

# THE STANDARD *Bearer* A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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## MEDITATIE

### De Heerschappij Van De Kennis Des Heeren

*En het zal te dien dage geschieden, spreekt de Heere de heirscharen, dat Ik uitroeien zal uit het land de namen der afgoden, dat zij niet meer gedacht zullen worden; ja, ook de profeten, en den onreinen geest zal Ik uit het land wegdoen. En het zal geschieden, wanneer iemand meer profeteert, etc.*

*Zach. 13:2-6.*

Dag der kennis des Heeren!

Het zal te dien dage geschieden! Rijke dag!

't Is de dag, waarin de Heere Zijn Geest zal uitgieten over het huis van David, en over de inwoners van Jeruzalem; de dag, waarop er een groote rouwklage zal gehoord worden, en men bitterlijk weenen zal, omdat men Hem aanschouwen zal, Dien men doorstoken heeft, den God onzer zaligheid. . . .

En te dien dage zal er vergeving verlossing van ongerechtigheid zijn!

Want er zal alsdan eene Fontein geopend zijn voor dat rouwklagende huis Davids, en voor die bitterlijk weenende inwoners van Jeruzalem, tegen de zonde en tegen de onreinigheid!

En op dienzelfden dag zal de Heere der heirscharen het licht van Zijne kennis doen opgaan, en die kennis doen heerschen, zoodat de namen der afgoden zullen worden uitgeroeid, er geen plaats meer zijn zal voor den "profeet" en den leugengeest, de kennis des Heeren den inwoners van Jeruzalem boven alle aardsche banden en betrekkingen dierbaar zijn zal, en niemand meer den moed zal hebben om openlijk voor den dag te komen met de leugen!

Dag van de heerschappij der kennis des Heeren!

Negatief, 't is waar, en in taal en vorm ontleend aan de oude bedeeeling, wordt dit alles uitgedrukt.

De namen der afgoden zullen worden uitgeroeid. Een afgod is niets in de wereld. Het is een produkt van des menschen zondig hart, dat zich van den levenden God afkeert, omdat het Zijn opperhooge souvereiniteit niet wil erkennen, noch zich voor den hoogen God wil bukken om Hem te dienen en te eeren; en van zijne door de duisternis en de leugen verdorvene verbeelding, die zelf bepalen wil het goede en het kwade, om het laatste te volgen. Eene ijdelheid, een maaksel van den goddeloozen mensch, die God wil zijn van zijn eigen god, maar waarop hij desniettemin zijn vertrouwen wil stellen. En aan dien afgod geeft hij zelf een naam. De levende God heeft ook een naam. Dien naam geeft Hij Zichzelve. En in dien naam openbaart Hij Zich, verkondigt Hij Wie Hij is, en wat is Zijn groote macht en majesteit en heerlijkheid, het wonder Zijner Goddelijke deugden. Maar een afgod is niets in de wereld. Hij heeft ook geen naam. Zijn maker, de ijdele mensch, geeft hem een naam, schrijft aan zijn god allerlei deugden en krachten en werken toe. De naam van een afgod is *de leugen*.

Juist zooals de naam des Heeren *de waarheid* is, zoo is de naam van een afgod *de leugen*.

En als hier in Oud Testamentische woorden gesproken wordt van den dag, waarop de Heere der heirscharen de namen der afgoden uit het land zal uitroeien, zoodat ze niet meer gedacht zullen worden, dan wil dat niet minder zeggen, dan dat de duisternis zal worden verdreven, en de leugen, de leugen van de oude slang, de leugen tegen den levenden God niet meer zijn zal, noch ooit meer in 's menschen hart zal opkomen!

En wat wil dit nu anders beduiden, positief gedacht, dan dat het licht van den vollen dag opging, dat men den Heere der heirscharen, den levenden God alleen kennen zal, om Hem lief te hebben, te eeren en te dienen? Wat kan dit anders beteekenen, dan dat de Heere der heirscharen zoo aller harten en zinnen vervullen zal met Zijne waarachtige kennis, dat er geen plaats meer zal gevonden worden voor den afgod? Of

hoe zal het ooit kunnen, dat men de namen der afgoden nimmermeer zal gedenken, dan doordat aller aandacht in eerbiedige vreeze op den God van hemel en aarde gevestigd staat?

Daarom zal dan ook de onreine geest, de geest van den afgod, de leugengeest worden uitgeroeid.

Daarom zullen er ook geen profeten meer zijn!

Want de Heere der heirscharen zal ook de profeten uit het land wegdoen. En let er wel op, dat er niet staat "valsche" profeten, maar eenvoudig "profeten." Er zal dan geen behoefte meer zijn aan, er zal geen plaats meer gevonden worden voor profeten in dien bijzonderen zin, waarin ze vóór den tijd, aangeduid door het "te dien dage", konden optreden. O, toen kon iemand optreden als drager van den profetenmantel, met de pretentie, dat hij van den Heere inzicht ontvangen had in myteriën der kennisse Gods, nooit tevoren geopenbaard. Hij zeide tot al het volk: "Ken den Heere door mijn woord." En toen was er juist ook gelegenheid voor den valschen profeet, om onder voorwendsel, dat ook hij een gezicht had gehad, de leugen te verkondigen.

Maar "te dien dage", wanneer de Fontein tegen de zonde en tegen de onreinigheid zal geopend zijn, en wanneer de Geest der genade en der gebeden zal zijn uitgegoten, zullen de profeten uit het land zijn weggedaan.

En wat wil dit nu anders zeggen, dan dat "te dien dage" allen profeten zullen zijn, dat de openbaring van de kennis des Heeren vol zijn zal, en dat dus niemand meer zeggen zal of zeggen kan: "Ken den Heere", omdat allen den Heere zullen kennen, van den kleinste tot den grootste toe?

"Te dien dage" zal dit geschieden.

En zeker, die dag werd ingeluid, toen de Zonne der gerechtigheid opging over Gods volk; opging in de schemering van Bethlehem: God in de gelijkheid des zondigen vleesches; opging in de woorden des eeuwigen levens: Hij openbaarde ons den Vader; ondergaand-opging door den diepen en donkeren nacht des kruises in den vollen dag Zijner heerlijke opstanding; opging in de harten der Zijnen op den Pinksterdag, toen Hij door dien Geest door apostelen en profeten de volheid der kennis openbaarde en voor Zijne Kerk in deze tegenwoordige bedeeeling bewaarde in de Heilige Schriften.

Zeker, principieel zijn de namen der afgoden, en de onreine geesten, en de profeten uit het land thans uitgeroeid.

Allen kennen den Heere. Niemand kan aan de openbaring ook maar tittel of jota toedoen.

Maar toch wacht ook dit woord nog op de volle vervulling.

De dag, waarop de kennis des Heeren heel de nieuwe schepping zal vervullen.

Waarin we zullen kennen, zooals we gekend zijn! Blijde dag!

Heerschen zal de kennis des Heeren!

Want, en hierin openbaart zich de tijdelijke onvolkomenheid van dien dag, ofschoon er geen plaats meer zijn zal voor de profeten, en dus ook de valsche profeten niet meer openlijk zullen kunnen optreden, ofschoon de leugen zal zijn uitgeroeid, en het licht der openbaring in vollen glans zal schijnen,—toch zal de valsche profeet het nog altijd weer wagen, zoolang en waar hij ook maar de gelegenheid schoon ziet, om zijn stem te verheffen, en om de namen der afgoden weer in te voeren.

Maar de waarheid, de kennis des Heeren, zal heerschen, zal hem ontdekken, zal hem dooden!

Neen, openlijk treedt de valsche profeet niet meer op!

Want "die profeten zullen beschaamd worden, een iegelijk van wege zijn gezicht; en zij zullen geen haren mantel aandoen om te liegen."

Ze verstaan wel, dat de kennis des Heeren heerscht, en dat allen den Heere kennen, van den kleinste tot den grootste. Daarom komt de valsche profeet zonder profetenmantel, bedektelijk. Hij houdt zich schuil als een gewoon mensch onder degenen, die den Heere kennen. Zelfs loochent hij, als ge een onderzoek instelt naar hem, dat hij een profeet is. Hij zal zeggen: "Ik ben niets bijzonders, en ik breng geen nieuws. Ik heb geen gezicht gehad, en het is heelemaal niet mijne bedoeling om iets nieuws te verkondigen. Een gewoon mensch, een boer ben ik: 'Ik ben geen profeet; ik ben een man, die het land bouwt; want een mensch heeft mij daartoe geworven van mijne jeugd aan'." En als ge toch in zijne handen vindt de wonden van de Baälsprofeten, die zich met messen sneden, om de aandacht van hunne afgoden te trekken, en ge vraagt: "Wat zijn die wonden in uwe handen?" dan zal hij antwoorden: "Ik ben nooit de deur uit geweest; ik ben thuis geslagen, in het huis mijner liefhebbers heb ik deze wonden opgedaan."

Met andere woorden: "ten dien dage" komt niemand er meer openlijk voor uit, dat hij bedoelt de leugen in te voeren!

Men komt bedektelijk!

Men beroept zich op dezelfde Schrift, waaruit allen den Heere kennen. Men spreekt dezelfde woorden, die de Kerk altijd gesproken heeft. Men komt als een wolf in schaapskleederen, als een engel des lichts, als een liefhebber der waarheid. . . .

Want men verstaat het: "te dien dage," wanneer de namen der afgoden uit het land uitgeroeid zijn, en de kennis des Heeren heerscht, bemint men in dat land de waarheid bovenal. "En het zal geschieden, wanneer iemand meer profeteert, dat zijne vader en zijne moeder, die hem gegenereerd hebben, tot hem zullen zeggen: gij zult niet leven, dewijl gij valsheid gesproken hebt in den naam des Heeren; en zijn vader

en zijn moeder, die hem gegeneerd hebben, zullen hem doorsteken, wanneer hij profeteert."

Zoo had het ook moeten zijn vóór dien dag!

Erger toch dan een moordenaar is iemand, die valsheid spreekt in den Naam des Heeren, die Gods volk bedoelt af te voeren van de waarheid, van den levenden God, om een afgod na te volgen en aan te hangen!

Daarom had de Heere van het begin Zijn volk gegeven "een wet om naar te leven."

En in die wet had Hij hun geboden: "Wanneer uw broeder, de zoon uwer moeder, of uw zoon, of uwe dochter, of de vrouw van uwen schoot, of uw vriend, die als uwe ziel is, u zal aansporen in het heimelijke, zeggende: Laat ons gaan, en dienen andere goden, die gij niet gekend hebt, gij noch uwe vaderen; van de goden der volkeren, die rondom u zijn, nabij u, of verre van ons, van het eene einde der aarde tot het andere einde der aarde; zoo zult gij hem niet ter wille zijn, en naar hem niet hooren; ook zal uw oog hem niet verschoonen, en gij zult u niet ontfermen, noch hem verbergen; maar gij zult hem zekerlijk doodslaan: uwe hand zal eerst tegen hem zijn, om hem te doden, en daarna de hand des ganschen volks. En gij zult hem met steenen steenigen, dat hij sterve; want hij heeft u gezocht af te drijven van den Heere, uwen God, Die u uit Egypteland, uit het diensthuis uitgevoerd heeft. Opdat gansch Israel het hoore en vreeze, en niet voortvare te doen naar dit booze stuk in het midden van u."

Ook toen moest de waarheid, de kennis des Heeren, Israel boven alles dierbaar zijn!

Geen band des bloeds, geen natuurlijke liefde, geen ontferming der vriendschap mocht den valschen profeet sparen!

Maar Israel heeft het in de oude bedeeling niet dikwijls aangedurfd om op dit punt Gods verbond te houden, en in Zijne wegen te wandelen!

Want het vleesch is zwak!

En ach, het vleeschelijk element had in Israel door den regel de overhand!

En toch, het zal geschieden! . . . .

Ook dit woord zal nog worden vervuld! "Te dien dage". . . .

De dag zal komen, dat de kennis van den levenden God zal heerschen, volkomen zal heerschen, alleen zal heerschen, zóó heerschen, dat die kennis der liefde Gods en de bewaring er van boven alles dierbaar zal zijn, en de leugen en dwaling der tegensprekers niet meer geduld zullen worden!

Dan gaat het alleen om God!

Ten volle kwam ook thans die dag nog niet. Wel in beginsel, en wel zoo, dat er in de Kerk altijd door de worsteling gezien wordt, om de leugensprekers te verdoen, niet met het stalen zwaard, maar met het zwaard des Woords. En wel is er in beginsel die innerlijke

liefde der waarheid, die ook alle banden des bloeds en der natuurlijke liefde ver te boven gaat. Want "wie vader of moeder liefheeft boven Mij, is Mijns niet waardig."

Maar ook thans is het vleesch nog zwak!

En om eigen vleesch uit het land uit te roeien, al is het ook door het geestelijk zwaard des Woords, om zoon of dochter, vriend of maagd buiten het koninkrijk der hemelen te sluiten, dat blijft behooren tot het lijden dezes tegenwoordigen tijds.

Maar de dag komt!

De dag des Heeren, die geheel en volkomen des Heeren is! De dag, waarop Hij alle valsche profeten zal uitroeien, en alle leugensprekers voor eeuwig zal verdoen, zal werpen in den poel, die brandt van vuur en sulfer, uitwerpen in de buitenste duisternis, verdoemen tot den tweeden dood!

En dan zal Gods volk met Christus de wereld oordeelen, en in dit oordeel geheel beheerscht worden door de kennis des Gods!

Dan is het vleesch voor eeuwig weg!

En dan zal de Kerk volkomen staan aan de zijde van den levenden God en van Zijn Christus, ook als het geldt het oordeel der verdoemenis over zoon of dochter, broeder of zuster, vriend of maagd. . . .

't Is de dag van het "zien aangezicht tot aangezicht."

De dag der volkomene kennis, in het allervolmaakste licht!

De dag, waarin het ook ons geheel en alleen zal gaan om de heerlijkheid van den levenden God!

Dag van de volkomene heerschappij der kennis des Heeren!

Vreeselijk-heerlijke dag!

Het zal geschieden!

Want de Heere der heirscharen heeft het gesproken!

Hij is de HEERE, Jehova, de Ik Zal Zijn, de Ik Ben, Die alleen in Zichzelf is, de Onafhankelijke, de Onveranderlijke, de God des Verbonds, Die trouwe houdt in eeuwigheid, en Die nimmer laat varen de werken Zijner handen, Die Zijn Woord gestand doet!

En Hij is de God der heirscharen, de Heer van heirscharen des hemels en der aarde. Hij heeft alle dingen gemaakt naar Zijn eeuwig welbehagen, en om Zijns Zelfs wil, ook den goddelooze tot den dag des kwaads. En hij regeert van eeuw tot eeuw, en tot aan de einden der gansche schepping. Niets kan Zijn hoog besluit ooit keeren! Zijn raad zal bestaan, en Hij zal al Zijn welbehagen doen. . . .

Hij heeft het gesproken!

En reeds deed Hij het!

En straks vervult de Heere der heirscharen Zijn woord ten volle!

Kom, Heere Jezus!

H. H.

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## EDITORIALS

### Common Grace

5.

Before we pass to the discussion of other elements of the philosophy of Dr. Van Til, we must still make one remark concerning his conception of what he calls the Moment. We have a question here. Van Til speaks of Moment A. and Moment B., and of a certain commonness, in Moment B., both with respect to the attitude of God to the believers and non-believers, or rather, to elect and reprobate, and with respect to the relation between these in the world. But as far as I have been able to find out, he does not express himself at all with regard to the real meaning of history, particularly of Moment B., and of the relation of the latter to the kingdom of heaven in the new creation.

Yet, this question concerns the very heart of the common grace problem. To be sure, common grace postulates an attitude of grace on the part of God to the righteous and wicked alike in this world; it teaches that this common grace so operates that sin is restrained and the fallen human nature is improved. But all this is developed only in order to make room for a relatively good culture in the sinful world. Thus it is with Dr. Kuyper. He sees a good world, in spite of the fact that Scripture teaches us that it is wholly corrupt ethically, and that it bears the curse of God and is subject to vanity. He did not simply find a doctrine of common grace in Scripture and develop it. On the contrary, he went to Scripture to find out whether it would support his conception of a good world and noble sinner. He surely did not develop his theory of common grace in order to find a "well meaning offer on the part of God to all men" as was adopted in the First Point of 1924. No, but he approached the matter from the viewpoint of the question: how can one who holds the Reformed truth of total depravity explain the goodness of the fallen man, and the marvel of culture? And his answer is: "common grace." God established a covenant of friendship with the wicked world as such. In that covenant He assumes an attitude of grace and mercy to all, and restrains the operation of the curse, of sin and death, in order that fallen man may become co-worker with God in the development of this world and all its hidden wonders, and in order that thus God's original creation ordinance may be realized.

That this is, indeed, the heart of the question in Kuyper's "Gemeene Gratie", and that he approaches the whole problem with this in mind, would not

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be difficult to prove. Kuyper can find no room for history without common grace. According to him, there is not even a providential preservation and government of the world conceivable without common grace. And through common grace there is positive development and progress of the world according to the original purpose of creation. This purpose Satan meant to frustrate. It was his purpose to prevent the revelation of God's glory through the development of all the wonders of creation, and for this purpose he tempts man to fall away from God. But to carry out His original creation ordinance, and thus reach the glory of His name, God enters into a covenant of common grace with the sinner and all men, and thus makes man His coworker for the development of the powers of creation. Apart from the salvation of the Church, and the ultimate new creation, there is an organic development of this world with positive fruit. And this positive fruit of "common grace" has significance and value even for the eternal kingdom of heaven, it is carried into the New Jerusalem. It is thus that Dr. Kuyper explains Rev. 21:24 "and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it." This "glory and honor" refers, according to him, to the culture of the world in this present age. He writes:

"Nothing needs be excluded from this. It refers to their development in the sphere of their family life and social life, of their political institutions and their jurisprudence, of science and art, of heroism and tact, of commerce and industry, in short of all that which in its connection and unity constitutes the glory of a nation, and which gives it a place among the civilized nations. And since, as the expression demands, not the glory and honor of a single nation in a single period is meant, but this glory and honor here appears as the property of *the nations*, and that, too, in their entire course of history, we only think here of the continuous communal development attained or still to be attained by our entire human life in the history of the nations. And of this fruit, which is necessarily nothing else than the fruit of common grace, it is said, that this fruit is not simply submerged and destroyed in the general world-conflagration, but that it will have abiding significance for the New Jerusalem, i.e. for the new earth, for this glory and honor that shall then be attained by the human race is being carried into the new Jerusalem." Gem. Gr. I:460, 461.

Now we understand that Van Til does not agree with this, and this we appreciate. Sometimes we get the impression from what he writes, that he fundamentally agrees with us in his conception of history. Thus he writes on p. 41 of his book.

"We have had occasion to criticise some aspect of the criticism of Kuyper given by Danhof and Hoeksema. We do not hesitate to express also our apprecia-

tion of other aspects of this criticism. Danhof and Hoeksema have called our attention to the fact that to an extent Kuyper has to use our own terms, though abstractly rather than concretely. Kuyper himself, as his critics admit, has taught us to think concretely. He has taught us to regard all the facts in the light of the comprehensive counsel of God. But if we are to think thus concretely it is in order to say with Danhof and Hoeksema that there is no such thing as an independent creation plan. Nor can we speak of the metaphysical situation as on the verge of stopping short when sin came into the world. Again, we cannot, as Kuyper sometimes does, speak of redemption particularistically. Nor, finally, can we speak of a 'common judgment' and a 'territory-between' when we speak of believers and unbelievers."

It is evident, then, that Van Til does not believe that by common grace God carries out an original creation plan. That is not the meaning of history, of Moment B. But the question remains: how does he explain the history of this present time? That the righteous and the wicked have all things in common, is evident. That there is such a thing as "worldly culture" is also plain. But what is its meaning? How does Van Til evaluate it? Does it actually accomplish something? Is there positive fruit of the "culture" of the ungodly? And what is the significance of the present world with a view to the world to come, the kingdom of heaven in the new creation? It is important that Van Til give us an answer to these questions. For, closely connected with the answer to these questions is the answer to another: just what is the position and calling of the believer in the present world?

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We pass on now to another element that occupies an important place in Van Til's philosophy, the element of the "paradox". Let us quote him on this subject:

"Our position is naturally charged with being self-contradictory. The full bucket difficulty expresses the nature of that charge. It might seem at first glance, as though we were willing, with the dialectical theologians, to accept the really contradictory. We urge that unless we may hold to the presupposition of the self-contained ontological trinity, human rationality itself is a mirage. But to hold to this position requires us to say, that while we shun as poison the idea of the really contradictory, we embrace with passion the idea of the *apparently* contradictory. It is through the latter alone that we can reject the former. If it is the self-contained ontological trinity that we need for the rationality of our interpretation of life, it is this same ontological trinity that requires us to hold to the apparently contradictory. This ontological trinity is, as the larger Catechism of the Westminster Standards puts it, 'incomprehensible'. God dwells in the light



that no man can approach unto. This holds of His rationality as well as of His being, inasmuch as His being and His self-consciousness are identical. It follows that in everything we deal with we are, in the last analysis, dealing with this infinite God, this God who hideth Himself, this mysterious God. In everything that we handle we deal finally with the incomprehensible God. Everything that we handle depends for what it is upon the counsel of the infinitely inexhaustible God. At every point we run into mystery. All our ingenuity will not aid us in seeking to avoid this mystery. All our ingenuity cannot exhaust the humanly inexhaustible rationality of God. To seek to present the Christian position as rationally explicable in the sense of being comprehensible to the mind of man is to defeat our own purpose. To do so we must adopt the standard of reasoning of our opponent, and when we have adopted the standard of reasoning of our opponent, we must rest content with the idea of a finite God. No Christian can answer the full bucket difficulty in such a way as to satisfy the demands of a non-Christian epistemology. We can and must maintain that the Christian position is the only position that does not destroy reason itself. But this is not to say that the relation between human responsibility and the counsel of God is not *apparently* contradictory. That all things in history are determined by God must always *seem*, at first sight, to contradict the genuineness of my choice. That the elect are certainly saved for eternity must always *seem* to make the threat of eternal punishment unreal with respect to them. That the reprobate are certainly to be lost must always *seem* to make the presentation of eternal life unreal with respect to them." p. 16.

We shall have more to quote from Van Til's book on this point, especially to make clear how he applies this to the theory of common garce. But this must wait till the next issue.

H. H.

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## The Certainty Of Hope

We have been speaking of the object of the Christian hope. We tried to answer the question: What is it that the Christian in this world hopes for? Scripture exhorts us that we shall always be ready "to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you." I Pet. 3:15. And to this answer belongs, no doubt, that we shall be able to give some account of that for which we hope. We expect that our death shall be a translation into immediate glory, a passing out of our earthly house into the heavenly house of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. We look for the glory of the resurrec-

tion, when our vile bodies shall be made like unto the most glorious body of our Lord Jesus Christ, this corruptible shall put on incorruption, this mortal immortality, and we shall bear the image of the heavenly. And we hope for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in the day of His glory, when He shall put all enemies under His feet and completely destroy them, when He shall make all things new and take His glorified church with Him into the everlasting covenant and kingdom of heaven in the new creation, in which we shall reign with Him, and God will be all in all.

But now we briefly treat of hope itself, of the spiritual power and activity of hope. What is hope? How must it be explained that the believer hopes for things which eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard, and that never arise in the heart of man; yea, what is more, how is it, that hope stretches itself to that which lies beyond death, and the reality of which is apparently contradictory to all experience? And how do you explain that this hope of the Christian is so certain, so self-assured, that because of it the believer will gladly suffer all things, and will even glory in tribulation? For so that apostle writes: "we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience hope." Rom. 5:2-4. And then he adds "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us." Rom. 5:5. No wonder that, if we really manifest this hope in our lives in the midst of this world, we are asked a reason for it. And the proper answer to that question must include some explanation of the wonderful power of hope itself, as well as of the reason of its inner certainty.

It is of the power and activity of hope that the apostle speaks, when he writes that hope maketh not ashamed. And in general this act of hope may be described as a reaching out of the inner, new, spiritual life of the Christian for its final and full realization and expression. Hope is the tendency of the new life of the believer to seek its own level. You know that water always seeks the level of its own source. But the same is true of life. If your life is from below, it cannot rise above the things that are below. If it has its source in darkness and sin, it cannot aspire to the righteousness of the kingdom of heaven. If your life is from above, you cannot possibly be satisfied with the things that are below, you cannot rest until you have attained to the heavenly things. Now, this is exactly true of the Christian. He is reborn. He received a new life thru the power of the grace of God. And this new life is from above. It is characterized by righteousness and holiness and truth, for it is free from sin; but it is also different from our present, earthly life, in that it is heavenly. It is resurrection-life. It has its source, not in sin, but in the righteousness of

God; not on the earth, but in the risen and glorified Lord. For so writes the apostle Peter: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." 1 Pet. 1:3. And Paul writes to the Colossians, that we are risen with Christ, that, therefore, we should seek the things which are above, and not those on the earth; for, being risen with Christ, our life is hid with Christ in God. And because this is the case, because the principle of new life within is from above, is a spark of the life of the New Jerusalem, we cannot rest until we have attained to the perfect likeness with Christ in soul and body, and to the heavenly glory of the heavenly city. This characteristic, this tendency and striving of the new life in Christ to seek its own level is called hope.

If we try to analyze this spiritual power of hope, we find, first of all, that it is the expectation of some future good. "Hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" But when we say that hope is expectation of some good in the future, we must take the word "future" in the strict, i.e. in the eschatological sense of the word, as lying, not within the scope of the present time at all, but beyond it. All men look forward and live in expectation. We are children of time. And that means that we are forever moving. Incessantly we are carried onward on that indivisible moment that lies between the past, which is no more, and the future, which is not yet, and which we call the present.

"Time, like an ever-rolling stream,  
Bears all its sons away;  
They fly forgotten, as a dream  
Dies at the opening day."

And because we are children of this ever moving time, no man can be satisfied with the present. Always we look forward. The future that became present always disappoints. And always we reach out for a new future, until the curtain of death is dropped upon the stage of our life. But the hope of the Christian is different. It is not satisfied with anything time may offer. It looks beyond all time, over death and the grave, to another age, the age of another world. In this respect the attitude of the Christian is decidedly other-worldly. His hope transcends the boundaries of space and time. And by it he is victorious even over death. Secondly, this hope of the Christian is certain. We often employ the word hope to express that we are not quite certain whether or not we will attain to a certain goal, and realize a certain ambition. But that is not the Scriptural meaning of the word hope. On the contrary, the Christian hope is an inner certainty of the heart, that the object of his hope shall be reached. By hope the Christian is assured that the object for which he hopes is real,

that it actually exists, and that it is not a mirage, an illusion, an object of his imagination; and at the same time, he is confident that he shall personally attain to it. It is, therefore, inner assurance. And, thirdly, the Christian hope is longing for the realization of the promise of God concerning the final salvation and glory. It is not a cold, disinterested expectation, but a powerful yearning of the soul, that causes the believer even now, in this present world, to strive for the final goal, so that even now his conversation is already in heaven. That certain expectation with longing for the future good, that reaches out beyond time, and beyond all things earthy, and that is victorious over death and the grave, is the Christian hope.

Now, in Rom. 5:5 the apostle emphasizes that this hope of the believer is certain, or rather, that the believer shall not be disappointed in this assurance of hope. He writes: "hope maketh not ashamed." We may ask: when does hope make ashamed? And to this we may suggest a threefold answer. First of all, hope maketh ashamed, when it is finally proved that the object of hope is an illusion. The thing for which we hoped does not even exist. We spoke of our hope to all the world. We declared plainly that we sought a country. We gave an account of our hope to every one that asked us for a reason. So certain we were of the object of our hope, that for the sake of it we were willing to deny ourselves, to forsake the world, to suffer want and poverty, to go into prison and into death. We declared to all the world that we should be justified, and that in the end our cause would be vindicated. But behold, all things continue as they were from the beginning, and there never arrives a day of the Lord in which the cause of God is vindicated, all the wicked are destroyed, and the new heavens and the new earth are created. Our confession is put to shame. We are laughed to scorn. They that mocked at the hope of the children of God are vindicated. Well the apostle assures us that this is impossible. Hope maketh not ashamed. The object of the Christian hope is not an illusion. It is very real, and it surely shall be revealed in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But hope may make ashamed in another way. It is conceivable that the object for which the Christian hopes is, indeed, real; and that it is revealed in due time; but that is far below our expectation in glory and value and blessedness. Also in that case hope makes the professors of it ashamed. For they spoke very highly of this object, of its riches and bliss and glory and beauty. And they sealed this testimony with their life. For because of this hope they endured many tribulations in the world, confessing that they were strangers and sojourners in the world, looking for the city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. They believed that all the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in them. They

suffered reproach and shame, loss of position and of freedom, tortures of body and soul; they allowed themselves to be thrown before the wild beasts or to be burned alive at the stake, and to become the most miserable of all men; and all the while they had their eyes fixed upon the glory that was set before them. But, behold, in the end all their hope and boasting is put to shame, for the simple reason that the object of their hope, when it is finally revealed, falls far below their expectation, is, in fact, so insignificant, that they certainly were fools ever to speak of it, and to suffer for it. And when the apostle writes that hope maketh not ashamed, he declares that also this situation shall never arrive, that the final glory for which the believer hopes shall not be disappointing and unworthy of the boasting of the Christian in this world. Positively speaking, he means to say, that when that final inheritance which is the object of the Christian's hope shall be revealed, its glory will be so great, that all shall confess that half of it was not told them, and that they would rather suffer all the sufferings of this present time a thousand times over than lose that inheritance. Hope maketh not ashamed.

There is one other conceivable possibility of hope making us ashamed. It is the possibility that the object of the hope is not for us personally. The inheritance for which we hoped is real, and its glory and blessedness transcends all expectations, but when the saints are called to inherit the kingdom prepared for them from before the foundation of the world, we are not among the heirs. We hoped to enter in, we looked for the city that hath foundations, we confessed our hope before all the world, but in the day of the Lord it is evident that the inheritance was never meant for us. Hope maketh ashamed. And when the apostle declares that hope maketh not ashamed he certainly implies that also this can never happen, that no one who has the true hope eternal in his heart shall be disinherited in the end. To be sure Scripture teaches that there will be those who clamor for entrance into the kingdom of glory, and who shall not be able to enter in. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Matt. 7:21-23. But there is a marked difference between these wolves in sheep clothing, these would-be pious workers of iniquity, and those that have the true hope in their hearts. The former base their claim to enter into the kingdom upon their own wonderful works, the latter only on the perfect obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ. Those loved and worked iniquity, in spite of their apparent zeal and marvel-

lous works; these, however, did the will of their Father which is in heaven. For "every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure." 1 John 3:3. And, therefore, it remains true that one cannot have the true hope in his heart, and be disinherited in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. Hope maketh not ashamed. The object is certainly real; its glory surpasses our boldest imagination; and it is assuredly for those that with a true hope in Christ look for the city that hath foundations.

But why is this true? What is the ground of this unqualified statement that hope maketh not ashamed? The apostle supplies the answer to this question when he adds: "because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Here everything is of God, and in His work rests the certainty of our hope. Let us note, first of all, that the love of God, of which the apostle here speaks, is emphatically the love of *God*. It is necessary to understand this clearly. The meaning of the text is not that we love God, and that, therefore, hope maketh not ashamed. How could this possibly be the sense of the apostle's words? Our love of God can never be the basis of any assurance of hope. Yes, through the grace of God, and as a reflection of His love to us, we love Him. But it is only in principle that we love Him. It is only a small beginning of love to God that we experience. But if in this love of mine to God I endeavor to find a ground of assurance for my hope, I immediately discover ten thousand reasons to deprive me of that assurance. For "our sins rise up against us, prevailing day by day!" How, then, could it possibly be said, that my hope maketh not ashamed, because I love God? But this is not the significance of the word. On the contrary, the apostle speaks of the love of *God*, not of our love. He refers to the love wherewith God loved us, not to the love wherewith we love Him. If I know that He loves me, I possess a sure ground of hope, and may be perfectly confident that my hope in Him shall not make me ashamed.

For let us remember that this love of God is revealed to us in the death of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. For "hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us." 1 John 3:16. And "in this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." From this central revelation of the love of God to us we learn, first of all, that it is a love that is first, that can stand alone, that is wholly independent from our love, that is eternal and unchangeable. Never could this love of God have been manifested, if God had waited for some token of our love to Him. For we were dead in trespasses and sins. We were enemies of God, when He loved us. And such an independent, eternal



and unchangeable love I need, if I am to hope in Him. I need a love that is strong enough to overcome sin, to which I can appeal in my sins; a love that blots out iniquities, and that forgives transgression. That is the love revealed on the cross, and if I know that I am the object of that unfathomable, unchangeable, all-victorious love of God, I have a sure ground for my hope. Certainly I know that He, Who so loved me, will deliver me from all evil, and seek my everlasting good. But there is more. It was in the death of His Son, His only begotten Son, that He received this love. In other words, the love wherewith He loved us was a mighty, a great, an infinitely marvellous love, and the price paid by that love for our redemption was a most precious price. By the greatness of that price, I may measure the greatness of the love of God, and from the greatness of that love I may conclude that the glory unto which He ordained those, for whom He paid that price, is greater than my boldest imagination can conceive. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Rom. 8:32. O, indeed, if I may know that I am the object of that marvellous love of God, manifested in that death of His Son on the accursed tree, I may hope in Him, look in hope for the glory of God, and be assured that hope maketh not ashamed!

When I look at the cross, I know the object of my hope must be real, for the love wherewith God loved me is very actual. When I survey the cross, I am sure that the object of hope is very wonderful and glorious, for it is the death of God's only begotten Son I there behold. And when I look at the cross *in hope*, I know that the glorious inheritance for the possession of which our Lord died, and into the possession of which He entered through the resurrection, is also for me, and that in this hope I can never be disappointed. For my very hope is rooted in the knowledge that He loved me in the death of His Son, and that through that death my sins are blotted out forever! Unless I knew this, unless I were assured in my heart that the love of God manifested on the cross is a love to me, I could not possibly hope for anything from Him. All we can expect, apart from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, is His wrath and condemnation. Hope, therefore, the believer's hope is rooted in the assurance of faith, that God loves him with the love that was manifested in the death of the Son of God. I know that God loved me, therefore do I hope for His salvation, and therefore I am assured that hope maketh not ashamed.

But, perhaps, you will remark, that even so the ground, the ultimate basis for the certainty of the Christian hope is in himself, in his knowledge of the love of God to him. How, then, can he be sure that he does not deceive himself in this assurance that the love of God manifested in the death of His only be-

gotten Son is for him? Does he, perhaps appropriate to himself something that was never meant for him? That would, indeed, be the case, if there were even a grain of truth in that presentation of the gospel, that makes a man lay hold of the love of God in Christ by an act of his own free will. God offered His love to him, and he accepted it. The ultimate ground of his hope is, in that case, in his act of accepting Jesus Christ, and the love of God in Him. But if hope is based on my acceptance of the love of God, it can never be said of my hope that it shall never make ashamed, for who shall assure me that I had a right to appropriate that love of God to myself? And, besides, where is the guarantee that I shall not reject and despise the love of God again by the same determination of my will by which I once accepted it? There is no ground of certainty and assurance in the will of man. Only when the assurance of our hope is based on and rooted in an act of the unchangeable God Himself, can I be sure that hope will never make ashamed. If my hope is rooted in the knowledge of the love of God to me, and if that knowledge of the love of God is His own work, not mine, then, indeed, I may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. And this is, indeed, the truth. For the apostle does not speak of the love of God that was offered me, and which I accepted, but of the love of God that was shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which He hath given unto us. Never could we know the love wherewith God loved us in Christ, never could we even desire that love by nature. For we are enemies of God. But God sent His Spirit into our hearts, and through that Spirit He shed abroad in those hearts His own love. By that Spirit, through the Word, He Himself leads us to the accursed tree, and assures us that He loves us with an everlasting love. It is all of Him, none of us! It is Himself that causes us to know that He loved us; Himself that causes us to hope for the eternal inheritance, and that causes us to rejoice in the hope of the glory of God! And, therefore, it is absolutely sure that the believer's hope maketh not ashamed, because that hope is rooted in the love of God, and that love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Spirit He hath given him. And nothing can possibly separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!

H. H.

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#### NOTICE

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches convenes March 3, 1943, at 9:30 A. M. at Sioux Center, Iowa, D. V. Those desiring lodging please write for reservations to undersigned.

Rev. M. Gritters, S. C.

## Hope And Sanctification

In the Christian School of old Holland, where I received my early education, we used to sing a hymn about the object of Christian hope, and the longing of the believer for that object, that ran as follows:

“O, daar te zijn,  
 Waar nimmer tranen vloeien,  
 Waar 't hart geen angst, geen kommer kent noch pijn,  
 Waar doorn noch distel groeien,  
 O daar te zijn!  
 O daar te zijn!”

and which, translated into English, would run somewhat like this:

“O, were I there!  
 Where never tears do flow,  
 Where knows the heart no fear, distress, or pain,  
 Where thorn nor thistle grow,  
 O, were I there!  
 O, were I there!”

And “when I was a child and spake as a child, and understood as a child, and thought as a child”, I loved to sing that song, and could long for that beautiful country, where we would be free from want and distress, from all sorrow and suffering. And I considered that hymn one of the most adequate and appealing expressions of the Christian hope. But “when I became a man, and put away childish things”, I began to look at the hope of the Christian, and, consequently, also at that hymn from a different viewpoint, and came to the conclusion that the hymn did not touch upon what was most essential in the hope of the believer. I still believed that the heavenly country would be beautiful, and a land of bliss, where “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes”, and where there is neither sorrow or crying; but I no longer think that we express the very heart of the Christian hope if we say no more. For the longing of the believer is fixed centrally, not upon the blissful environments and circumstances of God’s house, but upon God Himself; and, therefore, it reaches out, not chiefly for freedom from suffering, but for perfect liberation from sin, for perfection. And because the Christian hope is chiefly fixed upon this object, it is a mighty power in the believer’s life, a power of sanctification, an incentive unto holiness.

Everywhere the Bible teaches that there is an inseparable relation between hope and a godly life. The relation is mutual. On the one hand, a living and conscious hope is quite impossible for one who lives in sin, and who sets his heart on the things of the world. To lead a sanctified life is indispensable to the enjoyment of the blessedness of the Christian hope. But on the other hand, hope is also an incentive to keep our

walk and conversation honest and pure in the midst of the world. To the Corinthians the apostle writes: “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” II Cor. 7:1. The apostle himself, longing for the perfect knowledge of Christ and the attainment of the resurrection, professes that he does this one thing: “forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Phil. 3:13, 14. And while he laments the walk of those, “whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly and whose glory is in their shame”, he writes that even now “our conversation is in heaven; from whence we also look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.” Phil. 3:19, 20. For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, and that hath appeared to all men, teaches “us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” Tit. 2:11-13. We are admonished to follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord; Heb. 12:14; and to gird up the loins of our mind, and be sober, as we hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. I Pet. 1:13. And as strangers and pilgrims we are admonished to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul, and to have our conversation honest among the gentiles. I Pet. 2:11, 12. And we must sanctify the Lord God in our hearts, and be always ready to give an answer to every man that may ask us a reason of the hope that is in us, having a good conscience. I Pet. 3:15, 16. For “seeing that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God.” II Pet. 3:11, 12. And we are admonished, seeing that we look for such things, to be diligent that we may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless. II Pet. 3:14. Everywhere the Christian hope is presented as a power and reason for a godly life in the world.

And this raises the question: why is there such a close relationship between hope and sanctification? How must it be explained that hope is a power and incentive unto a life of godliness? There can be no answer to this question as long as the Christian hope to us means nothing more than the prospect of a nice place after death, a beautiful city with pearly gates and streets of gold, where we shall be free from trouble and worry, from suffering and death. I am afraid that for many who profess to be Christians, this is just about the main contents of their hope. They strive after the very best things in this world; if they possibly could, they would be perfectly content

to remain here; but seeing that "implacable death" is inevitable, and that after death the judgment must be expected, it is a consoling thought that one may escape hell, and look forward to a beautiful and happy home after death. But if that is the real meaning of our hope, it could never be a power unto a godly and sanctified life. Nor is it in the case of those who entertain such carnal notions of hope. Usually, they live not only in the world, but also as those that are of the world: their hope is something that must help them along on their deathbed, or at the funeral of their dear ones. It certainly is not a power that causes them to strive to be pleasing to God. And yet, there is in the hope of the Christian something that causes him to flee from sin, and perfect holiness in the fear of God. What is that something? It cannot be the impulse to make ourselves worthy of the heavenly glory, for we enter it by grace, not by works. You and I can merit exactly nothing by our works, whatever they be. The desire to earn something with God is no motive in the Christian's life of godliness and walk in good works. There is, therefore, something else that causes hope to be a power of holiness in the believer. And that something else is the element of longing to be like and to be with God. That, and not the beautiful surroundings of the eternal inheritance, is the chief object of the believer's hope. And because hope is the longing and expectation for the perfect likeness, and the most intimate fellowship with God, therefore it causes us to strive after that perfection even now.

This truth is emphasized frequently in the Word of God. In II Cor. 7:1 the apostle writes: "*Having therefore these promises*, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." It is clear that the apostle means to say that there is something in the nature of the promises which we have, for the realization of which we look and long, in the very nature of hope, therefore, that should be and is an incentive to a sanctified Christian life. Now, what are these promises, the possession of which constitutes such a strong power of godliness? The answer you may find in the immediate context, where the apostle writes: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing: and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith

the Lord Almighty." Now, if that is the object of our hope, that God will walk with us and talk with us, and that He will call us His sons and daughters, and draw us into His blessed fellowship, if we have *these promises*, then that hope will be a power within us to cleanse ourselves, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God. Beautifully and clearly this is expressed by the apostle John: "Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he (better: it) shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." I John 3:2, 3.

Every man that hath this hope in him! What hope? The hope that we shall be like Him! Like whom shall we be? We shall be like God! Yes, that and nothing less the text declares. That may not be clear from the translation, but it is evident from the original, which may be and should be rendered thus: "Now are we children of God. . . . and when it shall be manifest what we shall be, then we shall be like Him." That, therefore, is the real heart of the object of our hope: to be like God. But, you object, that is impossible. We can never become like God. In fact, the ideal to be like God is exactly the invention of the devil, held before man as the highest good in paradise. The motive of that aspiration is unbounded pride. And that is true, if you mean that we shall never be essentially like God. God is GOD, and we are men; He is the Creator, and we are creatures. There is a chasm that can never be abridged between God and us. In this sense we do not even approach likeness with God. There is no approximation of the finite to the Infinite, of the temporal to the eternal, of the relative to the Absolute. And we shall never be like God in the sense that we shall be sovereign as He is sovereign. He alone is Lord, and with relation to Him we shall always be servants. But there is another kind of likeness to God, which Scripture certainly teaches, and frequently mentions. It is a spiritual-ethical resemblance, the highest possible perfection of the image of God in us, the perfect conformation to the image of His Son. That highest possible realization of His image in us, on the plane of heavenly perfection is God's purpose with His people. "For whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed according to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." Rom. 8:29. And the apostle Peter writes that "his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue. Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." 11 Pet. 1:3,4. This, then, is the likeness which also the apostle John has in mind in I, 3:2, and which

is the chief object of the Christian hope. To be righteous as He is righteous, to be holy as He is holy, to be pure as He is pure, to know Him as we are known, to be faithful and true as He is faithful and true, to walk in the light even as He is a light, and thus to dwell with Him, to see Him face to face, to enter into His secrets, to know His mind and to will His will, and to taste that He is good, and that, too, in the perfection of heavenly glory,—that is the object of the Christian hope, that shall some day be manifest.

That this is, indeed, the end of our salvation, is guaranteed by the fact that even now we are children of God. And it is this same sonship that makes it possible for us to hope for the perfect likeness with God. "Beloved", thus the apostle writes, "now are we children of God". Children of God we are, not by nature, for then we are children of our father the devil, and we love darkness rather than light; but by grace. By nature we have no right to be called the children of God, we have forfeited all the rights of sons: the right to Father's love and favor, the right to His loving care, the right to dwell in His house, the right to His inheritance. But in His great love He bestowed upon us the right to be called the sons of God through the perfect obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ. He adopted us by His grace, and He gave unto us the Spirit of adoption that witnesses with our spirit that we are the sons of God. But He did more. He not merely adopted us, and gave us all the rights of sonship, but He also actually made us into sons of God, so that we are born of Him, and we look like Him in true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. And so we can take the words of the apostle on our own lips; now are we children of God! But all this is true only in beginning, in principle. It is not yet manifest what we shall be. For we are still earthy, and we still carry about with us our sinful nature. We are children of God, but how often we appear as children of the devil! We are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, but here in the world we look like poor beggars. We are kings, but we do not reign. We are victorious, but we suffer defeat. We have eternal life, but we die as all men. The perfect, heavenly, glorious likeness with God is not yet manifest. No, but it surely shall be. In our present sonship in Christ we have the pledge of that final perfection. Children grow up, and then they are like their father. When my children were infants, they were, indeed, my children, and there was a beginning of my likeness in them. But I could not walk with them, and talk with them, and take them into my secrets, and open unto them my heart, and explain to them my problems, and take counsel with them: they were not yet like me. But when they grew up they became like me, they entered into my fellowship, our love became friendship: they became my chums. Beloved, now are we the children of God, and we are still very small, and there is in us as yet

a good deal that is quite in conflict with the perfect likeness with God, and so, it is not yet manifest what we shall be; it is not yet revealed that we are kings and princes, rich in glory, partakers of the divine nature, holy and righteous, clothed with immortality and power, knowing as we are known, and walking in the light of God. But it shall be manifest. For children grow up, and when all that is bestowed upon us in this gift of sonship shall be revealed, we shall be like Father! And to attain to that perfect likeness is the hope of the children!

And that this end of perfect likeness with God shall really be attained follows from the fact that we shall see Him as He is. So that the apostle writes: "we know that if it shall be manifested, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." We shall see God! Of this the Old Testament Psalms already sing. "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness." Ps. 17:15. One thing the poet desired of the Lord, and that He would seek after: "that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to enquire in his temple." Ps. 27:4. His soul thirsted for Him, and his flesh longed for Him, to see His power and His glory, so as he had seen Him in the sanctuary. Ps. 63:1, 2. The Lord pronounces those blessed that are pure in heart, for they shall see God. Matt. 5:8. And He even tells His disciples that even here they enjoy the beginning of this spiritual vision of God: "from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him." And the apostle Paul writes: "For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now we know in part; but then shall I know even as I am known." Yes, indeed, that precisely expresses the difference between the present and that glorious future, when we shall see Him as He is. We shall, of course, never see the infinite, invisible essence of God. No one has ever seen God. Our seeing of God will always be through His revelation of Himself to us. But there is a great difference between His revelation here, and that by which we shall see Him in heavenly glory. Here I look in a glass, a mirror. And God stands behind me. He reflects Himself in the mirror. And as I gaze into the looking-glass, I behold some dim outline of Him. Or, if you please, here I have a letter of Father written on the pages of Holy Scripture, in which He tells me all about Himself, as my God and Redeemer, through Jesus Christ my Lord. And, to be sure, I love to read that letter over and over again. But I do not see Him. However, all this is to be changed. When it shall be manifested what we shall be, then we shall see Him as He is. We shall no longer stand with our back towards Him, gazing in a mirror to see a reflection of Him; we shall no longer have to be satisfied with a word-picture of Him in a letter; we shall see His face. For in heavenly glory we shall meet with that higher,

that highest possible revelation of God which the Scriptures call the face of God, in Jesus Christ, our Lord:

Soon I in glorious righteousness  
Shall see Thee as Thou art;  
Thy likeness, Lord, when I awake,  
Shall satisfy my heart.

But if this is the object of our hope, we can also understand the close relationship between the believer's hope and a godly life. For as the apostle continues: "And every one that hath this hope on him purifieth himself even as he is pure." Do not misinterpret these words. We do not cleanse our own nature from sin: sanctification is the work of God by the Spirit of Christ. But to purify ourselves here signifies that in the strength of God's own work of grace within us, and motivated by the incentive of hope, we fight against sin, and against all carnal and worldly lusts, and walk in the way of the precepts of our God. We purify ourselves daily with respect to our walk in the world. Always there are new temptations we meet, always there are new sins we discover, and from these we purify ourselves daily by the grace of God. We *do* that. Let us note this. The apostle does not write an admonition: let us purify ourselves. He states a fact: He that hath this hope on him purifieth himself even as He is pure! But of course! How could it be different? Hope is expectation, it is looking forward to some future good. It is certainty that I shall attain to that future good. It is an earnest longing and yearning of the entire soul, of mind and will and heart, for that future good. It is reaching out for its object. For what object? For a beautiful place? Yes, indeed; for God's house must certainly be beautiful. But if the object of my hope were no more than this, it would be no incentive to purification and a godly life. No, but I look forward to, I expect with certainty, I yearn earnestly with my whole heart for that greatest of all glories and benefits, for that highest possible state of blessedness in which I shall see God, mark you well, see GOD, the true, the righteous, the holy God, who dwelleth in an inaccessible light! And therefore, I long for being like Him in knowledge, holiness, and righteousness, and to walk in the light, even as He is in the light, for only when I am like Him shall I be able to see Him! But if this hope be in me, if I am really motivated by this mighty longing to be like God, this strong desire will manifest and translate itself into the constant strife for a walk in holiness and righteousness in the midst of this world. "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." I John 1:6. And if we have this hope on Him, we purify ourselves even as He is pure!

H. H.

## The Numberings Of The People

After the plague in which 24,000 perished on account of Israel's whoredoms and idolatry with Moab, (Nu. 25.), Moses and Eleazar, the highpriest, received from the Lord the command to number the people from 20 years old and upward "throughout their fathers' house" (Nu. 26). This was to be the second numbering, the first having taken place some 39 years previous in the beginning of the second year of Israel's sojourn in the wilderness.

In treating this subject I arrange my materials under the two points:

- 1) The numbering as such;
- 2) Its purpose.

The method of numbering to be used is set forth by the command: "Take the sum of the congregation of the children of Israel. . . . *throughout their father's house.* . . ." For a complete statement of the method we must turn to Nu. 1:20: "by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of names, by their polls, every male from twenty years old and upward. . . ."

The *families* were the independent clans, founded by the immediate sons of the twelve patriarchs. This is plain from the language employed in Nu. 26, for example at verse 5: "Reuben, the eldest son of Israel: the children of Reuben: Hanoch, of whom cometh the family of the Hanochites: Pallu, the family of the Pallunites: of Hezron, the family of the Hezronites: of Carmi, the family of the Carmites. These are the families of the Reubenites." Thus as there were born to Reuben four sons, he appears in the account as branching off into as many families. The *fathers' houses* were plainly the subdivisions of the *families* and were thus founded by the grand- and greatgrand-sons etc. of the twelve patriarchs. The data are wanting for a clear analysis of the subdivisions of the congregation as represented by the terms *family* and *fathers' houses*. But this much is reasonably clear: The former was the grand subdivision of the tribe and the latter were the subdivisions of the former.

The two terms *generations* and *fathers' houses* are of identical signification. Jointly they denote the ancestral lineages of the individuals to be numbered as extending through the founders of the clans within the tribes to the twelve patriarchs.

Thus the task to which Moses was once more commanded to address himself consisted in requiring of the Israelite from twenty years old and upward that each give his name, his house, his family, and his tribe. What the imposition of such a task reveals is that there was on hand a complete history of family pedigrees; and the genealogical tables of the first book of the Chronicles, of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah,



and of Matthew's gospel show that through the centuries this history was kept up to date. For what reasons we shall see presently.

*Reuben*, so the numbering reveals, subdivides into four families and numbers 43,730. Dan, with only one family numbers 64,400. This has led to the conjecture that there may have been families that, for some reason, were not enumerated in this census, especially so in the case of Dan. This tribe, however, was formed of but one family at its starting-point (Gen. 46:23). But Simeon at this point numbered six families (Gen. 46:10), while in the account of the second numbering he appears as branching into five. Obed's family—the one not reckoned—may have become extinct or it may have attached itself to a more powerful house within the tribe.

The account also brings out that the grandsons of Pallus, the immediate son of Reuben, were the rebels Dathan and Abiram. With reference to these names the account goes back to the judgment that overtook these insurgents. The earth swallowed them up "together with Korah" the prime mover of the rebellion. This fearful end, however, is not to be identified with the fire-judgment upon the 250 offerers of incense. The exception of the children of Korah, who took no part in the rebellion, and did not therefore perish, is also mentioned (Nu. 26:5-10).

*Simeon*, five families, numbers 22,200. Nemuel of Nu. 26 is the Jemuel of Gen. 46; and Zohar of Gen. is the Zerah of Nu. The two names last mentioned are of the same import (*Zerah*, the rising of the sun; *Zohar*, candor, splendor).

*Gad*, seven families, numbers 40,500. Ozni is called Egbon at Gen. 46:15.

*Judah*. Two of Judah's five sons—Er and Onan—had perished in Canaan. The five families, of which two were founded by grandsons, offsprings of Pharez, number 76,000.

*Issachar*. Four families, numbered 64,300. Jashub is named Job at Gen. 46:13. Both names signify *to return*.

*Joseph-Manasseh*. Michar was Manasseh's only son; and the only son of Michar was Gilead, the founder of the family of the Gileadites. As Gilead had six sons, this family subdivided into as many houses, which numbered 52,700 Israelitish males qualified for military service. One of these houses was the Shechemites, founded by Shechem, the fourth son of Gilead. Mention is also made of the fact that to Hephher, the sixth son of Gilead, was born a son, Zelophehad by name, who begat daughters to the number of five but no sons. These daughters again appear in the following chapter in connection with the division of the land.

*Joseph-Ephraim*. Three families and a fourth

house founded by Ephraim's grandson Eran, a direct offspring of Shuthelah, Ephraim's firstborn, numbers 32,500. In the account Eran's house is listed as a family, the reason being that he was the only son.

The genealogical history of the first book of the Chronicles (7:20-23) tells of a tragic event in the life of the patriarch Ephraim not recorded elsewhere in the Scriptures and consisting in the slaying of Ezer and Elad, either sons or near descendants of Ephraim. These sons, it must be supposed, made a warlike expedition from Goshen into the land of the Philistines for plunder, and were slain by "the men of Gath that were born in that land. . . ., because they came down to take away their cattle." This can scarcely have taken place before the descent into Egypt, as Ephraim was born in Egypt, (Gen. 46:20). "And Ephraim their father mourned many days, and his brethren came to comfort him." These words cannot be taken figuratively as applying to the whole tribe of Ephraim, for the following verse asserts: "And when he went in to his wife, she conceived and bare a son, and he called his name Beriah, because it went evil with his house." The going in of Ephraim to his wife, can only be taken literally; and as there is no indication that another Ephraim is meant, the narrative must be to the effect that the old patriarch Ephraim begat a son Beriah, after those two sons were slain by the Gathites. Beriah's name, however, occurs neither in the tables of Genesis nor in those of the book of Numbers. The explanation may be that this son had died.

*Benjamin*.—Five families and two houses (listed as families in the text) founded by grandsons, numbered 45,600. Some of these descendants are listed as grandsons of Benjamin here and as sons in the account of Genesis. It shows that the term *son* in Scripture does not necessarily determine nearness of relation. Also, Genesis lists three more names of sons than are found in these tables. This may be explained by the probability that some of those named in Genesis had died childless or without founding a distinct family. Finally, Shuphan and Huphan are Nuppin and Huppin in the Genesis record.

*Dan*.—One son Shusham (Husham in Genesis 46), whose family, divided into smaller families, numbered 64,400.

*Ashur*.—Five families, two from grandsons, numbered 53,400. There was one daughter Sarah. Ishua of Gen. 46 is wanting here, probably because as in other cases he had founded no family.

*Naphtali*.—Four families, numbered 45,400.

The total number of persons is 601,730. A comparison of the totals here and in chap. 1 shows a small loss of 1820. The people that had grown so rapidly in Egypt, had scarcely held its own through the wilderness with its sins and judgments. The loss would have been much greater, however, if seven tribes—Judah,

Issachar, Zebulon, Manasseh, Benjamin, Dan, Ashur—had not held more than their own. A comparison of the totals for these tribes, here and in chap 1 shows a joint gain of 59,500 as compared with a loss of 60,020 sustained by the others. The heaviest loser was Simeon. His decrease amounted to 37,100. The judgments of God that had ravaged the nation may have taken their largest toll from this tribe. There is indication that at least in the most recent apostacy—the whoredoms with Moab—Simeon was the chief offender. The greatest gain was made by the tribe of Manasseh. The tables show an increase of 20,500.

The Levites occupy little space in the tables of Nu. 26, the reason being that this last enumeration is mainly in reference to the inheritance, and the Levites were not to have any inheritance or possession. Three chief families and five houses numbered 23,000.

The text at 26:59 has occasioned some difficulty: "And the name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, whom her mother bare to Levi in Egypt: and she bare unto Amram Aaron and Moses and Miriam their sister." Jochebed could not have been the direct offspring of Levi, nor could Amram have been Levi's grandson. If so, Amram did the forbidden thing by marrying his own aunt. Generations intervened between Levi and Jochebed. She was not his daughter in the strict sense.

The account of this numbering closes with the remark: "These are they that were numbered by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who numbered the children of Israel in the plain of Moab by Jordan near Jericho. But among these there was not a man of them whom Moses and Aaron the priest numbered, when they numbered the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. For the Lord had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness. And there was not left a man of them save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun" (26:63-65). Thus Jehovah's sentence had been fully executed; the old generation, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, had all been wasted by death; i.e. those only who were more than twenty years of age when the earlier numbering took place. The entire generation of warriors had passed away before Israel crossed the Zered. The fact of the carrying out of the penal sentence is mentioned here, when the new generation had just been numbered and assembled with a view to warring God's warfare for the possession of the Holy Land.

## 2. The purpose and objective of this numbering.

The purpose was not merely to ascertain the magnitude of the fighting force. Such knowledge could serve no purpose other than that of stimulating trust in the arm of flesh. But Israel must understand that no king is saved by the multitude of an host: that a mighty man is not delivered by much strength; but that his help comes from the sanctuary of Jehovah.

Because King David was unmindful of this, he ordered Israel numbered.

Regard must be had once more to the method used: "by their generation, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of names." It is clear from this language that the near purpose of the enumeration was to bring every Israelite of twenty years old and above under the necessity of giving his pedigree, his ancestral line, and thus of revealing to which tribe, family, and house he belonged. The authorities in the nation—Moses and his assistants—had need of such information as they did forty years previous at the beginning of Israel's sojourn in the wilderness. Then the twelve tribes had to be divided into four divisions in the order of East, South, West and North, with the tabernacle in the center. The four leading tribes were Judah, Reuben, Ephraim and Dan. To the East was Judah in conjunction with Issachar and Zebulon. To Reuben in the South was joined Simeon and Gad. On the West Manasseh and Benjamin were encamped under the leadership of Ephraim. To the North was Dan in conjunction with Ashur and Naphtali. The formation was that of a square with an inner square, the east of which was occupied by Moses, Aaron and his sons at the door of the tabernacle. The Kahathites on the South, the Gershonites on the West, and the Merirites on the North completed this inner square. In this structure, organization, each tribe and each chief family, house, and individual Israelite in the tribe occupied his own place. And there was besides an order of the march determined by the order of the encampment. Now such an organization, it must be plain, could not have been brought into being without a knowledge of the pedigree of each Israelite. The obtaining of this knowledge with a view to the bringing into being of this peculiar social structure had formed the purpose of the first enumeration.

The period of the sojourn in the wilderness has come to an end. The nation in the new generation has been purified through two judgments, especially by the last great visitation as by fire; the entire older generation has passed away. The people of Israel are about to possess their inheritance; and the individual Israelites are once more required to declare their pedigree. And again the definite purpose is the organization of the people not in the wilderness but now in the land of Canaan; the bringing into being in Canaan of another social structure, a holy commonwealth, in which each tribe, and each family house, and individual Israelite in the tribe would have his very own place and inheritance assigned to him by Jehovah Himself. That this is the primary purpose to be achieved also by this second numbering is proven by the circumstance that in the sacred narrative the matter of the division of the land immediately follows the numerical tables. Having recorded in his account the grand total of per-

sons, the narrator goes on to say: "And the Lord spake unto Moses saying, Unto these the land shall be divided for an inheritance according to the number of names. To many thou shalt give the more inheritance, and to few thou shalt give the less inheritance: to every one shall his inheritance be given according to those that were numbered of him. Notwithstanding the land shall be divided by lot: according to the names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit. According to the lot shall the possession thereof be divided between many and few" (26:25, 26).

Here then the enumeration relates to the settlement in Canaan. Without the knowledge of the people's pedigrees, this instruction could not have been carried out, the social structure here demanded could not have been.

These instructions then plainly bring out the purpose and objective of this numbering. The purpose was firstly to compel the Israelite to declare his pedigree, show that he was a true son of Abraham, in whom the nation was chosen and blessed, and thus make clear that he belonged to Israel and had a part in its work and blessing. Secondly, the purpose was to ascertain who were Ephraimites and who were Benjamites etc. and how many there were of each tribe in order to enable the rulers in Israel to divide the land of Canaan among its rightful heirs and to divide it equitably according to the standard, "To many thou shalt give the more inheritance, and to few thou shalt give the less inheritance." And the grand objective of the enumeration was the bringing into being of God's house—that commonwealth of Jehovah in which each of the numbered should have his allotted place and in which Jehovah should be all and in all.

It is plain that in this enumeration we have to do with a type of the church universal as the object of God's election. This church is the twelve tribes in the book of Revelation, forty four thousand strong, servants of God, all of them sealed in their foreheads, and with their names written in God's book of life, thus a numbered host, twelve thousand from each tribe, Rev. 3:5; 7:1-8. But in his vision John saw also a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, kindreds, and people, and tongue, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands. This is the church in glory, the true house of God, the heavenly and imperishable commonwealth of Israel, in which each of His numbered servants has his allotted place where he securely dwells—the city of God, the new Jerusalem, founded on righteousness through the atonement of Christ, a city that hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof, Rev. 22:23. It is the home of the numbered ones, of those chosen and blessed in Christ.

G. M. O.

## Het Wonder Van De Genezing Van Den Melaatsche

Matth. 8:1-4.

Van al de krankheden, waarmede de Heiland in aanraking kwam, gedurende Zijn omwandeling op aarde, was die der melaatschheid, één der meest voorkomende ziekten. Niet alsof zoude er voor Zijn omwandeling geen sprake van zijn geweest, want alreeds in de ceremonieele wetten, kwamen er in verband met deze krankheid verordeningen voor, die door den melaatsche in acht moesten worden genomen.

In het Oude Testament komen deze ziekten in verschillende graden en vormen voor. Zoo heeft men in de ziekte van Job één der meest ernstige gevallen gezien, zoo ontzettend, dat zijne drie vrienden van verstomming geen woord van troost tot hem durfden spreken. Het lijden van Job en den aanblik, maakte het schier onmogelijk, om de ontzetting te verbergen.

Deze melaatschen waren, wanneer de ziekte tot in de hoogste graad was door gewerkt, niet veel meer dan levende dooden. Als Miriam door den heere gestraft is met deze ziekte, vanwege haar rebelleeren tegen Mozes, dan smeekt Aaron Mozes: "Laat zij toch niet zijn als een doode, van wiens vleesch, als hij uit zijn moeders lijf uitgaat, de helft wel verteerd is".

Alle deze soorten van melaatschheid hadden dit gemeen, dat (op een enkele uitzondering na) medische hulp hier niets vermocht uit te richten. Alleen een wonder was in staat genezing te brengen.

We willen er even op wijzen, dat men vaak meende en nog dikwijls de gedachte is toegedaan, dat deze ziekte overerfelijk was. Dat daarom de melaatschen genoodzaakt werden, om buiten Israels legerplaats, in de eenzaamheid te leven. Dat het verkeer met anderen daarom geweerd werd en zij in de steden niet mochten vertoeven en wanneer iemand in hun nabijheid zich bevond, zij moesten uitroepen, "Onrein, onrein". Wat we er op nazagen, schijnt dit op een misverstand te berusten. De overerving was beperkt en geschiedde slechts van moeder op kind en omgekeerd, en dan nochtan slechts sporadisch.

Wat de oorzaak was van deze ziekte schijnt ook nu nog een geheim te zijn. Dat deze ziekte één der meest afzichtelijke was behoeft geen nader betoog wanneer we slechts letten op de afbeeldingen hiervan. In het Oude Testament werd deze bezoeking beschouwd als een speciale straf, voor een speciaal bedreven zond waaraan de lijder zich had schuldig gemaakt. Op zee bijzondere wijze gaf de Heere Zijn heilig misnoege te kennen. Alszoodanig werd het in Israel aangemerkt. Wij Westerlingen, die het afzichtelijke en het afschuwelijke van sommige ziekten niet kennen, schoon ook in onze hospitalen veel is, dat het oog beter niet ziet en waarvan het oor beter niet hoort, kunnen or

dan ook niet een juiste voorstelling vormen, hoe dat alles in de grijze oudheid mogelijk was.

Met den melaatsche kon men niet lang verkeer en het was zelfs niet mogelijk om voor langere of korte tijd hem aan te zien. Zijn verschijning wekte een niet te onderdrukken weerzin op, zoodat men zijns ondanks het hoofd afweerde. Dat bracht den kranke en bezochte dan ook in een eenzaam en gescheiden leven, waardoor hij zijn levensdagen, in den volstrekten zin des woords als een eenzame moet doorbrengen. Zij waren in den vollen zin des woords de uitgeworpenen, verwijderd van vriend en maag, van eigen huis en familie, ja zelfs van den dienst des Heeren.

Zoo nu komt de ziekte der melaatschheid voor als iets geheel op zichzelf, nergens werd zij door andere ziekten geëvenaard. Die ziekte hield niet op totdat geheel het lichaam in al zijn deelen was aangetast, terwijl ieder deel langzaam wegstervende afviel en eindelijk het geheele lichaam was weggeteerd. Wie dan ook door de melaatschheid werd aangetast, diens levenspad liep langs den weg van de aller vreeselijkste ervaring.

Geen wonder, dat Aaron haar noemt een levende doode, als hij Miriam aanziet. De melaatsche droeg in zijn verschijning den dood met zich. Hij was dan ook de openbaring van den dood en de absolute tegenstelling van het leven. Zijn lichaam werd zichtbaar afgebroken. Doch daarbij bleef het niet. Hoe diep ellendig was daarbij de angst der ziel! Daarvan gaf de aangetaste uitdrukking in het gescheurde kleed dat hij droeg, teken van een constant in rouw te zijn. Een rouw, omdat hij leefde en zich als een doode beschouwde en gevoelde en door anderen werd aangemerkt. Ook vooral dat laatste. Zijn leven was dat van den exlex—de uitgeworpene, waarmee niemand mocht verkeer en. Zijn naastbestaanden mochten hem zelfs niet opzoeken en aldus was er voor hem dan ook geen enkele plaats of gelegenheid, waarheen hij zich kon wenden, noch voor hulp, noch voor troost.

Dat de melaatschheid dan ook een beeld is, lijdt geen twijfel. Dezelfde idee vindt uitdrukking in de Schrift, vooral in de Psalmen. David spreekt er van in Psalm een-en-vijftig als hij zegt: “Ontzondig mij met hysop, en ik zal rein zijn; wasch mij, en ik zal witter zijn dan de sneeuw”. Ook de melaatsche, wanneer hij door een wonder van zijn ziekte genezen was, moest met hysop worden gewasschen. Als een reinigingsmiddel diende de hysop, vooral als men een doode had aangeraakt. En zóó nu beschouwde David zich een geestelijke melaatsche, wiens zonde doodelijk was.

Aldus sprak David naar de idee van het hopelooze en het ellendige van zijne zonden. En die ellendigheid van den in zichzelf dooden zondaar is een schrikkelijke werkelijkheid. De werkelijkheid, dat er een absolute scheiding is tusschen dien zondaar en God Drieenig—een nimmer mogen verkeer en in Gods nabijheid. Hopeloos, want de zondaar wordt aan zichzelf overgelaten en weggeworpen van uit de gemeen-

schap Gods, terwijl niets en niemand hem helpen kan.

De beteekenis is duidelijk. Zooals we allen van nature zijn in onze zonden en verdorvenheid, zijn we den melaatsche gelijk. Zonde is niet slechts scheiding, doch den dood te leven. Leven is alleen mogelijk in de gemeenschap met den Heere. God is niet de God “der dooden”, doch der levenden. En de geestelijk-melaatsche kan geen genezing verwachten, noch zichzelf genezen. Hij is den Heere een gruwel. De Joden noemden daarom de melaatschheid de vinger Gods, de hand des Heeren, die den lijder wegwierp. Daardoor werd de hitte Zijns toorns openbaar en die toorn hield niet op, totdat het leven in geheel zijn omtrek van het bestaan was vernield. En dat uit ieder oogpunt. Het physische lijden, zoowel als het uiteen geslagen worden van zijn moreel en geestelijk bestaan. Er was tusschen die beiden wederkeeringe invloed. Vervolgens, een uitgeworpene van de gemeenschap der Kerk en dit proces werd voltooid in den dood, als het resultaat van Gods ziedenden toorn, de betaling en straf der zonde.

Daarom kon dan ook alleen in den weg van het wonder genezing worden verwacht en verkregen. Alleen Goddelijke kracht, die direkt en onmiddelijk ingrijpt kan genezing brengen.

Welnu, een melaatsche, iemand die *vol* melaatschheid is, komt tot Jezus. Het doet er weinig af of toe, of hij met de schare was gekomen en Jezus gevolgd was, of dat hij de schare ziende, zich door die schare heendrong, totdat hij vlak voor Jezus neervalt. Hij kwam. Hopeloos, helpeloos en reddeloos, als een doode. Hij aanbad Jezus en beroept zich op Christus almacht en Zijn Souvereiniteit, of soevereine genade. “Heere, indien gij wilt, gij kunt mij genezen”. En Jezus geneest hem en zendt hem vervolgens tot den Priester, en verbood hem strengelijk, dat hij het niemand zoude zeggen. Hij moest het wonder voor zich houden.

Deze man had dus wel geloof, kan ook nog wel beschouwd worden als een kind van God, schoon zijn eerste daad ééne van ongehoorzaamheid is. En dat valt dan ook in hem tegen. We zouden geneigd zijn te zeggen, hij heeft toch ook al niet veel gehoorzaamheid betoond, na zoo’n groot bewijs van de barmhartigheid van den Heiland. Aldus redeneerende blijven we met het wonder aan den melaatschen verricht bij hem stil staan en zijn al heel spoedig uitgesproken.

Toch is dat niet de bedoeling of het doel van het wonder.

Waarom werd het den melaatschen streng verboden, iets omtrent het wonder aan anderen mede te deelen? Lag het niet in den aard der zaak, dat dankbaarheid, voor ontvangene weldaden, aan de orde was? Zonder meer te weten, zouden we het van den man verwacht hebben. En laat ons er maar direkt aan toevoegen, dat het niet in des Heilands bedoelen lag, om hem stil te doen zijn, gelijk men wel verklaren wil. Hij zou zeer zeker mogen spreken, *doch niet eerder tot-*

*dat de priester hem rein had verklaard.* Christus houdt Zich hier strikt aan de Wet van Mozes (Lev. 14:10, 21, 22). Hierop valt echter ook nog niet allereerst den nadruk.

Dit is duidelijk uit de bijvoeging "hun tot een getuigenis". Zij, de Priesterschap, zijn het belanghebbend voorwerp. Er is immers een wonder verricht? En een wonder is een openbaring van Gods tegenwoordigheid. Het predikt, dat de Heere in den duisternen nacht der zonde Zijn licht laat schijnen. Zijn Verbond wordt geopenbaard. Daarom staat het wonder dan ook altijd in verband met de Kerk. En tot de Kerk komt nu s'Heeren stem, om te onderzoeken of dit is naar den Woorde Gods. Dat die man nu niemand op den weg inlichting mag geven—straks kan dat immers nog wel—is enkel en alleen, dat deze priesters rechtstreeks dit wonder zullen moeten verklaren. Hun werd geen tijd gegeven, om te vragen wie het wonder heeft verricht, doch enkel en alleen of het overeen kwam met wat de Heilige Schrift er van zeide.

Met dit wonder zullen zij dan ook, of zij het straks zullen gaan ontkennen komt er niet op aan, zij zullen ook Jezus moeten beoordeelen. Of Hij het is, de van Godgezondene of een bedrieger? Het wonder is dus ook een teeken. Een teeken, of iemand onder eigen pretentie optreedt, ofdat hij wettiglijk is gezonden en aldus de bevoegdheid en de bekwaamheid bezit tot de uitoefening van het ambt, dat hij bekleedt. De wonderen waren de attestatie voor Mozes, als hij in den Naam des Heeren, Pharaoh den eisch voorlegt "Laat Mijn volk trekken". Zij bewezen de echtheid van zijn zending. En nu moet ook de Oud Testamentische Kerk haar oordeel uitspreken over den Zoon. Daarom, spreekt er met niemand over, laat er een getuigenis gegeven worden omtrent Mijn werk. Het wonder geschied dus maar niet, om een indruk te maken, neen, maar het geschied, opdat het een teeken mag zijn van Gods nabijheid. Hier dus, dat God Zijn Zoon waarlijk heeft gezonden in het vleesch en dat in het werk van Dien Zoon, de Zending van den Vader wordt bevestigd.

Nog eens weer, daarom moet die man direkt naar de "bevoegde kerkelijke autoriteiten", die niet alleen moeten, maar ook kunnen oordeelen over de echtheid of den namaak van het Goddelijke wonder hier verricht.

Als dat dan eenmaal is geschied, dan zullen zij als vanzelf wel gaan vragen, naar de eigenlijke beteekenis van deze wondere genezing. Eigenlijk zal het dan ook in het geheel niet moeilijk zijn, om te zien, dat Hij die de lichaamskwaal kan te niet doen, die zelfs macht heeft over de doodelijke ziekte van de melaatsheid, ook de Zoon is, die Zijn volk reinigt van het verderf, de straf, den dood, van den toorn Gods en Die daarvoor in de plaats geeft, het leven der gemeenschap met den levenden God.

Zij zullen dan allereerst zien, dat het Wonder is

Vleesch geworden en woont nu onder hen, vol van genade en Waarheid en Zijn stem zal zijn als de stemme Gods en niet eens menschen. En zooals zij het Wonder pas verricht uit de Schrift alleen kunnen verklaren, zoo ook zullen ze den Christus Gods, alleen kunnen verklaren, als de zuiverste openbaring van den Vader, bij het licht der Schrift. Zoo zullen zij in Zijn licht het licht zien.

Of ook omgekeerd, zij zullen vanwege de hardheid des harten, Zijn wonderwerk verklaren te zijn het eigen werk van den Satan en den Zoon verwerpen, Wiens werk zij hebben aanschouwd, maar Wien zij niet hebben gewild.

Gelijk het ook werkelijk geschied is.

W. V.

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## The Doctrine Of Non-Resistance

The subject of the present essay has been a matter of interest through the ages of the church. That it would be so might be expected from the emphasis which the Scriptures place upon the virtues of love, humility and meekness, and also on the other-worldliness of the Kingdom of God. And that the Scriptural doctrines would be carried beyond their meaning might also be expected.

Thus, in the 15th Century we have the Bohemian Brethren who took "the law of Christ" (Matt. 22: 37-39; Gal. 6:2) as their ideal of Christian life and rejected as irreconcilable with it, such things as civil power, wealth, war, and trade. Also the extreme pacificism of the Quakers, and their well-known conscientious objection to military service is a manifestation of this same tendency of mis-applying the words of Scripture. And in the teaching of the Russian count, Leo Tolstoy, this was carried to such an extreme that he condemned all civil and criminal law, prison system and execution, police force, armies and navies as immoral. Now it is true that this principle was, in Tolstoy's case especially, asserted against the brutal government and the persecuting church, but since the consistent application of this claim would deprive the powers of all executive might, the other extreme lay at hand, namely, that the government does not live in the realm of this principle of Christ.

We, therefore, do best by learning from the Scriptures how this law of Christ is of application and what are the limitations set to the use of force. And since I am rather certain that many are interested in this question from the view-point of the labor-strike problem I shall also touch on that angle.

Now it is remarkable that the principle passage in this question is considered to be the expression of Jesus: "Resist not evil," and yet it should be evident



that no theory or doctrine can safely be built on one such expression. Therefore we shall look at a group of passages.

Matt. 5. The main theme of the Sermon on the Mount is "the Righteousness of the Kingdom of Heaven." Of that Righteousness Jesus says that it must be greater than that of the Pharisees and Scribes, which is a popular way of saying that it must be not relatively greater, but absolutely greater, of a different kind. This righteousness is that of the law of love. In the light of that law the citizens know themselves and their relation to God and their fellow-men, and are therefore, lowly of Spirit, meek, hungry for righteousness, merciful, pure, peace-makers, willing to suffer. They love the law as to its deepest principle, (vss. 17-47) and thus also love even their enemies, and are able and willing to forego all vengeance, all self-assertion, vindictiveness, and appearance of self-maintenance. Rather than blacken an eye for an eye, or knock out a tooth for a tooth the citizen of the Kingdom will turn the other cheek to him that strikes him, in order that that virtues of the beatitudes may shine forth, to the glory of the Father in heaven.

Romans 12. "Be not overcome of the evil, but overcome the evil with the good," is the climatic summary of this chapter, (see vs. 21.) The entire chapter teaches the service of love, the perfect will of God, vs. 2. Vss. 1-13 show this love working in the church in a positive sense. Vss. 14-21 show this same love in the midst of opposition and temptation, as seeking the welfare of the other and as willing to forego any self-assertion and revenge. If we would match sin with sin we will be overcome of the sin, of course.

1 Corinthians 6. This chapter speaks of litigations among brethren. The Apostle maintains that litigations before the civil court may never be resorted to among brethren and that they must rather suffer themselves to be wronged. For the conclusion we would draw, the question is of some importance, namely, what was the material in these litigations. Were they prosecuting about property and possessions or about offenses and insults? The first would of course seek a judgment of equity whereby the property would be adjudged to the possessor. The second would seek a judgment of vindication as a means of self-assertion and revenge. Commentaries do not touch this point, but I am inclined to hold that these cases involved property and tangeable values, because a. The very fact that they went to the civil court would suggest that they sought a redress which the church had no power to grant as they desired it. This can only apply to tangeable values that must be restored by force. b. The word *apostereo* in vs. 7, translated "defraud," means definitely to defraud, to rob, to despoil.

If this be, indeed the meaning, then the Ap. teaches here that we, Christians may not resort to any force,

not even to the legitimate civil power. But, from lack of assured exegesis, I would rather not assume this, but take it as personal offence, insult, grievance. However, then the text also teaches the same general principle, that it is better to suffer wrong than to give any occasion of reproach to those outside, and that the very occurrence of litigations among brethren is a shame for such as profess that they shall one day be accounted worthy to judge the world and angels.

James 5: 6-11. Since this passage mentions specifically the relation of the greedy industrialist to the laborer, we might expect it to give very definite material on the question of rights and redress, and the use of force. Yet the part that seems to be very decisive for the question of force, nl., "He doth not resist you," vs. 6 is of questionable interpretation. Calvin says, "When the Ap. adds, 'the just doth not resist' he signifies that the audacity of the rich increases, because those whom he oppresses are destitute of defense. . . . However although the just doth not resist because he must bear wrongs patiently, I nevertheless, opine that at the same time his helplessness is indicated, that, nl., he doth not resist because he is defenseless and forsaken of the help of man." Besides it would presuppose a very high spiritual life in these righteous if we interpret that they practiced the doctrine of non-resistance to death.

However, in this section he is exhorted to the spiritual virtues of patience whereby he commits his cause to the Lord's judgment-day.

1 Peter 2:11-3:17. The general theme of this long list of exhortations is found in 2:11, 12, "as pilgrims and strangers abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul, having your walk honest among the Gentiles that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." Now in vs. 18ff. the servants are specifically admonished. They are to be subject to their masters in all things for God's sake, and they are to suffer abuse and wrong without murmuring, for that is pleasing to God. In that respect the unresisting suffering of Christ is their exact example.

These are some pertinent passages.

Now someone will say; even so we have no answer to the question, whether a strike is ever permissible in a labor dispute. I will grant this. For though the emphasis in all these passages is strong on the theme of non-resistance the Bible does not prohibit the use of force in human affairs. We can mention the offensive and defensive wars of the Old Testament; but also many cases that cannot be classed as strictly moral persuasion, such as the cleansing of the temple by Jesus and the dismissal of Judas; Paul's discomfiture of the council by his appeal to the resurrection, and his appeal to Caesar.

And here I may say I am sorry that the editor of

the Standard Bearer has not covered this very problem in his series on the Strike in Vol. XVII; 11ff. It is just at this point that his series is fatally weak. The apparent strength of his argument lies in the fact that he has given the word force the meaning of the word violence. A strike is simply assumed to be the illegal retaining of a job which you have in fact lost claim to. This inadvertant equivocation has still left us in the dark on just the point where so much interest centers among those interested in a true C.L.A. And in view of the fact that some among us would outright condemn all force, I once asked if it is sin to force a car salesman to drop \$25.00 from his price by walking towards the door. And I did not ask this to reduce the position of the brethren to absurdity, but to show how serious the problems of our Christian calling are if we would live the life of heaven in this world.

Therefore I believe that we gain a great advantage if on the basis of Scripture we approach the question from exactly the other side. Instead of always asking how far our rights go and where they stop we must ask the other question, namely, what is our duty? That is the emphasis in all the passages we have reviewed. Rights are not considered; our duty is pointed out; Gabe ist Aufgabe. Any rights we may have are immediately seen as duties. And on the high ideal plane of the kingdom of heaven there are no adiaphora, no indifferent things. We cannot state the case by saying, "May we use force?" But rather in every given case we must use force or we may not. We must always and only seek that kingdom.

And this in the second place points also to the principle whereby we must circumscribe the limits of force. It must be subservient to love and wherever love is not advanced it is proved as wrong. Therefore it is not so that the government may use force because it is "onder and boven de wet." Not at all. On the contrary she falls under that same law of Christ. No vengeance, no self-vindication, no aggression may be the motive of the government acts, but love of righteousness and equity, as the exectutive of God's righteousness in this world, must motivate her.

And so the question arises, is the Christian ever called to use force in performing that duty (not right, but duty) of love? And my answer is that Scripture concerns itself with the motive and the manifestation of the motive. It forbids hatred, vengeance, violence self-assertion and every act that might give the appearance of such and it demands that all our acts be controlled by the wisdom of the love of the heavenly kingdom.

And specifically, with respect to the Strike question, if the well-known objectionable clause in the constitution of the C. L. A. can be placed in such context, I will have no objection to it.

But this will be no easy task, for although the law of love is an easy burden to those that are born of

God, yet in this world it will mean continuous self-denial, suffering, cross-bearing, with no other encouragement that the reflection that it is the will of the Lord and He shall recompense.

A. P.

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## Sermon Reading And The Ministry Of The Word

During the early stages of the history of our Prot. Ref. Churches, all our churches were very much acquainted with "Sermon Reading." This was due to a lack of students, or because of the distance of our vacant congregations from our School in Grand Rapids. Then one of the Elders in the church took a sermon, for which he sought sometimes all the week through, because of the lack of good ones, and he would read that sermon to the congregation on the Sabbath. He would do this of course upon the authority of the consistory. However, this was usually not considered to be the "Ministry of the Word." Rather it was considered to be somewhat like the bringing of a message by a student, namely, an edifying word. Surely it was a word from Scripture, which the elder or student brought, but it was not official, and the word brought by the elder or student, brought edification to the people of God, but it was not brought by an official bearer of the office of the Ministry, (nor was it authoritative.) I remember very well that during the years from 1925 to 1929 while being a student, it was emphasised that we spoke "een stichtelijk woord," but that there was no Ministry of the Word. I must admit that I did not understand this clearly then, and I am today more than ever doubtful of this distinction. I am very open to conviction however.

First of all let us state at the outset that we believe firmly in the offices which Christ has instituted in His Church. Immediately upon the ascension of our Lord, and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon the Church, the offices of Apostle, Prophet and Evangelist were instituted. These were the gifts of Christ unto His Church in the midst of the world, in order through them, to instruct, comfort and thus guide her into all the truth. These offices were called the special offices and terminated at the death of the Apostles. Then the so-called general offices were instituted and given unto the Church, comprising the offices of Elder and Deacon, the former again being divided into the Teaching-Elder and the Ruling-Elder. These three offices in the Church are of course to be distinguished from the general offices of believers. All believers are also in office, that is, they are given the unction of

the Holy Spirit, and as such they are all prophets, priests and kings, with Christ under God. This office is primary. It is also essential and eternal. Forever shall the people of God rule over all the works of God's hands, and offer sacrifices of praise and speak in the name of God. They do this now only in principle and very imperfectly, but by and by they will do this together in highest unity and perfection forever. So that this office of the believers is essential and eternal.

But the better to develop that Body of Christ in the world, the better to cause it to grow in the knowledge and grace of our Lord and Saviour, God gives unto it the various offices to Teach, Rule and show Mercy unto it. This is taught us in Eph. 4: 11, 12. "And he gave some, apostles, and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." These words leave no doubt as to the relation between the body and these various offices. The body is the body of Christ and is therefore essential and primary. The various offices are gifts unto that body for its growth and edification. Yet we must not think that the various offices instituted in the church are given by the membership of the body. The Body of Christ is not a Democracy, nor are her officials, Elders, and Deacons, the Ministers, chosen OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE and FOR THE PEOPLE. For this is not the case. It is very plain from Scripture that the offices are instituted by Christ and Christ will fill these offices with men, CHOSEN BY HIMSELF, whom He especially fits with various gifts unto their respective tasks. These officers are then responsible to their Sender, Jesus Christ, and are bound by His Word alone, even as also the whole Body of Christ is bound by and to that Word. So that all the labor, preaching and ruling and also mercy, centers about that Word. Yea, it is all based upon that Word and from that Word it receives its direction, and its authority. Therefore the bringing of that Word, both on Sundays during the public worship, as well as during the week days in Catechetical instruction to the covenant youth, is the chief labor of the Church, and this labor is called the Ministry of the Word. The Word then is being ministered unto the body of Jesus Christ.

As to that Ministry of the Word we may make a few remarks. First of all it is necessary to remember that only God's Word is to be Ministered unto God's people. Any other word ministered is vain and sinful. And in the measure that the words of men are ministered, in that measure there is no spiritual fruit at all. Because men's words are ineffective and without any power to accomplish any good. On the other hand God's Word is effective and powerful and causes the thing that is not, to be, as though it were. Even as in

creation, when God said: Let there be light, there was caused to be light, as the direct result of God's speech. So also in grace. When God says anything, He causes it to be. When He speaks of righteousness and peace, then He causes righteousness and peace to be in the hearts of His own. Therefore also, the people of God must know that the word is being ministered, when they hear the voice of their blessed God saying: Come unto Me. God is preaching His Word.

Secondly the Ministry of the Word, implies that there be a Minister, who does indeed minister that Word of God. Such a minister is sent unto the Church by the Author of that Word that is to be ministered. He is called upon to clothe that office of the Ministry, and in the measure that he does this, in that measure he is worthy of the name Minister of God's Word. He then stands in Christ's office, administering that office in God's Holy Temple, as that Holy Temple is not made up of brick and stones, but of living members of the body of Christ. He is Christ's ambassador, through Whom God speaks unto the heart of Jerusalem. We must understand that the Minister does not speak ABOUT God and as such ministers the Word, but God actually speaks, and He speaks through His ambassador. Through the preacher Christ causes His own voice to be heard. Thus the body of believers, when listening to the preacher, actually does say: "I hear the voice of Jesus, say, come unto Me and rest".

Therefore thirdly, that Preacher is the mouthpiece, not only of God but of the Church. For the Church receive the commission to PREACH THE GOSPEL. Given this commission to preach the gospel, when Christ was about to ascend to heaven, the church must therefore keep that word, receive it, interpret it, confess it. This the church does through the Ministry of the Word. It is well to emphasize this in our day. It is not the task of everyone to preach the Word. In truth, it is the duty of every believer to witness of the truth. Surely we must all let our light shine in the darkness. He who does not confess the Saviour before men, will also not be confessed by the Saviour before the Father in heaven. But the official preaching of the Word is not everyone's task. It is only the task of the Church, officially through the officebearers, that is, through the Minister, whom God has called unto that task. Such a Minister then must devote all his time and talent and effort to that exclusive work, Ministering the Word. He does this upon authority, first of Christ, secondly of the Church of Christ, through whom Christ calls him.

Therefore also no elder, nor student is a minister of the Gospel. He has not the authority of the office vested in his person. The Elder *does* have the authority to rule and the Deacon *does* have the authority to be the Merciful High Priest's representative. Also the Minister is at the same time an Elder, but the ruling Elder is not the Minister. Only the Minister is at

the same time an Elder, but the ruling Elder is not the Minister. Only the Minister receives the authority to preach the Word, although he does this under the supervision and upon the request and calling of the Church through its consistory.

Now this brings us also before the question as to how we must regard the public services when an Elder reads a sermon or a student brings to us the message from the Word of God. And in the light of the above, we believe that whether there be the Minister delivering the Word, or a Student bring the message, or an Elder reading it out of a book unto the congregation, we have the official Ministry of the Word. Does not the official ruling body of the Church, that is the consistory, authorize the elder to read or the student to deliver the sermon? Is it not true, that whenever the congregation comes together to worship the Lord, and the Word of God is being brought to her, that then we have the Ministry of the Word? And does not the approval of the official body make the service also the official ministry of the Word? We believe it does, and that essentially there is therefore no difference for the body of believers, whether a Minister, Student or Elder brings the message from the Word. If this were not the case, then often the Church of God would be without official Ministry of the Word, sometimes for years. Often it happens that churches are without their own pastor for such a length of time, and the Elders read sermons, or Students bring the Word of God.

With this we do not recommend that the church does without its own pastor for such a church would be lacking in one of the greatest gifts of God unto His people. We must not forget that the pastor and teacher is the gift of God to His church in the world. That also a pastor, laboring in one place continually, becomes ever more valuable. If he is faithful to his calling, he will grow with the body of believers, and know them better and better, as to their needs and wants, their weaknesses and strength. But when it pleases God for awhile not to send one of His ministers to His church, then it surely cannot mean that such a church has not the official ministry of the Word. We believe it does, if the rulers of the church seek diligently for the best reading sermons and authorize an elder to do this reading. Though then that elder is not a minister, yet the minister of another flock is being used, to not only edify but to Minister the Word of God unto the Church of Jesus Christ in the midst of the world. Whether therefore an Elder read a sermon in the absence of the Pastor, or a student is called upon to bring the sermon, we, as members of the body of Christ, must desire to be present, because God is Preaching His Word through the Ministry of His Church. Bearing this in mind, it would greatly eliminate the sinful spirit of: I am of Paul, and I am of Apollos and I am of Cephas. But we would come to

the courts of the Lord to hear what the Spirit hath to say unto His Church, by the Ministry of the Word, which is always present, when God's Word is brought upon authority of the official body.

L. V.

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## The Error Of Seventh-Day Adventism

The doctrine of Adventism as we know it, found its origin in Wm. Miller, of Low Hampton, N. Y. His first occupation was that of a farmer, but later he devoted his life to clerical work and became a fanatical student of prophecy. He began his studies of the prophecies in the year 1818 but did not enter upon the work of the ministry until 1831. He soon satisfied himself that the advent of Christ was to be personal and premillennial, and that it was near at hand. The year 1843 was the date agreed upon in which Christ would return. (Hence the name *Seventh Day Adventists*). Before the specific day came all business of the followers was put to a standstill, their goods and properties were liberally distributed to others. These would no longer be of any avail to them. But the day passed and no Christ came. Other dates were set, but again, as natural, ending in bitter disappointment for them.

In the year of Miller's death his followers were estimated at 50,000. Many who had been drawn into the movement by the prevalent excitement left it and returned to the churches from which they had withdrawn. But ere long there also appeared divisions among the faithful of the sect. Such as the Evangelical Adventists, the Life and Advent Union, the Age-to-Come Adventists, and finally the Seventh Day Adventists. Some of these believe in the mortality of the soul, others that it's immortal, some in the annihilation of the wicked (like the Russelites) and some deny this. Of these various groups we know and hear most of the latter—the Seventh Day Adventists. They do not go to the extremes of speculating about the exact day of Christ's return, but do lay special emphasis on the fact and its nearness. But they are distinguished from others especially by their keeping of the Sabbath on the seventh day of the week. Hence the name *Seventh Day Adventists*.

Concerning this they maintain that it still is obligatory to observe the Sabbath on the seventh day. Nowhere, according to them, does God in His Word command us to consecrate the first day unto Him. And they challenge us to find one text that literally proves our standpoint. Hence, they as in the Old

Testament keep the seventh day. Consequently they also maintain that the seventh day in itself is holier than the other days of the week, and that the consecration of it to the Lord is also pleasing to Him.

According to the topic of our essay we are to expose this error. We readily understand, of course, that if it would be merely a matter of different days, the error wouldn't be so great. But a principle is involved. And to show the fallacy of that principle we do not intend to go into the details and different angles of this doctrine. Neither to come merely with a few texts to prove the contrary. Fact is that the *positive* idea of worshipping on the first day is nowhere taught or commanded us in Scripture *with so many words*. But that must not offset us. Neither do we find that in respect to Infant Baptism. But we will try to show that their conception of this doctrine is fundamentally erroneous in the light of the whole of Scripture. The one error of the Seventh Day Adventists, then, is that they fail to see the one whole of God's work as revealed to us in Holy Writ; that they do and act as if God has never spoken nor given another Day of Rest than that of Paradise. Or to put it in a still more concrete form: they do not see the relation of God's work in Christ to that of His work in Paradise.

To clarify the above we must take notice of God's day of rest in the Old Testament according to the ordinance of creation. In the book of the Beginnings we read that it was God who rested first of all on the Sabbath Day. And God's resting on the Sabbath certainly does not mean that He relaxed from the mighty works He had done, but that He now enjoyed the finished work of His own hands. He delighted in it, found His pleasure in the completed work of creation. That work was good and it pleased Him. Man now, as imagebearer and imitator of God, was called upon to do the same thing. Enter into God's finished work, and delight himself in it, enjoy the fellowship with God as an imagebearer and praise God.

But this apparently was of short duration. Sin came, man became a covenant breaker and child of the devil, and no longer did he go into that rest. God, however, promised to do another work, much more glorious than the first. His work in Christ Jesus. The work of the Immanuel, God *with* us, the tabernacle of God with man, the Almighty, Omnipotent, All-Sufficient One dwelling with creatures. In that work He would show the wonders and riches of His grace, His unfathomable love, and a mercy that is greater than the height of the heavens above the earth. And man entering into that glorious state would enter into the finished work of God, the work in which all of God's virtues would be manifested. This Adam did not enjoy before the fall, but was promised to him after it.

But the fulfillment was yet very distant, some 4000 years. During this time they had no more than the

typical Sabbath, which pointed to this rest. And clinging to the promises of that rest they went forth. But always and again it was six plus one, six plus one. Six days and then the Sabbath, and after the Sabbath they again found themselves in the toil and labor, difficulties and strifes of this life. The true rest they had not attained. Even the land of Canaan, which was a type of the rest to come, didn't bring them the rest.

That's the history of the Old Testament Church from the viewpoint of the rest. So for 4000 years. You ask why so long? Why was the time of the Old Testament of such a long duration? The answer, from our particular viewpoint, is to show the Church that it *by itself* could never attain the perfect rest with God. It showed that the prophets couldn't usher them into that rest, neither the priests or kings. Instead it became darker still. Think of the time shortly before the coming of Christ. And when the church had seen and learned that it by itself was utterly helpless to reach that rest, then the fulness of time had come. And Christ, the Immanuel, God Himself, appears on the stage. He it is that will bring the rest. He through suffering and battle and strife will pay our debt, overcome the power of the devil which deprives the church of rest. He will do the work of God, *the* work of God. He will bring God to man, yea, in the heart of man, lay the foundation and build the house of God, and through Him God's covenant and fellowship with His people will really come to pass.

This is the heart of Christ's work on earth. He manifested that in His words, works and miracles. And take notice that He performed many miracles *on* the Old Testament day. And O how the Pharisees became embittered towards Him for this. But why did Jesus perform so many on that day? Couldn't He have avoided this and prevent some offence? The reasons for this certainly were not arbitrary, but to prove and show the principle of His work. No more appropriate day for our Lord to perform miracles can be found than the Sabbath. For miracles were signs, signs of His spiritual work, that He spiritually delivers us from our state of blindness, infirmity, sickness and death, and gives us the life of God. His miracles were signs of giving us the rest. Therefore He is Lord also of the Sabbath. He rules and has authority also over this day. He is Lord in that He gives us the Sabbath, and delivers us from sin and weariness. Then He suffered and died. By it He was doing the work of the Immanuel, delivering us and bringing us to God, and God to us. He lay in the grave on the Sabbath. (to bury the Old Testament Sabbath too?) On the third day He arose on the other side. And now—the work of God has been completed, that work by means of which God and His people are again united, only now never to be separated again, and that work which is characterized by heavenly re-



lations and fellowship. In splendour and excellency it far exceeds the first work in Paradise. The former was the creation, the latter the beginning and essence of the recreation. On that day it was that God Himself entered into His finished work. Soon Christ ascended to heaven, received the Spirit, and on Pentecost day poured it out. Then it was that He gave His church to enter into that work, the eternal Sabbath, the eternal Sabbath in principle.

This beautiful reality the Seventh Day Adventist fails to see. He sees the first day of rest, but is blind to the second, the fulfillment of it. Essentially he misses the heart of the matter.

But we still have one more point to prove. If no more is said he will still maintain that the seventh day is the proper day for the Sabbath and that we certainly have failed to prove him wrong.

In answering we can say first of all that Scripture plainly teaches that this work of Christ takes the place of the old, that the New Testament is the fulfillment of the Old Testament. Hebrews 8 teaches this in very plain terms, as well as many other passages of Scripture. All of the old has been fulfilled. Consequently the old falls away, the Old Testament rituals, external worship, types and also the Sabbath. The reality also of the Sabbath has come, and when the reality appears the shadow vanishes.

But why do we now have the Sabbath day on the first day of the week? And does our Sabbath have the same meaning to us as the seventh did to the Old Testament saint? It certainly does not. That idea is sometimes found even among us. Our Sunday in itself, to the exponents, is more holy than the other six. Consequently their keeping of the Sabbath often consists in as much refrain from earthly labors as possible and the positive element often is absent. But such is not the teaching of Scripture. In the New Testament every day is Sabbath day, in principle enjoying the rest of God every day. The idea certainly is not that we must serve God but one day per week and the other six lose sight of this and be busy with the things here below. The New Testament is heaven in principle. In that sense all days are alike. Every day we must enter into that rest, flee from the earthy, sinful, and enter into God's completed work. Or to express it in the terms of our Heidelberg Catechism: I must cease from evil works all the days of my life. . . . and thus begin in this life the eternal Sabbath.

Out of this it follows from some that we need not consecrate any special day to the Lord. They abolish all Sunday worship. All days are alike anyway. We, however, still maintain, and strongly so, that even though it is our calling to celebrate the eternal Sabbath every day we must do that in a special way one day per week. That for two reasons. In the first place because our principle of obedience is yet

very small, and the earthly things cleave to us. Our celebrating the eternal Sabbath every day is very little, and therefore we certainly can receive much benefit from this special day. Suppose once that we had no Sunday worship at all. I can assure you that the remnants of our religion and knowledge of Scripture would be very little even with the second generation. In the second place such is necessary because it simply is well nigh impossible for us with our earthly vocations and work to serve God and attain the necessary knowledge of Him without our worship on Sunday.

And the special day we have on the first day of the week, on Sunday, because on it Christ arose. On that day God finished His work in principle, and we were delivered from our toil and labor and entered the rest. On that day the eternal Sabbath began for the Church. Which day then is more appropriate for us to serve our God in a special way, and enter that rest? Now it is true that we nowhere read of the New Testament Church having their regular worship on Sunday. But we do read that they gathered on the Lord's Day. Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:2; Rev. 1:10. This certainly must have been on the first day of the week. But even then the Adventist points out that these texts do not prove their regular worship was on Sunday. To them these gatherings on the Lord's Day may have been purely incidental. Taking these texts by themselves we must concede this possibility. But in the light of God's one work in Christ, as fulfilling the old, these texts certainly cannot just be brushed aside.

In the light of all this the Adventist still maintains his point. Always and again he calls for a text that with so many words prove his error. The whole of Scripture he fails to see, yes, refuses to see. But this is characteristic of many beliefs, even in our day. The Baptists do likewise. But such there always have been. The apostle Paul also had to contend with them. Time and again he met up with those clinging to the Old Testament rituals and ideas, and as is evident, also with Seventh Day worshippers. And so we in conclusion can do no better than state his words, which to our mind are very conclusive proof of the Seventh Day Adventist's error. Col. 2:16: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of any holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days." And Gal. 4:10: "Ye observe days and months and times and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain."

J. B.

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Our help is in the glorious Name,  
The Name of matchless worth,  
Of Him to Whom all power belongs,  
The Lord of heaven and earth.