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MEDITATIE

Het Slaan Van Den Herder

Zwaard! ontwaak tegen Mijnen Herder,
en tegen den Man, Die Mijn metgezel is,
spreekt de Heere der heirscharen; sia dien
Herder, en de schapen der kudde zullen ver-
strooid worden; maar Ik zal Mijne hand tot
de kleinen wenden.

Zach. 13:7.

Zwaard! ontwaak!

Kenmerkend voor heel het stuk der profetie, dat thans volgt, en dat tevens het slot der gezichten van Zacharia vormt, is dit openingswoord.

Zwaard! ontwaak tegen Mijnen Herder, en tegen den Man, Die Mijn metgezel is!

Want volgens dit laatste gedeelte zal het zwaard keer op keer ontwaken, en gekeerd worden tegen den Man, Die Gods metgezel is. En herhaaldelijk, altijd opnieuw zullen de schappen der kudde verstrooid worden; maar ook zonder feil zal de hand des Heeren tot de kleinen zijn gewend, opdat het overblijfsel behouden worde.

Beproeving, loutering, gedurende scheiding van kaf en koren, bewaring en heiligeing van het overblijfsel.

En eindelijke overwinning en verheerlijking!

Ziedaar in 't kort de inhoud van hetgeen de profeet nog in dit laatste deel de Kerk des Heeren heeft te verkondigen.

Neen, iets vreemds, iets, dat principieel verschillend is van hetgeen hij ook eerder reeds had moeten voorzeggen, is dit niet; noch ook is het een boodschap, die vreemd aandoet in vergelijking met de rest der openbaring aangaande de Kerk in de wereld. Van strijd en lijden gewaaide reeds de moeder der beloften: het

zaad der vrouw zou immers de verzenen vermorzeld worden! En van bangen strijd en bitter lijden spreekt nog het eindgezicht op de geschiedenis der Kerk in de wereld, den ziener op Patmos getoond. Van worsteling en bloed en tranen spreken al de profeten, zingen schier al de psalmen, getuigd de wolke der getuigen, die de belofte van verre zagen en door het geloof omhelsden, schoon ze haar destijds niet ontvingen. . . .

Van strijd had ook het onmiddelijk voorafgaande deel dezer profetie gesproken. Van strijd tegen de vijandige wereldmacht, die altijd weer op Jeruzalem aanvalt.

Van strijd en bewaring en overwinning!

Maar, ofschoon het ook in dit gedeelte juist daarover gaat, het oogpunt is hier toch eenigsins anders. Hier slaat het zwaard metterdaad. Hier wordt de kudde werkelijk verstrooid. Hier wordt de Kerk gelouterd. Ze wordt onder de beproeving kleiner, altijd weer kleiner. Totdat de ure der eindelijke en volkomene overwinning slaat!

In enkele forsche trekken wordt ons dit alles geteekend in de laatste verzen van dit hoofdstuk, om verder in bijzonderheden ons te worden voorgesteld in hoofdstuk veertien.

Twee deelen zullen worden uitgeroeid, altijd weer. Het derde deel zal overblijven.

En ook dat derde deel wordt in het vuur geworpen, beproefd, gelouterd, gelijk zilver en goud worden gelouterd.

En straks is Gods Verbond volmaakt. Dan zal de Heere eeuwiglijk zeggen: Het is Mijn volk; en het zal zeggen: Heere, mijn God!

En dit alles wordt ingeluid door, zooals het ook zijn aanvang en zijn beginsel heeft in, het slaan des Herders.

Zwaard! ontwaak!

Sla den Herder!

Maar waarom dit machtwoord Gods?

Want het is de Heere der heirscharen, Die hier spreekt. En ofschoon Zijn Woord hier niet kan worden verstaan als een rechtstreeksch bevel aan den drager van het zwaard, toch is dit Zijn eigen machtwoord. Als Hij zegt: *Sla!* wie zal het dan keeren? Als Hij het zwaard gebiedt: *Ontwaak!* wie zal het dan terug doen keeren in zijne schede, totdat het zal hebben volbracht al datgene, wat het van 's Heeren wege had te verrichten?

Het is dus de wil des Heeren, dat deze Herder zal worden geslagen, en dat wel door het zwaard, gehanteerd door de "machten", die er zijn, en die door God Zelf zijn gesteld. Zijn wil is het, dat deze Herder door dat zwaard ten bloede zal worden geslagen, omgebracht, gedood.

En Zijn wil is altijd goed!

Als Hij spreekt, dan is dat Woord heilig en rechtvaardig. En als dat Woord een vonnis des doods is, dan is het gegrond op 't zuiverst recht.

Daarom perst de vraag: waarom dan moet deze Herder worden geslagen, door het zwaard gedood? Wat heeft Hij gedaan, dat Hij des doods schuldig wordt bevonden naar het heiligst recht des Allerhoogsten? Is Hij dan schuldig krachtens Zijn ambt? Want Hij is een Herder der schapen, door God zelf in 't ambt gesteld, om de schapen der kudde te vergaderen, te leiden in grazige weiden en langs zeer stille wateren, te voeden en te beschermen tegen de grijpende wolveren. Heeft Hij Zich dan misgaan in Zijn ambt? Is Hij, zoovele herders der schapen onder Israel, gebleken te zijn een booze herder, die zichzelven verrijkt ten koste der schapen, en die de kudde verstroot en verwoest?

Maar neen! . . .

Hier ligt een mysterie, een wonder van geheimnis, een paradox!

Want op hetzelfde moment, dat het Woord des Allerhoogsten, het bevel van den Heere der heirscharen, uitgaat tot het zwaard, dat het ontwaak en den Herder sla, wordt Hem door datzelfde Woord Gods, dat niet liegen kan, het schoonst getuigenis gegeven, dat ooit een menschenkind geworden kan: ontwaak tegen den Man, Die Mijn Metgezel is! Deze Herder is, én persoonlijk én als Herder in heel Zijn leven, en in het uitvoeren van Zijn ambt de metgezel des Allerhoogsten Gods! Hij staat en wandelt in Gods Verbond. Hij is Gods Vriend. Hij leeft altijd als voor het aangezicht des Almachtigen. Hij staat voor Gods zaak. Hij is in alles eenswillend met den wil des Heeren. Naar dien wil vraagt Hij, dien wil te doen is Zijne spijze. Dien wil te gehoorzamen is Zijn lust. Gods Woord hoort Hij. En wat er ook gebeure, dat Woord doet Hij en spreekt Hij in de wereld. En nimmer wijkt Hij achterwaarts. Daarom is Hij ook de goede Herder! En daarom kan Hij van God Zelf het getuigenis ontvangen, dat Hij de Man is, Die Gods

metgezel is! . . .

Nog meer!

Het mysterie wordt dieper!

Want, als naar 't heiligst recht het Woord Gods gebiedt: "Zwaard! ontwaak tegen den Man, Die Mijn Metgezel is," dan, zoo volkommen is deze Herder de Vriend en Metgezel Gods, zegt Hij: "Ja, zoo zij het! Sla Mij! Uw wil, o God, geschiede!" . . .

Hier ligt het wonder des kruises!

Want deze Man, Die Gods Metgezel is in den hoogsten zin des woords, is de Christus. Zeker, een lange rij van herders waren er in de oude bedeeling, priesters, koningen, en ja, vooral ook, profeten, wier roeping het was om de kudde des Heeren te weiden en te beschermen, te leiden en te voeden, te vergaderen en te bewaren. Maar aan de spitse van die allen stond toch Hij, door Wien alleen allen, die vóór Hem waren, herders konden zijn, de Man, Die bij uitnemendheid Gods Metgezel is.

De goede Herder!

Hij toch is God in het vleesch, Immanuel, Waarachtig God en waarachtig mensch, in eenigheid des Persoons, op 't allernauwst vereenigd. . . .

Gods Metgezel!

Want, dat Hij deze Herder is, eeuwen tevoren door Zacharia gezien, bewijst Zijn eigen woord.

Op weg naar den Olijfberg was 't, dat Hij indachtig werd aan dit woord, eens door Hemzelven door den mond des profeten gesproken: "Gij zult allen aan Mij geërgerd worden in dezen nacht; want er is geschreven: Ik zal den Herder slaan, en de schapen der kudde zullen verstrooid worden." Matth. 26:31. Alleen maar haalt Hij daar dit woord aan naar zijn diepste beteekenis. In Zacharia heet het nog: "Zwaard! ontwaak"; en: "Sla den Herder." En immers werd dit woord ook in de werkelijkheid uitgevoerd door mensen "naar den bepaalden raad en voorkennis Gods." Maar de Herder begreep toch, dat dit niets minder was dan de wil Gods, en dat het, al was het ook door lijden, dat de mensen Hem aandeden, Gods hand was, die zwaar op Hem zou drukken, Gods vonnis, dat over Hem zou worden geveld en uitgevoerd, Gods toorn, die over Hem zou worden uitgegoten. . . .

Daarom: "Ik zal den herder slaan!"

En daarom gehoorzaamde Hij tot den dood, ja, tot den dood des kruises!

Want Hij was Gods Metgezel, Die altijd den wil des Vaders deed, en Die door den van ijver Gods Huis werd verteerd; Die daarom gewillig was alleen te staan voor Gods recht in de ure des toorns!

En Hij was de goede Herder, Die Zijn leven stelde voor de schapen!

Zwaard! ontwaak. Sla den Herder!

O, Mijn God! sla *Mij*!

Vreeselijke ure!

Wat toch zal, als de Herder aldus door God Zelf wordt geslagen, er van de schapen der kudde worden?

Wat zou men dan anders kunnen verwachten, dan dat de kudde uit elkaar geslagen wordt, en de schapen, alle schapen der kudde verstrooid zullen worden?

Ja: "en de schapen der kudde zullen verstrooid worden." Hoe zou het anders kunnen?

Want wel doelt dit woord allereerst en in den engeren zin des woords op de discipelen. Zoo toch past de Herder het Zelf toe in dien donkeren nacht, toen Hij zich met de jongeren op weg naar Gethsemane bevond, en door Gethsemane op weg naar het zwaard, dat toen reeds tegen Hem ontwaakt was: "Gij zult allen aan Mij geërgerd worden in dezen nacht." Ach, ook zij verstanden het nog niet, dat de Herder alzoo moest geslagen worden! En ook zij, die het immers altijd nog druk hadden over de vraag, wie straks in het heerlijke koninkrijk van den Messias wel de meeste zou zijn, wilden het zoo niet. "Wees U genadig, Heere, dat zal U geenszins geschieden!"

Ach, zij wilden wel met Hem in gevangenis en dood gaan, maar dan met het zwaard in de hand!

Maar een Herder, Die geslagen werd en niet weder sloeg, Die, schoon Hij toch immers de macht had, Zijn eigen goed recht en Zijne goede zaak niet wilde verdedigen, *Die Zich slagen liet.* . . .

Het gewillig staan, het met opzet gaan staan van den Herder in het vreeselijk oordeel des kruises. . . .

Dat was hun te veel!

Op zulk eenen Herder durfden zij het ook niet aan, om hun vertrouwen te stellen. Neen, erger nog, aan een met opzet weerloozen Herder in de ure des oordeels en den gevraars *ergerden* zij zich ook! Toen, ja, toen het volkommen was gebleken, dat Hij noch van mensen noch van engelen hulp begeerde vluchtten ook al de discipelen!

Vreeselijke ure!

Want ofschoon dit wel in de eerste plaats op de discipelen zag, heeft dit woord toch een veel breedere beteekenis. De schapen der kudde zullen verstrooid worden! Neen, dat kan niet beteeken in laatster instantie, dat een elftal discipelen op de vlucht slaan; dat betekent niets minder, dan dat er nu in 't geheel geen herder meer is, en dat de geheele kudde uit elkaar geslagen wordt! Alle schapen worden verstrooid!

En zoo was het!

Want die kudde is het Oud Testamentisch Israel met heel zijn instituut naar de wet van Mozes, met zijn tempel, altaar, offerande, priester, koning en profet, met heel zijn dienst der schaduwën, zoals het alles zijn eenheid vond, zich toespitste, zijn einde had in dezen Herder!

Sla dezen Herder, en er is niets meer over!

De band, die de kudde Israels samenbond, is verbroken!

Israel wordt verworpen als natie. Het is geen kudde meer!

Bange ure!

En toch: ure der redding!

In 't vuur geworpen wordt de Kerk, ja, toen, in die vreeselijke ure van het slaan des Herders, meer dan ooit!

Uit elkaar geslagen wordt de historische openbaring der kudde, maar ze komt niet om. Ze wordt weer vergaderd. Want hoor! "Ik zal Mijne hand tot de kleinen wenden!"

Maar is er dan nog een "hand des Heeren"?

Is niet de Herder geslagen, door het zwaard gedood, en was juist niet die Herder de hand, de machtige arm des Heeren ter verlossing der schapen? Waar is dan nu de hand des Heeren, die zich tot de kleinen zal wenden?

Is dan de hand des Heeren niet verkort?

Doch neen! Wel is die geslagen Herder de hand des Heeren, maar eene hand, die zich juist in en door dat slaan openbaart als machtig om te verlossen! Het was de verlossende hand des Heeren, die zich tot ons wendde in de kribbe van Bethlehem: het Woord is vleesch geworden, en heeft onder ons getabernakeld. Het was die machtige hand ter verlossing, die zich naar ons uitstrekte, naar ons, zoals we verzonken lagen in diepten der ellenden, der zonde en des doods, in den dood des Herders: Hij heeft Hem, Die geen zonde gekend heeft, tot zonde gemaakt, opdat wij zouden worden rechtvaardigheid Gods in Hem. En het is diezelfde machtige hand ter redding, die door den dood heen het leven bereidt voor de "kleinen", het eeuwige leven!

Hij is opgestaan!

Opgestaan om onze rechtvaardigmaking!

En die opgestane Herder is de hand des Heeren, die zich tot de kleinen wendt!

De kleinen!

De lagen van staat! Niet "die groot zijn in hun oogen", maar de nederigen, de gebrokenen van harte en verslagenen van geest, de treurenden en zachtmoedigen, zijn het voorwerp van redding door die machtige hand des Heeren. Zij, die door den Heere zelf klein zijn gemaakt, en nu om hulpe ter verlossing zoeken. . . .

Zeker, zij zijn weer eerst de discipelen, die in die vreeselijke ure des oordeels verstrooid werden. Nad niet de Herder gezegd: Ik zal u voorgaan naar Galilea?

Maar straks, op Pinksteren, de duizenden. . . .

En al de eeuwen door wenet de God der zaligheden Zijne hand tot de kleinen uit alle volken!

Aanbiddeljk mysterie!

H. H.

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EDITORIALS

Gansch Israel Zalig

Van F. O. van Lynden, Washington, ontvingen we een vraag over de bekende tekst: "totdat de volheid der heidenen zal ingegaan zijn. En alzoo zal geheel Israel zalig worden." De broeder wil van deze woorden gaarne een korte verklaring zien in ons blad.

Het bepaalde punt, waarop de broeder ongetwijfeld het oog heeft in deze vraag, is zeker wel de kwestie van het zalig worden van *gansch Israel*, en dat in verband met de volheid der heidenen. We dienen den broeder met de volgende opmerkingen.

1. Dat er in hoofdzaak vier verschillende verklaringen van dit zalig worden van geheel Israel worden gegeven. In de eerste plaats zijn er, die de woorden zoo verstaan, dat op een bepaalden tijd in de toekomst alle Joden tot den Heere zullen bekeerd worden, en Israel als natie weer door God zal worden aangenomen en als het bijzonder eigendom des Heeren in eere zal worden hersteld. In de tweede plaats is er de verklaring, die wel niet aanneemt, dat beslist *alle* Joden in de toekomst zullen worden bekeerd, noch ook, dat ze weer als bijzonder volk zullen worden hersteld in hun eigen land, maar die toch de woorden zoo verstaan wil hebben, dat er voor de Joden nog een bijzondere toekomst wacht, waarin het Joodsche volk als geheel, grootendeels zich tot zijnen God zal bekeeren. Dit alles zal dan plaats hebben *nadat* de volheid der heidenen zal zijn ingegaan. In de derde plaats zijn er, die de zaak zóó verstaan, dat "geheel Israel" ziet op de volheid der uitverkorenen uit de Joden, die echter niet plotseling en in de toekomst, maar geleidelijk en heel de geschiedenis door weer in hun eigen olijfboom worden ingeënt en in Christus worden ingelijfd. En eindelijk is er de verklaring, die door "geheel Israel" niet het Joodsche volk, noch ook het uitverkoren deel der Joden in de nieuwe bedeeling, maar heel de Nieuw Testamentische kerk verstaan wil hebben. Zij leggen er vooral nadruk op, dat de apostel in het verband gesproken heeft van het inlijven van Joden en Heidenen in de gemeenschap van Christus, en dat hij ten slotte zegt: en *alzoo*, dat is dan door het inlijven in Christus van Jood en Heiden, zal *gansch Israel* zalig worden.

2. Dat het voornamelijk door het verband moet worden beslist welke dezer verklaringen de juiste moet worden geacht. En dan mogen we zeker in de aller eerste plaats wel opmerken, dat het verband de eerste twee verklaringen boven genoemd veroordeelt. Er mag hier zeker niet gedacht worden aan eene bekeering van alle Joden, noch ook aan een herstel van de Joodsche natie, noch ook aan een bekeering van Joden op

groote schaal in *de toekomst*. Want ten eerste heeft de apostel er van hoofdstuk negen af aan zeer sterk den nadruk op gelegd, dat "geheel Israel" juist niet alle Joden inhoudt. Zij zijn niet allen Israel, die uit Israel zijn. En de kinderen der belofte alleen worden voor het zaad gerekend. Wat ook verder de beteekenis mag zijn "geheel Israel" in Rom. 11:28, de uitdrukking is zeker beperkt tot het "overblijfsel naar de verkiezing der genade." En ten tweeden heeft de apostel in het verband van ditzelfde hoofdstuk verklaard, hoe God heel de nieuwe bedeeling door, niet alleen uit de Heidenen, maar ook uit de Joden geleidelijk Zijne Kerk vergadert. Op den olijfboom worden niet alleen takken uit den wilden olijfboom ingeënt, maar ook "natuurlijke takken", die eerst afgebroken waren, doch thans weer op hun eigen olijfboom worden ingeënt. En dan volgt er in vers 26: "en *alzoo* zal geheel Israel zalig worden." Had de apostel, nadat hij in vers 25 gesproken had van het ingegaan zijn van de volheid der Heidenen, geschreven: "en *dan*, of *daarna* zal geheel Israel zalig worden," het woord zou op eene bijzondere bekeering in de toekomst kunnen zien. Doch dit schrijft de apostel juist niet. Hij schrijft "en *zoo*. En dat wil zeggen: op de wijze, langs den weg, dien ik pas heb aangeduid, zal geheel Israel zalig worden. We kunnen dus niet de verklaring aanvaarden, die het zalig worden van geheel Israel door eene bijzondere bekeering der Joden in de toekomst verwacht. We hebben dus te kiezen tusschen de laatste twee genoemde verklaringen: "geheel Israel" is geestelijk Israel vergaderd uit Jood en Heiden heel de nieuwe bedeeling door; of het is het uitverkoren deel der Joden, zooals dat, met de uitverkorenen heidenen uit alle volken, heel deze bedeeling weer in Christus en Zijne gemeenschap, den olijfboom, wordt ingeënt. Voor de eerste van deze twee verklaringen is zeker zeer veel te zeggen, en ik heb lang gemeend, dat dit metterdaad de beteekenis der woorden is in Rom. 11:26. In de eerste plaats toch spreekt de apostel zoo met nadruk van *geheel Israel*, iets, dat ons aanstands doet denken aan het Israel uit alle volkeren, uit Joden en Heidenen vergaderd. In de tweede plaats is deze verklaring zeker in overeenstemming met al hetgeen ons geleerd wordt aangaande Israel, Jeruzalem, de troon Davids, den tempel, den berg Sion, etc. Er is zeker geen grond in de Schrift om de verklaring, die "geheel Israel" laat slaan op de kerk der nieuwe bedeeling te beschuldigen van valsche vergeestelijking. Bovendien doet deze verklaring zeker recht aan het beteekenisvolle woordje "*alzoo*" in verband met hetgeen de apostel in het voorafgaande geleerd had. Daar had de apostel zeker verklaard, hoe de Kerk in de nieuwe bedeeling wordt vergaderd door het inenten op den olijfboom van wilde en natuurlijke takken. Hoe natuurlijk dan, om waar de apostel in vs. 26 zegt: en *alzoo* zal geheel Israel zalig worden, dit te verklaren als doelende op heel de Nieuw Testamentische Kerk!

En toch meen ik, dat ook deze verklaring ten slotte geen recht doet aan den tekst in het verband, en dat "geheel Israel" moet worden verstaan als ziende op het uitverkoren deel der Joden, zooals het gedurende heel de nieuwe bedeeling in Christus en de gemeenschap der Kerk wordt ingelijfd. En mijn grond hiervoor is, dat in heel dit elfde hoofdstuk van den brief aan de Romeinen de term "Israel" ziet op Joden in onderscheiding van heidenen. Daarom mogen we aan het woord in vs. 26 willekeurig geen andere beteekenis geven. Dit is waar, om ons maar te beperken, van het woord zooals het voorkomt in vs. 25: "dat de verharding voor een deel over Israel gekomen is, totdat de volheid der Heidenen zal ingegaan zijn." Het is over de Joden, dat de verharding voor een deel gekomen is; en bovendien wordt *Israel* hier gebezigd in onderscheiding van de Heidenen. En dit is ook waar van hetgeen op vs. 26 volgt. Daar schrijft de apostel, en dat wel ter verklaring van hetgeen hij in vs. 26 had geschreven, nog eens over de Joden, die wel zijn "vijanden aangaande het Evangelie om uwentwil", maar die zijn, "aangaande de verkiezing", "beminden om der vaderen wil." En zoo schrijft hij dan verder: "Want gelijkerwijs ook gjilieden eertijds Gode ongehoorzaam geweest zijt, maar nu barmhartigheid verkregen hebt door dezer ongehoorzaamheid; alzoo zijn ook deze nu ongehoorzaam geweest, opdat ook zij door uwe barmhartigheid zouden barmhartigheid verkrijgen." vss. 30, 31. Overal in het hoofdstuk wordt Israel onderscheiden van de Heidenen. Het zou dus willekeur zijn om in vs. 26 de term "Israel" te verklaren als slaande op geheel de Nieuw Testamentische Kerk. Ik meen dan ook, dat de tekst het oog heeft op het zalig worden van geheel het overblijfsel naar de verkiezing der genade uit de Joden. Ze worden geheel deze bedeeling door, als takken, die eens afgebroken waren, weer op hun eigen olijfboom ingeënt. En alzoo wordt heel het uitverkoren deel der Joden zalig.

3. Dat dit niet plaats heeft *nadat* de volheid der Heidenen zal zijn ingegaan, maar *alzoo*, d.w.z. doordat de verharding voor een deel over Israel gekomen is, terwijl het andere deel behouden wordt, en dat dit zoo zal blijven totdat de volheid der Heidenen zal zijn ingegaan, d. w. z. tot het einde toe. De volheid der Heidenen is het uitverkoren deel der Heidenen, in onderscheiding van de uitverkorenen uit de Joden. *Alzoo* dus wordt ook "geheel Israel" zalig. Voor een deel is het verhard, en dat zal zoo blijven tot het einde toe, wanneer ook de volheid der Heidenen zal zijn ingegaan. Maar het andere deel, het uitverkoren zaad, de kinderen der belofte ook uit de Joden, gaan aldoor in de gemeenschap van Christus in. Vandaar dat het uitverkoren deel der Heidenen en het uitverkoren deel der Joden samen een volheid wordt, en straks aan het einde, op hetzelfde moment als eene volheid wordt vergaderd. En alzoo het zal worden "ééne kudde en ééne herder."

H. H.

How Shall They Hear Without A Preacher?

Another question was sent in by H. A. V. P. of Holland, Mich. The question is whether, if anyone is to be saved, the Word of God must always be preached to him by an ordained minister or missionary. The question is elucidated by different examples. If an American soldier tells a Japanese soldier about Christ on the battlefield, or if a Japanese soldier, who is not acquainted with the way of salvation, finds a Bible and reads it, can he not be saved through this means? Briefly: "Does Scripture teach that God can and will save only those to whom His Word is *preached*?"

In reply I may state the following:

1. First of all, that for a complete answer I would refer Mr. V. P. to my book entitled: "God's Eternal Good Pleasure," pp. 237 ff., especially to the part that explains the words: "and how shall they hear without a preacher?" If these words mean anything in the context, they mean: no one can hear Christ without a preacher. And since, according to the same context, no one can believe without hearing Christ, it follows that no one is saved without a preacher. Now, a preacher is one that is sent, for "how shall they preach except they be sent?" The apostles were sent directly by the Word of Christ. The Church is sent to preach indirectly through the Word of Christ to the apostles. And in order that it may be quite sure that it is the *Church*, and not the *individual* that preaches, the latter is called through the Church; and therefore; a preacher in our day is an ordained minister, called and sent by Christ through the Church. The question is not so much and, in fact, not at all, whether anyone must be called *by* a preacher, but whether it is paramount that he is called by Christ, and whether it pleases Christ to call anyone without His Church in the world. And this, I think, in the light of Scripture, must be answered negatively at least in so far: *that no one can deliberately ignore the Church and its preaching, and insist that Christ can just as well save without a preacher.* The custody of the truth, and the task of preaching, is not entrusted to any individual, but to the Church only, just as the Spirit of Christ does not dwell in any individual apart from the Church but in the Church. Individualism in this respect leads to corruption of the truth and to the extinguishing of the light of the Word of God.

2. Whether in very special circumstances Christ cannot and will not use special means is certainly not for us to say. If it is the will of Christ to let His Word be heard by a Japanese through an American soldier in case there is no other way, I certainly would be the last one to deny that this is possible. Only, in that case I would put it this way: Christ simply sends

that American soldier for that particular moment and makes a preacher out of him, and speaks His Wor'l through him. And yet, even in that case, Christ will surely bring that Japanese soldier as soon as possible in contact with the Church and with the preaching. As far as being called by the means of finding the Bible in special circumstances, we have, it seems to me, a fitting illustration in Acts 8:26 ff. The Ethiopian eunuch had found a Bible and was reading it. But Christ sent him a preacher in the person of Philip, and thus he was called and baptized. We must remember: 1. The Bible would not even exist today if the Church had not fulfilled its calling to preach. 2. If a man finds a Bible, and it is Christ's will to call him, it is my conviction that the Lord will bring that person to the Church, and thus let him hear the preaching.

The rule, therefore, remains, and no one can violate it with impunity: Christ causes His Word to be heard through the preacher that is sent.

H. H.

The Triple Knowledge

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART TWO

OF MAN'S REDEMPTION

Chapter II

LORD'S DAY VI.

II.

The Mediator Of God And Man

Who then is that Mediator, who is in one person both very God, and a real righteous man? For this question we, perhaps, had been looking for some time. We probably grew impatient with the Catechism as it discussed the hopelessness of our condition, the impossibility of salvation on our part, and the question of a possible Mediator, the necessity of His being true and eternal God and real righteous man in one person. And all the while we were left groping in the darkness of our sin and misery. Yet, we saw how essential it is for the maintenance of the true doctrine concerning our salvation that these matters be emphasized, and not lightly passed over. For, on the one

hand, it must be clearly and fully understood, before we can even begin to speak of a Saviour and salvation, that with us the matter is strictly without hope. In no sense can we accomplish our own salvation, or any part of it. And, on the other hand, we must see sharply and clearly that no other Mediator than the Christ of the Scriptures can possibly help us, so that to falsify this Christ, to adulterate the truth concerning Him as revealed to us in the holy gospel, is to shut out all possibility of salvation. The questions the Heidelberg Catechism thus far discussed may appear abstract and academic, they are, nevertheless, intensely practical, questions of life and death. However, now it has been clearly demonstrated and firmly established that we need just such a Mediator, who is both God and man, and that, too, a righteous man, the Catechism all of a sudden unveils before our longing eyes the complete figure of a real and only Mediator of God and man, in all the fulness of His glory and blessings of salvation! For in answer to the question: "Who then is that Mediator?" it declares: "Our Lord Jesus Christ: 'who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption'."

In this procedure of the Catechism, according to which it now places us at once before the Christ in all His fulness and significance, before it explains Him in the details of His blessedness, there is an underlying truth to which we may well call attention. It is this, that faith receives and embraces Christ Himself, before it can possibly appropriate any of the blessings of salvation, yea, even before it fully understands the significance of His Person and work. Christ Himself is the fulness of our salvation. It is Himself we receive. Himself He imparts to us through faith by His Spirit. We do not receive Him piecemeal, bit by bit; we do not receive the blessings of salvation one by one until gradually we have appropriated the whole Christ and all His benefits: we receive Him! Into Him we are ingrafted by a true faith. Members of His body we do become, both legally and organically by that same faith. And when thus we have become His possession, one plant with Him, we possess Him in all His fulness. We say "Our Lord Jesus Christ!" And that is our salvation. We may grow in the knowledge of Him through the Holy Scriptures. And growing in knowledge we may attain to a fuller understanding of the confession expressed in the words: our Lord Jesus Christ. But although we may, and actually do, thus grow in grace and in the enjoyment of the liberty we have in Christ, from the very first moment of our being grafted into Him, our faith lays hold on Him, on the whole of Him. To say "*our* Lord Jesus Christ," is, indeed, to be saved! To say that Jesus is Lord, *our* Lord, is to possess *Him*, all at once, in all the fulness of His grace! For that reason the method followed by the Catechism is quite correct. It will explain all the implications of the

answer it here gives in future chapters. But here it confronts the faith of the Christian with the full Christ, in order that from the depths of our misery we may at once rise to the heights of complete salvation by appropriating Him, and confessing in spiritual joy: "Our Lord Jesus Christ!"

To expound this answer in all its implications this is not the place. It would mean to explain all the details of the doctrine concerning our salvation. And this is to be done in succeeding chapters. Here we must be satisfied with the main features of this Christ as they are drawn before the eyes of our faith by the Catechism in a few bold strokes. The answer here given is literally taken from I Cor. 1:30: "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." The general meaning of this text is plain: Christ is our all, our complete redemption. There is a question, however, as to the relation between the various concepts occurring in the text: wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption. The question is especially whether *wisdom* is to be regarded as the main concept, so that the other three: *righteousness*, *sanctification*, *redemption*, are explanations of this one term. The Revised Version suggests this meaning in a marginal note that would translate the text thus: "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God, both righteousness and sanctification and redemption." And there is something in favor of this interpretation. For, first of all, in the context the apostle had emphasized this notion of wisdom, in fact, it may be said to be the main theme of the chapter from verse eighteen to the end. The wisdom of the world is contrasted with the wisdom of God in the "foolishness" of preaching. "God hath made foolish the wisdom of the world. For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through (its) wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." vss. 20, 21. Moreover, this wisdom of God is power, power to save, which seems to favor the idea that in vs. 30 also wisdom is looked upon as a power of righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, "Seeing that the Jews ask for signs, and Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." vss. 22-25. And the order in the original of verse 30 seems to favor somewhat the translation as suggested by the marginal note of the Revised Version. However, these arguments are not conclusive. In fact, if the apostle had meant to give the last three terms as explanations of the term *sophia*, wisdom, he could, and in all probability would have expressed himself more clearly and

precisely. However, in the original the terms *righteousness* and *sanctification* are certainly more closely connected with each other than with either *wisdom* or *redemption*. And, therefore, we would favor the translation: "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, also both righteousness and sanctification, and redemption."

One more remark we must make about the relative position and value of the various terms in the text. It cannot but draw our attention that the word *redemption* stands at the end of the series. However, in the work of salvation redemption is not last, but first. Christ is first our redemption, and because He is our redemption He is our wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification. For redemption is the purchasing free of one that is in bondage, the effecting of one's release by paying the price, the ransom. Now, it is clear from all Scripture that this is first, and basic for all the other blessings of grace. Redemption presupposes that we are guilty, and that we are legally in the bondage of sin and death. We have no right to be delivered from that bondage. We are legally shut up in the prison of the lie, of unrighteousness and corruption. If, then, we are to be liberated, the price, the ransom must be paid for us. Before we even can have the right to become partakers of wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification, we must be redeemed. This price of our redemption was paid for us by Christ on the accursed tree, where He bore the punishment of our sin in most perfect obedience to the Father. And because of this, on the basis of this, He is also become our wisdom, our righteousness, and our sanctification. That the word redemption has the last place in the series of terms, therefore, is not because it is actually last, but because it has the emphasis. Christ is become our wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, because He is our redemp*t*or.

A more beautiful passage of Scripture the Heidelberg Catechism could not very well have selected for its present purpose than the text from first Corinthians. For, as we have stated, it is the purpose of our instructor to place before us all at once the fulness of the Christ in all the riches of His salvation. And for this the text from Corinthians is eminently fit. For notice that the text does not state merely what Jesus *did* for us, or still *does* for us, nor even what He gives unto us, but what He *is* to us. He is made or become unto us wisdom, righteousness and sanctification, and redemption. He *is* all this for us. The Christ of the Scriptures, the Son of God come into the flesh, born of a virgin, Who sojourned among us and revealed the Father unto us, Who suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified on Golgotha, buried in the sepulchre of Joseph of Arimathaea, was raised on the third day, ascended into the highest heavens from the Mount of Olives, and was exalted by the mighty power of God on the right hand

of the Majesty in heaven, far above all principalities and powers, and every name that is named both in this world and in the world to come,—that Christ *is* unto us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification, and redemption. O, indeed, He merited this all for us by His work of perfect obedience; He revealed it all to us both personally and through the prophets and apostles; He gives all this to us, making us partakers of it all through the Spirit that was given unto Him and that was poured out into the Church. But even this does not fully explain what is expressed in the text: He was made, He became unto us wisdom, righteousness and sanctification, and redemption. He *is* our all! To lay hold on Him by faith is to appropriate wisdom, righteousness and sanctification, and redemption. To see ourselves by faith in Him, is to see ourselves filled with wisdom, perfectly liberated from the bondage of sin, righteous and holy. To know Him is to know the wisdom of God; to trust in Him is to be righteous, and holy, and free. To possess Him is to possess salvation, righteousness, and eternal life and glory!

And the terms employed here do, indeed, express a fulness of salvation. Our Lord Jesus Christ is truly the Mediator we need, and beyond Him we need none other. For we are guilty, and to blot out our guilt by complete satisfaction of the justice of God is absolutely required in order to be restored to the favor of God. And this we could never do in ourselves. We need, therefore, one that is our redemption. And this is our Lord Jesus Christ, who was delivered for our transgressions, and raised for our justification. To believe in Him is to be liberated from the dominion of sin according to God's own justice. But redemption is not enough. We are actually in bondage dead through trespasses, and we must be delivered. We are blind, and our mind is in darkness. We are slaves of the lie, in bondage to the foolishness of spiritual ignorance. We grope in darkness, we hate the good, we hold the truth under in unrighteousness. And moreover, we exist in a world in which the wrath of God is revealed from heaven, and from the testimony of that wrath there is no escape. There is no way out. No philosophy of man can help us. "The world by its wisdom knew not God." But Christ is our wisdom! Not only did He reveal the Father unto us, and did He make known the full counsel of salvation, but He Himself, in His Person and work, *is* the wisdom of God; and by His Spirit and grace through faith He is our wisdom. He is the light in our darkness, the solution of all mysteries, the way out of sin and death into the light of life! He is our righteousness and sanctification. In the judgment of God we stand condemned in ourselves, both because of our original and our actual sins. But Christ *is* our righteousness, and, therefore, our eternal life. For in Him there is a righteousness that far transcends the right-

eousness of the first Adam before the fall. He Himself, the Christ of the Scriptures, is that righteousness that is worthiness of glory and immortality. And in ourselves we are dead in sin, polluted and defiled, hating God and hating one another, seeking the things of the flesh rather than the things that are above. But Christ is our sanctification, our complete purification, and our consecration to the living God. No, indeed, if the instructor of our Catechism purposed to bring before us all at once the image or revelation of the full Christ in all His glory and power of salvation, it could no do better than quote this significant passage from First Corinthians.

We must note, too, that in this answer of the Heidelberg Catechism it is emphasized that this Mediator is all of God. In fact, this is one of the main thoughts in the text as it is found in Corinthians. O, indeed, it is our salvation that is accomplished through this "Lord Jesus Christ." But even that salvation is not the chief purpose of this Mediator and His revelation. On the contrary, the wisdom of the world must be made foolish, and the power of the world must be put to nought. It must be revealed that the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. And, therefore, "God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world, that he might put to shame the things that are strong; and the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, did God choose, yea, and the things that are not, that he might bring to nought the things that are." vss. 27-28. For no flesh may ever glory before God, but he that glorieth must glory in the Lord. Hence, this Mediator is made unto us all that He is from God. He is *Mediator*, indeed, but not one whom we interposed between God and ourselves, or whom we appointed or requested or even desired and sought that He might act in our behalf with the Most High. He *mediates* in our behalf, but not as a *third party* that places himself between two contending parties in order to reconcile them. He is from God! There is nothing in Him that is to be attributed to us. God's Mediator is He, made of God, and wholly commissioned by God in order to accomplish the things of God, even in behalf of us.

For notice that He *became*, or *was made* unto us wisdom, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, and that this is all from God. He became all this unto us by a wonder of the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and according to His eternal good pleasure. For it was determined from before the foundation of the world that the Son should be the revelation of all the fulness of God, the first born of every creature, and the first begotten of the dead. And to Him was given the Church, for we are chosen in Him (Eph. 1:4), that He might redeem that Church unto Himself and to God, and through the deep way

of death might justify, and purify, and glorify that Church; in order that the fulness of God's glory, dwelling in Him, might be revealed in manifold reflections of grace and beauty through the millions upon millions of the members of His body. And thus He was, from before the foundation of the world, made wisdom, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, and that, too, *unto us* that that are chosen in Him. And all this was realized in time. From God He became or was made the fulness of salvation, righteousness, and eternal life. He became all this from the manger of Bethlehem to the cross of Golgotha, and *through* the death of the cross into the highest glory of his position at the right hand of the Most High. And all this was the work of God. The incarnation of the Word, the work of Jesus' ministry, the death of the Son of God, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, His ascension into heaven and His exaltation far above all principalities and powers,—all this belongs to His *becoming* or *being made* unto us wisdom, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption. Not until He travelled the way from the incarnation through death to glory is "Our Lord Jesus Christ" perfected, completed, fully made, as the revelation of the God of our salvation. And not until this glorious Lord has received the Spirit of promise, and poured out that Spirit into the Church, is He become salvation *unto us*. And all this is of God, of the triune God. Of The Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit, are all the works of God, both in creation and in redemption. And of the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit, i. e. of the one God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, are the incarnation, and the ministry, the death and resurrection, the ascension and the exaltation, and the outpouring of the Spirit, of "our Lord Jesus Christ." And so it is all of God, even also that we are in Him. For "*of him* are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom *from God*, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption." He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord!

H. H.

The Gainsayers

(The literary Contest of Christianity
in the first three centuries)

As I wrote in my previous article, already in the times of the apostles many Jews and pagans became Christians but in name only and smuggled their false religious notions and practices into the church, where they matured and eventually became known as Ebionism and Gnosticism. Ebionism is Judaizing Christianity; Gnosticism is paganizing Christianity. The

Ebionites were thus the successors of the non-Christian Judaists: and the Gnostics were the successors of the non-Christian Neo-Platonists. The Ebionites and the Gnostics were the heretics *in the Christian Church*. They formed the Christian class of the opponents of the religion of Christ and their thought-structures formed the heresies of the first three centuries.

As to the Ebionites, they formed a Christian sect in the church but which was separated from it about the end of the second century. In all likelihood, the name was derived from the Hebrew word meaning *poor* and at the first was applied not to the doctrine of the Ebionites but to the poverty of their circumstances. Perhaps the name was applied to them with the former signification by their enemies and that they employed a name already existing than that they coined it to suit their purpose. That the term originally applied to the circumstances of the Ebionites is a supposition supported by arguments that may be stated thus:—that the early Christians, both Jewish and heathen, were called *the poor*; that as eventually the Judaizing Christians came to be the only Jewish Christians who did not lose their identity by merging with the Christian church, and who, on this account, required to be distinguished from the heathen Christians, they retained the name. It may well be that at first all Judaizing Christians went under that name. These Christians must be distinguished from the Judaists. The latter, as we have seen, were no Christians at all. They opposed and derided all that was called Christ. They were enemies of the gospel and wanted to be known as such. But the Judaizing *Christians* were what their name signified. They were Christians and, at least in the beginning of the apostolic age, combined with the Gentile Christianity to form the Christian church. The epistles, especially those of Paul, reveal that the Judaizing Christians divide into two classes: the conservative and the radical.

The conservative Jewish Christians accepted Paul and his teachings on free grace but believed the Mosaic ritual law still binding yet without denouncing the Gentile Christians for not keeping the law. They were not properly heretics but weak and stunted Christians. It was the presence of these weak brethren in the church that drew forth from the apostle counsel such as this: "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his mind." (Rom. 14:5) This refers to the Jewish fast and feast days still observed by the weak in faith. Counsel of this character bespeaks tolerance on the part of the apostle with respect to these weak Christians. He wanted to be patient with them. What they lacked is insight into the truth. Hence, they had to be taught and not denounced. The more advanced members in the church had to refrain from judging them and setting them at nought; for "we shall all stand before the judgment

seat of Christ . . . every one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Rom. 14:10-12).

Though these conservative Judaizing Christians must not be branded heretics, certain it is that their wrong attachment to the Mosaic institutions indicated a bias in a dangerous direction—in the direction of that radicalism or heresy combated in the epistle to the Galatians. False teachers had entered the field of labor of the apostle, who, though they at first were not openly militating against Christianity, yet strove to lead it into legalistic channels of thought. The primary tenet of their creed was that every convert to Christianity, Jew and Gentile alike, was obliged to observe the whole ceremonial law and in particular submit to circumcision. As the ritual law had waxed old and vanished away, such teaching was, at the bottom, a denial of Christ and His vicarious atonement. It was Ebionism *proper* in its early stages of development. These radical teachers perhaps did not think to wittingly deny Christ. Yet it is telling that, in distinction from the conservative Judaizing Christians, they were hateful of Paul. They even went so far as to attempt to undermine his personal influence and apostolic authority by claiming that, as he had received his doctrine from the Twelve, he was to be ranked with the ordinary teachers in the church. The apostle therefore found it necessary, first of all, to defend his apostolic authority by proving that he was called of God and had received his gospel by a direct revelation. Gal.1,2. In the second place he was obligated to attack and expose the false teachings of these Judaists and defend the doctrine of justification by faith.

Of the Ebionites proper, Origin distinguishes two classes—the extreme and the common. The former, according to Origin, differed from the non-Christian unbelieving Jews in this only that they accepted the moral teachings of Christ.

The essence of the doctrine of the common Ebionites may be set forth in five propositions:

1) Jesus is a mere man, the offspring of Joseph and Mary by natural generation. Yet His human nature is the incorporation of the spirit of an angel or of an archangel, or even of Adam.

2) Circumcision and the economy of Moses is binding for all men unto salvation. This is equivalent to saying that man established his own righteousness before God through the works of the law.

3) Of all the books of the New Testament the Gospel of St. Matthew alone is genuine.

4) Paul is an apostate heathen and a heretic; all his epistles are to be rejected.

5) God is one.

It is evident that the doctrine and practices of the false teachers, withheld by Paul, were not uprooted. They abided; and the name Ebionism, it is clear, is the designation of this very doctrine in the final stag-

es of its development. How true the Dutch adage: "Beginselen werken door."

At the close of the second century the Ebionites inhabited chiefly the coasts of the dead sea, but they dwelt also in Rome and Cyprus. They disappeared as a distinct sect from the stage of history in the beginning of the 8th century *circa* 420: but their doctrines, in every changing form, survive them through the centuries and are with us today.

Essentially, the Ebionites in their attitude toward the true Christ of the Scriptures differed nothing from the non-Christian Judaists. It is therefore wholly correct to say that the Ebionites were the successors of the Judaists.

Another error, most subtle and dangerous, was Gnosticism. The name is derived from the Greek word *gnosis* meaning *knowledge*. But it is the knowledge or wisdom of man. In the New Testament this word is frequently used by St. Paul and in the epistle of St. Peter to express the saving knowledge of God in Christ.

Gnosticism derives its ideas both from Heathenism and Christianity. It is therefore more comprehensive than Neo-Platonism with which it is akin. It is an infusion of paganism into Christianity. As such it is representative of a striving on the part of the old pagan world to make out of its diverse religious and speculative culture a universal gospel, method of salvation, that could serve as a substitute for the Gospel of the Holy Scriptures and would appeal to all men including God's people. It is therefore not openly hostile to Christianity, as is Neo-Platonism, but hails it as the highest stage of development of religion and takes it up and gives it a place in its system but so corrupts it as to destroy its identity.

At the same time the gnostics strove to solve the deep riddles of the universe, viz., the origin of life and the origin of evil,—how life sprung from God, the infinite source,—how a world so imperfect as this could proceed from a supremely perfect God,—to solve these riddles not by reason but by fancy, spiritual intuition. Hence the Gnostics do not reason in a logical way in their literature but construct for their readers wonderful word-pictures. They clothe their ideas not in simple language but in the garb of type and symbol as do the prophets of God of the Old Testament Scriptures. Those who have mastered their literature say that it reads much like the Revelations of John. "Demonic possessions and resurrections from the dead, miracles of healing and punishments and accumulated without end; the constant repetition of similar events gives the long stories a certain monotony, which is occasionally interrupted by hymns and prayers of genuine poetic value. A rich apparatus of visions, angelic appearances, heavenly voices, speaking animals, defeated and humbled demons is unfolded, a superterrestrial splendour of light gleams up, mysterious signs from heaven, earthquakes, thunder and

lightning frighten the impious; fire, earth, wind, and water obey the pious; serpents, lions, leopards, tigers, and bears are tamed by a word of the apostles and turn upon their persecutors; the dying martyrs are surrounded by coronets, roses, lilies, incense, while the abyss opens to swallow their enemies."

In providing their speculations with a basis, the Gnostics drew upon the Bible and upon the copious unauthentic documents, which appeared in the second century under the names of eminent teachers in the church. Gnosticism is plainly indicative of an attempt on the part of satan to divert men's minds from the truth in Christ Jesus and to beguile even the faithful.

The primary principles of thought of this system can be set forth in few words. Also in this system God even in and for Himself is a wholly unintelligible, super-rational being, an infinite blank, before whom all thought is powerless, a primevil being, an infinite background, without attributes of any kind, without life and without thought, above existance and above goodness. This is a perversion of the Scriptural doctrine that God dwells in a light accessible only to Him and that His self-revelation to man is but the earthly reflection of the glories of His infinite being.

Yet, strangely enough, though God is unintelligible even to Himself and above existence, He is yet an active force, perpetually producing something else not by the power of His creative word but through an outflow from His very being. (pantheism).

That which springs from this transcendent source—God—is not this earth and its fulness but a series of spiritual powers or energies to which are given names—mind, reason, wisdom, power, truth, life, goodness, etc.—and which therefore correspond in a formal sense to the attributes of the true God of the Scriptures. It is only through these powers that the infinite being of the gnostics passes into life and activity, and becomes known. This is plainly a caricature of the Scriptural doctrine of revelation. To this spiritual world is given the name of *fulness* (*pleroma*) and the divine powers composing it, in their ever-expanding procession from the being of God, are called aeons. Christ is the most perfect aeon.

To understand this system further—it cannot be really understood, as it is too vague, confused and irrational—an account must be taken of the Gnostic conception of matter (in contrast to spirit) as an inherently and essentially evil substance. It therefore cannot proceed from the good God but is uncreated and thus a kind of second deity, in eternal opposition to God and the ideal world, and the principle of evil in our material world. The latter is the handiwork of a fallen aeon, called the Demiurge, the Jehovah of Judaism, who wrongly imagines himself to be the supreme and only god. His throne is not in the ideal light-world but in the heavens of the planets, and he rules over this visible world, the raging kingdom of the devil, and re-

sist the purposes of God.

Matter, the evil principle in this world, being in itself dead, is animated by an aeon of the light-world (veiled pantheism).

Christ, the most perfect aeon, assumes not a real but a ghost-like body. His appearance in the flesh is therefore deceptive. He saves through communicating to a small circle of elect the gnosis (knowledge).

Common to all Gnostics was the notion that the divinely created body, in distinction from the spirit of man, is inherently evil and that its sensuality must be overcome by abusive treatment. But all did not employ the same measures. Some thought to reach this objective through the practicing of extreme rigor and self-denial such as abstaining from certain kinds of food and all nuptial intercourse; others through bidding defiance to all moral laws and abandoning themselves to the most shameless licentiousness. Here the diabolical principle of action was that voluptuousness must be conquered by unrestrained indulgence in it.

There were soon many sects of the Gnostics, the description of which need not be given here. They were all branches of a common sect. But it was not till the first quarter of the 2nd century that Gnosticism came to full and systematic development; and then it ranges from two main centers—Antioch in Syria, and Alexandria. The founder of the Syrian Gnostic school was Meander, the pupil of Simon Magnus of Acts 8. Prominent in this Gnosis is the never ending struggle between the Supreme God, on the one hand, and the Demiurge and his angels or aeons, on the other hand.

Then there was the great school of Gnosticism represented by the famous Marcion whose field of influence was Asia Minor. Marcion was the son of a Christian Bishop, who is said to have excommunicated him. To him the Jehovah of the Old Testament Scriptures is the Demiurge in conflict with the Supreme God and with Christ whom he sent to redeem the world from the power of this Demiurge.

The Gnostics did not organize themselves into congregations in separation from the Christian church. They formed no sect but a multitude of philosophic schools. Many of them remained in the church and regarded themselves as the spiritually superiors in it. Some even held ecclesiastical office.

Though all Gnostic systems are heathen in their character, Gnosticism assumes three forms, known, the one from the other, by the heathen, the Jewish, and the Christian elements preponderating respectively in its syncretism. In the ethical point of view, we perceive two main branches: the ascetic and the libertine.

The following characteristics are common to nearly all Gnostic systems. (1) Pantheism; the conception of the identity of God and the world—the one being the supreme eternal substance of which the other is the perpetual outlaw, manifestation, and form. In

some of these systems this pantheistic notion stands out in bold relief; in others it is veiled. (2) The separation of the Demiurge—the creator of our visible world—from the supreme God. (3) Dualism: the notion according to which matter is inherently evil and riots independent of and in eternal opposition to the supreme God, He being powerless to overcome it. (4) Docetism; the reduction of the human nature of the Redeemer to a mere Ghost-like appearance. Finally, in all these systems man is his own redeemer. He achieves his own salvation through liberating his spirit from the chains of matter (the body) and from the bondage of this visible world and its rulers, the planetary spirits, as aided by the gnosis (knowledge) imparted to him by the Redeemer. This "knowledge," a mystical enlightenment which only the spiritual can receive, brings man into communion with the heaven of spiritual realities. Christ is the revealer of the unknown, supreme God. By His illumination all "spiritual" men are brought back to the realm of the good God. Gnosticism had no need of the vicarious atonement of Christ and it therefore made no room for it in its system. Mankind divides into three classes: the spiritual, who could receive "knowledge;" the psychical capable of faith; and the material who could receive no message.

Gnosticism gradually lost importance after the middle of the 3rd century (A.D. *circa* 250); but was revived at the close of that century by a high-born Persian, Mani, who gave to his new system his name—hence Manichaeism. This ism, together with Neo-Platonism, was the final result reached, after a history of more than a thousand years, by the pagan religious development of the civilized nations from Persia to Italy. In the point of view of the headway that it made and the great number of adherents that it gained, (not certainly in the point of view of its intrinsic worth; it had no worth), Manichaeism ranked with Christianity, which had to wage with it a long conflict. Unlike the Gnostics of former days, the Manichaeans organized congregations. Manichaeism, therefore, was more than a school; it was a church and as such a formidable rival of organized Christianity. It had a strictly hierarchical organization headed by twelve apostles, among whom Mani and his successors, like St. Peter and the popes of Rome, was the supreme judicial power. There were thus in existence at this time two great church formations: the Christian and the Manichaean.

In every point of view Manichaeism was Satan's crowning achievement. Its gnosis was almost complete. It retained all the mythologies of the old pagan semitic religions of nature and transformed them into "doctrines," but abolished all their immoral cultus, and substituted instead a spiritual worship and a strict morality. It offered, further, redemption, revelation, and life everlasting. It shows to what length satan

will go to provide men with a substitute of the Gospel of Christ: what he is willing that they should have in the way of religion and morals if only they ask not for the true Christ and the God of the Scriptures and continue worshipping at his shrine.

Manichaeism is the ancient Babylonian religion, the original source of all the gnosis of Western Asia, wonderfully refined. It is satan's temple, reconstructed along the lines of God's house—the Christian church—the purpose being to beguile, if possible, even the elect of God into worshipping there.

Manichaeism was everywhere persecuted. The Roman emperors enacted strict laws against its adherents. But the system still continued to exist. It accompanied the Christian church until the 13th century.

G.M.O.

Een Psalm In De Woestijn

(Psalm 63)

Het opschrift van dezen psalm doet vreemd aan. Er staat: "Een psalm Davids, als hij was in de woestijn van Juda". We zijn geneigd om te zeggen dat een wildernis toch de laatste plaats zou zijn waar we een lied dichten!

De woestijn is beeld van de hel.

En de psalm wordt uiteindelijk het lied des hemels.

Jesaja vertelt ons, dat de woestijn een stuk van de aarde is, hetwelk de vloek des Heeren draagt. De baken van zulk een stuk aarde worden tot pek en het stof wordt tot zwavel, ja, de aarde zal dan tot brandend pek worden, het zal des nachts en des daags niet uitgebluscht worden, tot in eeuwigheid zal zijn rook opgaan, van geslacht tot geslacht zal het woest zijn, tot in eeuwigheid der eeuwigheden zal niemand daar doorgaan; maar de roerdomp en de nachtuil zullen het erfelijk bezitten, en de schuifuit en de raaf zal daarin wonen; want God zal een richtsnoer der woestheid daarover trekken, en een richtblood der ledigheid. In die gevloekte plaats zullen de wilde dieren der woestijnen de wilde dieren der eilanden ontmoeten, en de duivel zal zijn metgezellen toeroepen; ook zal het nachtgedierte zich aldaar neerzetten, en het zal eene rustplaats voor zich vinden; daar zal de wilde meerle nestelen en leggen en hare jongen uitbikken en onder hare schaduw vergaderen; ook zullen de gieren met elkander verzameld worden. Ge behoeft er ook niet aan te twijfelen of het zal zoo zijn. Want Jesaja voegt er aan toe: Zoekt in het boek des Heeren en leest; niet één van deze dingen zal er feilen, het één noch het ander zal men missen; want Mijn mond zelf heeft het

geboden, en Zijn Geest zelf zal ze zamenbrengen.

Reist in Death Valley en ge zult onwillekeurig denken aan Jesaja's beschrijving van het land waarop de Heere vergramd is tot in eeuwigheid. Er ligt in de woestijn der aarde iets vreeselijks, hetwelk men gevoelt bij het doortrekken van de wildernissen der aarde.

De wereldsche menschen hebben dat ook gevoeld. Men rilt bij het lezen van de wegwijsers in Death Valley. Zelf die naam "Death Valley" is teekenend. Heeft men het soms overgenomen uit den Bijbel? Psalm 23 spreekt van het dal der schaduwe des doods! Er is een plaats in Death Valley die men de keuken der hel noemt.

God sprak luide in de woestijnen der aarde. Als men later weggeworpen wordt in de buitenste duisternissen waar het onuitblusschelijc vuur brandt, zal men vaak denken aan Death Valley.

En een psalm?

Een psalm is lof des Heeren. Let slechts op de woordenkeus van dit lied. Ge vindt er het prijzen van God door de lippen; het loven van God in 't leven; het opheffen der handen in den naam van God; de roemende mond en vrolijk zingende lippen; men verblijdt zich in den psalm in God en men zweert bij Hem! Dat is de psalm.

Voeg die twee ideeën nu te zamen en ge hebt een probleem. Een psalm in de woestijn.

David was Koning van Israel toen hij dezen psalm dichtte. Leest vers 12. En er is maar één gelegenheid die dan past op dit gezang in de woestijn van Juda. Het was toen hij vluchtte voor het aangezicht van Absalom.

Maar ik heb aan Jezus gedacht bij het bestudeeren van dit lied.

Leest eens Lucas 5:16; Markus 1:35 en Hebr. 5:7. Daar lezen we: "Maar Hij vertrok in de woestijnen en bad aldaar"; "En des morgens vroeg, als het nog diep in den nacht was, opgestaan zijnde, ging Hij uit en ging henen in eene woeste plaats, en bad aldaar." En in Hebr. 5:7 wijst de Apostel erop, dat Jezus in de dagen Zijns vleeschес sterk geroepen en geweend heeft tot God.

David ging naar de woestijn van Juda omdat Absalom hem op de hielen zat, doch Jezus koos met voorbedachte rade de woeste plaatsen om de psalmen te bidden, om te klagen en te schreien en te snikken tot God. Ge kunt gerust er op aan, dat Jezus ook vaak psalm 63 gebeden heeft. Deze psalm is sterk Messiaansch gekleurd.

Elohim, Eli! Zóó begint het lied.

Vooral dat Eli heeft een bekenden klank. Zoo schreeuwde Hij tot God in de vervullingen van alle woestijnen der aarde. Toen Jezus dat Eli tweemaal uitschreeuwde, aan hat einde van die bange drie uren, toen heeft Hij de verlating Gods ervaren, waarvan de woestijn beeld is.

Zoo zullen we er iets van zien, dat Jezus met voorbedachte rade naar eene woeste plaats ging om te bidden tot God.

Zoo kunnen we het verstaan, dat David Psalm 63 gedicht heeft in de woestijn van Juda.

De woeste plaatsen geven uiting in het voorwerpelijke, wat het diepe hart ervaart. Men staat dan *en rapport* met zijn omgeving.

Let maar op het eerste vers.

Er is een onbeschrijflijke dorst naar God *in een land dor en mat zonder water.*

Ziet ge, Davids ziel was gelijk geworden aan de woestijnen der aarde. De Heere bezocht hem met plagen. De Heere bracht zijn zonde thuis. Hij kastijdde David uit liefde. En de straf, de kastijding was, dat Absalom hem verjaagde van den troon: bittere ervaring. De goddelozen vloekten, doch David wist dat God achter die vloeken schulde. God heeft gezegd: vloek David!

Evenwel, David is de beminde des Heeren. Gods zaad blijft eeuwiglijk in David. En hoewel dan zijn vleesch en ziel en hart bezwijken onder des Heeren sterke hand en hij in de woestijn van Juda een weerschijn bemerkt van de toestand waarin hij verkeert, zoo verlaat hij zijn God toch niet. De eeuwigheid zelve zit hem in de ziel. God verlaat David niet en daarom kan David God niet verlaten.

Ge kunt dat goed merken. Luistert maar naar datgene wat David boven op het hart ligt: Ik zoek U in den dageraad! Mijn ziel dorst naar U! Mijn vleesch verlangt naar U!

David kan niet vergeten wat hij in 't verleden gesmaakt heeft van God. In vroegere, in betere dagen, had hij God in 't heiligdom aanschouwd. Daar zag hij Gods sterkheid en Gods eer!

We staan verbaasd als we merken hoeveel David begrepen heeft van den dienst der schaduwen. Vooral als ge Uzelven afvraagt: wat bedoelt David als hij zegt: "ziende Uwe sterkheid"? Wat voor krachtsuiting zag men nu toch in het heiligdom? Als hij nu nog gesproken had van Gods kracht en sterkte in de natuur, dan hadden we direct gedacht aan de stormen en orkanen en bergen en aardbevingen, en wat dies meer zij. Doch nu zegt hij: 'k Heb U voorwaar in 't heiligdom voorheen beschouwd met vrolijk' oogen; hoe zag ik daar *Uw alvermogen!* Wat bedoelt David daarmee?

Dat kan maar één ding beteekenen: David zag, dat door middel van bloed de vreeselijke macht en kracht en schuld en verdoemenis der zonde en schuld weggevaagd werden!

Zoo kunnen we ook begrijpen, dat hij er aan toevoegt: "Hoe blonk Uw Goddelijke eer alom!" God heeft eer ingeoogst met het wegvagen der zonde. Daar schitteren Zijn deugden op 't hoogst. Het zal de hemelzalen doen daveren van de liederen der schare gekochten. Als ze het eeuwiglijk zullen zien, dat God

de zonde en schuld vernietigt in 't goede Bloed van Jezus, dan zullen ze de stem des roependen hooren: "Hierom bedrijft vreugde, gij hemelen en gij die daarin woont!" Ziet ge, het is in den hemel duidelijk geworden dat de verklager der broederen met al zijn vuile aankleve door het bloed des Lams overwonnen is! Het is God op Zijn sterkst.

Dat zag David in de woestijn van Juda.

Nog duidelijker wordt het wanneer ge doorleest.

David zong God zijn lof toe in 't heiligdom vanwege de kracht Gods in 't vernielen der zonde. Hij zong want hij zag Gods eer; hij zag 't schitteren van Zijn deugden. Wel, hij zal een van die deugden opnoemen. "Want Uwe goedertierenheid is beter dan het leven!"

Wat zal ik daarvan zeggen? Goedertierenheid is Goddelijke hartstocht om te zegenen, om goed en liefelijk te zijn voor het voorwerp Zijner eeuwige liefde. Dat is goedertierenheid, schoone Hollandsche vertaling van dit Hebreeuwsche woord. God tient van goedheid over Zijn kinderen. Kunt ge het David nazeggen?

Het is beter dan het leven.

Het leven is zoet. Het ervaren van menschelijke goedheid en liefde is zoet. Het eten en het drinken; het wandelen in zonneschijn, het smaken van de duizende zegeningen die puur aardsch zijn en die tezamen ons leven spellen is goed en zoet. Maar Gods goedertierenheid is beter dan het leven.

Och, zelfs op zijn best genomen valt het leven tegen. Wat al teleurstellingen! 't Lust me niet om er diep op in te gaan. 't Behoeft ook niet. Gij allen die dit leest hebt het duizendmalen ervaren. Soms schijnt het eventjes alsof we nu dan toch eens heel gelukkig zullen zijn. Ergens zegt iemand: Ik zal in eeuwigheid niet wankelen! Dat kwam vanwege het feit, dat Gods weg met ons eenigsins strookte met ons begeeren. Alles liep dan mee. Doch maar voor even. Er is geen volmaakt geluk hier op aarde.

Daar komt nog bij het feit der zonde. Ongemengd geluk is er niet. Want we verzondigen alles. Onze dagen vergaan door Zijn toorn en van Zijn grimmigheid worden we verschrikt. We weten in 't diepe hart, dat God "stelt onze ongerechtigheden voor U, onze heimelijke zonden in het licht Uws aanschijns!" Als 't avond wordt dan knielen alle kinderen Gods bij hunne legerstede en zeggen ze het Daniel na: "Maar bij ons zijn de beschamingen der aangezichten!"

't Leven valt tegen.

Doch Uwe goedertierenheid is beter dan het leven.

Als we maar weten mogen, dat alles in God bruischt, dringt, werkt om ons te zegenen, om ons goed te zijn, dan is het goed. Dan mag het leven tegenvallen en de Satan schelden, doch dan zullen we met Job zeggen, ook al moet het door de tranen heen: De Naam des Heeren zij geloofd!

Let maar op het uiteinde van datzelfde vers: mijne

lippen zouden U prijzen!

Zoo komt David bij zijn belijdenis. Hij zal het ons vertellen hoe hij zijn leven zou willen slijten. De verzen 4 tot 6 spreken allen van David's leven zooals hij het voor God zou willen leven.

Hij heeft uitgevonden, dat voor een mensch er niets beter is dan in God te rusten. Daar looft men Hem en daar heft men zijn handen op in Zijn naam. Mag het zoo gebeuren met ons, dan wordt men verzadigd als met smeer en vettigheid. Dan wordt onze mond vervuld met roem en spreekt ge van vrolijk zingende lippen. O, als God mij bemint, dan kan niets tegen mij zijn. Dan zal het gaan.

Zoo peinst David en gedenkt aan God op zijn legersteden. Het staat er in 't meervoud. Hij werd van dag tot dag verjaagd in de woestijn, zoodat hij nooit tweemaal sliep in 't zelfde bed. Maar waar hij ook zich neervleide, overal was zijn God en in 't holle van den nacht kwamen die gedachten om hem te vertrousten. En zong David zijn psalm in de woestijn van Juda.

't Mocht dan nu tegenloopen. Het was niet meer dan schijn. Ook deze vlucht in de woestijn was Gods weg met hem. Hoe donker ook Gods weg moog' wezen. . . . En zoo peinsde David in de nachtwaken.

Hij dacht aan 't verleden.

Gij zijt mij een hulp geweest van der jeugd aan. Daarom ben ik er van verzekerd, dat ik ten slotte zal aanlanden in veilige haven.

Daar zal een tijd komen, dat ik in de schaduw Uwer vleugelen zal zingen met een vrolijk hart.

En het bewijs voor zulk een hopen ligt in 't werk dat de Heere gewrocht heeft in 't diepe hart. Luistert aandachtelijk naar David. Tracht er in te komen wat hij bedoelt. Hij zegt: Mijne ziel kleeft U achteraan, Uwe rechterhand ondersteunt mij!

In die woorden zien we de relatie der liefde tusschen God en Zijn volk. Mozes spreekt er ook van: Van onderen de eeuwige armen! De ziel van Gods volk kleeft aan God. Het woord is hetzelfde als gebezigd wordt voor het achterna kleven van een man die zijn vrouw bemint. En Gods hand ondersteunt Zijn kind. Natrilling van de relatie waarvan Johannes spreekt: De Zoon die in den boezem des Vaders is!

En eindelijk dat dwaze volk, die altijd de Davids benauwen.

Vreeselijk zal het zijn te vallen in de handen des levenden Gods.

We stemmen het toe: David was zondig. Doch hij had het niet verdiened van *hen* om zoo nagejaagd te worden. Dat deden zij omdat de haat Gods in 't harte brandde.

Hun einde is vreeselijk. De onderste deelen der aarde is hun lot. Ze zullen den vossen ten deele worden. Die vossen zijn de Oostersche jakhalzen: de wilde beesten die op het doode lichaam azen.

Doch met den Koning Israels zal het gaan.

Hij heeft de uiteindelijke overwinning.

Zoo zal Jezus zingen in den hof van Jozef. Hij zal zich in God verblijden. Voor God heeft Hij gestreden en door God zal Hij tot in eeuwigheid gezegend worden.

En ook die van Jezus zijn.

Nu nog in de woestijn voor tijd en wijle. Doch peins aan God in de nachtwaken: Hij zal het eeuwig maken voor U!

G. V.

Nieuws Uit Het Westen

Dat op ettelijke tijden iemand opgedragen wordt een nieuws artikel te schrijven verorderstelt, dat onze mensen belang hebben bij onze kerken. Dat belang vindt men vooral bij hen, die werkelijk onze zaak behartigen en liefhebben. Gaarne mogen we dan ook iets nieuws hooren aangaande de toestanden onzer kerken, in het Oosten van het Westen en in het Westen van het Oosten. En zoo werd mij dan opgedragen iets te schrijven van onze gemeenten in het Westen. En bij het Westen bedoel ik de kerken in deze omstreken, d.i. Iowa en Minnesota. Van het verre Westen kan ik niets vermelden. Mogelijk zou een van onze broeders aldaar dat wel eens kunnen doen. Ik zal dit artikel dan ook maar inkleeden als een brief, een brief aan vele lezers.

Om op de gewone manier te beginnen, kan ik wel zeggen dat we allen gezond zijn. Ja, gezond op geestelijk gebied natuurlijk. Zoo ver ik weet heerscht de vrede in al onze gemeenten. In het verleden heeft dit zich ook wel laten blijken op onze Classis vergaderingen. Zeker is het, dat we dit niet genoeg waardeeren, noch ook dankbaar genoeg voor zijn. Dit is in de eerste plaats dan ook al schoon nieuws, vooral wanneer wij als kerken op een of andere tijd het tegenovergestelde ervaren hebben, of besef-fen wat zulks teweeg brengt. Natuurlijk, we moeten de waarheid hebben en altijd weer hooren verkondigen, zooals wij nu ook doen naar onze vaste overtuiging. Nooit de vrede ten koste van de waarheid. Maar ook met de waarheid moet de vrede onder ons zijn en heerschen. Waar vrede woont gebiedt de Heere Zijn zegen.

Aangaande veel uitwendigen groei onzer gemeenten kan ik niet veel schrijven, omdat het er gewoon weg niet is. In het Westen hebben wij ook al wel bij de ervaring geleerd dat onverschilligheid in betrekking tot de waarheid een van de kenmerken is van onzen tiid. De onkunde is groot, dat is zeker. Maar was dat maar al. Men heeft er gewoon weg geen belang bij, geen begeerde zelfs om Gods Woord te onder-

zoeken. Of een andere zegt: het kleine verschil is de moeite niet waard. Zeker, het zou mooi wezen en ook aangenaam indien meer mensen onze waarheid toegedaan waren. Ook moeten we daartoe tot ons uiterst bezig wezen. Maar het is de Heere, die toch den wasdom geven moet. Bovendien is het altijd Gods kleine gemeenten tot troost dat Hij niet aan getal verbonden is, maar dat het bij Hem gaat om waarheid in het binnenste. Aangaande den zegen en persoonlijk geestelijk welzijn maakt het dus helemaal geen verschil of we klein zijn of groot.

Maar ik moet me bij nieuws houden. Bij den tijd dat de lezer deze woorden leest zal hij mogelijk wel gehoord hebben dat ondergetekende het beroep van onze gemeente te Doon aangenomen heeft. En nu komt Orange City weer vacant te staan. Het is dan ook onze ernstige bede dat de Heere zoo spoedig mogelijk den man Zijns raads tot hen zende. En ik ben overtuigd dat de behoefté aan een leeraar in een kleine gemeente juist zoo groot is als in een grootere gemeente. Een kind (dat ook een heel mensch is) moet juist zoo wel verzorgd worden als een volwassene. Of soms nog meer?

Aangaande onze radio programmas kan ik onze lezers wel vermelden dat het goed gaat. Persoonlijk geloof ik ook, dat onze onderneming een succes is, zoals men het woord in onze dag gebruikt. Heel de onderneming gaat uit van den bond onzer Jongelieden Vereenigingen. En hun werk is zeker wel onze dank waardig. Naar wat we hooren is ons gehoor tamelijk groot. Velen van andere kerken beluisteren hen, en zoals ze ons zeggen, met genoegen. De stemmen van onze leeraars, of laat me liever zeggen onze waarheid, wordt over de "ether waves" gebracht tot een afstand van ongeveer 300 mijl van iedere zijde des stations. Ook krijgen we het station voor een geschikte prijs. Och ja, niet omdat men onze waarheid zoo lief heeft. Dat begrijpt ge wel. Maar eene reden daarvoor is omdat wij niet om geld bedelen. Dat doen we natuurlijk niet als Protestantsche Gereformeerden. Het schijnt wel dat die mensen van het station het al zoo gewoon zijn om zulks te hooren bij godsdienstige programmas, dat ze de onzen eene uitzondering achten. Maar het is ons tot voordeel. Hoe lang we dit werk nog voort zullen zetten is nog niet bepaald, maar zekerlijk wel zoo lang als onze penningmeester maar betalen kan.

De maand Februari is de gewone tijd voor de jaarlijksche winter vergadering van al onze Jongelieden Vereenigingen. Gewoonte is om dan enkele toespraken te hebben door onze leeraars, een banquet, enz. Het staat echter nog te bezien of we zulks dit jaar wel hebben zullen. Dat wegens de omstandigheden door den oorlog teweeg gebracht—gas, enz. Maar in de laatste paar dagen hebben we er toch weer iets van gehoord. Ook hoorden we enkele stemmen om Ds. Vos te verzoeken voor ons te spreken, daar hij dan toch in deze

omgeving zal zijn.

En terwijl ik juist schreef over de toestanden door den oorlog teweeg gebracht, met het oog op het gas, enz., doet me dat ook nog aan iets anders denken. De mensen in het Oosten hebben daar mogelijk al wel over gedacht, vooral hen die eenigszins met de toestanden hier op de hoogte zijn. Wat ik bedoel is dat velen onzer leden nog al op een grooten afstand van de kerk wonen. En er zijn hier natuurlijk geen "street-cars" of "busses". Maar in het algemeen krijgen de boeren hier wel genoeg gas. Ons kerkelijk en verenigingsleven *behoeft* dus wegens het gas niet te lijden. In het algemeen gaat dit leven dan ook zijn gewonen gang. Soms echter ontbreekt er iets anders aan dan gas, d.i. de begeerde, vooral naar vereenigingsleven. En dat, dunkt me, is nog veel erger dan een gas probleem. Wat zouden velen van Gods kinderen in Europa toch wel van ons denken en zeggen, ziende de vele voorrechten en gelegenheden, die wij hier mogen hebben?

Sprekende over den oorlog kan ik ook nog wel eventjes aanhalen dat ook daardoor onze kerken weer op een bijzondere wijze geopenbaard worden, wegens ons geloof en standpunt in die dingen. Wat brengt die oorlog toch veel teweeg, ook op kerkelijk terrein! Allerlei gedachten en stellingen komen te voorschijn. Wij hooren van zendingswerk en nog meer zendingswerk. Nu is dit natuurlijk wel goed, zelfs een vereischte, maar het moet dan naar 's Heeren wil gedaan worden. Maar ons land heeft de Heere in den oorlog gebracht wegens zijne zonden. Zoo spreekt men. Amerika is toch nog zoo zondig, schoon het wel een christenland is. Wij moeten dus veel zendingswerk doen om Amerika op de knieën te brengen. En als Amerika dat maar doet, dan behalen we zekerlijk de overwinning en krijgen we vrede. Een andere spreekt en bidt zonder enige voorwaarde dat wij, de christenlanden, de overwinnaars mogen zijn, en dat de vijanden door het begaan van ernstige en groote fouten en zelfs aardbevingen van den Heere gezonden te niet gedaan worden. Wij zijn immers christelijk en helemaal rechtvaardig, maar. . . die vreeselijk goddelooze Duitschers en Japaneezen! Hoe gaarne men ook hier in het Westen het land van Amerika mag vergelijken bij Israel van ouds. Laten wij als land dan toch maar in het gebed de handen opheffen tot God, gelijk Mozes deed in den strijd met Amalek. Dan is er geen twijfel meer aan de uitkomst. Maar van een God wiens raad bestaat, van de teekenen der tijden volgens de Schrift, van de wederkomst van Christus op de wolken des hemels hooren we weinig of niets. In Sioux Center hebben al de kerken om iedere zes of zeven weken een "Union Prayer Meeting". Natuurlijk, in verband met den oorlog. En wat gaat het er soms van langs. Maar zoals in The Banner eene korte tijd geleden geschreven werd, de Protestantsche Gereformeerden van Sioux Center nemen daar ook deel in. En dat is waar. Maar

zij komen dan ook met ons standpunt, dat van de Schrift. Duidelijk is het dan ook wel, dat hun woorden en gedachten gedurig dwars tegen de gangbare meeningen van onzen dag indruischen.

Om nu niet in te gaan op de bijzonderheden van bovengenoemde verkeerde voorstellingen is het ons volk dadelijk duidelijk, dat zulks niet kan. Maar wanneer wij dan spreken van andere dingen, dat er hier geen vrede kan zijn, van de wederkomst van Christus, enz.—och ja, dan worden die Protestantsche Gereformeerden genoemd die nauwgezette, die "fijnen", en wat niet meer. We worden hier dus ook gebrandmerkt. Maar dat geeft ten slotte toch ook niets. Zoo God voor ons is, wie zal tegen ons zijn? Daar komt het toch op aan, niet waar?

In het Westen is het tot dus ver geducht winter geweest. Zulks heeft onze openbare Godsdiens ook gedurig belemmerd, d.i. vooral voor hen, die oud zijn en die nog al ver van de kerk wonen. Wij zien dan ook uit naar de lente.

J. B.



The Crisis Of Contradiction

He appeared in the civics class, and He said: "My Kingdom is not of this world." Some mocked with this, others skeptically shrugged their shoulders at that term "kingdom" for we have a democracy. If that kingdom moreover is not of this world we shall have to rethink our position on civics, it might mean a new civics book and a new philosophy of sociology and ethics. That is all so revolutionary it seems. And who will write such a new book and where will we get teachers to teach it if such a new book should be written. In geography class He appeared and said, "The things which are seen were not made of the things which do appear." That contradicted our geography book. It is so revolutionary. That means we must have a new geography book also with a new approach and a new appraisal of the science of the earth. Geologists mocked with this. In history class He stood and said, "There is no new thing under the sun." The more part of the class contradicted this contradiction, several of them inquired about what this new conception of history might be. At the dinner table He appeared long enough to say, "I am the bread of life" and "man shall not live by bread alone." The family had lived by the vitamin chart. That had plainly been contradicted now. It meant that they shall have to rethink the matter of eating and drinking. At the peace table where able staff officers were engaged in winning the post-war peace He stood at their side and commented, "What is crooked cannot be made straight." Their entire peace program had

at once been contradicted. At the race track He appeared and said, "The race is not to the swift" and on the battlefield He contradicted the theory of logistics when He said, "The battle is not to the strong." At the beautiful altar where men sent up sacrifices in flowing robes of incensed smoke He said, "Incense is an abomination to me." That plaque hanging on the wall which said that sacrifices were pleasing to the Lord had been contradicted, and men chafed under the impact of it. In the beauty parlor He commented, "If a woman have long hair it is a glory to her," and added, "not in plaiting of the hair but in a meek and quiet spirit resides womanly beauty." While in the hygiene class He openly avowed, saying, "To eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man." That defied the very rudiments of hygiene and the greater part mocked with this. Several among them however expressed need for a new book on hygiene.

The crisis of contradiction.

Now I understand what they meant when certain lewd fellows cried out concerning Paul and his company "these men have turned the world upside down" and when the men of Athens said, "thou bringest certain STRANGE things to our ears."

Everywhere therefore where the Word of the Lord comes you find a crisis developing. And this crisis develops because the Word of God contradicts the word of men, of any men of all men. It contradicts the word of man at every point. This is not accidental. This is so because the very essence of the Word of God is that "No prophecy of the Scripture is by any private interpretation." Notice the emphatic negative in this word from Peter. The Word of God as we have it did not come up out of the thoughts of a man. It is not derived, it is original. No man, as man, ever conceived of the things which are incorporated in the Word of God. It never came up in his heart, it never entered his mind. It originated in the mind of God. With the entrance of sin into the world a crisis developed already very early in Paradise when Adam said to himself that eating from the forbidden tree would bring him preeminence, but God said that dying he would die. Shortly thereafter you witness that same thing in Cain, he said that he was an individualist and not responsible for being his brother's keeper. Everywhere along the broad front of Old Testament history one sees this same crisis, throughout the history of the Judges and Kings and especially in Israel's national history later we hear that God sent prophets "rising up early and protesting." The supreme crisis develops when the Word Incarnate appears upon earth. At His birth mother Mary is already assured that He will be a sign "spoke against." He will be contradicted for He speaks the Word of God and He IS the Word of God. And it conflicts everywhere with the word which has its origin in the minds and hearts of mere man. Paul speaks of Christ

as enduring "such contradiction of sinners." As He was contradicted, He Himself also contradicted. He spoke against the Jews, the Scribes and the Pharisees. He contradicted Judas Iscariot and Peter; Pilate and Herod . . . even His own friends . . . even His own mother was contradicted.

The world was indeed turned upside down. Wherever the Word of God came it found itself contradicted thereby, whether in the civics class or in geography or history or wherever it might be. Science and philosophy and psychology, all of them were contradicted. The world was turned upside down. It revolted. It in turn reeled and plunged upon Him. Rather than to endure such contradiction any longer, in half-crazed anger it crucified Him. If perchance the cross would put an end to His diction and thus terminate further contradiction. But soon enough His apostles appeared, carrying that same Word of God and "they were not able to resist the wisdom and spirit by which he spake" (Stephen, Acts 6). In stark madness they gnashed their teeth and they stopped their ears. The Jews relied upon salvation by empty forms, Rome depended on her forensics; Greece on her philosophy, but Paul stood among them; to the Jews he said that through the law was the knowledge of sin, to Rome he said that with all their jurisprudence they had crucified the Righteous One ^{and had} turned the truth of God into a lie; while addressing the Greeks he said that their wisdom was foolishness.

The crisis of contradiction.

For men speak according to the foolishness of their own darkened minds. They speak that which best fits their own lusts, at best they speak according to the imagination of their own deceived hearts. But God speaks as the original. He speaks of the things as He has created them, as He in His eternal plan knows them as they really are. And these two clash in endless conflict. No wonder then that when the world sees the Two Prophets of Revelation, murdered on the streets of Sodom, she jumps to the conclusion that she has triumphed in the crisis of contradiction and therefore they "make merry and send gifts one to another."

Wherever true faith appears, there contradiction ceases and it becomes confession. There we cease to contradict and we begin to confess. And there He no longer contradicts us but He blesses us. If God contradicts us, if His Word clashes with ours we must let loose of our own word lest His contradiction become condemnation. Is it not a condemnation when He tells us that the wisdom of this world is folly? Love not the world, comes His word of contradiction, followed at once by the word of condemnation, "If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him". Insofar as God's people today confess the truth insofar they "speak with" God. But, insofar as they do that they too will contradict and be contradicted. Many will weary of this continual crisis, many will despair

under it and many will conform to the world and "speak as the beast speaketh", but until Jesus returns His followers will bear the testimony of the Lamb and go forth conquering and to conquer, but, contradicting and to be contradicted.

In view of all this we would make a few observations. First of all, if in the matters of labor and business, ethics and morals geography, civics, history, hygiene etc. God's Word contradicts the current word of men, it speaks for itself that we must have a world and life view which is of no private interpretation, but which is based upon the Word of the Lord. Not only is our preaching and teaching and all vain if God contradicts it, but, wherever He contradicts it and we go on in it He condemns us. Our political and national outlook in these days of war may neither be of private interpretation. From one end of the world even unto the other men champion a kingdom of this world, a country on earth but God contradicts them and He says that His kingdom is not of this world and our "better country" is in heaven. Neither may our children be exposed to the private interpretation of schools without the Bible, but history and geography and hygiene etc. shall have to be built upon the Word of the Great Contradictor. And so also in our own private and personal lives, His words of rebuke and admonition and warning must not be left unheeded, but when we are contradicted of God we should submit. Only in that way can we come to peace with God through the Spirit of the Lord.

In the second place we see it our calling to contradict all that which is contrary to the Word of God in all branches and departments of this life. This makes for ever sharpening antithesis. To this Paul refers when he says that we shall have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but that besides that we must "reprove" them, lest by not contradicting them we are guilty of connivance. No fear then that the Christian will sit in the seat of the scorners or stand in the way of sinners, his words, his actions but also his walk of life shall contradict the philosophy of sinners. This must be done in all humanity. It will be done in weakness and infirmity. But only that way can we bear the testimony of the Lamb.

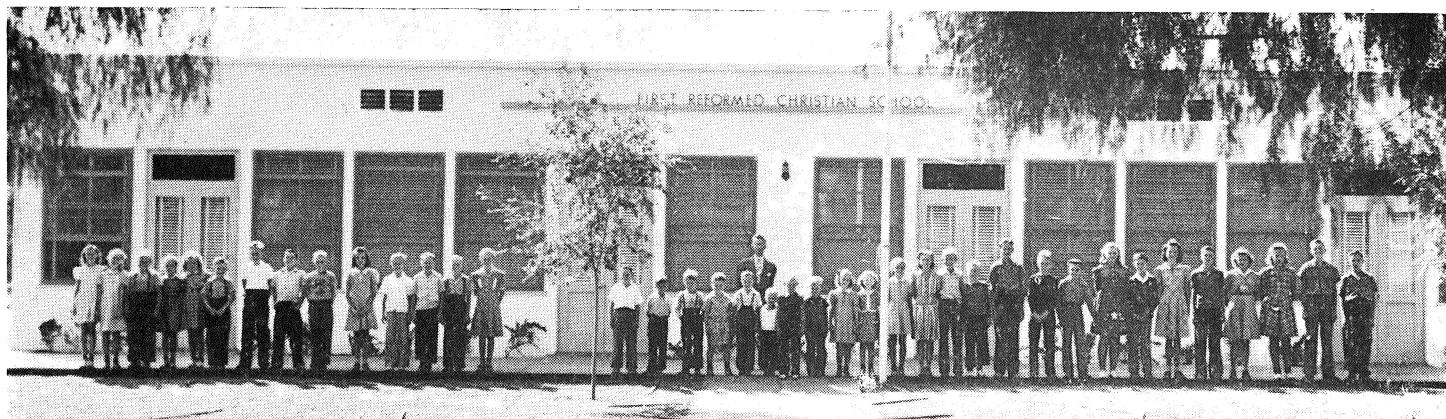
Finally, this will develope into the final great crisis. As in the days of Enoch ungodly sinners with ungodly words in ungodly speeches railed at the faithful, so shall it be in the latter days. As the philosophy of sinners becomes more and more unified under one head in the False Prophet, and as the Truth under Christ shall develope into a power which none can resist, the Great Crisis will come.

Then Christ Jesus shall return.

He shall say, "Be still and know that I am God".

Sinners and deceivers shall end in confusion but they who have borne the testimony of the Lamb shall triumph.

M. G.



A Bit Of History And A New School Building

Looking back over some eight years of history as a Reformed Christian School Society, we exclaim with the saints of old: "The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad!"

For eight years our children were the recipients of what we are convinced to be distinctive Reformed Christian Instruction. The wonderful truth which we as parents have somewhat learned to know and love, namely, that God is God and all that it implies, is also taught our children in the day school. God first and last and all the time. It certainly is a wonder of God's grace that in a world that is steeped in sin and wickedness, there is a people found that know the joyful sound and who have the conviction of soul to stand up for God and His Christ and show this also in regard to the instruction of their children.

To be sure it is not their own doing that they take this stand in regard to the instruction of the Covenant youth and do not like thousands of professing Christians who send their children to a school which is decidedly hostile to God and His kingdom,

The knowledge of that tends to make them humble and ascribe all honor and glory to God, the Giver of every good and perfect gift.

In the eyes of the world it must seem utter foolishness to maintain a private Christian School and spend hard-earned money for its upkeep while we are compelled to help maintain the public school system thru taxation and could send our children there free of charge and where all the modern buildings and equipment is used. But that is to be expected from a world that walks in darkness and it is also part of the Christian's burden which he must bear in this world. But standing in the light of God's Word he will exclaim, and that joyfully, "Thy yoke is easy and Thy burden is light!"

As some of our readers will recall, we started our

school in our church basement where Mr. P. R. Zuidema for years gave of his talents entrusted to him; and when he left us, Mr. A. C. Boerkel took up the work and is now for the second term instructing our children in the fear of the Lord.

For a few years the need was felt for a better meeting place. This need was filled in the course of this summer when a neat and practical two-room school house was built.

The greater part of the labor was donated by our people, which considerably helped in keeping down the cost of the building. We also asked for and received help from our sister congregations for which we are very grateful.

Just before the opening of the school we had a dedicatory program in our church. The speakers for the evening were the Revs. G. Vos and L. Doezeema and Mr. A. C. Boerkel. The President of the School Board, Mr. J. R. VanderWal, gave the opening speech.

After the program refreshments were served at which time the school building was open for inspection.

The school opened with an enrollment of 40 pupils who certainly provide plenty of work for any one teacher.

We cannot resist mentioning the fact that we now have one hundred percent attendance for which we are thankful to our Covenant God. He it was and is that moved the hearts to His fear. Whether some of our people will be able to keep bringing their children is very doubtful with a view to the present war condition. We sincerely hope that a way may be found to avoid the sending of some of the Covenant youth to a public school.

As to the future of our school, we know it to be in God's hand and therefore we do not fear. May we all be found faithful in the carrying out of our God-given task!

For the Board of the First Reformed Christian School Society:

M. Gaastra, Secretary.

Redlands, Calif.

The Dramatic Element and The Novel

No doubt this subject reminds the reader of the subject of the drama and dramatization or of the novel. And although there is close relation, the subject "the dramatic element and the novel", does not concern itself with the individual subjects of the drama or dramatization, nor with a complete treatment of the novel. Our subject is limited to the dramatic element and especially as it is prominent in the novel.

In the interest of wholesome, edifying art and entertainment for Christian people these subjects, the novel and the drama, have often come to our attention. The drama has come to the attention of the church much longer ago than the novel because it appeared so much earlier as a "form of art". Since the days of early Greece drama has received much attention from civilized peoples of all nations. Especially since the invention of the moving camera has the public been provided with pictures of dramas, movies. We all realize how that through the modern "movie" the old interest in drama has been popularized to such a great extent that it is one of the major forms of recreation for almost everyone of our modern world. So of late years the church has been confronted with the "problem" of movie attendance. Yet it is essentially the same as the drama, and that has been before the mind of the church even in the days of the Reformation. Calvin, Farel and Beza expressed their disapproval of plays. Early Reformed leaders in the Netherlands also were against the "tooneel", the stage. Arnold Croese, Ds. J. Taffin, Ds. Feugeray and Ds. A. Cornelius are examples of those who opposed the stage in their time and some of these even urged William of Orange to forbid the "tooneel". (See, series of articles in the *Reformatie*, "Een Belangrijk Opstel", S. Greydanus, 19e Jaargang). The Puritans of England and later of America, as well as the Quakers, frowned on plays. It is well known how that the life of the "Maypole celebration" was not tolerated by the Puritans. Because they frowned on plays we do not find New England the country of the first playwrights of our country it is explained to us.

The novel is of a much later date; it being a new form of prose writing that came into being with the first novel in 1740. Although novels were not condemned by church leaders, yet there were several warnings expressed as to the kind and the amount of novel reading that was wholesome for Christian youth especially.

We do not intend at this time to enter into a treatment of the drama nor of the novel as such. Worthwhile material for discussion in our circles has been given by our leaders upon the subject of dramatiza-

tion. More attention can yet be given to this subject of the part of dramatization in the field of art and as it ought not to be appreciated by the Christian. This will bring us to the deeper question of all, the subject of our interest in art and culture of the world, to the different forms of art such as painting and music, literature and other forms of art—aesthetics.

Limiting ourselves, however, to some observations about the dramatic element and the novel, let us briefly consider these two separately before giving some remarks.

When we first think of the dramatic element we think of that which is only connected with the stage. Such is not the correct conception of the dramatic element. The word "drama" comes from the Greeks who were the originators of the modern drama. The word as such means "to do" or "to act". It refers, first of all, to that portrayal of life and action which was intended to be produced on the stage. Then it refers to that enacted on the stage, in the theatre itself. A drama or play, written or enacted, is intended to be a portrayal of life's action. Therefore we often hear the word drama applied to more than just the composition or performance.

We often speak of the drama of life. We mean then the action of life and not the drama as literature. And we refer, when speaking of the drama of life, not to every part of life, but only to the action of life and life when taken as one whole. When we think of life as a whole, life with a beginning and an end, as a unity we consider it one's drama. There are, however, also many parts to life which are dramas by themselves. There are series of events, connected and having interest and vividness which supply the material for the writers of dramatic literature. That action of life which is a unity, and is vivid and interesting, is what I would call the dramatic element.

Many of us do not notice the dramatic element in much of life's action. There is the action of life which we would consider monotonous, uninteresting, without connection and purpose. Yet a keen observer, an artist notices much more and is able to describe it to us and cause us to see it then also. As it is with beauty so it is with the dramatic element. Many things we do not at first consider beautiful until someone brings out their beauty for us. There are some things that we do consider beautiful but lack the power to express their beauty. Then too we enjoy an artist's description of its beauty. And because of the ability to observe and express the artist is also able to create for us dramatic elements which are true to life. Originally the dramatic element took place as God arranged it, for He is the Master Artist, and ruler over all things. Situations arise because of man's sinful will and action but all as it is ruled and governed by God, Who determines the drama of life and every dramatic element. We are called upon to observe and appreciate the ob-

servation of others who show us the hand of God in life. It is God Who also gives to some men more than others that gift to see and to express and to reproduce. The ability of the artist comes from God, the giver of all good and perfect gifts.

The novel makes much of the dramatic element. Because of the dramatic element in the novel they are often reproduced on the stage. So even the novel takes the place of the drama which was that prose written for the theatre.

To briefly show how that the dramatic element is important in the novel allow me to give the essential elements and characteristics of the novel. Both the novel and the romance are fiction. Characteristic of fiction is that it is that form of prose narrative in which the characters, scenes, and incidents are partly or entirely imaginary. Romance was produced in that period of literature when there was the movement of romanticism. As a reaction against romanticism there arose the spirit of realism. Novels are more in keeping with the ordinary train of events in society, and so were produced more by the realists. These two movements, romanticism and realism, became modified in the progress of literary history. There arose a new romanticism and a new realism. The latter is the sordid type of realism that is the modern taste in literature and so too in novels. We can say that there must be at least three essential elements in a novel. It must have a setting, a plot, and one or more characters. The setting is the background, the time and place of the narrative. The plot is the skeleton or framework or main thread which gives shape and proportion to the novel. This can be called the dramatic element of the novel, that part which gives the action, with its problems and solutions. And of course to picture life the novel must picture characters true to life and worth knowing.

We can speak of different kinds of novels. There are, for example, the historical novel, local color novels, the kind of novels in which the central theme is love or adventure, naval fiction, and the psychological novel. This list shows us how varied and interesting the dramatic element can be in the novel. It takes in all the drama of life.

When we criticize any art form and so too the dramatic element as it is portrayed in the novel, we come before the difficulty that there is not a definite theory of aesthetics among Reformed people. That is, there is not a recognized view of the principles of beauty and taste. The best Reformed people have avoided the iconoclasm of the radical Reformed group which condemns everything of art. Yet they do not go along with the folly of those so-called Reformed people who worship the goddess of art.

Keeping this in mind let us make a few remarks about the dramatic element and the novel. The dramatic element as it is portrayed in the novel certainly

can be appreciated by the Christian. It is, if portrayed correctly, life in which we are placed to glorify God. We are not called upon to escape the world, but to live in this world. We can learn about the world from novel reading.

Especially to be recommended are novels which are produced by Christian artists. For therein do we not only have life portrayed but we have life interpreted and criticized from the truth of the Word of God. The sad fact is that in our country we have very few Christian novels. Many good Christian novels have been produced in the Netherlands.

This does not mean, however, that we cannot appreciate the art of the world. It can also give us a true dramatic element in its novels. Overagainst the portrayal of life by the worldly artists we must exercise caution. First, we must caution against the portrayal of that part of life which should not come to our attention and especially of youthful minds—the sordid and lustful, which is too unseemly to mention. We must also caution against the philosophy of the worldly author for it comes in a very subtle form. Do not mistake a wrong pious notion which says flee from all this literature. It is God's will that we should know of it and be equipped with the armor of salvation to fight against it. For it is God who gives us the world to overcome. Do not, therefore, bow down and worship such art blindly and drink it in and enjoy it the way the world does. Read it and be strong in condemnation. The amount of reading of novels will thus naturally be adjusted as we select and judge from our deep rooted Christian principles. "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

L. D.

Election And Foreordination

For all who love the truth of God as revealed in Scripture, and who confess the sovereign grace of Almighty God, the importance of this subject must be self-evident. No apology for an article of this nature need be given.

However, for the sake of clarification of our subject we will submit a few remarks of an introductory nature.

Our chief interest in this essay is to make an inquiry into the relationship of the two concepts in the subject under consideration. Were we to define the terms "election" and "foreordination" what would we consider to be their proper "differentiation"? It is to this question that we attempt to give an answer in the sequence of his essay.

Keeping the aforementioned purpose in mind we will first make a study of the Scripture passages which speak of these concepts and in the light of this inquiry draw some conclusions and finally in this way attempt to give a "definition" of the respective terms.

Some Representative Texts.

The concept "election" is far more clearly worked out and revealed in the New Testament than in the Old Testament. The Mystery of salvation has been revealed in the dispensation of the Spirit in a greater degree of clarity than in the age of the types and the shadows. The least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John the Baptist, the greatest of the Old Testament prophets born from women. "For the Word of God has become flesh and we have seen His glory" the Gospel of John affirms. And the Spirit promised by the prophets was poured out on Pentecost to lead the church "into all truth". Fact is that without the interpretation of the Spirit as contained in the New Testament Scriptures, the Old Testament remains a closed book to a large extent. And thus it is also with the doctrine of election. We therefore will turn to the New Testament and thus at once we will also have the Old Testament teaching.

Lest we become tedious we will speak but just a word about the terms employed in the New Testament for "election". There is first of all the verb: to choose (*eklego*). We find this in Mark 13:20; I Cor. 1:27; James 2:5; Ephesians 1:4. Secondly there is the noun: the elect. This is the noun designating the class elected to life eternal. This term appears in such passages as Rom. 8:33; Col. 3:12; Titus 1:1 and Luke 18:7. In these passages is spoken of the elect of God designating the Divine authorship of election. For those interested in further study we refer to such passages as Matt. 24:22-24; Mark 13:20, 22; I Peter 1:1-2:9. Finally there is the abstract noun *election*. This looks at the act of God. The passages where this term is found are Acts 9:15 and Rom. 9:11. In both these passages reference is had to election as an act of God and not as the result. In Rom. 11:7 evidently election are the elect however.

Whereas we are convinced that a study of the etymology and derivation of the word offers us little or nothing, we will proceed to study the passages in which this concept is spoken of. We will confine ourselves to some of the more representative ones.

In our study of this question we found the fundamental notion of the concept election is that of God's sovereignly free choice. Election always deals with definite *individuals*—individuals who are chosen in distinction from others who are rejected, or not-elected as the infra-lapsarian would put it. Thus in James 2:5 the "poor of the world" are said to have been elected by God to be rich in faith in distinction from those who are the "rich in the world". A distinction is emphasized, a separation between two groups. The

same distinction is also found in I Cor. 1:27ff. Just as Jesus calls His people "my sheep" so He also speaks of them as the elect in their battle of faith in the arena of prayer. Thus in the parable of the Unjust Judge and the Widow, He speaks of the elect who cry to God day and night for justice against their enemies, the oppressors. Again this distinction.

Another aspect of election which is emphasized throughout in Scripture is, that it is an act, a work of God in His eternal Council. This is clearly taught in Ephesians 1:4 where election is said to have been "before the foundation of the world", i.e. before God in His eternal council decided to lay the foundation of the earth. Also here it is stated that God elected definite individuals. He elected *us!*

And election is also emphatically said to be a *sovereign* act of God. The ground of this is not what man has done. It is solely in the will and good pleasure of God. A case in point is that of Esau and Jacob the twin-sons of Isaac and Rebecca. Rebecca, we are told had conceived by Isaac upon the prayer of the latter, and before their birth the children struggle within her womb. Upon inquiring of the Lord she is told that two manner of people shall be born from her, yea, are now already struggling within her for the mastery. And that in this struggle the elder shall serve the younger. Gen. 25:21. The apostle tells us in Rom. 9:11 that this act of God's sovereign election was wholly independent of the respective works of these children. They had not yet done good or evil, since they were *not yet born*. That is the teaching of the apostle is evident from the question: "Is there unrighteousness with God"? Rom. 9:14 and the ultimate answer given to this question in vs. 18: "Wherefore He is merciful to whom He will and whom He wills He hardens."

And finally let it be noticed that election takes place in Christ, who is called the Elect of God. Luke 23:35. He is Elected to be the Head, and the elect are said to be His body in Him.

Let us now turn to the concept *foreordination*. The underlying notion in this term in both the Classical and in the New Testament Greek seems to be that of boundaries, limitations. ("orizoo" and "Pro-orizoo" are from "oros" meaning: a boundary line). There is also a resultant meaning of this fundamental notion when applied to different objects and relationships. Thus the term was employed in logic. It defined the limits of a term. Geographically it defines the boundary line between two areas. It is also used of the course of a ship making its track through the waves. Thus its use is in classical Greek. The meaning of the Holy Spirit in using this term in His book is unique as to the resultant notion.

It here means that act of God in His council whereby He determines the course of world-history from Alpha to Omega—from beginning to end. The empha-

sis here falls on the Events, on history! Or if you will, the "Moment" of history is here singled out!

In Hebrews 4:7 the author speaks of the appointment of "another day" of which David had spoken prophetically in Psalm 95:7, 8. This "other day" is the event of Jesus' labors on the cross and the Rest that results from it. This otherday is the real day of rest, the realization of the typical day of rest. This was appointed, set off as event in History. And the beacon light of the prophetic Word showed the way of God's foreordination. Likewise in Acts 17:26 it refers to "the time afore-appointed and the bounds of their habitation" where the apostle speaking in Athens to the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers, contrasts the former and the present relationship of the Gentile world to the Citizenship of Israel. Foreordination deals with the historical destiny and lot of nations.

Again in Acts 2:23 the term refers to an event in history. In this beautiful passage Peter speaks of what the "hands of lawless men have done" to Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God in the midst of Israel by powers, wonders and signs. This wicked event was not a chance happening. It was according to the determinate council of God. According to God's foreordination the course of history, all the forces and powers that be must be active in this deed. Here the pattern of history as spoken of in Revelation 12 is clearly seen. And the apostles being warned and threatened not to preach in the name of Jesus, lift up their voices to God in prayer and apply Psalm 2 to the event of the Cross. Now also in Psalm 2 the Decree is the determining factor in history. It and it alone, determines the course of history and the destiny of peoples. Acts 4:28.

In Romans 8:18-30 the apostle speaks of all the events of this "present time". He looks at all these events in the light of the now prevailing suffering and groaning of every creature and all creation. And what is the conclusion? Vanity of vanities, all things are vanity; there is no wise purpose in all things? Nay, the amazing suffering of *all things*, this universal "groaning" works together for a "good", a good which could not be attained in any other way! It is in the deepest sense the *love of God* in all things, in this universal suffering for those who love God, being called according to His eternal purpose. Nothing can separate God's people from God's love in Christ Jesus because there is nothing in which the love of God does not vibrate toward them. This love reaches them not in spite of, but *in* sickness and health, prosperity and adversity, present and future things, height and depth, nakedness, peril and sword. And therefore God's called children are *more than conquerors* in this universal "groaning".

And what lies back of this "working together of all things for the good of those who love God"? The fore-

ordination of God. The final word in history is the "glory of the children of God, the redemption of their bodies". The final moment is the glory of being conformed to the image of the glorified Son in the flesh. It is this Omega of history that God's foreordination has determined to be the end, the purpose of all things. This is the course of history. There is a straight line in the events of time from Alpha to Omega which makes forever impossible the "vicious circle" of a Vanity of vanities! And this thanks to God's *foreordination*!

Foreordination also gives the means for the Christian participation in the future blessedness. The central means is Christ and His redemptive work on the cross, His resurrection. Thus it is stated in Eph. 1:5. And soteriologically (applied salvation) foreordination also gives the *means*; thus guaranteeing the certainty of salvation. Between the foreknowledge of God and the final glory lie the foreordained means. In Rom. 8:29, 30 this is clearly stated. Foreordination to the glory of sons in Christ implies: Calling (the effectual) and justification. In Ephesians 1:11 foreordination also postulates the means of obtaining the final redemption and the sealing of the Spirit. We read: "In Whom (Christ) we have been called, *having been foreordained* according to the purpose of all things working One according to the council of His will." Without foreordination there would be no *calling*. Now the historical moment of the *calling* is a certain and effectual reality.

That foreordination is sovereign, all-wise, good, no believer of the Scriptures will doubt.

The Proper Differentiation of the Concepts.

To the careful observer this may already have become clear from the observations that we have thus far made. Just a word about this may not be superfluous.

We believe that these concepts have in common:

1. Both are sovereign acts of God and deal with the history of the world and determine the destiny of men and angels.

2. Both are therefore to be placed under the genus-concept: The Outgoing Works of God.

3. Both deal with the work of God in His eternal council before the foundation of the world; and are therefore best called different aspects of the one undivided work of God.

The differentiation is as follows:

1. *Election* deals with *individuals*, making the separation, and implies reprobation. This cannot be said of foreordination. It has no such antonym. But foreordination deals with *events*, with the continuity of history. It determines the *historical end*, the *elos*, purpose of electing grace, to wit, the *glory of the saints*. Election is personal and determines who the individuals are that shall share in this foreordained glory.

2. Hence the concept "election" is not as broad as

the concept "foreordination". Foreordination includes all things, sin and grace, good and evil, present and future, rational and irrational creatures, the earthly and the heavenly creation. It gives display to the unsearchable riches of God's *wisdom*, i.e. that virtue of God whereby He has determined the best means to the highest end. Election determined who shall participate in this highest end—the glory of the saints!

3. Foreordination seems to be the more fundamental of the two concepts, even as it is the broader. God elected us in Christ, having foreordained us to the adoption of sons through Christ Jesus. The particular end unto which men were foreordained implied election.

Definitions Election is that act of the triune God whereby He sovereignly chose men and angels unto the foreordained glory of the new heavens and the new earth in Christ Jesus. Foreordination is that act of the triune God whereby He sovereignly determined the end of all things in history, and the means that should work together unto that end, and thus assuring the salvation of the elect, and revealing the greatness of His glorious virtues.

G. L.

Ingezonden

Geachte Redakteur:

Vergun me een enkele regel te melden in The Standard Bearer, aangaande het geschrijf of gedoe van Ds. Halsema in De Wachter van Oct. 20, 1942, dat we met verontwaardiging hebben gelezen.

We zouden Ds. Halsema wel eens willen vragen, of hij de oorsprong van dat gedoe wel eens doordacht heeft. Lees eens met aandacht het gedeelte van Kuiper, bladz. 108, eerste deel, van de Gemeene Gratie. We hebben hetzelfe gelezen in 't begin van de strijd, volgens mijn gedachten heeft Kuiper niet gedacht aan de Raad des Vredes. Nu hebben we dat artikel van Ds. Schilder nog eens nagezien "Een Deel voor twee mensen, en de Gemeene Gratie, en dat is voor ons een heldere verklaring. Dat artikel is te vinden in de jaargang 1936 van de Reformatie. Zie het eens na en bestudeer dat punt eens over, daar gaat het om. U moet eens wat voorzichtiger zijn en beschuldigt of plaatst uw broeder zoo maar niet in een verkeerd daglicht. Zoo ook Ds. Zwier die ging aan het jagen op verboden Terrein en liep zoolang dat hij schoot de haas op verboden terrein, maar daar was geen sign. Maar als hij de haas in zijn buik heeft, mocht ze dan eens bitter worden, heb ge in dit uw werk de bitterheid der zonde wel geproeft. We kunnen niet verstaan hoe die herders de schapen kunnen hoeden

door zulk gedoe, het beste is, maak eerst uw eigen tuin is goed schoon van onkruid, als ge het zelve niet kan vinden, dan willen we het onkruid wel aanwijzen dan moet ge dan bal verwachten. We kunnen ons niet met een Clup te vrede stellen, maar wel onder de God der Schriften, zoo spreekt Lindeboom, 'k wil zeggen, heeft Ds. Hoeksema de Schrift niet helder verklaart naar de Waarheid, maar de Waarheid moet er onder, doch daar zal God voor zorgen. Strijd niet tegen God, want Ds. Hoeksema heeft de Waarheid met zich als eene Banier.

Bij voorbaat mijn vriendelijke dank.

Frank Oord,
Lynden, Washington.

Contribution

Dear Mr. Editor:

I was very sorry to read the article "Gedachten Over De C. L. A." by A. H. This article had reference to a group of Christian men and women who have banded together to give help, advice and support, not alone to its own members but also to those outside of its organization, who have conscientious objections to joining with the worldly unions.

The C. L. A. in its struggle does not seem to be understood, not even among the leaders in our own churches. I think it is the duty of our laboring men to investigate by attending its meetings.

In reading the article by A. H. must we infer that D. L. A. means Devil Labor Association, when at their gatherings God's children implore His help and guidance?

It is my prayer that God may bless the C. L. A. and that many Christians may join her ranks.

Respectfully,
Bernard Elhart,
1124 Rathbone Ave.,
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

IN MEMORIAM

De Mannenvereeniging der Protestantsche Gereformeerde Kerk te Edgerton, Minnesota, betreurt het verlies van een harer leden,

MR. BEN VOS

die plotseling uit ons midden werd weggenomen. Zijn leven was Christus en daarom het sterven ook gewin.

Namens de Vereeniging,
Wm. Verhil—Pres.
A. Blyenberg—Secret.