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MEDITATIE

Door Zondaren Weersproken

Want aanmerkt Dezen, Die zoodanig een tegenspreken van de zondaren tegen Zich heeft verdragen, opdat gij niet verflauwt en bezwijkt in uwe zielen.

Heb. 12:3.

De Weersprokene!

De bij uitnemendheid Weersprokene!

Dat is Jezus, de Christus, de Zoon des levenden Gods!

Ook reeds in de oude bedeeeling, eeuwen voor Zijne komst op aarde, als men maar ergens Zijne schaduw zag, sperden zondaren den mond open om hun tegenspraak tegen Hem uit te brullen. Zoo kwam het immers, dat Israels zanger geïnspireerd kon worden om te zingen:

“Maar Ik, Ik ben een worm, van elk vertreden;
Een worm, geen man;
Een spot en smaad van menschen,
Wien 't booze volk, naar zijn baldadig wenschen,
Beschimpen kan.”

En ook:

“Al wie Mij ziet bespot Mij, boos te moe;
Men schudt het hoofd, men steekt de lip Mij toe.”

En nog eens:

“Zij rukken aan, met opgesperden mond,
Gelijk een leeuw, al brullend in het rond.”

Het was immers tegen Hem gericht, wanneer de zondaren van ouds reeds tot de zieners zeiden: “Ziet niet; en tot de schouwers: Schouwt ons niet wat recht is; spreekt tot ons zachte dingen; schouwt ons bedriege-

rijen. Wijkt af van den weg, maakt u van de baan; laat den Heilige Israels van ons ophouden!” Jes. 30:10, 11.

En zoo zag ook de grijze Simeon hem reeds, toen Hij Hem als een kindeke in zijne armen had: “Zie, Deze wordt gezet tot eenen val en opstanding veler in Israel, en tot een teeken, dat wedersproken zal worden.”

En zoo werd het vervuld, zoodra en zoo dikwijls als Hij Zijnen mond opendeed om te spreken.

Of is er dan ooit een mensch geweest, die zoo algemeen en voortdurend werd tegen gesproken als Hij? Was er dan ooit, onder zondaren, ook maar één, die het met Hem eens kon worden, of die Hem kon ontmoeten, en Hem kon hooren, zonder Hem te weerspreken? Of heeft Hij dan ook maar één woord gesproken, waarmede de zondaren, mits ze maar verstonden, wat Hij bedoelde, hunne instemming betuigden? Geleerden en ongeleerden, de leiders des volks zoowel als 't gepeupel, Schriftgeleerden en Farizeën, maar ook de broodhongerige schare,—allen deden hunnen mond tegen Hem open. O, zeker, er waren er ook, die Hem gaarne hoorden, die Hem volgden het gansche land door, die beleden: “Gij zijt de Christus, de Zoon des levenden Gods,” en: “Gij hebt de woorden des eeuwigen levens.” Doch dat waren niet de zondaren, die spraken naar de inspraak van “vleesch en bloed,” doch zij, wien de Vader in de hemelen het alzo had geopenbaard. En, o ja, ook zondaren smaakten soms wel het goede Woord Gods, en gaven Hem getuigenis, dat Hij aangename woorden sprak, doch slechts om Hem straks, wanneer het er op aankwam om daders van Zijn Woord te zijn, met meer bitterheid der ziel te verwerpen en tegen te spreken.

En de tegenspraak richtte zich zeer bepaaldelijk tegen Hem, tegen Hemzelven, tegen Zijn persoon en verschijning, en tegen alles, wat van Hem en aan Hem was.

Aanmerkt Dezen, Die zoodanig een tegenspreken tegen Zich heeft verdragen!

Ach, neen, de tegenspraak liep niet slechts over een zeker stuk der wet, of over een bepaald punt der leer,

of over iets in Zijn wandel en levenswijze; ze betrof Hem zelf.

O, zeker, men sprak Zijn Woord tegen, en men zocht altijd gelegenheid om over verschillende punten Zijner leer met Hem te twisten, doch de diepe oorzaak hiervan lag toch altijd daarin, dat Zijn Woord van Zijn persoon niet te scheiden was, dat Zijn Woord Zelfgetuigenis was, en dat in en door dat getuigenis van den Christus aangaande Zichzelf juist de openbaring van den eenigen en waarachtigen God gelegen was. En hoe scherper Zijn getuigenis als Zelfgetuigenis aan het licht trad, hoe heftiger de tegenspraak werd. Juist dan, wanneer Hij verkondigde: "Ik ben het licht der wereld, Ik ben het brood des levens, Ik ben de goede herder, Ik ben de van den Vader Gezondene, Ik ben van boven," sperde men den mond wijd open om Hem tegen te spreken. In Zijn Woord, dat louter licht was, hoorde men Hem, Die Zelf het licht der wereld was, en voelde men zich, als men in de duisternis wilde wandelen, niet maar door dat Woord, maar door Hem Zelf veroordeeld.

En zoo was het met Zijne werken.

Och, men trachtte wel hier en daar den vinger te leggen op hetgeen Hij deed. Als Hij op den sabbat genas, dan overtrad Hij immers het gebod; als Hij opzocht de zondaren, om zalig te maken, wat verloren was, dan was Hij een vraat en wijnzuiper, een vriend van tollenaars en zondaren; als Hij duivelen uitwierp, dan deed Hij dat door Beelzebul, den overste der duivelen. Maar in den grond der zaak liep deze tegenspraak van Zijne werken ook en alleen over Zijn persoon, want ook die werken getuigden van Hem, dat Hij wel waarlijk was de Christus, de Zoon des levenden Gods. En hoe scherper die werken van Hem getuigden, hoe bitterder de tegenstand werd, zoodat, toen Hij eindelijk Lazarus uit de dooden had opgewekt, men zich haastte om Hem, en ook Lazarus, te zoeken te dooden!

Men wilde Hem niet!

Men wilde wel een Christus, maar niet Dezen!

Dat *Deze* koning over hen zou zijn, dat haatte men!

En zoo weersprak men alles, wat Hij zeide, en alles, wat Hij deed, omdat men het op Hem zelve gemunt had.

De Weersprokene!

Bitter lijden!

Aanmerkt den Weersprokene, zooals Hij de tegenspraak verdroeg!

Want immers, den Weersprokene aanmerkende, bedenken we allereerst, dat het juist door *zondaren*, en alleen door zondaren, en dat wel in hunne capaciteit als zondaren, was, dat Hij werd weersproken.

Het was de tegenspraak van zondaren tegen den zondeloozen Zoon Gods in het vleesch!

Daarom ging 't zoo diep!

Daarom moest het wel een tegenspraak worden tot in den dood!

Daarom moest deze tegenspraak wel gericht zijn, niet tegen deze of gene bijzonderheid, maar tegen Hem, den Waarachtige!

Och, zondaren spreken ook wel elkander tegen. Geleerden zijn het over dit of dat punt der wetenschap niet met elkander eens, voeren tegen elkander debat op het podium of in boek of blad. Doch het gaat niet diep. Men weersprekt niet den persoon van den ander, maar zijne stelling. En die stelling betreft een koud en abstract punt der wetenschap, dat ten slotte het leven, en het diepe hart niet raakt. Het is geen kwestie van leven en dood. En bij alle verschil van meening spreekt men ten slotte zijn respect uit voor elkander, en als 't debat is afgelopen, geeft men elkander de hand der vriendschap.

Doch zoo was het met de tegenspraak tegen *Hem* niet!

Het was een tegenspraak van *zondaren*!

En die tegenspraak heeft haar oorzaak niet in eenig meeningsverschil, heeft haar zetel niet in 't verstand, maar vindt haar wortel in vijandschap tegen God, in liefde tot de duisternis, en heeft haar zetel in het diepe hart, waaruit al de uitgangen des levens zijn! Ze is geestelijk-zedelijk van aard. Eigenlijk is er bij deze tegensprekende zondaren geen misverstand, noch meeningsverschil. In den wortel der zaak verstaan ze zeer wel, zijn ze grondig overtuigd, dat hetgeen ze tegenspreken de waarheid is, en dat Hij, tegen Wien ze Zich keeren, het Licht is en hun het getuigenis Gods brengt. Machteloos zijn ze dan ook in hun tegenspraak. Nooit winnen ze 't van Hem in hun debat. Altijd worden ze met beschaamde kaken afgewezen. Hun tegenspraak is de tegenspraak van hen, die de waarheid in ongerechtigheid ten onder houden, die God kennende, Hem als God niet willen eeren en dienen, die, het Licht ontwarende, zich steeds dieper in de duisternis terugtrekken, de tegenspraak der vijandschap tegen God!

Bitter lijden voor Hem, Die temidden dezer openbaring der vijandschap moest wandelen!

Lijden, dat des te dieper werd aangevoeld, omdat de Weersprokene de Zondelooze was!

Want eenerzijds was de tegenspraak tegen Hem zoo scherp, zoo algemeen, zoo zonder uitzondering tegen alles, wat Hij sprak of deed of van Zichzelf openbaarde, juist omdat Hij de volstrekt Zondelooze was, Die van geen compromis met zondaren wist, Die zich nu nooit eens kon aanpassen bij de goddelooze wereld, Die nimmer ook maar iets kon zeggen, dat bij de zondaren instemming en bijval kon vinden. Alle *zondaren* spraken Hem altijd en in alles tegen! Als de *zondaren* het nog voor een oogenblik met Hem eens schenen te zijn, dan wist Hij, dat dit juist misverstand was, en moest Hij Zich haasten om het misverstand weg te nemen!

Welk een lijden!

En anderzijds droeg Hij dit lijden als de Zondelooze, Die door ijver voor Gods zaak verteerd werd, Wiens spijze het was, den wil des Vaders te doen, Die altijd volmaaktelijk het Licht zag en liefhad, Die met een diepen afschuw voor de duisternis, voor de dwaasheid der goddeloosheid, vervuld was, en Die daarom deze tegenspraak altijd aanvoelde als vijandschap tegen God! O, wat lijden moet het reeds geweest zijn voor den Zoon Gods in zondeloos vleesch, om ook maar in deze bedorven wereld, waarin Hij overal de werking der zonde zag, rond te wandelen, te verkeerren! Hoeveel dieper dan werd dit lijden nog, als al deze werking der zonde zich concentreerde en toespitste op Hem in de tegenspraak der zondaren!

Aanmerkt Hem!

Vreeselijk lijden, dat dieper werd, naarmate het tot helderder openbaring kwam, dat de tegenspraak op Hem Zelfen gemunt was!

Want immers, deze tegenspraak kon zich in woorden alleen niet uiten!

Het werd een tegenspraak in daden!

Aanmerkt Dezen, Die *zoodanig* een tegenspraak van de zondaren tegen Zich heeft verdragen!

Want wel duidt het woord tegenspraak, ook zooals het hier in het oorspronkelijke voorkomt, louter op oppositie door het woord. Maar dit *zoodanig* wil ons toch terug doen zien op het voorgaande vers, waar gesproken werd van kruis en schande. Zoodanig een tegenspraak, die zich ten slotte uitte in schande en kruis, verdroeg Hij!

Hoe kon het anders?

't Was immers de tegenspraak der vijandschap tegen God? 't Ging immers tegen den persoon van den zondeloozen Zoon van God in het vleesch? 't Was immers een geestelijke tegenspraak? En naarmate men meer zijne machteloosheid gevoelde om Hem in dezen geestelijken strijd te overwinnen, moest men wel hoe langer zoo meer pogingen in het werk stellen, om Hem in natuurlijken zin te vernietigen.

En zoo werd de tegenspraak steeds heftiger, steeds persoonlijker.

Men lasterde Hem.

Men heette Hem een vraat en wijnzuiper, een vriend van tollenaars en zondaren, een verleider en bedrieger, een Godslasteraar, een oproermaker, iemand, die in verbond stond met Beelzebul, die een duivel had.

Men sloeg de handen aan Hem.

Met zwaarden en stokken keerde men zich tegen Hem, nam Hem gevangen, bond Hem, behandelde Hem als een dief en moordenaar. En als het ten slotte voor den hooge priester ten volle openbaar was geworden, dat het tegen Zijn persoon ging, dat het ging om de vraag, niet wat Hij sprak of wat Hij deed, maar wie Hij was, en Hij als de getrouwe Getuige beleden had, dat Hij was de Christus, de Zoon des levenden Gods,

kende hunne woede geen grenzen. Men bespotte Hem, sloeg Hem met vuisten, bespuwde Hem, geeselde Hem, wierp het spotkleed om Zijne bebloede leden, drukte Hem de doornenkroon op de slapen. . . .

Men verklaarde Hem des doods schuldig. . . .

En nagelde Hem aan het schandhout!

De tegenspraak der zondaren!

De Weersprokene ten einde toe!

Aanmerkt Hem!

Aanmerkt, hoe Hij verdroeg!

Want alles verdroeg Hij, en Hij keerde niet achterwaarts!

Hij bleef getrouw in Zijn getuigenis, ook al keerden alle zondaren zich overal en altijd tegen Hem in alles, en ook al werd Hij weersproken tot den dood, ja, tot den dood des kruises! En bij alle geweld der zondaren, hield Hij den strijd strikt in geestelijke banen, vertrouwende op Hem, Die Hem zou rechtvaardigen!

En Hij verdroeg geheel vrijwilliglijk.

Want immers, indien iemand, dan had Hij door het geweld Zijns Woords die goddelooze vijanden kunnen overwinnen, verdoen, vernietigen. Of ook had Hij om twaalf legioenen engelen kunnen bidden, en ze waren toegeschoten om Hem te verlossen.

Doch neen, Hij verdroeg, vrijwilliglijk, om Gods wil.

Want immers, zoo moest het!

De tegenspraak der zondaren, die reeds in het paradijs een aanvang genomen had, moest ten volle geopenbaard worden in de tegenspraak des kruises, opdat de zonde aan het licht zou treden als vijandenschap tegen God. Die tegenspraak der vijandschap tegen God moest de Zondelooze Knecht des Heeren diep, in merg en been gevoelen, dragen, verfoeien. En alzoo die vijandschap tegen God gevoelende, moest Hij haar dragen op het kruis, om daar ook de tegenspraak Gods tegen de zonde der wereld te dragen ten einde toe!

Daarom verdroeg Hij ten einde toe!

Opdat Hij aan het kruis, waar in Zijn vleesch de tegenspraak der zondaren de veel vreeselijker tegenspraak van den toorn Gods ontmoette, tot in den dood toe positie zou mogen kiezen voor God en tegen de tegenspraak der zondaren, en door Zijne instemming met Gods gerechtigheid, de tegenspraak der zondaren zou verwinnen!

Zoo, en daarom verdroeg Hij!

Ten einde toe!

Aanmerkt Hem dan!

Meent ge, dat de tegenspraak, die gij van zondaren moet verdragen, te hard is, uw last te zwaar? Bezwijkt ge haast, en verflawt ge in uwe zielen?

Aanmerkt Hem, grijpt moed, weest stil, en blijft de loopbaan loopen!

De glorie wacht!

H. H.

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EDITORIALS

Irrational and Super-rational

At the close of his article entitled "A Narrow Bridge" the editor of *The Banner* makes the following remarks:

"Let us not forget that though the truth of God is not irrational, it often transcends our reason. There are many doctrines in Scripture which appear to be self-contradictory. On that very ground the Unitarians deny the Trinity. No believer in the Trinity has ever been able to show that it is in accord with human logic to believe that there are three distinct divine persons while there is only one divine being. How many have plunged from the narrow bridge of truth because *they* could not harmonize the tri-personality with the unity of God and therefore rejected the first or the second!

Again, who can show that it is logical to believe that Jesus Christ is only *one person*, the Second Person of the holy Trinity, and yet has two natures, a human and a divine nature. How many have sacrificed, in their thinking, the human nature to the divine or the divine to the human! And as to the human nature of our Lord in the state of His humiliation, how impossible it is to maintain *logically* the absolute sinlessness of our Lord and His temptability at the same time!

We find ourselves in precisely the same kind of a predicament with respect to our conception of sinful man and of the way of salvation. We accept, for example, the doctrine of total depravity but we also hold that the natural man by the common grace of God is able to perform some outward good. Likewise, we believe in a particular atonement but we also hold that there is a general offer of salvation and we plead with sinners to repent. Again, we believe the doctrine of irresistible grace; we hold that a sinner's heart must be opened by the Holy Spirit before he can believe; at the same time we summon him to faith and repentance and urge him to come to Christ. All this sounds foolish to the man who applies the yardstick of human logic to divine truth. It is not foolish to the man who accepts the Bible as the Word of God

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and believes that by the foolishness of the gospel God is pleased to save sinners.

Now, I wish to state first of all that with the first sentence of the above quotation I wholeheartedly agree.

With emphasis I would like to express agreement with the second clause of that sentence: the truth often transcends our reason. And I may add that, ultimately, the truth *always* transcends our reason. Of course! How could it be different? *The* truth always concerns God, and God is the transcendent One, and as such He is the incomprehensible One. It is the wonder of revelation that, while God makes Himself known to us, He at the same time causes us to discern clearly that we cannot comprehend Him. And as one contemplates and searches this revelation of the Infinite, he always confronts more inscrutable depths of mystery, which he can never fathom. Nor does the believer have any spiritual or rational difficulty with those inscrutable mysteries of God which he knows and apprehends by faith, without ever comprehending them. For, as the editor of *The Banner* admits, though they surpass our comprehension, they are not irrational. Hence, in the measure and form that they are revealed to us, we know them, and in as far as they are incomprehensible, we worship and adore Him Whose depths they are, and Whom to know is life eternal. To these mysteries certainly do belong the truths referred to above, that of the holy trinity, and that of the unity of Christ's Person in the divine and human natures. And to these belong many other truths, and ultimately all truths, if we but make the attempt to fathom them. We walk in mysteries.

But I want to emphasize also the first clause of the above quotation: "the truth of God is not irrational." To say that the truth is irrational is to deny the possibility of all systematic theology, of all knowledge of God, of revelation itself, and virtually to assert that God Himself is irrational. It is quite impossible for us, whom God created rational beings, to apprehend that which is irrational, i.e. contrary to reason. Nor are the truths which the editor of *The Banner* mentions in the above paragraphs irrational. To us it appears that he partially contradicts his statement that the truth is not irrational, when he writes: "No believer in the Trinity has ever been able to show that it is in accord with human logic to believe that there are three distinct divine persons while there is only one divine being." If the editor had written that no believer has ever been able to comprehend the tri-unity of God, we would have no objection, but we do object to his statement now. If the doctrine of the trinity is not in accord with human logic, it is irrational, and cannot be a doctrine. Contrary to reason it would be, and impossible for faith to apprehend, if the doctrine of the trinity implied that one is three and three are one in

the same sense, i.e. that one being is three beings and three beings are one being. But this is not the case. And there is nothing contrary to reason, even though it may far transcend our boldest comprehension in the doctrine that God is *one* in *being*, and *three* in *persons*. And the same is applicable to the unity of the divine Person of the Son of God in the two natures, the divine and the human. Readily we admit that also this truth far transcends our comprehension, but there is nothing illogical or contrary to reason in the doctrine that the eternal Son of God, Who subsists eternally in the divine nature, also assumed the human nature.

But when the editor in the rest of the above quotation tries to make us believe that this principle, that the truth is never irrational though it transcends our comprehension, is also applicable to and involved in his contention that atonement is particular and the well-meaning offer of salvation on the part of God is general and universal, that God wills to save only the elect and that He nevertheless wills that all men shall be saved, that man is totally depraved and that yet he is able to do good works, we must most emphatically disagree with him.

The editor, let me point out, does not do justice to the doctrine which has been adopted by the Christian Reformed Churches in 1924, and which he also tries to present to his readers. When, for instance, he writes: "Again, we believe the doctrine of irresistible grace; we hold that a sinner's heart must be opened by the Holy Spirit before he can believe; at the same time we summon him to faith and repentance and urge him to come to Christ," he does not state the matter quite correctly from the Christian Reformed viewpoint. If no more is said, there need be no logical contradiction involved in the statement, for when *we* urge a sinner to come to Christ, we do so on the supposition that God will draw him, and that otherwise all *our* urging is absolutely vain. But the editor should have stated the matter as follows: "We believe the doctrine of irresistible grace, which God gives only to the elect, and yet we believe that *God* (not *we*) offers this grace well-meaningly to those whom He does not want to save." That is the doctrine of the Christian Reformed Churches. Briefly: God well-meaningly offers salvation to those whom He does not want to have it. Still more briefly: God wills to save those whom He will not save.

Now, this is not a deep truth, but a very superficial untruth. It does not transcend our reason, but its falsity and nonsense lies quite within the scope of our reason. Its untruth is so superficial that a child can not fail to recognize it. It is irrational, indeed, and, therefore, incapable of being accepted by the rational mind of the believer. No one can possibly believe both sides of a directly contradictory statement, for the simple reason that by accepting the one he has already

rejected the other. Either God wills that all men shall be saved in the sense that He is earnestly desirous of the salvation of all men, and in accord with this it is to teach that He offers salvation well-meaningly to all, a salvation which Christ merited for all, and the acceptance of which is left to the will of man; or He wills that only the elect shall be saved, and in harmony with this is the Reformed doctrine of particular atonement, and of irresistible grace. But both cannot be true. And no man can possibly believe both.

And, therefore, as long as the editor of *The Banner* tries to inculcate this contradiction into the minds of his readers, his attempt to fight Arminianism in the Christian Reformed Churches will prove fruitless. They will not believe both sides of the contradiction he proposes, but accept one of them only. And that will be the Arminian side, which is far more appealing to the flesh than the Reformed truth.

That this is true the editor of *The Banner* cannot fail to ascertain for himself, if he will but turn on the radio and listen to some of the programs that are broadcast from Christian Reformed Churches and under their sponsorship as "Hour of Praise" programs. Just recently I happened to listen to one of them, which, while the message delivered on that occasion was a sad mixture of modernism and Arminianism, was concluded by singing:

"There's a Stranger at the door, Let Him in;
He has been there oft before, Let Him in;
Let Him in, ere He is gone,
Let Him in, the Holy One,
Jesus Christ the Father's Son, Let Him in.

"Open now to Him your heart, Let Him in;
If you wait He will depart, Let Him in;
Let Him in, He is your friend,
He your soul will sure defend,
He will keep you to the end, Let Him in."

And all this while the editor of *The Banner* is pleading with his readers: "Beware of taking your doctrine from the gospel hymns". . . .

I would, therefore, earnestly invite the editor: come on the narrow bridge of the truth with us, brother, and refrain from your strange acrobatic stunts by which you attempt to jump off on both sides, and to stay on the bridge at the same time!

H. H.

Yea, they are kept from paths of sin
Who walk in God's appointed way;
Thy precepts Thou hast given us,
That we should faithfully obey.

Eliminating the Innocent Party

Brother Langerak suggests (see p. 206) that the exception which the Lord mentions in Matt. 19:9 ("except it be for fornication"), justifies the conclusion that in case of fornication the innocent party may remarry, both the husband and the wife. He suggests that the text may be read this way (the meaning is, of course, that we may *continue*, finish, the text in this way): "Whosoever shall put away his wife for fornication and marry another, does not commit adultery."

Now, as I have stated before, I understand full well that those who make a plea for the remarriage of the innocent party base their view exactly on the phrase "except it be for fornication," and explain this clause as modifying, not only the words "whosoever shall put away his wife," but also the words "and shall marry another." In other words, they read: "Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another except it be for fornication, committeth adultery." But even so, the fact remains that the Lord adds: "and whosoever marrieth her (the innocent wife whose husband is married to another) which is put away doth commit adultery."

Now, what becomes of this innocent woman if the text is read (or concluded) as brother Langerak suggests? She is simply eliminated, and changed into a guilty woman. Just notice: "Whosoever shall put away his wife for fornication, and marry another, doth not commit adultery." In this case the woman has committed adultery, and the innocent woman of Matt. 19:9 exists no longer. The brother, therefore, would answer my question by eliminating the innocent woman whose husband is married to another. But this is impossible, unless we eliminate the words concerning marrying the innocent woman from the text altogether, an apocoptation which, in spite of the fact that it is found in certain readings in the original, I do not think is permissible.

Hence, I can see only one possible explanation of Matt. 19:9, and that is, that the words of the exception, "except it be for fornication," modify only the words "Whosoever shall put away his wife," and not also "and shall marry another." This is the only possible explanation, unless we would take the stand that the text teaches that the innocent *man* may remarry, but not the innocent *woman*. The Lord then teaches here, that a man sins even if he puts away his wife except for fornication. If she commits fornication he may put her away. But if he puts her away and also marries another, he commits adultery besides. On the basis of fornication he may put her away, but in no case may he marry another, no more than the innocent woman, whose husband lives in adultery, may marry another.

This is quite in harmony with the context. The Pharisees placed the Lord before the question: "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" That, therefore, is the main question. The question was not whether a man might remarry after he put away his wife, but simply whether he might put her away. And after the Lord had answered them by referring to the original creation ordinance of marriage, and solemnly declared: "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder," the Pharisees appeal to Moses to defend their stand that a man may put away his wife. Still the question is not one of remarriage, but of putting away the wife for every cause. And to this the Lord answers, that Moses because of the hardness of their hearts had permitted them to put away their wives, "but from the beginning it was not so." Hence, in vs. 9 this is still the chief question. And it is this question which the Lord answers by saying that a man may put away his wife only in case of fornication, but he adds that if a man that puts away his wife for every cause (which was the case put up by the Pharisees) marries another, he commits adultery besides. And that no one dare conclude from this that remarriage is permissible in case the other party is guilty of fornication is evident from what the Lord adds: whosoever marrieth her that is put away doth commit adultery. If a married and divorced, but innocent woman, whose husband is married to another man, may not remarry, how can an innocent man, whose wife commits adultery have that right?

H. H.

P.S. Next time, D. V. I will try to answer the question of brother Meelker.

The Triple Knowledge

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART TWO

OF MAN'S REDEMPTION

Lord's Day XI.

Chapter 2.

The Perfect Saviour.

The name Jesus, a Greek rendering of the Hebrew name Joshua or Jehoshua, is explained by the Cate-

chism as briefly meaning Saviour: "why is the Son of God called Jesus, *that is Saviour?*" Of old there has been and still is difference of opinion among scholars as to the proper derivation of the name Jehoshua. According to some it is supposed to be a simple verbal noun, and in that case the meaning is *salvation*. According to others, the name is composed of two parts, *Jeho*, an abbreviation of Jehovah, and *shua*, salvation or saves, and according to this derivation the name means Jehovah-salvation or Jehovah saves. We cannot, of course, enter more deeply into the merits of this controversy. Let it suffice to state that, in our opinion, the analogy of many similar names in the Old Testament is decidedly in favor of the latter view. Thus the name Jehohanan is composed of *Jeho* and *hanan*, and means Jehovah-gracious or Jehovah granted; Jehoiada is composed of *Jeho* and *iada*, meaning Jehovah knows; Jehoiachin consists of *Jeho* and *iachin*, signifying Jehovah appoints; Jehoiakim is composed of *Jeho* and *iakim*, and means Jehovah sets up; Jonathan (Jehonathan) is *Jeho-nathan*, meaning Jehovah gives, etc. It is quite in line with these and many other examples in Scripture to explain the name Jehoshua or Joshua as being composed of *Jeho* and *Shua* and as meaning Jehovah-salvation. This, then, is the full meaning of the name Jesus. And thus explained, the name has a profound and rich significance. It signifies that Jesus is the revelation of the God of our salvation, or rather that He *is* Jehovah-salvation. In Him we see Jehovah, the EHJEH ASHER EHJEH, the I AM THAT I AM, the eternal, self existent, immutable God, Who is eternal and immutable in Himself, and eternal and unchangeable also in relation to His people and covenant, come down to us in our misery and death, reaching down with His mighty arm to save us. Creation is the revelation of the Almighty, Who calleth the things that are not as if they were. But Jesus, i.e. the Christ of the Scriptures, the Son of God come into the flesh, bearing our iniquities, crucified and slain, raised on the third day, gone into the heavens and exalted at the right hand of the Most High,—this Jesus is the revelation of Jehovah our salvation, Who calls light out of darkness, righteousness out of sin, life out of death, heavenly glory out of the desolation of corruption and hell.

It is noteworthy that the Catechism in this eleventh Lord's day lays stress on the truth that the name Jesus implies that He is a complete Saviour, a perfect Saviour, in Whom we must find everything that is necessary to our salvation; and that for this reason He is also the only Saviour, so that we "ought not to seek, neither can find salvation in any other," and that they, "who seek their salvation or welfare of saints, of themselves, or anywhere else," do not believe in Jesus, "for thought they boast of him in words, yet in deeds they deny Jesus the only deliverer and Saviour." The rea-

son for this emphasis on the part of the Heidelberger is, of course, that the Roman Catholic church does, indeed, teach men to seek salvation also in Mary, in the saints and in men. And although our controversy is no longer so directly with the Roman Catholic church as it was in the days when our Heidelberger was composed, even in this respect and with a view to this controversy the Catechism is not quite so obsolete as is sometimes supposed, witness the following replies in recent years broadcast over the radio: "What is her (Mary's) place in the Christian religion? Mary's place in the Christian religion should be obvious. She is the morning star preceding the Light of the world, Christ. The only difference is that all her light is received from the Son she heralds. By God's eternal decree Mary has been associated with the highest mysteries of the Christian religion, being the very instrument of the Incarnation of the Eternal Son of God, and, therefore, of our redemption. We have devotion to her because of our admiration of her, and because of her interest in our eternal welfare. . . . In what way did Mary take her part in the redemptive work of mankind which was accomplished by Christ alone? Christ was the principal Author of our redemption, but there were many secondary cooperators in the work. we even find St. Paul saying that we are to fill up what is wanting to the sufferings of Christ. The explanation of this, however, would demand a treatise on the mystical body of Christ as comprising all the members of the Church, and I can scarcely do justice to it now. All I can say is that Mary cooperated in the redemptive work in a way quite special to herself. As Jesus is the second Adam, so Mary is the second Eve. As our first Mother Eve brought us forth to misery and suffering, so our second Mother Mary, in bringing forth our Saviour, brought us forth to happiness and salvation. Mary's consent was asked by God when the time for the Incarnation was at hand: she consented to the full work of Christ from the cave of Bethlehem to the cross of Calvary. She provided the very blood that was shed for us. In union with Christ she had her own passion, and Simeon rightly predicted to her, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, 'Thy own soul a sword shall pierce.' With, in, and through the work of Christ her sufferings also contributed secondarily towards our redemption. And she was given to us from the cross as a mother for a mother's work. To all of us Christ said in the person of St. John, 'Son, behold thy mother.' We Catholics, therefore, regard Mary as our spiritual Mother, entertaining towards her the devotion of children. Every Christian woman above all, should regard Mary, the Mother of Christ, as the glory of her sex." Radio Replies, III, by Dr. Leslie Rumble. Or note this by the same author in answer to another question: "Essentially that work was accomplished on Calvary by the death of Jesus on

the cross. And Mary was there, standing at the foot of the cross, identifying herself with the offering of her Son. By man and woman came death. Both sexes cooperated in our downfall, and both sexes cooperated in our redemption. . . . Mary is the second Eve as Christ is the second Adam. And both repaired the evil of our first parents, Christ principally and Mary secondarily and subordinately to Christ. . . . Mary's work was to be our co-redemptress, and to mediate for us together with Christ, but of course in subordination to Him. . . . She is our spiritual Mother in heaven, and she fulfills the duties of a Mother, winning for us by her intercession that grace of Christ which is life to our souls and which, please God, will mean eternal life in the end." *idem*, II, p. 162.

Nor has the Roman Catholic doctrine changed with regard to prayers to Mary and to the saints in heaven, and with respect to looking for help and salvation from them, and even through their relics. "Why do Catholics believe that Mary prays for them and helps them? Because they believe that she is their spiritual Mother, and that she has not lost her interest in those for whom her Son died, merely because she is in heaven. . . . We do not pray to Mary instead of to God, but we do pray to her as well as to God. . . . Two prayers are better than one, above all when the other whom I have asked to join in my petition is the very Mother of Christ." *idem*, p. 161. And as to worshiping the saints, note the following: "Why pray to Saints? Is it not better to pray to God directly? Not always. The same answer applies here as in the case of prayers to the Virgin Mary, who after all is the greatest of the Saints. God may wish to give certain favors through the intercession of some given Saint. In such a case it is better to seek the intercession of that Saint as God wishes." And as to worshiping the relics of the saints, the same author has this to say: "Why do Catholics worship relics of Saints? They do not worship relics as they worship God, by adoration. If you mean worship in the sense of honor or veneration, then Catholics certainly venerate the relics of the saints." And when one objects to the Roman Catholic practice of expecting help or favors through relics, the same writer answers: "No real difficulty arises in this matter. No one holds that material relics of themselves possess any innate or talismanic value. But God Himself can certainly grant favors even of a temporal nature through the relics of Saints, thus honoring His Saints, and rewarding the faith and piety of some given Catholic." *idem*, I, p. 289, 291. These quotations may suffice to demonstrate that the emphasis of the Catechism on the absolutely sole sufficiency of Jesus as Saviour is, even in opposition to the present Roman Catholic doctrine, not out of date.

Yet, our immediate concern today is not so much

with the errors of the Roman Catholic church as with those who, while they loudly and emphatically proclaim that "Jesus saves", yet deprive Him of all power to save unless the sinner gives his consent. This is a great evil, and a very general and prevalent one in our day, all the more dangerous because those that thus preach Jesus ostensibly emphasize strongly exactly that which they, nevertheless deny: that Jesus saves. The name of Jesus is on the lips of many a preacher today, who, nevertheless, proclaims a Jesus that is impotent to save. And the words "Jesus saves" may be read on billboards and auto licenses, as well as above entrances to church buildings, but if you should inquire of those that are responsible for these advertisements just what they mean by that winged slogan, you would discover that they attach a meaning to it quite different from what the words actually express. For they do not mean that Jesus actually saves, but that He is willing to save, provided the sinner gives his consent, will let himself be saved by Jesus; if not, their Jesus is powerless to save. In other words, they do not find in their Jesus absolutely all things necessary to save a sinner, and that, too, not a willing, but an unwilling sinner that is dead through trespasses and sins. And, therefore, it is not only proper, but urgently necessary for the church that prizes and would preserve the truth as it is in Christ, to emphasize that Christ is a complete, a perfect and only Saviour, and that He is not only willing, but powerful to save even unto the end. His name is called Jesus, "because he shall save His people from their sins."

The Heidelberg instructs us that "the Son of God is called Jesus, that is a Saviour, because he *saveth us and delivereth us* from our sins. Mark you well, He is called Jesus, not because He *is willing* to save and to deliver us, nor even because He *is able* to save and to deliver us from our sins, but because *He actually does save and deliver us*. And again, the Catechism declares that "they who by a true faith receive this Saviour, must find all things in him necessary to their salvation." Now, salvation is that marvellous work of God's grace whereby the sinner, loaded with a burden of guilt that renders him damnable before God, chained from within with shackles of corruption and death, which he can never break, standing in enmity against God, loving the darkness rather than the light, wholly incapable to save himself, or to contribute even the least to his salvation, impotent and unwilling to turn to God to be saved, is redeemed from his guilt, is liberated from his bondage of sin and corruption, is delivered from the dominion of death, and is raised to the status of a free son of God, translated from darkness into light, and from death to eternal life in fellowship with God and in heavenly glory. And when we say that Jesus is a complete Saviour we mean that He alone accomplishes absolutely all that is implied in

this marvellous work of grace. Let us consider this a little more in detail.

We may distinguish here between that part of the work of salvation which Jesus accomplished *for us, in our behalf*, and that other part which He performs *upon us and within us*. The first part is the work of redemption, whereby Christ purchased us free from the guilt of sin and from the bondage of death, and merited for us the *right* to be delivered, and to receive all the blessings of salvation. This is first. It is basic. For we must recall that we are guilty and damnable before God, and that our being in the bondage of sin is the result of God's just sentence of death upon us. We are born in original guilt because of Adam's transgression, and we increase our guilt daily by our actual sin. And guilt is liability to punishment. And the punishment of sin is death. That punishment is not something that will be inflicted upon us in the future, after physical death only, but that is also upon us now. And to that just punishment belongs our spiritual death, our totally undone and depraved condition. Hence, before all things, before we can even have the right to be saved and delivered from the bondage and power of sin, it is necessary that our guilt be removed, and that we become juridically or forensically righteous before God. To use an illustration, as our just punishment for our sin God shut us up in the prison of corruption and death, and securely locked the door of our prison. He that would deliver us from our bondage cannot simply break into our prison by main force. On the contrary, he must receive the key to our prison door from God Himself, that he may set us free. But to obtain that key, he must make us worthy of liberation, he must remove from our heads the sentence of damnation, satisfy the justice of God and remove our guilt, and obtain for us everlasting righteousness. And this is what Christ did for us. He did so by His perfect obedience, His suffering and death on the accursed tree, whereby He atoned for all our sins, and obtained for us that righteousness according to which we are worthy of eternal life and glory.

Why, then, is the Son of God called Jesus? First of all because He redeemed us. In Him God reconciled us unto Himself, not imputing our trespasses unto us. In the death and resurrection of Jesus Jehovah is revealed to us as the God of our salvation, Who justifies the ungodly. That is the meaning of the name Jesus!

But this is not all. In fact, if it were all, He would not be Jesus. He must not only accomplish that part of salvation that must be done for us, in our behalf, but also that other part that is to be realized within us. Not only our state, our legal status before God, must be changed from one of guilt into one of perfect and everlasting righteousness, also our actual condition must undergo a complete and radical change, such a

change as is nothing less than a resurrection from the dead. We must not only be redeemed, but we must also be *delivered* from sin. We must be changed from death into life, from darkness into life, from rebellious and cursing children of the devil into dear children of God, from the misery and desolation of our natural state into the glory of heavenly perfection. Our whole nature must be radically turned about, so that the image of God is restored in us, and instead of loving the lie we love and do the truth, instead of being slaves of the devil and yielding ourselves as servants of iniquity unto unrighteousness, we follow after righteousness, and instead of being corrupt and rebellious of will and inclination we are consecrated to God. We must receive spiritual eyes to see the things of the kingdom of God, and to recognize Jesus as the revelation of the God of our salvation; and spiritual ears to hear spiritual things, and a spiritual heart to obey the Word of God. And we must receive all these spiritual blessings, not in such manner that after having once received them we now possess them in ourselves, but constantly. We must be united with Christ, that from Him we may live as the branches live out of the vine, as the members live only in organic union with the body. And so we must be preserved even unto the end, and that, too, in the midst of a world in which everything stands opposed to us, and in which the devil, the world, and our flesh constantly try to destroy us. And, finally, we must be glorified. Through death we must pass into heavenly glory, into the "first resurrection" of the building of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. And through the grave we must pass into the glory of the final resurrection, that we may inherit the kingdom of God, which flesh and blood cannot inherit. This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on incorruption, and the image of the earthy which we now bear must be replaced by the image of the heavenly, that in the new heavens and the new earth we may be fit inhabitants of the tabernacle of God that shall be with men!

And when we say that Jesus is a complete Saviour, we mean that He alone accomplishes all this marvellous work in us, and that they, who by a true faith receive this Saviour, find all these glorious blessings of grace in Him, and in Him only. He not only obtained the right of our deliverance, He also received the key to our prison of sin and death, and the commission to liberate us and to lead us on to eternal glory. For He is raised from the dead, and in Him is life and immortality. And He went into the highest heavens, and is exalted at the right hand of God, endowed with all power in heaven and on earth. And being exalted at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, He received the promise of the Holy Spirit, in order that through that Spirit He might return to us, dwell in us,

and make us partakers of the blessings of grace He merited for us by His perfect obedience. And by the power of that Spirit, and through His Word, He delivers us, and saves us even unto the end. It is He that regenerates us, imparting unto us His own resurrection life; it is He that calls us, so that we come to Him and embrace Him by a true faith; it is He that unites us with Himself, that lives in us, that cleanses us from the pollution of sin, that sanctifies us unto God, that preserves us in the midst of the opposing forces of this world, so that nothing can pluck us out of His hand. And it is He that is the resurrection and the life, and that will lead us through death into glory, through the resurrection into the heavenly tabernacle of God. All this is in Jesus only, nor ought we to seek any part of this in ourselves, or in any other. The Son of God is called Jesus, Jehovah-salvation, because He is a perfect Saviour!

H. H.

The New Generation

As was said, the task that remained to the one and a half tribes west of the Jordan was to prosecute the conquest by freeing their respective allotments from the remnants of the heathen tribes, and especially to cleanse the land of the altars and shrines of their pagan worship. But this was not done. With the exception of Judah, the tribes, in violation of the command of God, concluded a covenant with the heathen and, according to the articles of this covenant, the heathen were allowed to continue in the possession of many of their cities on the condition that they pay tribute. What is worse, the pagan temples and altars were not broken down. We learn this from the rebuke of the angel of the Lord contained in the second chapter.

This sinful negligence, seeing that it is chargeable to the old generation of elders and judges, heads and officers, genders surprise. It calls for an explanation. For in the book of Joshua this old generation of leaders stands out as truly godfearing. They had remained loyal to Joshua during all his campaign. It was this old generation—that part of it included in the two and a half tribes—that had built the altar by the Jordan from solicitude lest the posterity of those who dwelt in Canaan proper should say to their posterity: "You have no part in Jehovah," and so should restrain their children from serving Him. It was this old generation west of the Jordan who, fearing that the altar was to be perverted to unlawful use, gathered themselves together at Shiloh to overrun the two and a half tribes with war, and who would not drop the thought of war against these tribes until they were

satisfied that the altar had been reared in good faith. There is more evidence of the strongest kind that this old generation of leaders feared God. When Joshua, with a view to the double-hearted among the people, said that, if it seemed evil to them to serve Jehovah, they should choose them whatever pagan deity they might prefer and serve that deity, they indignantly replied, "God forbid that we should forsake the Lord and serve other gods, seeing that the Lord is our God and that it is He who brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage, did these great signs in our sight, preserved us in all the way wherein we went and drove out before us all the people." The point to their reply is, "We, the people of Israel, as a nation, have our origin in election and were brought into being by the wonder of grace, that we might be His people. Him therefore must and will we serve. For, denying Him, we disown our Maker, Him to whom we are indebted for our very existence."

This is the language of faith. These elders feared God. And yet it was during their lifetime that the covenant with the Canaanites was concluded and this with the temples and altars of these pagan people still standing. But these violations cannot be charged to the elders of the old generation. The fault lay with "that other", that next following generation of which it is stated that "it knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel" (Jos. 2:10). It must not be imagined that this apostate generation did not begin to make its appearance until all that generation, loyal to God, "were gathered unto their fathers." This cannot be the meaning of the notice, "And Joshua the son of Nun died. . . and also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers, and there arose another generation after them that knew not the Lord." Being the next following generation, many of the men that belonged to it, were already in their prime when Joshua died. After not so many years their numerical strength exceeded that of the older generation and finally their influence and prestige was dominant. Then, it must be supposed, strange voices were heard in the councils of the tribes. The men of "that other generation" were tired of war. Doubtless they used as an argument that the people of Israel had come into the possession of all that land that they could conveniently cultivate and that it had become plain to all, that the Canaanites could not be expelled from their strongholds. So the tribes, one after the other, over the protests of the godfearing elders, it must be imagined, concluded a peace with these pagan peoples, with the land still studded with pagan altars and temples. As has already been explained, this was the great offence of that "other generation", namely, their accepting the inhabitants of the land as their neighbors, as a people fit to dwell among and their

failure to cleanse the land of the apparatus of pagan worship. Their doing was indicative of a wrong attitude toward God and thus preindicative of their choosing Baal in rejection of God. The significance of their doing was that it amounted to a breaking of God's covenant.

As could be expected, the Lord soon let Himself be heard of and this not through an earthly ambassador but through an angel—the angel of the Lord—consubstantial with God. It is certain that this angel was the Lord Himself, the *Presence* of the triune Jehovah i.e., Christ. For no ordinary prophet would so entirely identify himself with God, as is done by this Angel in His message to the people. "I have made you go out of Egypt," He said to them.

The Angel came up from Gilgal. For it was at Gilgal that he had appeared to Joshua, announced Himself to him as the "Captain of the Lord's host," and, in fulfillment of His promise, reiterated in Joshua's audience and for his encouragement, delivered all Canaan into the hands of the Israelites with the fall of Jericho, the key city of Canaan. This had been several years ago, how many is not stated. The actual occupation of Canaan was now completed. But the survey of the whole land was such as indicated gross disobedience to the Word of God. The seriousness of their offence is indicated by this, that the Lord appeared unto His people in person and communicated what He had to say to them directly. First the angel directs their attention to the fact that He made them go up out of Egypt, and brought them into the land which He swore unto their fathers (Jud. 2:1). Thus the people are again told that, as a nation, they were brought into being by the wonder of God's power and that therefore they belonged exclusively to Him body and soul. "And I said," the angel continues, "I will never break my covenant with you." This statement of the angel is a reproduction of the thought expressed by Moses in this language, "Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken unto these judgments. . . that the Lord thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he swore unto thy fathers: and he will love thee and bless thee, and multiply thee" (Deut. 7:12, 13). The children of the promise, the elect of God, by His mercy, do hearken unto His judgments. With them He keeps, never breaks, His covenant, the covenant of mercy and grace, which He swore unto Abraham. The others, who are not properly included in the covenant, do not keep His judgments. They violate His command. The covenant they despise. This is the matter upon which the angel next dwells. Moses had commanded that they "make no league with the inhabitants of the land," and that they "throw down their altars." "But ye", says the angel to them, "have not obeyed my voice." They had entered into a forbidden fellowship with the nations against whom

they were called to contend, and were tolerating their idolatry within the borders of God's country and thereby authorizing the heathen openly to manifest their depravity and practice their abominations. "Why have ye done this." The angel demands to know. They had no reply. For they were without excuse. For they knew, God had said (Ex. 23:29, 30) and Moses had reiterated it, that the course, which they now pursued, led to ruin. They knew that God could not prosper their sin. They must then experience what the messenger now announces namely, the covenant curse. "I also said—and I say it now—I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you." The covenant curse was to be realized through the agency of the Canaanites, who would first seduce them to sin and thereupon, as scourges in God's hand, harass and oppress them on every side.

The true people of God were sensible of the surpassing reality of the blessings which they had received. Their alarm on account of sin is great. "And it came to pass, when the angel of the Lord spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept. And they called the name of that place *Bochim*—weepers—: and they sacrificed there unto the Lord," gave expression, thru their sacrifice, to their contrition of heart and their need of forgiveness. The sinful doings, which the angel had denounced, were those of the carnal seed. But the guilt of these doings was communal. Besides, the true people of God were also guilty by reason of their own sin. Thus the conflicts and oppressions, in store for the nation, would involve, to be sure, also them but for their chastisement, and thus for the advancement of their spiritual life. And when, out of the depths, they cried unto the Lord, He delivered them, delivered the nation for their sake. The messenger had not shut the door of hope on them. For to them was the promise.

Doubtless, *Bochim* is to be identified with *Shiloh*. For this is the sacred place where the people of Israel, at that time, according to the command of God, assembled for feasts and sacrifices. Here is where the angel would find them. The discourse of the angel produced an outburst of weeping. Only because it was a weeping of true penitence before God on the part of God's believing people, could the place where it occurred, receive the name *Bochim*. The spot, being called *Bochim*, was henceforth the memorial of the Lord's transacting with the nation at this spot, a memorial of His discourse to them—a discourse in which the covenant relation between God and His people, the obligations of His people in the covenant, and the covenant curse and blessing was again clearly set forth. The Lord had thus twice spoken to that "other generation", first by Joshua, His servant and

now in person by His own mouth,—spoken, to this generation, now that it was about to plunge deeper into sin. *Bochim*, too, would witness against them in the day of judgments. But *Bochim* was also a memorial of the reactions of God's believing people to His Word. They received His Word. They weep on account of their sins. For them therefore the door of hope is open.

It was not until the old generation that, on a whole, we have reasons to believe, feared God, had died out, that the sacred writer makes special mention of this "other generation" the next following one, that, on a whole feared *not* God. "And there arose," says the author, "another generation after them, which knew not Jehovah, nor the works which He had done for Israel." This cannot mean that the new generation knew nothing about Jehovah and His works, were as ignorant of Him as heathen people who had never heard of Jehovah's name and of His works. A clue to the right understanding of these statements of the author is given us in what he says of the old generation, namely, that they "had known *all* the works of the Lord that He had done for Israel," and at another place in his narrative (Jos. 2:7), that they "had seen all the great works of the Lord. . . ." The old generation had stood in the midst of the events. They had witnessed the acts of God. They knew Jehovah and all His works through personal observation and experience. And the movements of the conflict made an indelible impression upon their souls and could therefore not be forgotten. This alone would account for their serving God all their days, if nothing more is meant than an outward conformity to God's laws. With many of the old generation, serving God may have amounted to just that and nothing more. They saw God's works and despised God in their hearts. But the true Israel, seeing the events, blessed God's name because they were men born from above, men of spiritual perception and understanding who knew and wanted to know the events as works of God, wonders of His grace.

As to the new generation, it had acquaintance of the Lord and all His works only through the report of their fathers. Hence they did not know God and His works through personal experience, had not stood in the midst of the events and been mightily impressed by them, as had their fathers. But there is more meaning contained in the notice, "And they knew not the Lord and His works. . . ." Being men in whose heart there was not the true fear of God they did not *acknowledge* that it was through God that they had come hither, that the events of which they had intelligence, through the report of the fathers, were the works of Jehovah, the wonders of His grace and that by these wonders their nation had been brought into being. They reasoned about the history of their people as do

the rationalist interpreters of our present time. They rationalized God's wonders. The departure of their people from Egypt and the conquest of Canaan were after all but human achievements, they said. Their fathers had seen and believed that victory came to them from the Lord. But they did eat, built goodly houses, and dwelt in them (Deut. 8:12) forgot God and said (Deut. 8:17), "Our power and the might of our hands hath gotten us this wealth." Thus their not knowing the Lord and His works must also mean that they knew little *about* the Lord and His works, of the true idea and purpose of their history, nation, institutions, promises of God and His worship. They had no insight into God's Word and no spiritual perception of the things of God. For they cared only for themselves. They could detect no perceptible difference between the worship of Baal and the worship of Jehovah. The contrarities and the differences were all smoothed away by the evil influence of habitual intercourse with the idolatrous Canaanites. It could be expected therefore, that, with the last restraints removed through the death of the elders, this apostate generation, being as it was, ungodfearing, openly broke with the Lord to serve Baalim. Jehovah was so holy and exacting, His religion so cold, and His worship so cheerless and uninspiring. In Baal's temple they could sing and dance and serve sinful flesh. The word *sin* was not found in the vocabulary of his priests.

Herewith is completed the treatment of the first introduction to our book, which includes chapters 1:1-2:10; 2:20-3:4.

G. M. O.

Street Evangelism

Some years ago it was no uncommon sight to see little and larger groups of people, on various street corners of the down-town areas of larger cities, listening to some persuasive or emotional singing or to some speaker doing his best to bring, or pretending to bring, the Gospel. Practically every denomination known put forth its efforts in this direction. Whether it was considered a very effective method of bringing the Gospel is hardly conceivable but it was at least a good vent or venture for so-called mission enthusiasm. Every corner with its group seemed to offer another creed or Christ.

Today the popularity of this type of "Gospel preaching" has greatly diminished since the new era of radio. The "Street Evangelist" has found the radio a better medium to reach many more than ever was possible by

his best endeavors on the most favorite corner of some great metropolis.

However, in the largest cities of our country "Street Evangelism" is still carried on to some extent. This is evidently due to the fact that the radio is in general a rather expensive enterprise. Then, too, among the very lowest class of people, such as are found in the slums, the radio is a luxury. Such conditions necessarily call for another medium to reach these sinned-darkened souls; and, naturally, the street-corner lends itself the easiest for this purpose.

In considering the subject of "Street Evangelism" the main point of consideration is whether or not such an endeavor, at its best, is advisable and worthy of recommendation.

Possibly there are some who think it necessary to consider another relative question first of all, namely, *may* "Street Evangelism" be conducted. Those burdened with this question are naturally of the opinion that this is the all-important consideration in this so-called work of the Gospel. It, too, is rather surprising how many serious-minded folk are of the opinion that "Street Evangelism", in the good sense of the word, is absolutely to be condemned.

Having stated that the main point of consideration in this subject is the *advisability* and the *recommendableness* of this method of preaching one correctly concludes that the writer does not condemn "Street Evangelism" when properly conducted. Anyone condemning it must necessarily condemn both Christ and His apostles. From Scripture it is evident that both Christ and those whom He sent to preach did so in the streets and even in the marketplaces. They preached in palace and prison, to nobles and slaves, to harlots and drunkards, at sea or on land, to barbarians and civilized, on the high-ways and in by-ways, in season and out of season. And why not? Should not the feet of them that bring good tidings always be swift to bear the message wherever and whenever the way is open? Let us beware lest we become complacent because we and our children have been fed with the Word of God and we forget and despise the "dogs that are fed with the crumbs that fall from the Master's table." True possession of salvation must necessarily create within the heart the urge and longing to go out and tell others, regardless of whether it shall prove to be a savour of life unto life or of death unto death. God forbid that the zeal for true, whole-hearted, Biblical Evangelism die in our midst.

It is, however, not surprising that the more serious minded folk oppose the street-corner preaching. The practise of it was too often carried on by would-be-preachers who somehow had failed to attain the office of the minister of the Gospel in the legal way. Too often they were sponsored by some individual or individuals, or by some society or club rather than by the

Church of Jesus Christ through its offices. This, too, explains why the ministration of the Gospel, carried on by the "Street Evangelists" of the Reformed faith, was nothing more than a hawking of Christ and the blessings of salvation. The line of demarcation between those of the Reformed persuasion and those who built upon the foundation of Arminius and his followers was entirely eradicated. The result being that this type of work left an unsavory effect upon those who loved the faith once delivered to the saints.

In any and all preaching of the Gospel, as well as in every type of missionary activity, it is a Scriptural, and therefore divine, requisite that such endeavors be sponsored by the Church of Jesus Christ through its instituted offices, that of the elders with the minister of the Gospel. The Gospel may not and cannot be *preached* being sponsored only by some individual, society, club or federation. This does not mean that such an organization or individual may not *witness* for Christ. Witnessing for Christ is always allowed, in fact, divinely *required* of every one of us. But *witnessing* for Christ and *preaching* Christ are two different things. Witnessing for Christ is giving testimony of one's faith and telling others about Christ. Preaching, on the other hand, is *delivering* the Word of Christ *on Christ's own authority* to those to whom one has been specifically sent. To *preach*, therefore, one must receive an *official commission* from Christ, through the Church, to speak the Word of Christ, the Gospel of Peace. In this way the Truth, too, will be vouchsafed while it is always in jeopardy when the preaching of the Gospel is a free-for-all. Therefore, also "Street Evangelism" is the duty of the Church *only* and not that of an individual, club or society.

Considering the question whether "Street Evangelism" is advisable and worthy of recommendation various considerations must be made. If one studies the present mode of living it is very obvious that the man on the street, driven by the hustle and bustle of life, considers himself as having no time to pause enroute to listen to a somewhat *complete* proclamation of the Gospel of Christ. When life was at a much slower pace it was even then very noticable to any observer, and extremely discouraging to the preacher, that any one who was present at the beginning of the "Street Evangelist's" message was generally absent long before its close. Such tid-bits of any Gospel message cannot be advantageous for any purpose.

To my mind it, too, is questionable whether the *sacredness* of the Gospel permits its proclamation under any and all circumstances. Quite often the street-preacher has been seen to begin his message without a single soul for his audience, merely hoping that his plaintive voice and the contortions of his face would draw some souls who had more pity for the lone preacher than for their own lost soul. This I call

sacrilege. This also holds true for any attempt to proclaim the Gospel in the midst of drunks and hoodlums. The Gospel is sacred and should not be dealt with as the cheapest article on the market. The pearls of the Gospel of peace are not for the swine to tread on.

Studying the various Scriptural passages bearing record of Christ's and the apostle's Evangelism, as conducted in the streets of the Bible countries, it may be observed that there was an occasion for preaching. Christ and His apostles seem to have *created* the circumstances and conditions appropriate for Gospel preaching. Generally such circumstances were created by religious disputations or debates brought about by personal contact with certain parties or individuals. When the climax of such disputes was reached and the audience had become vitally interested as to the very heart of the matter the dispute was turned by Christ or His apostles into a lively preaching of the *full* Gospel of redemption. To such methods Christ's time and place among the slow and patient Easterners lent itself much more than the day and modes in which we live.

Experience and reason witness abundantly that "Street Evangelism", even when properly conducted, is most generally not advisable in our time and country. Disappointing as this may seem to those, especially in our own Protestant Reformed circles, who are filled with zeal for missions and missionary activity, I think they may rejoice in the great and wide door which the Lord has opened in the radio facilities utilized by our churches. The response received through these channels is so encouraging that it demands of every one of us to put forth every effort that the glorious truth entrusted to our Churches by the King of the Church may go forth upon the ether waves each week of the entire year. It is true that this activity may never bring forth the organization of a congregation in the circle dear to our hearts, but let us always bear in mind that we do not labor *first of all* for the Protestant Reformed Denomination, but for God and His glory. In this we have the promise that His Word shall never return to Him void, but shall do whatsoever He pleases, even though it may seem to us that we plough on rocks and labor in vain. Here we may sow in tears, but bearing the precious seed we shall doubtless come again with rejoicing for we know that our labor is not vain in the Lord.

A. C.

Make me, O Lord, to know my end,
Teach me the measure of my days,
That I may know how frail I am,
And turn from pride and sinful ways.

Resolved that we should Establish our own Schools Wherever Possible:

DEBATE — AFFIRMATIVE:

We have the children; the material means are at our disposal; the teachers can be obtained; hence, the possibility is there. That is the thrust of this *wherever possible*. The question is: Should we, the way being open, establish schools of our own, where our Protestant Reformed children can be instructed by Protestant Reformed men and women on the basis of what we believe to be the unadulterated Reformed truth? The negative has the burden of showing why this is neither desirable nor mandatory. The affirmative answers this question with an unequivocal: Yes! And gladly we assume the burden of proving our position.

You will notice, that our subject does not limit us to any particular type of school. It includes whatever school, whether for elementary or higher education, it is within our means to establish.

In defense of the proposition as stated above I would like to set before you a series of clear-cut affirmations.

I—*The truths involved in our controversy with our Christian Reformed Brethren, the doctrines which make this school question the vital issue it is, are: a-Fundamental in themselves, and b-Basic to all instruction.*

I need not elaborate here, since my opponent, I know, will grant me the truth of this affirmation. Nevertheless, this must be our point of embarkation, for were there not those doctrinal differences between us and them who control our present Christian schools, there could be no question of separation.

As Protestant Reformed people, therefore, we believe that the doctrines at stake are fundamental, so much so that they in a broad way affect the entire structure of Reformed truth and our whole view of God, the world and man. Our cause is a worthy one. Officially and in a narrower sense the principles involved are embodied in the "Three Points of 1924". According to them *who now control the instruction of our children* the natural man is able to do much good, also before God, by virtue of a gracious operation of the Holy Spirit in the heart of every man. In things natural and civil, in politics and society, in business and art, in every sphere of human endeavor he can do much to please his Maker. This good is the fruit of a general operation of the Spirit whereby sin is restrained and remnants of the original integrity which man enjoyed in Paradise are retained in him. Above all, God is graciously inclined to all men in general. From

day to day and in numerous things He bestows His grace on mankind in general. His blessing rests on reprobates as well as elect and His expressed desire is that all shall be saved. I need not take time and space at this time to state what we believe with respect to each of the above. In a broader sense the whole structure of Reformed truth is affected by these doctrines. Predestination, particular atonement, total depravity, sin, God's counsel and providence, especially their *emphasis* and *application*,—all this and more is involved. There is with our Christian Reformed brethren always that *other side*, the *side* we do not want and do not want our children to believe, but which means so much to them, that they cast out of their ecclesiastical fellowship all those who cannot see that *other side*.

Now mind you, these are precisely the doctrines which must affect, one way or the other, all that is done in a school, all the instruction that is given, the prayers that are offered, the hymns that are sung, the programs that are rendered. These points are not only weighty in themselves, but they are strikingly basic to all instruction. Grace for all! A divine desire to save all! An offer of salvation, of saving grace to all! Blessing for all men! Sin is restrained! Remnants of original righteousness are retained in all men! Man can please God in every sphere of life! These and others are not comparatively immaterial principles; they give color and direction and perspective to all that goes on in a school. And, naturally, with the affirmation of such doctrines goes the contradiction, directly or indirectly, of the truths we confess and hold sacred.

II—*The school is of paramount importance as an agency for the instruction of our covenant seed.*

So is the home, of course. It, as far as the direct instruction of our children is concerned, is perhaps the most important of all educational agencies. In the home the child is instructed practically from birth. There the child receives its first impressions, learns its first prayers, hears its first Bible stories, receives its first lessons in reverence, obedience and general behaviour.

Also the church is a vital factor in the instruction of the child, more so than at first thought we might realize. Here the child is indoctrinated, in catechism and as it grows older, in the preaching of the Word. What is still more important in this connection, in church *the parents and teachers are indoctrinated*. In this way the church exerts an inestimable influence on both the home and the school. Here the doctrine is preserved and proclaimed which constitutes the basis of all instruction. The church is the supply base of incentive and doctrinal conception for both the home and the school. This point is too obvious to need more emphasis. Bear this in mind with a view to our pre-

sent discussion. No, our schools are not church schools, but the mighty influence of the church is definitely and necessarily behind all that goes on in the school. Under the present setup the influence is that of the *Christian Reformed Church*.

However, also the school must never be underrated as an educational agency. Here the child is instructed in all that must prepare it for its place as a child of God's covenant in this present world. Here doctrine is applied to life itself, and that by men and women with mature conception and definite conviction. And what a part of a person's life is spent in school! 25 hours each week, 40 weeks each year, 12 years, including high school! 12,000 hours under Christian Reformed teachers and in a Christian Reformed atmosphere! And that during the most vital and impressionable period of one's life. For never is one so exceedingly receptive to all one sees and hears. How fresh and clear is the mind of the child, how retentive its memory, how keen its imagination! How readily it imbibes all it is taught! In a measure this applies even to the period of adolescence. True, at that age one is not as passive as formerly. Still, the conceptions of the adolescent are not yet mature, his convictions are not yet ripened and aged by experience, his mind is still very impressionable and he is not yet able properly to discriminate. It is during that all-important period of life that the school, that is, they that teach in the school, exert their influence on our children. If you really love your church and are duly concerned about the spiritual welfare of your children, these considerations should stagger, should frighten you.

III—*The instruction our children receive must be based on our Protestant Reformed truth.*

My opponent will grant also this affirmation, yet this point must be stressed as a step toward our final and correct conclusion.

The schools our children attend must be *Christian* schools, as Christian as it is within our power to make them. They must not be public schools plus some religion and religious exercises. They must be based throughout on the principle of the fear of the Lord and permeated with the truth of the Word of God.

That truth of Scripture, to us, is our *Protestant Reformed truth*. All the instruction our children receive must be based on and permeated with that truth. Whatever contradicts that truth is not christian, but unchristian, antichristian. In the measure "the three points" with their implications permeate the education our children receive; in fact, in the measure the pure Reformed truth does *not* permeate that education, *in that measure* such education is un- and antichristian. Nor can the Christian school ever approximate its ideal and purpose on any other basis than that of the unadulterated Reformed truth. That purpose is that

God may be glorified and that "the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Can that purpose be reached where the truth is corrupted and our children are instructed on the basis of a distorted view of God, the world, man and doctrine in general? I heartily agree with what my opponent once wrote in the Standard Bearer, "After all doctrine, false or true, determines the religious character of all the instruction, life and discipline of the school. . . . We need men and women that are thoroughly learned in the Reformed doctrine, that love the Reformed doctrine and are able to base their teaching upon the Reformed truth." Indeed, even the best we can give them is not good enough for our God-given covenant seed!

And thus our school must cooperate with the home and the church. The highest possible harmony, certainly, should exist between these three main agencies for the instruction of our children. That point has always been stressed by leaders of the Christian school movement. Only then can the education of our children approximate the ideal. There must be doctrinal harmony. Nothing can be more distressing to the child than an education that contradicts itself, that denies common grace in the home and the church and tolerates, inculcates it in the school.

Then there is the influence they must and do have on one another. Church and home must exert their influence on the spiritual character of the school. The latter should willingly cooperate with the former. We should have teachers that seek to create in our children genuine loyalty to the Protestant Reformed home and church and a real appreciation of the Protestant Reformed truth as it applies to all of life. More than we realize, the welfare of the home and the church, and the future of the latter, depend on our schools.

IV—*Our present schools cannot and do not meet the educational needs of our children and our obligations as covenant parents.*

Emphatically, they *cannot*, and my opponent will never be able to prove the contrary. The present Christian schools are *Christian Reformed* schools. Don't deny this by saying that our schools are not church-schools. That only means, that officially they did not adopt the three points and that they are not under direct supervision of the church. To all practical purposes they are Christian Reformed, controlled by Christian Reformed people, a few hamstrung Protestant Reformed board-members and teachers notwithstanding. The societies are Christian Reformed, the boards are Christian Reformed, the teachers are Christian Reformed, hence, the schools are Christian Reformed. I am utterly at a loss to understand how any Protestant Reformed person can fail to see this. Consequently, the instruction is Christian Reformed, that

or nothing, but certainly it is *not* Protestant Reformed. The Christian Reformed church is the doctrinal supply base for our present schools. Mind you, this is not an indictment against our present teachers. We expect nothing else. We don't ask them to violate their own consciences by teaching contrary to their own convictions. Nevertheless for us this means two things. a-The Christian Reformed doctrine is the basis of all the instruction. b-Our principles are not taught, but rejected and ridiculed. Against the former we might conceivably lodge some kind of a protest. But how can we protest against what is *not* taught? Nor is there anything we as Protestant Reformed can do about the situation. There is no way to make the Christian Reformed school Protestant Reformed unless we can do the same with the Christian Reformed church. However, Rev. De Jong will give me occasion to say more about this in my rebuttal.

That our present schools are definitely Christian Reformed is corroborated by numerous experiences. Forcibly this fact is brought home to us, when our children are taught the good points of the union, when such doctrines as that of the covenant of works is taught as does the Christian Reformed church, and when our children are asked to believe that "according to His mercy God would save all men, but according to His justice He cannot do this". Often young people have said to me, "We can't make up our minds as to what is right. When we hear our teachers talk, it seems to us they're right. When we hear you talk, we feel that you are right." Thus there is constant opposition to our church and doctrine, whether deliberate or unintentional. Daily the seeds of doubt are being sown in the hearts and minds of our children. And remember two things in this connection: a-The lie often seems so plausible at first glance. The flesh is so ready to believe, that God does love and bless all men, that there is a restraint of sin and that the natural man can do much good. These things are the natural conclusions of the sinful heart. b-Always it is the mature mind of the teacher overagainst the delicate, impressionable, trusting mind of the inexperienced child. When all is as it should be this is fine and the thoughts of our children are molded in the right direction. But how precarious is the situation when all is not well. Neither are all teachers above taking undue advantage of their natural superiority.

And so the dangers are many. Nor can we as parents completely control and counteract the evil influences of the school, even in our own children. Many parents are not able to refute all the things their children come home with. Besides, there are many things which never reach the ears of the parents, things which our children take for granted but which are poisonous nevertheless. Then, our children form friendships, especially in high school, which often lead

them away from their own churches. And thus our schools as they are today are slowly gnawing away at the foundations of our Protestant Reformed home and church.

No, I cannot be enthusiastic about the schools as they are today. Enthusiastic! How can any Protestant Reformed person be? Is it nothing to you whether Protestant Reformed doctrine or Christian Reformed doctrine permeates all the instruction our children receive? That continuous dripping of the lie into the minds and hearts of our children must and will bear its inevitable consequences.

V—Conclusion: *We should establish our own schools.*

There simply is no other way to avoid the dangers that threaten us now and to approximate our ideal. We must have schools, which we as Protestant Reformed parents can control, wherein our teachers can labor according to their convictions and with a free hand, and wherein all the instruction is based on the truth we love. We must have "men and women", says Rev. De Jong himself, "that are thoroughly learned in Reformed doctrine, that love the Reformed doctrine and are able to base their teaching upon the Reformed truth."

A Protestant Reformed home and Protestant Reformed church call for a Protestant Reformed school. The school is the extension of the home, we say. A Christian Reformed school the extension of a Protestant Reformed home? Shame on us for hugging such an inconsistency. Even our Christian Reformed brethren must feel that way about us.

When our passive, impressionable, little children have grown up and the training period shall be past forever, when their opinions shall have been molded and their conceptions ripened, when the tree shall have taken its permanent shape, then you and I must be able to say: We did our best! We sought to bring them up in the aforesaid doctrine to the utmost of our power! We cannot say that now as we take our children to those of the Christian Reformed church and say, "Here's my child. Instruct it!"

Wherefore, if we love our Protestant Reformed truth and church, if we are duly concerned about the spiritual welfare of our children, there can be only one answer to the question we are discussing: the answer the affirmative was privileged to defend.

R. V.

DEBATE — NEGATIVE:

As I understand the subject of our debate it is my task to state why I think that we should *not* establish our own schools wherever possible. This is a very up to date subject, especially here in the city of Grand

Rapids. As we start out our debate I have all confidence in my worthy opponent that he will write about the issue at stake. This is not a personal matter at all and the debate should leave no scars.

As I see the issue the point at stake is not at all whether an instruction based throughout upon Protestant Reformed principle is not ideal for our children. There can be no difference of opinion among us on this particular point. However that does not settle the issue at all, although I have a notion that this will be the chief argument of my opponent. Neither is it the point in our debate whether we should establish our own schools if this becomes necessary. Nor is it the point whether the present Christian Schools have just about reached the ideal so that there is really no room for improvement. We all know better. And all those that have the true interest of our christian schools at heart will admit at once that the schools are far from having reached the ideal. But the point at stake is whether we should establish our own schools wherever possible.

The question may arise: "What is meant by *wherever possible*." By this expression I understand the physical possibility. That is to say: there must be a sufficient number of children, and financially it must be possible that the local sponsors of such a movement can carry the financial burden. Naturally the availability of teachers, a building site and the very possibility of building also enter in. However, as to the former we will leave out this element for the time being, and as to the latter this is a temporary problem due to war restrictions.

Should we establish our own schools wherever possible? My answer is definitely "NO!" I want to look at the matter of a school of our own from the viewpoint of its *necessity* and not its *possibility*. I hope that my worthy opponent also clearly keeps this distinction in mind. Perhaps with an example I can clearly illustrate the point of distinction I mentioned. (The kind reader of course should keep in mind that an illustration has its limitations and especially in the case at hand is meant to focus attention on one point). Here follows the illustration as to the difference between possibility and necessity. For the sake of argument, conceive of it that I live in a fairly decent house. Naturally if I would move out and build a new house and a better house, provided of course that I have the means, I would improve myself. Should I go to work now and build a new house? Perhaps I will, perhaps I will not. In order to come to a definite decision I have to consider a great many things. And after taking all things into consideration I may very well come to the conclusion that I will not build a new house but stay where I am, even though my house is not as convenient and up to date as I would like to have it.—But let me now draw another picture.—I live in an old

shack; we are always sick because of the unhealthy living conditions. On a certain night I wake up and the house is afire, the whole thing burns down. Now it is no longer a question whether I like to move, or should move, but I *must* move. I have no place to live. And as I move in another house the motive was not at all improvement, neither was it a matter of possibility, but it was absolutely necessary. I could do nought else.

But why not establish schools of our own if we have the means, the facilities, the children, if they are most ideal for the instruction of our children? Why not? For several reasons. Let me enumerate a few of them. Of course I know beforehand that my opponent and those on his side will deny that there can be any reason at all. I hope though that my opponent will not ignore or try to minimize some of these vital reasons I expect to enumerate. The financial argument used so often against a school of our own does not enter into the picture. In the first place I think this is usually a poor argument and I do not put much stock in it. Furthermore the argument is excluded because the very subject of our debate presupposes the financial possibility. But here follow a few of the reasons, all of which have been mentioned many times before.

First of all I am convinced that we have a calling with respect to the present Christian School. We are members of the Societies, we send our children to these Schools. We have a moral obligation toward the school in which we have a place at present. I know this is denied time and again by those who are on the side of the affirmative. And I wish to state right here and now that: "As long as the affirmative denies that we have a moral obligation toward the present Christian School, its argument for a school of our own is not convincing, though it may seem that way, everybody just does not swallow sweeping statements without even being granted a hearing." But why do we have a moral obligation and in what does it consist? Let me mention a few things. Nobody can deny that we are part of the present school system. We agree with the principles as expressed in the various constitutions upon which the institution and its teaching is based. Besides we have helped to erect and maintain these schools, we always had a vital interest in them. The Christian schools are no church schools, they may not teach doctrine, much less the common grace theory. If this is done nevertheless we can appeal to the constitution, bring in our protests and complaints and attempt to make the Boards and the teachers see the error of their way. We should leave these schools where we were educated ourselves, which we maintained in the past, which are founded upon the truth of God's Word, which are no church schools, but parental schools, leave the schools in which we are

vitaly interested, the schools where our children are instructed or give instruction? Leave these schools because they are minus the label Protestant Reformed, and because we have no full control of them, or because we are a minority? It seems to me that every unbiased person will come to the conclusion that we can not just merely leave those schools and build our own. To me that looks too much like what we call in our church life 'wegloopende protestanten'. And woe if people do that with respect to the church, that is bad. But then it would be perfectly in order to do the same with respect to the school? Of course not.

In the second place I would not establish schools of our own whenever possible because the present christian schools do not cast us out, as it was in 1924 with respect to the church. On the contrary they seek our help and cooperation. And let no one say that this is merely a matter of the dollar. There are many instances wherein the christian schools have not benefited financially at all by having our children in their school, still they kept them and wanted them. And it is no exception that some of our children received and undoubtedly still do receive christian instruction in our present christian schools which is partly paid for by Christian Reformed people. Don't say: "They are merely interested in our dollars." That is too much to swallow. Fact is there are a goodly number of christian school people outside of our Protestant Reformed churches who are sincerely interested in us, in our children. People who admire us for our positive stand on christian instruction and who desire nothing better than to keep us and cooperate with us for principle's sake. Personally I also think that the christian school movement certainly needs all the support it can be given. Should we withdraw arbitrarily while no one casts us out but on the contrary they want to keep us? That would be foolish and morally wrong.

In the third place it is my position that we have no moral right to leave the school unless we have first brought our grievances to the proper authorities, attempted to improve the christian character of the instruction, have done our utmost in the spirit of love to see to it that our schools live up to their constitutions, and in every way have shown that we seek the true welfare of the christian schools. And if we utterly fail in this then the matter becomes altogether different. However, the very thing I mentioned, we Protestant Reformed people never did. We have been too negative since '24. We should have been, we should be today, more positive and constructive. I for one am willing to confess this. I know it is very easy to say: "We have no calling here," or "You try it once and see how far you get." The fact is, generally speaking, we never tried. It is very easy to do some mud-slinging but whereas we are all guilty of neglect, let us admit it, confess it. Besides, this is also a fact, I

know of one community where the above has been tried. And it worked, it works today. As I see it this matter is of such weighty importance that even if the present movement for a school of our own here in Grand Rapids should succeed, this above mentioned matter of neglect will haunt and bother the movement for many years to come. And a goodly number of our own people, even if they would send their children to a school of our own certainly would always condemn the manner in which the school came into being. Let nobody think that you can merely brush these things aside. Much less can those who are on the affirmative side win our people for the idea of a school of our own by merely stating that those who are against it are not Protestant Reformed. That argument is not true, besides it is very dangerous and has already sown seeds of bitterness among brethren that belong to the same household of faith. The matter of a school of our own wherever possible must be debated in a sphere of brotherly love and respect, otherwise the end will be hopeless confusion, 'verkettering,' division and bitterness. And you can not win one soul for the movement by the method of ignoring the arguments of the opposition and display the attitude: "We are *all* right and those who do not agree with us are *all* wrong." Naturally I happen to be on the negative side, hence I must defend the negative side, but irrespective of this I am firmly convinced that the above subject certainly is debatable. And to win anyone for the movement you must first be willing to see the other man's point of view, believe in his sincerity, and then try to convince him that he is nevertheless wrong. A simple 'for' or 'against' does not decide the matter. Instruction based upon Protestant Reformed principles is ideal for our children. But from the foregoing does not at all follow that we must now establish schools of our own where ever possible. There are too many problems that enter in before we should decide upon such a move in any local community.

I have more to say on this subject but space does not permit. In the next Standard Bearer we expect to finish the debate. Let the readers be judges and kindly wait with your final judgment till you have read all the material.

J. D.

Teach me, O Lord, Thy ways of truth
And from it I will not depart;
That I may steadfastly obey,
Give me an understanding heart.

Thurn Thou my eyes from vanity,
And cause me in Thy ways to tread;
O let Thy servant prove Thy word,
And thus to godly fear be led.

Het Gebed Eens Bejaarden

(Psalm 71; Tweede Deel)

De vorige maal toen we stilstonden bij dezen psalm hebben we glimlacht bij de naïeve verklaring van sommigen die hier van een anoniemen schrijver spraken. Uit twee verzen vooral werd het overduidelijk, dat we hier luisteren naar den Messias in Zijn ouderdom. Christus die wachtende op den Heere wachtte in een eeuwig dood. De Zoon des menschen in het gezicht op Patmos heeft haar als witte wol.

Als ge luisteren wilt naar het eelste in Gods kerk op aarde, dan hebben ze ook David beluisterd in dezen psalm. Het blijkt overduidelijk uit den trant van schrijven en de stijl.

En Hij bidt.

Zijn gebed is angstig en bang. Hij is omringt van allerlei benauwdheden. Er is de hand des goddeloozen, desgenen die verkeerdelijk handelt en des opgeblazen.

Tevens is Zijn gebed vol van vertrouwen en hope. Hij weet, dat de Heere Hem liefheeft.

De vorige maal zijn we Hem op den voet gevolgd tot en met het vierde vers. Laat ons nogmaals luisteren naar de Man van Smarten. Het kon ons tot onderwijzing zijn.

Hij, David, doch veel meer Jezus, zegt: Want Gij zijt Mijn verwachting, Heere HEERE, Mijn vertrouwen van Mijne jeugd aan.

In dit vers ziet ge een kenmerk van ware vroomheid. Wat is Uwe verwachting? De hemel met al zijn heerlijkheid? Zijt ge verlangend om de volmaakt rechtvaardigen te zien? Gaat Uw ziel en leven uit naar de paarden poorten en straten die schitteren van goud? Waar zucht ge om in Uw verlangen? Is het om verlost te worden van wat pijn in Uw hoofd of misselijkheid des lichaams? Is het U te koud of te heet op deze aarde? Misschien zijt ge arm en onder de schulden gebukt. Wat is Uwe verwachting, o Mensch?

David en de betere David zullen het U vertellen. Als ge uit God geboren zijt is Uwe verwachting op God en Hem alleen. Wat zou mijn hart, wat zou mijn oog op aarde nevens U toch lusten?

De Heere HEERE is de verwachting van het volk Gods. Mooi kenmerk. De hemel is dit: "want zij zullen God zien!" Matt. 5.

Mijn vertrouwen van mijne jeugd aan.

Wat een jeugd heeft David, neen, Jezus, gehad.

Maria heeft zekerlijk een perkament met het Oude Testament gehad. Dat kunt ge merken aan de sprake van Jezus als man. Hij is van Zijn jeugd aan onderwezen in de Schriften. Ook ging Hij naar de synagoge om Christelijk onderwijs te ontvangen.

Een mooie tekst voor sommigen onder U die Uwe

kinderen naar de publieke school stuurt. Men heeft mij verzekerd, dat sommigen die zich Protestantsch Gereformeerd noemen, Uwe kinderen naar de school stuurt die goddeloos is. Een vraag: als Maria nu leefde, zou zij Jezus naar de publieke school gestuurd hebben? Onmiddellijk zegt Uw hart: Neen, duizendmaal Neen! Welnu, zoudt ge Uw kind dan uit de omgeving van Jezus weren? Een van de sterkste argumenten om Uw kinderen naar de Christelijke school te sturen is wel, dat ze daar met de geslachten van Gods volk omgaan.

Dan roepen onze kinderen later uit: Op U, o God! heb ik gesteund van den schoot mijner moeder aan, van mijner moeder ingewand aan zijt Gij mijn uit-helper! Dat kon David zeggen. Zijn moeder is een zeer godvruchtige vrouw geweest. Ik ben overtuigd, dat dit de reden is, de hoofdreden van het boek van Ruth. Dat boek toont ons de onmiddellijke voorgelachten van David, die zoo zoet zingen kon in Israel. In de kerk der eeuwen. Hij zingt nog. De zachte, lieflijke gestalte van Ruth en van haar schoonmoeder waren de voorzaten van David. Nog een paar vrouwen Gods en dan komt David. En daar staat het punt in het boek van Ruth. Leest het laatste vers van het laatste hoofdstuk.

Als men dan zijn God gekend heeft als klein knaapje en straks als jongen en jongeling, dan zult ge ook als grijsaard zeggen: mijn lof is geduriglijk van U! Waar het hart vol van is, loopt de mond van over! Ook is dat het doel van alle dingen, van de geheele schepping, het hoofddoel van alles wat God ooit gedaan heeft: Hij zal geloofd tot in eeuwigheid.

En wat mag lof zijn? Het is dit: ge gaat dan in orde de deugden Gods uitspreken voor Zijn aangezicht. Lof it dit: (ik heb de stof maar voor 't grijpen.) "Genadig en barmhartig is de Heere, lankmoedig en groot van goedertierenheid!" En: "En alle schepsel dat in den hemel is, en op de aarde, en onder de aarde, en die in de zee zijn, en alles wat in dezelve is, hoorde ik zeggen: Hem die op den troon zit, en het Lam, zij de dankzegging en de eer en de heerlijkheid en de kracht in alle eeuwigheid. En de vier dieren zeiden: Amen. En de vier en twintig ouderlingen vielen neder en aanbaden Dengene die leeft in alle eeuwigheid!"

Dat, mijn broeder, is lof.

Het is de hemel der hemelen in 't hart en alle ge-neugten.

O Ja! dan zult ge wel ervaren temidden van de duivelen en goddeloozen dat ge een vreemde zijt. Alles aan U is hen vreemd. Luistert maar naar David en Jezus: Ik ben velen als een wonder geweest!

Als ge wat commentaar over die vreemde uitdrukking wilt hebben moet ge ter school bij Jesaja. Ge vindt het in hoofdstuk 52:14. Daar staat: "Gelijk als velen zich over U ontzet hebben, —alzo verdorven was Zijn gelaat, meer dan van iemand, en Zijne ge-

daante, meer dan van andere menschen-kinderen,—” Iets verder in het volgende hoofdstuk: “Hij had geene gedaante noch heerlijkheid; als wij Hem aanzagen, zoo was er geene gestalte dat wij Hem zouden begeerd hebben. Hij was veracht en de onwaardigste onder de menschen, een Man van smarten, en verzocht in krankheid; en een iegelijk was als verbergende het aangezicht voor Hem; Hij was veracht en wij hebben Hem niet geacht!” Wat een beschrijving van het wonder. Hij was een wonder dat ons van nature pijn doet. Wij kunnen het niet staan. Weg met zulk eenen! Aan het bloedige Kruis met Hem!

En als gij van Jezus zijt, dan zijt gij ook een wonder voor Uwe naburen en een smaad voor degenen die met U in aanraking komen. Men houdt niet van U. Eerst niet. Eerst zeide men in Nazareth: Wat een liefelijke verschijning en wat liefelijke woorden!

Doch later, als men merkte dat de Woorden Gods snijden en scheuren en veroordeelen alle gruwelen van hart en leven, dan wordt het anders. Het aangezicht is dan niet meer als gister en eergister. Het ging wat sneller in Nazareth's synagogue. Men wilde Hem van de hoogte omneer smijten. Eerst Hosannah! In de hoogste hemelen! En dan: Kruis Hem! Kruis Hem! Eerst liefelijke, zachte en vleierende woorden, doch om straks angstiglijk te veranderen in snijdende striemende woorden: Weg met zulk eenen! Dan vertrappt men wat men eerst verafgoodde. Ach, wie heeft het niet ervaren?

Want als ge van Christus zijt is dat ook Uw deel. Paulus was een wonder voor velen. Van hem en zijn metgezel zeide men eerst dat zij goden waren. Straks moet hij zich met schade en schande wegpakken. Hij klaagt: Wij zijn het uitvaagsel en afschrabsel der wereld!

Om mijnentwil, zegt Jezus, zal men U haten.

Zoo kunt ge het begrijpen, dat Jezus zegt: “Doch Gij zijt Mijne sterke toevlucht. Dat zei David eerst en al Gods volk zeide het hem na. Doch eerst in Jezus is dit vervuld. Toen niets meer overbleef om op te steunen, toen Pilatus verachtte en Herodus spotte; toen Petrus vloekte en Judas verried; toen de anderen vluchtten en de schare joelde rondom het kruis; toen de duivelen grijslachten en de booze geesten Hem benauwden; toen Hij het Wonder der wonderen werd; —toen is Jezus aan 't betrouwen gegaan. Zelfs toen Vader zich verborg in dikke duisternis, schreeuwde Hij Zijn liefde en vertrouwen uit: Mijn God! Mijn God!

Dat is de les voor U, geliefden. En voor al die Jezus in 't harte dragen. Stelt op prinsen geen vertrouwen. Sterkte, die ware kracht is, is in God. Hij is de Rots. Zijn werk is af.

Uw hart zal U onderrichten in de nachtwaken. Gij zult in smartelijke dagen leeren, dat er slechts één medicijn is voor een verscheurd hart: Laat mijn mond

vervuld worden met Uwen lof, den ganschen dag met Uwe heerlijkheid!

Dat is de medicijn des hemels. Dat is de reden waarom engelen zoo gelukkig zijn. Ik benijd U, o Engelen Gods!

Dan is daar den tijd des ouderdoms.

Daar heb ik eerder over geschreven.

Ouderdom bij den drie-en-dertig jarigen Jezus?

Ja, lezer, Jezus is zeer oud geworden. Toen de eeuwigheid gevaren is in al Zijn schreeuwen en sterke roepen tot God (Hebr. 5:7) toen is Jezus zeer oud geworden. Die ouderdom heeft Johannes gezien na de drie uren van duisternis. Even vóór Hij met sterke stem geroepen heeft. Die oogen van Jezus, als de spiegel Zijner ziel, hebben ietwat vertolkt de lange, eeuwige jaren van Gods toorn en grimmigheid.

David klaagt in een ouderdom van aardsche tijds-jaren. En de stakkerd is verhoord. Zijn jeugd is voorts eeuwig.

Doch Jezus is bejaard geweest en die bejaardheid is een oogst geweest onder de baren en golven van toorn gewassen. Wie zal dit verklaren?

Maar als Ik dan in die diepten van ouderdom aan het bange kruis onderga, Mijn God, verwerp Mij dan niet! Leest het versje, lezers, leest het tweede gelid: “Verlaat Mij niet terwijl Mijne kracht vergaat!” Dat is toch de ouderdom, is het niet? Ouderdom is, dat Uwe kracht afneemt. Welnu, heeft Jezus dan geen ouderdom gekend? In Gethsemane moest er kracht toegevoegd worden. Hij zou dat pad nooit voleind hebben zoo God geen kracht zond. En die kracht bleef komen. Hij moest zooveel lijden. En als kracht kwam, zoo werd zij gebruikt. En dat gebruiken van kracht was LIJDEN. Zoo zien we iets van de reden dier bange schreeuw: Waarom, o Mijn God, verlaat Gij Mij? ! Leest het tweede lid van het 9de vers: Gij zult er een wonder in zien. Het is een echo die weerklinkt voor de oorspronkelijke schreeuw. Wij roepen in de bergen eerst. En dan antwoordt de echo in de verte. Hier is de echo eerst. Dat is David. Dan hoort ge het oorspronkelijke op Golgotha's kruin. Dat is Jezus. Mijn hart aanbidt.

Want Mijn vijanden spreken van Mij, en die op Mijn ziel loeren, beraadslagen te zamen, zeggende: God heeft Hem verlaten; jaagt na en grijpt Hem, want daar is geen verlosser!

Lijkt het er niet op, alsof David gewoond heeft in Jeruzalem, anno Domino 33?

Vijand van Jezus? Ik kan, ik moet er niet in komen. Het wordt ons angstig te moede. Jezus is het lieflijkste wat God ooit geschapen heeft. Dat is de mensch Jezus. Hij was als mensch veel schooner dan Adam. En dan heb ik het oog op Zijn hart. Als ik nu slechts een voorbeeld mag noemen, ga dan met mij naar het huis van een Farizëer. Zijn naam is Simon. Men at en men dronk wat. En toen richtte zich de

stem van Jezus tot Simon. Ook kwam er een aarzelend antwoord. Doch dan draait Jezus zich om: Er stond een hoer achter Zijn sofa. Die hoer weende, traande, baadde des Heilands voeten, zij waschte Zijn voeten met heete tranen en veegde het vocht weg met de haren haars hoofds. En zij liet niet af die voeten van Jezus te kussen. En dan, luistert: het zijn hemelsche klanken: Uwe zonden zijn U vergeven! Uw geloof heeft U behouden, ga henen in vrede! Die hoer is ons voorgedaan in den hemel. En Simon brandt in het aanvankelijke vuur. Doch Jezus is de Lieflijke.

Vijand van zulk een Jezus? Later worden ze genoemd: Satans! Dat staat er in 't Hebreeuwsch in vers 13.

Dat volk loert op de ziel van Jezus. Zij loeren ook op Zijn volgelingen. Dan wordt het benauwd. Weet gij wat men dan doet? Dan loopt men weg. Doch dan lezen we: Jaagt na en grijpt hem! God heeft hem toch verlaten! Er is geen verlosser.

Dan is er maar één uitweg.

Dan moet ge naar God gaan.

En zeggen: (Het is vers 12) "O God! wees niet verre van mij; mijn God haast U tot mijne hulp!"

Het doode, oppervlakkige en goddelooze volk heeft daar geen kennis aan. Die hebben nooit geweten, noch ook ondervonden, wat het zeggen wil om tot God te gaan om hulp. Het lijkt zoo ijdel. Zij helpen zichzelf. Zij hebben wapenen genoeg. Zij roemen op paarden en wagenen. Zij gebruiken hunne mond en tong die zwaarden en spiesen zijn. Hebt ge nooit ervaren om door die zwaarden gewond te worden? Jezus werd verscheurd door het roepen van dat volk rondom het kruis.

Gaat dan naar God. En zeg: Wees niet verre van mij! Help mij van het ongoedertieren volk.

Doet ge dat, dan zal men van U zingen in den hemel: Zoo daalt Zijn kracht op hem in zwakheid neer! En de Engelen werden vroolijk voor God.

De eenigst denkbare vrucht van die kracht in zwakheid is: Looft dan, ja, looft; verheugt U in den Heer!

En waar God geloofd wordt vindt ge blijde Engelen.

Zij hebben God lief.

G. V.

TEACHER WANTED

The First Protestant Reformed School of Redlands, California, is in need of a Teacher to teach eight grades—man or woman. Those interested please correspond with Herman Joling, 845 W. Brockton Ave., Redlands, California.

Kerknieuws

De tijd is weer aangebroken dat ik me nederzit om een briefje op te stellen voor onze Vaandeldrager. Ons volkje wil zoo gaarne iets hooren ook van dezusterkerken die met ons één en hetzelfde geloof belijden. Nu ons "Church News" niet meer verschijnt is 't oog natuurlijk meer dan ooit te voren gericht op de Standard Bearer. Ik moet tot mijn spijt de lezers echter mededeelen dat ik ook niet veel kerknieuws kan vertellen om de eenvoudige reden dat men het niet opstuurt. Broeder N. vroeg mij onlangs ook nog of ik ook van plan was om iets nieuws van onze kerken te schrijven. Hij maakte de opmerking, dat daar nu juist niet zooveel van terecht kwam. Ik mompelde eenige verwarde woorden, als een verontschuldiging, en daarmee was ik er voor dat oogenblik weer van af.

Zooals ge misschien wel zult hebben opgemerkt: er was een vriendelijk verzoek van de kerknieuws schrijver in de Jan. 15, S. B., en ook verzocht de R.F.P.A. Board of de verschillende kerkeraden iets van zich willen laten hooren. Nu ik hoop dat de R.F.P.A. meer voorspoedig is als ondergeteekende. Deze heeft er in het verleden meer dan eens om gevraagd, doch zonder resultaat. Van den eene krijgt men ten antwoord: er is geen nieuws onder de zon. Een ander belooft het, en doet het niet; en een derde zout u af met een glimlachje. Maar met al dat nietig gedoe ontvangt men geen nieuws. De band der eenheid schijnt niet worden te gevoeld, en de lezers worden ongeduldig. Men krijgt zoo ongeveer den indruk, dat een ieder voor zich zelve leeft. Dit spijt me meer dan ik kan zeggen. Ik besloot dan ook bij mijzelf om het bijltje er maar bij neer te leggen. De Hoofdredacteur kan daar dan een beetje rekening mee houden, wanneer hij weer de verschillende onderwerpen aan de schrijvers uitdeelt.

Nu het oude jaar is weer henengerold met al zijn lief en leed; en met nieuwe moed bezield, zijn we weer een nieuw jaar begonnen. Zoo zijn wij menschen nu eenmaal. Ook de Christen lijdt wel een beetje aan dit euvel. De Schrift leert ons echter, dat er gansch geen nieuws is onder de zon, en dat alles zuchtend henensnelt naar het einde. Er was dan hier bij ons in Fuller Ave., in 1943 geen bijzonder nieuws. Er werden weer geboren, en er stierven ook zoo ongeveer weer hetzelfde getal. Er kan echter met blijdschap worden geconstateerd, dat de vrede in ons midden niet werd gestoord; en 't is van daag nog waarheid: Waar liefde woont gebiedt de Heer Zijn zegen. Daar woont hij Zelf, daar wordt Zijn heil verkregen.

Het vereenigingsleven van oud en jong gaat als naar gewoonte nog al de gewone gang. En ook de catechisaties worden, zooals ge begrijpt, in ons midden niet gemist. Dit is een gezond teeken, want vooral

de jeugd moet goed worden onderlegd in de grondbeginselen der waarheid; want dan alleen wordt er een sterk Protestantsche Gereformeerde geslacht gekweekt ook in het midden van onze kerken. Het huisbezoek spoedt ook zoo langzamerhand weer naar het einde. Dit is nog al een belangrijk werk in een gemeente als de onze met haar 527 huisgezinnen. Sommigen zijn van gedachte, dat dit werk nu eigenlijk niet zoo belangrijk en noodzakelijk is. 't Is echter een zwaar werk, en het kan dunkt mij toch ook wel met zegen worden verricht. De kerkeraad moet toch eigenlijk weten hoe het met de gemeente gaat. Hij moet weten of er vrede heerscht, of wel dat de gemeente door twist of tweedracht wordt verteerd. Hij moet weten of kinderen de ouders eeren, en of ouders de kinderen opvoeden in de vreeze de Heeren. Kromme dingen moeten soms eventjes recht worden gezet. Er moet soms worden gevraagd of men getrouw ter kerk gaat, en of men wel waarlijk een zegen ontvangt, en indien niet, waar dan de fout zit. 't Is ook wel goed om de vraag te stellen, wat men leest, en of men leest. En de Standard Bearer mag natuurlijk niet in eenig huis ontbreken.

Ge hebt zeker wel gehoord, dat er diensten worden gehouden in het zuid-oosten van onze stad. Er zijn zoo ongeveer 50 huisgezinnen van Fuller Ave. gemeente die zich in dit gedeelte der stad hebben gevestigd. Dit kon een mooie gemeente worden wanneer een ieder zijn best deed. De tijd zal 't wel leeren. Het kindje is vanzelf nog niet geboren. 't Is nog in moeders schoot en toch wordt het al opgedragen aan Gods genadetroon. Moeder mag wel blij zijn. Ze helpt natuurlijk gaarne mee tot het verkrijgen van een nieuwe woning, wanneer de tijd er is.

Men hoort wel eens vragen: Hoe zal het dan gaan met Fuller Ave.? 't Is 't beste maar dat we ons hier niet al te druk over maken. Deze groote kerk met haar 1240 zitplaatsen is eerst wel een beetje minder vol, maar dit wordt met verloop van tijd wel weer anders. De dingen zijn nu toch niet normaal. De ruim 140 boys die van Rijks-wege zijn opgeroepen uit ons midden voor 's Lands dienst, missen we toch ook al uit ons midden. Het is verblijdend, dat we van niemand hunner tot zoo ver een doodbericht hebben ontvangen. Gode alleen de eere, want het past ons in dezen niet te roemen. Hem komt ook de eere en aanbidding, en de dankzegging toe, dat we na een twintigtal van jaren nog gezond in leer en belijdenis zijn. Dit wordt natuurlijk ontkend door de kerken die ons uitwierpen.

De Wachter stipte dit onlangs ook nog eventjes aan in de vragenbus die verzorgd wordt door Prof. Kromminga. Hij meent dat de drie gemeene genade punten een verlengstuk zijn van de belijdenis. Dit is echter niet het geval Prof. 't Is geen verlengstuk, maar wel een verlamstuk.

De Prof. gaat in zijn gedachten een twintigtal jaren terug, toen de strijd uitbrak over Infra en Supra. Toen, zegt de Prof. werd er olie op de onstuimige wateren gegoten en de storm werd gestild. De vergelijking, die hij wil maken gaat echter niet op. In 1905 liet men God, God. In 1924 loochende men de Souvereiniteit Gods. In 1905 ging het om Gods eer, en in 1924 om de eer van mensen. In 1905 zocht men eenparig de vrede der kerken; in '24 heeft men alle recht met voeten vertrapt. Zeker wel een in het ooglopend verschil. We gaan echter moedig voorwaarts op den ingeslagen weg, en ons scheepke, onder Jezus hoede, geraakt niet op de klippen van menselijke filosofie en wereldgelijkvormigheid.

Donderdagavond den 20sten Januari werd er nogmaals een candidaat bevestigd als bedienaar des Woords en der heilige Sacramenten, te Holland, Michigan. We wenschen Holland's gemeente 's Heeren zegen toe en bidden dat de jonge Ds. veel vrucht op zijn arbeid aldaar mag zien.

Op dien avond kwam ook de schoolvereeniging voor Christelijk onderwijs te zamen in de basement van Fuller Ave. kerk. 't Was weer een amechtig hoopje; voor mij althans een bewijs dat we in dezen niet eensgezind zijn, hetwelk niet prijzenswaardig is in deze dagen van zooveel 'compromise'. Na de gewone bezigheden trad Ds. Veldman van Kalamazoo voor ons op; hij koos als onderwerp: Waarom langer uitgesteld. Dit kan ook verklaard worden, waarom langer dralen of verschuiven. De leuze moet ook bij ons zijn, en meer en meer worden: Voorwaarts zij ons doel. De Spreker stelde drie vragen die hij achtereenvolgens beantwoordde. 1. Is er een oponthoud omdat we denken, dat het niet belangrijk genoeg is? 2. *Denken* we misschien, dat de tijd ons ontbreekt? 3. Of is er misschien een uitstellen omdat we financieel er geen uitweg mee weten? Ik wil trachten om enkele indrukken in dit schrijven weer te geven van des Ds. rede.

Zijn Eerwaarde begint te zeggen: dat hij een vreemdeling in Jeruzalem is en eigenlijk niet veel hoort, wat er hier zooals gebeurt op ons kerkelijk gebied. Hij merkt terloops eventjes op, dat ons "Church News" de natuurlijke dood is gestorven, en dat de kerknieuws verzorger ook niet veel laat hooren in de Standard Bearer. De laatste zinsnede had de Ds. maar niet moeten uitspreken. Ondergeteekende vermeldt altijd het nieuws dat hier in Fuller Ave. voorvalt. Ander nieuws ontvangt hij niet, teminste niet bij hooge uitzondering. Er is van Ds. Veldman's gemeente nog nooit het geringste nieuws aan mijn adres bezorgd. De Spreker is van meening, dat we wel zien dat het noodzakelijk is een school te bezitten die gegrond is op onze Prot. Geref. beginselen. Het kindje, dat 4 of 5 jaar geleden geboren is, is echter droevig krank. Nu Ds. indien ge in dezen zinspeelt op de bestaande vereeniging van nu, dan hebt ge het m.i. mis. Daar zit

de ziekte kwaal niet. Het baby is niet ziek, maar het kwam met dit gezonde kindje nog niet tot de mannelijke wasdom. Als ik me echter niet vergis dan is er in deze twintig jaren een geslacht opgegroeit, dat de eerste liefde heeft verloren; en wij als ouderen gaan in dezen zeker niet vrij uit.

De spreker merkte terecht op, dat het zeer gevaarlijk is voor eenige kerk wanneer dit het geval is. Vooral met het oog op het zaad der kerk is het, het hart der zaak. Onze kinderen moeten niet onderwezen worden in hetgeen geen waarheid is. De school kan niet gescheiden worden van onze kerken. De algemeene genade leer is oorzaak van dit euvel. We moeten ons niet vereenzelvigen met de wereld. We moeten altijd leven uit het beginsel der Antithese. 't Is nu eenmaal niet de tijd van zwijgen. De invloeden ontvangen op de school hebben groote invloed vooral op het kinderhart. We moeten tijd nemen ook voor deze dingen, want de tijd vliegt daarheen en wacht voor niets en niemand. De dagen zijn boos en daarom moeten we niet vertragen, maar er moet zijn een vlijtig werken ook voor het verkrijgen van een eigen school. En omdat de dagen boos zijn, en smart en verdrukking het deel zal zijn van Gods volk in de toekomst, moeten we een afgescheiden volk zijn en niet vertragen om ook onze beginselen uit te dragen ook aan onze kinderen.

De Spreker is ook de meening toegedaan dat we financieel sterk genoeg zijn. Het moet niet gaan om bijzaken. Voorwaarts zij ons doel, in 't geloof. 't Is niet een kunnen maar een moeten; en wanneer het zoo zou zijn dat we financieel niet kunnen, dan zij het gezegd: God vraagt niet het onmogelijke. Het bevel komt echter steeds weer dat we zullen wandelen in het midden dezer wereld als een afgezonderd volk om Gods deugden te verkondigen.

Er werd dien avond ook besloten om spoed te maken om grond te koopen voor eigen school.

Donderdag den 27sten Jan. mochten we een goede avond doorbrengen in Fuller Ave. kerk. Het was iets nieuws. De "Talitha Society" had een mooi program uitgewerkt. Het radio koor nam ook een aandeel in deze bezigheid. Het viel goed in de smaak. Ds. Hoeksema echter had het grootste aandeel in dit program. Hij beantwoordde verscheiden vragen vae dogmatische en practische aard. Voor een uur lang hield hij de vergadering belangstellend bezig. De collecte, en de ververschingen die werden verkocht in de basement, bedroeg de som van ruim \$500. Dit geld wordt uitsluitend gebruikt voor de onkosten die zijn verbonden aan het radio werk, hetwelk ons aller aandacht waardig is. Het loont wel de moeite. Ouden van dagen en zieken genieten dit met een rijken zegen. Die dan ook een goeie smaak heeft voor de gereformeerde waarheid wil ook medewerken, ook met zijn gaven, dat de "Reformed Witness Hour" aan de air blijft.

Ik verneem met schrik dat mijn artikel te lang is geworden. Ik ontving ook een beetje nieuws van drie verschillende gemeenten. Ook dit zal moeten wachten tot de volgende keer. Dit is niet mooi, want ik vroeg voor nieuws. Men houde mij verontschuldigd.

Ik kan toch niet na laten om er eventjes op te wijzen dat er weer een nieuw boek aan de markt is, en door oud en jong moest gekocht worden. Ds. Hoeksema is de Auteur en daarom het behoeft niet te worden aangeprezen. Het boek ziet er netjes van buiten en degelijk uit van binnen. Het draagt de titel: "The Amazing Cross".

Dit boek is een verzameling van "Lenten Lectures". Het is verdeeld in 13 hoofdstukken en heeft 183 bladz. en kost de geringe som van \$2.00. Op treffende wijze schildert de Auteur de lijdende Knecht des Heeren als een oordeel der wereld en der kerk. Dat Hij lijdt in gehoorzaamheid. Het 6de hoofdstuk is eenig mooi. Het opschrift luidt: "Risen Indeed."

Wat m.i. zoo mooi is van dit boek is dit: Ge ontmoet een diepte van gedachten die door de minst ontwikkelde zeer goed kan worden gevat. Dat het goed gereformeerd is in alle opzichten behoeft zeker niet worden gezegd.

S. D. V.

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