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MEDITATIE

Loutering

En Ik zal dat derde deel in het vuur brengen, en Ik zal het louteren, gelijk men zilver loutert, en Ik zal het beproeven, gelijk men goud beproeft; het zal Mijnen Naam aanroepen, en Ik zal het verhooren; Ik zal zeggen: Het is Mijn volk; en het zal zeggen: De Heere is Mijn God.

Zach. 13:9.

Hoe lang, Heere?

Hoe lang zal het derde deel gelouterd moeten worden, zoodat er ook van dat derde deel slechts een derde overblijft?

Want immers, zoo is de voorstelling hier. Twee derden waren reeds uitgeroeid, een derde deel was overgebleven, en nu moet ook dat overgebleven derde deel nogmaals door het vuur om gelouterd te worden.

Een derde van een derde, en daarvan weer een derde. . . .

Zoo wordt ons altijd weer de ontwikkeling der Kerk in de wereld profetisch voorgesteld. En zoo is het in hare geschiedenis altijd weer geweest.

Hoe lang, Heere?

Zoo had reeds enkele eeuwen eerder de profeet Jesaja in bangheid der ziele gevraagd. Ook zijne profetische roeping stond op het allernauwst in verband met dit welbehagen des Heeren om slechts het overblijfsel te behouden, en het meerendeel te verharden. Zoo toch klonk zijne opdracht: "Ga henen, en zeg tot dit volk: Hoorende hoort, maar verstaat niet, en ziende ziet, maar merkt niet. Maak het hart dezès volks vet, en maak hunne ooren zwaar, en sluit hunne oogen, opdat het niet zie met zijne oogen, noch met zijne ooren hoore, noch met zijn hart versta, noch zich bekeere, en Hij het geneze." . . .

Hoe lang?

Zoo kan het process der verharding toch niet onver-

Zoo kan het proces der verharding toch niet onvergedurige smart is het reeds om dit welbehagen des Heeren met de oogen te zien vervuld in hen, die "onze broederen," die "onze maagschap zijn naar het vleesch," zoo zelfs, dat zij, die het dichtst bij dit vreeselijk schouwspel staan, soms de verzuchting slaken, dat ze "zelf wel wenschen verbannen te zijn van Christus" voor die broederen naar het vleesch. Maar in elk geval, het proces der verharding en der uitroeiing kan niet voltrokken worden ten einde toe, want dat zou de verwoesting van Gods Kerk beteekenen. En daarom: Hoe lang, Heere?. . . .

En het antwoord, dat de profeet toen had ontvangen, was niet naar het vleesch bemoedigend geweest: "Totdat de steden verwoest worden, zoodat er geen inwoner zij, en de huizen, dat er geen mensch zij, en dat het land met verwoesting verstoord worde. Want de Heere zal die menschen verre wegdoen, en de verlating zal groot zijn in het binnenste des lands."

Hoe lang, Heere?

Zal er dan geen overblijfsel zijn?. . . .

Ja, toch; want "nog een tiende deel zal daarin zijn, en het zal wederkeeren". . . .

Maar ook dat "zal zijn om af te weiden!" Jes. 6:10-13.

En nu was het enkele eeuwen later. En het land en de steden waren verwoest geworden, en de verlating was groot geweest in het binnenste des lands; en het tiende deel was wedergekeerd. En nog altijd ging het proces door. . . .

Hoe lang?

Ach, zeg niet, dat dit slechts van toepassing is op het oude Joodsche volk, en dat in de nieuwe bedeeing dit proces van scheiding en verwerping heeft opgehouden. Want ook Zacharia spreekt nog altijd van dezelfde ontwikkeling, al is het ook, dat het overblijfsel hier wordt voorgesteld als een derde inplaats van een tiende. De zaak blijft dezelfde. Een groote meerderheid, twee derden, wordt verworpen en verwoest;

de minderheid, een derde, wordt behouden. En ook dat overgebleven derde deel wordt beproefd door vuur, twee derden worden altijd weer afgescheiden, het gelouterde derde deel is nooit zuiver, moet altijd opnieuw gelouterd worden. . . .

Hoe lang?

Neen, beperkt tot de oude bedeeeling is dit proces niet. Zeker, ook toen, van den beginne af, bleef altijd slechts het overblijfsel behouden, en werd het meerendeel verwoest. 't Was zoo vóór den vloed, toen de zonen Gods al geringer in aantal werden, totdat God Zijne Kerk in acht zielen redde door het water. 't Was spoedig weer zoo na den vloed, toen de Mensch meende zijn wereldrijk te kunnen stichten om den levenden God te tarten. 't Was zoo ten tijde van Abraham, wiens geslacht de afgoden begon na te volgen. Zeer sterk was dit afscheidingsproces toen de Kerk in de woestijn was, en God in het meerendeel van hen geen welgevallen had, maar ze terneersloeg in de bange wildernis. En ook nadat het overblijfsel de belofte beërfde in het land Kanaän, ging het nog aldoor naar denzelfden regel. De tien stammen vallen af, gaan straks in de ballingschap om nimmer terug te keeren. Juda volgt, en slechts een klein overblijfsel keert terug. . . .

Maar nog altijd gewaagt de profetie van hetzelfde proces!

Twee deelen zullen uitgeroeid worden, en den geest geven; het derde deel zal overblijven; en de Heere zal dat derde deel in het vuur brengen om het te louteren!

En tot ver in de toekomst ziet dit woord!

Het strekt zich tot in de nieuwe bedeeeling.

Want reeds is de Herder geslagen, en de schapen der kudde zijn reeds verstrooid geworden. De Heere heeft Zijne hand tot de kleinen gewend, en in hen kwam de Kerk der nieuwe bedeeeling tot stand.

Maar nog altijd geldt dezelfde regel: een derde van een derde. . . .

Pijnlijk proces!

Hoe lang?

Betekenisvol woord!

Altijd weer worden twee derden der Kerk in de wereld uitgeroeid!

Altijd weer opnieuw, of liever voortdurend, heeft de Kerk op aarde behoefte aan het louteringsproces, waardoor het derde deel afgescheiden wordt!

Voortdurende reformatie, ja, maar dan Gods reformatie!

Maar wat beteekent dit anders, dan dat ge hier in de wereld nooit de volkomene zuivere kerk moet verwachten? De pure kern ziet ge hier nimmer! Altijd gaat met het afgescheidene derde deel het twee derde deel in beginsel weer mee, altijd neemt het weer toe in aantal en in invloed, en altijd weer heeft de Kerk

behoefte aan afscheiding!

Afscheiding uit de afscheiding!

En wat beteekent dit anders dan dat er slechts enkele perioden in de historie der Kerk op aarde zijn, dat de geestelijke kern heerschen kan, de overhand heeft, de leiding in handen heeft? Gedurig neemt het vleescheelijk element der twee derden weer de leiding over, wordt de prediking vervalscht, en de Kerk overgeleverd aan de wereld.

En, nog eens, wat beteekent dit anders, dan dat uiterlijke grootheid nimmer kenmerk der ware Kerk in de wereld zijn kan!

Veeleer is te verwachten, dat de Kerk gedurig kleiner wordt!

Een derde uit een derde!

Gewichtig woord!

Hoe lang, Heere?

Bange vraag van verlangen naar het einde!

En altijd weer wordt die vraag geperst uit 't geprangde hart van het overblijfsel.

Want Gods reformatie der Kerk is een werk van beproeving, een louteringsproces, waarin de Kerk, het overblijfsel naar de verkiezing der genade, den lijdensweg moet bewandelen.

Immers spreekt het profetisch woord aldus: "Ik zal dat derde deel in het vuur brengen, en Ik zal het louteren, gelijk men zilver loutert, en Ik zal het beproeven, gelijk men goud beproeft."

't Vuur werkt scheiding.

Als het zilver in den smeltkroes geworpen wordt, dan worden alle vreemde bestanddeelen van het echte zilver gescheiden, en daarvan verwijderd. Als goud door vuur beproefd wordt, dan komt het straks gelouterd, gereinigd van alle vreemde elementen te voorschijn.

Zoo werpt God Zijn goud en Zijn zilver in den smeltkroes. Hij brengt het in 't vuur der beproeving. En als God dat doet, dan wordt de weg voor Zijn volk in de wereld moeilijk en donker, een weg van lijden en vervolging, van moeite en verdriet, van versmading en verguizing. Dan moet zij verduren den haat van het vleescheelijk element, van de twee derden, van wat Kerk heet, maar wereld is, dat altijd de profeten doodt en steenigt hen, die tot hen gezonden worden. Dan wordt zij veroordeeld en met de misdadigers gerekend, uitgeworpen uit de gemeenschap der "kerk" als eene onwaardige! Dan spreekt men liegende alle kwaad tegen haar, geeft men haar geen plaats in de wereld, berooft men haar van naam en positie, maakt haar plaats eng, werpt men haar in kerkerhol, brengt men haar op brandstapel en schavot. Dan spannen de machten der duisternis samen om haar van den aardbodem te verdelgen, en om haar naam en den naam haars Heeren uit te roeien. . . .

"Ik zal dat derde deel in het vuur brengen", . . .

En dan komt er scheiding, en door scheiding loutering!

Want, geen nood, dat ooit het zilver en goud van Gods eeuwige genade door den gloed van dat vuur zal worden verteerd! Geen nood, dat het ooit den boozen vijand zal gelukken om het werk van den Allerhoogste te vernietigen! Let er toch op: "Ik zal dat derde deel in het vuur brengen!" God werpt Zijn eigen werk in den smeltkroes. Het moge dan schijnen, alsof het de vijand is, die het vuur stookt, hij is slechts instrument in de hand van den oppersten Potentaat, om te doen, wat Hem behaagt met Zijne Kerk. Het moge dan allen schijn hebben, dat de machten der duisternis, de Satan en zijne trawanten, de goddelooze valsche kerk, en de booze wereld, haar eigen plannen smeden, zich geheel naar eigen willekeur stellen tegen Gods erve om haar te verdelgen, God Zelf is het, Die Zijne kerk beproeft, gelijk men goud beproeft. Dat vuur is Zijn vuur! En als de Kerk door dat vuur der beproeving moet, dan is Hij het, Die haar er in leidt en door doet gaan. Maar Hij, Die Zijne Kerk, al is het dan ook door middel der vijanden, in 't vuur der beproeving werpt, bewaart haar door Zijne kracht ook tegen het verderf van dat vuur. . . .

Niets kan haar scheiden van de liefde Gods, die daar is in Christus Jezus onzen Heere!

Geen vuur zoo heet, dat ook maar een haar van haar hoofd kan verzengen!

Maar dat vuur loutert!

Twee derden worden afgescheiden! Want velen, die wel in tijden van uitwendigen vrede en rust in de wereld, in tijden, waarin men alleszins godsdienstig is, en het eigenlijk tot den vorm der "beschaving" behoort om gedoopt te zijn en met den naam der Kerk genoemd te worden, zich bij haar voegen en bij haar blijven; velen, die "Heere, Heere!" roepen, en met den mond Hem roemen, in tijden, waarin het ook voor de wereld eene eere is, om "religieus," om "Christelijk" te zijn, maar wier hart verre van Hem is, worden in tijden, waarin het vuur Gods Zijne Kerk beproeft, openbaar als behorende tot de wereld. En zij gaan van de Kerk uit, omdat zij van de Kerk niet zijn!

Vuur maakt scheiding!

En datzelfde vuur doet ook het echte goud en zilver van Gods wondere genade in schooner glans te voorschijn treden.

Want wij roemen ook in de verdrukking, wetende, dat de verdrukking lijdzaamheid werkt, en de lijdzaamheid "bevinding," en de bevinding hope, en dat de beproeving onzes geloofs, die veel kostelijker is dan van het goud, dat door het vuur beproefd wordt, bevonden moet en zal worden te zijn tot lof, en eer, en heerlijkheid, in de openbaring van Jezus Christus!

Maar ook zoo is de beproeving een weg van lijden!

En in den smeltkroes der loutering blijft het oog gevestigd op dien dag van de openbaring van Jezus

Christus!

Vandaar, ook door den roem heen, de bange vraag: Hoe lang, Heere?

Hoe lang?

Tot dat het einde, Gods einde zal zijn bereikt!

En dat einde is de volkomene veroordeeling der wereld, de eindelijke overwinning over alle vleesch, alle zonde en dood; en de volmaakte openbaring en realisering van Gods eeuwig verbond in hemelsche heerlijkheid.

Dit toch is, in laatster instantie, de beteekenis der "belofte," die de eeuwen door aan het overblijfsel werd en wordt verkondigd en met een goddelijken eed bezworen. En dit is ook de eindelijke inhoud der belofte hier: "Het zal Mijnen Naam aanroepen, en Ik zal het verhooren; Ik zal zeggen: Het is Mijn volk; en het zal zeggen: De Heere is mijn God!"

O, zeker, dat verbond, en die verbondsgemeenschap, die in deze woorden is aangeduid, zijn ook nu, in deze wereld, werkelijkheid. Ook nu roepen de overgeblevenen Hem aan in belijdenis, in gebed en dankzegging, beide in de binnenkamer en voor heel de wereld. Ook thans zegt de Heere hun God tot hen, en hooren ze Hem zeggen, door Zijn Geest en Woord: *Ammi*, Mijn volk, en ook thans geeft hun de Heere getuigenis voor heel de wereld, dat ze Zijn volk zijn. Ook in deze wereld verhoort Hij hun gebed, en weten zij, dat ze alles van Hem ontvangen, daar ze immers bidden naar Zijn wil. En ook nu keert zich hun hart in geestelijke verrukking tot den God huns heils en roepen ze het uit in aanbidding: *Eloï*, Mijn God!

God, de Heere, wandelt ook nu met hen, en zij wonen bij Hem!

En hoe meer de Heere hen in het vuur brengt, en hoe meer de vijand tegen hen woedt en hen vervolgt, hoe dringender en ernstiger hun roepen tot den Heere wordt, hoe standvastiger ze Hem belijden, hoe duidelijker ze Zijn Woord des verbonds hooren: Gij zijt Mijn volk, en hoe meer ze ervaren, dat God hun Vriend wil wezen, en dat Hij hun gebed verhoort.

Maar toch, de volmaaktheid is nog niet.

Hier blijft het een voorsmaak van de heerlijkheid, die wacht.

Hier zien ze nog niet aangezicht tot aangezicht, en kennen ze nog niet, zooals ze ook gekend zijn. Hier zijn ze nog slechts in hope zalig.

Straks wordt het anders!

Dan zal God openbaarlijk, voor het oog der gansche wereld en van heel de schepping, Zijn volk verheerlijken en rechtvaardigen. Dan zal Hij voor aller oor zeggen: Het is Mijn volk! Dan ontvangen ze de eindelijke en volkomene verhooring van hun gebed. . . .

De tabernakel Gods is dan bij de menschen!

En eeuwiglijk zal Hij tot hen zeggen: *Ammi*!

En zij tot Hem: *Eloï*!

H. H.

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EDITORIALS

Common Grace

IX

A rather striking illustration is used by Van Til to clarify his application of the "As If" theory. He criticizes Dr. Kuyper's conception of "territories" (*terreinen-leer*), according to which the latter assigns to believers and unbelievers a certain common ground of living and cooperation. He, Van Til, does not agree with this theory, and admits that this conception of Kuyper's is not to be harmonized with his doctrine of the antithesis.

I may remind our readers that we criticized this "terreinen-leer" of Dr. Kuyper's long ago, and even before attention was called to this element in Kuyper's teaching in the Netherlands. Only we always held, and still hold, what Van Til is unwilling to admit, that this doctrine of "territories" or of a common ground in this world for the righteous and the wicked must and does inevitably and undeniably follow from the theory of common grace. For, according to this theory the elect and reprobate, regenerate and unregenerate, have a certain *grace* in common. Even this statement, without any further explanation or elaboration, leads to the conclusion, that there must be a common ground on which they agree and cooperate by virtue of this grace. For, common grace is not merely concerned with an "attitude" of God, supposed to be revealed in the many gifts God bestows upon the righteous and the wicked alike, but it is also a *power* for good, an *operation* upon the nature of fallen man, both the elect and the reprobate. And by this operation of grace the natural man is very really improved, without being regenerated. According to the Second and Third Points of 1924 this operation of grace is a working of the Holy Spirit in the unregenerate, restraining sin, an influence of God whereby the sinner is so improved that he is able to perform civil righteousness. I am aware that sometimes this operation of grace is so explained that its effect is a mere negative restraint of sin. But this is not really the meaning of this part of the doctrine of common grace. Let us remember: (1) That a mere restraint could never be productive of some positive good. (2) That Dr. Kuyper presents this operation of common grace as having been begun in Paradise, at the fall, so that Adam did not fall so deeply as he would have fallen, had God not administered a dose of common grace. I refer to Kuyper's illustration of the man that takes Parish green and to whom an an-

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tidote is administered. Common grace, therefore, does not operate in a totally depraved nature, according to this view, but in a nature which is not yet wholly corrupt, and whose total corruption is prevented for the time being by the antidote of common grace. (3) That Kuyper himself clearly saw that he would gain nothing by a theory of mere restraint. He very consciously faced the question, how mere restraint of sin in the totally corrupt sinner could possibly yield positive fruit in good works. Hence, he attributed to common grace a positive influence for good, even upon the mind and will of the unregenerate. But if there be such an operation of positive grace upon believers and unbelievers in this world, how can the conclusion be avoided that they have a common life, a common ground on which they cooperate? It is no longer a question of cooperation between righteous and wicked, but between men that are alike under the influence of a certain grace. And what is the common ground on which believer and unbeliever meet? In one word: *the present world*.

And such is not only the logical inference from the theory of common grace, but such are also its actual results.

I do not hesitate to characterize the common grace theory as downright modernism in principle, which is only worse than open modernism because it presents it self under the cloak of Calvinism!

Now, instead of this "terreinen-leer" Van Til would have the believer and unbeliever cooperate on an "As If" basis. This means that it is admitted that "cooperation pure and simple the believer cannot have, without compromise to his faith, at any point, with the unbeliever," Van Til's book, p. 31; but that actually they do cooperate "as if" they had anything in common.

And now the illustration of which I spoke in the beginning of this article. I quote from p. 31 of "Common Grace" by Van Til:

"To this we must now add that the non-believer is not epistemologically selfconscious. Only Satan and his host have reached that point. Yet some of the men of this world may seek to live close to their master. They are epistemologically selfconscious to such a degree as we may expect to see this side of the judgment day. Ought not in their case cooperation with the believer to be of the 'as if' variety? A reasonably selfconscious believer and a reasonably selfconscious non-believer may each build a house on adjoining plots of ground. While they build they have the 'metaphysical situation' in common. Both obtain their materials from the same source. Both have learned their skill from the same master builder. Quite courteously they assist each other with interchange of ideas and material. But only the believer has a clear title to his property. In fact the believer holds clear

title to both plots of ground. He has, he says, inherited it from his Father who owns all things. Moreover he has warned his neighbour of this fact. He has offered to give his neighbour clear title to the ground on which he is building. The unbeliever has spurned this offer. He claims to hold title in his own right. He says he has inherited his title from the 'prince of this world' himself. He denies that the believer has, had, or ever can have any claim to his property. He goes further than that, he claims to have inherited title to the ground on which the believer is building. Thus both parties claim title to both plots of ground. Their 'common judgment' is common only up to a certain point."

Now, I would like to see two such neighbors, one of whom claim the right of all the property, and tell each other over their backyard fence that the other fellow has no right to exist in this world, and would like to see them cooperate with each other even on an 'as if' basis. I am afraid that not much would come of their friendly interchange of ideas and materials, as long as they stand in this attitude over against each other. If the believer wants to live with his unbelieving neighbor on the basis of an 'as if', especially with one who openly professes that he inherited all things from his father the devil, he must not make a good confession, he must not only *act*, but also *speak* 'as if' they do the same thing when they build a house. That, I think, Scripture teaches plainly. They hated Christ, they will also hate those that are His. And the more they openly confess the *Lord Jesus*, the more they must expect to experience the hatred of the world. And this is also verified in experience. If you want to live on a friendly footing of cooperation with those that are enemies of Christ, you must compromise in word as well as in deed, especially with a view to the concrete things of this world and the present life. As long as you enclose your religion within the four walls of your church, and limit it to your private life and to your home, you may not encounter opposition. But when you begin to insist that Jesus is Lord always and everywhere, and try to apply your confession to such things as houses and lots, you will make it impossible to live on an "as if" basis with the wicked.

And yet, I do not believe that van Til here offers the correct conception of the antithesis between sin and grace, between the wicked and the righteous. It is my conviction that this particular believer would not speak the truth, but would speak very foolishly, if he made the claim that he has a clear title, not only to his own, but also to his neighbor's lot, and that his neighbor had no title to his lot at all. (It is perfectly true, of course, that in Christ the believer is the rightful heir of the world, but that has reference to the future world, not to the present. The righteous shall inherit the earth, to be sure, but that is after this

present world shall have been destroyed by fire, and the new heavens and the new earth shall have been created. It is also true, that in a sense all things in this world are ours, for Christ is surely Lord, and all things must serve His purpose. They all move and develop around Him and His Church, so that all things are subservient to their salvation. In that sense that wicked neighbor who professes the devil as his Lord, his plot of ground, his house and all he does, and all the wicked, yea, life and *death* are the believer's. But that does not mean that the believer can claim that his neighbor's plot of ground is his also. That is exactly not the case. It belongs to the common "metaphysical situation" as Van Til calls it, that the wicked and the righteous in this world have all things in common, also lots and houses. That particular plot of ground very really belongs to his neighbor in the providence of God, and not to the believer, nor will he ever possess that particular plot of ground through any clear title from Christ. Such a title to that particular plot of ground in this present world the believer does not possess, and Christ did not merit it for him.

That, therefore, I consider a mistake. When the believer acts under the acknowledgement that that particular plot of ground is his unbelieving neighbor's, and not his, he does not act on an "as if" basis at all.

What, then, might the believing neighbor say to that wicked man that built his house on a neighboring plot of ground? He may and should say this: "God gave you that plot of ground, and it remains His. Before God no man can have any absolute right of possession. That plot of ground is capital with which you may work as His servant. And what is true of that plot of ground is true of your building material, of your skill and strength to build your house. It is true, in fact, of all you are and have, of your body and soul, of your gifts and talents, of your money and possessions, of your wife and children, of your name and position in this world. It is all God's, and it can be yours only in the sense that with it you must love and serve the Lord your God. Do not speak of your rights. You have no rights in the absolute sense of the word. Rather speak of obligation to glorify God in your body and soul, and with all you have. That is your sacred calling. And if you do not fulfill that calling, but simply use this world, your lots and houses and all things for the lust of your own flesh, God is terribly angry with you, and He will punish you both in time and in eternity. And this calling you can never fulfill, for you are dead through trespasses and sins. But this is possible for those that are in Christ Jesus. I advise you, therefore, to seek forgiveness of your sins in His blood, and grace to be delivered from the dominion of sin, that you may see your house and lot in the proper light, and glorify God with it."

H. H.

The Triple Knowledge

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART TWO
OF MAN'S REDEMPTION
LORD'S DAY VII

Chapter II

The Nature Of Faith (cont.)

Calvin treats the subject of faith elaborately in his Institutes, Book III, chapter 2. Also according to him faith is both knowledge and confidence, and both are of a special, a higher kind than the knowledge and assurance of faith in general. Writes he: "Knowledge, as we call faith, we do not understand in the sense of comprehension, such as we have of those things that fall within the scope of human sensation. For this knowledge is even so far superior, that the mind of man must needs exceed and surpass itself, in order to attain to it. And even when he has attained to it, he does not understand that which he discerns; but while he has a persuasion of what he does not grasp, he apprehends more by the very certainty of this persuasion than he would by perceiving something human by its own capacity." (1). And again: "This also the words of Paul indicate: whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: for we walk by faith, not by sight, (II Cor. 5:6,7), whereby he shows that those things which we understand by faith, are, nevertheless, remote from us, and hid from our view. Whence we conclude that the knowledge of faith consists in certainty rather than in apprehension." (2). It appears that, according to Calvin's view, the confidence of faith is the result of this special and higher knowledge that consists in certainty rather than in comprehension. For he writes: "This is the principal hinge on which faith turns, not that we consider the promises of God's mercy to be entirely apart from ourselves, and not at all within us, but rather that, by embracing them from within, we make them our own. And out of this is born at last that confidence which elsewhere he calls peace (Rom. 5:1), unless one would rather derive peace from thence." (3). And again he writes: "Let this be the sum of the matter. When even the smallest drop of faith is instilled into our minds, we begin at once to contemplate the face of God as peaceable, serene and kind toward us, and that, indeed, far off and remote from us, but nevertheless by so certain an intuition that we know that we are not at all mistaken."

According to Calvin, then, the knowledge of saving faith is not a general certainty of the truth of the Word of God, while the real and chief element of faith is the hearty confidence that my sins are forgiven, but it is quite a special kind of knowledge, far beyond the capacity of the human intellect, whereby the believer contemplates the face of God as being kind and merciful toward him. And, according to the reformer, it is even the chief element of faith, at least in this sense that it is first, and that confidence is based on it, and follows from it. This scriptural knowledge of faith clings to the Word of God as contained in the Scriptures, particularly, so Calvin teaches us, to the promises of God. And since these promises of God are all concentrated in Christ, since Christ is the realization of all the promises of God, the knowledge of faith looks to Him, and the confidence of faith relies on Him as the revelation of the God of our salvation. And not only the confidence, but also the knowledge of faith is a special gift of the Holy Spirit, enlightening our minds so as to be able to apprehend the spiritual things of the Word of God. It is true, so he writes in paragraph 33 of chapter 2, book III of the Institutes, that the mere and external demonstration of the Word ought to be abundantly sufficient to work faith in us, if it were not that our natural blindness and stubborn perversity makes this impossible. For the inclination of our mind to vanity is such that it will never adhere to the truth of God, it is so dull that it is always blind to His light. And from this it follows that without the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the Word avails nothing. (*Sine Spiritus sancti illuminatione, verbo nihil agitur*). Whence it is evident that faith is far superior to the mere human intellect. Nor will it be sufficient that the mind is enlightened by the Spirit of God, by His power the heart must also be strengthened and sustained. And he concludes that in both aspects faith is special gift of God: as a purification of the mind to taste the truth of God, and as the strengthening of his spirit in that truth. (*Ergo singulare Dei donum utroque modo est fides, et quod mens hominis ad degustandem Dei veritatem purgatur, et quod animus in ea stabilitur*).

A good deal was written on the important subject of saving faith, its nature, object, and activity by A. Comrie (A. B. C. des Geloofs, Eigenschappen des Zaligmakenden Geloofs, Verklaring van den Heidelbergschen Catechismus), to whom also Dr. Kuyper refers in his work "The Work Of The Holy Spirit." We cannot refrain from offering our readers part of a quotation from Comrie occurring in the last named work of Kuyper on the subject of faith:

"We will shortly enumerate the objects of this knowledge of faith.

"First, this knowledge is a divine light of the Holy Ghost, through the Word, by which I become acquainted, to some extent, with the contents of the

Gospel of salvation, which hitherto was to me a sealed book; which, although I understood it after the letter and its connections, I could not apply to myself, to direct and support my soul in the great distress, conflict, and anguish which the knowledge of God and of myself had brought upon me. But it now became plain and knowable to me. Now I learn by the inshining of the Holy Spirit the contents of the Gospel, so that I can deal and commune with it. And so I suck from these breasts of consolation the pure, rational, and unadulterated milk of the everlasting Word of God. . . . And in this way, by means of the heavenly light, which pours in upon the inwrought faith, the soul obtains knowledge of the secret of the Lord in Christ, who is revealed to her. . . .

"Second, this knowledge is a divine light of the Holy Spirit in, from, and through the Gospel, by which I know Christ, who is its Alpha and Omega, as the glorious, precious, excellent, and soul-rejoicing Pearl and Treasure hid in this field. Although I knew all things, and I did not know Jesus by the light of the Spirit, my soul would be a shop full of miseries; a sepulchre appearing beautiful without, but within full of dead men's bones. And this knowledge of Christ, imparted to the soul by the inshining of divine light, through the Gospel, can never from itself give any light to the soul as long as it is not accompanied by the immediate inworking and illumination of the Holy Spirit. For it is not the letter which is effectually working in the soul, but the direct working of the Holy Spirit by means of the letter.

And now you may ask, In what respect must I know Jesus? We will confine ourselves to the following matters: This knowledge of faith, the object of which is Christ in the Gospel, is a knowledge by which I know, through the divine light of the Holy Spirit, my absolute need of Christ. I see that I owe ten thousand talents, and that I have not a farthing to pay; and that I must have a surety to pay my debts. I see that I am a lost sinner, who am in need of a Savior. I see that I am dead and impotent in myself and that I need Him who is able to quicken me and to save me. I see that before God I cannot stand, and that I need Him as a go-between. I see that I go astray and that He must seek after me. Oh! the more this necessity of Christ presses me, from this true knowledge of faith, the more earnest, intense, heart-melting, and persevering the outgoings of my soul are from the inwrought faith, and attended with greater conflict. . . .

"Third, it is through this knowledge that I, by the light of the Spirit, know Jesus in the Gospel, as adapted in every respect to my need. It is the very conviction of the fitness of a thing which persuades the affections to choose that thing above every other; which makes one resolute and persevering in spite of every obstacle, never abandon the determination to

secure to himself the thing or person chosen for this fitness to his need. . . . But when the divine light of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel illuminates my soul, and I receive this knowledge of faith from Jesus, oh! then I see in Him such fitness as a Surety, a Mediator, a Prophet, Priest, and King that my soul is touched in such a measure that I judge it impossible to live another happy hour, except this Jesus becomes my Jesus. My affections are inclined, taken up, directed, and settled upon this object, and my resolution is so great, so determined, so immovable, that if it required the loss of life and property, of father and mother, sister, brother, wife and child, right eye or right hand, yea, though I were condemned to die at the stake, I would lightly esteem all this, and would suffer it with joy, to have this wonderfully fit Savior to be my Savior and my Jesus. . . .

"Fourth, this knowledge of faith is a divine light of the Holy Spirit whereby I know Christ in the Gospel in all His sufficient fulness. By this I see not only that He is well disposed to poor sinners such a myself—for a man might be favorably disposed toward another to assist him in his misery, but he might lack the power and the means to do so, and the best that he could do is to pity the wretch and say, 'I pity your misery, but I cannot help you'—but this divine light teaches me that Christ can save to the uttermost; that though my sins are as scarlet and crimson, heavier than the mountains, greater in number than the hairs of my head and the sands of the seashore, there is such abundance of satisfaction and merits in the satisfaction, by virtue of His Person, that though I had the sins of the human race, they would be, compared to the satisfaction of Christ, which has by virtue of His Person an infinite value, as a drop to a bucket, and as a small dust in the balance. And this convinces my soul that my sin, instead of being an obstacle, much rather adds to the glory of the redemption, that sovereign grace was pleased to make me an everlasting monument of infinite compassion. Formerly, I always confessed my sin reluctantly; it was wrung from my lips against my will only because I was driven to it by my anguish, for I always thought, the more I confess my sin, the farther I will be from salvation and the nearer my approach to eternal condemnation; and, fool that I was, I disguised my guilt. But since I know that Jesus is so all-sufficient, now I cry out, and much more with my heart than with my lips, 'Though I were a blasphemer and a persecutor and all that is wicked, this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ has come into the world to save sinners, of which I am chief.' And if need be, I am ready to sign this with my blood, to the glory of sovereign grace. In this way every believer, if he stands in this attitude, will feel inclined to testify with me.

"Fifth, it is this knowledge by which I know in

the light of the Holy Spirit shining into my soul through the Gospel Jesus Christ, as the most willing and most ready Savior, who not only has the power to save and to reconcile my soul to God, but who is exceedingly willing to save me 'My God, what is it that has brought about such a change in my soul? I am dumb and ashamed, Lord Jesus, to stand before Thee, by reason of the wrong I have done Thee, and of the hard thoughts which I entertained concerning Thee, O precious Jesus! I thought that Thou wast unwilling and I willing; I thought that the fault lay with Thee and not with me; I thought that I was a willing sinner and that Thou hadst to be entreated with much crying and praying and tears to make of Thee, unwilling Jesus, a willing Christ; and I could not believe the fault lay with me. . . .

"The believing knowledge of the willingness of Jesus, in the light of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel, makes me see my former unwillingness. But as soon as this light arises in my soul the will is immediately bent over and submissive. They who say that Jesus is willing, but that I remain unwilling, speak from mere theory; but they lack the knowledge of faith, and have not discovered this truth. For as the shadow follows the body, and the effect the cause, so is the believing knowledge of the willingness of Christ toward me immediately followed by my willingness toward Him, with perfect abandonment of myself to Him. 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power' (Psalm CX, 3).

"Lastly, by this knowledge through the promise of the Gospel, and by the light of the Holy Spirit, I learn to know the Person of the Mediator in His personal glory, being so near to Him that I can deal with Him. I say, 'in the promise of the Gospel,' to show the difference between a vision of ecstasy like that of Stephen and the conceited knowledge of which heretics speak outside of and against the Word. The Word is the only mirror in which Christ can be seen and known by saving faith. And herein I see Him in His personal glory with the eye of faith, so near as I have ever seen any object with the bodily eye. For this inwrought faith and the light of the Holy Spirit shining thereon brings the Person Himself in substantial form to the soul, so that he falls in love with Him, and so enchanted with Him that he exclaims: 'My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. For His love is stronger than death; jealousy is more cruel than the grave; the coals thereof are coals of fire, flames of the Lord. Many waters cannot quench that love; if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would be utterly contemned' (Cant. III, 10; VIII, 6, 7). (A. Kuyper, *The Work Of The Holy Spirit*, 422-427).

I made the above quotations, which could easily be multiplied, to show that, according to Calvin and Reformed theologians, knowledge is a very essential part

of saving faith, and that it is a very special kind of knowledge, by which a man discerns and appropriates spiritual things. To be sure, it is a certain knowledge whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in His Word. Without the Word of God we know nothing of the things of the Spirit. Faith, the knowledge of saving faith is not a certain 'inner light' that can do without and despises the letter of the Word. It is in the Holy Scriptures that the Christ is mirrored. And faith is *certain* knowledge. It holds for truth and it assents to all that is revealed in the Scriptures. It is not necessary, therefore, to discover three elements in saving faith, and to speak of *assent* as the third element. For this assent is, in part at least, implied in the certainty of the knowledge of saving faith; while, in as far as assent means personal application of and reliance on the truth of the Word, it is included in the confidence of faith.

But this does not mean that the knowledge of faith is mere intellectual certainty and assent to the truth. Saving faith is not historical faith plus a hearty confidence. The knowledge of faith is more than this intellectual apprehension and assurance of the truth. It is different. It is not at all like the knowledge a natural man may have of the truth of the Word of God. For the natural man does not discern and receive the things of the Spirit. The knowledge of saving faith is spiritual. It is experiential. It is not a theoretical knowledge *about* God in Christ, but it is knowledge *of* Him. There is a wide difference between knowing all about a thing or person, and knowing that thing or person. In the former instance, my knowledge is purely theoretical, and my relation to the thing or person known is external and superficial. I place myself above the object of my knowledge, investigate it, feel rather superior to it, criticize it, analyze it minutely and describe it. But in the latter case, my knowledge is experiential, it is a knowledge of love and fellowship, and my relation to its object is profound and spiritual. A dietician may be able to analyze thoroughly every item on a menu, and inform you exactly as to the number and kinds of vitamen each offered dish contains, but if he has cancer of the stomach he cannot taste the food and enjoy it, neither is he able to digest it, and derive the necessary strength from it. On the other hand, the man with the hungry stomach may sit at the table with him, know absolutely nothing about vitamen, but he will order his meal, relish his food, and appropriate it to himself in such a way that he is refreshed and strengthened. Thus a man may be a keen theologian, so that he can ably and thoroughly discuss all kinds of dogmatical subjects; he may be thoroughly versed in Christology, and deliver learned discourses on the incarnation, the person and the natures of Christ, the atonement and the resurrection, and His exaltation at the right hand of God, but if he is a mere natural man, he is like that scholarly diet-

ician with his stomach full of cancer. He knows all about Christ with his natural mind, yet he does not know Him, neither can he appropriate Him. In reality he does not even see Christ, nor does he hear His voice, for Christ is spiritually discerned. He does not feel need of Him, for though he has a head full of theories about sin, he does not know his sin; and though he knows all about the atonement, he does not flee to it; and though he probably delivered a lecture on the bread of life, he does not hunger after it and can not eat it. He has knowledge, but it is not the knowledge of faith. On the other hand, a person may be far inferior to this able theologian in intellectual capacity, and his knowledge of the Gospel may be very simple, if he has the knowledge of saving faith, he will be like the hungry man that relishes and digests his food. He will know himself in all his misery and emptiness, as a damnable and guilty sinner, void of light and wisdom and righteousness, full of darkness, foolishness and iniquity, and he will deplore all this before God. He will know Christ as the Bread of life, as the fulness of his own void, as the righteousness in his guilt, the holiness in his corruption, the light in his darkness, the life in his death. And he will hunger and thirst in this knowledge of faith for the Bread and Water of life, take it, eat it, relish it, appropriate it, make it part and parcel of himself, and live! The knowledge of saving faith is the kind of knowledge of which Jesus speaks in John 17:3: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

H. H.

(1) Cognitionem, dum vocamus, non intelligimus comprehensionem, qualis esse solet earum rerum, quae sub humanum sensum cadunt. Adeo enim superior est, ut mentem hominis se ipsam excedere et superare oporteat, quo ad illam pertingat, Neque etiam ubi pertigit, quod sentit, assequitur; sed dum persuasum habet quod non capit, plus ipsa persuasionis certitudine intelligit, quam si humanum aliquid sua capacitate perciperet. Lib. III, cap. 2; 14.

(2) Id indicant et Pauli verba, nos in hoc corpore habitantes, a Domino peregrinari: quia per fidem ambulamus, non per aspectum (II Cor. 5:6): quibus ostendit, ea quae per fidem intelligimus, a nobis tamen abesse, et aspectum nostrum latere. Unde statuimus, fidei notitiam certitudine magis quam apprehensione contineri. Lib. III, cap. 2; 14.

(3) Hic praecipuus fidei cardo vertitur, ne quas Dominus offert misericordiae promissiones, extra nos tantum veras esse arbitremur, in nobis minime: sed ut potius eas intus complectendo nostras faciamus. Hinc demum nascitur fiducia illa, quam alibi pacem idem vocat (Rom. 5:1), nisi qui pacem derivare inde malit.

(4) Summa haec sit. Ubi primum vel minima fidei gutta mentibus nostris instillata est, iam faciem Dei placidam et serenam nobisque propitiam contemplari incipimus: procul id quidam et eminus, sed ita certo intuitu, ut sciamus nos minime hallucinari.

The Canonical Significance Of The Book Of Deuteronomy

To bring out this significance regard must be had to the character of this book. The character of the book has been variously defined. It has been described as an attempt "to furnish a new law which might be conducive to the interests of altered circumstances," by another as, hortatory description, explanation and enforcement of the most essential contents of the covenant relations and covenant laws with emphatic prominence given to the spiritual principle of the law and its fulfillment." Lange comments on the purpose of the book as follows: "Deuteronomy . . . the second law. But Deuteronomy is not therefore a repetition in the sense of a transcript. That would be a mere copy. . . which the second tables of the law were, which Moses must have, written truly by God Himself, as were the first but in other respects the work of Moses, while the first were entirely the work of God. According to another interpreter the aim of the book is, "to secure by supplementary regulations that the laws and institutions of the previous books, whose full validity is presupposed, shall be observed, not only in an external way, but as to their inner significance, their higher aim, their spiritual principle." Then there are those who define the book as the people's code and regard this as its distinguishing mark.

An examination of the book leads to the following discoveries.

1. In the middle books of the Pentateuch (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers) God speaks to Moses and Moses as God's prophet to Aaron and his sons. Conspicuous in these books are statements such as these: "And the Lord said unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel. . . . And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying. . . . And the Lord said unto Moses. . . . And the Lord called unto Moses and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying. . . ." Fact is that in these middle books God appears almost exclusively as the sole speaker and Moses as the hearer; rarely is Moses here brought forward as speaking to the people or to the priests. After recording the Lord's communications to Moses of the instructions regarding the building of the tabernacle, the writer simply asserts: "Thus did Moses according to all that the Lord commanded him, so did he." Ex. 40:17.

Coming to the book of Deuteronomy we find that here Moses as God's prophet is the sole speaker and he speaks in lengthy discourses not to a few priests but to all the people. The book sets out with the announcement, "These be the words which Moses spoke unto all Israel on this side Jordan in the wilderness." Every distinct discourse in the book is headed by a similar statement: "And Moses called all Israel to-

gether and said unto them, Hear, O Israel. . . ." (5:1-1). "Now these are the commandments, the statutes and the judgments, which the Lord your God commanded to teach you. . . ." (6:1). "And Moses with the elders of the people commanded Israel saying. . . ." (27:1). "And Moses went and spake all these words unto the people. And he said unto them. . . ." (31:1, 2).

2. A second characteristic of the book concerns its style. The mode of expression in the middle books is that of a speaker communicating bare facts. The style of Deuteronomy, on the other hand, is hortatory. The speaker of the discourses found here makes his appeal to the will, recommends, approves, urges, threatens and promises, as one swayed by a powerful emotion. And what is laid upon the hearts of the hearers is the law (ceremonial, civil, and moral) of Jehovah. What is stressed throughout is that the law be loved and obeyed, that the people may live and not be destroyed by the anger of God. This is the strain sustained throughout the whole book. It continues to gain in loftiness until it finally ends in a prophetic outburst revealing that the vantage point to which Moses is finally raised is of such height that it allows him to see the course of God's doings with His people to the end of time. An examination of these discourses bears out this statement. The substance of the first address (1-4) is that the people of Israel hearken to the statutes and the judgments "which I teach you for to do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord God is in all things that we call upon Him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? Only take heed to thyself and keep them diligently, lest thou forget the things which thy eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life; but teach them to thy sons and to thy sons' sons. . . ." And the basis on which the rendering of this obedience is made to rest is that the covenant promise will be realized, that thus Jehovah will cause His people to inherit the land. And the certainty of this is the greatness which Jehovah already has begun to show them by His giving into their hands the enemies thus far vanquished. Let them therefore now hearken to the Lord's statutes to do them, that they may live, and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers giveth you. For only on condition that they keep the covenant will they receive the promise. Let them be mindful of this. Let them recall their fathers who murmured in their tents, and said, "Because the Lord hated us hath he brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites, to destroy

us," and concerning who the Lord therefore sware saying, Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I sware to give unto your fathers." Let them consider further what their eyes have seen, to wit, "what the Lord did because of Baal-peor, the Lord thy God hath destroyed them from among you. But ye that did cleave unto the Lord thy God are alive every one of you this day." (Deut. 4:3, 4).

The second discourse begins with chapter 5 and continues through chapter 26. Though the materials contained in this section may have been spoken in a succession of days, fact is that they form a distinct whole. For this section sets out with the announcement "And Moses called all Israel together and said unto them, Hear O Israel the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day." The style also of this discourse is hortatory and its purpose is to bind upon the hearts of the people that they must be loyal to the Lord their God. There is again the exhortation, "Hear O Israel the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that you may learn them and keep them and do them." Rehearsing the events at Mt. Sinai—the giving of the law of the ten commandments, and the fear of the people by reason of the fire, and reciting to them the law, Moses concludes with saying what he has once and again already said, "Ye shall observe to do therefore, as the Lord your God hath commanded you, that ye may live and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess."

In chapters 6 to 12, the people are told that the end of the law is obedience and therefore exhorted to hear and to observe to do it, to love the Lord their God with all their heart, to teach His words to their children, and to write them upon the posts of their houses and upon their gates. They shall beware lest they forget the Lord, which brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, when He will have brought them in the promised land of their abode and have filled their houses with all good. They shall fear the Lord and sware by His name and shall not go after others gods. They shall not tempt the Lord as they tempted Him at Massah. They shall do that which is right and good, to cast out all their enemies before them, as the Lord hath spoken. They shall surely smite the nations inhabiting the promised land. They shall make no marriages with them. Instead, they shall cleanse the promised land from all defilement of their abominable idolatry. For they are a holy people unto the Lord. They shall know that the Lord keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him; and repayeth them that hate Him to their face to destroy them. . . . If they hearken unto these judgments they shall be blessed above all people. They are exhorted to obedience with regard

to the Lord's gracious dealings with them in the past. They are warned lest, after the Lord shall have destroyed their enemies and brought them in to possess the land, they glory in themselves, in their own righteousness instead of in the land. Let them understand that the Lord giveth them not this land for their righteousness; for they are a stiffnecked people. This he shows them by rehearsing their several rebellions. Now their minds are directed to God's mercy of the past in renewing with them the covenant at Sinai, the covenant that they had broken, through His restoring the two tables, and hearkening to Moses' prayer for them. What now does the Lord require of them but to fear Him, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him and to serve Him with all their heart and soul. The Lord is their praise. He has done for them these great and terrible things which their eyes have seen. And now He has made them as the stars of heaven for multitude. Therefore they shall love the Lord their God. Their eyes have seen all the great acts of the Lord which He did. Let them therefore keep all His commandments. If they do so, He will prosper them in the land of Canaan. If they forsake the Lord, His wrath will be kindled against them, and He will shut up the heaven that there be no rain. Blessing and curse is set before them; blessing for them if they obey, but curse if they obey not.

The content of chapters 12-26 is formed of statutes and judgments communicated by Moses to the people. In these chapters the exhortations "fear the Lord" followed by promises and threats is wanting.

Chap 27:1-8 is the transition to the last and third discourse which continues through chap. 31. It contains blessings and cursing and the renewal of the covenant. Chapters 32-34 are supplements to the book. In them is found the Song and Blessing of Moses and a narration of his death.

It is these exhortation from which our book derives in part its significance. The entire collection is summed up in the first and greatest commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and mind and will and strength. This command is contained only in the fifth book of Moses, at 6:4 and 10:12. And although it is not expressly stated, yet it is certainly implied that without love in the heart, the people's sacrificing is vain, that thus, obedience is better than sacrifice.

Thus, the great emphasis which our book places upon the religion of the heart—loving God above all—is the complaint of Isaiah, "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me; saith the Lord, I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts. . . . your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings. . . ." (Isa. 1:11 seq.). But the carnal Israel according to the reprobation did not, Yet

it continued to bring a multitude of sacrifices unto the Lord: burnt offerings of rams, the fat of fed beasts, the blood of bullocks, lambs, and he goats. It appeared before the Lord and tread His courts, brought oblations, burnt incense, kept the new moons and the Sabbaths, called assemblies and solemn meetings, observed new moons and the appointed feasts, spread forth its hands and made many prayers (Isa. 1:11-15), compassed sea and land to make one proselyte, swore by the altar, payed tithes of mint and anise and cummin, strained at a gnat, builded the tombs of the prophets, and garnished the sepulchres of the righteous. This outward conformity to the law of God gave to Israel the aspect of a fruit-bearing Fig tree. So the Lord God came and sought fruit thereon. But He found none. Instead of faith He found unbelief; instead of humbleness, pride; instead of love hatred; instead of mercy, cruelty; instead of contrition, hardness of heart; instead of a pure heart, a heart full of uncleanness, extortions and excesses. The appearance of the tree belied its nature. Despite all this outward show of piety, it lacked the true religion of the heart. For three years Christ labored with this tree, exhorting it to repent, calling it to the service of God, performing many miracles before the eye of Israel and thus providing them with the proof that He, the Christ, came from God. But they despised and rejected Him and crucified Him, the Lord of Glory. Thus having filled the measure of iniquity, it, the nation was scattered over the face of the earth.

A prediction of this scattering and also of the dispersions of the nation in the preceding centuries, are found in our book. Thus there is also a prophetic element in the book of Deuteronomy. We do find in it a prediction of the exile of the people of Israel to Babylon, of its return to Canaan, and of the final dispersion of the people of Israel over the face of the earth. Let us show this.

Chapter 28-30 is formed exclusively of blessings and cursings. If Israel shall hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord their God, to observe and to do all His commandments, all these blessings (those names in the sequence) shall come upon them. But if they will not hearken unto the voice of their God, then curses shall come upon them. The Lord shall bring them and their king to a nation which neither they nor their fathers have known. He will bring a nation against them from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth, a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favor to the young. And he shall besiege them in all their gates, until their high and fenced walls come down wherein they trusted. And the Lord will make their plagues wonderful. And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon them, the blessings and the curse. . . .and they shall call them to mind among all

the nations whither the Lord their God hath driven them, and shall return to the Lord and obey His voice, that then the Lord their God shall turn their captivity, and have compassion on them, and will return and gather them from all nations, whither He has scattered them. And He will bring them unto the land which their fathers possessed, and they shall possess it. . . .And the Lord will circumcize their heart, and the heart of their seed, to love the Lord with all their heart, and with all their soul that they may live. . . .For the Lord will rejoice over them for good, as he rejoiced over their fathers.

This last statement is plainly a reference to the blessedness of the church in glory. Now it is true that the statement to the effect that the Lord will root the people of Israel out of their land forms the subsequent clause of a conditional sentence, the introductory clause of which is, "If ye disobey my voice," so that it may be objected that nothing is here predicted. But the conditional sentence has the force of a positive statement. This is plain from the subsequent chapters, where it is stated that the people of Israel will actually be overtaken by these judgments on account of their sins. Said the Lord to Moses, "Behold thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land. . . .and will forsake me and break my covenant. . . .Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them. . . ." (Deut. 31:17,18). And once more in the song of Moses, "But Jeshurun (the people of Israel) waxed fat, and kicked. . . .then he forsook God that made him. . . .They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God . . .and I will heap mischief upon them. . . .They shall be burned with hunger, and devoured with burning heat and with bitter destruction. . . ." And then follows the prediction of the return of the remnant to the land of Canaan and of the future glory of the church. "And the Lord shall judge his people and repent himself for his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto the land of His people." Here it is stated positively, i. e., unconditionally, that Israel, the remnant according to the election, will be led through tribulation to glory, will be redeemed through judgment. Though the Lord will heap mischief upon His people, though they will be devoured with bitter destruction on account of their sins, the Lord will be merciful unto them in the end.

In this prophetic section of our book passages occur which have meaning only if made to apply to the final dispersion of the nation. "And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth even unto the other. . . .And along these nations thou shalt find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of

mind: and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shall have none assurance of thy life. . . and the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships. . . Thou shalt see it (thy land) no more again."

It is plain that our book forms the foundation of all later prophecy. Isaiah begins His prophecy with words almost identical to those found at Deut. 32:1. The whole discourse (Chap. 1) is a mosaic from Deut. 31 and 32. How well acquainted Amos is with Deuteronomy is evident from chap. 11:9; 4:11; 9:7. We detect the words of our book in many passages of Hosea. In the proverbs there is a reference to Deuteronomy from the beginning onwards. To a certain extent, the song of triumph of Deborah is formed upon original passages from Deut. 33. Christ makes significant use of Deuteronomy in his personal history.

Thus the significance of our book in the Canon of the Scriptures is plain. Our book completes the legislation that came by Moses by its emphasis on the law of love, at least by implication it thus sets forth the truth that works not springing from true faith have no ethical value in the sight of God and are thus very actually iniquity.

The book foretells the working out of the curse of God in the generation of the reprobated Israel to whom faith and love were not imparted. It foretells, does this book, the ultimate blessedness and glory of the redeemed of God, who by His mercy keep His covenant and who through tribulation are led by Him to their heavenly destination. Such being the scope of this book, it forms the groundwork for all later prophecy.

Finally, whereas the people of Israel are about to inherit the promised land, the book also in its middle section rounds out the legislation contained in the previous books.

G. M. O.

NOTICE

The Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church wishes to call to the attention of our churches that Synod will meet D. V., on Wednesday June 2, 1943 in the parlors of the Fuller Ave. Church. This is to be preceded by a prayer service on Tuesday evening, June 1 at 8.00 in the Roosevelt Prot. Ref. Church. The President of the former Synod, Rev. B. Kok, will preach the sermon on this occasion.

Consistory of the First Prot. Ref. Church.
H. Meulenbergh, Clerk.

Temptation And Trial

God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man. It is in this word of James that God is presented to us as the Holy being, Who cannot have fellowship with anything which is impure. It is contrary to the nature of our Holy God to seduce or allure men with evil designs. In that sense the Bible speaks of God as never tempting anyone. God is pure in His purposes and designs.

But, again, God DOES tempt us, and have us tempted. With the purpose of demonstrating the superior quality of His work in the saints. Then we call it, trial.

From both James 1:12 and 1 Pet. 6-7 it is evident that, in content, temptations and trials are one and the same. Temptations are trials and trials temptations. In fact, in 1 Pet. 6-7 it appears that temptations serve the trial of the faith. As gold must become approved and purified by the fire, so God will try the faith, but vs. 6 speaks of this act of trial as embracing also what we call temptations.

In 11 Cor. 13:5, as far as the Greek word is concerned, we are even admonished to "Tempt ourselves," although we have translated this passage as "Examine ourselves." From which it appears that as far as the words themselves are concerned the two are used somewhat interchangeably, receiving their particular meaning for a great part from the context.

The difference between the two is only that of viewpoint. The difference is not this, that the devil tempts us but God tries us, as some seek to maintain. It is true that the devil never does anything else than tempt us, wherefore he also has the name of Tempter. But, in certain aspects God also tempts us. In Gen. 22:1 it is simply related that, "God did tempt Abraham," using the Hebrew word "nasah" when we might have expected the "beghan" of Job 23:10. The devil intends our ruin for he is the murderer. His designs are evil. For such actions the Bible uses the word tempt or deceive. Standing there, watching the devil tempt a christian, and realizing that his purpose is to murder and destroy the christian, we call it temptation. In that sense God never tempts. But God can and may at the same time take the same material which the devil would have used with the intent to murder us, and use that for the welfare of and furthering of our faith. God can take the attacks of sin and the devil, hallow them to our service and use them to make our faith stronger and purer. Then in turn the temptation again becomes a trial.

A matter of viewpoint therefore.

James says: "Blessed is the man who endureth temptations, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life." In this passage the temptation becomes at once a trial, purifying and bringing out puri-

fied, the faith. The very same we have in 1 Pet. 1:6-7. "In heaviness, through manifold temptations, that the trial of your faith. . . though it be tried with fire. . . ." Again we see that temptations are trials also.

The afflictions and persecutions and hardships and even the failings of the saints are being pressed by the devil, in order to murder us. But these same entities become in God's hands like so much fire, trying and purifying the faith and finally bringing it out in its refined beauty. Although this will not appear until Christ returns.

So much for the distinctions.

In connection with this we would make a few conclusory remarks.

In the first place it is evident that throughout the ages of history God is engaged in demonstrating "the glory of His grace" (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14) in His people. In that program of Self glorification God has given His people the faith. But now God also wants the beauty and the glory and the strength of that faith to appear. 1 Pet. 1:6-7 God tells us that the faith is precious, but God wants to bring out its preciousness by demonstration. God does things so entirely different than we would do. If we had something which was precious, because of its very preciousness we would scarcely dare come out in the open with it, afraid perhaps that somehow we might become rid of it, lose it etc. But God, after He has first given His people the faith, thereafter comes out into the open with it, putting it upon display and making demonstration of it before the eyes of all the world. The result is that we have such a chapter in the Bible as Heb. 11, wherein God shows us, and all the world, that the fire and water, the persecutions and trials, the hatred and wrath of the world etc. became the stage whereupon God would demonstrate the greatness of His Work in the saints.

So God tempts Abraham to offer his son (Gen. 22:1) in order that afterwards He may write in Heb. 11:17 that Abraham did it, and all the world may wonder at the strength of such faith. So God tries Gideon when He orders him with three hundred to fight an army of perhaps a half million, in order that in Heb. 11 God may later record that Gideon did fight that army of half million and overcame. In Peter's epistles His people are tried and tempted by many and divers temptations, but the end is, that amid the welter of afflictions the faith in the saints comes out in all its strength and beauty. And so we could go on through the lives of many other saints. But the point is evident. God determines and regulates and controls and sends temptations and trials, and by the means of them strengthens the faith but also approves and exhibits the approved faith, to His own glory.

In the second place, since there is so much dross in all of us and the faith needs experiment shall it

come to refinement, trials are necessary for the well-being and development of that faith. As gold cannot be purified except it pass through the fire so it is with faith. And as a tree would never become firmly rooted except heavy winds tug at its branches occasionally, so our faith needs trials shall it become strong. It needs experience, it must submit to experiment. So God lets us wrestle with problems, suffer under adversities, be confronted with satan's allurements, be crushed under the feet of tyrants etc. in order to add to faith, virtue and to virtue knowledge. Or, as Paul says in Rom. 5. "Tribulation worketh patience and patience experience." But we have access to this grace only by faith. Where there is no faith these same problems, hardships, difficulties, temptations etc, will add to unbelief impatience; to impatience cursings; to cursings blasphemies and rebellions, and the end will be destruction. In short, the exigencies of these times exhibit that God's people have faith, but these same things exhibit that the infidel is an infidel. In the end of time wisdom will be justified of her children.

Thirdly, since in us there is so much weakness and waywardness, we must conduct ourselves humbly and reverently in the presence of these trials. "Let Thy work appear unto thy servants" (Ps. 90) says the humble Moses as he leads the staggering Israel on, past the dead bodies of fallen comrades further into the wastes of the sun-scorched and trackless desert. And again, "Revive Thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known," says the humble Habbakuk in chap. 3:1. Faith is God's work and the final approved display of it will be an exhibition of God's work in us, pray therefore that God continue His work of faith in us, that it choke not under the burden of trials He heaps upon us sometimes. "Lead us not into temptation" Jesus taught us to pray. Hence it behooves us to face these realities in true humility. If God should forsake us for just a moment we should perish. If God should neglect His work of faith in us for a moment it would collapse under the impact of temptation. The strength to face trials and temptations is not in us, our fortitude or aptitude (even a David fell) but is alone in God. Therefore also we shall not seek or give ourselves unto temptations, neither shall we play the Stoic when adversities come, but we shall flee to the watch-tower where we shall hear God say: "The just shall live by his faith." And meanwhile we shall not neglect to put on the entire armor of faith.

Lastly, we have that beautiful expression of Job (23:10) "When He hath tried me I shall come forth as gold."

Ah, dear reader, there is the secret of the christian's endurance when he is tried. He knows the mind and the purposes of God. He knows God's unchangeable election, he knows God's goodness and

mercy. He believes that God will bring him forth victorious. Though the eyes be sometimes tear-stained and the shadows fall close in, and he cannot see. . . yet he believes. He believes that the end of his trial-fraught way will be glory and salvation, glory to God and salvation in the appearance of Christ in glory.

But then we must wait until Christ returns. Then we shall see the refined and finished faith, and it shall be to the praise and the glory of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His will.

M. G.

The Reformed Conception Of The Sacrament

Just how and why the word "sacrament" came to be used for the divine institutions we now know by that name is not entirely clear. The word itself is not taken from Scripture. That, however, need not condemn its use. Other terms have found their way into Reformed theology which are not taken directly from the Word of God.

"Sacrament" is from the Latin "sacramentum," meaning: something that is consecrated, a consecration. In early times it designated the sum of money deposited in court by both plaintiff and defendant previous to the trial of a case and kept in some sacred place. After the verdict had been rendered the winner's money was returned to him, while that of the loser was forfeited. This money was called a sacramentum, it is suggested, because it was intended as a sort of sacrifice to the god. Then sacramentus denoted an oath, especially the military oath by which a soldier pledged his allegiance to his commander or standard. In this way it gradually came to be used for the sacred rites now known as sacraments, whereas in them our covenant God seals unto us the truth of His Word and covenant, and the church in using them consecrates itself to Him.

What is a sacrament? It is imperative that we have a clear-cut answer to this question. First, because the sacraments are indeed essential to the spiritual welfare of the church. We need them, not because the Spirit *can* not do without them, but for the reason that He will not do without them; and if the Holy Spirit wills to use them for the dispensation of divine grace and the confirmation of our faith we cannot ignore them with impunity. Secondly, there

has always been much controversy and misunderstanding on this question. Here, more than in anything else, habit and superstition have played a great role in the church. What then, is a sacrament? What does it purpose? How must we conceive of its operation?

A sacrament is, first of all, a *sign*, a *visible* sign. As such, signs may be adapted to any one of our senses, of course. The sacraments, however, are adapted to our sense of sight.

Such a sign is a visible representation of something which is itself invisible, a perceptible something which rivets our attention on something that cannot be perceived with the natural senses. Of such signs even this present life is full. There is much, even in nature, that eye cannot see and ear cannot hear and that must be presented to us in the way of signs. In a still wider sense all created things, animals and plants, numbers and colors, mountains and valleys, are signs, perceptible representations of things spiritual and eternal and heavenly.

Thus the sacraments are primarily signs. In each there is a material element; in Baptism the water that is sprinkled; in Communion the bread and the wine that is broken and poured out, eaten and drunk. These visible elements signify the invisible grace of God's covenant with all its benefits, the forgiveness of sins and justification, sanctification and perfect redemption, in a word: Christ. Together sign and thing signified constitute the sacrament. Mind you, both sacraments have reference to the same covenant of God and the same Christ. Herein, however, they differ, that whereas Baptism is the sign of entering into that covenant and of incorporation into Christ, Communion signifies our constant life in that covenant of God and continuous fellowship with and eating and drinking of the crucified Christ.

It is vital that we see clearly the relation between the sign and the thing signified. We must in no way fuse them into one as does the Roman Catholic Church. They conceive of the union between the two as physical. Somehow the thing signified is inherent in the sign, so that he who receives the one also receives the other. The sign and the things signified are inseparably connected, so that the latter is actually contained in the former substantially. The sign, then, becomes the channel through which the grace of God is conveyed to us, and the latter is strictly and absolutely bound to the means of the sacraments, without which, naturally, there can be no salvation. The Lutheran position is more moderate, yet they too retain too much of this inseparable connection between the outward means and the inward grace. They do not see the union as physical, they do not fuse sign and thing signified into one, but they do maintain a local union. The thing signified is present with the sign in such a way, that all who receive the one receive

both, although the thing signified is to man's advantage only if received by faith. We must not fall into either of these errors. The connection is neither physical nor local; never do sign and thing signified become one in any way; never do we receive the one merely by receiving the other. The grace of God is never in the things as such. Water, bread, wine are merely that,—no more. However, they *signify* the invisible grace of God's covenant and as such the Spirit uses them to impart the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to the believing church.

However, the sacraments are more than mere signs. They are also seals. A seal is a visible sign of authority, and consequently, a tangible guarantee of the genuineness of that which receives the seal. When a person graduates from school he receives a diploma; on that diploma you will find the seal of the State of Michigan; that seal signifies authority and guarantees the genuineness of that diploma and the truth of what it states. Without that seal the entire document would be rejected as false. Thus the sacraments are seals, seals of *God*, signifying divine authority and giving to the church God's own guarantee that the matter represented by the sacraments is true and certain of realization.

And what do they seal? What do the sacraments guarantee? Some say: the sacraments seal the persons who take part and give to all participants the assurance of salvation. Yet, this can never be, for then the sacraments would not be speaking the truth, whereas God has no pleasure in many of those who partake of them. Others say: No, not that, but the sacraments seal to all who partake that God, from His side, is willing to save all. Whether or not we are actually saved depends on what we ourselves do with the offer that comes to us, not only through the Word, but also through the sacraments. This we reject as rank Arminianism applied to the sphere of the church institute. Fact is, the sacraments guarantee the truth of God, the promise of the Gospel, justification from sin only in and through Christ. They guarantee the inseverable connection between faith and justification and seal to us the blessed promise, that whosoever believes in Christ is fully justified before the face of God. As such they picture what really is and certainly shall be the condition of the church, by the grace of God and according to His counsel of redemption.

As far as the purpose of the sacraments is concerned, which God Himself has instituted, which the church in the world must administer to the believers

and their seed, and which the saints must use by faith (for always they involve an action, conscious participation on the part of the church), all may be summed up in this one thing: they are "Means of grace." Surely, in as far as they involve conscious participation on the part of the church and thus represent an expression of faith and spiritual life on her part, they also serve as uniforms, marks of distinction for the church in the world. Primarily and predominately, however, they are means of grace.

Means of grace are those means which the Holy Spirit employs to apply the grace of God in Christ to the living church in the world.

Remember, that the grace which they impart refers only to the conscious life, the active, conscious faith of the child of God. This point is essential to a clear understanding of the means of grace. All of salvation is not granted in the way of means. The *essence* of things, such as regeneration, whereby the new life is imparted to the dead sinner, is always immediate. Thus faith itself is never given to us by way of any means; it is the fruit of that act of God, whereby He calls the things that are not as if they were by the immediate word of His sovereign and omnipotent will. God works mediately only when it comes to the operation of that faith, given in regeneration, in the consciousness of the Christian. Hence, means of grace serve, not to give life, but to bring it to manifestation; not to plant the seed, but to cause it to sprout out and grow; not to give the principle of faith, but to bring us to an active and conscious faith in Christ.

These means of grace are two in number. The term in its broadcast possible application may be made to include everything, for God uses all things for the salvation of His church. However, its use in Reformed doctrine is restricted to those means whereby the Spirit applies Christ and His benefits *directly*, brings Christ Himself to the consciousness of the church. Thus understood there are only two such means, the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments, adapted respectively to our two higher senses, that of hearing and seeing. Both, however, speak the same language and bring the same message.

Thus the sacraments are closely related to the Word. Both have one and the same Author, God. Both have the same content, for of both means of grace Christ crucified is the heart. Both are appropriated by a living faith only and have their purpose in the active, conscious faith of the Christians. And both work the same grace of God in Christ. Some people, including the late Dr. A. Kuyper, hold that a specific gracee, differing from that wrought by the Word, is conveyed by the sacraments. What grace this could be they do not make plain, but the sacraments, they feel, must work something which the

Word does not give. However, this is not the view of Reformed scholars as a whole, who cannot concede the existence of a grace other than that which is wrought by the preaching of the Word.

Even so, however, there are points of difference between the Word and the sacraments. Both are not equally necessary, for although the Word is indispensable for salvation, this cannot be said of the sacraments. Also herein we differ widely from the Roman Catholic Church. They have always failed to give proper significance to the Word. Not it but the sacrament is the real means of grace. The later contain all that is necessary for salvation, they are perfectly clear in themselves, and therefore they render the Word virtually superfluous as a means of grace. We, however, maintain the priority of the Word. It is the more important by far, whereas the Word without the sacrament would be quite complete, while the sacrament alone could mean nothing whatever to us. Whatever significance the sacrament has is derived from the Word. Besides, the preaching of the Word accomplishes more, for while the sacrament can only strengthen a faith already active, the Word works as well as confirms that faith.

Lastly, it is of cardinal importance that we clearly discern the relation between the means as such and the Spirit who uses them as His instruments.

We must not emphasize the one at the expense of the other. The two belong together. As far as our conscious faith is concerned, the Spirit always works through the means of grace. Hence, we cannot do without them. Nevertheless, it is not the means as such that impart the grace, but the Spirit of Christ, Who is and must be all in all, Who must plant the seed and cause it to grow, Who must give the life and cause to live, Who must give the faith and cause to believe.

R. V.

ATTENTION!

Editorial Staff of The Standard Bearer.

A meeting will be held D. V., Friday, June 4, at 8:00 P. M. at the Fuller Ave. Protestant Reformed Church.

Rev. G. M. Ophoff.

The Incentive Of Sanctification

The christian is solemnly called upon to walk in the way of sanctification. Sanctification certainly is an earmark of the redeemed child of God. By the fruits shall the tree be known. It is, however, not our purpose to write on the subject of sanctification proper, but as is evident from the title the incentive of such a walk. In particular we will try to show that such a holy walk stands in direct relation with doctrine. Occasionally we hear, and some of us perhaps even bosom the thought that sanctification has very little to do with doctrine. To be sure, they say, we must have the truth of God's Word and fight for it, but that really does not have anything to do with our walk of life. After all there are many christians of denominations other than the Prot. Ref. whose sanctified life cannot be surpassed by many of us, and who certainly will enter the pearly gates. And isn't it possible that a thorough-going Arminian or Pelagian fights sin and temptations and serves God? So we find pious people in many denominations even though they differ radically in respect to confession and doctrine. Does it then make any difference as to our walk whether we are Reformed or Arminian or whether we believe in predestination and the sovereignty of God, yes or no?

Our answer is that it not only makes some difference, a difference of degree, but in the final sense makes all the difference. Our life is affected tremendously by the doctrine we confess. The Holland language has it: zoo leer zoo leven. The truth of this statement we will try to prove in this article.

To understand this we must know and keep in mind the essence of sanctification. What is a life in the way of sanctification? In a nut-shell it is a bit of heaven. The regenerated and justified child has been redeemed from the filth and dominion of sin, and been made conformable to the image of God's Son. Through this gift of God's Spirit he now can walk in the way of good works and live a holy life in principle. A life of sanctification means that we daily crucify our old nature, fight sin, and put on the new man. It implies that we live as God's children in the midst of the world, its temptations, pleasures and treasures. The sanctified christian manifests himself as of God's party in church life, the home, school, work, friends and conversation. He consecrates his life unto God and in principle keeps not some but all of His commandments.

But sanctification means more, much more. There are many who apparently do these things and yet fail to really walk in the way of sanctification. The motive, n—of love is lacking. The christian must serve God and consecrate all unto him because he loves

God. 1 John 4:7-9. And that is where so much of our apparent sanctified life falls by the wayside, being false. Why do we serve God? Why do we live as His children, revealing ourselves likewise in the various spheres of life? This question naturally touches the very heart of the matter of sanctification. Usually, and I unhesitatingly add, most of the time for self, either because we are so dreadfully afraid of hell and therefore want to go to heaven, or for other utilitarian reasons. How we try to bring our Arminian and Pelagian self into the sphere of religion and the service of God! But if we cater such motives we certainly do not walk in the way of sanctification. This is not sanctification, regardless what we may do in the deed. Neither can the Arminian or Pelagian *with his ideas* truly walk in the way of sanctification. But true sanctification proceeds from the heart that loves God. Adam was called upon to love the Lord His God with all His heart and mind and soul and strength. Our Lord when on earth emphasized this very same thing. My heart must say: God I love you and therefore I want to serve you. Out of love for Him I hate sin and strive for the good, reveal my new life in all the spheres of life. 1 John 2:5. Such a life is a little bit of heaven, for unto eternity we will praise Him there simply because our hearts go out to Him. And in it the saints will have perfect joy.

Viewing our life in that light we must confess with the Heidelberg Catechism that our beginning of new obedience is yet very small. How much do we really do out of love for Him? But another question is: how is it possible for me to improve upon myself? That I must so live I know only too well, but what can I do about it? The question is not, take notice, how we can serve Him more in the outward deed. That question can be answered by revealing ourselves more as His children in all that we do. But what can activate me to do that out of love? How can I love Him more with my heart? Without a doubt such lies beyond the realm of my own power. Personally I can do nothing about it. Neither must we think that resolutions will help, nor that by so-called practical preaching we will receive an incentive to do so. Some think that if the ministers only preach enough of hell and condemnation, and hammers on the need of sanctification the effect will certainly be a holier walk of life. Fact is, and experience confirms it, that all this by itself does not help one bit. We cannot drive or compel people to love God.

There is only one thing that can motivate us to so serve Him out of love, *nl*—the Word of God. God Himself. And the Word only. Only the preaching of the pure and unadulterated Word can have the effect that His people love Him and therefore walk in His ways. To come still closer to home we can say that the preaching of sovereign predestination and the total depravity of man is *the* incentive of sanctifica-

tion. The idea we also find expressed in the very arrangement of the Heidelberg Catechism, misery, redemption and gratitude. First through the law of God we are shown our misery. What a horrible picture we see. Man by nature is corrupt in sins and trespasses. He is not merely a sinner, but a dead sinner. Were he merely a sinner his condition would not be so grave. It is not so dangerous to be in deep water, if we can only swim. But man is dead, incapable of doing any good and inclined to all evil. And God is terribly displeased with his original as well as actual sins and will punish them in His just judgment temporally and eternally. That is mankind. Then the Catechism comes with Christ. Christ saves, redeeming our life from destruction and crowning our life with loving kindnesses and tender mercies. To that helpless, depraved sinner God manifests the riches of His grace, His boundless and unfathomable love, and mercy as high as the heavens are above the earth. He spared not His only begotten Son, and to express it in plain terms He gave all He had. So God manifests His love. But that redeemed child of God experiences more. Seeing many of his fellow men who have not tasted of that wondrous redemption but still in the midst of that horrible death he begins to wonder. He asks himself why this is given unto him and not to them? Why was I born in the covenant and not in a heathen land? Why did I have christian parents? If he is honest with himself he will admit that it was due to nothing of himself. And the positive answer he also finds in God's Word: sovereign elective grace. On the one hand he sees his depravity and on the other the sovereign love that has redeemed him. Deut. 7:6, 8ff, Jer. 31:3, etc. The result is: God I owe Thee everything, O God I love Thee. I want to serve Thee simply because I love Thee. This idea we also find expressed in the 32nd Lord's Day of the Catechism. The question is asked: since then we are delivered from our misery, merely of grace, through Christ, without any merit of ours, why must we still do good works? This the Arminianism in man asks. He wants to merit at least a little of his salvation by good works, a life of sanctification. But since we are saved merely by grace, through Christ, of what avail will they be? In his heart he says: it's no use. But answers the Heidelberg so pithily, exactly because of that we must walk in the way of sanctification. Just because we do nothing of ourselves and all is of grace through Christ we must do good works. Theoretically and practically the result is that we love our God and have a delight in His commandments. The same idea we find in Psalms 78 and 105.

Does it then make any difference what we believe? Are sanctification and the life of the christian affected by doctrine? As said in the beginning it not only makes some difference but really all the difference. Sanctified life out of love for God the Arminian as

Arminian cannot live. Neither the Pelagian. They still have ability to do something of themselves, and believe in merits. Neither will we ever come to that love of God by maintaining that there is still some good left in the natural man and that God is still gracious to him in this life and not terribly displeased with his original as well as actual sins also in this temporal life. The incentive of sanctification is found only in the preaching that centers around the sovereign predestination of God and the total depravity of man. That Word God applies to the heart, and the result is and always shall be more of love to Him. Of all people the Protestant Reformed should live a life of sanctification, serve Him out of love in every sphere of life and forgive one another. Another effect is that we daily experience our home not to be found here below in the midst of sin and the old man. Neither do we expect or long for a so-called glorious kingdom of peace on this earth after the present war. He who loves God has strife with sin and all its implications. But we long for the heavenly country to be delivered once for all from all that hinders us to love Him in this life and to enjoy the perfect liberty of the children of God.

J. B.

Unwarranted Conclusions?

Esteemed Editor:

May I again be privileged to use your paper to further substantiate statements which I made and which are seemingly asumed to have no basis in fact and remarks for which I supposedly must hang my head in shame?

First of all I must say that it is not my intention in this controversy over the CLA to become personal in respect to those who disagree with me. Neither do I think we should stand on the heights and classify our opponents and call "shame, shame" or say that this or that is not to his credit or assume to know how much or how little our opponent knows about his subject. Not that the undersigned is greatly affected by such remarks but I feel that, besides the fact that such things sound a bit juvenile, that is not the issue and the matter in hand is of more importance than the personal opinions of any individual contributor. I would rather let our readers compare the various articles themselves and let our arguments stand or fall by their own judgment. If brother B. V. feels that I have been uncharitable in my remarks he cer-

tainly has that privilege as creatures of the dust we are subject to error and readily submit to correction and reproof if necessary.

Let us then treat the matter as they appear in brother Veldkamp's article entitled "Unwarranted Conclusions" and perhaps enlarge somewhat on proof for the conclusions which are supposedly unwarranted.

In the first place I utterly fail to see how anyone can speak of this or that being "more Biblical" when he himself has advanced no Scriptural proof to substantiate his argument. Of course we agree that there are passages in which we can plausibly conceive of more than one interpretation but our interpretation must not conflict with the rest of Scripture and both parties must present such a text and that has not been done.

If now then your opponent advances Scriptural proof to substantiate his statements may we then quit ourselves of the matter simply by saying, "I am not an exegete?" Must we be afraid of wrong conclusions that, rather than risk it, we very literally close the Scriptures and reason with our own little finite minds? Neither do I claim to be an exegete but I refuse to believe that any child of God has been denied so much grace or has received the gift of the Spirit in so small a measure that he cannot understand and interpret the Scriptures according to the measure and ability which God in His Wisdom has deemed good for him. To my mind it is positively dangerous to infer that conditions have changed (although basically they have not) and therefore certain passages hold little or no meaning for us!

I also trust that brother B. V. being well acquainted with Eph. 6:11-18 will have noticed that it very distinctly is a spiritual warfare to which the Apostle has reference—"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood. . ." and the weapons of offense are very distinctly not the arm of flesh but "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." We also find a related passage in 11 Cor. 10:3,4.

And now brethren of the opposition it is assumed that I know but little concerning the organization which you so staunchly defend. It is assumed that it is nothing other than base ridicule when I place "Christian" in quotation marks when speaking of the CLA. Let me then state some plain and unquestionably true facts which are very easily verified by at least three separate parties and more if need be. I shall only take the liberty not to give the names of the individuals concerned but these may be supplied at your request.

1. Is it not true that an officer of the CLA, an ardent worker for the cause and a zealous organizer of the shop men in Holland, Mich. was *not* a church member and to the best of my knowledge never attended church services. And is it not true that he was separated from his wife and that when this man

passed away a short time ago it was necessary to call in a thoroughly modernistic preacher who, had he been there, would have pronounced a eulogy over the body of Judas Iscariot himself! I ought to know for that officer lived under my roof for some six months. I hope for your sakes, brethren, that this is one of those rare exceptions yet nevertheless he was one of your brethren in the CLA.

2. Is it not true that when I was employed for a short time at the West Mich. Furniture Co., one of your CLA men earnestly besought me to "join up" at the first opportunity he had to approach me on the matter. And that without knowing who I was, for I was relatively a stranger here, or what I believed or did not believe. I daresay I could have been an atheist and the invitation would have as warmly been extended me to affiliate with your organization!

3. Is it not true that at least a percentage of your members have stated to acquaintances of mine that they prefer to work next to a CIO man rather than a non-union man?

4. Is it not true that by joining the CLA it becomes very easy to take another step and join the other unions? For, is it not true that the carpenters of our fair city were CLA men and when they found that the CLA had not enough prestige and power to secure for them the wage increase they sought they promptly joined the AFL?

These facts cannot be denied brethren and if your organization continues to entertain such on your rolls I see no reason why they cannot in time become a majority and "extend the sphere of their influence" in your midst. These are not words of bitterness or sarcasm but they are the truth as both I and others have experienced them. Neither have I conducted a "snooping campaign" to discover these things. They were literally thrown at me. Do you perhaps have an explanation for such a phenomena?

I have not found basis in the Scriptures for a Utopia in this life but *have* found comfort in such passages as: "Be of good cheer for I have overcome the world. . . Let not your heart be troubled. . . If in this life only we have hope in Christ. . . A table Thou preparest me in the presence of my enemies. . . Be patient therefore brethren, unto the coming of the Lord . . . Behold we count them happy which endure. . . If ye suffer for righteousness sake happy are ye. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing . . . If any man suffer as a Christian let him not be ashamed," and many many more.

If it is true that my proposition favors State Socialism then so does Rom. 13 and Art. 36 of the Belgic confessions. For what in brief do I propose? Simply this: That I believe that the government is instituted by God for the punishment of the evil-doer and for the protection of those that do well. Very as gross acts of violence, cause themselves to fall into

well then, if a man or group of men (and I have employers and companies in mind) by their unrighteous and wicked acts be it by robbing the hireling *as well* the class of evildoers, it is the duty of the government to punish such evil-doers and they i. e. the government may very well be made aware of such a state or condition by a direct appeal to them by the well doer or doers. I trust that that is clear.

There is also much more to be said in respect to the right of one man or a group of men to leave his or their work or threaten to do so simply for the sake of another who belongs to their organization and who demands higher wages when it is possible that he is already being remunerated to the full extent of his worth to his particular employer. But that matter had better be left lest our patient editor feels that we occupy too much space.

G. Ten Elshof

18th ANNUAL FIELD DAY

JULY 4 — IDEAL PARK

Plans are being formulated for a big Field Day this year at Ideal Park. We need the cooperation of every family in our Grand Rapids churches, as well as the families in our churches surrounding Grand Rapids to succeed. Good speeches, wholesome games, and Christian fellowship, all will combine to make this a day of real Christian joy. The committee is doing their part to prepare these plans, but you must do your part and *BE THERE!* You may have some plan to help us make the day a success. If you do, send us a line. Watch for more announcements later.

Mr. W. Hofman, 734 Franklin St., chairman.
Mrs. B. Verstrate, 958 Sigsbee St., secretary.
Mr. B. Veldkamp, 852 Dunham St., treasurer.

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Haven, Michigan wishes to express its sincere sympathy to its pastor, Rev. A. Petter, and to his family, in the loss of his father,

MR. JOHN PETTER

May the Lord abundantly comfort him and his family in this time of sadness, and may He fill the emptiness in their hearts with the presence of the Holy Spirit.

By order of the Consistory.

Peter Vander Gugten, Clerk.