

# THE STANDARD *Bearer* A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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## MEDITATION

### Turn Away Mine Eyes

*Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way.*

*Ps. 119:37.*

Turn away mine eyes!

In the way of Jehovah's precepts the psalmist longs to walk.

For the statutes of the Lord are his delight, and to order his life according to them, and to observe them with all his heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, he considers a great good.

To the very end he would persevere in the way of His statutes, so that he may be faithful and fight the good fight, even though the enemy persecute him, and make the way well-nigh impossible.

Such is the theme of this entire section of the psalm.

And realizing that he is weak, and that the enemy is strong, he casts this entire part of the psalm into the form of a prayer for Jehovah's grace, that by it he may be preserved, and in the strength of the Lord's persevering power he may persevere. In need of everything is he, in need of instruction, in need of understanding, in need of the Lord's direction that he may go in the way of His commandments, in need of that positive inclination of the heart in virtue of which he may constantly love the testimonies of his God, and hate covetousness. And always he must be quickened by that persevering grace of Jehovah in the way of righteousness.

But this way of God's commandments leads directly through the very midst of the world.

And that world is full of opposition, full of enmity against God and His holy law, full of seducing in-

fluences, that would ensnare the child of God, and allure him into ways of rebellion and corruption.

And readily that lustful, vain world finds an ally in the flesh of him that seeks to keep Jehovah's way.

The psalmist deeply feels his weakness, and seeing himself encompassed on every side by these seducing vanities, he prays:

Turn away mine eyes!

Strange prayer!

Or is not the earnest request of the psalmist impossible of fulfillment?

Would it not have been far more reasonable, and at the same time far more indicative of spiritual strength and courage to pray for strength that he might be able boldly to look at the vanities of the world, without being at all affected by their allurements, and deceived by their glamorous attractions?

Or is not the world, through which he must needs travel even unto the end, full of vanities, so that it is quite impossible to turn the eyes away from them? Is it not rather thus in the world, that to turn the eye from one of its vanities is but to turn it upon another?

A vanity is a lying thing.

It is a concrete representation of *the* lie: "Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." It is an evil that appears good, a corruption that appears desirable, misery that offers itself as bliss, death that promises life; a thing that presents itself to the eye of the flesh as full of joy and blessedness, but that is actually filled with hell; a sweet but deadly poison, a white plastered grave, full of dead men's bones, beautifully ornamented gates of hell. . . .

Such is a vanity!

It is the creation of the sinful heart, as well as the object of its longing and lust.

For "when the woman saw that the tree was good

for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise (o, but it was not!), she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." That was the beginning: the turning of the eye to a vanity, the turning of the heart away from the Word of God, to give heed to the lying vanity of the word of the devil. And that one act was decisive. Having turned once, man could never return. His heart having loved the lie, and having rejected the truth of the Word of God, he became a liar! And ever since, he has his eye fixed on that tree, and in the darkness of his mind he always again sees that it is good for food, and that it is desirable to make one wise, and that it is pleasant to the eyes, and he craves it, and eats. . . .

And after that first, original pattern, he fills the world with lying vanities!

Constantly he creates things that seem desirable and pleasant on the outside, but that are empty of that which is good, and full of corruption, damnation and hell! And so: all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world!

And the more the world develops, from the principle of that first lying vanity, the more it fills itself, and corrupts itself, and destroys itself with things that are vain, and becomes a veritable vanity-fair! There are the vanity-riches, created by him, who would have his *soul* eat and drink of an abundance of material things, but who is a stranger to the riches of God. There is the world's vanity-glory, the glory of self, the pride and boast of the fool who, forgetful of the fact that his breath is in his nostrils, oblivious, too, of the fundamental principle that God made all things for His own name's sake, and will not give His glory to another, is puffed up in his own imagination, and would be "as God"! There is a world full of vain philosophy, proclaimed from platform and pulpit, in the lecture room and in the church; published, too, in ponderous volumes and glamorous magazines and pamphlets, all ambassadors for the lie that man is his own God! There is the world's cup of vanity-pleasure, filled to the brim with sweetest poison, offered on the streets and public markets of Vanity Fair wherever you turn, in your newspaper and magazine, your opera and theatre, in music and song, in picture and act. There is. . . .

But why mention more? . . .

Everywhere it meets the eye: the world full of the creations of beautiful lies, beautiful, that is, to the same eye that once "saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise!". . . .

But how, then, could this prayer of the psalmist

possibly be heard: Turn away my eyes from beholding vanity!?

Must not one withdraw himself in a lonely cell, or, as some have done, isolate themselves on top of a high pillar in the desert, in order to escape from the vanities of the world?

Or rather, would not even in that cell the vanities of the world and of the flesh penetrate, and would not the isolated pillar itself turn into the worst vanity of all?

Turn away mine eyes!

Impossible prayer!

---

Wonder of grace!

For it is for this that the poet is praying.

For that wonder of grace in virtue of which it is possible to see and not to see, to behold and not to admire, to view and to abhor the vanity of the world!

Turn away my eyes!

The eye is here mentioned as the chief representative of all the senses that place our inmost soul into intelligent connection with the outside world.

How wonderfully is man formed!

From the inscrutable depths of his inmost soul, he beholds and experiences, interprets and understands, through the "light of his body" the world about him. Through the windows of his body the light of the world streams into his soul, so that he becomes aware of that world, perceives it, interprets it, and subjects it unto himself. These windows are his senses. And among them the eye is chief: "the light of the body is the eye." But there are five of them, and with each of them man perceives the outside world, as well as himself in that world, from a special aspect, while again all these different aspects unite harmoniously into the one world of his perception: the world of sight, of hearing, of touch, of taste, and of smell.

But he was originally so formed, that in this world of his perception and of his interpretation, this world of his "natural light," he might behold the higher light of the glory of God, and, letting that light stream into his heart, to dedicate all things unto that glory of the living God!

That was his true light!

His heart was directed to the praise of the Most High, and his eye was "single" unto God's glory, and so his whole body was full of light!

But his heart became corrupt, his mind became darkness, his will became perverse, his eye became evil, and so his whole body was filled with darkness. And now he still has light, and still the outside physical world streams into his soul through the fivefold window of his body, and still he perceives and inter-

pret, but from a corrupt heart, and with an evil eye, motivated by enmity against God. . . .

And the very light that is in him is darkness!

"If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" Matt. 6:23.

And thus he creates his own world, a world full of the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, a vanity-kingdom!

In that world lives also the child of God. To that world he belongs by nature. In the sphere of that world he is born. That world he loves, for also his heart is by nature corrupt, and his eye is evil, and with that evil eye he greedily gazes at the vanities of the world about him. But the wonder of grace took hold of him, changed his inmost heart, called him out of darkness into God's marvellous light. And having thus become a new creature in Christ Jesus, "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." A new light illuminates his eye, the light of the Spirit, and in that light he rejoices in the things of the kingdom of God, hears the Word of God, delights in the statutes of Jehovah, and loves righteousness; and in the same light he now passes a radically different judgment upon the vanities of the world, so that he hates and abhors them. . . .

From them he turns away his eyes!

Not, indeed, as if it were possible for him to avoid seeing vain things, hearing vain words, coming into contact with vain things. For then he must needs go out of the world.

But while formerly, in his natural state of darkness, he would behold them with delight, and stop to gaze at them in wonder, and imbibe the lying sweetness of them, he now turns away his eyes in disgust at their corruption, overcoming their seductive power by the strength of the new life that is in him.

And yet. . . .

While walking in the midst of the vanities of the world, he realizes his weakness.

Perfect, a new creature, he is in principle only. Only in as far as he is in Christ, and that means, too, as far as Christ lives in him, does he love righteousness and abhor evil; and is he able to condemn and overcome the lying vanities round about him, and even within him.

But the "old man" is still there. And this old man has the old motions of sin in his members, the old greed and craving for the vanities of the world and of the flesh in his soul.

And so, it is not a bold resolution the psalmist utters.

He does not boast of his own strength.

He is not at all confident in self, but rather feels that he must needs suffer defeat, and turn anew to the vanities of corruption, if in his own power he must overcome them,

But he has the victory in prayer!

Deeply conscious of his weakness, but knowing the strength of Jehovah's grace, he cries from the depth of his regenerated heart:

Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity!

Always turn me, and I shall be turned!

Preserve me, and I shall persevere!

Indispensable grace!

---

And quicken thou me!

That is but the positive aspect of the same preserving operation whereby our eyes are turned away from vanity.

Quicken thou me in thy way!

"Thy way" is the way of Jehovah's statutes. It is the direction of our whole life, inward and outward, our thinking and willing, all our desires and inclinations, our seeing and hearing, our speaking and acting, in every relation of this present life,—the direction of all our activity as indicated by the word of the Lord.

In that way quicken thou me!

Cause me to live, constantly cause me to live, cause me to live more and more in that way! Give me the light of life that I may see thy way; give me spiritual knowledge that I may know thy way; give me wisdom that I may discern and approve of thy way; instill into my will the desire to walk in thy way; bend the inclinations of my heart that I may yearn after thy way; give me strength always to choose for, and to turn into the direction of thy way; give me joy that I may delight in thy way! And *always* give me this life, for in me is only death, my life is in Thee; and increase the measure of this life, and light, and knowledge, and wisdom, and delight, and joy, and spiritual discernment, and strength, in order that with all my heart and mind and soul and strength, I may run the way of Thy commandments!

Day by day quicken Thou me!

Such is the positive aspect of the preserving grace for which the poet prays.

And there is a close relation between this and the turning away of our eyes from beholding vanity.

They cannot be separated. Together they are one power of the preserving grace whereby we are enabled to keep the precepts of Jehovah *in this world, and in our present state of imperfection*, to fight the good fight even unto the end, that no one take our crown!

And the prayer is our victory! For in the way of prayer we are preserved.

And being preserved we shall persevere.

Even unto the end!

H. H.

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## EDITORIALS

### The Christian Reformed Synod on Labor Unions

(Cont. from No. 2, p. 26)

2. It appears rather clear from the "principles" adopted by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Synod in "neutral organizations" that Synod, although it ostensibly adopted the principle of corporate responsibility, does not consider mere corporate responsibility without personal participation in the sinful practices of a union sufficient as a basis for ecclesiastical censure. This seems to be the implication of conclusion 3, although it must be admitted that here too the language of the resolutions is ambiguous, and in need of commentary by Synod itself. However, it seems rather plain that this third "principle" takes the stand that only when a member of the church personally takes part in the sinful acts of a union can he become liable to church discipline. Literally it declares: (1) That "the doctrine of corporate responsibility does not imply that membership in unions which have engaged in sinful practices of itself makes one liable to ecclesiastical censure;" and (2) that "when members of the church render themselves guilty of the acts that are contrary to the word of God, the usual application of the rules for discipline shall be made." The ambiguity enters in when Synod also declares that (3) "corporate responsibility may render one worthy of ecclesiastical discipline but the degree of guilt must be determined by the local consistories." This last statement would seem to be in conflict with that under (1). The latter declares that corporate responsibility does *not* imply liability to censure; the former (the statement under 3) would seem to admit that such liability exists. However, the Synod would probably harmonize the apparently conflicting statements by its reference to *degrees of guilt*. The meaning of this third "principle" then would be that corporate responsibility *per se* does not render one an object of church discipline, but that it may make him liable to censure if he is corporately guilty *in a high degree*. However, if one also takes into consideration the declaration under (2) above, the whole certainly must leave the impression that Synod repudiated the stand that corporate responsibility without personal participation in the sinful practices of the union of which one is a member makes him liable to ecclesiastical censure.

It will be necessary to consider this point a little

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more in detail. However, this must wait until the next issue of our paper, that we may give space to the following.

H. H.

## The Christian Labor Herald Differs

The editor of *The Christian Labor Herald* reflects upon our article on the Union question in *The Standard Bearer* of Oct. 1, and expresses the opinion that "the editor (of the S. B.) is hardly justified in concluding that the Synod by that expression also declared that the existing so-called neutral labor organizations (CIO and AFL) do not necessarily give constitutional warrant to sin, nor show in their regular activities that they champion sin." The editor states that he is under the impression that I quote from a "press report on the decisions of Synod," and later in the editorial that I "probably felt justified in injecting those initials (CIO and AFL) in parentheses because membership in those two organizations was the real question before Synod." And, therefore, he quotes the full decisions of Synod on this matter, as they are found in the Acts, Art. 172.

Now, I certainly quoted from a press report, and I stated this very clearly (cf. S. B. Sept. 1, p. 496); nor did I "inject" the above mentioned initials, for they appeared in the report published by the *Grand Rapids Press* from which I quoted, so that also the reporter must have had the impression that Synod was referring to the CIO and AFL. However, I have no desire to misrepresent the conclusions of Synod, and, therefore, I gladly reprint the full decisions as they appeared in *The Christian Labor Herald* of Nov. 1943. Here it is:

"A. Synod of 1943 reassert in re Labor Unions the position taken in 1916 and 1928, and the conclusions of the report, "Christian Social and Industrial Organizations," as adopted by the Synod of 1930.

B. Synod expressly declares itself in agreement with the following principles:

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

2. The Biblical doctrine of corporate responsibility and the Biblical teaching of the Christian's separation from the world make it imperative for members of neutral labor

organizations to discontinue membership in any such unions whose common practices are clearly in conflict with the principles of the Word of God.

3. Christian conscience cannot condone membership in a neutral organization if it continues and approves its sinful practices in spite of protests against them.

4. The doctrine of corporate responsibility does not imply that membership in unions which have engaged in sinful practices of itself makes one liable to ecclesiastical censure; however, when members of the Church render themselves guilty of acts which are contrary to the Word of God there shall be the usual application of the rules for discipline. Corporate responsibility may render one worthy of ecclesiastical discipline, but the degree of guilt must be determined by the local consistories.

5. Consistories and Classes should take careful note of the practices of all labor organizations existent in their respective communities to determine whether membership in our Church and membership in such organizations are compatible.

C. Synod exhort the ministers of the Church to emphasize the Scriptural principles of the Christian's separation from the world, and the sinful consequences of putting on an unequal yoke with unbelievers to obtain right and justice through means condemned by the Word of God. Further Synod admonish the membership of the Church to break with all organizations which by common practice reveal an anti-Christian spirit. In short, Synod urge upon ministers and elders by vigorous use of the keys entrusted to them to declare the principles of the Word of God which must guide the members of the Church in their relation to the world and the organizations of the world."

The reader may notice that the difference between this report from the *Acta* and the press report as printed in the S. B. of Sept. 1 is as follows: 1. The press report inserted "CIO and AFL after "neutral labor union" in B, 1. 2. B, 3 is missing in the press report. 3. C was not taken up in the press report. 4. Also A was omitted in *The Press*.

But, apart from the insertion of "CIO and AFL" the main conclusions of Synod were literally correct as I quoted them.

More about this next time, D. V.

H. H.

## Nog Eens: En De Verlatene Dan?

We ontvingen het volgende schrijven:

### DE "ONSchULDIGE" EN DE "VERLATENE"

Hooggeachte Redakteur,

"Broeder Cammenga moet nog weer schrijven. En dan moet hij een antwoord geven op mijn vraag: En die verlatene dan?"

Ja, Maar . . . . werpt Ds. Hoeksema thans niet het zeil over een andere boeg, door de discussie feitelijk te bepalen bij Matt. 19:9?

Doch enfin!

Naar mijn inzicht dan ligt in Matt. 19:9, tweeërlei gedachte. Eerstelijk: Echtscheiding om allerlei oorzaak, ten tweeden: Echtscheiding uit oorzaak van hoererij.

Als ik de vraag van broeder Vander Wal van Redlands goed heb begrepen, dan ging het over de "onschuldige partij," dus echtscheiding uit oorzaak van hoererij. En in 't antwoord daarop van Ds. Hoeksema, kon ik mij niet vinden.

1. Nu ligt het voor de hand, dat het in Matt. 19:9 in de eerste plaats niet gaat over echtscheiding uit oorzaak van hoererij, want de farizeeën kwamen met de vraag: "is het geoorloofd zijn vrouw te verlaten om *allerlei* oorzaak?"

Nu maakt de Heere Jezus in zijn antwoord, dunkt mij, onderscheid in die "allerlei oorzaak", en wel door den *bepalenden* sin:: "anders dan om hoererij." En in dat geval is, naar mijn overtuiging, Lev. 20:10, en Deut. 22:22 nog steeds van kracht, want volgens 1 Cor. 6:16 dan is de band der eenheid verbroken door overspel of hoererij door een der betrokken partijen.

2. In mijn vorig schrijven zeide ik, o.a., "en nu kan en mag een kerkeraad nooit afgaan op praatjes of veronderstellingen, maar wanneer er beslist bewijs is, dat *man* of *vrouw* waarlijk in overspel leeft, dan geloof ik nog steeds, dat de onschuldige *partij* vrijelijk hertrouwen mag." Gods oordeel des doods rust op den overspeler(ster).

3. Ds. Hoeksema zegt, o.m., "Wie nu die vrouw trouwt, die zelf onschuldig is, en wier man een overspeler is, die doet ook overspel want voor God is ook de onschuldige partij van een schuldige echtgenoot, nog altijd aan de eerste partij verbonden." En dat wil er nu juist bij mij niet in, volgens mijn opvatting van 1 Cor. 6:16.

Onder Israel zou toch de onschuldige partij vrij worden, door toepassing van Lev. 20:10 en Deut. 22:22. En nu zou ik kunnen eindigen, maar Ds. Hoeksema wil van mij een antwoord hebben op de vraag: En die verlatene dan?"

Wel, ik ben geen theoloog, noch ook de zoon van een theoloog. Tot *schrift verklaring* onbekwaam en

ongerechtigd. Dat is het werk van de dominees. Doch als leek vorm ik mijn gedachten, en die gedachten over Matt. 19:9 zijn als volgt:

In den tijd toen de Heere Jezus deze woorden zeide tot de Farizeeën (want immers tot degene die buiten staan *zegt* Hij, terwijl Hij Zijn Gemeente leert) stond de staat der vrouw op een laag peil. In die echtbreuk was zij steeds de "verlatene," en dat vaak om allerlei nietigheden en grillen van den man.

In onzen dag is 't bijna juist anders om. Vier-vijfden van de echtscheidingen worden door de vrouwen aangevraagd.

Zoo een verlatene vrouw in Jezus tijd was een voorwerp van medelijden, want 't was een eere voor de vrouw om zaad voort te brengen. En nu is mijn gedachte dat de Heiland ons leert: "Het verlaten zijn, zonder wettige oorzaak van hoererij, geeft gene der partijen het recht te hertrouwen, want ze zijn nog steeds één vleesch.

Natuurlijk gaat Ds. Hoeksema hier op antwoorden, en dan zou ik gaarne een verklaring hebben van 1 Cor. 6:16, en dan in verband met Lev. 20:10, en Deut. 22:22. Misschien kom ik dan tot een ander inzicht, want 't zit in goede handen.

Onder 't schrijven werd ik er nogmaals bij bepaald, hoe armelijk het huwelijk als type van Christus en Zijn Gemeente is. Door de dood wordt de eenheid van den huwelijken staat verbroken, maar onzen hemel-Bruidegom Jezus Christus, hernieuwt, bevestigt en verzegelt die eenheid, door Zijn sterven aan het vloekhout der schande.

J. Cammenga, Sr.

### Antwoord:

1. Neen, ik werp het schip thans niet over een anderen boeg, ofschoon ik om der discussie wil mij bepaal tot Matt. 19:9. Wie de Standard Bearers, waarin ik eerder over deze kwestie geschreven heb, wil nasnuffelen, zal ontdekken, dat ik het altijd over dezen boeg gegooid heb.

2. Het eenige antwoord, dat broeder Cammenga mij feitelijk geeft op mijn vraag is in de woorden: "Het verlaten zijn, zonder wettige oorzaak van hoererij, geeft geen der partijen het recht te hertrouwen, want ze zijn nog steeds één vleesch."

Nu zijn we dunkt mij hiermee reeds iets gevorderd, want broeder Cammenga stemt hiermee toe, dat de onschuldige partij in eene echtscheiding in elk geval niet altijd weer trouwen mag. Alleen, wanneer er bij de schuldige partij hoererij is, mag de onschuldige hertrouwen. Zeg, dat eene vrouw echtscheiding aanvraagt op grond van *non support*, of *cruelty*, en ze ontvangt echtscheiding voor de wet, dan mag haar man in geen geval weer trouwen. Dat is in elk geval al heel wat gewonnen, vooral in ons land.



Maar de zaak in Matt. 19:9 staat heel duidelijk anders, dan broeder Cammenga haar voorstelt. Want immers de wettige man van die verlatene vrouw is weer getrouwd, leeft dus in hoereri, en dan mag de verlatene nog niet weer trouwen, want: "wie die verlatene trouwt, doet ook overspel." De vrouw is dus wel verlaten zonder oorzaak van hoereri aan hare zijde, maar haar man bedrijft hoereri. En nu vraag ik nogmaals aan broeder Cammenga: "Maar *die* verlatene dan?"

3. Ik kan mij niet goed voorstellen, hoe broeder Cammenga uit 1 Cor. 6:16 kan redeneeren. Rechtstreeks zegt die tekst natuurlijk niets over onze kwestie, ook niet, dat een getrouwd man, als hij gemeenschap heeft met een hoer, daarmee voor God zijn huwelijk met zijn wettige vrouw opheft. Het zegt alleen maar, dat zoo iemand door die gemeenschap één lichaam met haar is, en zijne leden stelt tot leden eener hoer. Wil dat nu zeggen, dat die gemeenschap met de hoer permanent is, zijn huwelijk voor God niet meer bestaat, en zijne vrouw dus maar hetzelfde moet doen, en met een ander één vleesch worden? Dan kan niet alleen de onschuldige, maar ook de schuldige hertrouwen, zooals sommigen dan ook metterdaad hebben beredeneerd. Doch zoo staat het in 1 Cor. 6:16 immers niet! Die getrouwde man, die de hoer aanhangt, moet daarmee ophouden. "Vliedt de hoereri!" En wat wil dat nu anders zeggen, dan dat hij naar zijne wettige vrouw moet "vlieden" en zich bij haar alleen houden? Door de daad der hoereri is dus de band des huwelijks niet verbroken, schoon wel de trouw geschonden werd.

4. Wat Lev. 20:10 en Deut. 22:22 betreft, het volgende:

a. Dat de doodstraf voor overspel nog geldt, zal broeder Cammenga moeten bewijzen, eer ik het tegendeel tracht te bewijzen. Berust deze bewering op de algemeene stelling, dat de doodstraf in de nieuwe bedeeing moet worden toegepast op alle overtredingen, waarop ze werd toegepast in de oude bedeeing?

b. De onschuldige partij werd in dat geval niet vrij door de daad van overspel, maar door den dood des schuldigen of der schuldige.

c. Ook al zouden bovengenoemde Schriftuurplaatsen ook voor onze samenleving gelden (hetgeen ik niet geloof), dan zullen wij het hier wel nooit zoover krijgen, dat overspelers met den dood gestraft worden. We hebben het dus altijd met onschuldige partijen te doen, waarvan de schuldige partij nog leeft. Neemt God de schuldige partij weg, dan kan de onschuldige partij vanzelf weer trouwen.

Doch, dit leidt ons op het oogenblik maar van 't punt af. Daarom moet ik broeder Cammenga wel vragen om nog weer te schrijven en dan een antwoord te geven op de vraag:

Maar *die* verlatene dan, wier man in hoereri leeft?

H. H.

# The Triple Knowledge

## An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

### PART TWO

#### OF MAN'S REDEMPTION

#### Lord's Day IX.

#### Chapter 3.

#### The Eternal Father Creator.

Very properly and beautifully the Heidelberg Catechism, speaking of God's fatherhood with respect to all things, as the Creator of heaven and earth, mentions God's eternal counsel. It is true that it introduces this counsel here, strictly speaking, not in connection with creation, but as the power whereby God still upholds and governs all things; but this necessarily implies that the same universe that is thus upheld by God's counsel was also created according to and by the same eternal decree.

And let it be understood from the very outset that it is of utmost importance to speak of this eternal purpose and counsel of God as logically preceding the act of creation, and to present the whole universe, all that exists in space and time, as the revelation and unfolding of this eternal counsel. For only in this way can we maintain a clear and correct conception of God's relation to the world as its Creator. Only then can we maintain, and somewhat understand, that God, as the Catechism expresses it, "out of nothing made heaven and earth," and that creation reveals Him as the One Who "callesh the things that be not as though they were," or again, "that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Rom. 4:17; Heb. 11:3. And understanding this, we will be in no danger to exchange the teaching of Scripture on this point for the philosophy of man with regard to the origin of the world, and, therefore, also with respect to God. Then we will have no inclination whatever to compromise with the theory of evolution, nor admit that it is capable of offering a solution of the problem it claims to solve, for it can never understand that "things which are seen are not made of things which do appear." Nor will we be in danger of the pantheistic conception that the world emanates from the divine essence, as light from the sun, or as water from a fountain. And although we may figuratively speak of God as the "overflowing Fountain of all good," when we wish to speak accurately we will even refuse to

adopt the language of philosophy which prefers to speak of God as the Cause of all things, or the First Cause, or the *Causa causarum*, or the ultimate Source of the universe. A cause, even though it be the ultimate and first cause, belongs to its effect by the law of necessity. If God is the First Cause of the universe He is not transcendent above the world. But God is not the Cause, nor the Source, but the Creator of the world. And that implies that He called all things into existence by an act of intelligent and omnipotent will. The finite does not emanate from the Infinite, the temporal does not evolve from the Eternal, but the world in time and space is called into being by and according to the eternal counsel of the living God. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

But there is another reason why it is paramount to speak of the counsel of God in this connection. When, on the basis of Scripture, we confess that we believe in "God the Father, Almighty, maker of heaven and earth," we are stating something about *God*. The first article of the *Apostle's Creed* is not concerned about the universe, but about the knowledge of its Creator. Creation is revelation. The question is: what does the act of creation reveal to us about the invisible things of the Most High? And then it appears that, unless we would make creation itself co-eternal with God, we confront two very serious difficulties here. The first is that the creation of the universe in time would necessarily seem to postulate a change in God. Creation is an act of God in time. When we read in Gen. 1:1: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," the meaning is, no doubt, not that there *was* a beginning, but that God created time in the very first act of the formation of the chaos. Time is created together with the world, just as well as space. And this means that Scripture would give us to understand at once, that God, the eternal and infinite One, places creation in time and space, outside of and in distinction from His own essence. But we ask: does not this act of creation presuppose a change in God? Did He not *become* the Creator of the world *in the beginning*? Did He not do something "in the beginning," and ever since, which He did not do before? Yet, we know from Scripture that the answer to this question must be negative, for with God there is no variableness neither shadow of turning. How, then, can the immutability of God be maintained in the light of the *bereshith* (in the beginning) of Gen. 1:1? And the second difficulty we confront here concerns God's absolute self-existence, independence, and self-sufficiency. God is in Himself the implication of all infinite perfections. He is self-sufficient. He has no need of the creature. Nor can the creature add anything to God's infinite greatness. Yet, when we consider Gen. 1:1 we are inclined to ask: but did not creation enhance God's

glory and greatness? Was not God "before" the beginning of Gen. 1 without the world? And is not God *plus* the world greater than God *without* the world? Again, we answer immediately: God forbid! For we know from Scripture that He is the self-sufficient One. But the question arises: how can we harmonize this self-sufficiency of God with the act of His creating the world in time?

Now, in attempting to approach a solution of these problems, we may do well to recall that here, indeed, we ultimately face unfathomable mysteries, for the simple reason that we deal here with the relation of the Eternal to that which exists in time, of the Absolute to the relative, of the Infinite to the finite. God is incomprehensible. In Himself He is infinitely above and beyond our puny understanding. "Behold, God is great, and we know Him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out," Job 37:26. For over against all that is relative He is the Absolute, in comparison with the finite He is the Infinite, over against all limited existence He stands as the Limitless, the unfathomable Deep; over against the multifariousness of the creature He is pure Being, the one, simple incomparable Essence. God *is*, the creature *exists*. God is from everlasting to everlasting the same, the creature *becomes* in time, is in a constant state of flux, increasing and decreasing, appearing and disappearing, growing and decaying, never remaining the same, existing but for a moment. How then shall we ever find Him out? The Lord is great, and his greatness is unsearchable, Ps. 145:3. "Behold, the nations are as a drop of the bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity. To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare him? . . . There is no searching of his understanding." Isa. 40:15-18; 28. And how then shall we comprehend His work? Can the caused find out the Uncaused? Can existence find out pure Being, or follow Him in His unsearchable ways? Can the meandering brook swallow up the deep ocean? Can the faint light of the candle surpass the glory of the sun? Even though this were possible, yet it would be absurd to imagine for a moment that little man could search out the living God. "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." Job 11:7-9. Contemplating the revelation of the glory of God's infinite majesty, the child of God can only prostrate himself before Him in humble



adoration, and cry out: "O the depths of riches, both of wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." Rom. 11:33-36.

However, all this does not mean that our mind can cease from contemplating upon the marvellous works of God to reach out as far as possible for the knowledge of Him. And this means for the believer that he turns to His own revelation for an answer to the questions that arise. And if we do so, we shall find at least an approximate solution of the two problems raised above in the Scriptural teaching concerning the counsel, the eternal decree and purpose of God with regard to all things in time and space. This counsel or eternal plan and will of the Almighty, this "good pleasure of his will," Eph. 1:5, or "good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself," Eph. 1:9, or "purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will," Eph. 1:11, is eternal and absolutely all-comprehensive. For our present purpose it is sufficient to bear this in mind.

God's counsel is eternal. Let us try to understand the implication of this Scriptural teaching. It means, negatively, that we may not conceive of the eternal purpose of God under the image of a blueprint of plans and specifications, such as an architect makes of an edifice that is to be erected. We are apt to do just this, when we contemplate the counsel of the Most High. The reason is that we think of eternity in terms of endless time. The Bible itself often does this, when it speaks of God's eternal purpose as having been formed "before the foundation of the world." But we must not forget, first of all, that Scripture usually speaks anthropomorphistically, i. e. in terms derived from our own existence; and, secondly, that in this and similar terms in Scripture it is often a logical, rather than a temporal, relation that is expressed. If we forget this we will conceive of eternity as endless time. And in this conception the eternal purpose of God is a certain plan of the world which God made at some point of time before the "beginning" of Gen. 1:1. But this is a serious error. Eternity is not time, not even time *ad infinitum*. There is a qualitative difference between eternity and time. Time is not a part of eternity: it is outside of eternity, essentially distinct from it, as creation is distinct from God. Hence, when the Word of God teaches us that God's counsel is eternal, we must understand that it is not some kind of plan of the world, that once was not, then was made in some point of time before "the beginning," and that is no longer of real value when it is realized in the ac-

tually finished world, but that it is the eternal and living and almighty will and mind of God Himself with respect to all things created, in time and in space. Not inaptly this was often expressed by saying that "the decree of God is the decreeing God." God never was, never will be, never is, without His counsel. *He is eternally decreeing.* God's counsel is the living conception of all things that is eternally before His mind.

And to this must be added that His decree is all-comprehensive. It embraces all things that are, that ever were, that ever will be, in their proper meaning and significance, their interrelation to one another, their movement and their development, their beginning and their end, their inception and their destination. We see and experience only a small part of "the world" at any moment. For we are children of time. We see the world in its "present moment." That moment comes, is, and is gone. The world of the past is no more, the world of the future is not yet, the world of the present is constantly moving from the past into the future, or out of the future into the past, on that indivisible moment of the present. But with God this is different: *He has eternally the whole world in space and in time before His divine mind!* And that, too: not by experience derived from the existing world, or from foreknowledge of the future world, *but by the sovereign decree of His own will!* Eternally He conceives of the whole world, from beginning to end, yea, unto everlasting time. All things that ever were and are and shall be are ever before Him. The first creation, and the first paradise, the first man in his state of righteousness and in his fall into sin, Cain and Abel, the flood and its little church in the ark, Abraham and Moses, David and his seed, Christ in His incarnation, His death, His resurrection and exaltation, the Church as it develops in the new dispensation the angels and demons and all their activity, the wicked and their fury culminating in the Antichrist of the latter days, —all these moments of the world in time, in their exact relationship as decreed by God with perfect wisdom, are eternally before the mind of God by His own will and sovereign conception. In God's counsel the first paradise stands eternally in its proper relation to the second, the first man Adam eternally appears in His righteousness and fall, sin and death do their work eternally, Cain kills Abel for ever, Christ is killed and sacrifices Himself, is raised and exalted for evermore! Christ and His glorified Church, and the new creation, but also all that leads up to their realization and perfection in glory, are for ever in and before God's mind. In His decree God creates and upholds and governs all things eternally! That is the meaning of God's eternal purpose!

On the basis of Scripture, we may make one more observation concerning this eternal purpose and coun-

sel of God's will. All the individual moments in that counsel are conceived and arranged in their relation to one another according to infinite divine wisdom and logic. And this means that in God's mind all these individual moments are so conceived that all in their own position serve the one purpose: the highest possible revelation of God in the glory of His majesty and the beauty of His triune covenant life. In this sense, I would never hesitate to maintain that the supralapsarian view of the counsel of God is the only true, and biblical, conception. There is, of course, no time element in God's decree. It is eternal. We cannot properly speak of *before* and *after* when referring to the eternal good pleasure. But there is perfect subordination of means to ends, and of all means to the one end: the glory of God. And this means that in God's counsel Christ, and that, too, as the incarnated Son of God, as the crucified One that rose again, as the first-begotten of the dead, is in that sense "the first-born of every creature." Of Him God conceived "first." In Him He purposed to reveal all the fulness of His glory. And unto Him, i.e. in order that the glory of His grace might become fully manifest in all its manifold riches, the Church is given as His body by the decree of election. And all the rest, the counsel of reprobation and the counsel of creation, the counsel concerning the fall and the counsel of providence occupy in God's eternal purpose the place of means unto the end of the realization of the glorious Christ and His glorious body dwelling in the tabernacle of God in the new creation. All things exist for the Church, the Church exists for Christ, and Christ exists for God!

This conception of the eternal, all-comprehensive, living and infinitely wise counsel of the Most High we obtain from Scripture. It is of this decree as the eternally decreeing God that Prov. 8 speaks in language of incomparable beauty. I quote from vs. 22 on: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way (certainly more correctly, as suggested in the margin of the R.V.: "The lord formed me *as* the beginning of his way." The original has *reshith*, a predicate objective, not *bereshith*, in the beginning), before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was (or: from the foundation of the earth). When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth; while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part (or: the beginning) of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass (measured out a circle) upon the face of the depth: when he established the clouds above (better: the sky or ether, the firmament), when he strengthened (or: restrained) the fountains of the deep: When he appointed the foundations of the earth: Then

I was by him, as one brought up with him (better: as a director of the work): and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men." It is not our purpose now to give a complete exegesis of this most profound and rich portion of Scripture. For our present purpose it may suffice to observe the following: 1. On the one hand, it should be plain that Wisdom in this section is not identical with the Logos (the Word) of John 1:1-3. For the Logos is the infinite Word God speaks, the personal Image of the Father, and is *begotten* of the Father. But in this passage Wisdom is distinguished from God, the Lord, and is created, or formed, i.e. conceived in God's mind (*Canani*; in the LXX: *ektise*). 2. On the other hand, the language forbids us to think of a mere figure of speech, when throughout Wisdom is presented as having personal subsistence. This Wisdom, then, though not itself the eternal Word, has its personal subsistence in the Logos. In other words, it is the whole implication of God's eternal counsel with respect to all things, the decree of God as the living and eternal conception of God, conceived by the Triune God "before the world was," and that, too, of the Father, through the Son, and in the Spirit. The eternal Son of God, Who is the perfect and expressed image of the Father, is also the "Mediator of the decree of God," in the sense that in Him, in Whom the Father beholds the infinite perfections of the Godhead, He now also eternally conceives the reflection and revelation of those perfections in the created world. Wisdom, then, is the "world-idea" as eternally conceived by the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit.

H. H.

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## Contribution

Esteemed Editor:

I have read your articles on the Christian Reformed Synod on the Labor Unions and because of the tremendous threat that unionism holds for the Christian I want to raise a question and a suggestion.

1. In your criticism it is assumed that a neutral union is impossible, and yet do we not in practice countenance the neutral farm union, business-men's union, professional-men's union? Does only the laborer fall under the principle "He that is not with Me is against Me."?

Or is it after all the constitution and the conduct by which we must judge an organization.

If this latter is the case then the question arises:

"Must our Protestant Reformed Synod (or Classis, as our case was in the past) express itself on general principles only, or must it give its judgment concerning definite organizations mentioned by name, regardless whether a concrete case has come up from a lower body?"

I believe this matter could profitably be looked at a little more expressly in *The Standard Bearer*.

Your brother in Christ,

A. Petter.

Note: My answer to the question of Rev. Petter will appear later, probably in the course of the discussion of the decision of the Christian Reformed Synod *in re* this matter.

H. H.

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## The Conquest of Southern and Northern Palestine

The work of crushing the armies of the five kings, who had encamped before Gibeon to make war against it, was but half done and the day was far spent. As was said, the enemy might still escape before being completely destroyed. Then there formed in Joshua's soul the passionate desire that the day might be prolonged "until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies." The desire crystallized into a prayer of faith, which is quoted in the sacred text from the "Book of Jasher" i.e., "Book of the Upright."

"Then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of all Israel, Sun stand still upon Gibeon; and moon, in the valley of Ajalon.

"And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the Book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hastened not to go down about a whole day.

"And there was no day like that before it, or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel.

"And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal." Joshua X:12-15.

This miracle has from first to last occasioned an immensity of perplexity and discussion. The standing still of the sun and moon or the lengthening of the

day from twelve to eighteen or twenty hours is no more to be understood literally, it is said, than that fighting of the stars down out of their courses (Judg. VI:20), or the melting down of the mountains (Isa. XXXIV:3), the rending of the heavens (Ps. 18:10), or the skipping of the Lebanon (Ps. XXIX:6), the clapping of the hands by the trees in the field (Isa. IV:12), the leaping of the mountains and the hills (Ps. CXIV:46), the bowing of the heavens (Ps. XVIII:10). It is the language of poetry with which we here deal, and poetry, too, of the most figurative kind. Thus it is not an unheard of miracle with which we here have to do. Such is the view.

But how is the language (from the "Book of the Upright") to be taken if it is not to be taken literally. There are several answers. The day was prolonged, according to some, also on the supposition that it appeared to Joshua and to Israel wonderfully lengthened, the work accomplished on it being so great that it would without supernatural help have required two days. The rationalizing interpretation imagines extraordinary refractions of the light of the sun already set or a combining of lightning with the light of the sun and moon so that there was no night, so to speak, between this and the following day.

The untenableness of these views is obvious. They militate against the language of the sacred text. The view that the day simply appeared to Joshua wonderfully lengthened is a sheer conjecture. Besides, there is no agreement as to whether the language is that of prosaic narrative or of poetry or as to whether the whole of the passage (verses 12-15) is a quotation from "The Book of the Upright." Since the Bible, in its present form, is the infallible word of God, this latter question is of no importance whatever when it comes to ascertaining, on the ground of the text, just what took place.

Now according to the report of the sacred narrator, "The Sun stood still in the midst of the heaven, and hastened not to go down about a whole day." To the unbiased mind, this is not figurative speech, as are such expressions as "The trees clapped their hands" but plain prosaic narrative. The sacred narrator, in compiling his book, was not writing poetry; it is history that he was narrating. The statement in question can therefore mean but one thing. It unequivocally asserts that, on account of the standing still of the sun, the day was actually lengthened by a space of time equivalent to a whole day. To speak here of a lengthening of the day simply in the consciousness of Joshua or of a refraction of the light of the sun already set is to deny what the text actually asserts, is thus to impose upon it a meaning that it cannot have. What those interpreters, who deny the objective reality of what is here narrated, give us is not exegesis but baseless speculation.

Thus what the words express is an objectively real and miraculous extension of that day in response to the prayers of Joshua. All objections which have been raised against the fact of such a miracle are worthless. Thus the appeal to the immutability of the celestial bodies fixed by unchangeable laws is invalidated by the fact and truth that the laws of creation are but the modes of manifestation of the power of God. Laws they are that have their being in Him and operate not otherwise but by His will. If the objection could be sustained, all miracles would be impossible.

Finally, the language of the text does not compel us to assume that the sun, in its course, was brought to a state of rest. For the Scriptures here speaks of the behaviour of the sun according to its appearance to Joshua, as we also speak of the rising and setting of the sun, although we are satisfied in our minds that the earth revolves about the sun. Though Joshua's astronomical knowledge had been as advanced as ours, he still would have clothed his prayer in the language reported in the Scriptures. That the optical standstill of the sun was effected by the arrest of the revolution of the earth on its axis, is likely but not certain. It may also have been effected through God's power in an astronomical wonder wholly unknown to us and incomprehensible by natural wisdom. But what *must* be maintained is that the sun, after the time of its setting, actually continued visible in Joshua's heaven about a whole day.

Being of all the typical wonders of God the most amazing—"There was no day like that before it, or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man. . ."—it, this wonder, so strikingly illustrates how all nature—heaven and earth and the fulness thereof—is subservient to the salvation of God's people, is in league with them and must help them to victory. Finally, Joshua's effectual prayer, its amazing power, preindicates the power of Christ with God.

With the standing still of the sun and the moon, Joshua received a most wonderful token of the fact of God's presene and favor. The war of extermination was now prosecuted with great vigor and in strict obedience to the commands of God. The hail-storm had inflicted terrible losses upon the enemy. Those that died not of the hail fled, as pursued by Israel, through the pass of Nether Bethhoran to Azekah and thence to Makkedah, where the five kings sought to secure their persons, and hid themselves in one of the many caves which were found in the lime and chalk rocks of Palestine and which were well fitted for places of refuge in times of danger. Under the direction of Joshua, large stones were rolled to the mouth of the cave into which the kings had fled, and an armed guard was stationed in its entrance. The rest of the army pursued the enemy and completely dis-

comfited them. The remnant of the fugitives fled to the "fenced cities." Joshua himself did not lead in the pursuit but remained behind to establish the headquarters of his camp before Makkedah. Thither the people returned in peace. "None moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel," i.e., no one ventured to do them any harm.

The cave was now opened and the kings brought before Joshua. They were made to prostrate themselves and at Joshua's command the captains of the army came forward and put their feet upon their necks. The ceremony indicated entire subjugation of these kings and of all the remaining Canaanitish powers as well. "Fear not, nor be dismayed," said Joshua to his captains, "be strong and of good courage: for thus shall the Lord do to all your enemies against whom ye fight." The kings were killed and their bodies hung on five trees. The one suspended was considered accursed and might not remain hanging over night.

The death of the five kings marked the beginning of a conflict that may have lasted for months and that did not end until the whole of southern Palestine west of the Jordan was conquered by the Israelites. Named are the cities Makkedah, Libnah, Lachish, Eglon, Hebron, and Debir. We are informed that Joshua smote the whole land, the mountains, the southland, the lowlands, and the foothills, from Kadesh-barnea to Gaza, and the whole land of Goshen to Gibeon. After the completion of the conquest he returned to the camp at Gilgal on the Jordan. He was successful because God fought for Israel. A complete destruction was effected, because Joshua destroyed all that had breath.

We now enter upon a new theatre of the conquests of Joshua, the northern part of west Palestine. The combination that now went out to fight against him embraced a vast multitude, "even as the sands that is upon the sea shore with horses and chariots very many." Gathered together were Jabin king of Hazor, Jobab king of Madon, the king of Shimron, and the king of Achshaph, and the kings that were on the north of the mountains, and of the plains south of Chnneroth, and in the valley, and in the border of Dor on the west, and the Canaanites on the east and on the west, and the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite in the mountains and the Hivite under Hermon. The confederacy which at first had included the five kings of the south already vanquished by Joshua, had come into being, no doubt, shortly after the fall of Jericho. But it would take considerable time to assemble a host so vast. Meanwhile the Gibeonites refused to join the movement and made peace with Joshua. Their neighbors were angry, especially the king of Jerusalem, and without waiting to be joined by the forces from the north, went forth to punish their disloyalty. Joshua at once

hastened to their relief and inflicted a crushing defeat upon the confederates. Had this battle not been fought, had Joshua repudiated his treaty with the Gibeonites, the opposition now to be overcome would have been more formidable still. For nothing could have hindered the southern kings from joining their forces to those of the kings from the north in the warfare against the Israelites. So did the fraud of the Gibeonites work well for the people of Israel.

Joshua was not allowed to rest long after his defeat of Adonizedek and his brethren. The effect of the news of that disaster upon the kings of the north was to arouse them to immediate action. "And it came to pass when Jabin, king of Hazor, had heard these things that he sent," sent to all his confederates. It was thus Jabin who headed the new conspiracy. *Jabin* was apparently the official title of the chief ruler of Hazor, for when, at a subsequent period, the place has been rebuilt, Jabin is again the name of its chief ruler (Judg. IV:2, 17).

Hazor was an important royal seat of the Canaanites. Destroyed by Joshua, it was afterward rebuilt, as was said, and again became a kingly capital. The sites of this and the other cities named are unknown. Hazor perhaps lay on the west of the sea Merom. The matter is of no importance. All that it was necessary to reveal is that Hazor was situated near Merom, and was the capital of a powerful kingdom. The other cities mentioned—Madon, Shimron, and Achshaph—lay, apparently, not far from Hazor. The mountains referred to are those of Naphthali (ch. XIX:32). "The plains south of Chinneroth" denotes the Ghor of the Jordan, south of the sea of Galilee; the "lowland" probably denotes the maritime plain from the Philistines northward; "the borders of Dor," the highlands about a city on the seacoast, which belonged later to Manassah (ch. XVII:2 of the Book of Joshua), by which tribe its Canaanitish inhabitants were not driven out (Judg. I:27). The sacred narrator does not mention all the places that contributed to the confederacy, but comprehends them all in the statement "Canaanites on the east and on the west Amorites, Hittites, the Jebusites in the mountains, the Perezites, and the Hivites under Hermon." The combined forces must have been extraordinary large, as numerous "as the sand that is upon the sea shore in multitude." According to Josephus, there were 3000,000 footmen, 10,000 horsemen, and 20,000 chariots; but these figures cannot be accepted as reliable. Horses and chariots were instruments of warfare which the people of Israel were forbidden to employ. Of such arms they had no need as the Lord fought for them. As armed with this truth, they were invincible in battle, however formidable the opposition, however certain that, in the point of view of nature, they were doomed to defeat.

The vast company came together and pitched at the waters of Merom, the little lake where the three streamlets that form the Jordan unite. Probably the allied kings had pitched their camp to the north of these waters, for there a large plain spreads itself out. From thence they might launch forth against Joshua, who could be expected to come up by way of the Jordan valley. If this was their plan, it was defeated by the promptness of Joshua, who resolved to fall on them by surprise so that they should be unable to bring their forces into action.

It was a perilous undertaking, and Joshua, therefore, had need of encouragement of the Lord. He was already on the march, it must be, when the Lord communicated to him this message. "Be not afraid because of them: for tomorrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel: thou shalt lame their horses and burn their chariots with fire." As sustained by this promise, Joshua suddenly arrived at the waters of Merom and fell on the enemy. Seized by a panic, they fled in consternation, without striking one blow, so it seems. One portion made for Misrephoth-maim in the south-west; another made for Zidon, in the north; a third struck in an easterly direction to the valley of Mispheh. But the victory was the Lord's. The sacred narrative never fails to bring this out. He does so now: "And the Lord delivered them into the hand of Israel. . . ."

The enemy was smitten until none of them remained. Having dealt with their horses and chariots as Jehovah had bidden—he had received the command to burn their chariots and to render the horses unfit for military enterprise through injuring them in the leg or foot—Joshua returned and destroyed Hazor, the capital of the league that had just been broken up. So "he turned back and took Hazor, and smote the king thereof with the sword; for Hazor beforetime was the head of those kingdoms." For this reason Hazor was treated like Jericho. It was burned and devoted, as were also the other cities of the confederacy. On the contrary, "the cities that stood on their hill," i.e., the fortified mountain cities, were not burned. But the cattle was taken for a prey and the humans slain. Whether Joshua, in not burning this one class of cities, was carrying out divine instruction, is not stated. But he must have, as no criticism whatever is brought to bear upon his tactics as military chieftain. It is expressly stated that "He left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses" (Ch. II:15).

So was the conquest of Western Palestine virtually completed. First, by the capture of Jericho, Joshua had gained possession of the Jordan valley. By taking Ai and Bethel, he had opened the way to the great plateau of Western Palestine, and by his victories of Gibeon and Bethhoron over the southern kings, he had



conquered all that country. Of his warfare with the inhabitants of the central part, the sacred writer tells us nothing. The northern section had been brought under Israel's sway at Merom. But the land of the Philistines and the territory held by Tyre and Zidon and some small kingdom on the north-east were not subdued. The subjugation of these parts was a task reserved for others. "Thou art old and stricken in years," said the Lord to Joshua, "and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed." Nevertheless, his conquest had embraced the whole of Palestine. Emphasis is laid on this fact. "So Joshua took all the land, the hills, and all the south country, and all the land of Goshen, and the valley, and the plain, and the mountain of Israel, and the lowland of the same; from mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir, even unto Baal-gad, in the valley of Lebanon, under mount Hermon: and all their kings he took, and smote them and slew them" (Ch. II:16-17).

It is stated that "Joshua made war a long time with all these kings" (Ch. II:18). According to a reliable calculation, at least five years had been spent by them. The pitched battles of Bethhoron and Meron could have lasted but a few days; but the sieges of the various cities required a long time, yet not so long considering their number, position, and strength. Many of them were walled cities, situated on fortified hills. The number of kings subdued were thirty two (Ch. II). Most of them, it is true, were petty chieftains.

There still remain two statements to which attention must be directed. One is that "There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon. . ." (Ch. II:10). Had they made peace with Joshua, they would have been spared as well as the Gibeonites. It is amiss to say that, because of their abominable past, the Canaanites would have been destroyed, had they repented. No sinner goes lost, who truly desires salvation. *Whosoever* will may come. Nor should it be said that, because they are reprobated, and thus doomed to everlasting desolation, they would have perished though they had turned to God. Reprobation excludes repentance and thus calls for persistent unbelief. The facts of the matter are these: Whereas it was the sovereign good pleasure of God to destroy the Canaanites, He, during the entire four hundred years and not first, as some contend, at the close of this period, also sovereignly hardened their hearts, and thus prepared them for their destiny. The result of this was that they could not will to do otherwise but to defy God and continue to defy Him to the end, which they also did; and on this account they perished in their sins. "There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel. . . . For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might

destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favor, but that he might destroy them, as the Lord commanded Moses" (ch. II:20).

The history of the conquest of Canaan has given great offence to the opponents of Christianity, to the primitive heathen and Jews, and to English deists and German rationalists. The Manichaeans classified it among "the cruel things which Moses did and commanded," and which went to prove, according to their view, that the God of the Old Testament could not be the God of the new. Eichhorn, among others, in his *Introduction*, p. 403 (in Keil's commentary on Joshua) uses strong words, exclaiming in moral indignation: "How impious is the narrative in the Book of Joshua! It makes God not only give way to the Israelites, against all right, the land of Canaan, which the Canaanites as the first occupants most justly held, but also sketch out a horrid plan for its conquest, and directly under the most dreadful bloodship and the total extinction of the Canaanites. Who can reconcile this with even a partially correct view of the God-head?"

These objections must be met. Firstly, the earth and its fulness is the Lord's. What is His He may give to whomsoever He will. Secondly, the Canaanites were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly, and thus doubly deserving of the doom by which they were overtaken. Had they forsaken their abominations and turned to God, they would have been saved. But this they would not. They choose to defy God and thus *choose* death. And what they choose, they received. Why then find fault with God. The wages of sin is death. And God is righteous. He pays the sinner his wage. "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?"

The warfare of Joshua, all his military achievements, were wonders, miracles, as truly as were the ten plagues of Egypt through which the Lord humbled Pharaoh. These achievements formed a new, marvelous, and terrible work of Israel's God through which He, in His fathomless love, freed the promised land from the godless men by whom it was corrupted.

It is so plain that God fought for Israel. Consider the Canaanites. They would gather themselves together to do battle with God's people. In the crucial moment the Lord would look upon them, as He once looked upon the Egyptians. Then they were afraid, and would flee in three and four directions without striking a blow.

To say that the Lord looked upon them is simply to maintain the following. The hearts of the Canaanites, as are the hearts of all men, were in the hands of the Lord. Hence, He could turn their hearts as He willed. (In Psalm 25 we read of the Lord turning the hearts of the Egyptians to hate His people). He could terrify the Canaanites which He also did by



awakening in them, by things made and done, and spoken, strongest consciousness of His presence and of His determination and power to destroy them on account of their abominations and defiance to Him and His people. Also the conquest of Canaan, to be sure, was a typical miracle. It was thus prophetic of the second coming of Christ in judgment over the world, of His freeing this earth, through judgment from the godless who now possess and corrupt it.

G. M. O.

## Christian Morality Against the Background of Pagan Corruption

The eighty-four years from the accession of Nerva to the death of Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 96—A.D. 160) forms a period, as we have seen, in which the pagan civilization and culture of the Graeco-Roman world was at the height of its glory. It was the golden age of literature. The far-flung empire stood under a well-ordained jurisdiction. The seas had been swept free from piracy. Commerce flourished on the Mediterranean Sea. There was protection of life and property. Improved methods of farming had increased the yield of the soil. The great cities were renowned for their swimming pools and magnificent buildings of every kind. Industry prospered. Institutions of learning sowed abroad culture. Books in ancient Rome were plentiful and cheap. Public libraries were in every great city.

But at the core this civilization and culture was rotten. (In this it did not differ from the civilization and culture of our modern world). To quote from a former article, the majority of men were wretchedly poor or they were slaves and as such were treated like beasts of burden. Gladiatorial shows i.e., public games in which men were forced into mortal combat with their fellow-men or with wild beasts for the amusement of the people—the free citizens—were the order of the day in every city of considerable size. There was perpetual war between the legions of Rome and the fierce barbarian tribes who dwelt on the border of the empire; and the followers of Christ were being thrown to wild beasts or driven into exile. The luxury that resulted from the influx of wealth from the conquered nations was amazingly extravagant. Fortunes were spent on the pleasures of the table. The belly was the god of the rich. With luxury came the vices of sensuality, both natural and unnatural. Avarice, suspicion, robbery and bribery prevailed on every

hand. Natural sympathy and kindness between man and man seems hardly to have existed. Poisonings and assassinations were so common that such atrocities seem hardly to have been regarded as a breach of morality. There were no alms-houses, no hospitals, no societies of benevolence. An immense number of the population was slightly removed from begging. The slaves came from the conquered nations (they were whites, not negroes) and they were so plentiful and cheap that the masters inhumanly wore them out by neglect and hard usage. In the gladiatorial shows, murder was practiced as a sport. The human combatants were condemned criminals or captives of war. Paganism had assumed supreme lordship over human life and dealt with it as it pleased. As to the emperors, all were godless men and not a few of them were monsters of iniquity.

The civilized Graeco-Roman world had become a veritable house of ill-fame. The lack of appreciation of female virtue was general. Poets, philosophers and legislators were agreed that the proper position of the woman is one of oppression and degradation. Aristobulus' answer to the question of Socrates: "Is there any one with whom you converse less than with your wife?" was, "No one, at least very few." The cultured of her sex were generally women of ill-repute. "These dissolute women were held in higher esteem than the housewives, and became the proper and only representatives of some sort of female culture and social elegance. Modesty forbids the mention of a still more odious vice, which even depraved nature abhors, which yet was freely discussed and praised by ancient poets and philosophers, practiced with neither punishment nor dishonor and likewise divinely sanctioned by the gods. It was not considered adultery for a husband to hold intercourse with the slaves of his household and with prostitutes. And the women were as corrupt as the husbands. A chaste wife was a rarity in the land. Poor, sickly, and deformed children were exposed to a cruel death, or in many cases to a life of slavery or infamy—a custom approved, for the public interest even by a Plato, an Aristotle, and a Seneca. "Monstrous offspring," says the great Stoic philosopher. "we destroy; children, too, if born feeble and ill-formed we drown. It is not wrath but reason thus to separate the useless from the healthy".

The above description of the moral state of civilized heathendom of the Graeco-Roman world, agrees with that of the apostle Paul contained in his epistle to the Romans.

In that world was God's little flock—a people transported out of that world, Satan's kingdom, into the kingdom of God's Son, thus a people in the world yet not of it, a people who bore the imperishable treasures of the kingdom of Heaven, in the depths of whose soul was implanted the life which is in Christ and whose

conversation therefore was in Heaven. We find in the writings of the early fathers a picture of the life of this little band of Christians. How lovely that life, in contrast to pagan corruption. "We who once served lust," says Justin Martyr, "now find our delight only in pure morals; we, who once followed sorcery, have now consecrated ourselves to the eternal good God; we, who once loved gain above all, now give up what we have for the common use, and share with every needy one; we, who once hated and killed each other; we, who would have no common hearth with foreigners for difference of customs, now, since the appearance of Christ, live with them, pray for our enemies seek to convince those who hate us without cause, that they may regulate their life according to the glorious teachings of Christ, and receive from the all-ruling God the same blessings with ourselves."

This picture is not overdrawn. It is fact that God's people, in that age were exceptionally unworldly, patient in enduring suffering and persecution, and excelled in the hope of Christ's coming and in all manner of well-doing.

Minutius Felix addresses the heathen thus: "You prohibit adultery by law, and practice it in secret; you punish wickedness only in the overt act; we look upon it as criminal even in thought. You dread the inspection of others; we stand in awe of nothing but our own conscience as becomes Christians. And finally, your prisoners are overflowing with criminals; but they are all heathen, not a Christian is there, unless he be an apostate."

On the other hand, the error of unduly idealizing the Christian life of the period before Nicea must be avoided. Then, too, the light was being obscured by sins that dwell in the flesh. In periods of "stillness" Christian zeal abated. On re-opening of persecution, many would deny the Saviour to save their lives or to escape the loss of their worldly goods.

The Christian church condemned the gladiatorial bloody games as murder. They were included in the "pomp of the devil" and forbidden on pain of excommunication. Tertullian denounced them without reserve. He tells the catechumens that "the condition of faith and the laws of Christian discipline forbid, among the sins of the world, the pleasures of the public shows. They excite all sorts of wild and impure passions, anger, fury and lust; while the spirit of Christianity is the spirit of meekness, peace and purity. What a man should not say, he should not hear. All licentious speech, nay, every idle word is condemned of God. The things which defile a man in going out of his mouth, defile him also when they go in at his eyes and ears. The true wrestlings of the Christian are to overcome unchastity, perfidy by unfaithfulness, cruelty by compassion and charity." Worldly-minded Christians, then as now, would plead for such amuse-

ment by appealing to the silence of the Scriptures, or to the dancing of David before the Ark, and to Paul's comparison of the Christian life with the Grecian games. Tertullian refuted their arguments.

In general, the Christians of that age were opposed to high office in the pagan state on account of the idolatrous usages, sacrifices, libations and flatteries connected with public offices.

The fathers did not inveigh against slavery. They counseled servants to serve only the more zealously to the glory of the Lord, that they may receive from God the higher freedom. Tertullian deems the outward freedom worthless without the deliverance of the soul from the dominion of sin. Says he: "How can the world make a servant free? All is mere show in the world, nothing truth. For the slave is already free, as a purchase of Christ. If thou takest the freedom which the world can give for true, thou hast thereby again become the servant of man, and hast lost the freedom of Christ, in that thou thinkest it bondage."

The Christians made chastity the cornerstone of the family. The ancient councils condemn carnal sins in every form. Female martyrs preferred death to loss of honor. But it was the virgin and not so much the faithful wife and mother of children that the father praised and glorified.

Marriage was regarded as the sacred union of body and soul. Chastity was the law of the family life. Clement of Alexandria says: "The mother is the glory of her children, the wife is the glory of her husband, both are the glory of the life, God is the glory of all together."

Christianity placed a check on the pagan tyranny of the father. It taught the value of children as heirs of the kingdom of God.

Love was a bond of union among believers and the mark of true discipleship. "That especially," says Tertullian to the heathen, "which love works among us, exposes us to many suspicions. 'Behold' they say, 'how they love one another!' Yes, verily this must strike them, for they hate one another. 'And how ready are they to die for one another!' Yea, truly, for *they* are rather ready to kill one another. And even that we call each other brethren, seems to them suspicious for no other reason, than that, among them, all expressions of kindred are only feigned. We are even *your* brethren, in virtue of the common nature, which is the mother of us all; though ye, as evil brethren, deny your human nature. But how much more justly are those called and considered brethren, who acknowledge the one God as their Father; who have received the one spirit of holiness; who have awaked from the same darkness of uncertainty to the light of the same truth?"

G. M. O.

## Uit De Diepte

(Psalm 69; Tweede Deel)

De vorige maal, schrijvende over dezen psalm, zagen we David, als de type van den Christus, in groote smart. Hij vergeleek zijn lijden met die in de diepten der watervloeden verzonk, als een die wegzonk in grondelooze modder waar men niet staan kon.

De oorzaak was dat een groote menigte van goddelooze menschen hem omringden, die hem haatten zonder oorzaak. Ze hadden nu eenmaal een gruwelijke hekel aan hem en daarom spogen ze hun duivelsch vergif uit tegen hem.

Dat bracht hem tot God met roepen, met tranen. Zijn keel was ontstoken en zijn oogen bezweken.

En hoewel David in het onderhavige geval onschuldig was, bracht die smart hem tot gedachtenis van zijne zonde en dwaasheid. En hoewel hij hetgeen hij niet geroofd had moest wedergeven, zoo is toch deze tekst alleen van toepassing in het absolute op den Christus Gods.

We zagen dien Christus aan 't wedergeven. Hij gaf God alles weder wat de uitverkorenen Hem ontroofd hadden. "Als dezelve geëischt werd, zie, zoo werd Hij verdrukt." Verdrukt, zoo lang en zoo bang in de diepten van den eeuwigen dood, totdat God tevreden was, totdat Hij genoeg gedaan had. Totdat God alles terugontving van het door ons geroofde. Toen is het stil geworden in het hart van den doodelijk vermoelden Messias.

De psalm gaat echter verder om tot in bijzonderheden te verhalen hoe ellendig het er met God's knecht bijstond.

We hebben U ook nog gewezen op de diepste oorzaak van al het lijden van David, van Jezus Christus. Het lag uitgedrukt in de woorden: "Want om Uwentwil draag ik versmaadheid!" Het is dezelfde taal die we ook opmerkten in den 44sten psalm: "Want om Uwentwil worden wij den ganschen dag gedood!"

Die gedachte wordt verder uitgewerkt, wanneer we lezen in het 10de vers van psalm 69: "Want de ijver van Uw huis heeft mij verteerd; en de smaadheden dergenen die U smaden zijn op mij gevallen!"

Het eerste gedeelte van dezen tekst wordt aangehaald in Joh. 2:17.

Daar zien we Jezus die het opneemt voor Gods Huis, den Tempel. Men had den tempel gebruikt als een beurs van koophandel. Doch Jezus wist dat die tempel gebruikt moest worden voor een huis des gebeds. Toen werd Zijn geest in Hem ontstoken en maakte Hij een zweep van touwtjes om het afzichtelijke en monsterachtige te verjagen uit dat lieflijke Huis Gods. Hij ijverde voor het Huis met grooten ijver.

Het tweede gedeelte van den tekst wordt door den

Heiligen Geest aangehaald in Romeinen 15:3. Daar zegt Paulus, dat Jezus Christus ook Zichzelven niet behaagd heeft; dat de Christenen uit de Romeinen zichzelven daarom ook niet mogen behagen. Want, zegt Paulus, er is geschreven: "De smadingen dergenen die U smaden, zijn op Mij gevallen!" Dus daar wordt de ervaring van David op Christus toegepast. We mogen verder gaan en zeggen, dat die idee pas vervuld werd in Christus.

Daar zit dit in: als gij U bekommert om Uzelf en alle dingen doet met het oog op Uw eigen welzijn, dan laat men U aardig met rust. Doch als ge het voor God en Zijn Huis opneemt, dan komt op Uw arme hoofd de smaad waarmede men God smaadt. Men haat God. Welnu, als ge U openbaart als van de partij des levenden Gods, dan haat men U om Gods wil. Al de smaad waarmede men God overlaadt, komt dan op U.

Dat werpt uiteindelijk zaligheid voor Christus en de Zijnen.

Daarom zegt Jezus: "Zalig zijt gij als de menschen U smaden en vervolgen en liegende alle kwaad tegen U spreken, om Mijnentwil!"

God beloont het als ge vertrapt wordt om den wille van Zijn Naam en deugden en werk.

Maar hier brengt het droefheid en smart.

Luistert maar: "En ik heb geweend in het vasten mijner ziel, maar het is mij geworden tot allerlei smaad."

Hoe doortrapt gemeen werd David, werd Jezus behandeld.

Hij nam het voor God op en werd gesmaad. Men belachte en bespote hem. Men trachtte den ganschen dag om hem te vernielen. Vers. 5. Alright! Toen ging de arme man aan 't weenen. En de spot vermeerde. Dat was toch al te koddig. Hoe men het bij David deed weet ik niet, maar ik weet het wel van Jezus. Daar hangt Hij. Ja, ge zaagt wel: het is Golgotha. Zweet, bloed en tranen mengen zich dooreen op Zijn aangezicht. En het spotten rondom het kruis neemt toe. Fluistert het nog eens na wat Hij eerst zeide: "Die Mij zonder oorzaak haten. . . ." Ja, is er één onder het geboefte rondom het kruis die nu ook maar iets kan aanbrengen om den Zoon Gods te beschuldigen? Neen, o neen! Alles aan Hem is lieflijk, begeerlijk.

Daar hangt Hij te weenen "in het vasten Zijner ziel!" En men schudde het hoofd. Men lette op al die tranen, dat wringen van het geteisterde lichaam, dien doornenkroon, die striemen van de ruwe soldaten in Pilatus' recht huis—en men schaterde het uit van pret. Ze staken den lip uit tegen Hem en riepen rauwelings: Kom af van het kruis als Gij de Zone Gods zijt! Ja, de smadingen waarmede men God zoo gaarne wilde smaden zijn op Jezus gevallen. Hij nam het voor God op. Welnu, dan moet Hij ook de smaad Gods dragen.

Kiest Gij dat ook?

Wie is die reiziger die zich voorspoedt in de woestijnen en de doore plaatsen ten oosten van Egypte? Paulus zag hem loopen, neen, vluchten van het vreeselijke aangezicht van Farao. En Paulus reciteert: "verkiezende liever met het volk Gods kwalijk behandeld te worden, dan voor een tijd de genieting der zonde te hebben, achtende *de versmaadheid van Christus* meerdere rijkdom te zijn dan de schatten in Egypte; want hij zag op de vergelding des loons." De versmaadheid van Christus! En dan zoolangen tijd vooraleer die vreemdeling van Galilea stierf op het Kruis?

En ook zoo vandaag. Neemt het op voor God en Zijn Huis, voor Christus en Zijn kruis: en ge wordt gehaat. Langzamerhand worden de aangezichten strakker. Eerst gaat het nog wel. Zoo was het ook in die stoffige synagoge in Nazareth. Men is onder den indruk: Jezus spreekt lieflijke woorden! Hoe gracieus is Zijn verschijning en woord.

Maar past op! Ziet ge het wel? Men neemt Hem en wil Hem van de rotsen neerstorten. Men versmaadt hem. Hij nam het op voor de verkiezing en de verwerping in de synagoge van Nazareth. De weduwe van Serepta, en Naäman, de Syriër!

Zoo ook vandaag.

Spreekt altijd van God, voor God en ten bate van God: en men zal U uiteindelijk haten.

O! Kalamazoo! Kalamazoo! Gij zijt er getuige van geweest! De inkt der notulen zijn droog, werd eenigzins verkleurd en vaag. Inwendige smart en tranen die nooit geschreid werden, doch verkropt en ingehouden, zijn geworden tot een lang program van smaad en hoon van buiten, in woord en schrift; doch van binnen zijn ze geworden tot een stroom van lijden. Men heeft het schoone en lieflijke Woord vertrapt en geschonden.

De trillingen van een rede die daar in Kalamazoo uitgesproken werd zijn nog in het heelal. God bewaart ze voor eeuwig. Het zijn trillingen van geluiden van woorden die het opnamen voor God. Die man verdedigde God, dat heerlijk Wezen.

Toen kwam de smaad van negentien lange jaren.

Toen kwam de haat, de vernieling, de duivelsche hoon.

Toen kwamen de tranen, de modder en het slijk, de bezweken oogen, de lange dagen van smart.

Maar toen kwam ook de verkwikking van het Woord! Gij hebt voor Mij gesproken! Den ganschen dag geacht als schapen ter slachting. Wat zou er een blijdschap zijn als die 22 amechtige kerkjes eens verdwenen en de stem van den vaandeldrager niet meer gehoord werd!

Kent gij die smaad?

Dan kent ge ook de belofte: de tranen die ge om Mijnentwil getraand hebt worden van de oogen afge-

wischt. En ze gingen in, dragende de schoven.

De versmaadheid van Christus is dan ook meerderen rijkdom dan de schatten in Egypte.

Ze is de hemel daarboven bij God.

Doch zoolang als God ons hier op aarde laat zullen we moeten lijden. Zoo spoedig als ge het Woord niet langer draagt, zoo spoedig nam het lijden een einde. Doch als ge volharden wil om het Woord te minnen, het voor te houden in woord en daad en leven, zoolang zult ge met David zeggen: Ik heb een zak tot mijn kleed aangedaan; maar ik ben hun een spreekwoord geworden." Het kon wel geschreven zijn alleen voor ons hier in Amerika. Vandaag roemt Jan Rap en zijn maat op het feit dat men van de Afscheiding of de Doleantie is, doch ik heb me vaak afgevraagd: hoe is het er toch werkelijk naar toe gegaan?

Wat dunkt U? Toen *de Cock* op de straten van Ulrum liep, hoe hielden de menschen zich toen? Ge hebt het toch wel eens gehoord? Men wierp hem en zijn geestverwanten het slijk achterna.

Een zak tot een kleed. Dat is Oostersche beeldspraak. De zak was het kleed der rouwe en der droefheid. Droefheid vanwege het lijden der haat.

Hoog en laag lachte om David.

Luistert maar: "die in de poort zitten klappen van mij, en ik ben een snarenspeel dergenen die sterken drank drinken."

Die in de poort zitten waren de rechters, de oudsten, de wijzen van zijn dag. Die in de poort zitten zijn de ministers, de professors, de doctoren, allen die in eere en waardij leven. Die in de poort zitten zijn Kajafas en Annas, de Schriftgeleerden en Farizeërs, de Ouderlingen en Overpriesters.

Komt, zegt het mij: van wien heeft Jezus het meest geleden? Van die in poort zaten. Wie heeft David het meest benauwd? Saul, Absalom, Achitofel.

Dat volk geeft den toon aan. Wat zou die en die er van zeggen? Zij klappen van mij. Teekenend. Men redeneert niet, men zoekt zijn woorden niet met wijsheid en verstand om te weerleggen. O Neen. Men klapt. Verachtelijk gebroed.

Ja, dan, dan durven de anderen ook. Eindelijk schreeuwt de heele schare: Kruis Hem! Kruis Hem!

Ook die sterken drank zuipen. Ook het domme volk. Het wordt een gemengd koor met één groot hoofdthema: Weg met dezulken van de aarde! Men wordt dan een snarenspeel. Wat beteekent dat? Dit: men heeft genot en groot genoeg er in om het arme volk, dat het voor God opneemt, te vernielen.

Doch hoe gevaarlijk om zoo te handelen!

Zulk eenen die dan verscheurd wordt in zijn lijden gaat naar God.

Het mag een tijdlang genoeg geven om dan toch eens dapper te scheuren en te schrijven, te vernielen en te vertrappen; uiteindelijk graaft zoo een zijn eigen graf.

Want de verscheurde gaat naar God.

David zegt, nadat hij al zijn smart beschreven heeft: "Maar mij aangaande, mijn gebed is tot U, O Heere! daar is een tijd des welbehagens, o God! door de grootheid Uwer goedertierenheid: verhoor mij door de getrouwheid Uws heils!"

Er is een waarheid in de catalogus van Gods waarheden die verschrikkelijk is en doet sidderen. Ze doet ons bidden: Heere, zet Mij toch op den eeuwigen weg! De waarheid die ik op het oog heb is dit: De Heere zal U Uwe vijanden geven tot een prooi! Principieel is dat zoo met Christus. Dezelfde arme geslagene die zoo jammerlijk schreide in Gethsemane en het uit moest brullen in de duisternis van Golgotha; dezelfde die aan het kruis stille luisterde naar de helsche hoon van het geboefte; dezelfde Jezus die "als Hij gescholden werd nooit wedschold"; diezelfde Jezus heeft het alles overgegeven aan Zijn Vader. En Zijn Vader heeft Heb beloofd, dat Hij al die vijanden zal ontvangen tot Zijn prooi.

En zoo komt Jezus weer om te richten, te richten.

En krijgt het vertrapte volk een plaats in die troon om te richten met Hem.

Mozes profeteerde ervan, toen hij zeide: En gij zult op hunne hoogten treden.

Gaat met Mozes mede naar gene zijde van de zee. Gaat met hem mee. Luistert naar hem als hij U leert, dat de versmaadheid van Christus meerdere rijkdom is dan de schatten in Egypte.

En om die versmaadheid van Christus te ontvangen behoeft ge slechts één ding te doen.

Neemt het voor God op.

Dan haat Satan en die van Satan zijn Uw arme vermoeide ziel.

Dan zingen de engelen in de hemelen hun lied, want zij hebben God lief.

En dan is Uw loon groot in de hemelen.

Want de Heere ziet en hoort al die smaad en hoon die U om Zijnentwil geschiedt.

En Hij verhoort U "door de grootheid Zijner goedertierenheid en door de getrouwheid Zijns heils!"

Dan spreekt Jezus U zalig, want ge draagt Zijn versmaadheid.

G. V.

#### IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies Aid Society of Hope Protestant Reformed Church herewith desires to express their sympathy to Mrs. D. Engelsma, in the death of her mother,

MRS. BESSIE KOOLE

May the God of all mercy and grace give to her a rich measure of His Holy Spirit to comfort her in this hour of deep bereavement.

Mrs. G. Korhorn, Sec'y.

Rev. J. Heys, Pres.

## Article XXXVI Of The Belgic Confession

This article of our Belgic Confession has suffered from the hands of critics more than any article of our Confessions. When one is questioned whether he is in agreement with our forms of unity, there is always the exception made to this article of the Belgic Confession. Although the subject of the article has been discussed and debated often in the history of Reformed churches there is yet no unity of opinion about the meaning of the article nor is there a positive stand taken after negative criticism. Everyone admits there is something wrong with the article. But wherein the error is there is no agreement. Nor has there been a forthright and clear conception of the duty of the magistrate in matters of religion. And the result of all this has been to my mind a failure to appreciate article XXXVI. I would like to write something about this article to arouse appreciation for the entire article or at least to see the problem and the real necessity of making a confession about the duty of the magistrate. We should not have the idea as if the part of the article under debate takes up a subject about which we could just as well have been silent. Whether we agree with the statement of the article or not the subject confessed is a most important one and all should realize that it is and will become a very important confession of the Church of Jesus Christ in these last days overagainst the kingdom of anti-christ.

Recently the subject has been brought up in the Christian Reformed Church. There were those on their last Synod of 1943 who followed the criticism of the footnote of 1910 and agreed in the main with it. On the other hand there was also a strong defense of the article and a sharp criticism of the footnote. Professor D. H. Kromminga takes this last stand and wrote a pamphlet expressing his views. I consider this writing of Professor Kromminga to be one of the best contributions to the debate about this article that I have read. It is not only clear, able and honest work, but it also shows the fearless spirit for the truth which we welcome in discussions and especially in matters pertaining to our Confessions. This does not mean we are in agreement.

To really appreciate and understand article 36 we ought to know some important facts about the author and the composition of the Belgic Confession as well as the Confession as a whole. The martyr-life of the author, Guido De Brés, and his marvelous purpose in writing the Confession, namely, to prove the Reformed faith from the Word of God, has made me personally very appreciative of this article 36.

Guido De Brés was the chief author of the Belgic



Confession. Remarkable it is that after having been educated in the Roman Catholic Church he was zealous for the cause of the Reformation. He traveled about as an evangelist zealously proclaiming the truth of the Reformed faith. For his evangelistic activity he was put in prison and chains and hanged on the last day of May, 1567, at the age of 27. The Belgic Confession was revised by Francis Junius, student of Calvin, pastor of a Walloon congregation, and later professor of theology at Leyden. The Belgic Confession was printed about 1566 and was presented to Phillip II of Spain in the vain hope of toleration. The Confession was originally written in French. It was publicly adopted by the Synod of Antwerp in 1566, the Synod of Wesel in 1568, more formally by the Synod of Emden 1571, the Synod of Dort 1574, the Synod of Middleburg 1581, and finally by the Synod of Dort in 1619. Inasmuch as there were different translations at the time of the Synod of Dort 1619, and because the Arminians demanded partial changes in the Belgic Confession, the Synod of Dort 1619, ordered and submitted the three translations, French, Latin and Dutch to careful revision. These translations were made from the precise parchment which the Synod of Antwerp of 1580 ordered to be made from the revision of Francis Junius. This revision of Junius has always been regarded as the authentic document. In Netherlands therefore there has always been the authentic document translated and officially adopted by the Synod of Dort. In America the Reformed Churches had the difficulty of translating the Belgic Confession themselves once again. But there was an excellent English translation made from the Latin text of Dort, says P. Schaff. He refers to the translation of the Reformed Church of America in 1792. That is also the translation which we have in our Churches.

The above is the history of the Belgic Confession. Article 36 has another history of its own. The subject of article 36 is "Of Magistrates". If you will read the article you will notice it speaks of the following elements: 1) The reason why God instituted government; 2) The office of the civil magistrate; 3) The duty of the subjects toward the magistrates; 4) Wrong views and practices which are rejected. And it is concerning the second element of this article 36 that the debates and discussions arose. The part under dispute reads: "And their office is, not only to have regard unto, and watch for the welfare of the civil state; but also that they protect the sacred ministry; and thus may remove and prevent all idolatry and false worship; that the kingdom of anti-christ may be thus destroyed and the kingdom of Christ promoted. They must therefore countenance the preaching of the Word of the gospel everywhere, that God may be honored and worshipped by everyone, as he commands in His Word."

To this statement of the Confession which speaks of the office of the civil state towards the sacred ministry, the Reformed Churches of Netherlands, De Gereformeerde Kerken, objected and in 1905 took out the part of the article which spoke of the State's duty to prevent and remove all idolatry and false worship. The statement deleted reads in Holland, "om te weren en uit te roeien alle afgoderij en valschen godsdienst, om het rijk des antichrists te gronde te werpen."

This action of the Churches of the Netherlands seems to have had an influence upon the Churches in America which was naturally to be expected.

The debate about this much debated article did not stop upon this action of the Reformed Churches of Netherlands in 1905. Rather the discussion continued up to the present time. Other elements in the article were subjected to criticism. Dr. Greijdanus comments about a brochure written by Dr. Van Lonkhuyzen, "De Blijvende Schriftuurlijke Grondgedachte van Art. 36 Onzer Nederlandsche Geloofsbelijdenis", that there is not much clarity among us. He says that we deleted a part, but there is still a part about which there isn't agreement. That is the expression, "het woord des Evangelies overal te doen prediken". The final comment of Greijdanus is that the government has a duty towards God to acknowledge Him and serve Him, and to quote him, "doch wij weten nog zoo weinig hoe." (Reformatie, 24 Feb. 39, p. 162).

Although the translation of 1792 of the Reformed Church of America changed somewhat the wording of article 36, that is, became an interpretation in a way, there resulted also here in America much discussion and difference of opinion. We all know how that in 1910 the Christian Reformed Church added a footnote to the part of the article which the Reformed Church of Netherlands deleted. Since that time it was felt by the majority that the situation with respect to article 36 was not satisfactory. In 1938 the Christian Reformed Church took out the footnote of 1910 and also the part which was always under debate. And, now as I already intimated there is still difference of opinion in the Christian Reformed Church as to the action of the Synod of 1938. The Synod of 1943 was confronted with the request to again retract the action of 1938 and add the footnote of 1910.

The footnote adopted in 1910 assumes that the article maintains the established church, a union of church and state, and states that history disproves this principle and that practically all Reformed churches have repudiated the idea of the Established Church. It therefore declares that it does not conceive of the duty of the magistrate in this sense.

So far forth I have given something of what has been done about article 36 of our Belgic Confession. To understand more of what is involved requires a further analysis of the arguments given for or against



the interpretation of the article and the footnote. This too is a necessary work but is beyond the scope of this article. At least we can receive a definite impression that much work must be done and that this is a vital subject for the Church of Christ in the midst of the world. I cannot refrain from adding a few of my own impressions, however.

In the first place, I believe to understand and appreciate article 36 we must look at it as a product of its chief author, Guido De Brés, and not as a product of the Synod of Dort, or of Reformed fathers who lived when the ideas of the Established Church flourished. They only adopted the Belgic Confession. That means that we remember that it was made by one who was strong in his faith and was suffering from the hands of a cruel tyrant who was a tool of the Roman Catholic Church. That means that his idea about the relation of Church to State and of State to religious matters was not a dead issue. I see in this article a beautiful testimony of a leader and a people who followed him to a despot reminding him what he should do in the sight of God, persecute evildoers, instead of the righteous.

In the second place, we must remember that confessions are made by the people of God in the midst of the battle of faith. Those on the front line make confessions and not the armchair strategists. It is true that upon reflection they can be bettered as to accuracy.

In the third place, I believe the footnote makes a hasty assumption that the article proceeds from the principle of the Established Church, and does not appreciate the article as it should.

In the fourth place, I believe that the article demands of us a clear statement as to the duty of the government and also a testimony to it. L. D.

## Sick Visitation

One of the labors expected from the ministers of the Word, according to his call letter, is to visit the sick and afflicted. Naturally, this does not free the elders from this obligation even though many in small congregations seem to think so. The duty of this work rests upon the shoulders of the elders (the minister also being an elder).

From history it is evident that this work has been done throughout the centuries. Not only did our Reformed Fathers manifest this in their writings, but Scripture itself speaks of it. Of Job we read that his friends, brethren and acquaintances came to bemoan and comfort him. Job thus had several visitors in his affliction. And when Jesus speaks about the bene-

ficiaries of the kingdom He says: "For I was an hungered and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in; naked and ye clothed me; I was sick and ye visited me; I was in prison and ye came to me," Matt. 25:35, 36. From both these passages we get the impression that already in those days it was most common for the sick to be visited and comforted by their friends and acquaintances. However, one very outstanding portion of Scripture in respect to this matter we find in James 5:14, 15: "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." In respect to the explanation of this text there is difference of opinion. Does the apostle by sickness mean spiritual or physical sickness? Personally we are of the conviction that the apostle means the former. Our reason for this is in short as follows: 1. The word used here in the original has the meaning of weakness, infirmity. In other parts of Scripture, Heb. 12:4 e.g., it is used in respect to spiritual weakness and infirmity. 2. In vs. 13 the apostle speaks of physical affliction and therefore it is not likely to have a mere repetition of this in vs. 14. 3. In vs. 13 the afflicted one is told to pray himself, while in vs. 14 the sick one must call the elders of the church to pray for him. The idea most likely is that the sick one is so weak spiritually, so downcast and disheartened that prayer is impossible for him. Therefore he must call upon the elders. 4. We read that the prayer of the elders, i.e., of faith, shall save the sick, something which certainly cannot be said with all certainty of physical sickness. In passing we can also remark that the sick must *request* the elders to visit them. In our day the minister's knowing about our sickness is usually considered sufficient with the understanding and expectation that a visit will naturally follow. It is therefore proper that the minister or elders are notified when we are sick and not let them hear that in a round-about way.

However, there are some who draw further conclusions from this text. From this passage they conclude Scripture to teach that the sick need not be visited by the minister or elder when physically sick, be it nature ever so serious. There is to them no connection between physical sickness and the minister of the church. The minister is there only for spiritual things, here spiritual weaknesses and infirmities. Should such be true our common practice of visiting the physically sick certainly is out of place, for those are usually the kind of sick people we visit. And perhaps there are not a few of us thinking this way about it, advocating the above view. I for one have heard more than once that the minister really has to visit only

those who spiritually are sick, who spiritually are in need of comfort and prayer, and that his common practice of visiting those having pneumonia, heart-trouble, broken bones, etc. is nothing but a custom among us. What does a minister have to do with broken bones, pneumonic lungs and other diseases? In other words according to them there is much unnecessary sick visitation done.

The undersigned, however, certainly disagrees with this view. To be sure there are some people who expect the minister to call upon them for every minor thing, be it even when they're down in bed with a heavy cold. They're always ready for a visit. The other extreme, which is just as bad, if not worse, is that they don't call upon the leaders of the church until the afflicted one is at the point of death. But it is our opinion that sick visitation should be done also with physical illness. Our grounds for this opinion are as follows: 1. Scripture itself teaches us this. The friends of Job came to visit him in his physical affliction. Besides Job himself certainly was not so weak spiritually that he could not pray. In all his distress he maintained his integrity and sinned not. This is also evident from the quoted passage of Matt. 25. True it is that the nature of the sickness is not specified here with so many words, but whereas all the other conditions of need mentioned by our Lord are physical, such as being hungry, thirsty, naked, etc., it certainly is most natural and proper to consider the sickness mentioned here to be physical. 2. Scripture as well as the form for the ordination of the minister of the Word teaches us that it is the work of the minister to instruct admonish and *comfort* as well in general as in particular. In the third place this is necessary on account of the very essence of physical sickness. For what is sickness other than a foreboding of death? Are not all diseases and afflictions tangible evidences of the power of death working in us and pursuing us until it has finally completely overtaken us? Do all these infirmities not plainly teach us the reality of life that we are as the flower of the field and as the blade of grass. And death itself naturally speaks loudly of the wrath of God upon sin. Therefore what a blessed occasion for the pastor of the sheep to point them to the reality of *their* life! What an opportune time to bring home many precious truths and promises of the Word of God! In the fourth place we are office-bearers of a suffering church, of a people living in the midst of continual death and the valley of tears. How often does physical sickness not bring downcast hearts and distressed souls? Should these people then not be comforted when in these particular circumstances? In the fifth place these circumstances often accompany trying times. How our human nature is inclined to rebel! How easily we are dissatisfied! How hard we often find it to bear our cross submissive-

ly and lay the finger on our lips in silence to our God! How proper then for an office-bearer of Christ to visit us and bring us the Word of God applying it to our own circumstances!

As to the work itself, I think it can safely be said that it is a beautiful one as well as difficult. It is not easy to visit those in deep grief or great distress. And those who are called upon expect something too from the one visiting them. They expect to be comforted, lifted up, and strengthened. How the minister feels this especially when there is great sorrow or when he must do so in a home filled with sympathizing friends and relatives. But the first requisite for this work to my mind is to really be a pastor, one who loves his sheep. Out of love he must call upon the sheep of his fold, seeking his own distressed ones. Only when he really loves them can he "weep with them that weep", and only then will he visit them not because such is exacted from him but because as a shepherd he seeks his sheep. How comforting also for the one called upon to know that there is one who remembers him and who weeps and suffers with him. Another very important factor is that the one visiting and comforting must try to place himself in the position of the sick one. Only too often do we remain living in our own world of health and happiness and from a distance try to comfort them. But then we cannot do sick visitation. Those in distress or pain or grief have their own particular viewpoint of life. And that particular viewpoint we must try to take in, looking at life as they view it. Then we will find out that only in that way we can really comfort, speaking the Word of God as it fits their particular circumstances, but also that it is much easier to comfort them.

It is to be understood, of course, that we can comfort with nothing else but God's Word. It is our only means. True sick visitation is then also a visitation that centers about God's Word. How often is an hour not spent with a sick one discussing all kinds of things, and then finally, yes, a word of prayer is offered up, preceded perhaps with reading a small portion of Scripture. Such visiting naturally is not really worthy of the name of sick visitation. And when we say that we can comfort with God's Word only it means that His Word is the only thing we can use in this work. To be sure we can do as the world, give those who are sick our sympathy and wish them a speedy recovery etc. But that is not sick visitation, neither do we then come with God's Word. I do not mean to say that we should not long for those things. Such is natural, especially when the nature of our sickness allows us to entertain such hopes. When *we* however, come with God's Word to the sick we come with something different. That Word, as we said, shows and teaches them the reality of life. It tells us to prepare our house because we're going to die. It tells us that we

are dust and must return to the earth, that to everything there is a season, a time to be born and a time to die. In it God tells us that He returns man to destruction. We are consumed by His anger and by His wrath we are troubled. The days of our years are threescore years and ten, and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow. Ps. 90. Our only hope is in Christ Jesus who has overcome death and now has the keys of death and hell. In a beautiful way this same idea is expressed in the article of the consolation of the sick in the back of our Psalter. It follows the one work of God from Adam to the consummation of all things. In Adam we have all died, and therefore must now return to dust. God's wrath is now upon us, but our only hope lies in Christ Jesus. And being reconciled to God through Him we now ought to have an earnest desire of being delivered from this mortal body, and received the crown of righteousness.

J. B.

## The Son Of Perdition

When the Scriptures speak of a "son" then it often refers to the male offspring of another person. This reference to a male offspring is not always the meaning however of the term "son", simply because the term "perdition", refers not to a person, but to a condition or state. In fact it is well to bear in mind that the term "son" is often used differently than merely meaning the male offspring of another person. Often Scripture for instance used the term "son" to denote membership in a certain class or group of persons, as in the common phrase "sons of the prophets", which implies nothing at all as to the ancestry, but which simply states that this particular son or person belongs to the group or school of the prophets. So that the term then does not refer at all to a physical descendant, but to one related to a group. When however the term "son" is used with a genitive of quality, then the phrase indicates a certain peculiar characteristic of the person described. Many times the Bible uses the expression in that way. To mention a few: One of them, "Sons of Belial" is simply a description of persons who are base and find their spiritual ancestry in Belial, that is Satan. Another such expression is: "Sons of Thunder" as applied to the two sons of Zebedee, who were disciples of Christ. So one finds in Scripture similar terms such as "Children of light" or "Children of the kingdom" or "Children of your Father the Devil". These are all expressive of some quality of the persons under discussion.

So we also meet with the term SON OF PERDITION in the Scriptures. In a purely formal sense this means that the chief characteristic of this "son" is perdition. Now the term "perdition" occurs at least 8 times in Scripture and each time it denotes the final state of ruin or loss which forms the opposite of the state of salvation and glory, reserved for the redeemed. It is perhaps well to remember that the whole term "Son of Perdition" occurs but three times in the Bible and is a name given to Judas Iscariot in Matt. 23:15 and John 17:12 and given to the Anti-christ in 2 Thes. 2:3. And in this term (Son of Perdition) we have the well known Hebrew idiom by which a person, typically embodying a certain trait or characteristic, is called the son of that thing. The name as it appears in Scripture therefore represents both Judas and the Anti-christ as most irrevocably and completely devoted to the ruin and loss of all things that stand for the cause of salvation and glory, and that is called "perdition". Perdition is the chief characteristic of Judas and Anti-Christ. Not merely that he seeks his own perdition. Indeed, he imagines that he is seeking instead his own salvation and glory and honor. He was looking for his own happiness, even as Judas was willing to be a disciple of the Christ, if in that way he could be exalted to the position of "secretary of the treasury" in the cabinet of Jesus Christ, after the latter had established his earthy kingdom in all the glory of the former kingdom of Judea. But salvation he hated with all his soul. Salvation as wrought by Christ he would not tolerate. He was totally devoted to the cause of eternal ruin and loss. Not of himself only, but of all men. He was wholly devoted to the cause of hell and perdition. And to attain this terrible end of perdition, he would stop at nothing nor refrain from using any means at his command.

Surely the Son of perdition would not stop at anything to attain his end, even though he had to rob the poor and widows or had to shed innocent blood. He would speak peace with his lips but war was in his heart. He would deceive the righteous and privily seek their ruin and perdition. He would make common cause with the enemies of the Christ and join himself with all hostile elements, whether they be Jew or heathen. He plotted and schemed and strove for the overthrow of the kingdom of heaven, for he hated it with all his soul. Yea, he hesitated not to sell the blessed "Son of God" for thirty pieces of silver, because he was the "son of perdition".

However this term "son of perdition" refers to his spiritual ancestry also, in that it speaks of his own place wherein he only can be "at home". For Judas is not given this awful title because he went to perdition, and thus "ex eventu" became a son of perdition. Rather the reverse is true. Being a son of perdition, he went to perdition, or as it is stated in Acts 1:25 he

"fell away, that he might go to his own place". Perdition was the place assigned to him from the beginning and to that place he would go after having revealed his true characteristic, n.l., perdition of himself and all with whom he came in contact. It is therefore that we read of him further in Acts 1:15-17 that "the Holy Spirit by the mouth of David spake before, concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us and had obtained part of this ministry". God used him, even giving him part of the ministry for a time, so that He might carry out His divine counsel concerning the Christ and His cause. And it is called by Christ a fulfillment of Scripture, when Judas falls away and is lost unto perdition. For in John 17:12 where the term occurs, it is precisely this fact which gives meaning to the prayer of Christ: "While I was with them (disciples) in the world, I kept them in Thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled". Christ kept in the Father's name **ALL THAT THE FATHER GAVE HIM**. None of them did Christ lose. Judas however had been lost, for he was the son of perdition. He was not given to Christ by the Father as were the other disciples. Judas was given, only to carry out perditions work, and not to be saved. Jesus never offered salvation to Judas therefore, as it is often presented. Never was it the Lord's intention to give salvation or grace unto Judas. In God's counsel Judas was the son of perdition from the beginning and as the son of perdition he became manifest in all his corrupt dealings.

However, even as there were types of Judas throughout the old dispensation in men such as Ahitophel (see Psalm 41:9, as well as Ps. 100:8 and Acts 1:20), so also Judas himself is the type of the great son of perdition, the title also given to the Anti-christ, according to 2 Thess. 2:3, 4, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition. Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God". This does not refer to the Devil, who is a spirit and is called the "prince of this world", but rather to the Anti-christ as he shall be fully developed in the last days. Surely, even as Satan entered into Judas at the appropriate time, so also Satan shall enter in the heart of the Anti-christ at the appropriate time to carry out his dastardly work. And this antichrist will be the highest manifestation of the Son of perdition, yea, will be the son of perdition par excellence. He shall be devoted to the cause of hell and perdition as no one before him, though possessing at the same time all the elements of those who had gone before him. He is the fully developed "man of sin"

All of sin finds its end in him. He is the incarnate sinner. The builders of the tower of Babel finds their fulfillment in this "Son of Perdition". The scornors of Noah's day, and the Pharaoh's of Egypt, as well as the great lover of self, Beliam, all find their highest development in this son of perdition. In him is found the serpents deceit and guile, as well as the pharisaistic piety and zeal for God's temple. For he will not be irreligious but religious. He will sit in the temple of God. He will surely have the church pew reserved for himself, thereby the better to deceive those who are to be found in that temple. Great things he will be able to perform and great words will proceed from his mouth. He will speak as a prophet of all Israel and perform wonders that will bring the world to awe and amazement. But still he is called "Son of Perdition". His way is the way of perdition. His aim is the perdition (as opposed to the salvation in Christ) of all his followers and they will be legion. For "he opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped". This is the sin which makes him the son of perdition. Never did a Pharaoh or other type of this man of sin, exalt himself as such. O surely, Pharaoh did deify himself, and he claimed divine honors for himself, but never did he do this **OPPOSED TO** his pagan gods. Antiochus Epiphanes did desecrate the temple of the Jews, but he did this by erecting an altar to Zeus. But the Anti-christ shall be much worse in that he will oppose all that is called God. Nothing can equal him. He is the highest, the exalted, the great God himself. Such will be his claim. There will be no room whatsoever for any other god, whether a god of the heathen, or the God of Israel. Even anything worshipped will be superceded by the anti-christ. For he will exalt himself and oppose also all that is worshipped. Such is the description of the Son of Perdition as given us by the apostle Paul.

There is however comfort in this that he is called the son of perdition. As we stated with regard to Judas, we may say the same as pertaining to the anti-christ. For he is the Son of Perdition because he has been ordained to be this. He cannot go further than is written of him. He cannot destroy any that are given into the hands of the Saviour by our Father. For also in the last day it will be said by our Lord: "those that thou gavest me I have kept and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled". The son of perdition **MUST** be revealed for a short time. He **MUST** serve the purpose of the Most High for a time. After that he will be abased, and the humble and faithful shall be exalted. The son of perdition is born for perdition and serves the purpose of perdition and finally ends in perdition, according to the immutable decree of our God and Saviour.

L. V.