

THE STANDARD *Bearer* A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XX

OCTOBER 1, 1943

NUMBER 1

MEDITATIE

Verlost Jeruzalem

Ook zal het te dien dage geschieden, dat er levende wateren uit Jeruzalem vlieten zullen, de helft van die naar de oost zee, en de helft van die naar de achterste zee aan; zij zullen des zomers en des winters zijn. En de Heere zal tot Koning over de gansche aarde zijn; te dien dage zal de Heere een zijn en Zijn Naam een. Dit gansche land zal rondom als een vlak veld gemaakt worden, van Geba tot Rimmon toe, zuidwaarts van Jeruzalem; en zij zal verhoogd en bewoond worden in hare plaats; van de poort van Benjamin af, tot aan de plaats van de eerste poort, tot aan de Hoekpoort toe; en van den toren van Hanareël tot aan des Konings wijnbakken toe. En zij zullen daarin wonen, en er zal geen verbanning meer zijn; want Jeruzalem zal zeker wonen. Zach. 14:8-11.

Jeruzalem, dat ik bemin!

Bemin, ja ook de aardsche stad van hout en steen, maar dan toch niet om dien aardschen vorm, maar omdat die vorm een schaduw biedt van 't blij Jeruzalem, dat straks geopenbaard zal worden.

Bemin, ja ook die verschijning er van op aarde, die Kerk heet, maar dan toch niet om die aardsche vergadering met hare aardsche banden en aardsche vormen, maar omdat in die vergadering wel waarlijk Jeruzalems Koning regeert, Zijn Woord wordt gehoord, Zijn Naam wordt erkend en geprezen, en een voorsmaak genoten wordt van de gemeenschap van dat Jeruzalem, dat straks van den hemel afdaalt van God, en waarin de tabernakel Gods bij de menschen zijn zal.

Op dat Jeruzalem is het oog van al de heiligen in hope gericht.

In de oude zoowel als in de nieuwe bedeeeling verlangen ze naar de openbaring van dat Jeruzalem.

Want hier hebben ze geen blijvende stad; ze zoeken de toekomstige.

In de hope op die stad zijn de ouden gestorven in het geloof, "de beloften niet verkregen hebbende, maar hebben dezelve van verre gezien, en geloofd, en omhelsd, en hebben beleden, dat zij gasten en vreemdelingen op de aarde waren. Want die zulke dingen zeggen, betoonen klaarlijk, dat zij een vaderland zoeken. En indien zij aan dat vaderland gedacht hadden, van hetwelk zij uitgegaan waren, zij zouden tijd gehad hebben om weder te keeren; maar nu zijn zij begeerig naar een beter, dat is, naar het hemelsche. Daarom schaamt zich God hunner niet, om hun God genaamd te worden; want Hij had hun eene stad bereid."

En naar diezelfde stad zien ook de heiligen der nieuwe bedeeeling nog altijd uit.

Want wel zijn ze "gekomen tot den berg Sions, en de stad des levenden Gods, tot het hemelsche Jeruzalem, en tot de vele duizenden der engelen; tot de algemeene vergadering en de gemeente der eerstgeborenen, die in de hemelen opgeschreven zijn, en tot God, den Rechter over allen, en de geesten der volmaakte rechtvaardigen; en tot den Middelaar des nieuwen testaments, Jezus, en het bloed der besprenging, dat betere dingen spreekt dan Abel." Maar ook zij kwamen hiertoe slechts in beginsel, door het geloof, centraal in den verhoogden Christus, met Wien ze gezet zijn in den hemel, en door den Geest, Die hun gegeven is. En met al de heiligen door alle eeuwen heen zien ook zij nog uit naar de volle openbaring en eindelijke vervulling van het voorwerp hunner hope: het hemelsche Jeruzalem!

Dat Jeruzalem is eindpunt van alle profetie.

Want er is slechts één Jeruzalem, de stad die fundamenteen heeft, de grondslagen waarvan in de eeuwigheid zijn gelegd, het gemeenebest, waarin God Koning is, en, als Koning regeerend, tevens als Vriend woont bij Zijn volk eeuwiglijk.

Daarop ziet alle profetie der oude bedeeeling, in

woord en schaduw. En daarvan spreekt het laatste profetische Schriftwoord.

Van dat Jeruzalem gewaagt ook hier het woord uit Zacharia.

In vormen, geheel ontleend aan Jeruzalems bestaan van dien tijd, had hij de stad Gods geteekend als geplunderd door de Heidenen, had hij het overblijfsel voorgesteld als ontkomend door den gespleten Olijfberg, en had hij den nieuw-testamentischen dag voorgesteld, als een geheel eenigen dag, waarin niet zou zijn het kostelijke licht en de dikke duisternis. . . .

En des avonds zou het licht worden!

En in dat licht vertoont zich aan des profeten oog, nog altijd in oud-testamentische vormen, het verlorne Jeruzalem!

De Heere is daar een eenig Koning!

Levende wateren vlieten uit de Godsstad over het gansche land!

En hare inwoners zullen daarin zeker wonen!

Blij Jeruzalem!

Een eenig Koning!

En die eenige Koning de Heere!

Want de Heere zal tot Koning over de gansche aarde zijn; te dien dage zal de Heere een zijn, en Zijn Naam een!

Daarin ligt zeker wel de heerlijkheid en schoonheid, de aantrekkelijkheid en zaligheid van Jeruzalem bovenal en centraal. Als Jeruzalem verlost zal zijn, volkomen verlost, dan zal Jehova alleen Koning zijn, en niemand anders zal ooit meer worden genoemd!

O, zeker, er zijn ook paarlen poorten, en er is ook een gouden straat, en er vloeit ook een kristal heldere rivier des levens, en er zijn boomen des levens, en het zal daar eeuwig licht zijn, zonder dat de stad het licht der zon en der maan behoeft, en aldaar zal geen nacht zijn, en de dood is daar niet meer, noch rouw, noch gekrijt. Maar dat alles wordt toch beheerscht door, en vloeit voort uit dit eene groote feit, dat in het verlorne Jeruzalem de Heere eeuwiglijk en eeniglijk Koning is!

Jehova's regeering is zaligheid!

Immers wordt hier bedoeld, dat de Heere daar, in het verlorne Jeruzalem eeuwiglijk als Koning zal worden gekend, erkend, gediend!

Koning is de Heere altijd en overal, in 't gansche heelal, of de mensch dat koningschap erkent of niet. Is Hij niet de Heer? Is Hij niet de Schepper van hemel en aarde. Die de dingen, die niet zijn, roept al's-of ze waren? Is Hij niet de soeverein van alle creatuur? Is Zijns niet alleen het recht, en de macht, om Zijn Woord te doen uitgaan, en gehoorzaamheid te eischen aan Zijn hoog bevel? En is er dan ooit in 't gansche heelal een nietig schepsel, dat Zijn wil kan wederstaan. Regeert Hij niet over de engelen in den hemel, die waardig letten op 't woord van Zijn mond, en over 't stomme schepsel op aarde, dat zich onbewust haast om Zijn Woord uit te voeren? Of staan niet de

starren des hemels, zoowel als zon en maan, onder Zijn hoog bevel, en dat wel om aldoor Zijn eer te verkondigen, en van Zijne heerlijkheid roemen? Behooren niet zee en berg en dal, rivier en meer, boom en bloem en plant, de dieren des velds en de vogelen des hemels en de visschen der zee tot het rijk, waarover Hij bewind voert, en roept Hij ze niet alle bij name, en gehoorzamen ze dan niet op de stem Zijns monds? Of is het dan niet waar, dat ook die vermetele schepselen, die de rebelleerende vuist durven opheffen in het aangezicht van den Allerhoogste, en zich inbeelden, dat ze Zijn wil kunnen wederstaan, volkomen gebonden liggen aan Zijnen wil, en evenmin iets tegen den wil des allerhoogsten Konings kunnen uitvoeren, als de bijl tegen den wil desgenen, die daarmee houdt?

Zeker, God de Heere is altijd soverein!

Maar zooals het rampzaligheid is om zich tegen de opperhoogheid van dien oppersten Potentaat te stellen, zoo is het hoogste zaligheid, om Hem als het hoogste, als het eenig Goed te kennen, te smaken, te lieven en te loven, en het betrachten van Zijn wil, het doen van Zijn Woord het houden van Zijne geboden, als een liefdedienst te ervaren en te genieten.

En dat is het Koningschap hier bedoeld.

Daar in 't verlorne Jeruzalem is de hoogste openbaring en volkomene vervulling van het koningschap der genade, dat in Christus Zijne centrale vervulling en openbaring heeft, en uit en door Hem zal gerealiseerd worden in al de inwoners van het Nieuwe Jeruzalem, om verder door die burgers van de hemelstad te worden gehandhaafd en uitgevoerd in heel de nieuwe schepping. Daar zullen alle schepselen Christus en Zijne gemeente dienen, opdat die verlorne en verheerlijkte gemeente met alle dingen haren God diene, en in dat dienen des Heeren het hoogst mogelijke zielsgenoegen te smaken!

Want overal zal dat Koningschap van Jehova geopenbaard worden!

Tot Koning over de gansche aarde zal Hij zijn! Want wel had het oorspronkelijke woord, in 't licht van het verband en van heel de voorstelling in den tekst, wellicht beter kunnen vertaald worden door "land," en wordt met dit land het aardsche Kanaan bedoeld, maar de eindelijke realizeering van het oude Kanaan is toch het beter vaderland, de gansche nieuwe schepping!

En een eenig Koning zal Hij zijn!

Hij zal één zijn, en Zijn Naam één!

Als de EENE zal Hij staan in het bewustzijn van allen!

Geen afgod zal meer worden genoemd!

Op Hem zal aller oog gericht zijn, aan Hem zal aller dienst gewijd zijn, van Hem zal aller verwachting zijn, en Hij alleen zal gekend worden als de overvloeiende Fontein aller goeden!

Daarom zal dan ook Jeruzalem het verhoogde middelpunt zijn van heel de nieuwe schepping!

Het gansche land zal vlak gemaakt worden, en Jeruzalem zal verhoogd worden, en als het verhoogde Jeruzalem bewoond worden, van het oosten tot het westen (van de poort van Benjamin tot aan de hoekpoort, en tot aan de eerste poort), en het noorden tot het zuiden (van den toren van Hananeël tot aan des konings wijnbakken).

Jeruzalem met troon en tempel, als 't koninkrijk des Heeren en woning Gods zal 't voorname centrum zijn van heel de nieuwe schepping, dat alles beheerscht, waarom alles zich beweegt.

In en om en voor Jeruzalem leeft alles!

Heerlijke Godsregeering!

Rijke zegen!

Levende wateren zullen uit Jeruzalem vlieten!

Naar het oosten en naar het westen, naar de Oostzee en naar de Middeilandsche Zee, dat is over het gansche land, dat is over de gansche aarde, vlieten deze wateren. En ze vlieten onophoudelijk: des zomers en des winters!

Meer dan eens gewaagt de Schrift van levende wateren, die uit Jeruzalem, met name uit het huis des Heeren vlieten. Zoo is de voorstelling in Ezechiël zeven en veertig, waar wateren vlieten van onder het huis des Heeren aan de rechterzijde, eerst ondiep, maar langzamerhand zich verdiepend en tot een stroom zich vormend, die niet te doorwaden is, gezondmakend en leven gevend aan alle levende ziel, die er in wemelt. En aan beide oevers van dezen stroom pronken boomen des levens, spijsgeboomte, welks blad niet afvalt, en welks vrucht niet vergaat; en het blad dient tot heeling, de vrucht tot spijze.

Zoo spreekt de profetie van Joël van een dag, waarin "de bergen van zoeten wijn zullen druipen, en de heuvelen van melk vlieten, en alle stroomen van Juda vol van water gaan; en er zal eene fontein uit het Huis des Heeren uitgaan, en het dal van Sittim bewateren." 3:18.

En bekend is de teekening in Openbaring van "eene zuivere rivier van het water des levens, klaar als kristal, voortkomende uit den troon Gods, en des Lams. In het midden van hare straat, en op de eene en de andere zijde der rivier was de boom des levens, voortbrengende twaalf vruchten, van maand tot maand gevende zijne vrucht; en de bladeren des booms waren tot genezing der Heidenen." 22:1, 2.

Schoon beeld van Gods rijke gunst en genade, die alleen geneest en het waarachtige leven schenkt, is water in de Schrift. Soms is het beeld van Gods gunst in Zijn reinigende kracht, soms uit het oogpunt van Zijn verkwikkende, dorst lesschende kwaliteit. Soms is het beeld van die genade, zooals zij ons direkt raakt, reinigt van ongerechtigheid, wascht in het bloed van Christus, wederbaart en heiligt, zooals in het water des heiligen doops; of zooals zij ons verkwikt en het eeuwige leven schenkt, waarvan de Heiland spreekt in

zijn gesprek met de Samaritaansche. Soms ook beeldt het af de heerlijke genade des Heeren, zooals zij op indirekte wijze tot ons komt om ons te verkwikken en te zaligen.

Dit laatste is hier het geval.

De levende wateren vlieten uit Jeruzalem over het land. Zoo is ook de voorstelling in Ezechiël, Joël, Openbaring. En het is eerst door de vrucht van den boom des levens, die aan den oever van de rivier des levens prijkt, dat de inwoners van Jeruzalem heeling en leven ontvangen.

Heerlijk water des levens!

Beeld van Gods rijke gunst en zaligende, verheerlijkende genade, zooals die straks uit Christus, als het Hoofd der schepping Gods, heel de nieuwe schepping zal doen tintelen van leven en heerlijkheid, en in en door hare vrucht ons overal Gods vriendschap zal doen smaken en aanschouwen!

Overal!

Want de wateren vlieten over het gansche land, naar het oosten en naar het westen.

En voortdurend!

Want, waar andere wateren op bepaalde tijden opdrogen, deze rivier des levens vliet des zomers en des winters.

Blij Jeruzalem!

Zekere woning!

Want "zij zullen daarin wonen."

Wonen in den waren, diepen, Schriftuurlijken zin des woords.

Want wonen is nog iets anders dan ergens een plaats hebben. Het schoonste en rijkste huis van den groote dezer wereld is nog geen woning; de schamele hut van den allerarmste op deez' aard kan wel eene woning zijn.

Wonen is gemeenschap, de genieting van elkanders vriendschap.

En in het verlorne Jeruzalem zal men wonen in den diepsten zin des woords, want daar is de tabernakel Gods bij de menschen, en Hij zal bij hen wonen, en zij zullen Zijn volk zijn, en God Zelf zal bij hen, en hun God zijn! Daar in het hemelsche Jeruzalem is 's Vaders huis met zijne vele woningen in Zijne allerhoogste openbaring van liefde en vriendschap. Daar zullen de burgers van Jeruzalem eeuwiglijk in Zijne geheimen ingaan, Hem zien aangezicht tot aangezicht, en kennen zooals ze ook gekend zijn. . . .

Zij zullen daarin wonen!

Wonen bij God!

En een zekere woning zal Jeruzalem haren burgers zijn!

Niets zal de vrede en veiligheid, de gemeenschap en zaligheid van de hemelstad ooit meer verstoren.

Want daar is geen verbanning, geen ban, geen vloek meer!

Heerlijk Jeruzalem!

H. H.

The Standard Bearer

Semi-Monthly, except Monthly in July and August

Published by

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

EDITOR — Rev. H. Hoeksema

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

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

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

Subscription \$2.50 per year

Entered as second class mail at Grand Rapids, Michigan

EDITORIALS

Common Grace

Permit me to continue my quotation from "The Gospel," to demonstrate how little ground Van Til has for his indictment that I really make God the Subject of man's obedience or disobedience:

"What then is the fallacy of Heyns' reasoning? When, on our part, we deny the doctrine of the two wills, we deny the theory that *God can will two exact opposites in the same sense and with respect to the same objects*. This is what Heyns teaches. He claims: 1. God wills that all men shall be saved. 2. God does not will that all men shall be saved. These two propositions in that form represent nonsense pure and simple. I even claim that no one can accept both propositions. There is no faith that can embrace them. I do not hesitate to assert that Heyns himself does not believe them. As soon as he declares that he believes the first proposition, he thereby already asserted that he does not believe the second proposition. However, in order to make these two contradictory propositions somewhat acceptable, Heyns explained the first will of God, according to which He wills that all men shall be saved as a *longing* or *desire* on the part of God, the second as *decree*. God *desires* that all men shall be saved, but in view of the fact that something interfered from without to frustrate this desire, God decreed to save the elect only. And thus Heyns destroys God's decree! Heyns' God is not God! But what does he do? He argues: if you deny the two wills in God, you must also deny the validity of God's commandments. And what is his error? This, that intentionally or unintentionally, he overlooks the difference between God's will of decree and His ethical will. The argument Heyns ascribes to us runs as follows: 1. God wills (according to His decree) that someone commits murder. 2. God therefore wills (ethically) murder. 3. God cannot be serious about the sixth commandment. Now, we never taught anything like this. Such a thing could never arise in the mind of any Reformed man. Nor is this logic, it is sophistry. The error is that Heyns' tries to introduce *his* dualistic presentation of the will of God into *our* argumentation, and then ascribes *his* erroneous conclusion to us.

But we do not argue this. Our argumentation runs as follows:

1. God willed eternally, sovereignly the coming and occurrence of that which He hates (the sinner and sin); and that, too, in order that His righteousness and holiness might become manifest as hatred of sin.

CONTENTS

MEDITATIE

- VERLOST JERUZALEM 1
Rev. H. Hoeksema

EDITORIALS —

- COMMON GRACE 4
Rev. H. Hoeksema
- THE CHRISTIAN REF. SYNOD ON LABOR UNIONS.... 5
Rev. H. Hoeksema
- EXPOSITION OF THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM..... 6
Rev. H. Hoeksema
- THE HEINOUS SIN OF ACHAN10
Rev. G. M. Ophoff
- PSYCHOPANNYCHIA OR THE THEORY OF THE
SOUL SLEEP13
Rev. R. Veldman
- CURRENT EVENTS15
Rev. J. A. Heyns
- HYMN SINGING IN PUBLIC WORSHIP16
Rev. P. Vis
- AUTHOR OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.....18
Rev. B. Kok

God's counsel is not dualistic, but antithetical. Even as God therefore knew His own eternally in love, so He eternally knew and knows with a sovereign hate of His good pleasure the reprobates. In His counsel the elect *are* known, ordained, called, justified and glorified. In His counsel the reprobates *are* rejected, fallen, lost, cast into outer darkness. What occurs in time, God has eternally before Himself and with Himself. Eternally He loves Jacob, eternally He hates Esau. God therefore, hates the ungodly and their works eternally! For, and this it is that Heyns constantly forgets: God is GOD!

2. When, therefore, the ungodly, in committing sin, *executes God's decree*, then he performs, as rational-moral creature, willingly and consciously, *that which God hates*. (Van Til ought to pay special attention to this, that he may revise his opinion, and correct his error. Here, to be sure, the ungodly is presented as being the responsible subject of his own actions, not God). That he executes the decree of God, does not alter the fact, that in the execution of that decree he does what is in conflict with the will of God, and that which He hates, so that he becomes the object of God's avenging justice. Thus the Scriptures teach us. When the ungodly Jews crucify Jesus, they fulfill God's counsel, yet do what He hates. Thus Pharaoh was ordained, "raised up" to say "No" to God. And as he stands there in Egypt, so he stands eternally in the counsel of God, and that, too, in order that God might show his power in him. And even as God hates him as he stands in all his ungodly rebellion in Egypt, so does God hate him eternally with the sovereign hatred of His good pleasure in His counsel.

3. When the ungodly fulfills God's counsel in time, doing that which He hates, God maintains Himself over against him, and shows him that He hates him because of His ungodly works, even as He hated him eternally in His counsel, and therefore He persists in His demand of that ungodly man: 'thou shalt love Me and keep my commandments.' And this demand of the law of God, in which God maintains Himself as the Eternal Good, the ungodly also faces as he appears in God's eternal counsel. And this demand he also confronts in time. Indeed, it *all* is firmly established in the sovereign good pleasure of God, Who is GOD indeed!"

Van Til will have to admit that the above presentation is quite contrary to what he attributes to us as our view, and that we do not present God as the real subject of man's actions. It is true that in the above quotation we do not speak of *obedience*, but of *disobedience*. Principally, however, this makes no difference. And, besides, there is in the same booklet of ours on "The Gospel" a paragraph setting forth our view of the relation between God and man's obedience, which we will quote the next time, D. V.

H. H.

The Christian Reformed Synod on the Labor Unions

Let us consider the first point of the principles adopted by the last synod of the Christian Reformed Churches on the Unions. We quote it here again:

"Church membership and membership in a so-called neutral labor union (CIO and AFL) are compatible as long as such union gives no constitutional warrant to sin, nor shows in its regular activities that it champions sin."

Now we may pass in silence, or at least just mention in passing, some of the minor objections that may be raised against this "principle." The Synod here leaves the impression that a labor union may be neutral, that is, neither for nor against Christ. It is true that it tries to save itself by the qualification "so-called," but the fact that it declares the possibility of compatibility of church-membership and union-membership certainly proceeds from the same assumption. In 1916 Prof. Berkhof, one of the members of the committee that advised synod to adopt the above "principle," knew better. He then spoke of "the anti-Christian character of the general labor unions." Then he directly opposed the stand he now assumes, as is evident from the following quotation: "Conditions being as they are, we can only come to the conclusion that our Christian laborers must organize separately, if they feel constrained to take an active part in the industrial struggle. We can say this advisedly, notwithstanding the position recently defended in one of our Church papers that a Christian may join 'an organization in the sphere of natural life that does not officially name the Word of God, and is therefore neutral in religion.' For our contention is that the general labor unions are not neutral and cannot, strictly speaking, be neutral."* It seems to me that prof. Berkhof owes it to God and his conscience, as well as to us who listened to him in 1916, to tell us frankly and clearly just how he was converted so radically to the opposition on so serious a question as this. For a serious matter it is, no doubt, first to point out to the people of God the Antichrist, and then, some twenty five years later, to advise them to join him because he is "neutral."

We may also mention just in passing the ambiguity of the wording of this first "principle," an ambiguity that always characterizes the attempt to justify the wrong standpoint or the lie under the cover of maintaining the truth. For, if we take this first "principle" literally, it only declares that church-membership and union-membership are compatible so long as it involves no sinful act on the part of the church-member. And who would not agree with this? But

*The Christian Laborer in the Industrial Struggle, p. 29.

if this is the meaning of the first point in this declaration of principles, it says exactly nothing that everybody did not know before the committee made study of this problem, and it surely says nothing with regard to the problem the committee was appointed to investigate: the character of existing labor unions. But everyone feels, too, that this cannot be the meaning of the first "principle," exactly because the committee was to give advice with respect to the concrete question of a Christian's membership in the existing unions. And one feels that the committee makes a declaration here with regard to that concrete problem. And herein lies the ambiguity of the statement. No one can accuse the committee of having *literally* declared the compatibility of church-membership and union-membership; yet everyone will understand that this is exactly what the committee here *virtually* advocates and the synod adopted.

But this last element in the "principle" adopted by the synod we cannot pass in silence. It is all important. *Synod adopted the "principle" that church-membership and union-membership are compatible!* And this settles the matter as far as the Christian Reformed churches are concerned. The first and main clause of the entire program of "principles" adopted by synod is positively in favor of union-membership on the part of their own church members. Such is the literal wording of the first point: "*Church membership and membership in a so-called neutral labor union (CIO and AFL) are compatible!*"

You object that this is not the meaning of the first "principle" because this clause is definitely qualified? But my answer is:

1. That if the first declaration has any meaning at all, and is not a mere commonplace, the qualifying clause means *that the existing unions do not necessarily give "constitutional warrant to sin" nor show in their "regular activities" that they champion sin.* For if this is not the sense of the qualifying clause, it has no sense at all, and there surely was no earthly sense in adopting it. And exactly because this is the sense of the limiting clause, the main clause stands in all its sinister meaning: "*Church-membership and membership in a so-called neutral union are compatible!*"

2. That by members of the Christian Reformed churches this first "principle" will be interpreted exactly in the sense we here ascribe to it, especially by those members that look for the synod's "moral" support for their union-membership. It must be granted that this first "principle" declares plainly *that compatibility of church-membership and union-membership are quite possible, because the condition for such compatibility (no constitutional warrant to sin, etc.) is presented as quite possible.* Hence, the general membership of the Christian Reformed churches will certainly draw the conclusion that *their* member-

ship in the union is approved by the synod.

Once more: in 1916 prof. L. Berkhof virtually wrote this first point as follows: "Church-membership and membership in the general labor unions is incompatible, because they are anti-Christian, give constitutional warrant to sin, and show in their regular activities that they champion sin." One but has to read the pamphlet from which I quoted above to convince himself of this.

I ask why the radical swing to the left?

Prof. Berkhof owes us an answer. I ask him to give it. He once taught us to shun membership in the general labor unions as anti-Christian; now he advises us to join them. In 1916 he supported his stand by an abundance of grounds. For his present stand he does not offer a single ground. We would like to hear them. We are entitled to hear them. We are entitled to hear from him a refutation of his own arguments offered us in in 1916.

But it is evident that the synod here dealt the death-blow to the Christian Labor Alliance, and that, too, upon advice of one of its own members, Mr. John Van Vels!

H. H.

The Triple Knowledge

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART TWO
OF MAN'S REDEMPTION

Lord's Day VIII.

Chapter III.

The Revelation Of The Living God.

The Catechism emphasizes that the doctrine of the holy trinity is known only from revelation. The Church and the individual believer speak of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as three persons in the divine essence, only "because God hath so revealed himself in his word, that these three distinct persons are the one only true and eternal God." This does not mean that the doctrine of the trinity as such, as a dogma, can be found in the Bible. The Scriptures do not speak of the trinity, of three persons in one essence, nor explain the relation of the three persons to one another. It is not a system of doctrine from which one may simply quote literally in order to prove the

truth of a certain dogma adopted by the Church. It is the revelation of the living God. God came down to us to speak to us, on our own level, in language we could understand, concerning Himself. And when He thus reveals Himself, speaking of His glorious majesty, His works and virtues, He stands before us as the triune God, Who is one, yet also three, and Who through His threeness makes Himself known as the one, true, and eternal God. And the written record of that revelation of the living God we have in the Holy Scriptures. Hence, even though the ready made dogma of the trinity is not to be looked for in the Bible, it should not be difficult to demonstrate that "God hath so revealed himself in his word, that these three distinct persons are the one only true and eternal God."

Abundantly the Scriptures witness that God is *one*. In distinction from, and in opposition to the polytheism of the heathen nations, Israel must know and confess that there is only one God, and that He is one Lord: "Hear, I Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord." Deut. 6:4. His name is Jehovah, the I AM, the One Who exists of and by Himself, the Being of beings, the Unchangeable, the Eternal, the infinite God, the incomparable Holy One of Israel. He, therefore, is God alone, for two or more independent Beings, possessing infinite properties, would imply a contradiction in terms. Hence, without expressly declaring the unity of God, the Scriptures deeply impress the oneness of God upon our minds whenever they speak of the infinite attributes or virtues of God. Hence, He is the one God, beside Whom there is none other, and Who alone is worthy of all praise and adoration, Whose name is excellent in all the earth, and Who set His glory in the heavens, Ps. 8:1; Whose glory the heavens declare, Ps. 19:1; and Who reveals His eternal power and Godhead, in order that men should glorify Him as God, and be thankful to Him, Rom. 1:20, 21. As the one only true God He speaks to us in the singular, and insists that there is no other God beside Him. "I am the Lord thy God" are the introductory words of the Decalogue, and hence, heading all the commandments stands the first: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." In the prophecy of Isaiah the first personal pronoun with reference to God often occurs with great emphasis. "I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee. . . For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Keep not back. . . for I have created him for my

glory, I have formed him, yea, I have made him. . . Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour. I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God. Yea, before the day was I am he: and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it? . . . I am the Lord, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King." Isa. 43:1-14. God is one, Gal. 3:20; and there is one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all, Eph. 4:6.

There is, therefore, "one only simple spiritual Being, which we call God," and to this one Being belong all the essential divine attributes. This one Being is self-existent, infinite, eternal, immutable, transcendent and omnipresent, omniscient, all-wise, good, righteous, holy, gracious, merciful, infinitely glorious and blessed, all powerful, the one sovereign Lord. And He is one in Himself, so that all His virtues, although reflected and revealed to us in their manifold riches, are one in Him. He *is* His virtues. He *is* love and truth, knowledge and wisdom and power, righteousness and holiness, mercy and grace. Nor is there any division or conflict between these various divine virtues. They are absolutely one, so that His righteousness *is* His love, and His mercy *is* His holiness, and His grace *is* His truth. And this one only simple spiritual Essence, "which we call God," and Who is the Incomprehensible, Who dwelleth in the light no man can approach unto, revealed Himself as the *one* Lord, in order that He might be glorified as God, and be the sole object of all our adoration and worship, of all our confidence and hope, that we might know Him, have fellowship with Him, and in that fellowship and adoration of the living God be blessed for ever!

Yet, it is equally true that Scripture everywhere reveals that there is a plurality, a threeness, in this one simple spiritual Being, a threeness that never eliminates or destroys the essential oneness. Even on the very first page of Scripture this plurality in the oneness is plainly indicated: "And God said, Let us make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness." Gen. 1:26. Here, let it be noted: 1. God is addressing Himself, as is evident from the very contents of His speech: to no one beside Himself could He ascribe the work of man's creation or any participation in that work; 2. He is the *one* God speaking: God said; to which it dare not be objected that the plural form for God in the Hebrew (Elohim) implies a plurality of Gods, for the Hebrew form of the verb *said* (*wajomer*) is in the singular; 3. That, nevertheless, a plur-

ality is ascribed as subsisting in the one divine essence by the plural pronouns *us* and *our*. God is one, and His image and likeness are one; yet, He is, in some sense more than one, and that, too, in such a manner that He is able to speak to Himself, suggesting a plurality of *personal* subsistences.

And thus the Word of God throughout reveals that the one God is also more than one, is three in persons. The "Angel of the Lord" is Himself God, even though He is also distinct from Him. For this Angel speaks as God to Hagar in the wilderness: "I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude, Gen. 16:10; and Hagar recognized Him as God, for she "called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me." Gen. 16:13. It is, no doubt, with reference to this same Angel of the Lord that we read: "Then *the Lord* rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven." Gen. 19:24. Moreover, we learn from the Scriptures that in all His works God reveals Himself as acting in threeness of persons. For "by the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the Spirit of His mouth," Ps. 33:6. In calling the things that are not as if they were, God speaks creatively, and in the Gospel according to John Scripture comments upon this divine work as follows: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." And, besides, we read in Gen. 1:2, that the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. Ps. 110:1 puts the following words in the mouth of the inspired author: "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand," where David calls the Christ his Lord, Matt. 12:41-45. In the synagogue of Nazareth the Saviour quotes the words of Isaiah 61:1 with application to Himself: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me." It is the same Spirit of the Lord that renews the face of the earth. Ps. 104:30.

In the New Testament this threeness in God is much more clearly and distinctly revealed, for the Son of God is sent into the flesh, and the Spirit is poured out into the Church. And this Son of God is very God Himself, for "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," John 1:14. And He is "the only begotten God (monogenees theos), which is in the bosom of the Father," John 1:18; "the true God, and eternal life," I John 5:18. And He declares of Himself that He is one in essence with the Father: "I and my Father are one (hen, essence)," John 10:30. And throughout divine names, virtues, works, and honors are ascribed to Him. And the same is true of the Holy Spirit. He is called God, Acts 5:3, 4, 9; He

searches all things, even the deep things of God, I Cor. 2:10; and He alone knows the things of God, I Cor. 2:11. He participates in creation, Gen. 1:2, Ps. 33:6; is the Spirit of life, and of the resurrection, Rom. 8:2, 11; and of the adoption, Rom. 8:15; the Spirit in whose name, as well as in the name of the Father and of the Son, we are baptized, Matt. 28:19, and through Whom the blessings of grace are bestowed upon the Church, II Cor. 13:13. Moreover, He is not an impersonal power, but everywhere He appears as a person, Who comforts, John 14:16; teaches all things, and brings to remembrance the words of Christ, John 14:26; reproves the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, John 16:8; speaks not of Himself, but speaks whatsoever He hears, and shews things to come, John 16:13; and He works all the several gifts of grace, dividing unto every man severally as He will, I Cor. 12:11. Indeed, "three there are that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one," I John 5:7 (A. V.).

A profound mystery is this truth of the trinity. And this need not surprise us, for God Himself is the Mystery of mysteries. We may know Him as He has revealed Himself to us, but behind or beyond that revelation we cannot possibly penetrate. The infinite depths of His being we can never fathom, the immensity of His essence we can never comprehend, the secrets of His nature we can never scrutinize. But this does not mean that the *doctrine* of the trinity is an absurdity, or that the revelation of the trinity is contrary to our understanding. We must give ourselves account, therefore, of what we mean when we say that God is one, and that He is yet three. In what sense is God one, and in what sense is He three? For that He cannot be one and also three in the same sense is evident. And this question the Heidelberg Catechism answers by stating that "there is but one only divine essence," and that yet the three *Persons* are distinct in that divine essence, so that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are the one only true and eternal God.

There is, then, one divine essence: God is one with respect to His Being. There are not three Gods, there is only one God. There are not three divine natures, there is only one divine nature. There are not three divine minds, there is only one divine mind. There are not three divine wills, there is only one divine will. And it is in that one divine essence and nature that all the divine attributes subsist: the one divine essence is the implication of all infinite perfections. But in that one divine being there are three subsistences, hypostases, persons. And here three questions arise that require an answer in order somewhat to understand the doctrine of the trinity, viz. 1. What is meant by *person*. 2. What is the relation of the three persons of the Trinity to the divine Es-

essence? 3. And what is the relation of the three persons of the Trinity to one another?

What is a *person*? In man his person is that which he calls his Ego, his *I*. It is the subject of all his actions, and it remains the same through whatever changes he may pass, in life or in death. *I* think, *I* desire, *I* will, *I* speak, *I* see, *I* hear, *I* eat and drink, *I* rejoice and sorrow, *I* love and hate, *I* sing and weep, *I* suffer and die, and *I* am raised from the dead. In all these actions and experiences my *person* is the subject that performs and experiences, and that remains the same throughout. From infancy to old age we pass through many changes, yet we know quite well that we remained the same individual subjects. In death the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, yet it is the same *person* that passes through death, and into his eternal home. A person, then, is the subject of all actions and experiences in a rational, moral nature. A tree may be an individual tree, and a cow may be an individual cow, but neither the tree nor the cow is a person: they possess no rational moral natures. But the human nature is rational-ethical. And the individual in that nature is a self-conscious person, a rational-moral subject acting through mind and will. When, therefore, we assert that there are three persons in the Godhead, we mean that in the one spiritual nature of God there are three subjects, three that say *I*, distinct from one another in personal properties, but subsisting in the same divine essence, and eternally remaining the same in their distinct subsistence. These distinct personal properties are indicated by their names: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The Father is eternally and distinctively Father: He generates the Son. The Son is eternally Son: He is generated by the Father. The Spirit is eternally Spirit: He proceeds from the Father, and from the Son. The Father is subject of all the divine essential properties, and of all the divine works, as Father: He thinks, wills, loves, counsels, decrees, creates, saves, as Father, never as Son, nor as Holy Spirit. The Son is subject of all the essential divine attributes, and of all the divine works, as Son, never as Father, nor as Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit is subject of all the essential virtues of the Godhead, and of all the divine works, as Spirit, never as Father, nor as Son. One divine essence, one divine nature, one divine mind and will, one divine life we confess; but in that one divine essence and nature there are three that think, will, love, and live, each in His own distinct personal manner. The Holy Trinity is a threeness of persons in unity of essence.

As to the relation of these three persons to the essence of the Godhead, we must emphasize that there is no division, no separation, no subordination between the three persons, but that all are equally God in the one Being. It is not so, that the divine essence is divided among the three persons, that each of the

three persons subsists in part of the divine essence, or that the three persons are of different rank, subordinated to one another. That would lead to tritheism, to the doctrine of three Gods. On the contrary, all the three persons of the trinity subsist in the whole divine essence, and equally possess all the essential properties of the Godhead. All are equally infinite, eternal, immutable, almighty, wise, and good. If I may express myself thus humanly, all the three persons live and act on the same plane of the infinitely perfect Being of God. The Father is not the chief God, the Son God in a secondary sense, and the Holy Spirit in a still more subordinated sense of the word. These three distinct persons are equally the one true and eternal God!

And so, the relationship of the three persons of the Holy Trinity to one another is such that He is the living God, and that He lives the life of infinitely perfect friendship: He is the covenant God in Himself, and His own covenant life of friendship is the infinite archetype and basis of our covenant relation to, and covenant fellowship with Him.

The doctrine of the trinity implies that God is the living God! He is Life, and He lives in and through Himself. Life is energy expressing itself in activity. And it presupposes relationship, harmonious relationship. To live is to act and react normally in that relationship. Life cannot be in solitude. It always is some kind of communion, of fellowship. Now, God is the implication of infinite energy. In Him there is an infinite depth of divine power, of *dynamis*, of wisdom and righteousness and holiness and goodness and love and mercy and truth, incessantly active. And in the triune God there is also the infinitely perfect relationship and harmony for this energy to express itself into constant activity. For He is one, and this oneness is the eternal basis of the divine unity and harmony: in God there is no discord, no conflict, no dissonant, no disagreement; He is eternally in harmony with Himself. Yet, He is not alone, though He be one. Were He alone, He could not be the living God in Himself. But now the one God subsists in threeness of persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that sustain the relationship of perfect harmony to one another, and that react upon one another with all the energy of the divine nature, in knowledge and wisdom, in righteousness and holiness, in infinitely perfect love. And so there is a continuous current of divine energy, of infinitely perfect divine self-consciousness and joy, a glorious stream of life from the Father, to and through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit. God is life. He lives in Himself. And as the living God He is perfectly self-sufficient. He is in need of none besides Himself. Of the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit, He knows and is known, He loves and is loved, He adores and is adored, He glorifies and is glorified in Himself. The truth of

the trinity means that God is the living God!

And He is the covenant God. For the idea of the covenant is not that of an agreement, pact, or alliance: it is a bond of friendship and living fellowship. Friendship is that bond of fellowship between persons according to which and by which they enter into one another's life in perfect knowledge and love, so that mind is knit to mind, will to will, heart to heart, and each has no secrets for the other. It presupposes a basis of likeness, of equality, for only like knows like; and on that basis of equality it requires personal distinction, for without this there is only sameness, there can be no fellowship. And both, the equality and the personal distinction are in God. For He is the triune! The most absolute equality exist between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for these three are one in essence. And in Him there is the personal distinction between the three persons subsisting in the one Essence. And so, the three persons of the Holy Trinity completely and perfectly enter into one another's life. Their fellowship is infinitely perfect. They have no secrets from one another. There is no conflict between them. Their relationship is one of perfect harmony. The Father knows and loves the Son in the Spirit; the Son knows and loves the Father in the Spirit; the Spirit knows and loves the Father through the Son in the Himself. The living God is the covenant God! That is the great significance of the truth that God is triune, and that these three distinct persons are the one only true and eternal God!

H. H.

The Heinous Sin Of Achan

Jericho has been captured. Its walls fell by faith. The victory was solely God's and His gracious gift to His people in response to their faith—a faith of which their compassing the walls of the city was the living expression. Thus the victory was not of them, of anything they had done, for they had done nothing at all except march, shout, and blow the trumpets.

Certainly, the falling of the walls could not be attributed to their marching. The victory was the Lord's; and, though in the warfare that was to follow, the people would take an active part—they must engage the enemy on the battlefield—the victory would continue to be the Lord's. They must strive to enter in; but their striving—their joining battle with the adversary—must be the expression, not of a sinful and vain determination to achieve by their own strength (being God's handiwork, they are without strength in themselves) but of a living faith in their redeemer-God, of the assurance that He will continue

to qualify them for His warfare and respond to His work in them by making the adversary their footstool. Thus the victory that conquers the cursed tribes that infest Canaan is solely their faith. It was to drive home this vital truth that the miracle of the fall of Jericho's walls was worked at the very commencement of the conquest of Canaan. It is so evident from the history of this warfare that victory is theirs solely because the Lord fights for them.

Because the victory is God's, the spoils of war—Canaan, its inhabitants together with all their possession in their silver and gold and iron and cattle—is also exclusively the Lord's. Hence, with these spoils He may do as He pleases. That the people might have understanding also of this, the city was accursed to the Lord. (ch. 6:17). It was burnt with fire, and all that was therein—both men and women, young and old, and ox and sheep and ass—was destroyed with the edge of the sword. And the silver and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron were put in the treasury of the Lord. Of His spoils, He will freely give them. But what they receive, they will hold merely as a trust. He will remain the absolute proprietor. They will be dwelling in God's country as His servants in duty bound to consecrate themselves with all their possessions exclusively to Him, their Saviour and Redeemer. Being, as it was, the key city of the Canaanites, the capture of Jericho was the pledge of all the victories that were to follow. With this city vanquished, they were now in the possession of the firstfruits of the conquest.

There was still another lesson that was learned at this juncture in connection with Achan's theft and the resultant reverses suffered by the army in its war with the city of Ai. Let us get before our mind the facts in this sad case.

The first words with which the account begins are to the effect that Israel committed a trespass in respect to that which was devoted. But the individual directly involved was Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah. His sin was that he took of what had been devoted, a Babylonish garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight. The sin has its evil effects in the expedition against Ai. For the anger of the Lord was kindled to a blaze and it turned its destructive force first against the whole people.

Joshua sends men from Jericho to Ai, to explore the land. The report was brought back that the entire population of the city amounted to only twelve thousand and that therefore a few thousand chosen warriors would be sufficient to overcome its military force. But the movement results in a dismal failure not because the strength of Ai had been underrated. Thirty six of their number are smitten in the flight from the gates of Ai. The loss is very small, but the

A great sin has been committed indeed since the capture of Jericho in connection with the spoils of war. The Lord becomes very definite. Directly the matter concerns a lone individual. The actual theft was committed by one man only (11-14). And except they destroy the accursed thing from among them, the Lord will not be with them anymore. However ominous this threat, it is full of comfort. There is salvation for the whole people if only they denounce and repudiate the great sin through bringing to trial and in the name and by the direction of the Lord inflicting punishment upon the offender. The punishment demanded is not any more severe than the sin is heinous. He that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burned with fire (after being put to death by stoning (ver. 25), "he and all that he hath: because he hath transgressed the covenant of the Lord, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel." The Lord points out to the judges the offender through the lot. Conformably to God's command, Joshua the next morning brings the tribes of Israel before Jehovah, when Achan is indicated as the transgressor. There are four lots. By the first the tribe of Judah is taken; by the second the clan of Zerah; by the third the house of Zabdi; and by the fourth the man Achan.

Being exhorted by Joshua to confess his sin Achan owns all (vers. 16-18). The stolen property is found in his tent according to his statement (vers. 22-23).

He himself with all what belongs to him is stoned and burnt (vers. 24-26). And they raise over him a great heap of stones. So the Lord turns from the fierceness of His anger. And the name of the place is called "Achor" or *trouble*. The memory of this terrible story lives in the mind and heart of the people for judgment, to be sure, but, in latest times, also for hope. The valley of Achor will be given for a door of hope, where God's people shall sing. (Hosea 2:15).

Something more must be said about the man Achan and his sin. As to his sin, it is truly atrocious as to its character. Israel's warfare is God's. He willed and declared the war and commanded and qualified His people. The war was a holy crusade against men who were sinners directly before God—sinners who had filled their measure of iniquity and who, therefore, by divine direction, had to be destroyed, devoted to God without redemption for the enhancement of His glories. To the people of Israel it is given by grace to be co-workers with God in this warfare and fight His battles out of faith, in obedience to His command, as constrained by the love of God, and as sustained by the gladdening prospect that Israel will dwell with the Lord their redeemer in Canaan, when this country shall have been cleansed from its present corruptors. But as to the man Achan, his interests lie elsewhere. His god is gold, the things below. And the lust of these things constrain him. God is

not in all his thoughts. Hence, the warfare, as he has been warring it is, as are all modern wars, but an unholy, a mad scramble for this earth, a vile contest with men as corrupt and depraved as he for the riches of this earth. Thus that warfare, in so far as it was waged by him, was murder, thievery, idolatry, the achievement of carnal ambition. It was the breaking of God's covenant indeed.

We must not minimize Achan's sin, reduce it to small proportions and then begin to wonder how God could deal so severely with the man for a sin so trifling:—the taking of a little gold and some silver from a store so vast. When the sin was still in its contemplative stage, the man himself must have made light of it. All that he was about to do is to appropriate for his own use an insignificant portion of the substance of men accursed by God. He would not be robbing his brothers. And wasn't he entitled to some small reward for his war effort? And what were the priests to do with that vast treasure? Certainly, he would not be the only offender. So he must have reasoned by himself.

True it is that others also offended. There were many perhaps who complained of the shamefulness of the destruction of so many fine cattle and costly finery. But when the deed was done, God said that His covenant has been broken.

Achan's sin was great also on this account that Joshua, in behalf of the Lord had with such emphasis and in speech so unmistakable commanded the people. "And ye," he had said, "Ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse and trouble it" (ch. 6:18). As for Achan, the Lord might just as well not have spoken.

The disobedience of the man, his defiance of God, brands him a hardened sinner. God is not real to him. There are several indications that Achan is just this kind of a man. Firstly, his sole consideration is how to make away with his loot without being detected by Joshua and the elders. He has to do solely with Joshua, so he thinks, and thus not with God through Joshua. So he hides his treasure in the earth in the midst of his tent as willingly ignorant of the fact that all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do (Heb. 4:13). That he has now made the camp of Israel a curse, and troubled it, is to him a thought too ridiculous to contemplate. He is that kind of a person. Apparently, the defeat of the three thousand leaves him unaffected. He perhaps even denounces them in his heart for their lack of courage or criticizes Joshua for underrating the strength of the adversary. Of course the man is pretending. He really is ill at ease especially now when word passes through the camp that the defeat is to be ascribed to the presence of an accursed thing

people are thoroughly disheartened. Their heart melts and becomes water. And there is reason. If the Lord no longer fights for His people, they have no prospect save that of being annihilated by the combined forces of the adversary.

Joshua's distress is deep. With the elders he falls down before the ark of God and continues with them in lamenting their lot in the ear of God until the evening. They rend their clothes and put dust upon their heads in deepest displeasure. "Alas," says Joshua, "Alas! O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of Jordan! O Lord what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before the enemies: For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land, shall hear of it, and shall environ us round and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?"

That Joshua, a man trusting in God and wholly consecrated to His cause, could voice in the ear of God sentiments such as these—there is in his complaint the suggestion that God might be betraying His people—shows how Israel's defeat has amazed, confounded and distressed him. He does not really mean to accuse God. But being ignorant of Achan's theft and of the guilt in which the deed has involved the whole nation, he is at a loss how to explain the disaster. And the elders share his ignorance and likewise the whole people. Yet it should have occurred to him that someone must have sinned and that therefore the cause of the defeat lies not in want of faithfulness on the part of God but on that of Israel. The Lord's reply to him partakes therefore of the nature of a stern rebuke. "Get thee up," says the Lord to him, "Wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face, Israel has sinned. . . ." God's displeasure is vehement as appears from the several designations of their sin. "They have transgressed my covenant. . . .: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff."

Though the actual stealing was the evil work of one individual, the whole people are accused. The sin is communal. All are held responsible. The sin of the one is the sin of the many, not certainly because Achan legally represented the whole nation but on the ground of the solidarity of the family and race, i.e., of the entire union of interests and responsibilities in a social group. It is useless and vain to ask whether it is right and just that there should be this union of responsibilities. Irrespective of whether the justice of it appears to us, it is just, because God so wills. We deal here with a divine ordinance. With God there can be no injustice. But it must also be clear to every unprejudiced mind that God does the group no injustice by holding it responsible for the actual sins of

its members. For the group is as sinful as the members of which it is formed; and therefore it commits, if not actually then potentially, all the sins committed by its members. The lust of which Achan's theft was the conclusion, rioted in the flesh of every Israelite, but with this difference that in Achan lust had crystallized into action. All lusted. All stole. But in them the will to obey had triumphed over lust. Achan, as consumed by lust, had taken of the accursed thing.

And the responsibility is also theirs. They all are now under the ban of God (vs. 12). The Lord no longer fights for them. But of this they remain ignorant until confronted by the men of Ai. Then the Lord fails to gird their warriors with courage and daring for the battle. At the sight of the onrushing foe, they are seized by a panic and take refuge in disgraceful flight. Joshua is astonished. And the hearts of the people melt.

It is not easy to know just what construction is to be placed on the complaint of Joshua. What we must bear in mind, in the attempt to discover the thrust of this complaint, is that he who here prostrates himself before the Lord is a believer, a child of grace. Though as to the form of the words, the complaint has something in common with the murmurings of the rebellious generation that had perished in the wilderness, it must differ radically from these murmurings as to the spirit that pervades it. "And what," so he wails, "wilt thou do unto thy great name?" This is the language of love. God would do His name greatest injury, should he now destroy His people. For promises have been made, for one thing. Unless these promises are kept, the Lord will disgrace Himself in the eyes of the nations. For Joshua, the thought is too painful to contemplate. Then, too, he knows that in themselves the people whom he must lead in battle are sinful and condemnable so that, should the Lord do with them according to their sins, He would certainly deliver them into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy them at this very juncture. The thought rises in his soul that the Lord might be resolved to do this very thing, destroy them for all sins committed in the past and unforgiven. But he well knows that this cannot possibly be. Yet there is the defeat of Israel's warriors. What, since the capture of Jericho, could have occasioned this disaster, what new sin committed by the people. He knew of no sin. "O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before the enemies." Joshua knows not what to say or what to think. He is in a quandary. He feels that already he has said too much, has offended with his speech.

It must have come to him somewhat as a relief when the Lord, helping him out of his dilemma, said to him, "Israel has sinned. . . for they have taken of the accursed thing." The Lord's reply, though dreadful and saddening, is the answer to his questionings. There is an accursed thing in their midst (vers. 13).

in the camp. How could they know? Had someone, who saw him bearing home his loot, reported his theft to Joshua? But this could not be as he was certain that he had taken all the necessary precautions. He is again confident when he hears that the offender must be ascertained by the use of the lot. The offender is still unknown; and he has no faith in the lot as a means of detecting crime. Yet it is strange that the tribe of Judah is taken, for to this tribe he belongs. Fear grips his soul; and when Joshua finally brings before the Lord his own household, man by man, and he, himself, is taken, he stands speechless yet impenitent; for he is a hardened sinner.

The plight of the man deeply affects Joshua. He has sorrow in his heart on account of the terrible punishment which must be inflicted upon the culprit. Speaking kindly and earnestly, he says to the man, "My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me." "Own Him as the God who seeth and knoweth all sin, however deeply hidden." The man by this time has regained his composure. He steels himself. Finally he speaks, "Indeed, I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done. When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonian garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them and took them; and behold, they are in the earth in the midst of my tent and the silver under it." This is not the language of true penitence. It bears not the marks of a true confession. Judging from the reactions of Joshua, the tone of the man is defiant. It bespeaks a wrong spirit. Perhaps the thrust of his reply is well set forth in this language, "Yes, indeed, I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, but what of that."

The tent of Achan is now explored, and it is found that he has spoken the truth. It seems unlikely that he could have brought as unassisted, so much silver and gold to his tent. There must have been, so it would seem, an accomplice. The man's own wife and children must have known of the theft.

The recovered loot is brought before Joshua and the elders, who lay it out before the Lord. They thus present to the Lord the evidence of the sin, meaning to take Him as their witness that in inflicting punishment upon Achan there is no miscarriage of justice.

Achan, his loot, his sons and his daughters, his oxen, asses, and sheep, and all that he has, is subsequently brought to the valley of Achor. Joshua is now very stern. Facing the man, he utters these terrible words, "Why hast thou troubled us? The Lord shall trouble thee this day. Achan is stoned, he and his sons and daughters. And all that he has is burnt."

So do they make of him a terrible example. And the truth set forth for the instruction of the whole people is that the warriors of God must be consecrated to Him in love and not to an idol and that, except they are this, their warfare is an abomination to the Lord and they themselves cursed. It was needful that this truth be emphasized now that the conquest of Canaan had commenced.

G. M. O.

Psychopannychia or The Theory of the Soul-sleep

John Calvin in his own characteristic manner speaks of this doctrine as "the error entertained by some unskillful persons who ignorantly imagine that in the interval between death and the judgment the soul sleeps," an "absurd dogma of babblers," and a "madness which should be severely repressed." It concerns itself with the intermediate state, which is, as Calvin puts it, the interval between death and judgment, between our departure from this life and the consummation of all things in the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The presentation of this theory is simple enough. The soul of man, either that of the righteous or that of the wicked, does not enter at once into its eternal destination. The godly do not enter immediately upon death into active conscious life and glory with God, nor do the wicked enter at once into conscious torment. The spirits of both continue in a state of sleep, of unconscious repose, of spiritual insensibility until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to judge the quick and the dead and to make all things new. According to many there is also an intermediate *place*, where all the souls of all the dead thus slumber together until awakened in the day of the Lord Jesus.

For this fantastic theory, which, according to Calvin, originated with the Arabs and has since found its adherents throughout the ages, a variety of proofs is presented. 1) Men reason that there can be no conscious, active life apart from the body. The soul in its conscious activity is simply dependent on the brain, and if the latter is destroyed the former cannot function. Think of the change effected in our soul life by sleep. The moment the body falls asleep all consciousness is at a standstill, and although there remains a subconscious activity of the soul, all perception ceases and mind and will cease to function normally and orderly. And in sleep man is still alive and all contact with the world of things is still

unbroken. How much the more will the spirit of man cease to function actively and consciously when death enters to sever all contact with the world of things until the day of resurrection. 2) Does not Scripture itself repeatedly speak of death as a *sleep*? "And the Lord said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt *sleep* with thy fathers; . . ." Deut. 31:16. To the Jews in the home of Jairus the Lord says, "Give place: for the maid is not dead, but *sleepeth*." Matt. 9:24. Concerning Lazarus Jesus says to His disciples, "Our friend Lazarus *sleepeth*, but I go, that I may awake him out of *sleep*." John 11:11. Jesus is called "the firstfruits of them that *slept*," I Cor. 15:20, and Paul would not have us to be ignorant "concerning them which are asleep." I Thess. 4:13. Listen to Job as he complains, "As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep." Job. 14:11, 12. 3) In numerous other passages Scripture, although it does not use the word "sleep," certainly teaches us that the dead are unconscious. "For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" Ps. 6:5. "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence." Ps. 115:17. "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." Ps. 146:4. 4) Holy Writ repeatedly speaks of death as the descent into Sheol (Hades in the New Testament), and Sheol is the land of silence, of rest, of forgetfulness, where man has no part in all that takes place under the sun. It is the dreary abode of the shades, wherein both the righteous and the ungodly enter at death. It is the realm of unconsciousness and inactivity to which all alike descend and which all the dead have in common, the hazy region of the dead. 5) According to the Word of God the eternal destinies of all men will be determined by a final judgment, a single judgment which will render to all their just rewards, to the godly everlasting life, to the wicked eternal desolation. Before that day there can be no blessedness on the one hand or punishment on the other. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Cor. 5:10. Hence, the soul cannot enter into its destiny, either to rejoice or weep forever, immediately at death. 6) Finally, several individuals have been raised from the dead in the Old Testament and by our Lord Jesus Himself, but none had any account to give of their experiences in the realm of the dead. It seems plain that the interval between death and their return to life was spent in complete insensibility.

Let us now consider these proofs in the order in which they were given. 1) It is true that there can be no consciousness in this life apart from the body

and the physical brain; that at present all consciousness and activity are dependent on my nature as it now is. Does this mean that God cannot provide in any other way? That I cannot be conscious *here* without the brain does not imply that this is also impossible in the life to come. 2) It is true that Scripture refers frequently to death as a sleep. However, this does not refer to the spirit with relation to the things to come. In that case how could Job say, "They shall lie down (sleep) alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them." 21:26? The worms shall cover their spirits in the intermediate state and place? No, the reference is to man's present body. In death the child of God lays down his head, closes his eyes and departs all that pertains to this present life in the hope of being resurrected to eternal life in the glorious day of our Saviour. Therefore his death is called a "sleep," and therefore Scripture applies this figure to the death of the Christian only. 3) There are passages in Holy Writ which present the dead as unconscious. However, in each case Scripture intends to stress the point that in the state of death man cannot partake of the activities of this world. The viewpoint in this life, not he life to come. Thus there is in death no remembrance of God and thus his thoughts perish in that very day. 4) Likewise Sheol (Hades) is the place of the dead, the land of silence and forgetfulness from our earthly point of view. It is the realm of the dead in distinction from this present life, where man, the righteous as well as the wicked, is cut off from all that is related to this earth and from all earthly communion and contact. However, from the viewpoint of the eternal state of the dead Sheol is distinguished in two: the state of glory and eternal life, which is "Paradise," and the state of suffering and eternal punishment, which is "Gehenna." Therefore the Old Testament Scriptures can speak of the descent of the wicked into Sheol as something exceedingly dreadful. It is the place of destruction. "Sheol is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering." Job. 26:6. There burns the fierce wrath of Jehovah. And therefore there is joy for the righteous, even in the face of death. For them the descent into Sheol means the entrance into everlasting glory. Therefore also the Old Testament, although it has a word for heaven, has no special word for hell. Sheol, for the wicked, is hell. 5) It is true, that the eternal destiny of all men is determined in the way of judgment. Also, there will be a final judgment, in which all men will appear, the justice of God will be revealed, in the presence of every creature and every man's reward will be announced publicly. That judgment will lead to the consummation of all things. However, God always judges man; wherefore all are ready to receive the reward of their works the moment they depart this life. 6) Finally, it is true that none of those raised from the dead had aught to tell

of their experiences, but at best this is merely an argument from silence. In the light of all Scripture teaches this is no argument whatever. Some suggest that these individuals were not permitted to tell about the things they had seen. Others feel that an account of heavenly things would have been impossible in human language. We prefer to believe, that in view of the fact that they were to be raised, God did keep them in a state of unconsciousness until the moment of their return to this life. Whatever be the solution, it is certain that no argument can at any time be based on silence.

It is plain, therefore, that this theory is indeed an "absurd dogma of babblers," which finds no support whatever in the Word of God. Clearly Scripture teaches the very opposite. True, God's Word speaks comparatively little about the intermediate state. That is particularly true with respect to the wicked. Rather does it direct our attention to the end of all things, to that full salvation which shall be our portion in the consummation of the ages. This does not mean, however, that Scripture leaves us in the dark with respect to the question: What is the present state of those who have passed on? The wicked open their eyes in eternal torment. They are in misery the moment they depart from this life. The rich man opened his eyes in hell, where his state, fixed forever, is one of conscious misery. The righteous, on the other hand, are in perfect bliss the moment they depart from this life. Therefore they are "willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord." 2 Cor. 5:8. Therefore Paul considers it "far better to depart, and to be with Christ." Phil. 1:23. Therefore Jesus can assure the malefactor on the cross, "*Today* thou shalt be *with Me* in *Paradise*." Lu. 23:43. Therefore we rejoice that God has appointed us "to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him." 1 Thess. 5:9, 10. The moment the Christian breathes his last the blessed light and life of the eternal day, not the shades of night and insensibility, envelop him,—forever.

R. V.

Current Events

At this present moment the most outstanding event of recent date still is the complete capitulation of Italy to the Allies. It is still too early to see this complete surrender in the right perspective. In the first place we have no way of telling how strong the German army is in Italy. From recent developments it has appeared that Germany has sufficient forces there to cause great delay in the occupation not only of the

entire country but even of the southern and central parts of Italy. Further we know not definitely whether Germany chooses to defend any more than the portion north of the Po River. True it is she is putting up a great resistance near Naples, but a few days may reveal this to be but a delaying action battle even though the forces employed are of great strength. Besides this, we cannot get a complete and true picture of the effect of this capitulation of Italy upon the German masses. Germany will not tell us, and we have no sure way of determining.

A few things do stand out clearly however. For one thing Germany has been given a good dose of her own medicine. Deceit was her favorite dish, and now she is deceived by her own Ally. Herr Hitler is a great one for making treaties and promises only to break them before the ink is dry. However, two can play that game and now Italy not only withdraws her support from Germany in her war but does so very deceitfully. The armistice is not made known until the Allies have time to invade far up the coast of Italy to the surprise of the Germans.

One favorable aspect of this surrender for the Allies is the fact that our Atlantic fleets can now steam to the south Pacific to intensify the war in this area. Undoubtedly we shall in the near future see a new flare-up here and hear of bitter naval engagements between our Navy and that of Japan. Japan's Navy at present is in hiding, but Japan will soon discover that you cannot win wars by hiding away from the enemy especially not if he has a large enough navy to come and look for you.

However when we consider the enormous problem of feeding Italy's hungry populace, we realize that it is a costly victory for us. This will also in a measure offset the advantage of acquiring Italy's fleet, for the feeding of Italy will entail much shipping and convoying of these cargo ships across the Atlantic.

What amazes one is the reasoning of our own Government. It sees fit and considers it a need to feed these hungry Italians with our wheat and our meat. Far be it from me to condemn this action as such. If we can, let us do so. These Italians surely are our neighbours today, but it is amazing that the same administration that advocates this and intends to do this saw fit a few years ago to burn our wheat and meat when thousands of our own people were not able to buy it and many went hungry in our own land.

We are supposed to be a christian nation, and yet our present administration reveals very boldly its anti-christianity if not its atheism. It speaks of God. It prays to Him. It promises us religious freedom. Yet in spite of all this it shows its atheistic and anti-christian tendencies. We are promised freedom from want, but you may rest assured that our Government will never fulfill this promise. No Government can promise these things and fulfill its promise. Only God

can give us an abundance of food, and He can also make us live in dire want should He so desire. The early killing frosts that we have experienced in this vicinity brings this home forcefully. How can any Government guarantee us freedom from want when God controls all things and sends the weather He sees fit to send? Many officials already predict a shortage of foodstuffs which we formerly had in abundance. If our Government would only take God's existence as the Sovereign Ruler of all things into consideration it would not promise us freedom from want. Coupled with the promise of religious freedom this surely will never work. Religious freedom means that we are not only free to serve God if we so desire but also means that we are free not to serve Him in case we do not believe in Him. No nation that allows its citizens the right to be free from serving God can promise to its citizens freedom from want. No earthly Government is above God. When man first sinned in Paradise, God told him he would eat in the sweat of his brow. Throughout history God has been punishing the ungodly with famines. How then can any Government which gives man the liberty not to serve God promise over God's head that man shall escape punishments for his sins? A Government can promise religious freedom, but then it must not also promise freedom from want. Such a Government should warn its citizens that the day of vengeance will come. God will not be mocked. If America would bless God, we could pray and sing, "God Bless America," but if America refuses to serve God, we cannot even expect God to give us an abundance of earthly things.

As far as freedom from fear is concerned, this likewise cannot be guaranteed by any Government. It makes no difference to me what my Government may do, I will always be afraid of God and His just judgment. Were it not for the cross of Christ, I would be deathly afraid of Him. Were it not for His cross I would also be desperately afraid of my neighbour and of the other nations about me. No man and no group of men can change the hearts of the ungodly. You may punish them and you may teach them, but you will never change them. Therefore no Government can promise its people freedom from fear of invasion by the enemy. A nation can arm itself to the teeth and far outstrip all other nations in the weapons of defensive and offensive warfare, but it will only confess by its actions that it still lives in fear.

Besides this no nation on the face of this earth has up to this present moment freed its citizens from fear. With all the police forces, detective agencies and the like, we live in fear of murder, theft, kidnapping and even lynchings not to mention the fear of fraudulent practices and fly-by-night concerns. There is fear in every country on the face of this earth, for every man fears his neighbour with the exception that the child of God is not afraid of his brother in

Christ. When this prevails at home and cannot be conquered by punishment and education, how can we be promised freedom from fear of what the outsider may do to us? Nay, where there is religious freedom there can be no freedom from fear. Only where you have a *real* Christian nation is there any possibility of freedom from fear of the neighbour, and not until Christ's kingdom and not the kingdom of the Anti-Christ is established over the length and breadth of this earth will all fear be banished and all war forever cease. Let us put it this way: Where there is no fear of God, there must be fear of your fellow men, and where there is the fear of the Lord, all fear of man vanishes.

The child of God is free from fear. "Jehovah is my light and my salvation near. What shall my soul affright or cause my heart to fear?" he sings. He knows that in Christ Jesus our Lord he has the victory. He realizes that his neighbour may take his life and possessions, but he also knows that in Christ he is heir of all things. He recalls the word of God, "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth."

These are promises that Christ gives unto him and not his earthly Government. These are promises from the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. These are promises given only to the citizens of the kingdom of heaven. These promises can be given to that citizen of the kingdom of heaven by its King because He has died for their sins and arisen for their justification. They are reconciled to God through Him and become His children, and now when God is for us, who can be against us? There is freedom from fear. It is promised by God in Christ and only unto His people.

J. A. H.

Hymn Singing In Public Worship

In the life of the sincere child of God singing is a necessary engagement. The true child of God must sing. Not only because God demands such of him but also because it is the desire of his heart to do so. For the sincere christian realizes that he has been saved by sovereign grace, and in the measure that he does, his heart must needs express itself in singing of unfathomable wisdom and boundless love. He cannot help but sing. However also in his singing it is his calling and desire to do all to the glory of God. For that reason any subject dealing with the content of his songs and the manner in which they must be sung is of interest to him and is proper and significant.

However that may be said of this subject in particular. For, firstly, it speaks not merely of his singing in general but specifically of his singing in Di-

vine worship. And it is exactly there in Divine worship that singing is dear to him. There as nowhere else in communion with the saints he gives expression to the joy and sorrow of his heart in song. But it is also there that his singing has tremendous influence. Many a false doctrine has taken root and has been nourished by means of songs sung in public worship. We do well to always remember this, but especially now when we deal with a subject such as this. And, secondly, the subject speaks of hymn singing in these cherished and influential services. This adds to its significance and timeliness. For hymns are being introduced in all other churches and it is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain Psalters. Hence quite naturally the timely and weighty question arises: Can we as churches not sing hymns in public worship? Is it wrong in this respect to follow the crowd?

In answer to this we would say first of all that the singing of hymns in public worship as such is not to be condemned, provided the hymns sung are truly sound. There have been some in the past and there are still a few today who maintain that hymn singing in public worship is always wrong and to be condemned and that for the simple reason that they are hymns and not psalms. And it often happens in a discussion on this subject that the main question seems to be whether or not hymns may be sung. However to our mind we have no problem there at all. Scripture nowhere demands of us that in our singing we confine ourselves to the Psalms nor does it forbid us to sing hymns. Rather it does the very opposite. For we read in Eph. 5:19, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." And again in Col. 3:16, "Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." From these verses it is evident that rather than to limit us in our singing to the Psalms God even encourages us to sing hymns in addition to these. This was also seen and understood by the Church in the past. Therefore it allowed the Song of Mary, Zacharias and Simeon, the Morning and Evening Hymns, and the Hymn of Prayer to be sung in Divine worship and gave them a place in the Psalm book and Psalter. Hence the question is not at all whether we *may* sing hymns. Scripture plainly teaches us that we may and this the Church has always realized.

This does not mean of course that we may sing any and all hymns in our public worship. There are many hymns which cannot stand the test of Scripture, in fact, that is true of most hymns today. To sing such hymns is of course always wrong, not only when they are sung in public worship, but also when they are sung at home or in school. And against this growing evil we should be ever on guard regardless where it may occur, for it is God-dishonoring and a detri-

ment to the spiritual welfare of the church. But that hymns may be sung in public worship applies only to those hymns which are thoroughly sound. And with that we mean that as to content they must be Scriptural throughout. They may not give expression to an untruth, nor to half of the truth, or even to the whole truth and then in a vague and indefinite way so that they allow a two-fold interpretation, as do so many of the hymns in our day. Instead they must express the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and that very plainly and definitely, so that they leave the impression with no one that God is gracious but not righteous, merciful but not just. Such hymns are truly sound, and that they may be sung in public worship should be doubted by no one.

Yet even so we are strongly opposed to hymn singing in public worship. We could never recommend the singing of hymns in our Protestant Reformed Churches. For, firstly, it would be very difficult to obtain suitable hymns. In spite of the many hymns today there are but few that are doctrinally sound. And to make hymns is not everyone's task. How difficult it is to make proper hymns is evident from the labor of the Church in the past. Throughout all the years she has succeeded in making only a few good hymns. To make suitable hymns is therefore an extremely difficult task. But you say, are we not the purest church in the world today? Do we not clearly understand the truth? May we therefore not hope to be more successful? Yes, but to make spiritual hymns suitable to be sung in public service takes more than a good understanding of the truth. According to Scripture it takes men who are *filled* with the Holy Spirit. Before we set out to make hymns which are to be sung in public service, probably from week to week and from year to year, it certainly behooves us to think twice, and maybe even more often.

But secondly, even though it were possible to obtain suitable hymns it would still be dangerous to sing them in public worship. For history simply proves that whenever the church commences to sing hymns the Psalms are relegated to the background. After they have a few hymns they want more, and after they have more they want a still greater number, till finally the hymns take the place of the Psalms entirely. Hymn singing is the deathblow to the singing of the Psalms, which were sung with joy and delight by many in the past and are still dear to the hearts of many today. Moreover, thus we would be setting a dangerous precedent for our churches in the future. By introducing hymns we leave the impression that our singing in public worship is a small matter, that new songs may be introduced and old ones replaced whenever we desire, and that the church has the necessary talents to compose new songs at any time. And the result will be, that should the greater element in our churches in the future apostatize, which may

God graciously forbid, it would be quite easy for that element to gain the upperhand and introduce the songs which we today condemn. Hence we do better to maintain that which we have and introduce nothing new, in order that we may thus leave the impression that when we enter upon the plane of our singing in public worship we tread upon holy ground where it behooves us to take the shoes from our feet.

However, thirdly, to introduce hymns is also altogether unnecessary. Were it necessary, then it would be our duty to do so, even though it be difficult and dangerous. Thus it is with our confessions. To make confessions is also difficult and in a sense a very dangerous task. Yet the church is in need of them, and therefore we make them in spite of the difficulty and danger. But so it is not with our songs for public worship. These God has provided us in the Psalms. And in these Psalms we have a book of adequate songs which are sufficient for any and all occasions. True, they often speak the language of the Old Dispensation. But that is even the case with the book of Revelation and the epistle to the Hebrews. When understood correctly they provide us with songs for every occasion, whether it be one of joy or of sorrow, even though it be Christmas or Easter. And on all occasions and in every circumstance they allow us to give full expression to all that dwells in our hearts, whether it be sorrow or joy, hope or love. Hence, the Psalms are adequate. We are not in need of hymns.

For that reason we would say in the fourth place that, in general, the clamor for hymns is a sign of the times. If the Psalms are truly adequate then either of two things must be true, those who clamor for hymns are not fully acquainted with and do not understand the Psalms, or they do understand them but are enemies of their contents. The former is the case with some, but I am convinced the latter with the majority. That this is true is again evident from history. During periods of decline and spiritual lethargy the Psalms were always relegated to the background while hymns came more prominently to the fore. The reason for this is plain. When the church loses its vitality it becomes superficial. In such times of spiritual lethargy the church goes after the form, the esthetic, the beautiful, that which is pleasing to the ear of a church which is in spiritual decline. In such times it cannot sing the Psalms for the simple reason that they condemn the church. For Psalms always emphasize God's holiness and righteousness, His justice and majesty. But hymns on the other hand always emphasize God's love, mercy and grace.

Therefore, in conclusion, with a view to our present Psalter I would say, let us hold fast that which we have in order that no man take our crown. Then in the measure that we understand its songs and walk in the light we will have no need for hymns.

P. V.

Author Of The Epistle To The Hebrews

The question as to the author of the epistle to the Hebrews has engaged the minds of many learned theologians, from the very earliest church fathers, until the present day. There are three leading opinions entertained in regard to this question. The overwhelming majority ascribe the authorship of this epistle to the apostle Paul. There are some who ascribe it to other authors than the apostle Paul, either Barnabas or Luke. Others ascribe it to the apostle Paul in concert or conjunction with another author, and this other author is held to be according to some Appolos, and according to others Luke.

The objections that have most generally been raised against the apostle Paul being the author of this epistle are as follows: the chief and foremost is the fact that the name of the author is not mentioned. The strength of this objection does not lie in the fact that this epistle is without an inscription, for so is the epistle of John, concerning which it was never doubted but that he was the author of it, but in the constant usage of Paul, prefixing his name unto all his other epistles. Hence unless a just and good reason can be given why he should divert from that custom in the writing of this epistle, it may well be supposed that it is not of him. Another objection is based upon the fact of the dissimilitude of style, and manner of writing, from that used by St. Paul in his other epistles. It is stated that "the style and language, the categories of thought and the method of argument, all differ widely from those of any writings ascribed to Paul." Finally it is maintained that Paul could not have written Hebrews 2:3 "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;" for he emphatically declares that he did not receive his gospel from the older disciples (Gal. 1:12; 2:6).

Various answers have been given to the objection that the author's name is not mentioned, while it was invariably the custom of the apostle Paul to prefix his name unto all his other epistles. Some have explained this from the fact that the apostle Paul was very specifically the apostle to the Gentiles; that his allotment of work was to labor among the Gentiles, and if in writing unto the Hebrews, he had prefixed his name unto his epistle, he might have seemed to transgress the line of his allotment. By agreement James, Peter, and John were to attend the ministry of the Circumcision, while the apostle Paul and Barnabas would attend to the ministry of the Gentiles. Hence Paul, finding it necessary for him to write unto the Hebrews, would not prefix his name with an

apostolical salutation unto his epistle, that he might not seem to have invaded the province of others, or transgressed the line of his allotment. This explanation, as though the apostle concealed his name in this epistle, because he was doing that which was not meet for him to do, is unworthy of the apostle Paul. The commission given by the Lord Christ unto His apostles was that they should teach all nations, and even though it be true that Paul was especially called to minister unto the Gentiles, this did not mean that he did not also labor for the conversion of the Jews, as well as that we find Peter ministering unto the Gentiles. In writing this Epistle to the Hebrews he did nothing but what in duty he ought to do in obedience to Christ, and therefore he need not conceal his name as though he were doing something unjustifiable.

There is another answer to this objection which is far more satisfactory, namely this, that the apostle Paul had weighty reasons not to declare his name at the very beginning of this Epistle to the Hebrews, because of the prejudices that many of them had against him. This is the explanation given by many theologians. It is very fittingly stated by Barnes in his notes on the New Testament. "The name of Paul was odious to the Jews. He was regarded by the nation as an apostate from their religion, and everywhere they showed peculiar malignity against him. See the Acts of the Apostles. The fact that he was so regarded by them might indirectly influence even those who had been converted from Judaism to Christianity. They lived in Palestine. They were near the temple, and were engaged in its ceremonies and sacrifices—for there is no evidence that they broke off from these observances on their conversion to Christianity. Paul was abroad. It might have been reported that he was preaching against the temple and its sacrifices, and even Jewish Christians in Palestine might have supposed that he was carrying matters too far. In these circumstances it might have been *imprudent* for him to have announced his name at the outset, for it might have aroused prejudices which a wise man would wish to allay. But if he could present an argument, somewhat in the form of an essay, showing that he believed that the Jewish institutions were appointed by God, and that he was not an apostate and infidel; if he could conduct a demonstration that would accord in the main with the prevailing views of the Christians in Palestine, and that was adapted to strengthen them in the faith of the gospel, and explain to them the true nature of the Jewish rites, then the object could be gained without difficulty, and then they would be prepared to learn that Paul was the author, without prejudice or alarm. Accordingly he thus conducts the argument; and at the close gives them such *intimations* that they would understand who wrote it without

much difficulty. If this was the motive, it was an instance of tact such as was certainly characteristic of Paul, and such was not unworthy any man." Hence this *defect of inscription* rather proves, than disproves that this epistle is of the apostle Paul.

Owen gives us still another reason why the apostle did not prefix this Epistle to the Hebrews with his name and apostolic authority. "Unto all others he prefixed this title; declaring himself thereby to be one so authorized to reveal the mysteries of the gospel that they to whom he wrote were to acquiesce in his authority, and to resolve their faith into the revelation of the will of God made unto him and by him, the church being to be 'built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.' . . . 'In his dealing with the Hebrews the case was far otherwise. They who believed, amongst them, never changed the old foundation, or church-state grounded on the Scriptures, though they had a new addition of privileges by their faith in Christ Jesus, as the Messiah now exhibited. And therefore he deals not with them as with those whose faith was built absolutely on apostolical authority and revelation, but upon the common principles of the Old Testament, on which they still stood, and out of which evangelical faith was educed. Hence the beginning of the Epistle, wherein he appeals to the *Scriptures* as the foundation that he intended to build upon, and the authority which he would press them withal, supplies the room of that intimation of his *apostolical authority* which in other places he maketh use of. And it serves to the very same purpose. For, as in those epistles he proposeth his apostolical authority as the immediate reason of their assent and obedience; so in this he doth the scriptures of the Old Testament." (Owen Volume XVIII, pp. 82, 83).

Having answered the chief and foremost objection against Paul being the author of this Epistle, we can be more brief with the other two. It has indeed been admitted by competent authorities that the style and language, and the method of argument, in this Epistle, differ remarkably from those of the other epistles of Paul. The reasons for this are not far to seek. "The argument treated of in this Epistle is diverse from that of most the others; many circumstances in those to whom he wrote singular; the spring of his reasonings and way of his arguings peculiarly suited unto his subject-matter and the condition of those unto whom he wrote. Besides, in the writing of this Epistle there was in him an especial frame and incitation of spirit, occasioned by many occurrences relating unto it. His intense love and near relation in the flesh unto them to whom he wrote, affectionately remembered by himself, and expressed in a manner inimitable, Rom. 9:1-3, did doubtless exert itself in his treating about their greatest and nearest concernment." (Owen Vol. XVIII, p. 77. Hence the very subject matter of which

he treats in this Epistle, and the unique circumstances of those whom he is addressing, amply explains the differences of style and language, and the method of argument, which the apostle uses in this Epistle in distinction from all his other writings.

The remaining objection that the apostle Paul could not have written Hebrews 2:3, because the writer of it seems not to reckon himself among the apostles, but among their auditors, does not carry much weight. The apostle here places himself among those unto whom he wrote, though not personally concerned in every particular detail. This he does very frequently in his writings, as is evident from such passages as I Cor. 10:8, 9 and I Thess. 4:17. (See also I Peter 4:3). Hence when the apostle here says "us" he means the church at large.

Among the external evidences that this Epistle was written by the apostle Paul, the testimony given unto it by the apostle Peter in II Peter 3:15, 16, deserves consideration in the first place. Here we read, "And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according unto the wisdom given him, hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things." From these words of Peter it is evident that the apostle Paul wrote a peculiar epistle unto them unto whom Peter wrote his, namely, to the Jewish Christians. "He hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles;"—"Besides his *other epistles* to other churches and persons, he hath also written one unto you." From this it is evident that besides the other epistles of Paul, he also wrote to the Hebrew Christians, hence it is evident from this testimony of Peter that the anonymous writer of this Epistle was none other than the Apostle Paul.

B. K.

TREASURER'S FINANCIAL REPORT FROM AUGUST 1, 1942 to JULY 31, 1943.

Dear Friends of our Standard Bearer:

Again another year has passed by for our Semi-Monthly Magazine. This year was different than other years, for this year we had the privilege of sending The Standard Bearer from East to West and from North to South, yea to the uttermost parts of the earth. There has not been a year in the past when our Standard Bearer visited so many states as this year. We sent to 48 states. Starting with Mr. Wm. Doezeema, who received our first free copy, we now have 230 on our list. Four soldiers pay for their own copy. So friends listen to our financial report for a few moments.

Stamps and envelopes for these copies, which were written twice a month, cost more than \$100.00. It was indeed a busy year. Financially we cannot complain,

but there is room for improvement. This year we face an added cost of \$550.00, so that means we have to pay \$25.00 more per issue, 22 times \$25.00 makes \$550.00 this coming year.

So friends if your treasurer pleads with you to remember this cause once more, please let it not be in vain. He has pleaded with you for ten years, and the Lord has blessed us. It is true we had to struggle sometimes, but God's grace was always sufficient to bring us on top again. So friends, give Him the praise and glory, namely our Sovereign God.

Herewith we present to you our annual report for the year 1942-1943.

July Report — 1943

Received during July	\$251.25
Balance on hand, June	117.45
Total	368.70

Disbursements

Doorn Printing Co. July 1.	\$105.00
Doorn Printing Co. (envelopes)	11.61
Telephone	4.13
Stamps	10.00
Gas	2.00
Postal Cards	3.00
Change of plates	1.59
Total	137.33

\$368.70

137.33

Balance on hand, July 31, 1943\$231.37

Feb. Report. Short 1.50

\$232.87

R. Schaafsma, Treas.

ANNIVERSARY

On September 21, 1943, our beloved parents,
JAMES VELDMAN

and

EVELYN VELDMAN,—Hoeksema
celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary.

We are indeed grateful to our Lord, Who has spared and blessed them these many years, and our earnest prayer is that God may spare and be high unto them in the future as He has been in the past.

Their grateful children,

Mr. and Mrs. C. Schermer

Rev. and Mrs. R. Veldman

Rev. and Mrs. H. Veldman

Mr. and Mrs. B. Hoeks

Ann

Nell

Alyce

and 12 Grandchildren.