (so-called for his conscientious adherence to the pagan religion of his fathers), and Marcus Aurelius (138-180), the dangers to which the Christians were exposed increased in number. The safeguards which rulers like Trajan and Hadrian (they had given orders that mere noisy clamor on the part of the people should not be admitted as a formal accusation of the Christians) had raised against the fury of the mob, were more or less ignored or circumvented. Before the hearing of the accused had begun or was completed, the governors in the provinces were induced by the tumult and shouting of the populace to sanction the execution as in the case of the great Bishop Polycarp.

The second of the two emperors last named, to wit, Marcus Aurelius, went down in history as the noblest of Roman ruler. A philosopher he was, one whose "Meditations" reveal a conscience most acute. Yet, under his reign more Christian blood flowed than was shed in the persecutions of any of his predecessors including Nero.

In the evil days of Commodus (180-193), the vile offspring of Emperor Marcus, the persecution of the Christians was much less severe and general. This was due to two causes. Commodus cared nothing about the ancient pagan religion of his ancestors; secondly, there was at the seat of the Government a strong influence at work in favor of the Christian religion. Marcia, the wife of Commodus, who was a

staunch friend of the Christians, and the many Christian officebearers about the court, possessed vast influence with the Emperor. This period of comparative "stillness" continued until about 202, when a great change for the worse set in under Septimus Severus (193-211). This Sovereign, during the first ten years of his reign, was pleased to tolerate, if not to favor, the Christians. Then a change came over his feelings, perhaps on account of the excesses of the extreme party among the Christians themselves, and he enacted a rigid law against the further spread of Christianity and Judaism. Persecution again became general and also bitter especially in Alexandria, Carthage and other North African centers. "We Christians", wrote Tertullian, "are daily harrassed, tracked out, surprised in our most secret assemblies." His writings contain many a vivid picture of the trials and sufferings of God's people during these sad years.

This state of things continued through the early years of Caracalla (211-217), the son and successor of Severus. After the year 212 the long drawn out persecution gradually ceased and for thirty seven years the church enjoyed a rest interrupted only by the short outbreak of persecution under the Emperor Maximinus (235-238). El-Cabal (218-222) and his successor Alexander Severus (222-235) looked with favor on all religions in the hope of merging them into one. The latter even placed the busts of Abraham and of Christ in his chapel with those of the Roman gods. Maximinus the Thracian (235-238) again resorted to persecution. But Gordianus (238-244) left the church unmolested. And it was even supposed by some that Philip the Arabian (244-249) was a Christian. This period of rest proved detrimental to the spiritual life of the church. The zeal of the Christians cooled and their brotherly love diminished. There was need of another storm to restore the purity of the church. It came with the coming to power of Decius Trajan (249-251).

To Decius the presence of the Christians in Rome, their number and influence seemed one of the principal causes of the decline of the Empire; and in the year 250 he promulgated a persecuting edict demanding return to the pagan state religion. Every possible means was employed to terrify the Christians into returning to the gods of Rome; confiscation, exile, torture, and promises and threats of all kinds. Vast numbers of nominal Christians apostatized, consenting to sacrifice to some Roman deity to escape the loss of their goods or free themselves from the penalty of death. Cyprian Bishop of Cathage, was amazed and appalled at the sight of so many faithless members of his flock rushing to the temples of the gods to burn incense at the heathen alters.

Decius died in a battle with the Goths. The lull in the persecution which followed his death was of short duration. Valerian (253-260), the successor of Decius,

was at first kind and friendly toward the Christians; but after two or three years he changed his policy, and made an effort to check the spread of their religion first by banishment and confiscation of property and, when these measures proved fruitless, by bloodshed.

The next emperor, Gallienus (260-268), left the church undisturbed. He even issued a toleration edict acknowledging Christianity as a lawful religion. This calm continued forty years. It was followed by the last and most violent persecution of all—the Diocletian persecution.

Diocletian (284-305) immediately after coming to power called to his side three subordinate vice-gerents, Maximian, Galerius, and Constantine Chlorus (the father of Constantine the Great), and divided with them his vast empire. In the first twenty years of his reign his policy with respect to the Christians was one of toleration. Then in 303 under the instigation of his cruel and fanatical co-regent and son-in-law, Galerius, he promulgated three persecution edicts of ascending severity. A fourth, the worst of all, was issued soon after by Maximian. The terrible persecution which these edicts initiated lasted ten years. In raged most fiercely in the East under the reign of Galerius and his inhuman nephew Maximim Daza to whom Diocletian before his retirement had intrusted the command of Egypt and Syria. "All the pains, which iron and steel, fire and sword, rack and cross, wild beasts and beastly men could inflict, were employed to "induce the Christians to embrace the official state religion. In this as in former persecutions there was a vast number of apostates, men and women who preferred to save their lives rather than lose them and gain a crown. In 311 Galerius was smitten with a terrible disease. His conscience awoke and he was afraid. Shortly before his death he published in connection with Constantine and Licinius, his colleagues in the imperial throne, an edict of toleration and the persecution ended. A new edict, promulgated in 313, by Constantine, and signed under his pressure by his colleagues, ordered the governors in all the provinces to restore all confiscated property to the body of the Christians at the expense of the imperial treasury, and placed Christianity on a full legal equality with any religion of the Roman world. In 319 heathen sacrifice was forbidden. In the same years the clergy were freed from the obligation of paying taxes to the state; and in 321 the church was granted the right to receive legacies. In 323 Constantine, through defeating his last rival, Licinius, in battle, became the sole ruler of the Roman world. With the defeat of Licinius, who was hostile to Christianity, and whose hostility had grown to persecution, the church was everywhere free from its enemies. But it now found itself largely under the dominion of a new master—Constantine the great, the first Christian occupant of the throne of the Caesars. G. M. Q.



## Israel's Sins

Failing in his attempt to induce the Lord to instruct him to curse Israel, Balaam rises up and goes and returns to his place, Num. 24:25. The loss of the gold after which he lusts inflames his anger. He is burning with hostility toward Jehovah and His people.

As he passes through the country of the Midianites, who dwell on Moab's border, the thought occurs to his dark mind to counsel the heads of these peoples to call the children of Israel to the sacrifice of their gods and this in the consideration that, if the call is heeded, Jehovah in His anger will destroy Israel. With his purpose thus achieved, Balaam will be in a position to claim his reward; and he feels certain that Balak still will want to be generous. The heads of Midian and Moab are contacted and the vile plot is laid.

Flushed with their recent trans-Jordan victories, and reposing in the acacia plains of Moab, the people of Israel are in a dangerous spiritual mood. It is well that they watch and pray; for the tempter is at hand. The camp is being visited by outlandish women—daughters of the Midianites and the Moabites—who invite them to worship at the shrine of their idols. The god to be served is Baal as he is worshipped at Peor, with lustful practice. A god he is in whose honor virgins and women prostitute themselves. Thus one of the chief elements in this worship is whoredom in the literal, physical, sense.

There is present in the camp of Israel a large number to whom such practices are too appealing. "And the people did eat and bow down to their gods. And Israel joined himself to Baal-Peor . . ." (25:2).

Is it Christ who makes the disclosure that the contriver of this plot was Balaam. "But I have a few things against thee," said Christ to the church in Pergamus, "because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication" (Rev. 2:14). So Balaam persisted to the end in his attempt to work Israel's ruin that he might have his gold. In the book of Numbers we last read of him in connection with Israel's enemies, the Medianites, with whom he was slain in battle. "And Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword" (31:8).

Those among the Israelites who heeded this call to pagan worship, committed at least two gross sins: the sins of spiritual and physical whoredom. Both at that time called for the extreme penalty of death. "He that sacrifices unto any other god, save unto the Lord only, he shall utterly be destroyed" (Ex. 22:20). "Then thou shalt bring forth that man or that woman (who served other gods) unto thy gates . . . and shalt stone them with stones" (Deut. 17:2-7). A town guilty of

apostasy shall be destroyed and its inhabitants slain, (Deut. 13:6-11). The sins of prostitution and adultery likewise called for this extreme penalty. There were in all nineteen such sins. Sins they were for which the symbolical typical sacrifices did not avail. The offenders had to be cut off from God's people and removed from His presence through death. So was church discipline operative in the Old Dispensation. The culprit was placed under the ban of God and destroyed. He was made to pay for the gross sin with his life. The ushering in of the New Dispensation affected no *essential* change in this respect. True, the lives of those in the church who grossly offend may now be spared so that it would seem that in the New Dispensation mercy actually triumphs over judgment. Accordingly, it is impossible for the modernist to find in the God whom Christ revealed, the Jehovah of the Old Testament Scriptures.

The Form of Excommunication reads in part, "Therefore we, the ministers and rulers of the church of God, being here assembled in the name and authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, declare before you all, that for the aforesaid reasons we have excommunicated, and by these, do excommunicate N from the church of God, and from the fellowship with Christ, and the holy sacraments, and from all the spiritual blessings and benefits, which God promised to and bestows upon His church . . ." It is, assuredly, just as terrible to be cut off from the church of God and from fellowship with Christ and from all spiritual blessings and benefits which God bestows upon His people as it was to be cut off from the commonwealth of Israel. What can be more difficult for parents when the unrepentant offender is their own flesh and blood than excommunicating from the Christian church? What can be more difficult for us then to hate our fellow man for Christ's sake, if that man be of our own kin? Yet Christ demands it. The difference in severity then is only one of degree.

Israel's sins—the ones he commits in the plains of Moab—call for the extreme penalty of death. Accordingly, the Lord in His anger commands Moses to take all the heads i.e. leaders of the people and hang them up before the sun that His fierce anger may be turned away from Israel, 25:4. The burden of guilt rests most heavily upon the leaders. As usual, the moral contagion started with them rather than with the humble people.

Moses passes on the command to the judges in Israel. They are to bring to trial and slay "every one his man" found guilty. They are severally to execute the sentence upon the guilty belonging to his jurisdiction. The criminals are first slain and then fastened to a pole for exhibition and a curse-offering.

At the same time Jehovah Himself exercises the functions of judge. The camp is being visited by a

terrible plague. Death stalks on every hand as the wrath of God flames against the people. They are sore afraid and stand weeping before the door of the tabernacle. Still the plague ravages on. It seems that the whole congregation is doomed to extinction.

Yet there now occurs the most glaring example of the sin. Zimri, a prince of the tribe of Simeon, leads his illicit lover, a Midianitish woman, with shameless impudence into his tent, in the presence of Moses and of all the weeping congregation.

The woman is a princess. Her name is mentioned even. She is Cozbi, the daughter of Zuri, a head over a people and of a chief house in Midian, 25:15. Zimri, too, is a prince. There is ground for saying that the great evil, here being punished, riots in the upper class in general. It is the great in the camp who set the evil example.

Zimri was a prince out of the chief house of the tribe of Simeon, but the father of Cozbi ruled over several tribes. He was of the chief house of Midian and is called a king. He is numbered among the five kings of Midian, whom the Israelites put to the sword, Nu. 31:8. It shows that the attempt to seduce the people of Israel went out from the rulers of Midian and Moab and that in their eagerness that the plot succeed they were contributing their own daughters and sisters. The burden of guilt rests upon these pagan rulers. They are fully deserving of the doom by which they will shortly be overtaken. The presence of this woman in the camp would also seem to indicate that the purpose was to involve the heads in Israel. It was therefore an extreme case of the grossest outrage that Cozbi should herself be led in clear sunlight, into the sacred camp, to glorify lust. She must have realized that she would not leave this camp alive. The rulers in Midian must have been aware of this. But the plot must succeed or they all are lost. It is better that one or a few die than that the whole nation perish. So these chiefs must have reasoned.

The offence of this woman is so great that at vs. 18 it is again mentioned as forming one of the reasons of the war of extermination which must subsequently be waged against the Midianites. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Vex the Midianites, and smite them: for they vex you with their wives, wherewith they have beguiled you in the matter of peor, and in the matter of Cozbi the daughter of a prince in Midian, their sister . . ." The only explanation of this is that she, a woman of highest station among her people, had operated as a tool of these chiefs and that the task given her was to entice her equals in Israel.

In ordering the war of extermination, the Lord speaks of the Midianites as have beguiled the people of Israel. To beguile is to divert by deception. There is indeed deception to be detected in the method of approach of the Midianites. Firstly, the original text

brings out that the invitation came from the daughters of the Midianites. It was easy for these daughters to strike up an acquaintance with the daughters of the Israelites and through these daughters to ingratiate themselves with the families and especially with the men in the camp. Then would come the invitation to attend the sacrificial feasts of the Midian's god. To oblige these girls, who had proven themselves lovely companions, so generous and fine, these invitations were soon being accepted by an increasing number of Israelites. This, to be sure, was not an accomplishment of a day. And the invitation was not to carnal lewdness but to a sacrificial feast in the acacia and palm groves, to eat and to frolic in their shade. These groves gave a welcome retreat after the long wanderings in a barren wilderness.

But here is where the fall began. The falling away to idolatrous worship and the sins of the flesh were the result. "And the people did eat and bowed down to their gods and Israel joined himself to Baal-peor." It may well be that when these Israelites first went to the groves they were firmly resolved not to kneel before the gods. But they yielded yet only to avoid offending their Midianitish and Moabitish companions. They really meant no wrong. Besides, an idol is nothing, so they may have reasoned with themselves. But their hearts tell them that they have set their foot on a path that leads to ruin.

The end of that way has been reached. Disaster now overtakes them. The anger of God flames against them and the camp is converted into a morgue. And Zimri enters the camp with a Midianitish woman. Moses himself seems to be confounded. Nothing less than the exercise of a holy burning zeal, such as now comes upon Phinehas can stay the tide of corruption and the plague. Phinehas rises up from among the congregation. Taking a javelin in his hand, he pursues the man into his tent, and thrusts both of them through.

The plague is stayed from the children of Israel, —a plague in which there have died twenty four thousand.

The holy zeal that wells up in Phinehas' soul is peculiar to him only at this moment. The command, "slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baal-peor," had gone forth. But it was not being executed or, if so, than only on a small scale. There were sons and daughters to be slain, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives. The true people of God in the camp (all had not defiled themselves, Deut. 4:3, 4) could not bring themselves to slay their own kin. They shrank from this even as believers today shrink from putting under the ban of God their own flesh and blood, when they must. The zeal is lacking. They love their own kin more than Christ. This was true of the people of God in the plains of Moab. Jehovah Himself

must therefore slay the twenty and four thousand. On account of this lack of zeal on the part of the rest, all are deserving of death. So the plague ravages on—until stayed by the zeal of Phinehas. “he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy.”

Phinehas in his great zeal is a type of Christ. He is the true Phinehas. Wholly consumed was He by the zeal of God’s house. He therefore stayed the plague from His people. “Wherefore say (Nu. 25:12, 13), behold I give unto him my covenant of peace: and he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel”. These words were uttered first of all with reference to Phinehas. But in the final instance they can apply only to Christ. He was zealous for God, and made atonement for our sins. Therefore He has the covenant and His seed after Him. And His seed are we.

Now just a few words on the significance of this event in the next issue.

G. M. O.

## Rationalism and Christian Logic

It is with some hesitancy that the author of these lines undertakes to write on the above-captioned subject and that for two reasons, which both hinge on the nature of the subject. The first is the awareness on the part of his own limited background in the field of this subject. The writer considers himself a novice, one without broad reading knowledge and matured judgement. This does not mean that this article will not reflect the conviction of the writer. On the contrary, the writer is firmly convinced that the lines drawn in this article lead us in the right way for our christian thinking. Another reason for hesitating to write this article, is that not too many readers of the Standard Bearer will in all probability enjoy an article of this nature. One does not relish writing an article, which at best, very few read. However, since I entertain the secret hope, that at least my minister-colleagues will be interested in this subject, plus our theological students, I will proceed in the attempt of a treatment worthy of the subject.

Looking at the formulation of the subject, we notice that it is stated in the most general form. If treated in its full scope and import, literally books could be written on the subject, as indeed, there have been. Our discussion must therefore of necessity be limited to one distinct phase of the subject.

Permit me to affirm at the outset, that, as will be evident to the careful observer, the terms “Rationalism” and “Christian Logic” have something in common.

For only that which has something common is easily confused. However, I hasten to add, that these terms are not identical in their denotation. Both proceed from a very distinct principle and motivation. And, as we shall undertake to demonstrate, they are in their methodology diametrically opposed.

It is to this distinctiveness of “Christian Logic” as distinguished from “Rationalism” that I solicit your attention.

That there is great need of clarification on this point, none who have given serious thought to this matter would deny. This is true, when taking the subject in the abstract, and considered apart from any concrete case in point. It is the *sine qua non* of all correct reasoning and debate. During the past decade and a half, time and again the need of clarification became obvious in the common-grace controversy. Repeatedly the Rev. H. Hoeksema c.s. were accused of “rationalism” when they insisted that Scriptural truths were not self-contradictory. As recently as 1941 Dr. C. Van Til spoke in his paper on “Common Grace” in this tenor of the stand of the Revs. H. Danhof and H. Hoeksema, while, it must be said, that Van Til stated that the stand of the Synod of 1924 was that irrationalism.

In the light of these facts, serious minded persons who are not satisfied with a bald assertion, and who nevertheless wish to know the truth and meet the challenge, are necessitated to place themselves before the question: Is the insistence on *Logical Consistency* tantamount to “*Rationalism*”?

Hence, our task at hand is clear. A proper treatment of this matter will necessitate a clear-cut definition of the “terms” in our subject. Should one disagree with our definitions on good grounds and authorities, we, of course, stand corrected. We will therefore first define the term “rationalism” and then “christian logic”.

What is the common opinion of the perennial philosophy called “rationalism”? I will quote from ‘Fleming’s Vocabulary of Philosophy’. On page 420 we read: “RATIONALISM, in philosophy, is opposed to *sensualism*, *sensuism*, or *sensism*, according to all which, all our knowledge is derived from sense. It (rationalism, G.L.) is also opposed to *empiricism*, which refers all our knowledge to sensation and reflection, or experience. According to rationalism reason furnishes certain elements, without which experience is not possible. . . .” The reader does well to bear in mind, that the distinction between these views “in philosophy” is not religious at the bottom at all, but is a question of the relation between the *subject* and *object* of knowledge. Both deny the need of revelation. The beginner in studying philosophy does well to bear this in mind.

It is to this latter fact, that Dr. H. Dooyeweerd has reference when he calls this entire system, which does not reckon with God's revelation in Christ, "Immanentie-Philosophie". Writes Dooyeweerd "Wij nemen hier dus het woord immanentie-philosophie niet in de enge gebruikelijke beteekenis van wijsbegeerte, die alle werkelijkheid immanent aan het bewustzijn vat (philosophic rationalism, G.L. in iedere brug tusschen de menselijke bewustzijns functies en een "extra-mantale werkelijkheid" heeft afgebroken, doch in den breedten zin van alle wijsbegeerte, die haar Archimedisches punt immanent in het wijsgeerig denken zelve zoekt, onverschillig hoe dit wijsgeering denken dan nader wordt opgevat, 't zij in rationalistischen, 't zij in irrationalistischen, 't zij in metaphysischen, 't zij in transcendentiaal logischen zin, 't zij in psychologischen, 't zij in historischen zin." Wijsbegeerte Der Wetsidee, Deel I, page 17.

They all fall under the verdict of not asking for the light of revelation. We have in mind "rationalism also in this broader sense of the word. Very aptly this is defined in Fleming's Vocabulary of Philosophy as follows: "Rationalism, in religion, as opposed to supernaturalism, means the adoption of reason as our sufficient and only guide, exclusive of tradition and revelation."

To this we can add the judgment of Dr. H. Bavinck, in his Gereformeerde Dogmatiek, Deel I, Paragraaf 7 where he treats of the "Principia In De Wetenschap". Writes he: "In welke verschillende vormen dit rationalisme (see quotation from Dooyeweerd) ook is opgetreden, het heeft toch altijd ééne grondgedachte n.l. dat de oorsprong der kennis te zoeken is in het subject". To state it more concisely and clearly than it is stated by Bavinck is not well possible. It gives us rationalism in a nut-shell.

We now turn to defining the term "Christian Logic".

Turning to the term *christian logic*, it is imperative that we first define the term "logic". For a correct understanding of this entire matter, it is of primary importance to distinguish between "Pure" or "Formal Logic" and "Material" or "Applied Logic". Formal logic is a science, dealing with the Laws of correct thinking. It "is conversant only with the Pure or Formal Laws of thought, and does not concern itself with the material truth of any proposition, "Material Logic" is conversant with the material conceptions of various sciences and endeavours to apply formal laws to the attestation of truth or knowledge."

Pure Logic has been defined as "Logic is the Science of the Formal and Necessary Laws of *Thought as Thought*". Thus Hamilton Ueberweg gives the following definition: "Logic is the Science of the Regulative Laws of Human Knowledge. See "Elements of Logic" by James H. Hyslop.

The modifying term "christian" in our subject also must be defined. We do not believe that there are christian "laws of Thought as Thought" in distinction from non-christian laws. Regeneration is not a new "faculty", but it gives a new "habitus" to the mind and will. The christian's mind is of "one blood" with the non-christian in the Formal processes of Thought as Thought. The laws of correct thinking are not an arbitrary asset, but they belong to the very nature and fabric of the mind of man. I am now speaking of "Formal Logic". Both christians and non-christians must think. "Thought" is logical. It is always the predicating of something to a subject (object?). It deals with "conceptions", the forming of "judgements" and further of "reasoning".

All these elements of Formal Logic are both in "Rationalism" and in "Revelational-Thinking" i.e. one having the content of his thinking determined by God's revelation. To see the distinction we must turn to the Applied Logic in the concrete and practical. We must turn to Logic as an "art". The one Scripture denominates as the "minding of the flesh", the "natural mind" and other is the "spiritual mind". We here have man in the Actual thing processes, in the "conceptions-formed" the "judgements made", as these are determined either by faith in the Son of God or unbelief and disobedience to the Son. The question is a religious one at the bottom. This appears from such classical Scriptural passages as John 7:17, "If any man willeth to do this, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or (whether) I speak of Myself". Rom. 1:18-23 speaks for itself as does also Eph. 4:14, 17-19 and II Peter 3:5.

I believe that the difference between "rationalism" and "Christian Logic" can be demonstrated by formulating two syllogisms. Rationalism says: *The logical is true*. The Christian says: *Revealed truth is logical*. The concepts "truth" and "logical" are not interchangeable as subject and predicate. The following will demonstrate this.

1. Light is a creature. 2. God is light. 3. God is a creature. This is perfectly logical, but it is not true. Do I know this from the syllogism? No, only from the Word of God, His revelation

Here is a syllogism which is also logical and true. 1. All creatures are dependent. 2. Man is a creature. 3. Man is dependent. How do I know this to be true? Because it is logical? No, because the Word of God teaches it. I read this in such passages as Col. 1:11, "and in Him all things consist". Also in such passages as Matthew 6:25-34 and Acts 17:28 where we read: "in Him we live and move and have our being." Christian logic does not believe that the Bible affirms and denies the dependancy of the creature, and that both would be true. Scripture study does not lead to logical absurdity!

## The Criterion of a Miracle

In treating a subject involving the conception of a miracle we are immediately confronted with an extremely difficult and much debated problem. Not only has the subject been heatedly debated between the rationalist and the believing theologian, but also Biblical theologians have struggled long and hard among themselves about such questions as whether the miracles were: natural or supernatural; mediate or immediate; or by secondary causes conformed to laws of nature, accelerations, or breaches of these laws; creations or performed with existent matter; special providence or miraculous interposition.

In order to arrive at some kind of conception it seems desirable not to begin with the study of the recorded miracles individually and collectively for then we find such a great variety from many points of view that no classification and generalization seems valid. (For an attempt at definition see Smith's Bible Dict. Vol. III p. 1962, or Bruce's "The Miraculous Elements in the Gospels", p. 43-78).

Therefore, a better method would seem to be to find, if possible, the purpose (which may be considered a very good rule for any approach to the works of God) for this purpose will govern the design of the means. So we may be able to work backward to the understanding of the miracle and then its criterion.

On the foreground may stand the fact that the miracle is a sign. This is already expressed in the words used as, e.g. "a portent", "a power", "a wonder", "a sign". More concretely, Moses' mission is accredited to the elders by several signs; the distinction made between Egypt and Goshen is a sign; the destruction of Korah's company; the dividing of Jordan for the tribes, etc. These are a few of the many.

In the second place we may see that they are signs specifically of God's presence, working and intervention. But here we must of course qualify, because this can be said of all God's works. And so we add a third. They are further, namely, signs of God's *saving* intervention. In Ps. 105:4-8 and 106:1-8 this is clearly taught; further in Heb. 2:3-6 the signs, wonders, miracles and gifts are witnesses of the power of the coming world which was then setting in; and in Isa. 7:14 the signs of Israel's salvation is the Son born of a virgin and appearing in poverty, and His casting out devils is a sign that the Kingdom of God has come, and so all the miracles are signficatory of spiritual realities. Especially the raising of Lazarus is at length explained thus by our Lord in John 11. In this connection this word is wholly justified, for the natural is first, then the spiritual. Everywhere Scripture teaches us that there is a fixed cause of natural things (the promise to Noah, e.g.), and yet

We confess the Articles of Faith our belief in God triune, that is that He is *one* in *essense* and three in persons. Is this logical? Strictly logical. Do we therefore confess it? No, we do not. We confess this even as it is so singularly stated in question 25 of the Heidelberg Catechism. "Because God hath so revealed Himself in His Word, that these three distinct persons are the one only true and eternal God".

In the "Ninety Nine Theses" Luther says (47) "Nulla forma syllogistica tenet in terminus divinis". No syllogistic form is of force (normative value) in Divine terms. Luther evidently is employing technical language when he speaks of Divine *terms*. We understand "term" to mean "concept" and as an active process in the mind "conception". Says James H. Hyslop in the above named work "For the purposes of Logic a *concept* is the same as a *term*. In itself it is to be viewed from the mental side, and represents the ideal rather than the symbolical element in thought". We take a "term" to be an expressed "concept". Again (48) "Non Tamen ideo sequitur, veritatem Articuli Trinitatis repugnare formis syllogisticis". It does not follow, that the truth of the Articles of the Trinity conflict with the syllogistic forms.

That the great reformer distinguishes between Christian Logic and Rationalism is clear from (49). "Si form syllogistica tenet divinis articulus Trinitatis erit scitus et non creditus." We translate: If the syllogistic form has force (validity as a criterion of truth G. L.) in the Article of the Trinity it would be knowledge and not faith. Therefore Luther proceeds to tell us, that Aristotle can not help us in the "art" of Logic. He has only syllogistic forms, but no "divine terms" i.e. concepts, such as God, creation, sin, the law of God, the Covenant etc. Says Luther (50) "Breviter, totus Aristotel ad theologiam est tenebrae ed lucem. Contra Scholasticos." i.e. Briefly the whole Aristotle is to theology what darkness is to light. Again he says (53) "Usitatiores definitiones Aristotelis videntur petere principium". i.e. The more used definitions of Aristotle seem to beg the question.

In conclusion permit us to remark, that to determine whether one is a rationalist we must not ask, whether one wishes to maintain Logical Consistency or not, but whether the concepts employed are those which God has revealed in a given case. Taking rationalism in the broader sense (see above quotation from "De Wijsbegeerte Der Wetsidee") those maintaining the irrationalistic position of the self-contradictory fall under the verdict of rationalism. It reflects confused thinking to identify "logical consistency" with "rationalism". It is not at all impossible that those maintaining "Contradictions" in Scriptural concepts are rationalists.

May these efforts in some measure clarify our thinking.



there is another power, impossible of explanation from the natural, which breaks into creation. That is the power of the coming world, the power of the resurrection, which has come into this natural world supernaturally by the Incarnation. In that great intervention of God is rooted the world of redemption and regeneration. Although the exact distinction may be hard to define as to scope, yet this is the teaching of Scripture. Thus it is that Christ says: "He that believeth in Me, the works that I do shall he do also and greater works than these shall he do because I go to the Father and He will send down upon the believing prayer all things they ask in faith—grace upon grace. John 14:12-15. That is; the signified realities of regeneration, faith, hope and love, etc., are greater than the stupendous signs which Jesus did to signify and confirm them because they belong to a higher world.

Now in harmony with the promises and realization of that heavenly kingdom there are given signs and tokens which are designed for signification and confirmation of these things that are largely unseen and invisible. Therefore they are portentous, marvelous, impressive, designed to strike the eye and the mind as unusual. And here we must not make the mistake of attempting an over-scientific distinction between marvelous and not-marvelous, for then we will conclude that all things are marvelous. But thus in our technical approach we overlook the fact that Scripture uses the language of popular discourse and that it uses precisely terms that characterize the miracles as stupendous and marvelous. Therefore we must retain and use the term and the distinction. They fit with the marvelous, stupendous, supernatural things of the new and heavenly kingdom.

In the light of this approach we can view the many questions that revolve around the miracles and I believe it makes many of the solutions easier. He may, e.g., ask, are they natural or supernatural, and the answer is determined by the connotation of the two words. They are surely not supernatural but natural (not naturalistic of course) if the above distinction is used. They are supernatural if we use the vague, indefinite denotations of the old theology as "wat uit de krachten en naar de wetten der geschapene dingen niet te verklaare is" and mean thereby things we cannot account for. But not if understood as the influence of a will of a rational being upon a lower self-regulating order of nature.

Are they mediate or immediate. The great variety in Scripture seems to allow either conception. However the means, be it ever so evident, never is raised to a secondary cause next to God, as this is the case in ordinary events.

Are they wrought by God's power or also by men? They are always ascribed to God in Scripture. "If I

by the finger of God cast out demons then is the kingdom of God come unto you, Luke 11:20; God Himself bearing witness with signs and wonders and powers, Heb. 2:4; not the apostles but the name of the Son of God, Acts 3:12-16.

Are they a breach in or suspension of the laws of nature? We know so little of the created laws of nature that our written formulations of them are only provisional. There is no need of assuming any kind of breach or interruption or suspension and all depends on our idea of "laws of nature".

Are they new creations or performed with existent matter? Again we may say that creation in the strict sense is confirmed to six days. It is possible that God by His almighty power changes the already existing element at will.

Finally, what must we think of the miracles performed by means of the enemies: The Egyptian Magi, Witch of Endor, Simon Magus, the devil, the demons, Anti-Christ? In answer, I think we may grant some of these as true, others as false.

In connection with especially this last group we must emphasize (1) that they are always accompanied by God's Word of revelation, (2) that they are always completely under the control of the power which He claims, and any pretention of sinners or enemies of His cause, or any power they may perform by His permission is completely put to shame and Himself vindicated and glorified.

This leads us naturally to the discussion of the criterion of miracles or alleged miracles. And in order to keep the point clear we must distinguish from marvelous answers to prayer. These of course are abundantly testified in every age and land. But we ask whether a test is possible to determine true miracles from pretended or alleged.

We may answer by pointing to the great difference between the N.T. miracles and the alleged later miracles. A few things characterizing the N.T. miracles are: 1. They were completely under the control of those authorized to perform them. 2. They were open to the examination of all. 3. They were not denied by the enemies. 4. They were recorded at the time when most of the witnesses still lived. 5. They were strictly beneficent acts. 6. They were so abundant that many are left unrecorded. 7. Christ refused to use them for popular display "give a sign" though He was perfectly able to do so. So essential it was to accompany them continually with the interpretive Word of Revelation, and so definite was His program as revealed of the Father.

In the light of the great contrast between these characteristics and those of the so-called later miracles and also because of the indecision of the authorities in Church History on the question of whether there are later miracles, we may, I believe, say that there

are not true miracles after the Apostolic revelation is closed. For also the so-called miracles of the present day are mere charlantry, always hold the primary place and are profuse and ostentatious instead of subservient to the far greater Word of revelation.

And this brings us to the main criterion of a miracle. It must, namely, come under the complete control of the Word of God. This is already layed down as a rule before there was a fixed written revelation and when miracles were quite customary and much used as confirmation of the Word. For we read in Deut. 13:1-66, "If there arise in the midst of thee a prophet or a dreamer of dreams and he give thee a sign or wonder and the sign or wonder come to pass whereof he spake, saying, Let us go after other gods, thou shalt not hearken to his words for Jehovah proveth you to know whether ye love Jehovah your God . . . shall be put to death because he hath spoken rebellion against Jehovah your God who brought you out of Egypt." Similar to this is the tremendous challenge of the apostle Paul: "Though an angel from heaven bring you another gospel, let him be accursed." Gal. 1:8.

This then leaves us with the question of the lying wonders of false prophesy or of the Anti-Christ. Matt. 24:24; II Thess. 2:9; Rev. 13:13; Rev. 16:14. Of these we may say that they are lying wonders for deception and display, although we must not underestimate their power and impressiveness. Think of the Egyptian magi, the witch of Endor, Satan's power over Job, the demons of Christ's time . . . and we must indeed be prepared for them.

But our preparation is the written Word of God. That is the criterion of those miracles. On the basis of its teaching we can in general test any other teaching or pretense, we can safely refuse to expect any other miraculous confirmation of that complete and closed testimony of God, and clinging closely to that word we shall need no help from anyone who comes with other credentials than the sober knowledge of God's written Word.

And so we will live by that finished word alone not expecting God to speak again until that day when His almighty voice shall call living and dead before His judgment and that voice accompanied by the sign of the Son of man as the lightning that shines from one end of heaven to the other end thereof. Matt. 24:30; Luke 17:24.

A. P.

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Hark! the glad sound! the Savior's come!  
 The Savior promis'd long!  
 Let ev'ry heart prepare a throne,  
 And ev'ry voice a song.

## Training Our Sunday School Teachers

Another page of valuable Standard Bearer wasted, someone will likely say as he pages through this issue and finds there an article on the Sunday School. I can almost hear such an one mumble about, "Dat ongereformeed ding" . . . and our Prot. Ref. magazine writing about it . . . waar gaat het heen enz. etc. I am so sorry to have disturbed you.

But the Standard Bearer has a way of writing about all kinds of things and that is perhaps as it should be in a country such as ours. Besides that, there are many people in our movement who do favor a Sunday School, and they need something too at times. So, if you will kindly compose yourself again, pick up your paper and . . . page over.

I am in favor of a Sunday School, that is, I believe there is room for such an organization in the society curriculum of the healthy church life. I believe in fact it is a very useful organization especially in such circles where the children get no daily christian school instruction (are you reading this yet?).

But a Sunday School can be such a useful organization only when it has a staff of good teachers.

And that brings me to my subject. For I was not to write about whether or not we should have Sunday Schools, but about having good teachers, and more particularly about training them. So the Standard Bearer is bold enough to presume that we do have Sunday Schools and inquires now about the training of the teachers who give instruction there.

### *Should They Have Training?*

We have no seminaries where the Sunday School teachers get special training to equip them to teach our children. Very often the teachers have had very little concrete training when they conduct their first class. Most of their training consists of practice teaching and actual experience.

But should they have any actual training before they start to teach our children?

We could perhaps best approach this question by asking that other question, namely, what is required of teachers?

A competent Sunday School teacher must have at least three qualifications.

Her (or his) first qualification is this, that she must have a rather comprehensive knowledge of the Bible. The Bible is the center of her work and to aptly teach any part of it one ought to have a summary knowledge of the whole of it. This will prevent them from contradicting themselves and gainsaying one week what they with such emphasis drove home last week. It will help them give a unified explanation of the lesson. We do not want our teachers to fall into

the evil of reducing the Sunday School lesson to a Topical Talk, an evil which is becoming very great in our days and an evil which in many instances the pulpit has taught them. To avoid the danger of such topical talks and superficial explanations the teachers must have a comprehensive knowledge of the Bible.

The second qualification such a teacher must have is a correct knowledge and deep love for the Reformed Faith, more particularly as it is taught in the (in our) churches. To fail in this point will surely bring misery and instead of edification it will bring grief. Besides, if a teacher does not abide by the truth as it is preached in the church, it is a source of great danger to the children. Hence the teachers should be well acquainted with the doctrine as it is expressed especially in the Heidelberg Catechism, the Thirty Seven Articles and the Canons.

The third qualification is the knack, the know-how of getting the lesson across to the children or to the class. This is no doubt an art in which precious few of us attain to any degree of excellency. For that is an immensely difficult task. It is not so difficult to stand before the class and tell it in such a manner that it leaves an impression, so that when the teacher checks up later he finds that he has succeeded in driving home the main point of the lesson. If we shall therefore teach with any degree of success we must have the capacity to transfer what there is in our minds to the minds of the children. The teachers must have some sense of psychology and pedagogy (knowing what a child's mind is, how it acts and re-acts and how to find entrance into that mind) and must know how to use the best means at the best time to get the material across. The teacher must be resourceful, that is, she must present her material now in one way then in another way and sometimes in none of these ways. On a rainy day she may have to use different methods than on a sunshiny day; toward the end of the session she may have to apply different methods than at the beginning of the session etc., etc. To get the day-dreaming Jimmy and the slow-thinking Billy along with the alert Betty is a task which requires great skill. When I worked on the farm I learned how hard it is to work with young horses. Well, the teacher's task with the children is by no means more simple. And with this all comes the problems of sin and resultant call for discipline and good order.

Therefore the teacher must know how to get the class along with her so that they all together more or less get the benefit of the prepared lesson.

Since such things are required it is evident that the teachers do need training.

#### *How To Be Obtained*

We have no schools where prospective teachers

can take pre-courses in Sunday School teaching. The ideal is that our teachers must be trained but we have no special training schools to that end. Many of the teachers have had schooling perhaps, and some of them are already school teachers. But this applies to some only, not nearly to all.

Hence we shall most likely have to resort to the next best system of training. I would like to discuss a three-fold training system: The gradual, the special and the experimental.

The gradual training is very important and is basic to all the rest. It runs over a course of years and consists in the gradual instruction and indoctrination which such a person receives through the ministry of the church. When a Sunday School chooses a teacher it shall be careful to select one who has had this training, one who has faithfully attended the services and has been regular and active in catechism and has made confession of the faith. That is a great part of her training. In this training process the minister himself plays the great part, since both the regular services and the catechisms are under his charge. He does not necessarily teach with a view to making Sunday School teachers out of them, but for several of his catechumens the work he expends upon them becomes their training for future teaching in the Sunday School. Through this training they acquire a knowledge of the Bible, a conception of the truth, a system of doctrine, which will stand them in good stead come the time they themselves begin to teach. It might be well therefore that the teachers' training be not considered complete or adequate until they have covered the system of doctrine as set forth in the Three Formulas of Unity. We must have teachers who know the truth and are able to convey it to others.

The special training is acquired chiefly by means of the Teachers' Meetings, and very often this meeting also is conducted by the local pastor. At these meetings the teachers discuss the particular lesson and discuss ways and means of teaching that less next Sunday. Any other matters of class work and teaching may be brought up at that meeting and it stands to reason that these get-togethers are important training for the Sunday School teachers. It is also required that the teachers attend and take part in them to the end that each teacher may benefit and in turn be benefitted by the other. Matters of doctrine or discipline (psychology or pedagogy) may be discussed here, methods of approach may be treated here, etc., etc. In short, the teachers' meeting is an important factor in the training of the Sunday School teacher. And the superintendent of the Sunday School (if such there be) plays an important part in seeing that this training be provided as much as possible.

Finally there is the experimental training. Learning, by your teaching, learning as you go, learning

from experience. Given careful application to the work and a few years of actual teaching, an excellent teacher can develop. For experience is a good teacher. Shall the teacher profit from experience, her heart must be in the work, she must exercise herself in making careful study of each new lesson and experiment with the different methods of approach. Reading a book or two on teaching is also a valuable aid to get more out of her experience.

These things I believe should be included in the training of the Sunday School teachers.

The better trained they are, the more effective their work. And in this work as well as in all such work the Lord requires the best.

M. G.

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### KERSTLIED

God zij in de heemlen eer,  
Nu de Heiland is geboren!  
Daalt met uw Hosanna's neer,  
Englen! zingt voor sterflijke ooren!  
Nu Gods Zoon in 't vleesch verscheen,  
Wordt er in zijn Naam gebeen.

Doodsnacht heerschte heinde en ver,  
Angstig dwaalden alle volken:  
Maar daar tintelt Jakobs ster  
Door de zwarte jammerwolken:  
Zonde en vloek en dood verdwijnt,  
't Licht des eeuw'gen Levens schijnt.

Hij, die in de kribbe ligt,  
Zal Gods volheid openbaren;  
't Gruwelrijk des duivels zwicht;  
In de harten staan d' altaren,  
En de vlam des boozen haats  
Maakt voor 't vuur der liefde plaats.

Keer, o Jezus! in mijn hart!  
Word, o word ook daar geboren!  
Heilig mij door vreugde en smart!  
Laat me U eeuwig toebehooren!  
Zinge ik stervend nog uw eer:  
Aard en hemel looft den Heer'.

## Calvin's Four Kinds of Grace

It is generally maintained by the defenders of the doctrine of "Common Grace" that Calvin, the father of Reformed theology, also believed in a grace of God that was common to all mankind. They have even gone so far as to maintain that Calvin believed in four kinds of grace. They are enumerated as follows: Universal Common Grace, which God bestows on all creatures; General Grace, a grace which God bestows upon men as men; Covenant Grace, which is common to God's elect and all those who live in the covenant sphere; and Saving Grace, which God bestows unto salvation, unto the elect only. ("Calvin on Common Grace". by Dr. H. Kuiper, p.p. 179, 180). They have also been classified as common, Common Grace; Common Special Grace; and Special Grace. It cannot be denied that if one seek support, in Calvin's writings for the present day theory of "Common Grace", that there are certain expressions, in the writings of this eminent Reformed theologian, which apparently would lend themselves for this purpose. Even the Pelagians, in the days of Calvin, quoted from the writings of Augustine to support their doctrine of the free-will. It cannot even be gainstaid that these arduous supporters and defenders of the theory of "Common Grace" have been able to glean some chaff from the voluminous writings of this great reformer in defense of their doctrine. One marvels at the fact how these enthusiasts seek out this chaff and grasp every straw, while ignoring, or even loathing, the many golden kernels of grain emphasizing God's sovereign grace, which are so pentiful in the writings of this great scholar.

One of these enthusiasts is compelled to admit, after a very painstaking study of Calvin's works that in all his writings "there is not a single passage which gives something like a comprehensive view of the whole subject". (idem. p. 177). This writer continues "So we must proceed without the aid of such a standard passage. And meanwhile our difficulty is increased by the fact that Calvin sometimes (?) (B. K.) makes statements, which at first glance at least, seem to contradict what he teaches in other places concerning common grace, and by the lack of technical terminology in Calvin's writings". (idem. p. 177). Note especially the word *sometimes* in the sentence quoted above. There is hardly a paragraph in Calvin's writings which does not contradict the present day theory of "Common Grace". Therefore the defenders of this doctrine find themselves confronted with hopeless contradictions in the writings of this Reformed scholar. The writer quoted above first speaks of 'seeming contradictions', but later on in his book this same writer accuses Calvin, not of 'seeming contradictions', but of

real contradictions. We quote; "With regard to these contradictions we readily acknowledge that they are not merely seeming contradictions. They are real contradictions. We may as well try to budge a mountain of solid granite with our finger as endeavour to harmonize these declarations. There is nothing left for us but to agree that Calvin's writings contain irreconcilable paradoxes". (idem. p. 223). Not Calvin, but the defenders of the theory of "Common Grace" involve themselves in hopeless contradictions. This is mercy, or kindness of God, which in the last analysis, due to the fact that they speak of a certain grace, love, according to their own admission, is not grace, love, mercy, or kindness at all. This is evident from the following quotation from the above named writer; "Calvin sometimes declares that God loves only the elect believers who are one with Christ. At first sight such declarations appear to be flat contradictions of what he teaches in other passages to the effect that God loves also men who do not belong to the circle of the elect . . . Besides, there need be no cause for wonder that Calvin sometimes writes as though only the elect are the objects of God's love. For that love which God manifests toward the believers exclusively so far surpasses the love which God bestows on non-elect men that, when the two are compared, it hardly seems proper to term the latter love." (idem. p. 215). We would ask Dr. H. Kuiper if the love (?) which God bestows on non-elect men cannot be properly termed *love*, then what is it? If it cannot be properly termed love, for the above named reason, then for the same reason it cannot be properly termed grace, goodness, or mercy.

There is, I believe, a far better way of explaining these seeming contradictions in the writings of Calvin. It is true that Calvin often speaks of the love, goodness, mercy and beneficence of God in connection with the reprobate ungodly, while on the other hand he repeatedly emphasises that God loves, and is gracious only to the elect believers who are one with Christ. This is, however, no contradiction if we keep in mind that whenever Calvin speaks of the love, grace and goodness of God in respect to the reprobate ungodly, he speaks of these as divine qualities or attributes, but never as a gracious attitude. And the reason why Calvin always emphasises this innate goodness, love and grace of God in connection with the reprobate ungodly is that they should be without excuse. For them the goodness, love and grace of God is never a blessing, but rather an increase of condemnation.

Let us now briefly examine the various kinds of "Common Grace" which are attributed to Calvin. The teachings of Calvin on divine Providence are usually referred to by the exponents of "Common Grace" as Universal Common Grace which God bestows on all creatures. They refer, among others, to the following

passage of Calvin's Institutes; "But if we inquire the reason that induced him first to create all things, and now to preserve them, we shall find the sole cause to be his own goodness. But though this be the only cause, it should be more than sufficient to attract us to love him; since according to the Psalmist there is no creature that does not participate in the effusions of his mercy." Chap. V, par. 6. It is self evident that Calvin here speaks of the goodness of God as an attribute of perfection of God. The very next paragraph, however, clearly indicates that Calvin never intended that the truth of God's Providence should be regarded as signifying an *attitude* of grace over against the reprobate ungodly. In par. 7 of Chapter V, we read; "In the second species of his works, such as happen out of the ordinary course of nature, the proofs of his perfections are equally clear. For he so regulates his providence in the government of human society, that, while he exhibits, in innumerable ways, his benignity and beneficence to all, he likewise declares, by evident and daily indications, his clemency to the pious, and his severity to the wicked and ungodly. For no doubt can be entertained respecting his punishment of flagitious crimes; inasmuch as he clearly demonstrates himself to be the guardian and avenger of innocence, in prospering with his blessing the life of good men, in assisting their necessities, assuaging and comforting their sorrows, alleviating their calamities, and providing in all things for their safety. Nor should it perplex or eclipse his perpetual rule of righteousness, that he frequently permits the wicked and guilty for a time to exult in impunity; but suffers good men to be undeservedly harassed with much adversity, and even be oppressed by the iniquitous malice of the ungodly. We ought rather to make a very different reflection; that, when he clearly manifests his wrath in the punishment of one sin, he hates all sins; and that, since he now passes by many sins unpunished, there will be a judgment hereafter, till which punishment is deferred." Calvin here certainly does not teach that the temporary well-being of the ungodly in this world is to be conceived of as "Common Grace".

The teachings of Calvin that man is a rational moral creature, endowed with the gift of intelligence, able to regulate his present life in the midst of society, and to cultivate the various arts and so-called sciences, are usually referred to as "General Common Grace". These teachings of Calvin are found especially in Chapters 1-4 of the first book of his Institutes. However, when Calvin emphasises that man in his sinful state remained a rational-moral, and intelligent being, he does not do this to show the blessedness of natural man, but to emphasise the greatness of his corruption, and to show that he is wholly inexcusable before God. That Calvin loathed the conception as though there



were any good in man is evident from the following, "For as long as our views are bounded by the earth, perfectly content with our own righteousness, wisdom and strength, we fondly flatter ourselves, and fancy we are little less than demigods. But, if we once elevate our thoughts to God, and consider his nature, and the consummate perfection of his righteousness, wisdom, and strength, to which we ought to be conformed,—what before charmed us in ourselves under the false pretext of righteousness, will soon be loathed as the greatest iniquity; what strangely deceived us under the title of wisdom, will be despised as extreme folly; what wore the appearance of strength, will be proved to be most wretched impotence. So very remote from the divine purity is what seems in us the highest perfection. (Calvin's Inst. Bk. I Chap. 1 Par. 2).

In general we may say that Calvin's teaching concerning the external calling in the preaching of the Word, is usually referred to as Covenant Common Grace, or Common Special Grace. Calvin does emphasise a general calling in the preaching of the Word, but nowhere does he teach a general well meaning offer of salvation. In his Institutes he clearly teaches that God intends the preaching of His Word as a savour of death unto death for the reprobate wicked. For a further study of this question I would refer the reader to the pamphlet of the Rev. H. Hoeksema, "Berkhof, Kuiper and Calvin, A Comparison."

B. K.

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### A PRAYER

Oh, Strongest of the strong! Be Thou the stay  
Of the weak creature that Thy hand has made;  
I am so helpless that each moment brings  
Some new, some pressing reason for Thine aid.

Oh, Wisest of the wise! I nothing know,  
I am so ignorant, so poor, so blind!  
Be Thou my Teacher, be my Light, my Guide,  
Show me the pathway that I cannot find.

Oh, Kindest of the kind! I come to Thee  
Longing for favors that I sorely need;  
Open Thy bounteous hand, for Thou art He  
Whose choice it is to give, in word and deed.

## Ingezonden

Grand Rapids, Michigan  
December 5, 1942

Eerwaarde Redacteur:

Ammuseerde mij deze week door het lezen van de Standard Bearer tot zoo wat halverwege. Ontmoette plotseling een broeder by de naam van Mr. A. Hirdes die naar het scheen zijn gedachten over de C. L. A. wilde uiten en heeft haar onmenschelijk, goddelooslijk en dierlijk gestriemd. Volgens mijn persoonlijk gevoelen is het diepbedroefend dat zulke stukken van zoo laag karakter de censuur passeeren van onze Hoofd-redactie.

Maar ze zien het licht, en al wat de lezers kunnen doen is protesteeren en dat is wat deze eenige regelen bedoelen te zijn.

Onder geteekende laat U bij dezen weten dat hij part nog deel wil hebben met het schrijven van bedoelde broeder.

Misschien wel gemeend maar het ontsiert, verlaagt, bevuilt, berooft en ondermijnt de Standard Bearer wel terdege.

Het kan zijn dat schrijver dezes de eenigste is die hier over struikelt en toch voelt hij zich geroepen zijn stem te verheffen.

Op het terrein van den arbeid en de toepassing van onze beginselen schreit om oplossing en wij Christen arbeiders kunnen eigenlijk geen dag en geen uur wachten.

Maar op een wijze als deze, het wordt al donkerder, de verwarring neemt al toe en ook werkt het schadelijk naar buiten.

Hoogachtend:

A. Folkersma,  
824 Prince St., S. E.

Hier mag ik er aan herinneren, dat ingezonden stukken buiten de verantwoordelijkheid der redactie staan, wat hun inhoud betreft.

Red.

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Boven, in des Vaders woning,  
Wacht u 't rijk genadeloon:  
Zietlen zult gij naast uw Koning,  
Blinkende op den glorietroon.  
Wie zijn smaadheid heeft gedeeld,  
Wordt Zijn heerlijk evenbeeld.