

# THE STANDARD

## *Bearer*

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## MEDITATION

### The King And The Beast

*And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ, a king. And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the king of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest it.*

*Luke 23:1-3.*

The King before the Beast!

For, indeed, Jesus is the King!

King He is, not in His own name, nor by the power of the sword, nor by the will of the people, but by the grace of God, and by the will of the Lord of hosts.

Concerning Him it was that God had declared the decree from days of yore: "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of men and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Ps. 2:7, 8. Long ago the people had honored Him in their songs: "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow down before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him." Ps. 72:8-11. The prophet of the captivity saw Him in the night visions as One like the Son of man, and He "came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all

people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Dan. 7:13, 14.

Art thou a king then? . . . .

O, but indeed, I am a king. Thou sayest it!

King of the Jews, yes; and King of all; King of kings and Lord of lords, anointed unto this supreme office to represent the invisible God in the visible world. And: "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." But a King I am, for "to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world that I should bear witness unto the truth". . . .

The only rightful King that ever was, and Whose dominion for that very reason shall surely be established forever.

And he that here examines Him, and that inquires into His kingship, is the legal representative of the Beast!

—Pilate is Roman governor, and as such he represents Caesar. And throughout the trial it is but too evident that Caesar stands in the background. The question of Christ or Caesar looms large in this legal procedure, is the crucial question. . . .

And, to be sure, in his capacity of Roman governor and judge Pilate represents the sword-power, instituted by God, vested by God's own dispensation with divine authority even over life and death, for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. And Christ, the King by the grace of God does not dispute this divine prerogative and calling of the Roman governor. Emphatically he acknowledges this. He even instructs Pilate in regard to this truth. For when the Roman governor is provoked because this Christ never answers any irrelevant questions, and asks Him whether He does not realize that he has power to crucify or to release Him, He answers: "Yes, indeed, I know that thou hast power over me, given thee from above!"

Yet, the fact remains that the Roman governor is

a representative of the Beast!

For in the light of divine revelation the Roman empire was but a part of a whole, a temporal manifestation of the Beast, a historic moment of the anti-Christian world-power, that was from the beginning, that received his power from the dragon, and that will reach his culmination in the latter days. This is evident from the dream-image that troubled the mind of mighty Nebuchadnezzar. For, although the image is composed of different parts and metals, of gold and silver and brass and iron, and a mixture of iron and clay, yet the image is one, representing the one beast that is principally always the same. And although the stone that is cut out of the mountain without hands smites the image upon his feet, it is, nevertheless, the entire image that is thus demolished. This is also evident from a comparison of Dan. 7 with Rev. 13. For, although in the former passage the world-power appears in the form of different beasts, rising one after another out of the storm-tossed sea, in the latter they appear as merged into one monster with seven heads and ten horns. And the Roman empire is but a part of the dream-image of the haughty Babylonian despot; it is but one of the beasts that are one beast: a historic manifestation of the antichristian political power that always sets itself against the Lord and His Anointed!

The King and the Beast!

O, indeed, moved by the Spirit of revelation, the Church did quite correctly interpret this trial when "they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together. . . .

The Beast judging the King!

God's Anointed in the clutches of the world-power!  
Christ and Antichrist!

For this world-power has its origin in the man of sin, fallen man, that rebelled against his rightful Sovereign and entered into a covenant with the devil. A king God had made man, but king under Him, anointed to rule in His Name, and to function as His representative in the earthly creation. But the servant-king under God became a friend and slave of the devil. And ever since, he is evilly impelled to maintain himself in the world as its sovereign, and strives to establish one mighty world-empire in alliance with the Prince of this world. And for the realization of this purpose he employs the sword, the State, instituted for the punishment of evil-doers. . . .

And this power must needs be anti-Christian.

For God has anointed His own King over Sion, to become heir of all things, and to establish His own kingdom as the obedient Servant of the Most High.

And always the antichristian sword is turned against this Christ and His people in the world.

All through the old dispensation the dragon confronts the woman that is with child: before the flood, at the time of the building of Babel's tower, in the house of bondage, in the desert, in the land of Canaan. It rises against David and his house to destroy it from the earth.

It reveals itself successively in Babylon, Persia, Greece, the Syrian Antiochus, Rome . . . .

And now, finally, the Anointed stands before the representative of mighty Caesar.

He alone, without an army; helpless, without a sword . . . .

The King and the Beast!

The King *over against* the Beast!

The Beast with a kingdom of and for this world, maintained by this world.

But the King with a kingdom that is not of this world, a kingdom that does not at all depend for its maintenance upon the power of this world.

For this reason the King's accusers invent a wicked lie in order to secure His condemnation, not only by the Roman governor as the representative of the antichristian world-power, but also by Pilate as representative of the sword-power that is ordained of God.

O, to be sure, the entire trial of our Lord before Pilate concentrates around the question concerning the kingship. That is the crucial point. The accusation brought against Him is that He perverts the nation by His claim to the throne, that He forbids the people to pay tribute to Caesar, that He claims that He Himself is Christ, a King, that He makes Himself King. And it is emphasized that His kingship opposes that of Caesar, so that one cannot take His part and remain Caesar's friend. John 19:12. And the governor is deeply concerned about this question. Although being unable to understand a kingship of the kind that is represented by a Man like Jesus of Nazareth, he nevertheless inquires: "Art thou a king then?" He leads Him out and presents Him to the Jews in the words: "Behold, your king!" And the Jewish mob becomes incensed and shouts back: "We have no king but Caesar!" Indeed, as Jesus appears before the Roman governor, the very serious question as to the kingship is the all important point to be considered!

Yet, His accusers place the antithesis between Jesus and Caesar in a false light.

They put the kingdom of Christ and that of the Roman emperor on the same plane, and present them as operating in the same sphere. They make of the

Anointed One of God a pretender to Caesar's throne, a rival with him for the sword-power, one who, like Caesar rules over a kingdom of brute force, a kingdom of this world. God's King is presented as a revolutionary, who would establish another world-power on the same level as that of the Beast, and who, for this very reason, must needs forbid to give tribute to the Roman emperor.

A wicked lie!

A deliberate falsehood!

A devilish attempt to cover up the real antithesis between the King and the Beast, and to prevent that in the judgment of the Beast rendered against the King, the world of the Beast itself be judged and condemned for ever!

Or did they not know that Jesus' kingdom was not of this world? Had there ever been the slightest suggestion in the entire public ministry of the Lord that could lend support to the notion that He purposed to rise against the sword-power of the Roman empire? Could they produce even the smallest piece of evidence for this accusation? Was not the very opposite true? When they tempted Him with the question concerning tribute, had He not told them to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's? And had they not been witnesses in the garden of His absolute refusal to take up the sword even in His own defense? Ah, they might have produced evidence of the Lord's revolutionary activity, false though even that would have been, had not the Lord Himself destroyed the evidence by healing the ear of Malchus!

A devilish invention, deliberately made, was this indictment that He was a rebel against Caesar!

Or did they not remember that they had been willing to make Him exactly such a king, on more than one occasion, and that He had always refused?

Or was it not precisely because He did not want to overthrow the earthly throne of the Roman emperor, that they were always offended in Him?

He forbids the people to pay tribute!

He makes Himself a King in Caesar's stead! . . . .

But on that supposition the Roman governor may not pass judgment on Him. The condemnation of the Anointed One by the world-power may not be based on a misunderstanding. How, then, could the world be condemned? . . . .

Art thou a king then? . . . .

Yes, indeed! Thou sayest it!

But be at rest! My kingdom is not of this world! I have neither army nor sword! I came to witness of the truth. . . .

For the righteousness of God stand I! Let the issue be perfectly clear, then express your verdict!

The verdict of the Beast!

Victory through defeat!

For, not as representative of the divinely insti-

tuted sword-power, but as an instrument of the Beast, the Roman governor expresses his verdict.

Repeatedly he declares that he finds no guilt in Jesus. The issue is clear. As bearer of the sword he has no other "power from above" than to protect the Lord against His evil accusers. Either, He must let Him go as representative of the power that is ordained of God, or he must place himself and his sword in the service of the beast, and crucify Him!

And "he delivered Jesus to their will!"

The Beast has spoken. The King suffers defeat. Delivered He is to the wantonness of the soldiers, that know no king but Caesar, that despise any other kingship than that which is able to handle the sword and to maintain itself by brute force. And they express their contempt by a purple robe, a crown of thorns, mock obeisance. And presently He is led to the accursed tree of Golgotha, to be utterly defeated and put to nought!

Not a word passes His lips in self defense. He might have pleaded His cause. He might have protested that His case was clear before all the world, that no accusation had been brought against Him that could be sustained, that His innocence was clearly proved. Even to Caesar He might have appealed. But never a word He spake to escape His utter defeat. Only twice He opened His mouth, both times, not to defend Himself or His cause, but to remove a possible misunderstanding: once to explain the nature of His kingdom, and the second time to remind Pilate that his power was from above. For the rest, He was silent in His defeat. . . . .

Yet, this defeat was His victory!

For, first of all, His condemnation was, in reality, the judgment of the Beast. But a few days ago He had announced: "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out." It was now, indeed, the hour in which He "spoiled principalities and powers," and "made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it." How could the Beast, after this hour of judgment, ever make another pretense of justice and righteousness and justify his claim to handle the sword? How can the world ever make another claim that it is fighting to establish a kingdom of truth and righteousness, after having condemned Him Who came to witness of the truth? . . .

Defeat, yes, but unto victory!

For in the hour of judgment, the King must hasten to the place of execution, that there He may suffer the wrath of God for the sin of His own, and thus establish His kingdom in righteousness! . . . .

And the Beast must be instrumental to lead the King to His victory, and to accomplish his own destruction!

The victory of the cross!

H. H.

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## EDITORIALS

### Common Grace

7.

Attention must be called to Van Til's idea and application of the "limiting concept," which is closely related to his notion and use of the "paradox." Let us quote him:

"If we hold to a theology of the apparently paradoxical we must also hold by consequence to the Christian notion of a *limiting concept*. The non-Christian notion of the limiting concept has been developed on the basis of the non-Christian conception of mystery. By contrast we may think of the Christian notion of the limiting concept as based upon the Christian notion of mystery. The non-Christian notion of the limiting concept is the product of would-be autonomous man who seeks to legislate all reality, but bows before the irrational as that which he has not yet rationalized. The Christian notion of the limiting concept is the product of the creature who sets forth in systematic form something of the revelation of the Creator.

"The Christian Church has consciously or unconsciously employed the notion of the limiting concept in the formulation of its creeds. In these creeds the church does not pretend to have developed the fulness of the revelation of God. The church knows itself to be dealing with the inexhaustible God. The creeds must therefore be regarded as "approximations" to the fulness of the truth as it is in God. This idea of the creeds as approximations to the fulness of the truth as it is in God must be set over against the modern notion of the creeds as approximation to abstract truth. The modern notion of approximation is based on the modern notion of the limiting concept. The modern notion of systematic logical interpretation as approximation is therefore based on ultimate scepticism with respect to the existence of any such thing as universally valid truth. It is really no more than a hope and that a false hope, as we must believe, that there is in human interpretation an approximation to the truth. The Christian idea on the other hand rests upon the presupposition of the existence of God as the self-contained being that Scripture presents to us. The Christian idea is therefore the recognition that the creature can only touch the hem of the garment of Him who dwells in a light that no man can approach unto."

Much of this may be Greek to our average reader, and, therefore, I will make an attempt to reproduce

these statements in more popular language without distorting Van Til's meaning.

Very briefly expressed, Van Til means that whenever we say something about the truth as it is in God we know and confess, that we have only said something *about* it, but we have not expressed the fulness of the truth. We *limit* it, we put a fence around it, we approach it. Whenever we use a limiting concept, we really do nothing else than narrow the scope of the fenced off truth. And so, seeing that we are dealing with the inexhaustible God, we never come to an end. We can never say that we have expressed the truth. All our conceptions and declarations are ultimately only approximations to the truth as it is in God. And a *limiting concept* is such an attempt at approximation.

To this we can, of course, have no objection, provided that the scope and purpose of the *limiting concept* itself be clearly defined. We cannot afford to let the notion of the limiting concept run loose. That would be rather dangerous, even for the Christian notion of the limiting concept. It will hardly be safe to allow anyone, Schilder, Van Til, myself, for instance, to determine what in a given case must be considered a limiting concept. That would make all our knowledge of the truth relative and uncertain. The statement that creeds must be regarded as approximations to the fulness of the truth as it is in God is capable of a correct and sound interpretation, but as it stands there without further definition it cannot pass unchallenged. For that certainly would raise the question whether or not these "approximations" to the truth are themselves truths, or whether they will, perhaps, have to be revised as we approach more closely to the fulness of the truth.

It seems to me that the need of working with limiting concepts must have a definite cause. And the fundamental cause lies in the fact that God is infinite, and we are finite, and that the latter can never comprehend, nor even *approach* unto the former. Van Til is quite right when at the close of the paragraph quoted above he writes: "The Christian idea is therefore the recognition that the creature can only touch the hem of the garment of Him who dwells in the light that no man can approach unto." But this must be maintained in the strict sense of the word. God cannot be approached unto at all. This means, first of all, that *we* cannot approach Him, and that, if we are to have knowledge of Him at all, He must approach us. And this approach of God to us is His revelation. But this also implies that this revelation is the limit of our approach to God. In other words, it is possible to speak of an approximation to the fulness of the truth as it is revealed to us by God, but it is not possible to continue our approximation beyond the limit of revelation. Strictly speaking, therefore, the Christian idea of the limiting concept cannot be said to have its basis

in the fact that theology is an approximation to the fulness of the truth *as it is in God*. The finite does not approach or approximate the Infinite at all.

With a view to the proper use of the "limiting concept" it seems to me, we must add two more factors. The one is that the revelation of God as we now have it in the Scriptures is a light in darkness, the truth over against the lie. The light always shines in darkness and the darkness does not comprehend it. And, secondly, we should remember that the revelation of God in Christ Jesus concerns things that "eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard, and that never entered into the heart of man." These things are heavenly. They belong to the wonder of grace, which the natural mind cannot discover or understand.

Bearing this in mind, it seems to me, we can speak of a threefold use of the "limiting concept." The first is caused by the fact that all our conceptions are finite, while God is infinite. Whenever, therefore, on the basis of revelation, we form conceptions of God, we hasten to add that all these conceptions are but limiting concepts, lest we worship an idol instead of the living God. Thus we confess that, while God certainly is knowable, and our concepts of God as they are based on revelation are certainly the truth, yet God is beyond the scope of our finite concepts: He is the Infinite. The first article of the *Confessio Belgica* deals with such limiting concepts: "We all believe with the heart, and confess with the mouth, that there is one simple and spiritual Being, which we call God; and that He is eternal, incomprehensible, invisible, immutable, infinite, almighty, perfectly wise, just, good, and the overflowing fountain of all good." Notice that such terms as "eternal, incomprehensible, invisible, infinite" are strictly limiting concepts. They are not meant to be mere *negative* terms. They do not merely *deny* something about God. That God is infinite does not merely mean that He is not finite, but positively signifies that He is the Not-Finite. That He is said to be the Invisible does not simply deny His visibleness, but positively declares that He is the Not-Visible. And thus it is with all the others terms. They are, therefore, limiting concepts in the proper sense of the word.

The second proper use of the limiting concept finds its cause in the calling of the believer and of the Church to confess the truth concerning the mystery of God and salvation over against the lie. Perhaps this element is already present in the above confession concerning God. On the one side lies the mystery which we cannot comprehend, even though we conceive of it on the basis of the Word of God; on the other side is the darkness, the lie over against which the truth concerning the mystery must be maintained and definitely fenced off. For this purpose, too, the Church uses the limiting concept. An example of this we find in the declarations of the council of Chalcedon concerning the mystery of the Incarnation, particularly as to



the relation of the two natures in Christ, stating that: "We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men and confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable soul and body; coessential with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the manhood. . . . one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, *inconfusedly* (asunchutoos), *unchangeably* (atreptoos), *indivisibly* (adiairetoos), *inseparably* (acharistoos); the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence (eis hen prosopon kai mian upostasin), not parted or divided into two person, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God, the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ," etc. Here the Church deals with limiting concepts almost throughout, occasioned on the one hand by the revelation of the mystery of the Incarnation, and on the other hand by the attack upon this mystery by the lie. This is especially evident from the well known formulation of the relation of the two natures in Christ: "inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably."

The third proper use of the limiting concept in theology is caused by the difference between the earthly and the heavenly, and the necessity of expressing in earthly terms the reality of heavenly things. How crowded with limiting concepts, for instance, is the last part of that glorious fifteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians! "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. . . . Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed," etc. And the same is true, as might be expected, of the last two chapters of the book of Revelation.

Perhaps, Van Til differs with me, but to me it seems that there is need of defining the proper use of *limiting concepts*, lest we become arbitrary, and leave the impression that all the truth as confessed by the Church is relative and uncertain.

H. H.

#### CLASSIS EAST

of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet D. V. Wednesday, April 7, at 9 o'clock A. M. at Fuller Ave.  
D. Jonker, S.C.

## The Triple Knowledge

### An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

#### PART TWO

#### OF MAN'S REDEMPTION

#### LORD'S DAY VI.

#### Chapter III

#### The Holy Gospel.

"Whence knowest thou this?" Whence knowest thou that our Lord Jesus Christ is "that Mediator, who is in one person both very God, and a real righteous man?" And whence knowest thou that this Mediator is "of God made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption?" To this question the Catechism gives one of the finest answers in the whole book of instruction: "From the holy gospel, which God Himself first revealed in Paradise; and afterwards published by the patriarchs and prophets, and represented by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law; and lastly has fulfilled it by His only begotten Son." This is a remarkable answer, indeed. We might, perhaps, have expected that our instructor would have answered "I know this from the Holy Scriptures, which are the infallible Word of God, and my only rule for faith and life." But the Catechism, evidently, had in mind the saints of all ages, and remembered, that all the saints, both of the old and new dispensation, from the very beginning of history, were saved through that same Mediator, and must have possessed the same promise of salvation, the same source of knowledge concerning this Mediator of God and man, although they certainly did not possess the Holy Scriptures, from which we of the new dispensation derive the knowledge of the Christ. And, therefore, it calls our attention to the holy gospel, and emphasizes that as long as there were heirs of the promise in the world this holy gospel was delivered unto them. And it also reminds us that this "holy gospel" is not merely something that was preached from the beginning of the world, but that it was also fulfilled in God's only begotten Son.

Very often we read of the "gospel" in Holy Writ. It is called "the gospel of God" to emphasize its exclusively divine origin and authorship. Rom. 1:1; II Cor. 11:7; I Thess. 2:8, 9; I Pet. 4:17. The gospel is not ours but God's. In no sense is it of human origin. God conceived of the gospel, He realized it, and He proclaims it. With a view to its contents this

gospel of God is called the "gospel concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord," or simply "the gospel of His Son." Rom. 1:3, 9; Mk. 1:1. The contents of this gospel is, therefore, the revelation of the Son of God in the person of Jesus Christ our Lord. It is the "gospel of Christ," the Anointed of God, or "the gospel of Jesus Christ," the Anointed Saviour, who shall save His people from their sins." Rom. 15:19; I Cor. 9:12; II Cor. 2:12; 9:13; 10:14; Gal. 1:17. It is defined as "the glorious gospel of the blessed God," and as "the gospel of the Kingdom"; or as "the gospel of the grace of God," and "the gospel of your salvation," "the gospel of peace." I Tim. 1:11; Matt. 4:23; 9:34; 24:14; Acts 20:24; Eph. 1:13; 6:15. All these terms describe "the holy gospel" as something divine, something that concerns the Son of God and our salvation, something that is not of this world, neither concerned with this world, but with things which "eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard, neither have entered into the heart of man." It is concerning this "holy gospel" that the Catechism instructs us in its nineteenth answer.

It is evident from this answer of the Heidelberg that it conceives of a very intimate and close relationship between the gospel and the promise. For when it speaks of "the holy gospel" as being fulfilled in God's only begotten Son, it is thinking of the gospel as the promise of God. And this is quite in accord with the teachings of Scripture. In the Bible the words *epangelia* (promise), and *euangelion* (gospel) are synonyms. In the usage of the Church the two are often combined in the phrase: "the promise of the gospel." Thus our Heidelberg uses the term in its answer to the question: "What are sacraments?" The answer reads: "The sacraments are holy visible signs and seals, appointed of God for this end, that by the use thereof, He may more fully declare and seal to us the *promise of the gospel*." And also in its answer to the question concerning the preaching of the Word as one of the keys of the kingdom, it employs the same term: "Thus: when according to the command of Christ, it is declared and publicly testified to all and every believer that, whenever they receive *the promise of the gospel* by a true faith, all their sins are really forgiven them of God, for the sake of Christ's merits," etc. Qu. 84. To denote the real nature of the gospel, however, it were better to turn this phrase about, and to speak of *the gospel of the promise*. The idea of the gospel is that it is good news concerning the promise. One that has some news to bring, in the name of God, concerning the promise, preaches the gospel. This idea is clearly expressed in Gal. 3:8: "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." This last clause: "In thee shall all nations be blessed," is, of course, simply the promise. And the text declares

that when God makes an announcement of this promise to Abraham, the gospel is preached to him. The gospel is, therefore, identified with the promise. It is the announcement of the promise. The same truth is expressed in Acts 13:32, 33: "And we declare unto you glad tidings (*euangelidzometha*, we preach the gospel), how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." It is evident that the promise here mentioned as being "made unto the fathers", is the same as the one mentioned in Gal. 3:8. The promise: "In thee shall all nations be blessed," is fulfilled in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. And also in the text from Acts the promise and the gospel are simply identified. When the apostles preached the gospel, they announced glad tidings concerning the fulfillment of the promise. If, therefore, we would understand what is meant by the gospel, we must inquire into the nature of the promise of God.

Very frequently the Bible speaks of the promise of God. Sometimes the plural, *promises*, is used to denote the manifold riches of the grace of God, in other passages the singular is employed to remind us that the promise of the gospel is essentially one. In Heb. 11:13 we read: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." And at the close of that marvellous chapter it is said with a view to all the saints of the old dispensation: "And these all, having obtained a good report, through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." These passages teach plainly that all through the old dispensation there was *the Promise*, which was always the same. As the Catechism teaches us, the gospel certainly was preached to the saints from the very beginning. And the essence of that gospel was *the Promise*. This promise was not yet fulfilled: they did not receive the promise. But through the grace of God they embraced the promise by faith, and they saw it afar off. Because of that promise they lived in hope, and confessed that they were strangers on the earth. So glorious was that promise even then, that for the sake of it the saints of the old dispensation were willing to forsake all rather than lose their hold on the promise. They "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valient in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.

And others had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented: (Of whom the world was not worthy): they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens, and in caves of the earth." How glorious was the promise of the gospel, if even the distant view of it could fill them with such zeal of faith, and endurance of hope!

Of this promise also the epistle of Paul to the Galatians speaks. For to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. 3:16. And although the promise was temporarily placed under the law, yet the law could not possibly make the promise of none effect. In fact, the promise remained the essential thing, even under the law. Gal. 3:17. For never was the inheritance of the law; always it was given to Abraham unconditionally by promise. And seeing that the true seed of the promise is Christ, we also are Abraham's seed if we are of Christ, and heirs according to the promise. 3:29. As to the contents of this promise, Scripture speaks of it as "the promise of the Holy Ghost," the exalted Christ received and poured out into the Church. And this promise of the Holy Ghost, which is the realization of the gospel that was preached to Abraham, and by which all the nations of the earth should be blessed, we also receive. Gal. 3:14. It is a promise "of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." I Tim. 4:8. "And this is the promise that He hath promised us, even eternal life." I John 2:25. It is the promise of His coming, II Pet. 3:4; the promise to enter into His rest, Heb. 4:1; the promise to be heir of the world, "for the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." Rom. 4:13. For this reason, Scripture speaks of "the Holy Spirit of promise": Eph. 1:13; and of "the children of the promise" that is of those children that, in distinction from mere children according to the flesh, are born in virtue of and through the power of the promise, Rom. 9:8; and of the heirs of the Promise, unto whom the Lord seals the riches of the promise and the inheritance with an oath, Heb. 6:17; 11:9. Hence, when the apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost, standing on the threshold of the new dispensation, preaches the gospel, he declares: "For unto you is the promise, and unto your children, and to all that are afar off, as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts 2:39. The gospel, therefore, is the glad news concerning the promise that was given to Abraham and his seed, the heirs of the promise, chosen before the foundation of the world, as they walk in the midst of darkness of this sin-cursed world.

And this promise is sure. It can never fail. The Word of God can never be made of none effect. The

"gospel of the promise" is, therefore, not to be changed into a vague, general, "well meaning offer of grace to all." For between "the gospel of the promise" and a "well meaning offer" there is as much difference as between day and night. The two have nothing in common. He that preaches a well meaning offer cannot preach the glad tidings of the promise. A well meaning offer depends for its realization, in part at least, on the will of him to whom the offer is made; a promise is as sure as the truth and integrity of him by whom the promise is made. Preach a "well meaning offer" and all certainty is gone, for the realization of this well meaning offer of grace and salvation is contingent on the will of man, of a man that is dead through trespasses and sins, and that will always despise the offer of grace." And if this is the case, salvation is a completely lost cause. But the promise rests in God alone, in the truth and faithfulness of the eternal, unchangeable God. The promise of the gospel signifies that the eternal God, Who can never deny Himself, bound Himself to give to the heirs of the promise, that is, to the elect, eternal life and all things. For also in this do the promise of the gospel and a well meaning offer of salvation differ: the latter is general and undefined, it can be made to all men without distinction; the former is particular and clearly defined: it concerns only those whom God in His eternal good pleasure ordained unto salvation.

And how could it be different? Is not God GOD? Is He not the only One, and there is none beside Him? And is He not the all-sufficient God in Himself, and the absolutely sovereign Potentate? Where, then, would be the party to whom God would promise anything or offer something, unless He Himself in His sovereign good pleasure ordained and formed that "party"? Indeed, if there is a promise of the gospel, it must follow that this promise is entirely His, conceived by Him, given by Him, realized by Him, bestowed by Him, and that also the heirs of the promise are sovereignly determined by Him alone. Then God has sovereignly foreknown and foreordained the heirs of the promise in His everlasting counsel. "For whom He hath foreknown, them He also did predestinate to be conformed according to the image of His Son; and whom He did predestinate, them He also called, and whom He called them He also justified, and whom He justified them He also glorified." Rom. 8:29, 30. The promise of the gospel is sure, but it is sure to the heirs of the promise alone. One may, therefore, preach the gospel promiscuously to all men without distinction, but a gospel without distinction he may preach to no one in the name of God. If he does, he makes God a liar, Christ powerless to save, the gospel of none effect, and the assurance of the believer groundless. But, according to Holy Scripture, God's promise is sure, and the heirs of the promise are determined by His sovereign foreordination. For, first



of all, the Chief Heir of the promise is Christ Himself. For "to Abraham and his seed are the promises made," but, mark you well, "He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." Gal. 3:16. And no one dare deny that Christ is of God, sovereignly ordained by Him to be *the* heir of the promise. But if the Chief Heir of the promise is ordained of God, so are they that are His. And only thus could God swear by Himself that He would surely fulfill the promise to Abraham and his seed. "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them the end of all strife. Wherein God, willing to shew more abundantly unto the heirs of the promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, wherein it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us." Heb. 6:13-18. To the heirs of the promise the promise is sure, because it is based on and rooted in the immutable counsel of the eternal God!

Now, the announcement of this promise is the gospel. It is *euangelion*, good tidings, good news, because it is the sure promise of light in the midst of darkness, of righteousness in the midst of sin, of eternal life to them that lie in the midst of death. For, by nature the heirs of the promise lie with all the world under the curse, in the darkness of sin and death. In and with that world they are of the first Adam, born in sin, children of wrath, even as also "the others." And the promise, and that, too, exactly because it is the promise of God, causes the glad light of hope to dawn in their hearts the hope of redemption and deliverance out of the night of misery through the which they walk. Good news the announcement of this promise of the gospel is to them, especially because that promise speaks of things which "eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard, and that never entered into the heart of man." The promise does not merely bring to them the prospect of redemption from their sin, and the deliverance from their present death, and of a return to former state of integrity, but it holds before them the glorious hope of eternal life, the life of immortality and incorruption, the hope of the inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeeth not away. And the glory and blessedness of that state that is assured them by the unchangeable promise of God, is as highly exalted above the original state in the first Paradise, as the Lord of heaven is exalted above the man that is of the earth earthy. The news of the gospel, therefore, is unspeakably good news. It is *euangelion* indeed. And it is *news*. For the gospel

is not of this world. It never did, and it never could arise in the heart of man. Philosophy could never invent this news. The princes of this world could never conceive of it. It is the gospel of God concerning things that are wholly new. It is, therefore, God Himself that announces the promise, and that proclaims the gospel of His Son. Or, as the Heidelberg Catechism reminds us: "From the holy gospel, which God Himself revealed." To the heirs of the promise the gospel comes *by revelation* even though it is proclaimed by men. No mere word of man is sufficient for this. The heirs of the promise must hear the Word of God. Hence, the Catechism certainly touched upon the heart of the matter, when, in answer to the question: "whence knowest thou this?" it called attention to "the holy gospel, which God Himself first revealed in Paradise; and afterwards published by the patriarchs and prophets, and represented by the sacrifices, and other ceremonies of the law; and lastly has fulfilled it by His only begotten Son." Always it is of God. Always there were pilgrims of the night that were heirs of the promise in this world, from its very beginning. And always they longed for the *euangelion*, for some glad news concerning the promise. And again, always it was none other than God Himself that satisfied their earnest longing by publishing to them the gospel concerning His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ!

H. H.

## The Gainsayers

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

Having noticed how the enemies of Zion strove to silence the truth through their slanders and heresies, having exposed these heresies as to their primary principles, let us now, in the second place, have regard to the significance of this vile doing of unbelief for the church and the truth.

If we are to succeed in the attempt to grasp this significance, we certainly must take our stand on the foundation of the truth and the fact that also this rioting of unbelief was God's work, that in slandering the gospel and those who identified themselves with it — the followers of Christ — and in framing their false gospels, the enemies of the kingdom of righteousness and truth, functioned as God's agents but on this account none the less responsible. Here, too, when it is a question of the sovereign reason of this form of hostility, we must look to God as One who hardeneth whom *He* will (Rom. 9:18) and "who worketh all things after the counsel of his will" (Eph. 1:11). To express this truth and fact in the language

borrowed from the Scriptures, God gave up the heathen to the sin of slandering the truth, through the lusts of their own heart, the pride and willing ignorance of their heart (Rom. 1:24). He raised up the heathen (Ex. 9:16); moved them (Ex. 9:16), through the agency of satan (1 Chr. 21:1); and turned their hearts (Ps. 105:25) to oppose the Gospel. It is on this account that the rioting of unbelief, with which we here have to do, had greatest significance. Over it was suspended the sovereign counsel of God; and it came forth out of the store of His providence. He willed this opposition and also worked it. And the reasons are revealed. Let us consider the following.

From the very outset the church apprehended the great facts and truths that form the content of the Christian faith, confessed God as the creator of heaven and earth; the creation of man in the image of God; his fall by his own guilt and the instigation of Satan; the Messiahship of Jesus, His divine Sonship, incarnation, true humanity and essential divinity; His vicarious atonement; His resurrection, exaltation at the right hand of God and second coming; the personality of the Holy Spirit and thus the one true God — Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Christian church was at no time without this catholic orthodoxy. It possessed these truths from the beginning, not only objectively in the Scriptures but subjectively in its own consciousness and spiritual experience. But its insight into these articles of faith was, at the beginning, vague and defective. The people of God felt the force of these truths in their own hearts, but were at first unable to exhibit them in clear form before the mind. The truth had to be developed and its logical apprehension unfolded. And to this task the church also addressed itself by inward constraint of its faith and love crying for knowledge and the removal of apparent logical difficulties in the revelation of the mysteries of God. It understood, did the church, that so long as God's people must live by the holy Scriptures, do not see face to face, and know not as they are known, Christ is seen and received and experienced in the Word alone, and that therefore when knowledge is obscure and imperfect, Christ, and in His face the Father, is not being seen as He is, and that, in consequence thereof, the joy of believers is not full. To stimulate this holy urge of the primitive church to increase its knowledge of the truth and to arrive at a clear understanding of God's gospel, the Lord raised up heretics and turned their hearts to assail the gospel and to oppose to it their subjective and baseless speculations. And the faith of the church bestirred itself as it always does when confronted by unbelief, and the warfare with the lie was on. The church was strange to that kind of tolerance — so prevalent in recent times — that is most intolerant of the truth but can bear, in the name of peace, with most any lie of satan. It attacked, did the church, the false

gods of these heresies; it went to pondering its own great articles of faith with a zeal fully aroused and opposed them, as fortified by the Scriptures, to the vain imaginings of the adversary. In this conflict, of some 680 years duration, it had the victory in Christ. During the progress of this conflict it was steadily led into the truth by Christ's Spirit and also empowered to exhibit the truth, clearly, logically, and with precision, in its symbols — the great creeds of Christendom. So was unbelief again made to work for good to God's believing people. So did God again achieve His purpose *through* the opposition of darkness.

But this conflict was not without its peculiar danger. The church was exposed to the temptation of its sinful flesh to look at the Bible solely as a storehouse of theological weapons and thus to forget that it is also the medium of fellowship between a covenant God and His people. The Roman hierarchy of more recent centuries succumbed to this temptation; and the result was that faith lost its sense of trust in Christ and assumed the character of intellectual assent to the traditions of men. All contact with the Scriptures was lost.

Let us now have regard to this conflict as such. It is important to consider that it was carried on with 1) the non-Christian gentile world; 2) the non-Christian Jews; 3) the heretics in the Church. As compared with the Christian literature occasioned by the contest with the Jews and with the heretics, the literature produced in the contest with the persecuting heathen was unique in this one respect that it purposed to show that of all religions the religion of Christ alone was of worth and that therefore, instead of being outlawed and its devotees harassed, it assuredly should receive from the Roman rulers the legal right to exist. That this purpose might be achieved, the fathers did two things; they defended with their pen the Christian religion and with it the Christians against the slander and mal-treatment of the heathen; they exposed in their treatises the heathen religion for what it was — an utterly and worthless thing. The literature that resulted from this conflict with the heathen went down in history as bearing the name *Apology*. *Polemical* is a better name, as it comes from a word meaning to wage war, both offensive and defensive. The fathers did so. But they did not, certainly, express to the heathen their regrets for the religion of Christ as if it were some improper or injurious thing. In a word, they did not apologize for the Christian religion.

This "Apologetic" literature began to make its appearance *circa* A.D. 117, thus shortly after the death of the last apostle (*circa* 100) and grew in volume till the close of the third century, 300 A.D. Most of these works have been lost. The two which we possess in full are those of the martyr Justin (died 166) and of Origin in the first half of the 3rd century, 200-250.

Other outstanding writers of this type of Christian literature were Tertullian (died *circa* 220), Minucius Felix (died 230) and the later Arnobius and Lactantius, all of whose sphere of labor was North Africa. In some of these works the writers appeal directly to the Roman Caesars or to the governors of the provinces; in others to the general heathen public.

In their attacks upon the pseudo-religions and the false gods of the heathen, these fathers did anything but mince words. A few excerpts chosen at random from this literature will bear out this statement and also demonstrate what the fathers' purpose with these treatises.

In his "A Plea For The Christians", directed to the Emperors Marcus Aurelius Anonius and Lucian Commodus, the Athenian Christian Athenagoras sets out in this vein: "In your empire, greatest of sovereigns, different nations have different customs and laws; and no one is hindered by law or fear of punishment from following his ancestral usages, however ridiculous these may be. . . . The Egyptians reckon among their gods even cats, and crocodiles, and serpents, and dogs. And to all these both you and the laws give permission so to act, deeming on the one hand, that to believe in no god at all is impious and wicked, and on the other that it is necessary for each man to worship the god he prefers, in order that, through fear of the deity, men may be kept from wrong-doing. But why—why is a mere name (in this instance the name *Jesus Christ*) odious to you? Names are not deserving of hatred. It is the unjust act that call for penalty and punishment. And, accordingly, with admiration of your mildness and gentleness, and your peaceful and benevolent disposition toward every man, individuals live in the possession of equal rights; and the cities, according to their rank, share in equal honor; and the whole empire under your intelligent sway, enjoys profound peace. But for us, who are called Christians you have not in like manner cared; but, although we commit no wrong—nay, as will appear in the sequel of this discourse, are of all men most righteously and piously disposed toward the deity and toward your government—you allow us to be harrassed, plundered, and persecuted, the multitude making war upon us for our name alone (the name Christian).

"What are the very forms and appearances of the gods?" asks Minucius Felix, "do they not argue the contemptible and disgraceful character of your gods? Vulcum is a lame god, and crippled; Apolo, smooth-faced after so many years; Aesculapius well-beared; Neptune with sea-green eyes; Minerva with eyes bluish grey; Juno with ox eyes; Mercury with winged feet; Pan with hoofed feet; Saturn with feet in fetters; Janus indeed wears two faces, as if he might walk with looks turned back; Diana sometimes is a huntress, with her robe girded up high; and as the Ephesian she has many and fruitful breasts; and when exagger-

ated as Trivia, she is horrible with three heads and with many hands. What is your Jupiter himself? Now he is represented in a statue as beardless, now he is set up as bearded; and when he is called Hamman he has horns; and when Capitulinus, then he wields his thunderbolts; and when Latiaris, he is sprinkled with gore. . . ." Why should I speak of the detected adultery of Mars and Venus, and of the violence of Jupiter Ganymede,—a deed consecrated, as you say, in heaven? And all these things have been put forward with this view, that a certain authority might be gained for the vices of men. By these fictions, and such as these, and by lies of a more attractive kind, the minds of boys are corrupted; and with the same fables clinging to them, they grow up even to the strength of mature age; and, poor wretches, they grow old in the same beliefs, although the truth is plain if they will only seek after it."

"Which of the poets," asks Tertullian, "does not mock your gods? One sets Appolo to keep sheep; another hires out Neptune to build a wall; Pindar declares Aesculapius was deservedly scathed for his avarice in exercising the art of medicine to a bad purpose; while the writers of tragedy and comedy alike, take for their subjects the crimes or the miseries of the deities."

Titian in his address to the Greeks cautions against being led away by the solemn assemblies of the philosophers "who are no philosophers, who dogmatize one against the other, though each one vents but the crude fancies of the moment. They have moreover many collisions among themselves; each one hates the other; they indulge in conflicting opinions, and their arrogance makes them eager for the highest places.

"The philosophers", Titian continues, "have invented great and wonderful things. They have uncovered one of their shoulders; they let their hair grow long; they cultivate their beards; their nails are like the claws of wild beasts. O Man (the cynic) competing with the dog. You know not God and so have turned to the imitation of an irrational animal. You cry out in public with the assumption of authority; and if you receive nothing, you indulge in abuse, and philosophy is with you the art of getting money. You receive from your predecessors (Greek philosophers of former days) doctrines which clash with one another, you the inharmonious are fighting against the harmonies (the gospel)".

Also Justin finds the philosophers in conflict among themselves. With Thales the essence of all things is water; with Anaximander, air; with Heraclitus, fire; with Pythagoris, number.

In this vein did the fathers deride, in their discourses to the heathen, the things, the civilization and culture, of Athens and of Rome, of that Greaco-Roman world in which they lived and labored, confessed and witnessed — confessed the *Name*, however odious to

the heathen. True, they used little diplomacy — did these fathers. In this they were like the prophets of Scripture. But they had courage — the courage of faith. And they were prepared to lose their life in order to gain a crown. It requires little daring to denounce the idols of the world out of earshot of the world. But to shout such words of condemnation in the ears of the world, is a different matter. That is what these fathers did. These discourses were addressed to the heathen — to kings and magistrates in Babylon — and circulated among them.

Perusing the apologetic writings of these fathers, we learn that the heathen raised several objections against the Christians. What was constantly laid at their charge was that they observed a holy rite in which they killed a little child and then ate it; and that thereupon they practiced incest, the dogs overturning the lights so as to get them the shamelessness of darkness for their impious lust. "This," says Tertullian, "is what is constantly laid at our charge, and yet," he continues, "you take no pains to elicit the truth of what we have been so long accused. Either bring then the matter to the light of day if you believe it, or give it no credit as having never inquired into it. On the ground of your double dealing, we are entitled to lay it down to you here that there is no reality in the thing which you dare not search out."

The Christians were accused of sacrilege and treason because they refused to worship the gods of Rome. This was the sum total of their offending. The fathers replied also to this charge. "Punishment," says Tertullian, "were due to Christians, if it were made plain that those to whom they refused all worship were indeed divine. But you say, they are gods. We protest and appeal from yourselves to your knowledge; let that condemn us, if it can deny that all these gods of yours were but men. Being men, they are able to protect neither empire nor anyone else. This being true, the Christians pay them no divine homage. But they offer prayer for the safety of our princes to the eternal, the true, and the living God."

They were called to account as harm-doers on the ground of their being useless in the affairs of life. "I will confess," says Tertullian, "that there are some who in a sense may complain of Christians that they are a sterile race: as, for instance, pimps, and panders, and bath-suppliers; assassins, and poisoners, and sorcerers; soothsayers, too, diviners, and astrologers. But it is a noble fruit of Christians that they have no fruit for such as these."

The heathen inveighed also against the truths and facts of Christianity. Especially obnoxious to them was the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. The fathers replied by reference to the power of God; and argued its reasonableness from the divine image in man and from the righteousness and goodness of God.

Another argument of paganism against Christianity was its novelty and late appearance. This the fathers justified by the need of the human race to be trained unto Christ. But they also argued that Christianity existed long before Christ, that it went back to the very gates of paradise, that it existed from the eternity in the counsel of God.

The unbelieving Jews, too, had their objections. To their charge that Christianity cuts loose from the religion of the Old Testament, the fathers opposed those portions of the Scriptures which teach the temporality of the Mosaic ceremonies and rites and their true function, which was to foreshadow the things of Christ's kingdom, so that when the fulness of time was come all these ceremonies waxed old and vanished.

In reply to the objection that the divinity of Christ is destructive of the oneness of God, they maintained that the Old Testament Scriptures themselves make a distinction in the being of God, such as the book of Exodus, where the angel of the Lord is plainly Jehovah and yet distinct from Him; and the Messianic psalms, which ascribe divine honor to Christ.

Against the charge that the so-called Christ of the Christians was dishonorable and inglorious, so much so that He was crucified, it was replied that there was to be two events of His—one, to quote Justin, "in which He was pierced by you (the Jews); a second, when the Lord, the Father of all, brought Him again from the earth, setting Him at His own right hand, until He makes His enemies His footstool."

Justin advances as proof of the fallacy of Judaism the fulfillment of the prophecies and the types of Christ. The destruction of Jerusalem, in accordance with the prediction of Christ, plainly bespeaks, according to Justin, its condemnation by God. He finds, too, that all the main features of the gospel history were foretold: The birth of Christ from the virgin; the visit of the magi; the flight into Egypt; the baptism by John and the descent of the Holy Spirit like a dove upon Christ; Christ's death by the cross; His resurrection, ascension and reign in glory.

In these "apologies" the fathers are also positive. They endeavor to set forth the religion of Christ in its true light. But despite these "Apologies" persecutions continued, so that the only effect this literature had upon the unbelieving, reprobated heathen, is to harden them. But with this witness of the truth in circulation among them, they were without excuse. On the other hand, God's believing people, so many as had ears to hear, were strengthened by it and brought to a clearer and deeper knowledge of the Gospel of God. For these writings are laden with truth and bespeak deep and ardent love of Christ on the part of their authors. We have still to deal with the literary contest of the fathers with the *heretics in the church*.

G. M. O.

## Prohibition And Temperance

Anyone who might think that the subject Prohibition and Temperance is not up to date, is wholly mistaken. The writer of this article also thought that the above subject was really out of date. However a little investigation was sufficient to make him change his mind. It is true of course that the prohibition era is a matter of the past. However, that does not mean that all citizens of our country are satisfied with the present situation. Fact is that there are still millions of prohibitionists who would like nothing better than to once more force the prohibition yoke upon the shoulders of all American citizens. This point we hope to prove in the sequence of our article.

First we wish to state what is understood by prohibition and what is usually meant by temperance. By prohibition we understand of course that the law, either local or federal law, prohibits the sale and use of liquor. During the prohibition era it was a transgression of the law to sell, make or drink liquor. The only exceptions that were made dealt with wine for communion and liquor for medicinal purpose. "The word temperance has long been used to characterize the movement for the temperate use of intoxicants and for the activities of societies of abstainers and those favoring a restriction of the use and sale of alcoholic beverages."

Before I give my opinion on the above subject I will first prove that prohibition is becoming once more a live issue, and secondly that the temperance movement is not what it claims to be if one would merely judge by the sound of the word.

In "The American Mercury," of March 1943, Mr. Jack Van Norden writes an article under the heading: "Prohibition is Returning." In this particular article the author claims that the cry for prohibition has increased particularly in connection with the rumors that our soldiers are drinking excessively. Due to these rumors "The Office of War Information was obliged to institute a thorough investigation because of the unsubstantiated rumors of excessive drinking in the Army." Its findings were made public, so Mr. Van Norden tells us, in *A Survey of Drinking Habits in and around Army Camps*. One of the conclusions of this survey was: "There is not excessive drinking among troops, and drinking does not constitute a serious problem." In other words prohibition for our soldiers is not necessary. Van Norden himself is no enthusiast for prohibition either. But he claims that besides the many temperance organizations also a great number of Churches are actively seeking prohibition. Says Mr. Van Norden: "The Board of Temperance of the Methodist Church was the leading Protestant organization behind the last fight for prohibition. It is still that today."

I found a very interesting article under the heading "Never Prohibition Again," in the Atlantic Monthly of Jan. 1943, by Robert M. La Follette Jr. Says Mr. La Follette: "Prohibition is attempting to stage a comeback. Under the guise of wartime necessities, the dry forces have launched the same kind of campaign that brought about the adoption of the Eighteenth Amendment after the last war. — One spokesman of the prohibition cause was quoted in the press only a few months ago as promising: 'When prohibition comes in as a wartime measure, that will give us a chance to rally our forces and nail it down permanently.' The strategy of the prohibition movement, as he frankly stated it, is first, to try and dry up all military camps and establishments; second, to dry up all war industrial areas; and third, to dry up the entire country. How prohibition came about in 1917 and what he thinks about it, Mr. La Follette describes as follows: "The people allowed the fanatics of the temperance movement to lead them away from the principle of temperance. As a result the country was plunged into an era of *moral hypocrisy, political corruption and institutional degeneration* stemming from an "experiment" in *national repression which proved to be thoroughly unworkable.*" (I underscored J.D.). The writer of the above mentioned article certainly would oppose the return of prohibition, says he: "For thirteen years this country grappled with the prohibition law, and finally threw it overboard with a great feeling of relief in 1933. Throughout that unfortunate period the unenforceability of the prohibition law threatened the effectiveness of all law."

From the above quotations two things are very plain: 1. There is at present a strong movement in operation in our country which aims at the return of prohibition. 2. This movement is strongly opposed by others whose chief objection against prohibition seems to be that it is not workable. — Fundamentally of course the one is just as utilitarian as the other. We claim that prohibition *as such* is wrong, the principle of prohibition is wrong. The prohibition law forbids something which in itself is no sin. And because the fundamental principle is wrong our country also found out that it did not work. Prohibition was indeed the cause of moral hypocrisy, political corruption, and institutional degeneration, as Mr. La Follette puts it.

But what about temperance? Just as there is a prohibition movement so there is also a Temperance movement. Particularly the women have shown great interest in temperance, as can easily be explained. Looking up some references I found that a woman's crusade for temperance started about 1870 and crystallized here in America in the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, founded by Frances E. Willard in 1883. This organization is still very active over the entire United States. For many years it has been the



most influential movement for temperance and prohibition. Trying to find out what really are the purposes and aims of the W. C. T. U., I consulted a book entitled: "Women's Torch-Bearers." In this book I found a number of principles which express the aim of the entire organization. I will quote a little of the material that has a direct bearing on our subject. Quote: "What is the C. W. T. U? It is an organization of christian women banded together for the protection of the home, the abolition of the liquor traffic, and the triumph of Christ's Golden Rule in custom and in law." — The reason for joining the organization and signing the total abstinence pledge are given in the Declaration of Principles written by Frances E. Willard: "We believe in the coming of His Kingdom whose service is perfect freedom, because His laws, written in our members as well as in nature and in grace, are perfect, converting the soul." — The pledge of total abstinence reads: "I hereby solemnly promise, God helping me, to abstain from all distilled fermented and malt liquors, including wine, beer and cider, and to employ all proper means to discourage the use of and traffic in the same. To confirm and enforce the rationale of this pledge, we declare our purpose to educate the young; to form a better public sentiment; to reform, so far as possible, by religious, ethical, and scientific means, the drinking classes; to seek the transforming power of Divine grace for ourselves and all for whom we work, that they and we may wilfully transgress no law of pure and wholesome living; and finally we pledge ourselves to labor and to pray that all these principles founded upon the gospel of Christ may be worked out into custom of society and the laws of the land."

From the above it is plain that the temperance movement aims at much more than mere temperance. The term temperance is deceiving. In as far as I could ascertain Temperance as a movement aims at total abstinence and prohibition wherever this is possible. Of course if your teaching and speaking and education brings not enough temperance it is handy to call on the law and enforce prohibition. The temperance movement has always been the right hand of the prohibition movement. But the name is certainly misleading. From the above quotations it is very plain that also the temperance movement can not expect our support and that we, Reformed believers, can not join such organizations even though some of them call themselves "Christian." It seems to me it were better that the word 'christian' were changed into 'humanistic.' Moreover the principles and the pledge of the W. C. T. U. sound rather post-millennialistic to me. Still an other reason why we could not join the movement as represented by the W. C. T. U. And, as I mentioned already, the difference between the prohibition movement and the temperance movement seems to be merely a difference of degree.

Do we believe in the unrestricted liquor traffic? No, not at all, we certainly believe in having laws that restrict and regulate the liquor traffic and punish the misuse of liquor. The government *must* have laws respecting the liquor traffic, but then the laws that do not condemn the use but the misuse of liquor. Prohibition makes sin that which is no sin. And that is our principal objection against prohibition. The danger is also that the government may arbitrarily prohibit the use of many other things which in themselves are not sinful at all.

But what about Temperance? It seems to me the christian naturally favors temperance. Not a temperance which is prohibition in disguise, but a temperance which has as its purpose to discourage the misuse of liquor. Nobody can deny that the liquor traffic causes much trouble and sorrow, even in some christian homes. Should we not favor discouraging the abuse and misuse of God's gifts? Indeed, by all means, because the misuse and abuse of something, no matter what it is, is always wrong, sinful. Hence, we believe in true christian temperance, even in a denial of ourselves for the brother's sake who may be weak. But such a temperance has nothing to do with the humanistic attempt to improve the world by force. If the temperance movement had no other aim but encouraging temperance among the men in the armed forces and among the men and women in civilian life we could find no quarrel with it. Now I would say: "Watch out, lest you become a humanist, a post-millennialist, a person who can not distinguish between arbitrary compulsion and true christian liberty." Conclusion? No prohibition, but christian temperance. And by all means *christian temperance*, not its humanistic substitute.

J. D.

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## The Christian And Strikes

A strike has been defined as "the act of a body of workmen employed by the same master, in stopping work together at a prearranged time, and refusing to continue until higher wages, or shorter time, or some other concession is granted them by the employer." (Black's Law Dictionary).

This definition, which agrees in essence with various other definitions on the subject, can serve our purpose to establish what is to be understood by the strike as it is commonly known among us in the sphere of labor and industry.

It is necessary to make a distinction at the outset between a strike and simply quitting work. While a strike is a refusal to work until certain demands are

met by the employer, the strikers have no intention of giving up their jobs or of losing their positions to others. To carry their point they must of necessity prevent anyone else from filling their places, else the strike would simply amount to an exchange of employees. Besides that, the workmen band together, either through personal choice or under the domination of some labor organization, to cease working simultaneously at a prearranged time, usually at the busiest and most inopportune time for the employer. The strike is either so arranged that the employer is overawed and intimidated by the mere force of numbers, or otherwise it is so well timed that his business is hampered and possibly so seriously crippled that he is forced to comply with their demands or face his own economic ruin. The purpose of the strike is none other than to extort by compulsion some concession from the employer that can be obtained in no other way. (See Cogley. "Law of Strikes and Labor Organization.")

If we are ready to agree that the laboring man has certain rights which the employer is duty-bound to respect. Before he ever accepts a certain position, he has a right to demand just wages and proper working conditions. Any contract that he is asked to sign must be a free, voluntary and unbiased agreement between him and his employer, which both are bound to respect. If any unfavorable or unjust conditions arise, the way of mediation and arbitration is open to him, as well as the way of appeal for government intervention if the case demands it. At the same time, every man is at liberty to quit his job and seek employment elsewhere, if necessity demands as long as this does not conflict with his contract.

On the other hand, the employer also has certain rights which must be duly respected by the workman.

He has the right of personal property. His factory or shop, with the machinery in it, is his personal property, which he can use as he desires, without anyone preventing him. It is the inalienable right of every man to freely use and enjoy his own property, as long as he stays within his rights, and no one can interfere with him. Imagine a guest in your home who would prevent you from sitting in your own chairs, sleeping on your own beds and eating from your own table, or even would stand outside of your house in order to prevent you from using and enjoying your home as you see fit.

The employer also has the right to manage and control his own business without any outside interference. He has the right, not his employees, to say whether he wants his machinery to run and production to continue. He even has the right to choose his workmen, determine their number and their position, as well as the wages he intends to pay them, without being subjected to any form of compulsion by his servants. After all, a man is sovereign in his own do-

main, and each of us is obligated to respect that God-given right. Not to do so is conspiracy and rebellion. In any other sphere of life, an uprising like a strike would be considered nothing short of conspiracy, an act of open rebellion against the authorities, a simple act of extortion. And the concessions gained by such means would be considered ill-gotten gains. Any other contract, so obtained, would be considered illegal by any court of justice. But the law has learned to wink at the evil of strikes, which does not yet mean that they are justified by the Word, and in the sight of God.

Someone may object that there are also other rights and duties to be considered. The Christian laboring man has an obligation to support his family, give his children a Christian education, contribute to the Church and other institutions of charity. He even has a duty to militate against the injustices that he meets in the world round about him, which he cannot shake off by asking: Am I my brother's keeper? He owes it to his employer to demand of him to correct any evidence of injustice that may arise in the plant or factory. He must not become a partner in evil by silently ignoring it.

These things may be ever so true, but they do not excuse him for trespassing upon the rights of another. Nor can he fight evil with evil. He may fight with all the power he can muster, as long as he stays within his own domain and resists the evil with the good. The first requisite of a just cause is that it maintains justice.

The main objection that must be raised against a Christian participating in strikes, is, that a strike is conspiracy in open rebellion against the God-given authority of the employer, which is a sin against the fifth commandment.

There are also other objections that may be raised. We can raise the objection that a strike, taken only by itself, is already an act of violence. Even if no weapons are in evidence, or no other violent acts are committed, the mere fact that the workmen assuming authority in the plant, preventing the employer the free use of his property, hindering him from running his business as he sees fit, and threatening to cripple or ruin his business, is already an act of violence. A toy-gun hold-up is still a hold-up. If the Christian laborer is looking for justice, he must not seek it with the sword. He who takes up the sword shall perish by it.

Which does not mean that a Christian must take an attitude of passive resistance, simply bearing the brunt of social injustice without doing anything about it. I have never been an advocate of non-resistance, nor ever maintained "that the Christian must be satisfied with whatever position he is placed in, because it is the will of God", as B. V. charges in the Jan. 1st

issue of the Standard Bearer. The way of arbitration is always open to every workman. If he loves justice he will fight a long and persistent battle against the evil he meets, and will do it without faltering. Besides that, there is also the way of appeal for government intervention. The government also has an obligation to protect the rights of its citizens. And there is still the third possibility of quitting his job, if he can do so without breaking his contract. If arbitration and appeal for government intervention both fail, the workman can still give up his job and seek employment elsewhere. But if nothing at all avails him, he still cannot resort to violence.

Nor can we entirely ignore the objection that the strike is unavoidably accompanied by other acts of violence. Strikers soon learn that their efforts were futile unless they could prevent others from filling the places they had voluntarily surrendered. The result is picketing, boycotting and sit-down strikes. Even peaceful picketing, although frequently condoned, is but another means of intimidating the employer or preventing him from making free use of his personal rights. Boycotting seeks to ostracize him from the business world and from society, and thus cut off his means of existence or ruin his business, unless he complies with the demands that are laid upon him. Any Christian taking part in such action may gain his end and profit materially from his efforts, but spiritually he can but expect leanness of soul, lacking the peace of mind that accompanies God's approval on our actions.

But the main objection is, that a strike is conspiracy against those whom God has placed in authority over us. The Christian owes obedience to God first of all, and subjection to those in authority for God's sake. Any violent opposition to the "powers that be" is rebellion against God, motivated by sin, instead of arising from the principle of love to God. Our love to God demands love to the neighbor, even when he is our enemy according to the flesh.

With these things in mind, it remains a problem to me why the Christian Labor Association should have a strike clause in their constitution, condoning strikes as a last resort. They want to maintain their Christian principles, object to violence, and yet prefer to speak of a "peaceful strike, entirely within the law." A thing may be "within the law", and yet not be in harmony with God's Law. Or is it no act of violence for a group of experienced workmen to bring their employer in serious difficulty by simultaneously laying down their tools at a prearranged time? Is a strike, from the very nature of the case, not an imposition upon the personal rights of the employer? Can it be justified that certain concessions are extorted from the employer by placing him in a precarious situation from which there is no escape? Or are they ready to excuse this evil because it comes as a last resort?

What is still more strange, is the fact that they

consider the whole strike clause a dead issue, because it is very unlikely that they will ever use it anyway. But why maintain such an objectionable, and at the same time dangerous, clause in their rules of action? Why not remove it, and maintain a simple, positive stand against every act of violence in the sphere of labor and industry? Can anyone tell us why this clause remains standing where it is, if they have no intention of making use of it? Must this clause probably also serve as a toy-gun?

The matter is not so unimportant as some would have us think. In the last analysis, a Christian will strike or he will not strike, but in either case he must know what he is doing. A Christian labor organization will either defend the strike and allow, or force its members to participate in it, or it will condemn it and agitate against it with all its might. And such a Christian labor organization will either stand or fall on its Christian principles. If it is to exist, apart from and opposed to every form of worldly union, it must maintain its distinctive, Christian character throughout. That is its only right of existence. Let it be consistent in every detail.

C. H.

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#### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On February 26, our dear parents,

JOHN BROEK  
and

ELSIE ELIZABETH BROEK—Wassink

hope to commemorate their 30th Wedding Anniversary.

We, their grateful children, extend our hearty congratulations to them, and thank our Heavenly Father for His grace and loving kindness in sparing them for each other and us these many years. We pray that He will grant them many more years together, surrounded with His blessings.

their grateful children,

Mr. and Mrs. David Broek  
Mr. and Mrs. Arend Broek  
Margaret  
Mr. and Mrs. James Franken  
Mathilda  
Bertha  
William  
Cornie  
John Jr.  
Elsie Elizabeth  
Christine Evelyn  
and 4 grandchildren.

Sioux Center, Iowa,

## Christianizing Education In The Public Schools

It may be considered a strange, yet wholly natural phenomenon that the desire to christianize education in the public schools is generally found among those who are lax in their support of Christian instruction. Parents, who are remiss in the fulfillment of their covenant pledge, "to instruct and help instruct this child in the doctrine of this Christian church", are usually enthusiastic when confronted with the question whether the Bible should be introduced into the schools of our land. On the other hand, the true and ardent supporters of our Christian schools are apt to look askance at this movement and view it with misgivings and antipathy. This phenomenon can be easily explained. The Christian education of our children necessarily involves us in certain difficulties and sacrifices. How convenient it is to Christianize our neighborhood public schools! Besides, what objection can there be against this endeavor? Can there be a limit to the scope of Christianity? In contrast with this view, however, the supporters of Christian education, who really understand the purpose and necessity of the Christian school, realize fully that their school-system is wholly dependent upon the distinctiveness of their institutions. Why have Christian schools at all if it be our calling to christianize the public school? Well may the advocates of "Common Grace" therefore fear that their theory is undermining the very foundations upon which our Christian educational institutions have been founded.

### *Its Current Practice.*

In our United States the education of our children (yea, all education) is a privilege and an obligation exercised by the people. This cannot be said of all the countries in the world today. In Nazi Germany, e.g., the state exercises absolute control. Nazism believes in the Absolute State. The State, which, in the final analysis is the Fuehrer, the German leader, Hitler, has sole authority over every form of life and all institutions within the German Reich. Also education is under the absolute authority of the Nazi State. Such is not the case, however, in our country. Here we have local school-boards, district school-boards, state school-boards. Each school-board has its own superintendent. These school-boards regulate and supervise the educational program in our various educational institutions. They are elected by the people and therefore answerable to the people. In this way the people assume a definite obligation as far as the education of their children is concerned.

It may be of interest to note the legal status of the Bible in the public schools in the various states of

our union. Several states have a law which governs the matter. I presume that these laws have been written into the statutebooks through the will of the people. 6 states of our country have a law requiring Bible reading in public schools. 6 other states have a law which permits Bible reading. On the other hand we know of 6 states which specifically prohibit the reading from the Holy Scriptures. 25 states permit Bible reading under general terms of the law or by reason of its silence. And in still other states an adverse opinion has been given as to the question whether the Bible should be read in the public school, either by the attorney general, the state board of education, or the state supreme court. In Michigan we have no definite law, although we do have a court decision favorable to reading Bible stories.

It is also of interest to note that there is a movement on foot to have weekday classes in religious education for the children who attend public schools. It is probable that the Bible is given a place in the schools of our land even in those states where this is legally forbidden. A certain school-board superintendent told the undersigned that they aim to please the people, and that if the people of a certain locality were inclined one way or another, the instruction in the public schools would be given accordingly. This will explain why some rural public schools are not far behind many of our Christian schools. The weekly church school, mentioned above, is defined and described as "a school of religious education, distinguished from all other weekday church groups by its close relationship with the public school, with which it cooperates, but with which it has no organic relationship." This weekday church school is an essential part of the church's educational program, carried on under the direction of a local church or of several churches. Its sessions are held in church buildings, or in buildings owned or rented by the weekday church school council, or, where possible and advisable, in public school rooms. These sessions are held during public school hours, or during the last period of the day, or after school. (These arrangements are known as "released time", "dismissed time", and "free time", respectively). The weekday church school receives children on released time only upon written request of parents. Attendance is elective as far as initial choice of parents is concerned, but it is usually compulsory for all children whose parents have signed request cards for dismissal from school for religious education. The primary objective of the program as stated by the Vermont Council of Churches is to supplement the public school: "To round out a more satisfactory educational experience of the pupil by guiding him in a discovery and experience of the spiritual and Christian elements of life."

The christianizing of education in our public school children is therefore a matter worthy of our consideration. The report of the "1940 White House Confer-

ence on Children in a Democracy" includes the following statement: "Despite the various efforts made by church groups to educate children in religion, the religious needs of many children are imperfectly met at the present time. It has been estimated that approximately one-half of the children and youth in the United States receive no religious instruction outside the home." On the one hand we have those who plead for the use of the Bible in the public schools. And on the other hand there is a movement on foot for weekday classes in religious education. These weekday classes, although not in themselves a part of the public schools, are nevertheless closely related to them, inasmuch as they cooperate with them.

#### *Its Impossibility.*

Firstly, any christianizing of our public schools' instruction must necessarily result in a general, superficial christianity, which is no christianity at all. This appears from the laws of those states which require Bible reading in the public schools. In New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee reading must be "without comment", and in Massachusetts "without written or oral comment". In Georgia, Massachusetts and Tennessee any pupil may be excused from the Bible-reading exercises upon written request of his parents or guardian. Besides, does this not lie in the very nature of the case? To christianize instruction in the public schools one must surely consider the various kinds of children represented there. None must be offended. The Protestant, the Catholic, and the Jew must all feel at home. Instruction must be non-sectarian. It is for this reason that Bible reading is advocated "without any comment". Besides, usually those parts of Scripture are read which are considered acceptable by all the groups represented. The sermon on the mount is considered to be such a passage. Because of this, however, such a Bible reading is a gross misinterpretation of Holy Writ. Fact remains, does it not, that to read certain passages of the Bible and leave the impression that they are equally acceptable by and beneficial to all is surely a misinterpretation of those passages of Holy Writ, and is nothing less than Modernism.

Secondly, true Christianizing of education in the public schools is a spiritual impossibility. This lies in the very nature of the case. Education does not proceed from the government, is not imposed upon the people by the magistrates, but is a privilege and duty exercised by the parents. Public schools are surely the schools of the world. This fact receives added significance if God's covenant people are faithful to their baptismal pledge and provide Christian education for their children. Understood in this light the christianizing of public instruction is, must be considered impossible. It is absurd, a contradiction in terms. On the one hand, the reading of the Bible is spiritually impossible by those who are from below. The dark-

ness cannot comprehend the light. The lie cannot receive the truth. And on the other hand, and this is far worse, we may not "cast pearls before swine". For, what will be the inevitable result if we try to christianize public instruction by placing the Bible in the public schools? Will the Word of God not be subjected to an unmerciful maltreatment and ridicule? Or, will the Word of God not be viewed and regarded as merely another "good, moral book", useful only insofar that it can teach the children of the world to lead "good, decent" lives? Is it not true that the true significance of the Bible will be entirely lost sight of? May we as Christian parents, as God's covenant people assume this responsibility? I think not.

Thirdly, is it not clear that the christianizing of public instruction and the sending of our children to public schools in particular places us in an utterly helpless and defenceless position? If we permit our children to be counted among the children of the world can we expect them to receive an education according to the Word of God. Is there any possible way whereby we can enforce our desire and impose upon the world our Christian principles? Have we any right to complain if our children should be compelled to imbibe unscriptural teachings? Is there any school society or school-board where we can voice our complaints? Have we not lost all control as far as the training of our children is concerned? And, have we any right to complain about unsatisfactory conditions in our Christian schools if we have clothed our children in the uniform of the children of the world?

#### *Its Danger.*

Thus far we have treated very briefly the negative aspect of the attempt to christianize public instruction. I am sure that we must all agree that this task is impossible, that we have no calling to christianize the world, and that we may not expose Holy Writ to a being trampled upon.

This, however, is not all that must be said in this brief essay. Any attempt to christianize public instruction will necessarily cause us to lose sight of our high calling as covenant people and parents. Besides, it will involve us in the loss of all Christian instruction. If our efforts, as far as the instruction of our children is concerned, are directed towards christianizing public instruction, we will be engaged in a hopeless task. And the inevitable result will be that our children will be deprived of that instruction which we, as covenant parents, have pledged to give them. And, on the other hand, we will be wholly remiss in our own high calling. The Lord's commandment, also in this matter, tolerates no misunderstanding. Neither need we misunderstand it. Very plainly Israel is commanded to instruct their own children. The training of our children is a task which God has placed upon our shoulders. We need not, may not concern ourselves



with the task to christianize the public schools. We must provide our own schools. We must christianize our own instruction. This task is sufficiently difficult nowadays to demand all our attention.

H. V.

## Current Events

Since the last appearance of "Current Events" upon the pages of our Standard Bearer, the pages of history have turned so swiftly that even in this age of speed one is amazed. A new year began since the last installment of "Current Events" went to press. Yet, how much we have left behind us since that day, when, as God's people, we worshipped in His house of prayer and were reminded from His Word that He is our refuge and our strength, a very present helper in trouble.

The year began with certain of our military leaders emphatically declaring that the present war would be over before we celebrated another New Year's Day, and when asked whether this meant Japan as well as Germany the answer was, "Yes, also the war with Japan". Others hastened to warn against such optimism. Now two months later the opinion of both the man in the street and the military leaders is that victory will not come yet in 1943. Recent events in Tunisia which are far from favorable for the United Nations seems to bear out this contention. Of course, it is the trust in the arm of flesh which makes man declare with confidence, "we will have the victory this year". He does not know, he cannot know whether this shall be the case. It seems ironical, to say the least, to maintain that we fight for religious freedom and then forget God in our waging of the battle.

When one stops to enumerate the many things which have filled those pages of history, when in his thoughts he turns back those pages and scans the headlines of the numerous paragraphs which go to make up this book of history, he truly is amazed at the speed at which events do transpire. As we turn the pages, we notice President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill met together at Casablanca. We are told that Hitler did not appear in person to speak at the Celebration of the birthday of his rise to power. Here we see a column telling us that shoes have been added to the list of rationed items.

The man-power problem bobs up here and there between other items. With saddened hearts we read that many thousands of our eighteen and nineteen year old youths are now in military training. In big letters we read that Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands and Southern New Guinea have been completely wrest-

ed from the Japanese. Distrust of Russia looms up again as is evidenced by a paragraph declaring that the United States and England have given up all extra-territorial rights in China. In small print so as not to cause too much shock and yet plainly enough to prepare us for what lies ahead we are warned of the price of an European invasion which is promised us for the year 1943. Russia appears in many a headline and we see that the Russian "steam-roller" has pushed the Germans back dangerously. At last reports they are within reach of the Dnepr river. Perhaps before this review is published, they will have crossed this river and have covered some two hundred to three hundred miles since the beginning of their offensive. Stalingrad is regained, Khorkov is again in Russian hands, Rostov is wrested from the Germans once more and the Caucasus are freed from German domination. It truly is astounding, especially as one looks back and views the German Army when it was at its peak and forced back its enemies almost at will. More recently we read of that strange figure of Indian Politics, Mohandas K. Ghandi. Now 73 years old he has begun another fast. At last reports his condition is very grave. These are only a few of the many things that have transpired in less than two months of time. It leaves one breathless. Consider just one of these events, the Roosevelt-Churchill meeting at Casablanca. Ten years ago such a meeting would have been well nigh impossible. Then it would have required weeks if not months to execute such a meeting. Slow travel by sea would have made it impossible, but the modern plane solved the problem.

The smallness of this world again is evidenced in the visit of Mme. Chiang Kai-Shek, the first day of China to our land to plead China's cause. It appears, too, that her pleas will be heeded, not for China's sake but for our own. Fear of Russia will be the one reason, and the desire to crush Japan for our own good, will be the other. Quotations from Raymond Clapper's column makes this very plain. He writes: "Any frank appraisal on the united nations must report some anxiety regarding Russia and uncertainty as to what her aloofness means". He has here in mind the fact that Premier Stalin would not appear at Casablanca nor at Khartoum in Central Africa which is much closer to Russia and a location chosen for Stalin's benefit, should he choose to meet with President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill. He continues in another paragraph: "We are not so likely to come into a conflict of interest with Russia in European matters as we are in Asia". In the next paragraph he states: "Secretary of the Navy Knox is urging that we insure ourselves bases across the Pacific to make sea or air attack against us from the west impossible in the future." Still later we read, "The fact that the airplane brings Siberia and American territory together makes collective security or the

alternative protection essential to us. Russia is developing Siberia industrially. At the end of the war, with Japan defeated, Russia will be the strongest Asiatic military power in the Pacific". Then he gives the interpretation of our interest in China. "That", he writes, "is in the background of our growing interest in China". And so it appears as though China's plea will be heeded.

What also is of interest to the child of God in current events is the trend of thought concerning peace aims and the post-war world, which are expressed in speech and writing. Surely the second beast of Revelation thirteen is busy today molding man's opinion and preparing for the reign of the Antichrist. A world-wide empire, as portrayed in the first beast which John saw coming out of the sea, seems much nearer its realization today than ever before. More and more the world speaks of this today. In the February Reader's Digest appears an article by Ely Culbertson entitled, "A System to Win This War—and the Peace to Come". In this article he proposes a world Federation consisting of eleven Regional Federations, each Regional Federation being an economic unit. Over this world Federation there would be a Federation president. Over this Federation he would also place a World Police Force to preserve the peace of this world Federation. What is striking in his article is his expressed fear of the coming of Gog and Magog against this World-Wide Empire should it once be established according to his plan. Of course, he makes no mention of Gog and Magog. His plan is devised entirely apart from the Scriptures, yet he alludes to this fact and proposes his plan to overcome this uprising of God and Magog. Let me quote what he writes: "The United States is now at the peak of its influence and power. Yet even when our present enemies have been defeated, greater dangers may arise in the future. Our strength will steadily decrease in relation to more populous nations as yet untouched by the machine age. In a generation or two, vast segments of the human race—China, India, the Moslem world—may also be industrialized. Then nothing will stand between them and world dominion but the knowledge and possession of machines. Who can say how and in what direction they will drive the machines? This war is our last chance to save ourselves by helping to found a world order that makes sense. With all our hearts and minds we must plan it now, and lay its cornerstones on the unshakeable granite of our will. For the first time in history our nation can do what no other nation has done before—declare lasting peace on the rest of the world."

This speaking and writing concerning such a kingdom surely is a forerunner of the kingdom itself, and we may add, no doubt, an immediate forerunner. Man's mind is not yet ready for such a plan although

he certainly desires the peace and prosperity it would mean for him. But in this day and age of radio magazines, press and the like, man's mind will soon be molded and prepared to establish just such a kingdom. But remember his number is six hundred and three-score and six, the number of man. *The Rest* he will not reach. It can be found not in the Antichrist but in *The Christ* who, in contrast to this antichrist calls, "Come unto *Me* all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."

J. A. H.

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## Freedom From Fear And Want

The United Nations are today engaged in an all out struggle of life and death with the Axis Powers to destroy German Nazism from the earth. All of us sincerely hope that ere long the bloody warfare may be brought to an end and the dominion of National Socialism in its present form banished as well as vanquished.

But will peace mean freedom from fear and want for all men in all lands? That is one of the peace aims pointedly agreed upon by the two heads of the governments of the United States and Great Britain. The sixth point of the joint declaration of Churchill and Roosevelt of 1941 reads, "Sixth, after the final destruction of Nazi tyranny, they hope to see established a peace which will afford to all nations the means of dwelling in safety within their own boundaries, and which will afford assurance that all men in all lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want." This sixth point of the eight point program expresses the real aim of the war—it is to destroy Nazi tyranny on the one hand, and on the other to create a better world in which all men in all lands may have assurance of living out their lives in freedom from fear and want.

Surely An Ordeal.

Freedom from fear and want for all men in all lands certainly is a high and attractive ideal. Apart now from the fact whether there is much possibility of anywhere nearly approximating the ideal, the ideal certainly is attractive and appealing. Nothing is said as to the manner in which this glorious reign of peace is to be brought about, it is true, yet the ideal presented is indeed attractive.

If it means anything it means that the United Nations hope to bring out of the post-war chaos a really better world, a world where force will be re-

placed by arbitration, wherein the nations will live "and let live," wherein all will have equal access to the raw materials of the world, wherein there will be food enough for all and freedom from the fears of new wars and economic collapse. It means that one nation will not be exploited by the other, one people not trampled upon by the other, one group not have less privilege than the other. If it means anything it holds before men the goal of freedom from the dread of conflict, freedom of religion, freedom to join a labor organization or not to do so; freedom to labor and earn one's daily bread, whether or not you belong to certain labor organizations or not. If it does not mean the later, there still will be fear and discrimination. It means all that and much more. Briefly, it holds forth the olive branch of peace and concord.

And it does that in respect to all nations. That means to the Axis Nations as well as all others. The peace then shall not discriminate against these Nations at all, in any way. They will be treated as equals and not as vanquished criminals. It means economic equality for India, for China, for the South American countries. It means equality for the Jew and all the oppressed minorities everywhere. All men in all lands have the assurance of living out their lives without freedom from fear and want.

Certainly that is in the light of the past a high ideal. It means a really New Deal for the world in general. It means the old methods of racial discrimination, of extra-territorial rights, of exploitation, of subjugation, will be things of the past. It means you and I as Christians will have the privilege of serving God according to the dictates of our conscience in the land or country, that we will be able to earn our bread honestly without affiliating with any worldly and ungodly labor organization without fear of losing our livelihood.

A high ideal to be sure.

How Will it Be Attained.

We should not allow ourselves to be misled by this glorious ideal. It is only an ideal, and there is little opportunity that anything much of it will be attained.

For, first of all, the program is entirely too idealistic. It does not reckon with history, with reality, as it is. It is Wilsonian, and I'm afraid as doomed to failure as that idealism was. Did not Churchill already state that he had not become prime minister to divide the British Empire? He meant, of course, that Britain's dominion over India would not be sacrificed to give India her right to self-rule. Besides, about the peace table also Russia, the Great Bear will be seated. And political spokesmen of Russia seem already to have definitely let it be known that Russia does not expect to restore Poland to its former position.

What about all the heterogeneous peoples in some of the occupied countries? What about Alsace-Lorraine, who shall have it?

Secondly, after this war is over we may be sure that Europe for one will be in a state of chaos. When the strong Nazi government is broken, there will be no strong governments in the occupied countries to take over. That will mean intestine war. Hunger and starvation stalk Europe already, and by the time the war is ended will be much worse. Who will be able to feed the starving hordes and put them on their feet? An ideal will not feed stomachs, and there will be little desire on the part of the peoples of the United Nations to lower their own standards of living (which already will be low) to be able to feed all of collapsed Europe. Hunger and starvation will stalk the land. The problems of reconstruction will thereby be magnified to the nth degree. Pentup hatreds will be let loose. Post-war Europe will be pandemonium; we will have a task on our hands to control things in our own land.

The undersigned has little hope even from a merely natural viewpoint of establishing in the world after the war a world-wide utopia. There will still be conflicting ideologies, economic pressures, national selfishness, and the complexes of fear, hate and revenge. And it is a serious question whether the conquerors will have the will to establish a fair, just and equitable peace.

I do not mean to say that some of the gross evils disturbing the international life of the past fifty years may not possibly be controlled. Undoubtedly. But other forces will even thereby be set at work to undermine anew international honor and peace.

To my mind we need no idealism but a realism such as Herbert Hoover suggested if there is to be a measure of peace.

Above All This

Above all this, we need to remember as Christians that no war changes men's hearts. Only the gospel of Christ can do so. And we have no illusions that mankind as a whole will adopt Christianity. Therefore we do not expect the golden age of peace except in the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Freedom from fear and want will only come in the day of Christ. Not by human effort, but as the gift of God. Only then will peace as a mighty river cover the earth as the waters cover the bottom of the sea.

That does not mean that Christians may assume the attitude that all is ill with the world and nothing can be done. Consequence of that attitude is anabaptistic separation. It is as fatal as if one would let criminals continue to run loose, unhampered, because the heart could not be changed anyway. Criminals must be put behind bars for the protection of

law abiding citizens. Of course. But it does mean that we do not imagine thereby we have once for all rid ourselves of criminality, or that we can improve the criminals by incarcerating them. Of course not. So too it is among the nations of the earth. Criminal nations must be punished, and their tyrannies suppressed. But we do not entertain any idealistic notions that thereby crime can be permanently stopped, or that we are able to so order society that the populace can henceforth live without fear of ever being attacked again. Nations will fight in the future. Certain evils may be suppressed but others will arise.

And, finally, even if the reign of anti-Christ were established at this time, there would indeed be a measure of peace and prosperity, but not for the people of God. That same time will know no room for them. It will be a time of tribulation. In the name of human welfare the faithful will be persecuted. It will be a fearful time for them, and a time of want — not able to buy or sell unless one has the mark of the beast.

We hope the peace that comes after the war will take away some of the underlying irritations existing in the world prior to this war. We hope the peace will not at once create a host of new irritants, as the Versailles peace did. We hope, but we doubt it very much. We see little hope for an era of freedom from fear and want; at least in our generation the opposite effects of the stress of waging this war will tend to feed the fires of fear and want, rather than quench them.

But we do have peace and freedom in our hearts. Through Jesus Christ the Lord. And we look for the Saviour to come from heaven to establish in its final glory peace forever. Then freedom from want and fear shall be realized, but then alone. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.

P. D. B.

## Jehovah's Witnesses

We have been hearing a great deal the last years of the sect known as Jehovah's witnesses. In many parts of the country they have been jailed, or attacked by mobs and stoned out of town. They have been denounced as fifth columnists, fascists, saboteurs, and the like.

Undoubtedly, most us, at one time or another, have met them. For it is quite a common experience to have them to come to your door, and to find them handing you a tract or a book with the slogan, "Millions now living will never die." Sometimes they will park a sound-truck outside your house, with a sermon issuing therefrom that can be heard all up and down the

block. Then again they will have a small Victrola, and will ask you if you would like to have them play a record for you, which record is usually a sermon by the late Judge Rutherford.

The sect which this movement represents has had several different names. Once they were known as Russellites. More recently they went under the name of the International Bible Students Association. But at present they are generally spoken of as Jehovah's witnesses. And they insist that Jehovah's witnesses have existed for 5000 years and claim that even the Bible makes mention of them. One of the passages they refer to in order to prove this is Is. 43:10, which reads in part: "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord."

However, more conservative accounts record that the society was founded by Pastor Charles T. Russell of Pittsburgh about 1876, when he and "a few Christian persons met together in a little town in Pennsylvania to consider the Scriptures relative to the coming of Christ Jesus and His Kingdom." Russell began to preach in 1878. His title of "Pastor" was won, not by the laying on of hands but by leg work. His zeal, so his followers boasted, took him farther than the journeyings of St. Paul and Bishop Ashbury combined. It is said that his writings were "more extensive than the combined works of St. Paul, St. John, Arius, Waldo, Wycliffe and Martin Luther — the six messengers to the Church who preceeded him." Up to the time of his death, his six major books had had a total distribution of nearly 15,000,000 copies. And his followers declared, "the place next to St. Paul in the gallery of fame as expounder of the Gospel of the Great Master will be occupied by Charles Taze Russell." The body of his beliefs came to be known as Russellism, and has been accepted as the truth by the organization and been the basis of its teaching ever since. Upon his death in 1916, Russell was succeeded by Judge Rutherford, the son of a farmer, who for a time practiced law in Boonsville, Missouri. Rutherford, who according to his opponents adopted his title of "Judge" after serving as a temporary judge for four days in a county circuit court, had complete charge of the organization until he died recently in his \$75,000 Spanish home in San Diego, California.

The size and scope of this organization must not be underestimated. It would require a colossal asylum to house all its members. The records show that two years ago the organization already had 45,000 active members, and 200,000 followers in the United States alone. And it was estimated that there were about 1,000,000, more throughout the world. Among these were thousands of natives in South Africa. In Brooklyn, N. Y., the witnesses own a seven-story apartment house and an eight-story printing plant, together worth more than \$1,000,000, where they turn out tons of literature every year. In this printing plant besides the

linotypes they have huge rotary presses and a book-binding plant which can turn out 20,000 bound books and 150,000 booklets daily. They have an assembly plant that turns out portable phonographs and sound-car equipment. And their busy shipping room sends out publications in eighty different languages. Some of their books have passed the 2,500,000 mark. Then, too, the society owns radio station WBBR in Brooklyn, where its orchestra and singers entertain between recorded lectures by Judge Rutherford. Once they had a nation-wide hookup of 53 stations at a reputed cost of \$50,000 per week, but their fierce attacks on religion brought so many complaints that the stations cut them off.

However, though they are a mighty organization, Jehovah's witnesses nevertheless are unpopular, and to many they are even obnoxious. There are various reasons for this. Firstly, they all condemn religion. With religion they mean the organized religions of the Protestants, Catholics, and Jews, whom they call religionists. And it is their belief that, "Religionists have an ambitious desire to rule the world in the place and stead of God and Christ. Religion is therefore a snare and racket, and the Lord's Kingdom will do away with religion and all fraudulent schemes." Organized religion according to them, "is the highest development of and the most seductive form of Satan's visible organization." It is spiritual Babylon. Hence they denounce all religion and shout, "Religion is a racket." They attack especially the Roman Catholic church. This church they believe will one day give rise to Antichrist. It is therefore not surprising that they are most severely persecuted in Catholic communities.

Moreover, they are also offensive because of their refusal to salute the flag, an act which they brand as being idolatry. They believe that the flag is only a symbol, and that to salute a symbol is the same as worshipping an image. They therefore refuse to salute any flag whether it be American, Communist, Nazi or Fascist. And they are so strongly opposed to it that they instruct their children to make the same refusal in school. Because of this Jehovah's witnesses are exile in Russia and in concentration camps in Germany, and in our own country, where the Supreme Court has ruled that the public schools have a right to demand the salute to the flag, they are hated and despised and often accused of being pro-Nazi.

Furthermore, they are absolute pacifists, and refuse to bear arms even in self-defense. They believe that all government today is of the Prince of darkness and that therefore all wars between these worldly governments are evil on both sides. Hence the only citizenship they acknowledge is in a heavenly country, and they refuse to participate in an ungodly war of an earthly country. Because of this stand

many of the sect's members are now serving prison terms. For often they fail to go through the trouble of finding out what their rights are under the law, and what procedure they should follow to secure them. Consequently, before they know it they find themselves lawbreakers, subject to punishment. Moreover because of their strong denunciation of other faiths they are very unpopular, especially in communities where religious loyalties are strong, and therefore in doubtful cases they do not get the breaks given to the more respectable pacifist sects.

For all these reasons they are an obnoxious sect, which is the object of contempt and violence, and must endure much suffering and hardship. However they bear these with joy and gladness. In them they think to see the sure proof of the genuineness of their faith and the certain evidence that they are walking in the footsteps of the Fathers. Yet, when we delve a little deeper into the object of their faith, one can only fear the worst. Then there is every reason to believe that all their suffering is vain and foolish. But first of all, they deny the Trinity. No mention is made of the Holy Spirit. And Christ, though He is the first begotten of the Father, is not God but merely one who is higher than the angels and is now only a spiritual influence. He was a created spirit and in His incarnation was only a perfect man. After His crucifixion He ceased to be human and became again a spirit. He did not rise from the tomb; the disposition of His body is not known, though it probably was dissolved into gasses or was supernaturally slipped away and is being preserved as a corpse until God chooses to produce it. Hence they have no Gospel.

Then, too, they have an unscriptural view of the return of Christ and of the life that is to follow. According to them Christ already returned in the year 1914. Up to that time the world was Satan's and he ruled it. Everything made by man, from that date back to Noah, was not God's but Satan's handiwork. But 1914 ushered in a new era. Invisibly in that year Christ returned to earth. Satan, for the first time since the flood, was challenged. To date, to be sure, he has not been dislodged, but Christ is doing His best and Satan's ousting is at hand. They came to this peculiar view through the prediction of Chas. Russell that in that year Christ would surely return. But since the year ended without a visible return of Christ, Rutherford concluded that Russell must have meant an invisible return. In 1920 Rutherford also turned prophet and predicted that Abraham, Isaac and other prophets would return in 1925. Since then no dates were set, but Rutherford said merely that Judgment Day is coming very soon and that King David, Isaac, Samuel and the other prophets may be expected to come any day to assist the Lord in establishing His Kingdom. With this in view he had the \$75,000 Spanish home built in Calif. Thoughtfully he had the



grounds landscaped with date and palm trees so that these princes will feel right at home.

And they maintain that when Christ finally comes all will be destroyed in the terrible battle of Armageddon except Jehovah's witnesses. However, after the battle has ceased all will be brought back to life and the wicked will then have "a second chance to choose righteousness." Those who reject it will then be destroyed by the "second death" with which they mean total annihilation. But those who expect it will then live forever, although their glory will be inferior to that of Jehovah's witnesses. Heaven will then be on earth and its joys will consist in this that we will have heavenly automobiles, airplanes and all the other necessities and luxuries of the temporal world.

And in order to be able to apparently somewhat maintain all this they have their own revised version of the Bible supplied them by Judge Rutherford. Their Bible is called the diaglot, which means two languages. On the one side is the Greek and on the other the translation of Rutherford. All passages contrary to their belief are brazenly omitted.

Surely they are a sign of the times. Watch then and be sober.

P. V.

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#### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On February 20, our beloved parents,

JOHN WENSINK

and

MRS. J. WENSINK—Schinkel

celebrated their 30th Wedding Anniversary.

As children we are grateful to our covenant God for having spared them for each other and for us. As the Lord blessed them with His sustaining grace in the years past, both in joy and sorrow, our prayer is that He may continue to do so in years to come.

Their grateful children,

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Wensink

Mr. and Mrs. Albert Schmidt

Mr. and Mrs. Allen Lubben

Mr. and Mrs. Gerad Mesman

Henrietta

Gerrit

Edgerton, Minnesota.

#### GOD THE FATHER

In God the Father I believe,  
Who heaven and earth did frame,  
By His almighty Word; His praise  
And glory to proclaim.

I do believe in Jesus Christ,  
God's only Son, our Lord,  
Begotten from eternity,  
The everlasting Word.

I in the Holy Ghost believe,  
A Person, true, and One  
In essence, power, eternity,  
With Father and with Son.

An holy catholic Church I own,  
The heirs of heaven designed;  
By union all to Christ their head,  
And one another joined.

Redemption through the blood of Christ  
I heartily embrace;  
A full forgiveness of my sins,  
The gift of sovereign grace.