

THE STANDARD

Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XIX

MAY 1, 1943

NUMBER 15

MEDITATIE

Hij Is Opgestaan

En laat na den sabbat, als het begon te lichten, tegen den eersten dag der week, kwam Maria Magdalena, en de andere Maria, om het graf te bezien. En ziet, er geschiedde een groote aardbeving; want een engel des Heeren, nederdalende uit den hemel, kwam toe, etc. Matt. 28:1-8.

Een wonderlijk antwoord!

Zoo toch lezen we hier in den tekst: Maar de engel, antwoordende. . . .

Neen, uitgesproken was de vraag niet, waarop dit woord van den engel bij het ledige graf van den Heiland als antwoord most dienen.

Maar die vrouwen, die zeer vroeg in den morgen zich hadden opgemaakt om het graf te bezien, om zich te vergewissen, dat alles in orde was met het graf van hun geliefden Meester, en tevens om met de specerijen, die ze hadden bereid, het lichaam van Jezus te zalven, die vrouwen, zooals ze daar bij het ledige graf stonden, waren zelf één groot vraagteken!

Alles in haar, alles in hare houding, riep om een antwoord!

Ze zochten, en ze vonden niet, wat ze zochten!

Ze wilden het lichaam van den Heiland met specerijen bereiden, en er was geen lichaam.

Ze waren verbaasd, twijfelmoedig, bevreesd. . . .

Alles getuigde van de ééne groote vraag in hare ziel, de vraag aangaande Jezus van Nazareth, die gekruisigd was!

Och, 't was geen wonder, dat deze vrouwen verbaasd en twijfelmoedig waren over hetgeen ze hier bij het graf in den hof van Jozef ontmoetten! Ze zochten immers zoo geheel iets anders dan hetgeen ze hier von-

den! Ze waren, in den vroegen morgen van den eersten dag der week in de verkeerde richting gegaan, om te zoeken wat ze, naar het woord, dat Jezus herhaaldelijk gesproken had, niet konden verwachten te vinden. Herhaaldelijk had de Heiland het Zijnen discipelen immers voorzeggd, dat Hij moest worden overgeleverd aan de overpriesters en de Schriftgeleerden, en door dezen aan de Heidenen; dat Hij veel van hen moest lijden; dat Hij moest sterven, en dat Hij ten derden dage zou opstaan uit de dooden. Zelfs had hij hun nadrukkelijk beloofd, dat Hij hun zou voorgaan naar Galilea, en dat ze Hem aldaar zouden zien. Doch ze hadden dit woord niet kunnen verstaan. Het paste niet in hun systeem van denken. Zoo geheel andere beschouwing hadden zij van den Messias, en van den weg waarlangs Hij in Zijne heerlijkheid zou moeten ingaan. Wees u genadig, Heer! dat zal u geenszins geschieden!

En zoo kwam het, dat ook deze vrouwen geen plaats hadden gehad voor het vreeselijke kruis in hare beschouwing van den Meester!

En zoo kwam het, dat de verwachting, die naar het woord des Heeren op dezen eersten dag der week, de "derde dag," in hare ziel moest leven, zelfs niet bij haar opkwam.

En zoo kwam het, dat ze op dezen dag scheef tegenover de werkelijkheid stonden: den Levende bij de dooden zochten!

Want zalven wilden ze het lichaam van Jezus! Dit reeds toonde, dat ze aan geen opstanding ten derden dage dachten. Een laatsten dienst meenden ze te moeten bewijzen aan den Meester, Dien ze immers ook vóór Zijn lijden en sterven gevolgd waren, om Hem naar Zijn aardsche verschijning te dienen en te verzorgen. En wel hadden deze vrouwen, Maria Magdalena, en Maria de moeder van Jakobus, en Salome, en nog anderen, op dien droeven Vrijdagavond bij de stille begrafenisstoet behoord, en hadden ze tegenover het graf gezeten, toen Jozef en Nikodemus het lichaam van Jezus in het graf wegborgen; maar dat ook het werk der zalving volbracht was, hadden ze

niet gezien. En zoo waren ze dan, inplaats van naar Galilea, naar het ledige graf getogen. En zoo bedoelden ze dan, inplaats van met vreugde den opgestanen Heiland te begroeten, den dooden Jezus een laatsten dienst te doen. . . .

Zoo kwamen ze bij het graf. . . .

Niet Maria Magdalena. Zij was niet meer bij de vrouwen, toen de engel haar het eerste opstandings-evangelie verkondigde.

Want onderweg hadden ze de ernstige vraag besproken, wie toch wel den steen van het graf zou wentelen. En terwijl ze nog een oplossing zochten voor dit metterdaad moeilijke probleem, hadden ze van verre het graf reeds gezien, en tot hare verbazing bemerkte de steen reeds van het graf gewenteld was.

Het probleem was dus opgelost, doch slechts om de vrouwen twijfelmoedig te maken, en verbaasd.

Wat mocht toch dit zijn?

Maar Maria Magdalena had op deze vraag reeds een antwoord gevonden: wat anders kon dit beteekenen, dan dat men het lichaam van Jezus had gestolen? En op hare schreden terugkeerend, zonder verder onderzoek, had ze deze boodschap den discipelen gebracht!

Doch de andere vrouwen waren bij het graf gekomen.

En daar stonden ze nu: verbaasd, twijfelmoedig, zoekend hetgeen niet was, met hare specerijen bij het ledige graf!

Een groot vraagteeken!

En de engel antwoordt!

Hij is hier niet!

Want Hij is opgestaan!

Wat zoekt gij den Levende bij de dooden?

Als bewaker van het ledige graf, dat immers als stille getuige van de wonderlijke opstanding des Heeren allereerst moest dienen, en daarom niet mocht worden geschonden, totdat de "plaats, waar Jezus gelegen had" en de wonderlijke linnen doeken geinspecteerd waren geworden, was de engel zeer vroeg in den morgen neder gekomen van den hemel, en had den steen van het graf gewenteld. . . .

En zat op denzelfen!

Wonderlijke handeling! En vreemd verhaal!

't Gaat al maar over de omstandigheden van des Heilands opstanding. Geen woord wordt er gezegd van den Heiland Zelf, noch van Zijne opstanding. Wij zouden verwacht hebben, dat het verhaal ons juist van Hem en van Zijne heerlijke opstanding gesproken zou hebben. En als we lezen, dat de engel den steen van het graf wentelt, staan we in onze verbeelding ademloos, met gespannen verwachting daarbij: nu komt Hij, die de Opstanding en het Leven is, immers vol heerlijkheid en majesteit uit het donkere graf te voorschijn!

Niets van dat alles!

Daar is een groote aarbeving, daar is een blinkende

en schitterende hemelgezant, daar zijn wachters, die verschrikt op de vlucht slaan, daar is een handeling van den engel: hij wentelt den steen van het graf, en zit op denzelfen! Maar van Hem, en van Zijn majestueuze, triomphantelijke uittocht uit Hades, lezen we niets!

Teleurstellend?

Maar zochten wij dan misschien, terwijl we daar in onze verbeelding bij het graf stonden en wachtten op de glansrijke verschijning van den Heiland, evenals de vrouwen, ook nog den Levende bij de dooden? Zijn we misschien teleurgesteld, niet omdat het feit der opstanding van den Heiland minder heerlijk is dan we mochten verwachten, maar omdat onze verwachting van die opstanding niet in overeenstemming was met de heerlijke werkelijkheid er van? Is onze teleurstelling misschien daaraan toe te schrijven, dat ook wij nog een aardsche, en vleeschelijke verwachting hebben van het koninkrijk der hemelen, en daarom tevens een aardsche beschouwing hadden van Zijne opstanding?

Och, laat dan toch het woord des engels in onze ooren ingaan, en eene plaats vinden in het diepst van ons hart: Hij is hier niet!

Want Hij is opgestaan!

Maar wat dan? Zoudt ge Hem dan toch hier willen zoeken, en Hem straks een maaltijd willen bereiden, een vreugdemaal op aarde, om Hem naast Lazarus te plaatsen en te bewonderen? Hij is hier niet! Neen, Hij is niet hier in dit graf: ziet slechts de plaats, waar men Hem gelegd had! Maar ziet dan nog eens naar die plaats, die wonderlijke plaats, en let nauwkeurig op de positie van die linnen doeken, en vooral ook van dien zweetdoek, dien men om Zijn hoofd had gewonden, en vergewis u dan van het feit, dat Hij in geen enkelen zin des woords *hier* is. Och, ware Hij weer hier terug gekomen, ge zoudt Hem ongetwijfeld wel uit het graf hebben kunnen zien verrijzen, zooals men Lazarus uit het graf zag opkomen. Doch nu: Hij is hier niet: niet in dat graf, niet in den dood; ook niet weer met ons midden in den dood, zooals Lazarus weer midden in den dood lag, toen hij uit het graf werd geroepen; niet meer in de sfeer van ons sterfelijk, verderfelijk, natuurlijk bestaan; niet meer hier, waar wij Hem kunnen volgen, met Hem kunnen wandelen, eten en drinken. Want immers van al dat aardsche, verderfelijke, zwakke, sterfelijke is dat graf symbool, en ook het zekere en eenige einde!

Zoolang als we hier zijn, zijn we wezenlijk in de macht van het graf!

Midden in den dood!

Maar Hij is hier niet!

Want Hij is opgestaan! En opstanding is immers geen terugkeer naar de dooden, maar eene verrijzenis uit de dooden! Hij is doorgestaan! Hij ging in den dood, en ook in dat graf in, om dien dood en dat graf te overwinnen! En ge kunt dat graf niet overwinnen. door er uit terug te keeren: ge moet er door! En Hij

ging door! Van *hier* ging hij door het graf naar het *daar* des levens! Van het sterfelijke *hier* naar het onsterfelijke *daar*, van het verderfelijke *hier* naar het onverderfelijke *daar*, van het zwakke *hier* naar het in-kracht-zijnde *daar*, van het in-oneer-zijnde *hier* naar het heerlijke *daar*, van het natuurlijke *hier* naar het geestelijke *daar*, van het aardsche *hier* naar het hemelsche *daar*!

Want de eerste mensch Adam is geworden tot eene levende ziel, de laatste Adam tot een levendmakenden geest!

De eerste mensch is uit de aarde aardsch.

Maar de tweede mensch is de Heere uit den hemel!

En zooals wij het beeld des aardschen gedragen hebben, zoo zullen wij ook het beeld des hemelschen dragen: *daar*, waar Hij is!

Want Hij is hier niet, Gode zij dank!

En Hij moet hier ook nooit weer komen!

Want Hij is opgestaan! En Hij moet ons allen tot Zich trekken!

O, heerlijke opstanding!

Gezegende opstanding!

Ten derden dage is Hij opgestaan!

Immers, zoo had reeds de profeet van ouds gesproken: "Hij heeft verscheurd" en Hij zal ons genezen; Hij heeft geslagen, en Hij zal ons verbinden. Hij zal ons na twee dagen levend maken; op den derden dag zal Hij ons doen verrijzen, en wij zullen voor Zijn aangezicht leven."

Er is een dag van verscheurd en geslagen worden, de dag van het sterven in het eerste paradijs, óók de dag van Golgotha, de dag van het kruis; en er is een dag van het midden in den dood liggen, de dag van het heden, van deze wereld, óók de dag van Christus' zijn in den Sheool; en er is een dag van verrijzenis, de derde dag, de dag, van Christus' opstanding, de sabbat, de dag der zalige opstanding en van den eeuwigen sabbat!

Gezegende derde dag!

Wel moge de aarde beven, als teeken van het gescheurd worden van den dood en van het graf, en óók van het splijten van alle bewegelijke dingen in de toekomst van dezen opgestanen Heere. Want door de opstanding van den Heer uit de dooden gaan de oude dingen voorbij, gaat de "wereld" ten onder, en worden alle dingen nieuw. Het leven, neen, de Levende breekt door den dood heen, Gods wereld, de nieuwe wereld, breekt door de oude wereld van zonde en vloek en dood heen!

Wel moge de vijand sidderend vluchten!

Want immers ook thans is de macht des vijands vertegenwoordigd, en komt ze zelfs het allereerst in aanraking met het wonder der opstanding, in de doodenwacht, die om het graf gelegd is. O, dwaasheid der ongerechtigheid! Men had het graf goed verzegeld! Een verzegelde keten verbond waar-

schijnlijk de steen aan de rots, waarin het graf was uitgehouwen. En van den stadhouder had men een wacht van Romeinsche soldaten geeischt, om het graf te bewaken, en te voorkomen, dat het lichaam van Jezus uit het graf zou worden verwijderd. En zoo bewaakt de vijand het graf van den Levende! Alsof het ook maar iets kon baten, dat men de wacht hield bij den aardschen ingang van het graf, en alsof de macht der duisternis het zou kunnen voorkomen, dat Hij, Die de opstanding en het leven is, aan de hemelsche en eeuwige zijde in heerlijkheid uit het graf verrijst!

Maar ze werden zeer verschrikt. . . als dooden!

En wel mogen all vijanden van den gekruisigden Christus beven, want Zijne opstanding verkondigt hunnen ondergang!

En wel mag Gods volk jubelen op dezen derden dag: "Vreest gijlieden niet, want ik weet, dat gij zoekt Jezus, Die gekruisigd was!"

Hij is opgestaan!

En Zijne opstanding is onze eeuwige rechtvaardigmaking!

Immers is het *Zijne* opstanding. Het is niet maar *iemand*, een zeker mensch, die op den derden dag opstond uit de dooden, maar *Hij*. En Hij is de van eeuwigheid van God verordeneerde Christus, de Eerstgeborene aller creature, het Hoofd des lichaams, Zijne Kerk, in Wien God ons heeft verkoren van voor de grondlegging der wereld tot de eeuwige zaligheid in de nieuwe hemelen en de nieuwe aarde, waarin gerechtigheid woont. En Hij is het, die aan de spitse van Zijne Hem van den Vader gegevene Kerk trad in de ure des oordeels, Die alle onze zonden en alle onze krankheden op Zich nam, Die zonde voor ons gemaakt werd, en Die met onze ongerechtigheden in de ure des oordeels vrijwilliglijk in onzen dood inging, zich vernederde tot in de allerdiepste versmaadheid en angst der hel, en al de violen van Gods toorn over Zich liet uitgieten. Het is Hij, Die, nadat Hij was ingedaald in de diepte der hel, waar Hij Zich van Zijn God verlaten wist, uitriep: "Het is volbracht!"

En Zijne opstanding is *opstanding*, ja, want Hij is de Zone des levenden Gods.

Hij had macht Zijn leven af te leggen, en Hij had macht het wederom te nemen.

Maar Zijne opstanding is ook *opwekking*. En als zoodanig is ze antwoord van den Vader op Zijn: Het is volbracht! Ja, waarlijk, het is volbracht! De schuld is betaald, de macht der zonde is gebroken. Hij is opgewekt om onze rechtvaardigmaking!

Daarom is Zijne opstanding ook ons leven! Hij is de Eerstgeborene uit de dooden. Hij bereidde den weg voor Zijne broederen. Straks volgen ze Hem in de eindelijke opstanding in onverderfelijkheid!

Dood! waar is uw prikkel? Hel! waar is uw overwinning?

Gode zij dank!

H. H.

The Standard Bearer

Semi-Monthly, except Monthly in July and August

Published by

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

EDITOR — Rev. H. Hoeksema

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

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

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

Subscription \$2.50 per year

Entered as second class mail at Grand Rapids, Michigan

EDITORIALS

Common Grace

VIII

We must still call the attention of our readers to Van Til's "As If" philosophy. It is, according to him, especially with a view to the practical cooperation between the Christian and the non-Christian in this world, that we have need of an "as if," and we actually proceed on its tacit assumption and presupposition.

We cannot quote here all that Van Til has to say on this subject. Yet, before we discuss this notion, we will let him present his ideas in his own words.

Writes he on p. 18:

"On what basis then can we speak of cooperation between believer and unbeliever? It is on the ground that both have all facts in common objectively. Both deal with the same universe. Both are meant in the counsel of God to cooperate in bringing out the meaning of history. The believer's affirmation of God is to be worked out in contrast with the unbeliever's denial of God. The unbeliever's negation of God is to be worked out in contrast with the believer's affirmation of God. If this is to be accomplished "cooperation" between believer and unbeliever is unavoidable. Believer and unbeliever may in this sense be said to vie with one another in bringing out the glory of God. In the second place, since believer and non-believer have nothing in common subjectively the nature of the cooperation between them must be an 'as if' cooperation. That is, it must be an 'as if' cooperation of the Christian sort for the believer. Because of his ultimate scepticism the non-believer, as noted, virtually holds that all opinions are equally valuable. He therefore thinks, theoretically at least, of the believer's opinion as being on a par with every other opinion, and he is willing to cooperate on this basis. Yet, when, and to the extent that he becomes epistemologically self-conscious he will no longer cooperate. He may even then cooperate hypocritically but this is because he, as yet, lacks the power of oppression. The believer, on the other hand, knowing that he has the truth and that the non-believer builds on the lie, acts on an "as if" basis with the non-believer in order that the glory of God may be advanced. He knows he must be in the world with those who are 'of the world.' He also knows that while in the world with those that are of the world he must himself not become of the world. He is a soldier of the cross who must fight during the whole course of his life on earth. Every soldier must sleep. All the soldiers

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must be fed and clothed. Thus there is a legitimate while necessary abstraction from the believer's duty to make God and His Christ known to all men everywhere, all the time. It is for the very purpose of fulfilling his duty of glorifying God that he must act 'as if' there were certain facts and laws that he has in common with the unbeliever."

We may pause here a moment, in order to remind ourselves how we always presented the matter of which Van Til here speaks. It is evident that he is dealing here with the antithesis. This antithesis, according to him, results from the fact that believers and unbelievers in this world have all things in common objectively, but subjectively have nothing in common. And this antithesis will become manifest more sharply according as believer and unbeliever become more self-conscious epistemologically. I cannot agree with this presentation of the matter. The problem of what believer and unbeliever have in common cannot be correctly stated in terms derived from the relation of the objective and subjective, but must be presented in the light of the realities of "nature" and sin and grace. The believer and unbeliever have all things in common, objectively and subjectively, except grace. They are in and deal with the same world, and they have the same means and powers, the same faculty of knowledge, the same sensation, perception, imagination, reason. But on the basis of the sameness they stand in antithesis to each other in a spiritual, ethical sense, the unbeliever living his whole life in this world from the principle of sin, which is enmity against God, while the believer lives in principle from grace, the love of God in Christ Jesus his Lord.

Perhaps, I do not understand Van Til's last remark in the above paragraph. How the fact that "every soldier must sleep," and that "all the soldiers must be fed and clothed," can possibly abstract from the believer's duty to "make God and His Christ known to all men everywhere, all the time," I fail to see. Does Van Til mean that the necessity for the Christian in this world to maintain his earthly subsistence and his position in the world, absolves him to an extent from his obligation always and everywhere to live from the principle of regeneration, and gives him the right really to live in cooperation with the unbeliever "as if" he is in spiritual agreement with him? I cannot believe that he can mean this. If he does I most emphatically deny the truth of this position. If he means something else, the statement is in need of some elucidation.

But let us quote a little more on this subject. On pp. 18, 19 we read:

"We shall therefore need first an 'as if' for daily life. When I say the grass is green and my non-believing neighbor says the grass is green we must act 'as if' both meant the same thing. Interpretatively considered my neighbor and I mean quite different

matters. As an unbeliever he means that in a Chance universe, in which this chance-born thing called human rationality thinks it finds or constructs certain 'as if' universals, there is such a thing as he sees fit to call color, and there is a certain specimen of this color before him now which, in distinction from other such specimens, he chooses to call green. As a believer I mean that in a God-created universe I, as God's rational creature, observe a God-created fact in relation to a God-created law. I must seek and have sought on other occasions to convince my neighbor that his interpretation is impossible and that mine alone gives meaning to this thing we both call green. But for purposes of daily life we must both abstract from our interpretative endeavors and speak and 'act if' we meant the same thing when we say the grass is green. He needs me and I need him even in order that our mutually contradictory interpretations of life may be brought into being. And as I know that his interpretation, that is his negation of God ultimately must become subordinate to my affirmation of God, my 'as if' treatment of my interpretative opponent is in obedience to the command that I must do all things self-consciously to the glory of God. My 'as if' treatment of my opponent is no lapse into neutrality. It is a self-consciously interpretative procedure on my part."

This is a rather interesting paragraph, which is worthy of some careful analysis. And analyzing it, I come to the following observations:

1. That Van Til and his unbelieving neighbor do not act on an "as if" basis when they say "the grass is green," but that they very really do mean the same thing, as long as neither of them says any more. They look at the same grass, with similar eyes, similar sensations and perceptions. There is no "as if" about this at all. In fact, if this were not the case, there would be no possibility of conversing about this fact with each other. The very fact that Van Til on a fresh spring morning in May, and after a copious shower of rain, steps out of his house, and finding his sceptic philosopher of a neighbor also outdoors, says to him: "How green the grass is this morning," is sufficient evidence of his conviction that his neighbor is capable of seeing exactly the same thing. As long, then, as Van Til and his agnostic of a neighbor say no more than "the grass is green," they are mutually confident that they mean the same thing. They do not act on an "as if" basis at all in the making of this general statement.

2. Of course, as soon as they say more, they differ. But the difference is again not one of mere philosophical interpretation of a fact, as Van Til presents the matter. The difference is spiritual, ethical: it is a matter of sin and grace. Even for the agnostic neighbor "the invisible things of God, even from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal

power and Godhead." God speaks even through the green grass, and it is a speech that also addresses itself to the non-believing neighbor of Van Til's. But the unbeliever holds the truth in unrighteousness. He says in his heart that there is no God. He opposes the speech of God. And over against this wicked attitude of the ungodly, Van Til rightly witnesses of the Word of God. He does not oppose his interpretation to the philosophy of the unbelieving neighbor, but he witnesses of the Word of God as coming through the green grass, and that, too, in the light of Scripture. The moment, then, Van Til and his neighbor say *more* than simply "the grass is green," they are opponents, not as two coolly differing philosophers, but as representatives of the thesis and the antithesis, God and the devil, Christ and antichrist, light and darkness. They mean the same thing no longer. Neither can they act here on an "as if" basis. Certainly Van Til does not mean that he may leave the impression ever that he agrees with his agnostic neighbor.

When, therefore, both say "the grass is green" they say and mean the same thing: there is no need of an "as if."

When they say more, they agree no longer, and may not act "as if" they meant the same thing.

The real question, then, is whether the Christian may ever simply say that the grass is green, leaving God out of his expressed thought.

H. H.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On May 7, 1943, our dear parents:

MR. JOHN CAMMENGA

and

MRS. JOHN CAMMENGA nee Beatrice Bergsma

hope to commemorate their 45th wedding anniversary.

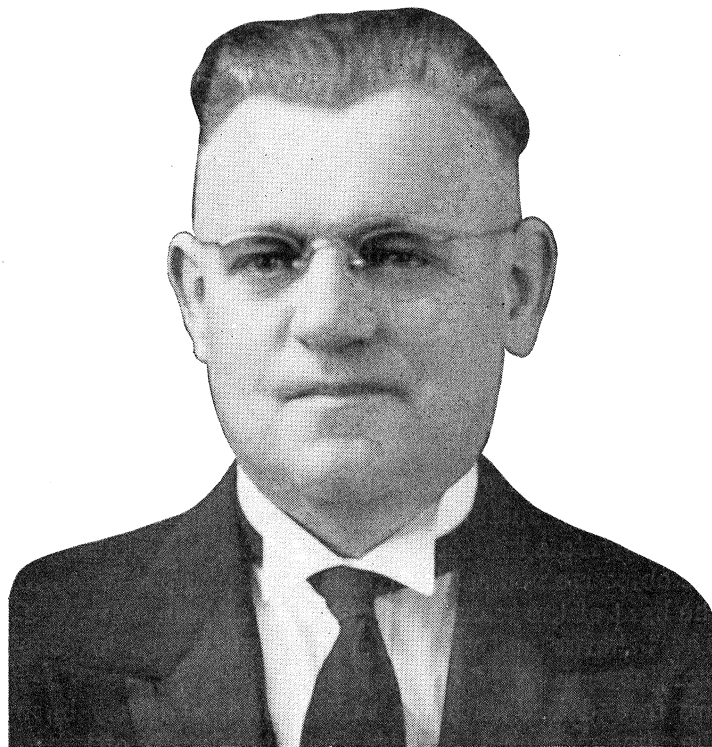
We thank our Heavenly Father who spared them for us these many years, and for the christian home which we might enjoy through them.

As children we extend to them our sincere congratulations. Our prayer is that the Lord may continue to bless them throughout the further part of this life; and may they always experience the joy and peace which is the heritage of them that love God.

Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Boerkoel
Mr. and Mrs. J. Cammenga Jr.
Rev. and Mrs. A. Cammenga
Mr. and Mrs. P. Cammenga
S. T. Cammenga
14 grandchildren

Open house afternoon and evening, May 7th, at 1036 Logan St., Grand Rapids, Mich.

Death Is Gain



To die is gain. Phil. 1:21b.

Funeral services for our deceased brother, the Rev. Wm. Verhil, were held in Grand Rapids in the Fuller Ave. Church, on April 7th. From the West, where also services had been held on April 5, there were present two delegates from the consistory of the Protestant Reformed Church of Edgerton, Minn., and the four pastors of our churches in Sioux and Lyon Counties, the Revs. A. Cammenga, J. Blankespoor, M. Gritter, and P. Vis, who also served as pallbearers. April 7, was the day for the meeting of Classis East of our churches, and the Classis had decided in its morning session to attend the funeral services in a body, and also to follow the procession to the cemetery. A large audience had congregated in the auditorium of the Fuller Ave. Church to pay their last respects to the departed and to express their sympathy with the bereaved.

In the church the Rev. G. M. Ophoff and the Rev. H. Hoeksema officiated, the former leading in prayer and in the reading of a portion of Scripture, the latter preaching the sermon. The interment took place in the Garfield Cemetery, where the Rev. B. Kok read a few passages from the Word of God, and led in a final word of prayer.

At the request of the delegates of the consistory of Edgerton, I here reproduce, partly from a few notes, partly from memory, as nearly as possible the sermon delivered on that occasion. I spoke approximately as follows:

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ:

Mrs. Verhil and daughters, brothers and sisters of the deceased, relatives;

Delegates from Edgerton;

Friends gathered with us:

First of all, I wish to express a word of heartfelt sympathy to you all in your present sorrow and bereavement. Our hearts are overwhelmed because of what the Lord has done to us. My sympathy especially to you, Mrs. Verhil, and Marie, who bemoan the loss of a beloved husband and father; and to you, delegates of the Consistory of Edgerton, who have been deprived of a beloved and faithful pastor. We all deeply feel your loss, which is also our own, the more so because the departure of our brother was so sudden and unexpected that we can hardly realize that he is no more with us, and it is as yet difficult to adapt ourselves to the new way in which the Lord now leads us. Our hearts are troubled and filled with grief; and the consciousness of the loss we have sustained is very vivid in our present experience.

Such is our experience at this moment.

We have lost a husband, a father, a brother, a pastor, a fellow laborer in the Lord, a faithful friend, and the keen sense of our loss is uppermost in our minds and hearts.

But you have not congregated here in order to be reminded of your bereavement and loss. Of this you have no need whatever. You have not gathered here on this occasion and at this place in order to have me analyze your experience, and emphasize your great loss. That would be no help of comfort to you: it would only lead you more deeply into your present sorrow. There is nothing in all our present experience that can lift us up. Nor is there real help and consolation in human sympathy, good though it be in circumstances like these to feel the sympathetic throb of loving hearts. In the expression of our sympathy we descend to the level of your sorrow and death, as the very word denotes, but from there we cannot raise you to a higher level. Expressing to you our sympathy, we can but declare that with you we, too, lie in the midst of death, and our experience is the same as yours. And what help is there in that? No, you are looking for something else. In your deepest heart you desire a word of contradiction. You are looking for someone that will contradict all your present experience, all your loss and sorrow, and by contradicting it lift you out of the depths of your sorrow to the heights of a new and transcendent joy, out of your darkness to the light of life, out of your present experience of loss and defeat to the assurance of gain and victory.

Yet, who will speak that word to you? Who would have the courage to contradict your present experi-

ence of sorrow and say that there is reason to rejoice? Who would dare to contradict the testimony of your present experience, and claim that there is no loss, but only gain in the death of the Rev. Verhil? Surely, we feel that here the word of man is vain. If mere man should attempt to contradict your loss and the testimony of your tears, his word could only be received as idle boast. We must have more than the word of man: we need the Word of the God, and that, too, the Word of the God of our salvation, the glad and mighty Word of the gospel. It always contradicts our experience as here we lie in the midst of death, and by contradicting it, lifts us up, and gives us the victory of faith. According to our experience we are guilty and damnable; but the Word of the gospel boldly contradicts and declares us righteous before God and objects of His blessed favor. All our experience loudly proclaims that we are corrupt, dead in sin; but the Word of God unhesitatingly contradicts and calls us saints in Christ Jesus, holy and beloved. In our experience we lie in the midst of death, but the Word of the gospel again contradicts and assures us that we are raised with Christ, that we are set with Him in heavenly places, and that we have life eternal. And so, our present experience, as we are gathered here on this sad occasion, witnesses loudly and persistently that the death of our brother is a great loss, and nothing but loss; but once more the Word of the gospel opposes to the end the testimony of our experience, contradicts it till it must be completely silenced, and declares: "to die is gain." And because I know that you need, and are looking for, a word of contradiction that is powerful to raise you up out of the present depths of your experience, it is to this Word of God from Phil. 1:21, that I would like to call your attention.

These words occur in a context in which the apostle is writing about himself. Just as we would write to friends from a far country all about ourselves, trusting that our friends would be interested to learn about our way and circumstances; so the apostle Paul informs the Philippians about his personal condition, especially since they know that he is in prison. Yet, he is not writing about those things that concern him as a man, of his human experience, for then he might well have presented a gloomy picture of himself, and have found many reasons to complain and to seek the sympathy of the Philippians. For he is in jail. He is shackled. He cannot move freely, and labor in the gospel. Yet, he writes: all is well! He views all things, even his imprisonment, in the light of his being an apostle, and a servant of Jesus Christ. And looking at himself and his circumstances in that light, the main question is not: what may become of him? but rather: what becomes of the name and the gospel of Jesus Christ? And thus he writes "that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel."

His bonds are gain! For that his bonds are *in Christ*, that he does not suffer as an evil doer, but for the sake of the gospel, is manifest to all, both in the palace and other places. Moreover, other brethren have taken heart from the bonds of the apostle to preach the gospel more boldly than heretofore. Some indeed, preach that gospel out of contention, out of spite to the apostle, others in love and sincerity. But the gospel is preached, nevertheless; and in this the apostle rejoices. And, as to himself, he is confident that, whether in life or in death, Christ shall be glorified in him. And that is the only matter that counts. By life or by death, Christ will be magnified. If he lives, he will continue to speak boldly; if he dies, he will joyfully lay down his life. For to him to live is Christ, to die is gain! And in that consciousness he would be able to glorify Christ even in his death as a martyr.

Our experience, our present experience, and all our experience always, must naturally contradict this bold assurance of the apostle: "to die is gain." Ah, but what else is death than sheer loss? Death is the dissolution of the earthly house of our present tabernacle, and with the dissolution of that earthly house we lose all! It is through and in that earthly house that we exist and live, that we have our contact with the world about us, that we hear and see and taste and touch, that we think and plan and long and desire, that we speak and act, that we occupy our position in the world, in the home, in society, in the church, that we are connected to those about us with ties of love and friendship. And in death, the dissolution of our earthly house, we lose all this! We live no more! We hear and see no more, we taste and touch no more, we speak and act no more, and all the precious ties of love and friendship are severed. O, when someone dies that is dear to us, and that occupied a large place in our life, we usually think of the loss from *our* viewpoint. In the present bereavement *we* lost a husband and father, a pastor and friend, a beloved brother. Yes, but consider what he that departed from us lost! He alone lost everything: wife, daughter, brothers and sisters, friends and relatives, his flock as a pastor, his position and calling as minister, his place in our churches,—he lost it all! All our present experience loudly testifies that his death is a tremendous loss, that death always is a loss and nothing else!

O, indeed it is! And if you speak of mere *man*, of man as he is dead in trespasses and sins, as he lies in the midst of death and does not and cannot possibly see the way out, and then insist that death is nothing but a loss to him, the apostle, the Word of God in general, will fully agree with you. Indeed, such a man will lose absolutely everything in death. He had his portion in this life. And even though, while he tried to enjoy this portion, he was but filling his belly

with the husks which the swine do eat, he rejoiced in that portion, nevertheless. But other portion he had none. The things that are seen and heard and tasted and touched were the objects of his desire, and the contents of his whole life. And when he dies he departs from them all. And for such a man, the awakening on the other side must be accompanied with an awful sense of utter desolation and want, resulting in utter despair. For him, even apart from the consideration of eternal suffering of the terrible wrath of God, death is nothing but a sheer loss.

But the apostle is not speaking of mere man when he triumphantly declares that death is gain. He is speaking of his own death, and of the death of all that with him are able to say: "For me to live is Christ." We must remember that the apostle is not making a general statement here, as if death were always gain. Nor is he simply announcing a doctrine, that death is gain for those whose life is Christ, even though this would, of course, be true. He is making a personal confession. He is considering his own death from a definite viewpoint. He is making a personal evaluation of death. He declares what death is *to him*. And he is making this evaluation from the viewpoint of him to whom to live is Christ! Exactly from that viewpoint it is that one can make the statement: to die is gain! The two statements cannot be separated. And they constitute a double reason for the double statement made in the context: "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death." Christ would be magnified by his life, for to him to live was Christ. And Christ would be magnified by his dying, if he would have to lose his life for Christ's sake, for to him to die was gain. Life and death, therefore, the apostle considers from the viewpoint of the magnification of Christ.

For that is the meaning of the statement: "for me to live is Christ." To be sure this confession presupposes as its basis that Christ lives in him, and that he is in Christ. Christ is the very source of the life of which he is speaking. He lives, yet it is no more he: Christ lives in him. He has been begotten again through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and the resurrection-life Christ is the principle of his whole existence. Yet, when the apostle declares: "to me to live is Christ," he means something else, something more. (He means that Christ, to use the well-known Dutch expression, is "zijn lust en zijn leven." Take Christ away, and you take his life. To be conscious of Christ's love, to live in Christ's fellowship, to live unto the magnification of Christ, to put his whole existence, with body and soul, with mind and will, into the service of Christ, to keep His good commandments, to confess His name, to

preach His gospel,—that it is what the apostle means by the statement: “to me to live is Christ.” You may take everything else away, and you cause him no loss. For the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ his Lord he accounts all things, i. e. the possession of them, but loss. Christ is his all, his life, his supreme, his sole joy!

Principally this is true for every true believer in Christ. O, we will perhaps hesitate to take this wonderful confession upon our own lips! It is but too true, that our life is not always Christ, that much of our life is self and world and flesh. Must we not confess, perhaps, that sometimes it appears as if most of our life is still this world and its lust? Indeed, as fully and freely as the apostle here declares that to him to live is Christ, we will not dare to repeat it after him with application to ourselves. No doubt, for him this was true in an eminent degree. But, let us not forget it, even for the apostle this was true only in principle. He too had to complain that he had a delight in the law of God according to his inward man, but that he found another law in his members, warring against the law of his mind, so that often he found himself not doing that which he would, and performing that which he would not. And in principle it certainly is also true for us, for every one that is in Christ Jesus, that to live is Christ. Principally, we too confess that you may take all things, earthly possessions, position, name, glory, pleasure, liberty, yea, life, away, and if we only have Christ and may live unto Him, we have lost nothing! And I am confident that this was principally also the confession of the brother that is now called home.

But then we may magnify Christ in death, in our own dying, in the death of those that go before. For then to die is gain. Let us not forget this in our present experience of sorrow and bereavement. Let us be careful that we do not sorrow as the world that has no hope and no confession in death. Let us beware lest we attempt to wake up the brother that is fallen asleep by our lamentations as we presently pass the coffin. We have a confession to make. We must glorify Christ. We must have somewhat to say in victorious contradiction to death and the coffin and the grave, that Christ may be magnified! And how else shall we glorify Christ by our present confession, and in our present circumstances, than by glorying in the knowledge of Him, of His death, and of His resurrection? And how else can we show forth the glory of the power of the risen Lord, than by lifting up our heads, even through our sorrow, and by confessing triumphantly: “to die is gain!”

O, but indeed, if to us to live is Christ, to die can only be gain! For, first of all, to die in that case is the transition from the imperfect to the perfect. Here, we said, we can at best only confess in principle that for us to live is Christ. The co-operation of the law of

sin we always still discern in our members. There is much that intervenes between Christ and us, much that separates, much that causes us sorrow because we do not and cannot keep His precepts perfectly, much for which we must always again humble ourselves in dust and ashes. But in dying we make the transition to that which is perfect in respect to the life of and with and unto Christ. All that is the old man, all that is of sin, all that is of the flesh and of the world, then drops away, and only that which is of Christ remains. Then we shall be able to confess in perfect joy: “to us to live is Christ!” Death is the death of sin and death, and the perfecting of our fellowship with, and life unto, Christ! And, secondly, death is also the transition from the earthly to the heavenly. We shall not only live unto Christ perfectly after death, but we shall also live on a higher plane, on a level that is far above the present level of our earthy existence, as Christ, the Lord of heaven, is exalted above the first man Adam! Here, at the very best, we can only see in a glass darkly, there we shall see face to face; here we can only know Him imperfectly there we shall know even as we are known; here we must be satisfied with fellowship with Him through the letter we have of Him in the Scriptures, there we shall for ever embrace Him personally! Let us, then, magnify Christ in the face of death and the grace, and triumphantly shout: “to die is gain!”

Yes, you say, but our experience has another contradiction. All this may be true for the brother that was called home, but how about us who remain behind? We gladly grant that this death is gain to him, but his gain is our loss. We lost a beloved husband, a dear father, a brother to whom we were attached, a pastor that had gained the love and confidence of his flock, a fellow-worker in Christ. And thus the Church of Philippi would say to the apostle. O, they would answer, we know that death is your gain, beloved Paul, but how about us? What shall we do without you? We are in need of you, of your preaching, your guidance, your counsel. What must become of the church if you are taken away? We simply cannot bear the thought of your departure from us! Do you not give this a thought, beloved Paul? And the apostle would answer: Yes, I know; and because I know this, because I realize that it is better for you that I stay, I am betwixt these two, and I know not, if it were left to me, what I should choose: to be with Christ is far better, yet to abide in the flesh is more needful to you! And so our deceased brother would speak. He realized that it would be better for you, his wife and child, and for you, his congregation, to remain in the flesh. In fact, it is but a few weeks ago, that he declined the call he had received to become home missionary for our churches, on the ground that he felt he must needs stay with his flock in Edgerton, and particularly, because he felt that the move-

ment for a Protestant Reformed School that had been begun there, was in need of his guidance and support. And now God sent him a call which he must needs accept, and which he would not have declined if he could!

And yet, even so, as we weigh our loss in the balance, we find that we only consider things from the viewpoint of their earthly and temporal relations and value. Let us, first of all, remember, that our loss concerns things temporal and earthy only, and that exactly in as far as our life is Christ, we too have lost nothing. And, secondly, God provides. His work is always perfect. He makes no mistake. To be sure, in His perfect wisdom, and according to His grace over us, the death of our brother was necessary even unto our own salvation. No, I grant that we cannot understand this. God's way is deep. His work is far beyond our boldest imagination and comprehension. But we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, and that our light affliction, which endureth but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. We may not understand, neither need we understand the ways of the Almighty, but we may trust, and commit our way to Him. And the day will surely reveal it, that even from this viewpoint we have reason to glorify Christ and to confess: "to die is gain!"

May our God give you all, and us all, grace that by faith we may truly lay hold upon this mighty and victorious word, contradicting all our experience, and lifting our eyes from the things that are seen unto the things that are not seen, in order that we may magnify the glory of our resurrected Lord, even while we are in the midst of death! Amen.

H. H.

The Command to Drive Out The Canaanites

Let us again get before us the description of Joshua's task with respect to the enemies of Israel. "When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be, if it make thee an answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt beseige it: and when the Lord thy God shall deliver it unto thy hands, thou shalt smite every man thereof with the edge of the sword. . . ." Thus shalt thou do with all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are

not of the cities of these nations; but of the cities of these people, which the Lord thy God does give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth: but thou shalt utterly destroy them: namely the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee. . . ." Deut. 20:10sq.

Let us once more notice that a distinction is here made between the peoples "which are afar off" and the accursed Canaanites. To the former the armies of Israel had to proclaim peace, that is announce to them that not a hair of their head would be harmed, if they surrendered without a struggle and agreed to become tributary to the people of Israel. If the overture of peace was spurned, and the unwilling city made war against Israel, only its male population might be put to death after the battle. The need of this bit of legislation rose from the circumstance that the ideal boundaries of Canaan included many tribes not under the ban of God and thus not predestined to being extirpated. All these tribes were subdued not by Joshua but in after years by king David, who thru these conquests laid the foundation of the peace that characterized Solomon's reign. "(For) he had dominion over all the region on this side the river (the river Euphrates) from Tiphshah even to Azzah, over all the kings this side the river: and he had peace on all sides round about him" (1 Kings 4:24). All these kings paid Solomon tribute in earthly substance and also in honor and esteem. Besides these, all the kings of the earth sought his presence to hear his wisdom. And they brought every man his present. 11 Chron. 9:23, 24.

These events and doings have typical bearing and are thus prophetic. The proclamation of peace with which the armies of Israel through their generals had to come to the cities "which are afar off" points to the instructions which Christ gave to the church of the New Dispensation and is thus typical of the gospel preaching. "And into whatsoever city or town you shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. And when ye come into a house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake the dust off your feet. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city." (Matt. 10:11 sq.). Here, too, the proclamation of peace is a command, directed to every one indiscriminately, that he surrender himself to Christ and serve Him and that, doing so, he will be saved, in that God is certainly gracious to His people, the obedient. The house had to be saluted, in all likelihood, by some such saying as, "God bless you," and with the reservation, "If it be His will." This greet-

ing, in the text, is identified with peace, and is therefore a prayer for salvation and spiritual fellowship in behalf of the house that was entered.

The unworthy cities encountered by the armies of Israel, were to be immediately punished through the slaying of the male population, while the punishment of the unworthy houses in the gospel period is postponed to the final judgment day.

The reason that the overture of peace extended to the cities "which are afar off" could have this typical bearing is that the commonwealth of Israel was the custodian of the oracles of God and a holy community setting forth God's virtues.

Solomon's reign was a greatly extended rule, characterized by military peace. The true Solomon is Christ as highly exalted and thus with all His enemies His footstool.

We come now to the Canaanites proper, to the tribes which were under the ban of God. Just how had they to be dealt with? According to the above-cited instructions these races of men—both male and female, in a word, everything that breathed, and thus not merely the males among them—had to be destroyed. This line of demarcation between the Canaanites and the surrounding nations is clearly drawn in the above excerpt. The question that confronts us is whether Joshua first had to proclaim peace also to the cities of the Canaanites and whether the execution of judgment upon them, too, was to take effect only in consequence of their unwillingness to surrender and to make peace with Joshua.

The scripture at Deuteronomy 10 seq. is not explicit on this point. This passage does assert that these tribes shall be utterly destroyed; but it does not say that Israel must refrain from first proclaiming peace to them. This has led some interpreters to suppose, as has already been pointed out, that also with respect to the Canaanites the execution of judgment had to be preceded by a proclamation of peace. There is no objection to this supposition as such provided it be understood and maintained that the proclamation was not a declaration of the determinate will of God to free the Canaanites from the curse and to spare them alive, if only they allowed Him to have His way with them by accepting His proposal, but merely a command to the effect that they surrender and live; provided it be understood, further, that also this command belonged to the means by which the Lord, in agreement with and in the execution of, His counsel, sovereignly hardened them in preparation of their doom. If the proclamation of peace be so construed, and if it be maintained that the purpose of its being made to the Canaanites was to harden them, the supposition that it was actually made does not, certainly, render the destruction of the Canaanites more agreeable to unbelief. However presented, God's works remain thoroughly disagreeable to unbelief.

But the supposition, though as such unobjectionable, is nevertheless erroneous. It collides with the command that the people of Israel "take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land" (Deut. 20:16); "they shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me" (Ex. 24:12) and against the fact that in this warfare with the Canaanites Joshua did not proclaim peace to any of their cities.

If it be asked why peace might not be proclaimed to the Canaanites, the answer is forthcoming that they formed a race of men so completely marked for destruction, that, with the exception of the Gibeonites, there were no houses or families among them to be spared. What this teaches is that the primary purpose of gospel-preaching is the salvation of the elect and that, when this purpose has been achieved, all preaching will cease. It teaches, therefore, that to go forth with a gospel according to which God desires to bring the whole world back to Himself is an utterly vain occupation.

Perhaps the strongest evidence that no peace was proclaimed to the Canaanites was the craft of the Gibeonites. Having heard of the deeds of Joshua, the Gibeonites hit upon a plan of negotiation, but with deceit. They pretend to have come from a country far off to form a league with Joshua. But the thing looks suspicious to the Israelites, hence they ask: "Perhaps thou dwellest in the midst of us, how then can I make a covenant with thee?" To this embarrassing question the Gibeonites reply not at all but say: "We are thy servants." Joshua is not satisfied and asks again, more pointedly than the others have done, "Who are ye and from whence come ye?" So pressed, the Gibeonites first repeat what they have said before but add that they have come on account of the name of Jehovah, whose fame they have heard, and all that "he did in Egypt and to the two kings of the Amorites, that were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, which was at Ashtoroth." They say nothing of Jericho and Ai (to have heard of which might indicate that they lived not very far off) but cunningly confine themselves to what God has done to kings at a distance, even in Egypt. They then recall the commission given them by their elders: "Wherefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spake to us saying, Take victuals with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say unto them, We are your servants: therefore now make ye a league with us." In conclusion they refer to their mouldy bread, their torn wine-skins, and their worn-out clothing in confirmation of their declaration. "This our bread we took hot from our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go unto you; but now behold it is dry and it is mouldy: and these bottles of wine, which we filled, were new; and behold, they be rent:

and these our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey." It is plainly their purpose to convince the Israelites that they belong to the nations "which are afar off", whom Joshua may spare alive on the condition that they become tributary to the people of Israel. They played their part admirably; for all the doubts which had been expressed are now silent.

The men of Israel took their victuals as a sign of friendship, of inclination to make a league with the Gibeonites. It may also mean that they received the men by reason of thie victuals. They did so without asking counsel of the Lord, which they should have done according to the explicit command, Num. 27:21, that the priest Eleazer should seek counsel from God for Joshua through the judgment of Urim and Thummim. And Joshua made peace with them and assured them of preservation from the edge of the sword. The league was confirmed by an oath. The deception was soon discovered. After not more than three days the Israelites hear that the Gibeonites dwell in their very vicinity; yet they spared them because of the oath which the princes had sworn to them. Discontent arises in the camp on this account, but the princes appeal to their oath and are resolved to let them live, lest wrath be upon the Israelites because of the oath. The princes adhere to their resolution, but the Gibeonites, as a penalty for their falsehood, are made wood-choppers and water-carriers for the congregation and the altar of Jehovah. Joshua communicates to the Gibeonites what has been decided upon. "There shall not fail from among you servants and wood-choppers and water-carriers." The Gibeonites plead as an apology their fear of the Israelites and express their readiness to submit to whatever it may please Joshua to do to them. Joshua does as he has informed them "and delivered them out of the hands of the children of Israel, that they slew them not." The Israelites would certainly, in their warlike zeal, as we may infer from their murmurings, have slain the Gibeonites. But Joshua is in full harmony with the princes, and gives no heed to the murmurings of the people.

This episode proves conclusively that Joshua might not proclaim, and thus was not proclaiming peace, to the races of men in Canaan. For if so, the Gibeonites would not have been afraid and in their fright resorted to trickery in their endeavor to save themselves from the Israelites. They would have known that the same ends could be gained simply by their accepting Joshua's overtures of peace.

But if peace might not be proclaimed to the Canaanites, how then is the following scripture to be explained, "There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon: all the other they took in battle" (Joshua 11:18). If this scripture be interpreted in the light of what now has been established as certain, namely

that Joshua might not proclaim peace to the Canaanitish cities, then we see that the meaning to be attributed to this notice is that, notwithstanding, if these cities without first making war against Joshua, had surrendered unconditionally and expressed a readiness to become tributary to the Israelites, they would have been spared, and the judgment would not have taken effect. The proof of this is in the experiences of the Gibeonites. "Joshua delivered them out of the hands of the children of Israel, that they slew them not." True, the princes and certainly also Joshua, though this is not explicitly stated, "let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we swore unto them." Yet it must not be supposed that the Lord would have ordered the Gibeonites destroyed, or would have allowed them to be destroyed, had the princes not sworn unto them. For, firstly, Joshua was not really bound to keep the oath, which they had sworn to the Gibeonites, after it appeared that the condition on which it had been given did not hold good. Certainly, the condition of the validity of the oath, was the truth of the declaration of the Gibeonites. Yet Joshua delivered them out of the hands of the murmuring Israelites. He did not allow them to be destroyed. Thus, in explaining Joshua's doing, account must be taken of another factor that entered in, namely, the attitude of the Gibeonites toward Israel and Israel's God. The Gibeonites give utterance to a remarkable speech. "From a far country thy servants are come because of the name of the Lord thy God: for we have heard the fame of him and all that he did in Egypt. . . There fore we are thy servants." After the discovery of their fraud, they say, "Because it was certainly told thy servants, how that the Lord thy God commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land. . . therefore we were sore afraid. . . and now behold we are in thine hand: as it seems good and right unto thee to do unto us, do." They here cast themselves upon the mercy of Joshua and thus on the mercy of Jehovah. There is certainly no case on record of the Lord ordering men so disposed, destroyed. It is exactly to sinners so disposed to whom God shows favor. Substantially the declaration of the Gibeonites is identical to that of Rahab the harlot. Said she: "I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us. . . For we have heard how the Lord dried up the waters of the Red Sea for you. . . Our hearts did melt because of you: for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth neneath. . . ." (Joshua 11:10sq.). Rahab was reckoned among the heroes of faith.

That the Gibeonites were the objects of the Lord's favor is plain from their after history. In his carnal zeal, king Saul (and his bloody house,) slew the Gibeonites. His object was to exterminate them. Saul's doing sorely displeased the Lord; and He sent a fam-

ine upon Israel in the days of David. Relief came after three years but not until amends had been made and the crime atoned for by the hanging of Saul's seven sons. 11 Sam. 21:1 seq.

Thus the reason that the other Canaanitish tribes were destroyed is that instead of forsaking their sins and turning to Jehovah to own Him as the God in heaven and on earth, as the Gibeonites and Rahab did, they continued to the very end to make war against God and to contempt and deride and defy Him. "There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel save the Hivites." But this was of the Lord. "For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that He might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favor, but that he might destroy them, as the Lord commanded Moses."

Thus the judgments that finally overtook the Canaanites were doubly deserved. This certainly is plain and must be made plain by anyone treating this subject.

And right here is where some interpreters, and among them Fairbairn, fall short. Though Fairbairn dwells at length on the fact that the sins of the Canaanites "had waxed great and were come up to heaven," and that therefore the execution of judgment on their sins was deserved, yet, by his neglect to make plain from the scriptures that the Canaanites refused to make peace with Joshua, and thus continued to taunt and defy God to the very end, he failed to set forth these men in all their wanton and amazing ungodliness. He thus failed to show as he ought, just how abominable these men were and how altogether just, therefore, their destruction. That the Canaanites refused to make peace with Joshua is certainly a matter that must be stressed. Scripture as has been shown stresses it, for a reason just stated. And what must also be stressed is that the Canaanites would certainly have lived had they turned to God. To impress this upon our hearts He spared the Gibeonites in connection with their casting themselves upon the mercy of Joshua. But to this certainly must also be added that the Lord was sovereignly determined to destroy the others and that therefore in His sovereign good pleasure He hardened them.

Fairbairn even makes it appear that it is not true that the Canaanites would have been spared had they turned to the Lord. He sets aside as erroneous the view that, to use his own language, "the execution of judgment upon the Canaanites was only designed to take effect in case of their obstinate refusal to surrender." Certainly it is one of the foundation truths of scripture that God is merciful to the sinner who repents. There is, to be sure, a sovereign election, but no one is sent into eternal desolation who truly wants to go to heaven. This, too, must be stressed in treating the doom of the Canaanites.

G. M. O.

Een Stille Lofzang

(Psalm 65)

Al wat we met zekerheid weten aangaande den historischen achtergrond van dit lied, is dat het door koning David gedicht is. Wat de aanleidende oorzaak was, weten we niet. Afgaande op den inhoud, schijnt het een loflied te zijn na een groote droogte, die door den Heere veranderd was in het brengen van een overvloedigen regen.

Het schijnt wel, dat het er benauwd bij stond met Israel. Zóó benauwd, dat men den Heere geloften gedaan had. Dat is, men had den Heere beloofd Hem grootelijks te prijzen, als Hij verandering mocht geven, uitredding, verlossing.

David was die gelofte niet vergeten. Daarom psalm 65.

We leeren hier iets zeer bijzonders. We leeren, dat wanneer het hart vol is van dank, er geen uitbundige vloed van woorden noodig is om het den Heere te vertellen hoe dankbaar we zijn. Let op het begin van den psalm als zoodanig: 'De lofzang is in stilheid tot U, o God!' Eigenlijk moet ge het woordje "in" er uit laten. Dat staat niet in den oorspronkelijken tekst. Dan lezen we: De lofzang is stilheid tot U, o God! Daar schittert een schoone gedachte. Als het hart vol is van bewondering, aanbidding van God, dan behoeft ge geen woorden. Dan is een stilte schooner vertolking van wat in 't harte leeft, dan alle uitbundigheid van woorden en geluid. En God behoeft ook de woorden niet om te weten hoe gij over Hem denkt. Hij ziet immer het hart aan. Als ge dan ook somtijds wél spreekt, dan ziet Hij toch achter Uw woorden naar 't diepe hart.

De stilheid van 't hart is tot God. Ja, doch het is tot God in Sion. Dat is een rijke toevoeging. In Sion, beteekent eigenlijk: in Jezus Christus. In 't Oude Testament was de bedoeling: op de plaats waar hemel en aarde elkaar ontmoeten, en dat was in 't binnenste heiligdom, in de tabernakel. Doch voor ons die psalm 65 nu zingen beteekent dat Jezus Christus. Want in Hem is die gedachte vervuld. Al wat David had was de typische woning des Heeren in Sion. Doch wij hebben Golgotha, waar de hemel de aarde ontmoette. Later in den psalm zullen we daar meer van moeten zeggen, namelijk, in verband met het zesde vers.

Ja, als de Heere Zijn volk verlost heeft, zal de gelofte betaald worden aan den Allerhoogste. Alle werken Gods zijn uit, door en tot Hem. Daar zorgt God voor.

Die gedachte wordt verder uitgewerkt in 't volgende vers. "Gij hoort het gebed; tot U zal alle vleesch komen." De psalmberijmers namen deze gelegenheid waar om den Heere eene Zijner schoonste namen te

bezingen: "O Hoorder der gebeden!" O, als dat er niet was, hoe triestig ware dan ons leven. Neen, zeg mij niet, dat het er niet op aan komt of wij bidden of niet; dat God toch alles al besloten heeft van voor de grondlegging der wereld; dat wij toch den Heere niet bewegen kunnen, en wat er meer tegengeworpen kan worden. Die dingen moogt ge alle aanbrengen, doch er moet meer gezegd. Ik weet wel, dat God alles besloten heeft wat er ooit geschiedde, geschiedt of geschieden zal; ik ben tot in t' diepst van mijn ziel overtuigd, dat we nooit God bewegen kunnen in den zin, dat Hij ooit van Zijn eerder genomen plan af zou zien om onzentwil. Maar hier is het punt: mijn smeeken en tranen, mijn zuchten tot God in benauwdheden, mijn geroep om afwending van dreigende smarten, zij allen zijn óók opgenomen in Zijn plan. Bovendien, laat mij toch mijn gebed. Het is de ademtocht eens Christens. Ik ben gewoon, in bange dagen, mijn benauwdheid U te klagen; Gij toch, die d' ellenden ziet, hoort mij, en verstoot mij niet!

O, geliefden, God hoort het gebed! Wat onuitsprekelijk lieflijke gedachte. Het is net alsof ik alleen in het geheele heelal met God ben. Er is niemand die eenig geluid maakte; ik ben de eenigste die mij tot Hem wendde in al mijn tranen en zuchten; er ging geen woord te loor; Hij hoort mijn gebed. Het wordt zoo donker in mijn ziel; ik ben bang geworden; daar is ook Satan die mij bespringt: ik vond droefheid en smart aan alle kant. En daar komt de Heere en fluistert mij toe: Zoek door gebeden met ernst mijn aangezicht! Kan het dan anders? Is er dan geen ijver in het hart, dat begint te jubelen: "Dat wil, dat zal ik doen: ik zoek den zegen alléén bij U!"

God hoort het gebed! Eeuwig dank, mijn Vader!

En zoo loopt de lijn recht: God heeft alles besloten: ook de benauwdheid die over Zijn volk komt; ook de zucht naar God; ook Gods lokkend roepen: Komt tot Mij, o Volk! En ook de verhooring. Het is alles één grot werk Gods! Hallelujah!

God hoort het gebed, daarom zal dan ook alle vleesch tot Hem komen. Alle vleesch bedoelt niet alle menschen hoofd voor hoofd. Want we weten uit Gods Woord, dat de meesten der menschenkinderen met voorbedachte rade nooit tot Hem gaan. Alle vleesch beteekent eerst geheel het geestelijk Israel, de geheele ware kerk van Christus. Die zullen allen in vindens-tijd den Heere gaan. En dat hun naam heir "vleesch" is ziet op het brooze en bouwvallige van die kerk. De reden en oorzaak voor hun gebed ligt in dien naam. En als we letten op wat er direkt op volgt, dan zit er in dat woord "vleesch" ook nog het zondige van de kerk. Want er volgt dit: "Ongerechte dingen hadden de overhand over mij!" En dat is in één woord vreeselijk. We weten, dat elk kind van God altijd in alle dingen zondigt, dat er niet een hunner is die ooit een werk gedaan heeft waar de zonde niet aan kleefde. Maar dat wordt hier niet bedoeld. Het gaat hier over

een toestand van David waarin de zonde *de overhand* over hem had. En dat is vleeselijk. Reden waarom de psalmberijmers zongen: "Een *stroom* van ongerechtigheden, had d' overhand op mij!"

O, onder te moeten gaan onder een stroom van zonden! Kan het vleeselijker? Die dan onder gaat is een kind Gods. En naar het uiterlijke te oordeelen, zou men zeggen: Dat kan niet met genade bestaan. Die man is eenvoudig weg een kind der wereld! Dat is vreeselijk, allereerst, omdat een kind Gods de zonde haat, er een afschuw van heeft. In zulke tijden komt er een magerheid over het hart en de ziel. Waar men mee omgaat wordt men mee besmet. Doch daar komt ook nog wat bij. Elke zonde brengt zijn onmiddellijke straf ook al met zich. Zoo spoedig een van die baren der ongerechtigheid tegen ons aanrolt is er ook de toorn Gods! God oordeelt alle dagen. Hij zegt in 't diepe hart van Gods kind: zoo en zoo denk Ik over U en Uw daad! Klinken de volgende regelen U niet bekend in de ooren? Luistert: "Want wij vergaan door Uwen toorn, en door Uwe grimmigheid worden wij verschrikt. Gij stelt onze ongerechtigheden vóór U, onze heimelijke zonden in het licht Uws aanschijns. Want alle onze dagen gaan henen door Uwe verbolgenheid; wij brengen onze jaren door als eene gedachte!" (Psalm 90:7-9).

Maar hier is echter een zeer fijn punt in Davids belijdenis: hij spreekt van zichzelf als het over de ongerechtigheden gaat; doch als het aankomt op Gods verzoenende genade schrijft hij het meervoud neer. Hij zegt: ongerechte dingen hadden de overhand over *mij*! Doch *onze* overtredingen die verzoent Gij! Daar leeren we uit, dat als het licht, het onderzoekende licht van Gods aanschijn in onze zondige ziel straalt, we onszelf zien en oordeelen alsof we de eenigste, zeker de grootste, zondaar voor God zijn, doch als het toekomt aan de genade en den zegen Gods, omsluit zulk een ziel alle de gekochten. O, de genade werkt een lieflijke, aantrekkelijke nederigheid!

Ja, onze ongerechtigheden of overtredingen, die verzoent Gij!

In het oorspronkelijke Hebreeuwsch staat er: die bedekt, verbergt Gij. De gedachte is duidelijk. God bedekt de zonde van Zijn volk door het bloed van het zond-offer, van Christus Jezus, den Heere. Hij ziet Zijn volk altijd aan in den Zoon Zijns welbehagens. Daarom volgt er dan ook: Welgelukzalig is hij dien Gij verkiest en doet naderen, dat hij wone in Uwe voorhoven; wij zullen verzadigd worden met het goede van Uw huis, met het heilige van Uw paleis!

Hebt ge het alreede gezien, dat in dit vers zoo ongeveer de geheele geschiedenis van de zaligheid besloten ligt? Misschien ware het beter om het volgende vers hierbij te nemen: Vreeselijke dingen zult Gij ons in gerechtigheid antwoorden, o God onzes heils! o vrouwen aller einden der aarde, en der verre gelegenen aan de zee!

Op dat *verkiezen* komt alles aan!

Als 't *mag gebeuren*, dan, ja dan is het goed.

Als er niets meer gebeurt dan die ongerechtigheden, die overtredingen, dan is er slechts één antwoord mogelijk en dat antwoord is: de eeuwige verdoemenis. Ook weet dat mijn ziel zeer wel.

Doch de Heere had U lief met een eeuwige liefde. In die liefde heeft Hij Israel gekend; en in die kennis heeft Hij U verordineerd den Beelde Zijns Zoons gelijkvormig te zijn.

Dan, dan *doet Hij U naderen!* Ik liet dit schuin drukken, want daar moet alle nadruk op vallen. God doet ons naderen; ons, die zoo zondig en doemwaardig zijn. Wat malle leer is toch de leer der Pelagianen! Alsof wij ooit tot God zouden naderen! Er is geen sprake van. Alles wat wij ooit doen is weghollen van God, zoo hard als 't kan. De idee van God is den goddelooze een gruwel. Hij haat God en zal nooit tot Hem naderen. En als het zoo ver komt, dat God ten oordeel verschijnt, dan zullen ze allen weenen en al sidderende trachten te vluchten. Doch God zal de goddelooze tot Hem, voor Hem trekken, voor den grooten witten troon. Doch nu? Nooit!

Maar die verkoren is in eeuwige souvereine liefde, dien *doet* Hij naderen. En dan moogt ge huppelende en opspringende van vreugde al dichter tot God gaan.

Voorts spreekt David van Gods voorhoven, van Gods huis, van Zijn paleis. Alle woorden die den hemel beteekenen. En als gij daar woont met God, zijt ge tevreden. Dan worden alle Uwe behoeften vervuld. Dan wordt gij verzadigd met het goede. En dat Goede is Gods Beeld. Dat zijn de deugden Gods die U voor eeuwig geschonken zullen worden.

Hoe is dat nu echter alles zoo gekomen?

Het antwoord is in dat vers, van hetwelk ik zeide dat er bij hoorde.

Ik sprak van het eenigste antwoord, hetwelk we mochten verwachten op onze zonden; en dat antwoord noemde ik: de eeuwige verdoemenis!

Ja, want God is recht. Hij kan Zichzelven niet verloochenen. Zonde roept naar recht om de hel.

Koe kan ik dan tot God naderen en zingen? Hoe kan ik naar den hemel opklimmen en jubelen van ongekend heil?

Vers 6 antwoord die vragen. Vreeselijke dingen zult Gij ons in gerechtigheid antwoorden, o God onzes heils! Wat dat wel beteekenen mag? Lezer, ga met mij mede. Ik zal U het antwoord doen hooren. Ga met mij naar gindschen heuvel: zijn naam is Hoofdschedelplaats! Ik zeide daar: naar gindschen heuvel! alsof ik hem U wijzen kon vanuit de verte. Maar dat kan niet. Sinds drie uren geleden is het donker geworden rondom Jeruzalem. Doch we zullen hem wel vinden. En als we dan bij dien heuvel gekomen zijn en temidden van een menigte menschen staan, zullen we het antwoord van vers 6 hooren. Och, gij weet het al: ik had het oog op den schreeuw van Jezus! Mijn God,

Mijn God, waarom hebt Gij Mij verlaten?! Dat is het vreeselijke antwoord van God in gerechtigheid, hetwelk wij nu al voor twintig eeuwen gehoord hebben.

En diezelfde God zal er voor zorgen, dat ge dat vreeselijke antwoord tot in eeuwigheid zult hooren. 't Zal Uw zangen in den hemel lieflijk maken. De schare uitverkorenen zullen altoos het Lam zien, staande als geslacht in het nieuwe Jeruzalem. In de verte hoor ik een gejuich van vele stemmen: Gij hebt ons Gode gekocht door Uw bloed!

Zoo worden de bergen vast gezet en het bruisen der zeeën gestild. Daar is niet meer het rumoer der volken. De uitverkorenen zijn stil geworden in aanbidding door Golgotha. En de verworpenen zijn stil geworden door dienzelfden Man van smarten: de goddeloozen zijn stil in de donkerheid.

Wie zou dan niet vreezen voor zulk een God? Die op de einden der aarde wonen vreezen voor Gods teekenen. Het is vervuld in ons die nu in de huizen Gods zingen. Des Heeren vrees is rein; zij opent een fontein. . . .

Van al die zaligheid ziet ge gedurig de teekenen. En van die teekenen rept het einde. Ik lees van de wonderen Gods in de natuur. Er komt een stroom regens. De opgeploegde voren worden dronken. Er is een jubel van God die het uitspruitsel zegent.

Velden en dalen, kudde en bloemen, boomen en planten—alles looft den Heere.

(Het einde zijn de teekenen die van den Heere geschieden in de natuur.

Wandelt in de valleien en de landouwen der aarde, als de Heere regen gaf na lange droogte.

Het is o zoo heilzaam. Ge zaagt dan een vooruitgrijpen naar hemelsche tafereelen.

Johannes op Patmos vertelt ons van een groot, een ontzaglijk groot koor van stemmen. En ze zingen één lied. Hallelujah.

Welnu, in de natuur ziet ge dat lied en hoort ge dat lied in de teekenen.

Het einde van den psalm brengt mijn ziel in verrukking: "ze juichen, ook zingen ze!" G. V.

IN MEMORIAM

De Vrouwen Vereeniging "Dient den Heere" van de Prot. Geref. Kerk te Edgerton, Minnesota, betreurt zeer het verlies van haren President en Leeraar,

DS. WM. VERHIL

De verzekering dat hij als s'Heeren getrouwe dienstknecht inging tot de vreugde zijns Vaders verzacht onze droefheid. Moge de Heere de bedroefde weduwe en dochter bijstaan met Zijn vertroostende genade, is onze innige bede.

Mrs. J. Wensink, Vice-Pres.

Mrs. C. Schnyders, Secr.

Semen Religionis In Calvin's Institutes

Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* is the best known of all Calvin's works, and is worthy of reading and study to this very day. The first edition of the *Institutes* were written by Calvin when he was about twenty five years old. Several times Calvin rewrote it, until some years prior to his death it appeared in its present length and form. The *Institutes* were written in Latin, but also in a French translation which Calvin himself supplied. The *Institutes* gained a wide reading public from the very first, and became the handbook of many theological schools is courses on theology. The *Institutes* have been translated repeatedly, the latest translation in English appeared in 1936.

The work gained prominence a once for various reasons. First of all, because it was the first book of its kind. There were of course Catholic works on theology, but up to Calvin's time there had appeared no work that attempted logically and coherently to set forth in order the system of Reformed truth. It was the first important contribution as a systematic dogmatics. Secondly, the clear and convincing development of argument that pervaded the book at once took hold of the Reformation fathers. It crystallized their thoughts and brought unity among the definitely Reformed branch of Reformers.

Although other works have since been written on dogmatics, still Calvin's *Institutes* retains more than a historical interest. There has been progress of dogma since the days of Calvin so that we have in several respects advanced beyond him, still in other respects one cannot help but feel that there are corresponding losses. Although Calvin spoke in another generation than the one in which we live, and we often cannot help but feel that it is for that reason difficult for us to understand Calvin's terminology and analysis, Calvin still is worthy of study. Much as I personally dislike abbreviated and condensed copies of worthwhile works, still H. J. Kerr's *A Compend of the Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Publ. by the Presbyterian Board of Christian Education at Philadelphia, 1936) is an aid in reading Calvin exactly because it omits all such extraneous material that demands a knowledge of medieval thought and conditions that tends to discourage and befuddle the present day reader.

In this day and age in which the Reformed faith is on the defensive rather than on the offensive one hesitates to criticize John Calvin's theological position. There is so little regard for John Calvin's Reformed thought that one fears that any disagreement may only add fuel to the fire and help those who love nothing better than to relegate his ideas into the

background of oblivion. In the present article the undersigned finds himself impelled in the interest of sound Reformed truth to differ with Calvin. Let no one think even for a moment that we wish to aid those whose purpose it is to depart from Reformed truth. On the contrary it is our earnest conviction that the very Reformed heritage demands that we here and there depart from Calvin's conception. Calvin himself would have been the last to maintain that his work was the summation of Reformed doctrine. Calvin was a pioneer, and it need not surprise us that it has been necessary more than once in the past to correct Calvin's conceptions.

WHAT DOES CALVIN MEAN

In the very first chapters of the *Institutes* Calvin treats of the knowledge of God. Calvin maintains the knowability of God on the part of man. As part of his explanation of this he refers to what he calls "the seed of religion" (*semen religionis*). He also speaks of the "sense of diety" (*sensus divinitatis*). In a general way we may say that with these terms Calvin has in mind what today in Reformed dogmatics is generally spoken of as the innate knowledge of God, in distinction from the acquired knowledge (*cognitio Dei insita et acquisita*). By the *cognitio insita* (innate knowledge) we understand today, not that man is born into the world with definite ideas and concepts of God, but that man's mind at birth is not like a sheet of paper upon which everyone may write what he wishes in regard to the knowledge of God. On the contrary, man is born into the world with an ineradicable idea that God is i. e. with a natural propensity to know God. This is the underlying fact that makes it impossible for man to be really an atheist, so that atheism is a spiritual-ethical matter rather than a logical error.

The question is, does Calvin mean this and nothing more? Or do we read our ideas into him when we so interpret Calvin? There is always that danger when we read another man's writings with our own conceptions in our mind, especially when the writer belongs to an earlier generation. And the question regarding Calvin's meaning is not altogether unimportant, especially since the conception of what Calvin calls the *semen religionis* is related to the more general question of the value of so-called natural theology, and so also to the question of common grace.

QUOTATIONS

What does Calvin mean by "religion" when he speaks of the seed of religion? It may be answered at once that Calvin does not at all mean the fear of God in Christ Jesus the Lord. Quote, "By the knowledge of God, I understand that by which we not only conceive that there is some God, but also apprehend what it is for our interest, and conducive to his glory, what

in short, it is befitting to know where there is no religion or piety. I am not now referring to that species of knowledge by which men, in themselves lost and under curse, apprehend God as a Redeemer in Christ the Mediator. I speak only of that simple and primitive knowledge, to which the mere course of nature would have conducted us, had Adam stood upright. . . . Since, then, the Lord first appears, as well in the creation of the world as in the general doctrine of Scripture, simply as a Creator, and afterwards as a Redeemer in Christ,—a twofold knowledge of him hence arises: of these the former is now to be considered, the latter will afterwards follow in its order.” (Bk. 1, chapter 2, paragraph 1—Beveridge’s translation, Vol. 1 p. 40.) Further he says, “For this sense of the divine perfections is the proper master to teach us piety, out of which religion springs. By piety I mean that union of reverence and love to God which the knowledge of his benefits inspires” (p.41). Calvin is vague and unreal in answer to the question, What does he mean by religion. He seems to refer to a religion, apart from Christ, that would have developed had Adam not sinned. The term does not simply refer to the objective knowledge of God but also to the subjective response to that knowledge in fear and love of God, as the second quotation indicates. This is, to say the least, vague for it is difficult to conceive of a knowledge of God apart from Christ, and also unreal since it would have developed had Adam remained upright which he of course did not.

By *the seed* (semen) of religion Calvin seems very definitely to refer to a positive principle of true knowledge in the above original sense, a principle that if only properly cultivated would develop into the fear and love of God and the keeping of his commandments. We quote Bk. 1, chapter 3, paragraph 1, “That there exists in the human mind, and indeed by natural instinct, some sense of Deity, we hold to be beyond dispute, since God himself, to prevent any man from pretending ignorance, has indueed all men with some idea of his Godhead, the memory of which he constantly renew and occasionally enlarges, that all to a man, being aware that there is a God, and that he is their Maker, may be condemned by their own conscience when they neither worship him nor consecrate their lives to his service.” Now it is certainly true that to every man God has not left himself without witness that He is and must be feared, and that man reacts to this revelation of God, but does not Calvin give too much content to this innate knowledge? Calvin admits that this knowledge is corrupted, yet the following quotation is very striking. In chapter 3, paragraph 1, Calvin says, “But though experience testifies that a seed of religion is divinely sown in all, scarcely one in a hundred is found who cherishes it in his heart, and not one in whom it grows to maturity, so far is it from yielding fruit in its season.” (p. 46).

You must note that Calvin says “scarcely one in a hundred”, that means there are some who cherish this knowledge in their heart, be it only relatively a few, although even in them this knowledge does not grow to maturity and does not yield fruit in its season. See also Bk. 1, chapter 5, paragraph 15. We ask, In whom does this primitive knowledge of God, a knowledge apart from Christ, find a soil where it is cherished? Of course, Calvin maintains that this knowledge is corrupted at some stage or another along the way, yet in some it does reach a measure of development.

Now, especially of the latter statement, it is evident that Calvin does mean by “seed of religion” a knowledge that if cherished and cultivated has in itself the possibilities of developing a primitive religion, i.e. the sort of a religion Adam would have had if he remained upright.

To my mind Dr. A. Kuyper errs when he asserts in his *Dictaten Dogmatiek* (if these student notes may be attributed to him) that Calvin simply means what we refer to when we speak of the *cognito Dei insita*. I quote Kuyper, “Niet ongelukkig heeft Calvijn die *cognitio Dei insita* bestempeld met den naam van *semen religionis*, daarom zulk een gelukige term, wijl juist in “semen” het potentieele karakter dier kennis ligt uitgedrukt. Immers, het semen heeft de mogelijkheid in zich, om op te schieten, bloesem te dragen en vrucht voort te brengen. Doch op zichzelf heeft het semen nog geen bloesem of vrucht. Sluit ik den *kokkos* (seed, P.D.B.) in een doosje, dan gebeurt er niets. Maar laat ik dien *kokkos* acquirere al de elementen, die in terra, in aere, in sole, in pluvio liggen, dan rijpt de vrucht. Welnu, ook wie alleen het *semen religionis* had zou geene gedachte omtrent God hebben, veelmin die onder worden kunnen brengen. Eerst als er van buiten af de *cognitio acquisita* bijkomt, kan de *cognitio Dei insita* rijpen tot eene *notio Dei clara ac distincta*.” (Vol. II, pp. 43, 44).

A few years ago in the course of our one and only season’s meetings of the Dogmatic Study Club, the Rev. B. Kok delivered a paper on the *semen religionis* in Calvin’s *Institutes*. Our leader, the Rev. H. Hoeksema, dictated some criticism at the close of our discussion which I should like to quote in full. The reader will understand that for the form and the exactness of the quotation the undersigned alone is responsible. We feel confident that the gist of the criticism is a true resumé. We quote:

“. . . all this is rather vague and unreal. The religion of which Calvin speaks is merely an abstract product of the mind, in reality it does not exist, for it is a religion that would have developed if Adam had not sinned. That by the term *religio* Calvin refers to the objective knowledge of God and to the subjective response to that knowledge in the fear and love of God and in His service, all this conceived in its original

form, apart from the fall and apart from Christ. That by the *semen religionis* he refers to a positive principle of true knowledge in its original sense, which if only properly cultivated would develop into positive fruit of the love of God, the fear of God, and the keeping of His precepts, which would have positive fruit but which man corrupts so there is no true piety."

"Criticism—If this interpretation of the expression as it occurs in Calvin be correct, we add: 1. That there is indeed due to God's revelation and witness in all men the knowledge that God is and that He must be feared and glorified. 2. That man as a rational moral being who is adapted in his whole nature to be an image-bearer of God surely responds to, and reacts upon that knowledge of God with all his heart, and soul, mind and will, emotions and strength. 3. That, however, in the natural man the *habitus* according to which he so reacts cannot be called a *semen religionis*, for the simple reason that the natural man is wholly corrupt. There is nothing in him that can be cultivated into a positive good, no matter who would cultivate it, and his reaction to the knowledge of God is always enmity against God, revealing itself not in any religious act but in the very antithesis of religion which is idolatry."

We consider it a gain therefore that later development in Reformed dogmatics has dropped Calvin's term *semen religionis*, and that our Forms of Unity have nowhere adopted it. There is in the natural man no principle, no latent seed, from which the fear of God can be cultivated. The only *semen* of religion there is is the seed of regeneration.

P. D. B.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On Sunday, May 2, 1943, our beloved parents,

DICK JONKER

and

MARIE JONKER nee FLOKSTRA

hope to commemorate their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary.

We thank God for His loving kindness toward them, and pray that He may continue to bless them in the future.

Their grateful children,

Gertrude M.

Cornelius A.

Thelma M.

James D.

Grand Rapids, Mich.

Meaning of "Israel" in Romans 11

Introduction

The eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans may be divided into three main sections. The first section, containing the vss. 1 to 16, is concerned about the question with which the apostle introduces it in the first verse of the chapter, namely, "Hath God cast away his people?" The second main part, comprising the verses 17 to 24, presents to us the figure of the olive tree with its natural branches, some cut off and re-ingrafted, and also the ingrafted branches of the wild olive tree. The final section, verse 25 and following, speaks about the final salvation of all Israel.

Now the question that has been raised for our consideration is, to whom does the Apostle refer when he speaks of "Israel"? Whom does he have in mind?

Various Interpretations

We may state first of all, that there is no difference amongst most Bible interpreters in respect to the meaning of Israel in the first part of this chapter. It seems that all are agreed that "Israel" means there "the Jews". Differences of opinion arise, however, with a view to the meaning of "all Israel" in the 26th verse, where the Apostle says, "And so all Israel shall be saved. . . ."

Here one finds mainly three different explanations of "Israel".

One view holds that "Israel" here is the spiritual Israel, composed of elect Jews and Gentiles together, that is therefore, the Church. This is the view held by Augustine, Luther and Calvin.

A second explanation contends that by "Israel" the apostle has in mind the Jewish nation as a whole. Those who hold to this view are of the opinion that we must expect a wholesale conversion of the Jews in the latter days. This view is popular with the premillennarian and is in harmony with his view of Israel and the Church as two separate bodies. (Scofield).

The third interpretation, given by Bengel, Olshausen and Philippi, explains "Israel" here as consisting of the elect Jews which are brought into the Church in the New Dispensation. These constitute only a very small part of the whole Jewish nation.

General Observations

Instead of merely criticizing the above views and giving the reasons for the one we favor, it would undoubtedly be more beneficial to make a short study of the whole chapter. In this way we shall be able to determine which of these views, mentioned above, is the correct one.

There can be no doubt but what the apostle has in mind the Jewish people in the first verse when he asks, "Hath God cast away his people?" This is evi-

dent from the fact that he supports his negative answer to this question by saying that he himself is an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. The fact that he, who is an Israelite, is a believer is a sign that God has not cast off his people and therefore also shows that by "his people" is meant the Jewish people, the natural seed of Abraham. It is still of that same people that the apostle is speaking when he says in verse 7, "*Israel* hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded". We may paraphrase this and say, "Israel, as a whole, that is, all the natural seed of Abraham, has not obtained that which it seeketh, but only the elect from among them have obtained it". The greater part of that which is called Israel were blinded and hardened; they did not believe the word of the Gospel but clung to their own Old Testament system of worship, which they had subjected to be a means for seeking their righteousness by the deeds of the law, that is by their own works. Comparatively speaking, there were only a few out of the multitude of Abraham's natural children which believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. They were "the election". They obtained what they sought after, that is, righteousness. They are also the living proof that God has not cast away His people. There is also now, in the New Dispensation, salvation for the natural children of Abraham, however, not for all of them, not even for the most of them but for a very few of them who are the objects of God's sovereign election. They are "Israel". Not those who were blinded and hardened, but the spiritual element, those Jews who were elect and therefore believed, are the true Israel. This agrees with what the apostle teaches in chapter 9, verses 6 to 8. "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." Here the apostle plainly teaches that the true Israel is comprised of only those who believe, that is, the spiritual children of Abraham, the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ. There are many that are called Israel, (called that because they are natural children of Abraham) who who actually do not belong to Israel at all. Only the *believing* Jew can truly be called Israel.

Now to the question why so many of the natural children of Abraham have been blinded, the apostle answers in verse 11, ". . . through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles." And to illustrate this fact, the apostle uses the figure of the olive tree.

The olive tree is undoubtedly the Church, or, if you wish, the Kingdom of God. The branches do not represent individuals but generations. The figure of the branch that is cut off from the tree can not very well

apply to the individual member since it is not possible that one should truly be a member of the Kingdom of God and fall away. This however is possible with a view to a certain generation. History very plainly teaches that people fall away in their generations, so that whereas some time in the past a certain family were members of the Church, today their posterity is lost in the world. Notice also, that the apostle speaks of essentially two kinds of branches, the natural branches and those that have been taken from a wild olive tree and ingrafted in this good olive tree. Furthermore, of the natural branches he says that some have been broken off while some remain, for he speaks of being "grafted in among them" vs. 17. In the light of the preceding context, especially verses 12 and 13, it is evident that the wild branches, "wild by nature", are the Gentiles and the wild branches that are ingrafted are the believing Gentiles. At the same time it is evident that the natural branches are the Jews, those that have been broken off are the unbelievers, those that have been blinded and hardened, while the natural branches which remain are the believing Jews, who in the line of their generations have been faithful to the word of the Gospel from the very beginning of the New Dispensation. Finally, there are among the natural branches a third group, namely, those that have been broken off but were also again set into contact with the tree by way of being "grafted in". It is especially to this last fact that the apostle calls the attention of the believing Gentiles. He warns us that we shall not boast nor exalt ourselves above the branches that have been broken off because "God is able to graff them in again." If a wild branch could be ingrafted, surely God is able much more to graff them in again in their own olive tree. vs. 24. And that is exactly what God does with all those Jews that believe, the elect. Through the way of faith they are being ingrafted into the olive tree and in this way all Israel shall be saved.

That is the mystery of which the apostle speaks in verse 25. He tells us there that a part of the Jews are being hardened in order that the Gentiles may be saved. However, we must not forget that while the Gentiles are being saved, God has not cast away His people and that also now in this present dispensation they, that is the elect among them, are being saved also. And they are being saved in the same way, namely by ingrafting them in the olive tree by faith. And believing Jew constitutes true Israel, the apostle says. And since, as we have established before, only the elect can say, "And so *all* Israel shall be saved."

Conclusion

We are now ready to consider the various interpretations already mentioned. In favor of the first mentioned explanation is the fact that it is a thoroughly scriptural idea. Against that view however is the fact that in both the preceding as well as in the following

context the apostle clearly differentiates between the Jews and the Gentiles and refers to the Jews by the term "Israel". In that light we will have to maintain that distinction also in verse 26.

Against the second view, namely that the Jewish nation as a whole shall be saved, is all the context as well as the word "so" in verse 26. The premillennarian explains verse 26 as though we read there, "And *then* all Israel shall be saved." They explain that the hardening of a part of Israel, (the Jews) is only temporary; that it lasts until the fulness of the Gentiles is brought in and that then there will be a widespread conversion among the Jews and all Israel shall be saved. We must insist however on the fact that the word "so" means "in this manner" and cannot be explained to mean "at that time." Another objection to this view may be found in the figure of the olive tree. There the apostle teaches that the natural branches were broken off for the sake of the salvation of the Gentiles. The Gentiles, therefore, that are ingrafted into the olive tree, take the place of the Jews that have fallen away. It would therefore be inconsistent with the figure of the olive tree if the whole Jewish nation were to be saved after all.

We may conclude, therefore, that when the apostle speaks of Israel in this chapter, he has in mind the Jewish people. In the second place, since the part stands for the whole, since the children of the promise are counted for the seed, the apostle can safely say, when he sees the salvation of the elect Jews, "And so *all* Israel shall be saved."

H. D. W.

IN MEMORIAM

On the morning of April 16 it pleased the Lord in His inscrutable wisdom to remove from our midst by the cold hand of death, out of the Church Militant into the Church Triumphant, our dearly beloved Wife, Mother, Grandmother and Sister,

MRS. EFFIE POORTENGA

at the age of 54 years.

Our hearts are bleeding but we mourn not as those who have no hope. We know that for her to live was Christ. Death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God Who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The sorrowing family,

G. Poortenga, Children and Grandchildren.

Comstock, Michigan.

The Validity of Natural Law

Definition:

For a simple, general definition of Natural Law as used in the field of Ethics I can best borrow that given by J. Gottschick in the Schaff—Herzog Religion Encyclopedia since the term has a long history and the definition varies with the conceptions of God and the Cosmos.

The above work defines as follows: "Those absolute and universally valid imperatives and that are innate (inborn) in the reason of every individual and necessarily come into consciousness with the development of the mind."

The writer further illucidates as follows: This thought originated with the Stoics who wished to show that "the good" is not binding because of arbitrary human statute, but because of inner necessity, and to establish, in contrast to the former ethical particularism, a system of morals binding on every one. The thought was plausible by reason of the fact that among the peoples of the earth a far reaching unanimity in moral judgment actually prevailed.

Historic Development.

History tells us of the mighty tyrants of the empires of which Egypt, Assyria, Babylon and Rome are so well known to us from the Bible. Gibbon in his—"The Decline and Fall of Rome." Vol. IV. Ch. 44., gives a full picture of the Roman state among which he quotes from one of the ancient codes, "The pleasure of the emperor has the vigor and effect of law, since the Roman people, by the royal law have transferred to their prince the full extent of their own power and sovereignty."

So highly exalted above the people was his despotic majesty that he was deaf and insensible to the interests and desires of the people and held in his hand their fortunes and lives.

Into this dreadful darkness there was injected a natural light by the influence of Greek philosophy which sought after the fundamental relation and purpose things and the ethical values of life. Consequently they taught that there is a higher law which obtains above the will of citizen.

When the Christian Church began its spread and influence in the nations it was of course immediately confronted with the question of its own authority. It taught as we know, that there is a kingdom of God whose law is the Word of the Gospel yet at the same time it felt that it did not have dominion over all of life but stood before the question in how far its Gospel and doctrine was also regulative for the life of the state and apparently somewhat unconsciously it took over from the existing general ethics that which seem-

ed unobjectionable and reasonable and added to it the principles and spirit of the gospel of love.

However not only did the church confess the abnormality that had come into the world by the fall, but even the unbelieving ethic held that there had once been a golden age wherein there had reigned a natural law of freedom and equality—a time that, alas, was no more. And so the logical conclusion seemed to be that the natural law only has relative force, and the inequality and violence and oppression which resulted from sins entrance made necessary the bridle of governmental force.

It was especially Augustine (354-430) who labored through his great gifts and deep biblical insight, to trace the principles for the organization of the church and for the civil polity, in such a way that the two might be brought into harmony of conception. He took his stand in the doctrine of the sovereignty of God as Creator. Even though that original creation was broken by sin this did not affect the reality that God still controlled the broken world by His laws and to His purpose.

The two parts of the broken creation he called the "City of God" and the "City of the World." And although the great earthly states are often the concrete embodiment of the city of the world, they are not necessarily so and may become by ordering their polity and life according to the doctrine of Scripture, a manifestation of the city of God. For this state the laws must be in harmony with the eternal law of God, although they are founded upon a natural law increased by God in the mind of man, as afterward reasserted in Scriptures. Thus the state is the type and shadow of the righteousness of God's dominion, and under the guidance of Christ's law of love, does have its own organization, but is subordinate to the Church's place and purpose as City of God.

With Constantine we have a Christian Emperor and with him the beginning of a nominally Christian empire. From that time there arises through the edicts of the pope and the decisions of the Synods a new body of law alongside the old Roman civil law-system. It is known as Canon law that is, the canonized edicts and decisions of the church as they were used also in civil affairs. This of course became a tremendous source of influence in the life of the European Middle ages. And thus it comes that through the ages there is the stream of Natural-law and Scriptural principles combined ruling the life and thought of the peoples.

However, from this principle there were departures to the right and to the left, either depending upon the philosophy of the leading figures or the utilitarian consideration of the times or both.

In the Italian Renaissance we have a Macchiavelli (1469-1527) who sets aside the entire traditional ethics and religion and builds his civil polity upon the law

of necessity, that is, political necessity. And whatever necessity may dictate as advantageous to the state the ruler is justified to resort to. Thus his book "The Prince" presents a system of unscrupulous political trickery as a civil polity.

On the other extreme we have those who set the natural law even above the will of God and maintain that due to the primacy of the intellect man can know and trace these eternal principles by reason even if there were no God.

But there is a distinct contribution made to the entire field of natural law by the great Remonstrant Hugo de Groot (rotius-1483-1645) who is known as the father of Natural Law. His motive was to find a law or principle for the ordering of the disrupted civil and religious Europe of his day,—a law that lay above the religious deviations. In his classic work "Concerning the Rights of War and Peace" he sought to point out such a universal code of civil conduct, a kind of international law. In evolving this structure Grotius uses a two-fold approach, 1. He tries to prove that a thing does or does not necessarily accord with the rational and social nature of man, 2. he observes the conduct of all peoples and from the thing they all do and feel in common he distils natural laws and from these he draws out the practical precepts. This approach rests on the supposition that what is everywhere found must have a deeper common cause. And strange though it may seem to us who are accustomed to the one rule of morals of Scripture, Grotius easily tolerates a disharmony between his ethics and his natural-law principles.

The attitude of the Reformers is instructive in this respect.

Melanchthon, the most liberal of the Reformers, under the influence of the Scholastic Theology, uses quite freely the conventional conception of "law of nature," "natural rights" of which we and all people have an inborn knowledge. For this there is, of course the presupposition in the teaching of Scripture, Rom. 2:15.

Luther has a more negative look upon the state. He does teach that the state has its authority from God, but on the other hand that the kingdom of the magistrate is the kingdom of the world, and is thoroughly evil. The civil power has the calling to avert a general self-destruction, but if you are the victim of all manner of violence in that world do not be surprised. That is the way of things in that realm. With its wrath and sternness it is a picture of hell.

It is Calvin who saw also here, better than the other Reformers, sees the true relations and the place of natural law. Being on the one hand, bound by the teaching of Scripture, especially, Rom. 1:19 and 2:15, to the fact that there is a natural revelation of God. He also saw the depravity of the mind and held that all natural knowledge was to be completely checked by Scripture's light.

Coming to Kuyper, we have a very large development of the theory of natural law, because Kuyper has, of course given a complete Staatskunde worked out in great detail. However with Kuyper we have the strange phenomenon that in the period from 1880 to 1894 the term natuurlijke Godskennis (which is closely related to natural law) has given way to the term Gemeene Gratie.

However, Kuyper maintains that the government has in Holy Scripture the basic principles, the natural theology can even at its highest stage only give in a very weak form.

Summarizing, I think we may establish the following:

1. There is a natural law.
2. This has been so marred by sin that it is a very precarious structure.
3. The sinful state tho often unconsciously living from that law, also often deliberately transgresses it.
4. The Scriptures must indeed be our spectacles where by we read this natural revelation.
5. What Scripture, either expressly, or by assuredly valid implication teaches, is authoritative in preference to any assertion of principle that appeals to Natural Law.
6. The denial of Common Grace does not imply the denial of Natural Law.
7. The denial of Common Grace does demand a critical appraisal of the application of Natural Law, against all confusion by the dualism between a natural and spiritual ethic, a temporal and a spiritual ethic.

A. P.

Current Events

In the last two months our country has proven again that it has no right to be called a Christian Nation. Indeed there are many Christians in this country of ours. There are thousands upon thousands of them to be found in these United States. But the behaviour of the nation as a whole, on the home front, has been decidedly unchristian. I have reference to the hoarding spree that preceded the rationing of canned goods and of meats which forced the Government to freeze these products so that the store shelves might not be drained of them before the rationing began. The story had been going the rounds here in Grand Rapids of a woman who ordered a large ham and asked the clerk in the store to carry it to her car. This he did only to find eight more hams in the car, which she had

purchased from other stores. That is decidedly unchristian and is only one example of what has been going on in every city and state in our country. The Christian, according to Paul in his epistle to the Philippians, does not look on his own things, but also on the things of others. The early Church had all things in common. There was no striving to get it all and let the other fellow worry and see to it that he has what he needs. The Christian cannot sit down and fill himself with dainties and enjoy them, knowing that he is eating that of which he has deprived others. You may argue as you wish, but such hoarding of scarce items is not motivated by love for the brother. Is not the activity demanded of us, namely, seeking the Kingdom of Heaven and its righteousness. It is not seeking the things above. Much less is it in harmony with the prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread." Surely it is seeking the things of this world as an end in themselves, rather than seeking them as a means wherewith to serve God.

This practice of making a run on these scarce items is not the work of a few either. Were this the case then my statement that this country does not have the right to be called a Christian Nation would have to be retracted. But there are not merely a few isolated cases of this in our country. This thing is found every place where these items are sold. The fact that the Government must freeze the sale of these items proves that this practice is very widespread. As long as the entire nation does this we must not call it a Christian Nation. A Christian Nation walks in the steps of Christ, and you may be sure Christ would never have done this nor advised His disciples to do so. A Christian is a disciple of Christ. Nowhere in Scripture does Christ advise us to practice such things.

More items may be rationed in the future. Much depends upon the crops we raise this year. But the child of God will "Take no thought for the morrow for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself." The child of God, who has the right to be called a Christian because of the work of Christ, must also behave in his work as one purchased by Christ and as a member of His body.

Another event on the home front revealing this same unchristian behaviour is that of raising the price of these rationed items in restaurants and cafes to get an added profit at the expense of the public. To be sure the merchant has a right to profit on the goods he sells. But when there is a price ceiling on the items he purchases so that his expenses are no greater than before the rationing he is taking a sinful advantage of an item to fatten his own purse at the expense of the public. Because of this the Government has set a price ceiling, recently, on these rationed items in restaurants and cafes. This again reveals how widespread this practice was. Now places that serve meals are not allowed to cut down the portions and

charge the same price as formerly charged for a larger portion. And coffee may not be sold for 7c a cup. Personally the undersigned has seen menus stating that a cup of coffee was 10c and even 15c. In the dining car of a train one must pay 25c for a cup of coffee. Scarce as coffee may be in our country such a price makes it even scarcer. But then, what else can we expect in this world? When man lives for himself and not for God, when he is seeking the world and not the kingdom of heaven such things will result. Break the first table of the law and you surely will break the second table. Hate God and you will covet what God gave your neighbor, and as a result you will bear false witness, and steal, and kill, and commit adultery, and disobey those in authority.

Washington has also revealed, of late, its revised draft classification. Married men without children but who were married before the selective service act are rapidly being reclassified into 1A unless they are performing some work deemed necessary for the war effort. Many such married but childless men are already serving in the armed forces. It will be but a month or two and fathers will be inducted whether they have become fathers before the selective service act or after it was made a law. One cannot help but wonder what it will mean to the Church that these young men are taken from our midst. For one thing the duty of bringing up the covenant seed in the fear of God's name will rest entirely upon the mothers. No doubt the children of these drafted fathers are either just arriving at the age where instruction in the fear of God's name can be begun, or else such instruction in the home has been given for a year or two. Then there is the deprivation of these fathers themselves of the means of grace. The men's societies will suffer a decrease in membership, and consequently the discussion will suffer. If the number of drafted fathers is great and the congregation is small the church may also suffer financially. These are only a few of the possible effects.

As to the war itself, many changes have taken place these last two months. The westward drive of the Russian Army has been stopped, and Germany has regained Kharkov and a large strip of the Ukraine up to the Donets River. Meanwhile in Africa activity has again flared up. At this writing Germany holds no more land in Africa than a strip approximately one hundred miles long and fifty miles wide. The battle is yet to come in Africa. Germany occupies the heights in this strip that is left to them, and is concentrated in an area well suited for a long drawn out siege. To capture this region can mean nothing less than a great cost of life and material. The enemy can hide behind many natural barriers while the attacking Allies must expose themselves in order to drive ahead and capture these heights. Many a father, mother and wife will be notified, when this battle begins, that

their loved one has lost his life for his country. What a comfort, then, for the believing father, mother and wife who is left behind to know that having lost his life in the service of his country their loved one has also entered into a "better country, that is, the heavenly." There he will never need to fight again. There is true peace and life and glory. May God grant them grace when these telegrams come they may say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

In the south Pacific Japan is reported massing troops and planes for a drive on Australia. Even Alasaka is expected to be attacked. Is it possible that Germany has at last induced Japan to strike the Allies at the same time that Germany begins her spring drive into Russia? If Japan does so it will be only for Japan's sake and not to relieve the pressure we might be preparing to bring on Germany. Japan will do so to protect what she has conquered and because she deems us too busy in Europe to retard her progress. At that Japan might be right. To the lay man it does seem that more material and troops are sent to the European theater of war than to the south Pacific. But we must not be too hasty in our judgment. The statements of General Mac Arthur and of Australian diplomats stressing the need of more and more men and equipment may be done to deceive Japan, if possible, into thinking that we are weak and thus lure her to more destruction as was done in the past.

One thing seems to become more and more plain each passing week, that is the fact that this war will not be over at the end of this year as many of us thought and many of our leaders were bold enough to claim. But let this be our comfort and confession, "I am persuaded that neither. . . principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come. . . shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Would we live from that principle the loss and trials that come our way will be easier to bear. We still feel the loss. But we will not despair of God's love to us. And in spite of the loss we will still be able to hope and look up.

J. A. H.

NOTICE

Field Day Committee meeting will be held May 5, 7:45 P. M. in the basement of the Fuller Ave. Church. All delegates from Societies that wish to take part in this annual affair, please arrange to be there.

CARD OF THANKS

Since it is impossible to send a personal letter of thanks and appreciation to our many friends who by word and deed comforted us in our deep sorrow in the death of our beloved husband and father:

REV. WILLIAM VERHIL

we hereby wish to express our sincerest gratitude to all for the many tokens of love and kindness. Especially are we grateful to the pastors, who by the grace and Word of God, comforted us in our grief with the blessed promises of our Covenant God and Saviour.

Mrs. Wm. Verhil
Marie Verhil

IN MEMORIAM

The English Ladies Society of the Protestant Reformed Church of Edgerton, Minnesota, hereby wish to express their heartfelt sympathy to their Vice-President, Mrs. W. Verhil, and to her daughter Marie, in the sudden loss of their husband and father,

REV. WILLIAM VERHIL

who so faithfully served as our President and Pastor.

We commend them unto the care and keeping of our heavenly Father, Whose grace is sufficient for every need.

Mrs. G. Broekhouse, 2nd Vice-Pres.
Mrs. M. Mesman, Secretary.

IN MEMORIAM

The Men's Society of the Edgerton Protestant Reformed Church hereby expresses its deep sorrow and grief in the sudden departure of their beloved pastor and president,

REV. WILLIAM VERHIL

We are grateful to our covenant God for what He has given us in him during the few years that he so faithfully laboured in our midst, and are comforted by the thought that he has gone before us into the eternal reward of God's children.

J. Dokter, Vice Pres.
A. Blyenberg, Secretary.

IN MEMORIAM

The consistory of the Protestant Reformed Church at Hull, Iowa, herewith wishes to express its sincere and heartfelt sympathy to Mrs. Wm. Verhil and Marie and the other relatives in the death of their loving husband, father and brother:

REV. WILLIAM VERHIL

As consistory of the church in which the brother first served as Minister of the Gospel we thankfully commemorate the work which God performed through him in our midst.

Our prayer is that the comforting Word of God which he spoke to our sorrowing hearts may also be of comfort to those whom he left to mourn. May the God of all mercy graciously comfort and sustain in this hour of trial with His blessed Word and Spirit.

In the name of the consistory,

A. Cammenga, Pres.
G. Blankespoor Sec'y.

IN MEMORIAM

De vrije Christelijke School Vereeniging te Edgerton, Minnesota, betreurd het verlies van een hare leden,

DS. W. VERHIL

In hem verliezen wij een, die tengevolge van het strijden voor de waarheid, de oprichter onzer vereeniging was, die door zijn prediking en arbeid bij ons levendig hield het beginsel der verbondsmatige opvoeding onzer kinderen.

Het is onze hoop en bede dat het zaad door hem gestrooid in deze, ook verder vrucht moge drage, tot de bevestiging van Gods Verbond in ons midden, en tot de komst van Zijn Koninkrijk.

J. Tempelman Pres.
Marinus Mesman Sec'y.

Soon shall the glorious hope
Come from on high;
Death shall be swallowed up
In victory.
Then shall we gladly sing,
Death, were is now thy sting,
Thy victory?