

# THE STANDARD

*Bearer*

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## MEDITATION

### The Answer Of Hope

*Let thy mercies come also unto me, O Lord,  
even thy salvation, according to thy word.  
So shall I have wherewith to answer him  
that reproacheth me: for I trust in thy word.  
Ps. 119:41, 42.*

The *apologia*!

The believer in this world is conscious of the need of an apology.

Not, indeed, in the modern sense of the word, as if he felt the need of *apologizing*, of making an excuse, of assuming a miserably weak defensive position over against the world that lieth in darkness.

Or why should the light apologize to the darkness, righteousness to unrighteousness, holiness to corruption, the truth to the lie, life to death, Christ to Belial? Is not the darkness *reproved* of the light? Is not unrighteousness condemned by righteousness? Must not corruption blush with shame before holiness? Does not the lie cower in the darkness before the clear light of the truth? Does not life have the victory over death? And is not Christ God's Anointed, the sole Heir of all things? Why then should the believer assume an apologetic attitude over against the scoffing unbeliever?

His is the offensive.

He fights the good fight, conscious of the victory. Yet, he must have an answer.

Always he must be ready to give an *apologia* to every man that asks him for a reason of the hope that is in him.

For he trusts in the Word of Jehovah! And that Word of the Lord to him is a promise of salvation, of eternal righteousness and glory, of an inheritance

incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, of the final victory over all his enemies, over sin, death, the devil, all the powers of darkness. And trusting in that Word, he keeps it, purifying himself even as He is pure, and walking in the light even in the midst of the world that lies in darkness. And thus, confiding in, and keeping the Word of God, he becomes God's representative, he is of the party of the living God, and that, too, in opposition to the world and all the powers of darkness. . . .

And he bears witness.

As God's representative through Jesus Christ the Lord, he may never be silent.

Always he must be able to bear testimony of the living God.

No power in heaven or on earth or in the pit may silence him! In tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword; over against death and life, angels, principalities, powers, things present and things to come, height and depth,—always he must have something to say!

For he trusts in the Word of Jehovah.

And the glory of the name of the Lord is inseparably connected with his testimony.

God is not ashamed to be called his God, no matter what may be his position or plight in the world; and he may not be ashamed to call Jehovah his God!

So shall I have wherewith to answer!

The believer's *apologia*!

The answer to all reproach!

For so the psalmist expresses his desire here: so shall I answer him that reproacheth me.

And this reproach on the part of the enemy is not only very real, but usually it appears to be well founded.

The world and the powers of darkness are ostensibly right, they appear to have abundant reasons to fill those that trust in the Word of Jehovah with reproach. And there seems to be no answer.

It was so, yes, indeed, it was so above all with Christ

He was the Representative of the living God in the world *par excellence*. And He is the faithful Witness. For the Lord God had given Him the tongue of the learned, not of the philosopher of this world, but of him that is taught of God, that He might speak a word to him that is weary. Jehovah opened His ear, so that He might receive the Word of God. And in that Word did He put His trust. Of it He bore testimony. And He was not rebellious, neither did He turn away back. Isa. 50:4, 5.

And for this the world hated Him!

For that world loved the darkness rather than the light. And realizing that the darkness was reprov'd and condemned by the light, they hated Him that bore this testimony with a deep and lasting and cruel hatred.

And how they filled Him with reproach!

For sharper and crueller weapon than reproach the enemy has none. Of a more effective means to maintain their own position in the world, and to expose the cause of the Son of God as false and worthless they know not. For to reproach one is to present him as a worthless fellow, an outcast, one that can present no credentials why he should be in the world at all, one that has a thousand reasons to be thoroughly ashamed of himself, and of the cause he represents, a liar, and imposter, one that is so contemptible that he is worthy of being forsaken utterly by God and men!

And so they reproached Him!

Him more than any man!

They called Him a deceiver, one that is in the service of Beelzebub, the prince of devils, a liar and blasphemer, a dangerous fellow that forbade to pay tribute, an insurrectionist that aimed at usurping Caesar's throne, a destroyer of the temple. And they proceeded to expose Him as such, and to prove their contentions, to make Him a spectacle, one that was cursed by God and men. They derided Him, they bound Him, they smote Him and buffeted Him, they spit upon Him in their contempt, they condemned Him to death, they scourged Him, presented Him as the mock-king, pressed the thorny crown upon His brow, and finally made Him an outcast, hanging Him on the accursed tree. And even there, while He was helplessly stretched upon the cruel cross, they could not refrain from casting their cruel mockery in His teeth, to emphasize His folly, His contemptibleness, His utter worthlessness, the falsity of His claims, the vanity of His trust in God, His being completely forsaken of God and men!

Cruel, deeply cutting reproach!

All the more cruel and cutting because the powers of darkness appeared to be right!

Or does not that cross spell utter defeat of the cause this Son of man had represented? Is it not the lie to all He had ever claimed? Is not that crucified One the embodiment of all that is contemptible? And is it not true, is it not clearly evident, that He is indeed forsaken of God and men, and that all His confidence in God had been vain? Or does He not Himself corroborate the claim of the enemy, when He cries out: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?". . . .

Yet, even then, He had an answer to them that reproached Him!

He *gave* His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; He hid not His face from shame and spitting!

And He witnessed, and gave the answer to them that reproached Him: "the Lord God will help me; therefore I shall not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near unto me. Behold the Lord God will help me; who is he that shall condemn me?" Isa. 50:7-9. He did make the good confession, before the high priest, and before Pontius Pilate, and, finally on the cross: "Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man, sitting at the right hand of God and coming with the clouds of heaven:" the victory is Mine! God will surely justify Me! Yes, indeed, I am a King, although My kingdom is not of this world! Today thou shalt be with Me in paradise! It is finished! Father, into thy hands do I commend My spirit! . . .

The answer to them that approached Him!

The *apologia*!

And all that are of Him, and in Him, must thus suffer reproach.

How could it be different? Did they not hate Him? How, then, could it be otherwise than that they shall also hate those that are of Him? The servant is not greater than his Master: let it be sufficient for the servant that he is like his Master! Like Him in suffering, that he may also be like Him in glory.

How could it be otherwise?

Is not that same Christ, Whom they hated with such a cruel hatred, in the believers? And does He not become manifest in them? Does He not dwell in them by His Spirit, live in them, speak in and through them, give them His Word? And do they, too, not trust in His Word? And trusting in His Word, do they not keep His commandments, and become witnesses of Him in word and in deed, so that they let their light, the light of God in Christ, shine in the world and before men? And do they, then, not become witnesses of the truth, and of righteousness, in the midst of a world that lieth in darkness, and that loves that darkness rather than the light? And do

they not condemn the unfruitful works of darkness, walking in the midst of this present world as strangers and pilgrims, looking for the city that hath foundations, whose builder and artificer is God? . . .

And so the world hates them.

And the more they work out their own salvation, and walk as children of light, the more that hatred of the world shall surely become manifest.

And they need an answer!

For the enemy reproaches them, even as they reproached Him.

The mockers scoff that their doctrine is old fashioned, that their notions are but foolish imaginations, that they are narrow minded, fools that really have no place in the world; and they make their place narrow, deny them a position, take away their name. . . .

And so, they often appear to be the most miserable of all men!

And presently they die like other men, and all their glorying, and their cause, and their hope appears to perish with them in the grave!

For God's name's sake, for Christ's glory's sake, they need an answer to them that reproach them!

God is still for us! Who shall be against us?

It is God that justifies us: who is he that shall condemn us?

Nothing can ever separate us from His love!

*The apologia!*

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The answer of hope!

For not in the things that are seen can the answer be found to those that reproach the people of God.

For the things that are seen are temporal. And the things temporal are limited on every side by death. Death is the last thing that is seen, both for the children of light, and for the children of darkness. And it is the last justification of the reproach of the world.

The thing that is seen of the Christ of God is His cross. And, even though it is true that already at the cross God justified His Servant, that cross itself cannot be the answer to those that reproached Him. Even the Son of God sinks away into the darkness of death and reproach at the accursed tree, and apparently the enemies have the victory over Him.

If it is only in and for this life that we are hoping in Christ, we are of all men most miserable!

But the answer is the resurrection!

He arose!

And His resurrection is God's answer to all the reproach of men that was heaped upon His head. It is the realization of His hope and confidence that God would surely help Him, justify Him, give Him the final and eternal victory over all His enemies. He knew that God would not leave His soul in hell, neither suffer His Holy One to see corruption, that through

the deepest and thickest darkness and confusion of hell, He would reveal to Him the way out, and show Him the pathway of life. And so, as He made the good confession, and gave answer to those that reproached Him, He had His eye, not on the things that are seen, and that are temporal, but on the things that are not seen, and that are eternal. He had regard for the things that lie just beyond, but then completely beyond, the scope of our earthly vision: the resurrection from the dead!

Thus it is with the psalmist.

He realizes that, if he is to have wherewithal to answer him that reproaches him, his eye of faith must be directed, away from the things that are seen, unto the things that are not seen, to the salvation of God, to the resurrection!

And so he prays: "Let thy mercies come also unto me, O Lord, even thy salvation, according to thy word."

Mercies and Salvation!

Are they not the same? Thy mercies, even thy salvation!

For, indeed, the realized mercy of Jehovah is the salvation of His people. The Lord is merciful! He is merciful, to be sure, in Himself, apart from any relation to the creature, to His people in Christ Jesus. For He is Most Blessed, the infinitely, and perfectly blessed God. And He knows Himself, and loves Himself as the Blessed One for ever and ever. He wills to be blessed! But He is also merciful to the people of His eternal choice, whom He has predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son. And in His eternal and abundant mercy He ordained them to become partakers of His own life and blessedness, in His eternal tabernacle, in the new Kingdom, the new heavens and the new earth, in which righteousness shall dwell.

That salvation is realized now!

For already they are justified, already they have the forgiveness of sins, and the adoption of children, and already they are begotten again unto a lively hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, according to His abundant mercy!

But the final manifestation of this salvation still waits for the coming again of their Lord from heaven.

For that final salvation, his perfect and public justification, also over against him that reproaches him, the poet, the Christian, longs. In that salvation lies the answer, the apologia, he must have.

And so he prays: let it come to me!

Yes indeed, let it come in its final realization, in the day of Christ: come Lord Jesus!

But also: let it come to me *now*, so that I may lay hold of it in hope!

Then I will have the answer!

The victory is mine!

H. H.

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## EDITORIALS

### As To The Day

One of our readers sent me a mimeographed pamphlet in which the question is discussed whether our Lord actually was crucified *on Friday*, and was raised *about sunrise Sunday morning*. The pamphlet was accompanied by the request on the part of the reader to express our opinion on its contents, and on the question itself.

The author of the pamphlet was not mentioned, although throughout there is familiar note in it that makes one rather sure as to its origin. However, seeing that the document as I received it was not signed, my discussion can be quite impersonal.

The author comes to the conclusion that Jesus was crucified, not on Friday, but on Wednesday, was buried in the late afternoon of that day, and arose in that late afternoon of the following day Saturday. And thus he obtains the result that our Lord was in the grave exactly three days and three nights.

I would like to make the following remarks in connection with this pamphlet.

1. First of all, I do not like, to express it mildly, the tone of conceit that runs through the whole discussion. By this I do not mean that the author is entirely sure of his contentions, and believes them to be true. That is his business, providing, of course, he can produce good grounds for his contentions. But I do refer to the fact that he tries to present the question as to the day of Jesus' death and resurrection as if it concerned the very cornerstone of the Christian faith; and relegates practically all that differ with him on this question, and that believe that Jesus was crucified on Friday, i.e. virtually the whole Christian Church of the past, to the category of higher critics and infidels. Listen to this:

"Think what this means! Jesus staked His claim of being your Saviour and mine upon remaining exactly **THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS** in the tomb. If He remained just three days and three nights inside the earth, He would **PROVE** Himself the Saviour—if He failed in this sign, He must be rejected as an impostor!" p. 1.

"No wonder Satan has caused unbelievers to scoff at the story of Jonah and the whale! No wonder the Devil has set up a tradition that **DENIES** Jesus is the Messiah. (The author here refers to the "tradition" that Jesus died on Friday, H.H.). **THE DILEMMA OF THE HIGHER CRITICS.**

"This one and only supernatural proof ever given

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by Jesus for His Messiahship has greatly bothered the commentators and the higher critics. Their attempts to explain away this sole proof for Christ's divinity are ludicrous in the extreme. For explain them away they must, or their Good-Friday tradition collapses." p. 1.

Now, just think what the author tries to make his readers swallow. First of all, instead of the fact of the death and actual resurrection of the Lord, he presents the exact time of Jesus' being in the grave as the cornerstone of the Christian faith! If Jesus did not stay in the grave exactly seventy-two hours, to the very minute, his death and resurrection meant nothing: He did not prove to be the Christ! What nonsense! As if all Scripture does not emphasize the very opposite, so that not the *exact time*, but the *resurrection itself* is the heart of the gospel! And, secondly, he presents the "Good-Friday tradition" as an invention of the Devil, and of the higher critics the purpose of which is to deny that Jesus is the Christ! Now, the simple fact is, that although there has always been a difference of opinion as to whether our Lord was crucified on the 14th or on the 15th of Nisan, the Church from its earliest days was unanimous in its belief that the crucifixion took place on Friday, and that they based this faith on Scripture. Really, the author here classifies the whole Church of the past with the higher critics, and with those that deny that Jesus is the Christ! And the plain fact is, of course, that while the Church has always held that the Lord died on Friday, it always believed in the risen Lord.

The author of this pamphlet makes the impression upon me of one that desperately tries to be original and to find some new and astounding doctrines. He likes to pose as an independent student of the Bible. Hence, instead of teaching the established truths, he searches for things that people have never heard before, and makes mountains out of molehills, while failing to see the real mountains. Just listen how he blows himself up about this very minor question:

"The PLAIN TRUTH CONCERNING the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ is fast sweeping the world. Thousands are coming to see it. This truth has been published in the Sunday School Times. The Oxford University Press, in their Companion Bible, publish a table proving this newly-revealed truth of the Bible.

"We praise God that though the truths of His Word become trampled upon and LOST through the dark ages of superstition, apostacy, and counterfeit doctrines, that the ORIGINAL TRUTH has been carefully preserved in the BIBLE ITSELF. We can study to show ourselves approved unto God, and seek out, and FIND these long hidden truths in the Bible."

Now, we would be the last to deprive the author of his somewhat puerile joy over his new discovery,

which, however, is not as new as he seems to think. But we refuse to accept his contention that he has discovered a very important truth, and that the "Good-Friday tradition" must be explained as having its origin in "superstition, apostacy, and counterfeit doctrines." When the author does not hesitate so to condemn the whole Church of the past, and exalt himself above her, and that, too, on the basis of so minor a question as the exact time of Jesus' being in the grave, I think it is about time for a little honest introspection and self-examination on his part.

Besides, I am of the opinion that he is in error about the time of Jesus' death, and that the "Good-Friday tradition" is based on pretty strong Scriptural ground.

But about this next time, the Lord willing.

H. H.

## Cast Down Into Hell

I also received the following communication:

"Esteemed Editor:-

"The Men's Society of Holland, Mich. in their study of the second epistle of Peter have had some difficulty in coming to a clear explanation of II Peter 2:4, especially when Peter speaks of the angels being 'cast down into hell.'

"Trusting that you will favor us with an explanation in *The Standard Bearer*, we remain,

Your brethren in Christ,

Protestant Ref. Men's Society of Holland, Mich.

Henry Windemulder, Sec'y."

The text reads as follows:

"For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."

The Revised Version is somewhat different:

"For if God spared not the angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."

The difference in readings is not at all essential. The Authorized Version has: "and delivered them into chains of darkness." The difference is due to two slightly different readings in the original manuscripts; it is the difference between the two Greek words: *seirais* and *seirois*. The former means chains, or with chains, or unto chains; the latter may be a form of *sirois*, meaning pits, or it may denote the same things as *seirais*, meaning chains. For this reason we regard the reading of the Authorized Ver-

sion as the more correct and reliable one, although whatever reading you choose, the meaning remains essentially the same.

The text, as we will not fail to notice, forms no complete sentence. It is a condition without a conclusion, a protasis without an apodosis. The apostle is writing about the judgment of the false prophets "whose judgments now for long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not." And of the certainty of this judgment of God upon the wicked, he furnishes us with three examples: that of the fallen angels, that of the first world that perished in the flood, and that of Sodom and Gomorrrha. All three are in the form of an uncompleted conditional sentence. But the conclusion, at least as to the meaning, is to be found in verse 9: "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished."

As to the text itself, we may literally translate it as follows: "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but casting them down into Tartarus delivered them up unto chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment." Some prefer to translate: cast them down into hell or Tartarus *with* chains of darkness. But this translation is undoubtedly wrong. The chains of darkness I understand as chains that consist of darkness, i.e. of misery and wrath and corruption and death. The fallen angels, therefore, that are cast down into Tartarus, are fettered in misery and death and suffering. From these they can nevermore escape.

But why does the apostle here use the word *tartaroosas*, casting into Tartarus? The expression does not occur elsewhere in the whole Bible, either in the New Testament or in the Septuagint. Hence, we can make no comparative study of the word. Nor does the pagan meaning of the word help us here. Tartarus was regarded by the ancient Greeks as the miserable, dark, and doleful dwelling place of the wicked after this life. And although the word as it is used here is undoubtedly related to its usage among the ancient Greeks, its meaning is not the same, for the apostle is not speaking of the abode of the wicked dead, but of the present abode of the fallen angels. It is not the same as *Hades*, a word that is also translated *hell*, in Scripture, but usually, though not always, refers in general to the state of the dead before the resurrection. Nor is it equivalent to the word *Gehenna*, which always denotes the place of final and everlasting punishment. It is, most probably, exactly because the apostle does not mean to refer to Hades, which is the state of dead men, nor to Gehenna, as the place of final punishment, but to the present, and temporary state and condition of the fallen angels that he chooses the word *tartaroosas* casting down into Tartarus. This is also in harmony with the entire context. For the apostle is not speaking of the final

punishment of the false prophets and of the fallen angels as already present, but as something certainly impending in the future. And also of these fallen angels in Tartarus, kept in chains of darkness, i.e. in a most miserable state, he writes that they are *reserved unto judgment*.

In conclusion, then, I would answer Holland's question as follows. That the angels are cast into Tartarus does not mean that they are already in hell as their final place of punishment. Unto that final judgment they are still reserved. But it does mean that they have been cast from their high estate of glory in heaven into a most miserable state of darkness from which they can never escape. In that state they may still do their evil work in the world, and even take possession of men's souls, as was so abundantly the case during Jesus' sojourn on earth, and thus they may fill their measure of iniquity. But in the day of judgment they shall receive their final and public sentence, and be cast into Gehenna together with all the wicked.

H. H.

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## The Triple Knowledge

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### An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

#### PART TWO

#### OF MAN'S REDEMPTION

#### Lord's Day X.

#### Chapter 3

#### The Goal Of Providence.

Thus far we spoke of God's providential government only with respect to the world as it exists and moves. He controls and directs every movement and all the activity of the creature, anorganic and organic, brute and rational, good and evil. But God's government of the world also implies that He directs the course of its history and development, from its beginning to its end, and that according to His eternal good pleasure, and unto the end He has in mind and determined upon before the foundation of the world. When a big ocean liner leaves the harbor and plows through the waves of the Atlantic, there is within the ship a veritable world of activity and movement, of men and machines, of passengers and crew, all under



the direction of the captain; but with all its life and activity aboard, the ship also makes progress from the point of its departure toward its destination, and this, too, is under the government of its chief officer. The same is true of God's providence with relation to the world. Creation is teeming with life and activity, and all its movement is directed as by the very hand of God; but it also makes history. Like the ocean liner, the world God finished on the sixth day of creation week was destined to make progress, to pass through a certain course of development. It was designed to cross the ocean of time, and to advance from its beginning in creation to the destination God determined for it in His eternal good pleasure. It proceeds through the ages from the *alpha* of creation to the *omega* of its consummation. And when we speak of God's providential government we also mean that it is He Who directs this entire course of the world throughout the ages of history. He is the Captain aboard this ocean liner of the universe, and so governs its course, that it advances along a straight path, without ever deviating from it, toward its final destination.

It is an important question, the answer to which determines for us the meaning of history, as well as the proper "world and life view" of the believer in regard to the present world and his own position and calling in it, what may be the end, the destination of our universe according to God's eternal purpose. What is the meaning of this present age? What is the pattern of all things? Whither are we drifting, and what is the proper evaluation of all the labor and toil of the creature, particularly of man? Is there really such a thing as progress, and is man, with all his strife and effort, with his toil and suffering, his culture and civilization, his war and bloodshed and destruction, really accomplishing something, attaining to a certain goal? If so, what is the goal toward which he is advancing? What is the final purpose of all things in our present world, and what may be the proper position of the Christian and his calling with respect to this world?

And here we may at once discard as false the answer of evolutionistic philosophy to the question regarding the direction in which the world is moving, and the end that is to be attained. Its answer is that the world is constantly moving in the direction of the highest possible perfection by way of gradual development. It is evident to all, even to the unbelieving philosopher, that the present world, such as it is, with all its suffering and death, with all its hatred and strife, with all its corruption and crimes, with its war and bloodshed, cannot be the final, the ideal, certainly is not the perfect world. There is something, there is a good deal that is wrong. But we are making progress in the direction of the perfect world. And when we

reflect whence we started, and consider the aboriginal state of the savage whence we ascended step by step the steep and difficult road of advancement and improvement, of culture and civilization, of social and political as well as moral reform, we have good reason to congratulate ourselves, and to be filled with hope for the future that the end shall be attained, the world of social and political prosperity and peace, from which all hatred and strife shall be banished, and in which suffering, perhaps even death, shall be overcome, and all men shall enjoy the more abundant life. He that believes the Word of God cannot for a moment agree with this philosophy of evolutionism. For it ignores the fact of the fall of man, and all its consequences. The meaning of history is certainly not that of gradual progress toward the highest possible perfection of the present world. The goal and direction of God's providential government is not that of evolutionistic philosophy. And the Christian cannot possibly cooperate toward the attainment of its ideal.

The same holds true for modern post-millennialism. We are not thinking now of this conception as opposed to that of pre-millennarianism, still less must we be understood as declaring ourselves in favor of the latter. We are not at present concerned with the unbiblical teachings of post-millennarianism concerning the second coming of Christ, the final judgment and the resurrection of the body. It is rather the post-millennarian view of God's providence, of His government of the present world, with relation to the kingdom of God, and, therefore, its conception of the meaning of history, that concerns us here. For, according to it, this relation of God's providential government to the coming of the kingdom of God is such that, if they are not identical, the former at least supplies the basis and forms for the latter: in the development of the present world and of human culture and civilization the kingdom of God is gradually coming, until the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of our God and His Christ. "God has not confined himself to distinctively religious and Christian agencies in building his kingdom in the world. 'The earth is Jehovah's and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein' (Ps. 24:1), and therefore all facts and forces are at his disposal in his works of providence and grace. Our whole expanding, progressive civilization, therefore, may be viewed as a means of extending his kingdom. Though this civilization is not the kingdom itself, yet more and more as it is progressively Christianized will it be merged into the kingdom, and the two may finally become practically identical when 'the kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ' (Rev. 11:15). Civil government, from this point of view, is an instrument of God for protecting and extending his kingdom (Rom. 13:1).

Commerce is a powerful means of knitting the world into unity and brotherhood. All trains and ships are shuttles weaving the world into one web. Great inventions readily lend themselves to this service. The first book printed on the printing press was the Bible, and the press has been a powerful gospelizer ever since. Every inventor practically lays his machine at the feet of Jesus Christ as the wise men laid their gold and frankincense and myrrh at the feet of the infant Jesus. Steam and electricity are turning the wheels and flashing the currents of the world for him, railways are speeding their trains across the continents and steamships are plowing the seas for him, the airships spreads its wings for him, the sewing machine sews for him, the typewriter writes its messages, telephone and telegraph have enmeshed the globe in a network of wires that is the great nervous system of humanity and flashes everywhere its truth and grace, and wireless telegraphy shoots his messages through the ether around the earth. Even swords and guns and all our mighty modern engines of destruction, as we have already seen, may fight for his kingdom and help to bring in its universal peace. Our developing science and art are contributions to his kingdom. All truth is religious and comes from God, as all our light shoots from the sun. The kingdom of God is enthroned in the intelligence of the mind as well as in the loyalty of the heart and we are to love the Lord our God with all our mind. This means that we are to be open and hospitable to all truth from whatever source it comes and use it in unveiling God's glory and furthering his kingdom. So, all true art is religious, for it discloses the beauty of God. God is beautiful, and so he has built a beautiful world and is building a beautiful kingdom. There should be no unfriendliness between our science and our theology, and between our art and our worship. The beauty of the Lord our God should be upon us in all that we think with our minds and do with our hands. The growing social sense of the world, leveling artificial and unjust distinctions and privileges, letting all men out to liberty and brotherhood, and earnestly endeavoring to build a social order that will give the means of a worthy and beautiful life to every human being, is a long step towards the kingdom of God on earth, a highway along which the redeemed shall come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." (1)

This beautiful post-millennarian idealism, then, finds the meaning of history in the gradual development of all things in the direction of the kingdom of God on earth. God's government of this world is such that it leads directly to the goal of the perfected kingdom of God. But the following objections must be raised against this view: 1. It is quite contrary to (1). *The Coming of the Lord*, James H. Snowden, pp. 112-114.

the picture Scripture everywhere gives us of the trend of development we must expect of this world, as well as of its end. Iniquity will abound, the means and forces of this world will be pressed into the service of ungodliness, the faithful will be few, and will have no standing room in the world. 2. It closes its eyes to the fact that all creation is under the curse, and that the creature is in the bondage of corruption, and subject to vanity. There is in this world no material for a perfected kingdom of God. 3. It denies the antithesis, according to which God works out His counsel in this world along the lines of election and reprobation. 4. It forgets that all the forces and institutions of this world are also, and especially, used by the forces of evil for the realization of the kingdom of antichrist, and is in grave danger of looking upon the latter as the kingdom of God. 5. It seeks the kingdom of God in outward forms and institutions, rather than in the power of grace and regeneration, and forgets that in this world the scope of the kingdom is limited to the sphere in which the Spirit of Christ dwells. 6. And to this we may add that it closes its eyes to reality and actual experience, for with all its boasted culture and civilization the world is characterized by corruption, apostasy, hatred, war and destruction more than ever before.

A peculiar view is offered by those who present God's providential government of this world as a matter of common grace. According to this view, the goal of God's government of the present world is the realization of His original creation ordinance, through man as His covenant-friend and co-worker, and to the glory of His name. Man's calling was to "cultivate" the earth and its fulness, to employ all his powers and gifts and talents as the servant of God to explore and develop and bring to light the hidden wonders and forces of the universe, and thus to bring the world to its highest possible perfection. This was the original creation ordinance of God. But Satan, intending to deprive God of the glory of His name, makes an attempt to frustrate this plan of God, and to ruin the present world, by tempting man, causing him to fall into sin and death, and making him an enemy of God. In this attempt he is apparently successful, for the friend of God, who was king of creation, heeds the word of the devil, rejects the Word of God, and falls into sin and death. And Satan would have been completely successful had God not intervened by His common grace. Adam and Eve would have perished right there and then in Paradise, would probably have been cast into hell at once, the beautiful creation of God would have turned into a chaos, and God's original ordinance of creation would never have been realized. But God immediately intervened by His common grace. He restrained the process of sin, of death, and of the curse. The result is, not



only that man did not die on the day he ate of the forbidden tree, but also that creation was preserved against sinking into a chaotic state. Moreover, man did not become as totally and absolutely depraved as he undoubtedly would have become, if this common grace of God had not intervened. And this operation of restraining grace continues throughout the history of this present world. On its basis and by virtue of its power, God could enter into a covenant with all men, outside of Christ, the sign of which He gave in the rainbow that spans the heavens. And in this covenant man is God's partner and co-worker over against Satan, for the purpose of realizing the original creation ordinance of the Most High and frustrating the attempt of the devil to rob God of His glory. Thus man is able, apart from Christ and regeneration, to accomplish much good in the present world, to cultivate the earth and all its powers, press them into his service in science and art, in industry and commerce, and build the proud structure of culture and civilization through the common grace of God. At the same time God carries out His purpose of salvation in Christ, gathers His Church, and establishes His kingdom in the world that is thus preserved and developed through this power of common grace, and the latter is therefore subservient to the former. The fruits of common grace shall even be carried into the New Jerusalem. However, toward the end God will withdraw the restraining influence of common grace, the world will rush headlong into corruption and destruction, and the man of sin, whom Christ will consume by the brightness of His coming, will appear. The original ordinance of creation having been realized, the world will be destroyed to make room for the new heavens and the new earth, in which righteousness shall dwell for ever. The meaning of history, and the goal of God's providential government with respect to the present world, according to this view, is the realization of the original creation ordinance of God.

Many objections may be raised against this thoroughly dualistic conception of history, but for our present purpose the following may suffice. 1. There is no original ordinance of creation which Satan attempted to frustrate. God's eternal purpose with all things is never any other than that which is actually attained. When He created the world His purpose surely cannot have been, and was not, that the earth and its fulness should be brought to its highest possible perfection and development under the first man Adam, and without sin. He had in mind the higher realization of His glory and of His eternal covenant in and through the second Adam. And this purpose He realizes even through the temptation of the devil and the fall, death and the curse, through the wonder of His grace. 2. Sin is ethical, and could not possibly have resulted in the reduction of the world to a chaotic

state. Even though the spiritual-ethical relation of man to God was radically changed, so that, instead of being the friend of God, he became his enemy and the ally of Satan, there is no reason why God should not sustain and preserve him, together with all the world and its powers, in essentially the same relationship as before the fall. 3. Satan certainly intended to deprive God of His glory through the temptation of man, but not by reducing the world to chaos, but rather by subjecting man and all the earthly creation to himself, and causing man to develop all the powers of creation in the service of sin and iniquity. And this is, indeed, the purpose of fallen man, and the spiritual character of the kingdom he is establishing, and of the cultural structure he is building. 4. Sin is not a process of corruption in the human nature that can be checked in its course, so that man is only half depraved: it is the total corruption of the whole nature, the subversion of the image of God, the radical change from light to darkness, from righteousness to unrighteousness, from life to death. This corruption the first man, and all men in him, suffered the day he ate of the forbidden tree, according to the testimony of all Scripture. 5. Death and the curse are not powers that operate in themselves, apart from God, so that God must restrain them in their course of operation, as is the dualistic presentation of the theory of common grace. They are inflicted by God Himself. 6. Even if there were an original creation ordinance, i.e. a purpose of God to bring the present world to its highest possible perfection, God Himself has rendered this forever impossible by laying the curse upon the whole creation, so that the creature is in bondage of corruption and subject to vanity, and man moves within the limits of his death cell from which he can never escape except through Christ. It is true that with the limited natural light and power left to him he still cultivates the earth and performs many wonderful things, but it is all subject to vanity: to build a perfect world he neither has the power nor the materials after the fall. 7. Even in as far as fallen man cultivates the earth and builds his house of culture, of science and art, of industry and commerce, he is not a co-worker with God, nor is the house he is trying to build to the glory of God. The contrary is true. He employs God's powers and talents and means and all the riches of God's world in the service of sin and Satan, to oppose God and His Christ, and to glorify himself. And so he increases his guilt daily, and also very really works out his own destruction. 8. Nor does the Bible teach us that God restrains the power and manifestation of sin in the course of the organic development of the human race by a certain gracious operation of His Spirit. The very contrary is true. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold

the truth in unrighteousness," Rom. 1:18. And in his wrath He gives them over, so that they become "vain in their imaginations," and their foolish heart is darkened, Rom. 1:21. "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts," vs. 24; and unto "vile affections," vs. 26; and "unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient," vs. 28. And so they become "filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." vss. 29-32. The goal of God's providential government, and the meaning of history, cannot be the realization of a supposed original creation ordinance, with the natural man as co-worker to God's glory through His common grace.

H. H.

## Ingezonden

Geachte Redakteur:

In het lezen der onderscheidene stukken over overspel. "Die Verlatene Dan," etc., die ik met belangstelling gevolgd heb, moet ik toch erkennen, dat het mij niet duidelijker is geworden. Ik kan Ds. H. H. niet volgen in zijne uitlegging van die onderscheidene teksten. Het kan waar zijn, dat als hij daar later eens over schrijft, de zaak mij dan wel duidelijk zal worden. Daar wacht ik dan ook op; en daar hebben wij als kerk behoefte aan. Er blijven zoovele vragen onbeantwoord, indien wij vasthouden, dat hertrouwen in ieder geval volkomen is uitgesloten. Dan zullen wij ook moeten vasthouden:

1. Dat elk huwelijk in wereld of kerk een huwelijk is, dat van God is vastgesteld. Hetgeen God samengevoegd heeft, dat scheidt de mensch niet.

2. Dat, alhoewel de schuldige partij de macht heeft om de onschuldige partij bloot te stellen aan de zonde van overspel, de kerk hier geheel en al machteloos staat om in dezen de tucht uit te oefenen: (a) Tot uitwerping van den schuldige *wel*; (b) Maar tot bescherming van den rechtvaardige niet.

Er blijven vele vragen onbeantwoord. Ik kom in strijd met het doorlopende bevel der tucht, als ook met de onderscheidene teksten der Heilige Schrift, die spreken over het huwelijk en overspel, teksten uit

Gen., Lev., Deut., als ook Matt. 19:10-12; I Cor. 7:1-15; I Cor. 6:16, etc. Dan strijd het een met het andere, indien wij staande houden, dat hertrouwen in alle gevallen ongeoorloofd is. Aan dit vraagstuk zit dan ook veel vast. Indien wij vasthouden, dat hertrouwen altijd ongeoorloofd is, dan is de zaak uit natuurlijk oogpunt beschouwd beslist. Maar klopt dit met de rechtvaardigheid der tucht en het welzijn der kerk? Laat mij dit eenigszins verduidelijken.

1. Alhoewel Lev. 20:10 heden ten dage niet gehandhaafd wordt door de overheid, is het daarom een feit, dat de kerk, die geestelijk oordeelt in de handhaving der tucht, dan ook zoo oordeelen moet? Indien wel, dan kom ik terdege in strijd met de tucht der kerk, niet alleen in deze zaak, maar ook in vele andere zaken. Ik kan het dan ook niet anders zien, dan dat een kerkeraad wel rekening moet houden met Lev. 20:10, en Deut. 22:22. Het komt mij voor, dat wanneer een der echtgenooten overspel bedrijft, dat het doodvonnis hier dan door God is uitgesproken; en dat de uitzondering in Matt. 19:1 "anders dan om hoererij" de onschuldige vrijspreekt. Dit staat met zoovele woorden niet in den tekst, maar met het oog op de Schrift en de censuur der kerk kan ik niet tot een ander oordeel komen. Want, die overspel begaat staat direkt onder den ban der kerk volgens de Heilige Schrift. Technisch beschouwd verbreekt iemand, die overspel begaat den heiligen band des huwelijks. De schuldige heeft de onschuldige verlaten, en gaat overspel bedrijven met een andere, en verloochent daardoor het één-wezen des vleesches met de onschuldige.

Men moet mij wel verstaan, dat ik vasthoud, dat alleen overspel of hoererij de grond is in Matt. 19:9, die de onschuldige vrijstelt om weer te trouwen. In I Cor. 6:16 wordt de zoodanige een vleesch met degene met wie overspel wordt bedreven. Ik versta hier ook, dat wij hier voor een kwestie komen te staan, die maar niet met een paar woorden is op te lossen, n.l., dan komt het een vleesch zijn met een ander in de handen van den mensch terecht. Maar men moet ook voor de aandacht houden, dat er vele zaken zijn, die wij niet kunnen oplossen, en ik geloof, dat dit een van die dingen is. B.V., als wij vaststellen, dat alle huwelijk van God ingesteld is, wat moeten wij dan met I Cor. 7:15? Hier schijnt het, dat echtscheiding geoorloofd is. En de kantteekening in den Statenbijbel zegt bij de woorden (vs. 28) "dienstbaar gesteld" dat de broeder of zuster wordt in zoodanige gevallen niet dienstbaar gemaakt," dat is: niet gehouden van hunne zijde om den band des huwelijks verder te houden, en ongetrouwd te blijven." En dan verwijst ze ons naar vs. 11. Met deze verwijzing van den Statenbijbel komt de vraag op: waren dezen dan niet een vleesch naar Matt. 19:6? Het gaat in I Cor. 7:15 over geloovige en ongeloovige personen.

Nu met den ban der kerk. Indien iemand overspel

bedrijft en niet wederkeert, moet de kerk dan niet oordeelen, dat zoo iemand niet tot de kerk behoort, en hem afsnijden? Maar mag zoo iemand heerschappij voeren over het lichaam en den staat van de onschuldige, indien deze de gave der onthouding niet heeft? Ik geloof het niet. Ik kan niet anders zien, dan dat degene die doorgaans hoererij bedrijft, en niet tot bekeering komt, als een heiden en tollenaar beschouwd moet worden, maar ook dat de onschuldige vrijheid zal moeten worden gelaten om weer te trouwen, zoodat de rechtvaardige niet genoodzaakt wordt om overspel te bedrijven.

Plaatsruimte laat mij niet toe om meer te schrijven. Ik moet daarom maar eindigen.

Broedergroetend,  
H. A. Van Putten.

Note van den redakteur:

Ja, er zullen wel allerlei problemen opkomen, en misschien ook wel overblijven. En gaarne schrijf ik over deze zaak meer in den breedte. Maar voor alle dingen zit ik nog altijd met "die verlatene" van Matt. 19:9. En voor ik broeder Van Putten antwoord geef op zijne verschillende bezwaren, zou ik van hem een duidelijk antwoord moeten hebben op mijn vraag: "en die verlatene dan?"

Ik kan mij niet eens voorstellen, dat mijne verklaring van dien tekst zoo duister is. Maar ik wil haar gaarne nog eens herhalen.

De tekst is als volgt. "Maar ik zeg u, dat zoo wie zijne vrouw verlaat, anders dan om hoererij, en eene andere trouwt, die doet overspel, en die de verlatene trouwt, doet ook overspel." En mijne verklaring is als volgt:

1. Een man verlaat zijne vrouw 'anders dan om hoererij.' Dit laatste wil natuurlijk zeggen: die vrouw heeft geen hoererij bedreven, en is dus onschuldig. Had de vrouw hoererij bedreven, dan mocht hij haar verlaten.

2. Die man trouwt een ander, bedrijft dus overspel, en leeft met die andere vrouw in hoererij.

3. Nu hebben we dus eene onschuldige vrouw, wier man hoererij bedrijft.

4. Mag nu die onschuldige vrouw, wier man in overspel leeft, hertrouwen? Neen, zegt de Heere Jezus: "*wie de verlatene trouwt, die doet ook overspel.*" Dus is het zoo klaar als de zon aan den hemel, dat Matt. 19:9 ons dit leert: *Eene onschuldige en door haar man verlatene vrouw, wier man in overspel leeft en met een ander getrouwd is, mag niet weer trouwen.*

Wil broeder Van Putten mij nu allereerst eens duidelijk maken, waarin mijne verklaring mank gaat? En indien ze niet mank gaat, hoe kan hij dan schrijven "dat de onschuldige vrijheid zal moeten worden gelaten om weer te trouwen"?

H.H.

## Communal Responsibility

The word *communal* refers to a commune and anything that pertains to it. A commune is defined as: the common people, a self-governing body, a municipal corporation. The word *communal* has, in the narrow sense of the word, a legal connotation and therefore has regard to all that which concerns the government of a legally constituted body or corporation. The word *responsibility* is a very common term with which we are all acquainted and may be defined as: the state of being accountable or answerable. Communal responsibility therefore refers to the responsibility of any commune, body, corporation, etc. It implies that a body or corporation is held accountable for its actions and it concerns this giving of an account and this answering for its actions.

In the light of the above, it stands to reason that the term *communal responsibility* has a very broad application and numerous implications. This responsibility may also be regarded from more than one point of view, as for example, the responsibility of the commune as a whole in respect to God, in respect to the law, in respect to each individual member, in respect to those who are not members of it, etc. It may also be regarded from the point of view of the responsibility of the individual, as a member of it, in respect to God, his fellow-members, etc. Moreover it may apply to the responsibility of various communes, such as, the commune of mankind in general, of the family, the state, the nation, as well as any corporation that is formed among men. In order to treat the subject exhaustively, therefore, one would be compelled to call attention to all of these, since all communes do not fall in the same category. This, however, is not necessary for a general understanding of our subject. We shall therefore limit ourselves to the more general implications which are involved. We trust that the reader will then be able to make the particular applications from the various aspects that are to be considered.

At the basis of every commune or corporation lies the fact of solidarity, which may be defined as: community of interests and responsibilities. And solidarity implies representation since the many who join together or are joined together for one common interest, appoint one or have one appointed with authority to represent the whole commune and act for it and in the name of it. Now every commune or corporation is a solidarity. It is formed for the purpose of seeking or serving a common interest and for which, therefore, one is authorized to act for many. Hence, in dealing with a commune, one does not deal with its many individual members but with its legally constituted head and representative. And yet, when dealing with

such a representative one is not dealing with an individual but with a body, not with one but with many, because the one speaks and acts for the many whom he represents. Hence, every representative transaction of this authorized one, involves all the individuals whom he represents and has effect upon the whole union which they form. From this must follow that the representative of any corporation is responsible for that corporation and also that the corporation is held responsible for the transactions of its head. Moreover every individual member, because he is a member, is held responsible for every action that involves the whole corporation. Thus you have *communal responsibility*.

Now the broadest commune is undoubtedly that of all mankind as represented in our first head, Adam. The Reformed Church has always held that God holds all men responsible for the sin of Adam in Paradise. This is also clearly taught in Scripture, in Rom. 5: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, *for that all have sinned*", vs. 12; "or if through the offence of one many be dead. . . .", vs. 15; "For the judgment was by one to condemnation", vs. 16; "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation", vs. 18; "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners," vs. 19. There can be no doubt but what Scripture teaches here that the guilt of Adam's sin is imputed to all his children. Although we did not commit the act, we are nevertheless in God's sight as thought we did because God imputes the guilt of Adam's sin to us and so Scripture can say, "*for that all have sinned*". Now the reason for this lies partly in the fact that God regards the whole race as a solidarity or a commune of which Adam was the head and representative. There is of course more that enters in here in respect to the imputation of Adam's guilt to all mankind, since Adam was also the first father and root of the whole human race. However, with a view to the case in hand, we need consider only the fact that Adam was our representative. Adam acted in a representative capacity; he was not a mere individual and therefore responsible only for himself so that the result of his sin affected only himself but he was the legal representative of the whole human race and in that capacity he acted. The judicial obligation to satisfy God's justice is therefore not limited simply to Adam but falls to the account of all men. Hence, not only Adam but all men must suffer the evil consequence of Adam's sin. In Adam all men are worthy of everlasting punishment. We may say therefore that the imputation of Adam's guilt to us, the obligation on our part to satisfy the justice of God and consequently our condemnation and worthiness to suffer eternal punishment is all the result of communal responsibility.

Scripture, however, does not limit communal responsibility to the commune of mankind in Adam. One finds it also applied, for example, to the family commune. The Lord states in the second commandment that He is a jealous God, "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me". Moreover the curse that was pronounced upon Canaan was visited upon his children; because Esau sold his birthright, his descendants were excluded from the Covenant; because of the sin of Moab and Ammon in resisting the children of Israel, their children were shut out forever from the congregation of the Lord; the sword shall never depart from David's house; the iniquity of Eli's house should never be purged; the leprosy of Naaman shall cleave unto Gehazi and unto his seed forever; not only the three rebels in the wilderness are swallowed up, but also their wives and children and all that they had; these are but a few examples to show that Scripture applies communal responsibility not only to the organism of all mankind but to families, generations and nations as well. Besides, it must be evident that this principle is equally binding with a view to the imputation of the righteousness of Christ as it is in respect to the imputation of Adam's guilt. For even as in God's sight the whole human race is a commune in Adam, so also there is a commune of the elect in Jesus Christ. And as Adam was our representative head and his guilt becomes ours, so also Christ is the Head and Representative of all those whom the Father hath given Him and His righteousness becomes their righteousness. For just as we actually had no part in the sin of Adam and yet are accounted guilty because of it, so also we had no actual part in the satisfaction of God's justice by Christ, and yet are accounted righteous because of it. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. . . ." Rom. 8:1. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Rom. 5:19.

This same principle of communal responsibility holds also in practical life. When, for example, the president of the United States declares war, it means that the whole nation is at war and every citizen of our nation is regarded as an enemy by those with whom that war is waged. It makes no difference what your own personal feeling in the matter may be, whether you agree or disagree with such a declaration, the fact is that you are nevertheless, as a citizen of the nation, regarded as an enemy by the other side. You are regarded as a responsible party even though you had nothing to do with the matter. And that is not only true of the enemy with which the nation is at war but that is also true of the nation itself; it also regards you as a responsible party and therefore places

you under obligation. Hence also, the whole nation must bear the effects and those effects are felt by many future generations.

Finally, the principle of communal responsibility in practical life is binding for all forms of unions and corporations that are formed by and among mankind. One finds it, for example, in the church as institute which is represented by its offices. The official transactions and declarations of a church are binding for all that are members of it. If, therefore, a church is in error the members of that church cannot say that although their church may have officially declared a heresy to be the truth, they do not agree and therefore need not concern themselves about the matter. The fact is that as long as they remain members of that church they are guilty of propagating that heresy. And if that church becomes guilty of persecuting those who resist it because of its error, it makes no difference how friendly a certain member of that church may be to those who are being persecuted by it, as long as he remains a member of that church he is co-responsible with all its members and the guilt of that sin will be laid to his charge. And this is true not only with a view to our membership in a church institute but also of membership in any organization. Without going into the problem of membership in worldly unions, it is evident, in the light of this truth of communal responsibility, that every member of such a union is responsible for its actions. It does not change the matter at all when one contends that he has nothing to do with the union but merely holds a membership card for the sake of obtaining employment. No matter how poor a member he may be and how little he may concern himself with the organization to which he belongs, that membership card is enough to indict him. He belongs to a commune and as a member of it he cannot escape its communal responsibility.

We realize that our subject raises many questions upon which we have not touched. However, as we stated in the beginning, it was not our purpose to treat the matter exhaustively but rather to call attention to some general principles involved. And if we have succeeded in doing that, our writing will not have been in vain.

H. D. W.

## “De Onmogelijkheid” van Heb. 6:4.

De uitdrukking, het onderwerp ons in dit artikel aangewezen, treffen we aan in een welbekend gedeelte der Heilige Schrift. We lezen in Heb. 6:4-6: “Want het is onmogelijk, degenen, die eens verlicht geweest zijn, en de hemelsche gaven gesmaakt hebben, en des Heiligen Geestes deelachtig geworden zijn, en gesmaakt hebben het goede woord Gods, en de krachten der toekomstige eeuw, en afvallig worden, die zeg ik, wederom te vernieuwen tot bekeering, als welke zichzelf den zoon van God wederom kruisigen en openlijk te schande maken.”

Reeds driemaal is er over dit gedeelte der Schrift geschreven in onzen Standard Bearer. Altoos concentreerde zich de discussie om de vraag of deze tekst in Heb. 6 als bewijs moest worden beschouwd voor de leer van een zekere algemeene genade Gods voor hen waarvan we lezen dat ze zulke rijke gaven van God hebben ontvangen. De hoofdvraag in dit artikel is, echter, ietwat anders. We lezen, immers, in verzen 4 en 6 dat het onmogelijk is voor “die” om tot bekeering vernieuwd te worden. Dezen, dus, kunnen niet bekeerd worden. Hoe hebben we deze “onmogelijkheid” te verstaan?

Echter, het kan niet overbodig worden geacht om in het kort een antwoord te geven op de vraag: “Op wie wordt deze onmogelijkheid toegepast?”

Ten eerste mogen we van de veronderstelling uitgaan dat dit gedeelte van Gods Woord geen afval der heiligen leert. Hierop thans in te gaan is onnoodig. Afgedacht van de doorlopende gedachte van Gods Woord aangaande de zekerheid van de zaligheid der uitverkorenen, de verzen 7 en 8 zijn een duidelijk bewijs dat ook in Heb. 6 eene afval der heiligen niet geleerd wordt. Immers, het onwedergeboren hart wordt vergeleken met de aarde die doornen en distelen voortbrengt in dat hart, dus, is het goede zaad niet aanwezig en is de regen daarom niet in staat om uit die aarde vruchten voort te brengen.

Ten tweede leert Heb. 6:4-6 ons dat de natuurlijke mensch in nauw verband met de waarheid kan komen. Hij kan verlicht geweest zijn, de hemelsche gaven gesmaakt hebben, des Heiligen Geestes deelachtig geworden zijn, het goede woord Gods gesmaakt hebben, en de krachten der toekomstige eeuw. We behoeven ook hierop niet in te gaan wat de behandeling van ons onderwerp betreft. We hebben hier eene schildering van den natuurlijke mensch, die, opgevoed in de sfeer van Gods verbond en in het licht van het evangelie, verlicht is geweest, niet alleen in zoverre dat hij met natuurlijk verstand de waarheid van het Woord Gods mocht verstaan, maar zelfs dat hij aangetrokken werd tot of door het goede Woord Gods. Zelfs mocht hij een zekere genegenheid of lust kennen voor dat Woord

**EEN VRIENDELIJK VERZOEK:**—Bij dezen verzoek ik onze kerken om zoo spoedig mogelijk een beetje nieuws op te zenden. Een beetje meer medewerking is wel aan te bevelen.

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Gods. Hij mocht de schoonheid en de goedheid van de Schrift zien alsmede de heerlijke beteekenis van het onderwijs dier Schrift. Hij verstond de leering aangaande Jezus Christus en Hem gekruisigd en mocht de heerlijkheid daarvan smaken. Hij zag en erkende de goedheid en schoonheid van de Christelijke hope, de gerechtigheid van het Koninkrijk Gods, de bedorvenheid en zonde van den natuurlijken mensch. Ook is hij des Heiligen Geestes deelachtig geweest. Verscheidene gaven diens Geestes mocht hij ontvangen zooals het spreken in vreemde talen, duivelen uitwerpen, profeteeren, door eene werking des Geestes. En zoolang hij deze gaven mocht bezitten wandelde hij uitwendig in wegen van bekeering en heiligmaking, zooals duidelijk is uit den tekst. Hij woonde de Godsdienstoefeningen getrouw bij, luisterde naar de prediking, verlustigde zich schijnbaar in de waarheid, nam deel aan het Avondmaal, bekleedde misschien een hooge plaats in de kerk, was daarom, beschouwd uit ons oog, eenmaal vernieuwd tot bekeering.

Ten derde wordt er van deze natuurlijke menschen gezegd dat ze afvallig worden, den Zoon van God wederom kruisigen en openlijk te schande maken. Afgedacht van de oorzaak of omstandigheden van hun afval, feit is dat ze afvallig zijn geworden. Zij verlaten hun weg van uitwendige bekeering en het wordt openbaar dat ze slechts natuurlijke menschen zijn, van wie de Kerk mag getuigen dat ze van haar zijn uitgegaan omdat ze niet van haar waren. Zulke personen worden gewoonlijk verharde zondaren, bittere vijanden van de waarheid en van de Kerk. Al hun vorige ijver voor de waarheid is nu in zijn tegendeel omgeslagen. Zij kruisigen den Zoon van God opnieuw, zijn in alles bittere vijanden van God en Gods verbond. Van diegenen wordt ons nu gezegd dat hunne vernieuwing tot bekeering onmogelijk is.

Nu mogen we aanstonds opmerken dat de onderliggende gedachte hier wel duidelijk is. Hier wordt eenvoudig geleerd dat hunne bekeering onmogelijk is.

Echter, hiermede vervalt de moeilijkheid van den tekst niet. Moet deze "onmogelijkheid" worden verstaan in den zin dat *wij* ze niet tot bekeering kunnen brengen? Of hebben we het hier te doen met een Goddelijke onmogelijkheid? Is het dus Gode onmogelijk om deze afvalligen te bekeeren? En indien we deze "onmogelijkheid" op God moeten toepassen, wat dan? Is de bekeering dezer afvalligen Gods onmogelijk uit oogpunt van God of kan God ze niet bekeeren van wege hun hopeloozen toestand? Op deze vragen zullen we trachten een antwoord te geven.

Allereerst, dan, is het onze overtuiging dat deze tekst uit Heb. 6 ons toesprekt van een Goddelijke onmogelijkheid. Immers, de bekeering des menschen, alhoewel eene daad des menschen, is toch een werk Gods! Dit wordt ons letterlijk geleerd in Matt. 18:3 waar we Jezus hooren zeggen: "En zeide, Voorwaar,

zeg Ik u: Indien gij u niet verandert (beter kan de tekst vertaald worden: Indien gij niet veranderd wordt), en wordt gelijk de kinderkens, zoo zult gij in het Koninkrijk der hemelen geenszins ingaan." Bovendien, de uitdrukking, "het is onmogelijk" van vers 4 sluit eenvoudig alle mogelijkheid van bekeering uit voor deze afvalligen. En daar de bekeering des menschen uitsluitend een werk Gods is, achten we het noodig om deze "onmogelijkheid" op God toe te passen. Hieraan moet nog toegevoegd worden dat het zesde vers spreekt van "*eene vernieuwing tot bekeering*." Deze bekeering ziet op eene verandering, niet slechts van het verstand, maar van het gemoed, van al het bewust geestelijk leven van den mensch, waardoor al onze lusten, begeerten, willen, etc. eertijds in de richting van het bôoze, zich thans keeren in de richting van God en het goede. Echter, deze bekeering wordt altoos voorafgegaan door eene vernieuwing. Eene vernieuwing tot bekeering is een vernieuwing die bekeering tot vrucht heeft. We moeten zelf vernieuwd worden zullen we ons bekeeren. Maar dit is zeker een werk Gods. En de tekst leert duidelijk dat deze vernieuwing tot bekeering van deze afvalligen onmogelijk is. Het kan eenvoudig niet geschieden. We achten het Gode onmogelijk.

Maar hoe moeten we deze Goddelijke onmogelijkheid verstaan? Ligt deze onmogelijkheid om zekere menschen te bekeeren in God Zelve? Is het, b.v. Gode onmogelijk van wege Zijne gerechtigheid? De zonde, immers, die deze afvalligen bedrijven bestaat in het opnieuw kruisigen van den Zoon van God en dat ze Hem openlijk te schande maken. Gods gerechtigheid, dan, kan op deze verschrikkelijke zonde geene vergeving schenken. Die zonde moest gestraft worden met de volle straf. Gods gerechtigheid kan daarom de bekeering van zoodanige zondaren niet toelaten. Of, is deze bekeering Gode onmogelijk, uit oogpunt van God, omdat het niet Gods welbehagen is dat de zonde in Zijn volk haar vollen loop mag hebben? Immers, de wereld is niet vergaan ten tijde van Christus' kruisiging omdat Christus bad voor de vergeving van die zonde, en Hij grondde Zijn bede op het feit dat ze niet wisten wat ze deden. Het is niet het welbehagen des Heeren dat de zonde in de zijnen ten volle mag doorwerken maar wel dat de genade door hen triumfante-lijk tot openbaring mag komen. De volle openbaring der ongerechtigheid geschiedt wel in het midden der wereld. In Heb. 6 hebben we sprake van het zondigen in en tegen het volle licht. Voor hen is geene bekeering mogelijk.

Nu achten we het boven allen twijfel verheven dat het Gode onmogelijk is om deze zondaren van Heb. 6 te bekeeren van wege hun hopeloozen geestelijken toestand. Men lette toch op den aard en de uitgestrektheid van hunne zonde. Op de uitnemende gaven die ze

hadden ontvangen en op hun verlicht zijn geweest hebben we alreeds gewezen. Ze kruisigen wederom den Zoon van God. Met ópzet spreekt de apostel hier van den Zoon van God. De bedoeling is dat ze in volle bewustzijn den Gekruisigde verwerpen. Ze verstaan het kruis niet slechts ten volle maar, hetzelfde ten volle verstaande, verwerpen ze hetzelfde. Ze zondigen met en tegen het volle licht. Dat de geestelijke toestand van deze afvalligen de reden is waarom hunne vernieuwing tot bekeering onmogelijk is is duidelijk uit den tekst zelve. Dat God ze niet bekeeren kan is dan ook niet van wege Zijn eeuwig welbehagen, Zijnen raad. Opzichzelf genomen is dit wel waar. De verwerping is zeker de eeuwige Goddelijke vrijmachtige grondslag en oorzaak van den zondaar, beide uit oogpunt van zijne zonde en zijn eeuwige verdoemenis. Maar dit is hier in Heb. 6 niet het oogpunt. Leert de tekst ons dat het onmogelijk is voor hen die eens verlicht geweest zijn, de hemelsche gaven gesmaakt hebben, des Heiligen Geestes deelachtig geworden zijn, het goede woord Gods gesmaakt hebben, en de krachten der toekomstende eeuw, om vernieuwd te worden tot bekeering, dan is het kennelijk de bedoeling van deze Schrift dat ze niet kunnen bekeerd worden juist van wege deze verlichting, dit nauw contact met de waarheid. En al de middelen die deze natuurlijke mensch mocht ontvangen in de sfeer van Gods verbond hebben slechts ten vrucht om zijn goddeloos natuurlijk hart tot openbaring te doen komen. Dit wordt immers bevestigd door de verzen 7 en 8-, de regen vallende op een land dat geen zaad heeft heeft slechts ten vrucht om doorrennen en distelen voort te brengen. Maar de verschrikkelijke toestand van deze afvalligen wordt hier voorgesteld als de reden aangegeven waarom ze niet tot bekeering kunnen vernieuwd worden.

Het is onzes inziens dan ook de gedachte van Heb. 6:4-6 dat deze afvalligen onmogelijk tot bekeering kunnen vernieuwd worden omdat ze beslist niet ontvankelijk zijn voor de invloeden en prediking van het evangelie. Wel is het werk der zaligheid het werk Gods alleen. Onmogelijk kan de mensch van zichzelf Gode behagen en zich keeren van de zonde tot den levenden God. Dit neemt, echter, het feit niet weg dat het werk des Heeren geschiedt in den mensch als een redelijkzedelijk wezen. En het feit dat de mensch zoo verhard kan worden dat hij niet langer ontvankelijk is voor bekeering wordt inderdaad door de historie bevestigd. Of, om deze zaak te beschouwen uit oogpunt van den alleen souverainen God, het is de leering der Schrift dat de Almachtige een mensch aldus verhard kan dat zijne bekeering onmogelijk is. Immers, Heb. 6 handelt juist over zoo'n verhard zondaar. Hij heeft het volle licht gezien en gekend. Hij verstaat de waarheid en heeft gesmaakt, in verstandelijken zin, de heerlijkheid van een Christen te zijn, van de vergeving der

zonde en de hope des eeuwigen levens. Hij heeft besef van de beteekenis van het kruis, stemt toe dat de Gekruisigde niemand anders is dan de Zoon van God, God Zelve. Maar hij keert zich tegen het volle licht. Hij kiest niet alleen voor de zonde (dit doen we toch allen van natuur), maar hij verwerpt bewustelijk het volle licht. Zijn geestelijk bewustzijn is dus van dien aard dat geen element der waarheid op hem eenigen positieven indruk kan maken. Zijn hart is gesloten voor het verbond Gods en de zaligheid des Heeren in den volstrekten zin des woords. God heeft hem, naar Zijn vrijmachtig welbehagen, aldus verhard dat het thans onmogelijk is om hem tot bekeering te vernieuwen.

H. V.

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## Birth Control and The Seventh Commandment

By way of introduction I should like to forestall any expectation that this essay will give a clear cut solution of the problems involved and a vest-pocket rule of conduct.

In the first place the question is a very difficult one and no less a man than Dr. K. Schilder has said: To my mind there may be cases where limitation of the number of children is desirable, yea even demanded. In such a case there are measures to be used which I do not need to name specifically, because I as theologian find these measures indicated for us in our accepted Form for Marriage, and as far as other lawful means are concerned, I am very well conscious of the fact that it would be folly for any theologian or physician to presume by his own little self (op zijn eentje) to prescribe the formula for the commands and prohibitions of the Divine law in this sphere.

I consider these to be words of wisdom, and surely the history of all like questions should warn us against hasty and onesided conclusions. I may refer to the well-known extreme in the question of intoxicating drink. On the one hand are the total abstainers who simply condemn all use of intoxicants as sin; on the other hand there is the danger of becoming so familiar with this "good creature of God" that it rules over us in drunkenness. To some extent the question of tobacco use has produced similar extremes. The one in false holiness abstains altogether; the other becomes bold and uses it to the detriment of health and economic welfare. Likewise the question of sword-power reveals the poles of extreme pacifism and ruthless militarism.

After this introduction the reader will understand that I feel free to leave some things in the form of unanswered questions, and leave ultimate conclusions to those more qualified to judge. Following our prescribed subject, it appears best to approach the question from the view-point of the Seventh Commandment, and to define other terms as we need them.

The Seventh Commandment, which concerns itself with adultery does not seem immediately to stand in relation to our subject, and yet upon some reflection it will be seen to be very basic to the entire consideration. We may say that the commandment in a few short words gives a complete norm for the entire marital sphere. But in order to see this we must understand that it is a recapitulation or summation of that which God ordained and established with and in the creation of man. This commandment goes back to the beginning and there we find that God ordained by His creative power and commanded by His revealing word all that is implied in the institution of marriage.

This institution is expressed in two main passages in Genesis. The first in the order of development is Gen. 2:18-24 according to which God made a help meet for the man and they are to be one flesh, and the second is Gen. 1:28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it; and have dominion. . . .

In the first passage we have undoubtedly the essence of marriage expressed. Its essence lies in the union of two different bodily-spiritual beings for the purpose of reciprocal exchange, reception and reflection of their different inclinations, thoughts and affections, unto manifestation of a new, higher and richer manifestation of ethical life. This union is not a matter of addition but of a new production. As e.g., when God joins soil—rain—sun, but a product, a fruitage, something new, that is a beautiful plant or flower. The mutual development in this intimate affection and love is a picture of that utter new thing of beauty and love that results when God joins Himself to a people in Christ and is forever delighted in the fruits of love they reveal from that new union.

Now although the idea of marriage is essentially complete in this union yet closely related to it is the power and urge of procreation which is at the same time the most beautiful image of the love and fellowship of the Father-house with its many beloved children.

Therefore it is against the back-ground of the being and purpose of marriage that we must view the question of birth control.

To begin with now, it has been truly observed no doubt that the text concerning procreation (Gen. 1:28) is not in the first place a command, but a word of

blessing whereby the multiplication of the race is brought about. For that it is not in the first place addressed to the responsible will may appear from the fact that it is also spoken to the irrational creature (vs. 21). Thus the purpose of God is not realized by the response of the rational will but by an increased power and urge in the biological constitution. And this applies to both the union of the two souls and minds and lives which are united into a higher manifestation, and to the multiplication of the race thereby. And although these powers and urges may not be utterly brought under the dominion of sin, yet they are thereby not effaced but continue their biological, and psychological functionings.

It is only under the new dominion of sanctification of grace that they are again consciously directed and guided to that beauty which is a reflection of the heavenly things. And then the question arises whether there is any place for the deliberate regulation of the expansion into family life.

And then it may immediately strike us that there are several factors which under God's providence and guidance work toward this regulation. There is in the first place the fact that people do not and are not expected to propagate children merely because they reach the necessary biological maturity. We do not expect people of 14 or 15 years old to feel immediately addressed by this command of Gen. 1:28. On the contrary we may expect many other factors to bring the proper maturity in all other respects, in that of mentality, in that of the ability to provide for the offspring, and the necessary wisdom to rear them for their place in life. Not the mere multiplication, but the manifestation of a becoming family life appears to be the purpose.

Further there appears very definitely a regulating factor in the fact that a period of nursing or lactation generally postpones the birth of a new child considerably. By this Divine ordering and delay any supposition that the primary purpose is the mere and unlimited multiplication of offspring seems definitely precluded.

These two considerations, then, would seem to imply definitely that there is some kind of a balance sought between the number of offspring on the one hand and their proper full development in order that the idea of a family in unity and happiness and love may be achieved.

Over against this however we may never forget several other considerations.

Firstly, it is evident that although, procreation is not essential to the essence of marriage, nor its only purpose, yet without children marriage does not attain its full richness as is also evident from the fact that most childless marriages reveal a lack of balance

and a certain futility of being and most Christian couples consider childlessness as a cross given them of the Lord to bear with patience.

And secondly the multiplication of the human race is indeed the will of God and also the Christian desires to be instrumental thereto if so be the guidance of God for his personal life. And not only so that the people of God in this world have the blessed privilege of bringing forth by natural generation and covenant formation the innumerable host of the redeemed, but also that the whole earth may be peopled to the measure of God's determinate decree in order that the day of harvest may come and the sickle thrust in to cut the wheat and the tares.

From this it would appear that any birth regulation or control must always be motivated by the desire to bring to manifestation the natural image of the glorious spiritual communion of Christ and of the father and son relation in the blessed family of God.

Especially here where the relationships are so all-pervading so influential for all of life, can we see how sin has destroyed and caused the good creature to be subjected to vanity and miss its mark. But by grace there may be at least a beginning of bringing also this sphere under the dominion of righteousness and again consciously directing it to the purpose for which God has created it.

The fruit of this will be on the one hand mutual understanding and deliberation for the avoidance of abnormalities and tragedies, where by children are born into a family world where there is no fit reception for them because of sickness and poverty and maladjustment, or their birth may bring danger of death or permanent injury to the mother. On the other hand it will cause the Christian to see that children are the natural God-ordained development and completion of the married state, that they are a heritage from the Lord and that they must be welcomed as the completion of that which is the image of the heavenly family of God. Thus the Christian will desire children for God's sake.

Finally, now, a word is required about the method or manner of this control. Above we saw that the complete realization of marriage is reached in the family of children. And because of this some theologians have maintained that no control is permissible even though an eventual child-birth would mean the loss of the mother's life. Others have maintained that only that is to be condemned which is contrary to nature such as use of preventive medication or devices, and retain as a last resort the demand of continence by the help of God and the power of His grace.

To this final stage the question may then be justly reduced. And although the loss of life is a tremendous alternative, yet we may never forget that by nature

we are under the dominion of sin and the battle to restore our lives unto the holy and blessed ordinances of God is indeed a battle that requires of us all that we have and are and that no effort or sacrifice is too great to even approximate that blessed goal.

A. P.

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## Shiloh

(The Distribution of the Land)

The united inheritance of Manasseh and Ephraim includes a fruitful country lying in the midst of Western Palestine. It extends from the Jordan, and the eastern slopes of mount Ephraim across to the shore of the Mediterranean. Of this entire district Ephraim received the southern portion, the half tribe of Manasseh the northern. Ephraim only, and he for a narrow space, touched the Jordan. The border between Ephraim and Manasseh is not clear nor the northern border of Manasseh.

The sacred narrator makes mention of the fact that there was also a lot for the tribe of Manasseh—a lot west of the Jordan, too—he being the first born of Joseph. Though Ephraim was ordained to take rank before Manasseh, to the latter remained the privilege of the double portion. The two sons ranked with their uncles as founders of tribes in perpetual acknowledgment of the service rendered by Joseph to the family.

As has been stated in Num. XXVI, so here. Zelophehad, the son of Hephher, had no sons but only daughters. Zelophehad himself had died in the wilderness, but the daughters declare it an injustice that their father's name should perish, and that, too, when he had not been of those that rose up against the Lord in the company of Korah. Moses brings their cause before the Lord by whom it was maintained in the following language, "The daughters of Zelophehad speak right: thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance of their father to pass unto them." By this the name of Zelophehad was preserved, which could not have been the case without the possession of an estate to which the name of the original proprietor attached. Because, therefore, the daughters, as heirs, obtained their possession among the male descendants of Manasseh, the inheritance in Western Palestine was divided into ten parts, while the land of Gilead went to the remaining Manassites.

The portion of the country allotted to the children of Joseph had not been well cleared of its original inhabitants. This is plain from what is said in Chap.

XVI:10, "They drove not out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer." Hence, the children of Joseph came complaining before their fellow-tribesman Joshua. "Why," they ask, "hast thou given me but one lot and one portion, as a possession, when I am a great people, in so far as Jehovah hath blessed me hitherto." Joshua, by no means disposed to grant special favors to his own tribe, demands of them to use their strength, to go up into the forest, to clear it out, and establish for themselves new abodes among the Perizzites and the Rephaim. But they show little inclination to this course, and at the same time intimate that they cannot spread themselves further in the plain because "the Canaanites that dwell in the land of Bethshean and her towns, and they who are of the valley have chariots of iron, both they who are of valley of Jezreel." Joshua still remains firm. In both his replies he betrays a touch of irony, as if he would say: Yes it is true thou art a numerous people, and hast great strength, and oughtest therefore to have more than one share. But seek to procure this second portion thyself. Cut down the forest! Behold thou wilt drive out the Canaanites; it is precisely thy task to conquer those that have iron chariots and are mighty; no other tribe can do it.

There now occurs an event of importance. The land having been subdued and the leading tribes having received their allotments, "the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there." No reason is given why Shiloh was selected as the religious center of the nation, but that it was chosen by Divine direction we can hardly doubt. We should have thought that the preference would be given to Bethel, a city of primeval sanctity in Israel and lying somewhat south but still sufficiently central. Bethel, however, though its ruler had been at the very first once defeated by Joshua, was not permanently occupied by Ephraim till after Joshua's death. Then the house of Joseph went up against Bethel and the Lord was with them. Shown the entrance into the city by a man whom they saw coming out of it, they smote the place with the edge of the sword, but let go the man and all his family, Judges I:23-26. From the days of Joshua, all through the period of the Judges, and on to the last days of Eli the high priest, Shiloh continued to be the abode of the tabernacle, and the religious center of Israel, while Shechem became the supreme seat of civil power. Yet Shechem had from the earliest times been accounted of such sanctity that it could not but rank among the Levitical cities and the cities of refuge. It was bounded on the north and south by the two mountains, Ebal and Gerizim, which early acquired a certain sanctity. On the former stood an altar as a memorial of the giving of the law.

Though the whole land was subdued, there remained seven tribes which had not yet received their inheritance. They were slow to entertain the thought of a fixed settlement and received, it could be expected, little encouragement to such a course from the other tribes. Thus they continued in the common camp in the district allotted to the children of Joseph even when Ephraim gathered around the tabernacle and was moving onward to a permanent settlement. The listlessness of these tribes was provoking to Joshua, for he knew that God's plan was quite different, that each tribe was to have a territory of its own, and that measures ought to be taken at once to settle the boundaries of the seven remaining tribes. He said unto the children of Israel, "How long are ye slack to go to possess the land, which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you? Give out from among you three men from each tribe: and I will send them and they shall rise, and go through the land, and describe it according to the inheritance of them; and they shall come again to me. And they shall divide it into seven parts." Judah and Joseph were not to be disturbed in the settlements that had already been given them. "Judah shall abide in their coast on the south, and the house of Joseph shall abide in their coast on the north." Special note was taken of the cities, for when the spies returned and gave back their report they described "the land by the cities into seven parts in a book."

The remaining land is now divided. "And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the Lord: and there Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel—unto the seven remaining tribes—according to their divisions.

The territory of Benjamin lay between the sons of Judah on the south, and the sons of Joseph on the north. For the most part it consisted of deep ravines running from west to east. Many of its cities were perched high in the mountains, as is evident from the commonness of the names Gibeon, Gibeah, Geba, all of which signify "hill." Several of the cities of Benjamin were famous. We mention Bethel; Gibeon, the capitol of the Gibeonites; Ramah, afterwards the dwelling place of Samuel; Mispah, one of the three places where he judged Israel.

The second lot came forth to Simeon. There is little to be said of Simeon. His portion was taken out of the allotment to Judah, which was larger than the tribe required. "And their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah." The history of this tribe as a whole can be written in the words of Jacob's prophecy, "I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel."

The boundaries of Zebulun are given with much precision; but most of the names are unknown so that the delineation cannot be followed. Zebulun was



wholly an inland tribe, as no mention is made either of the sea or the lake of Galilee as a boundary.

Issachar touched in the north on Zebulun and Naphtali; in the west on Ashur and Manasseh; in the south likewise on Manasseh in part; in the east on the Jordan. Issachar received an interesting and important site. Its most beautiful section of country was the fertile plain of Jezreel.

The fifth lot fell to the tribe of Asher, which received the territory on the slope of the Galilean mountains toward the Mediterranean. It was a very beautiful and fertile region. Naphtali was adjacent to Ashur, and had the Jordan and the lakes of Merom and Galilee for its eastern boundary.

Dan was the tribe whose lot was drawn last. He was shut in between Judah on the one hand and the Philistines on the other. The best part of his inheritance was no doubt in their hand. Soon therefore a colony of Danites went out in search of further possessions. Having dispossessed some Sidonians at Laish, in the extreme north, they gave their name to that city.

The division of the country was not completed but Joshua himself was still unprovided for. With rare self-denial, he waited until every one else had received his portion. When his turn did come, his request was a modest one. "Thy gave him the city that he asked, even Timnath-serah in the hill country of Ephraim. And he built the city and dwelt therein."

Under Moses the camp of Israel was divided into four divisions in the Order of East, South, West, and North, with the tabernacle in the center. The four leading tribes were Judah, Reuben, Ephraim, and Dan. To the East was Judah in association with Issachar and Zebulun. To Reuben in the south was joined Simeon and Gad. On the West Manasseh and Benjamin were encamped under the leadership of Ephraim. To the north was Dan in association with Ashur and Naphtali. Essentially this same order and relative dignity of the tribes was maintained in the division of the land among them. In this order, the Israelitish nation, as settled in Canaan, stands before us as the type of the church—the church in glory—the true house of God, the heavenly and imperishable commonwealth of Israel, in which each of his numbered servants has his allotted place where he securely dwells—the city of God, the new Jerusalem.

The assembling of the people of Israel at Shiloh and the subsequent completion of the division of the land, was the first fulfillment of the prophecy of the dying respecting Judah, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."

Canaan was the Shiloh land and Jehovah the rest and peace (such is the signification of the word Shiloh) of His people.

In His holy tabernacle near the altars that stood in its sanctuaries, the Lord — the King of peace and rest, the Shiloh — dwelt and exercised His rule. On the arrival in Canaan, this sacred tent was finally pitched at Shiloh. And whereas this structure housed the throne (the ark of the covenant) and the altars of God, it follows that the placing of it at Shiloh signified that at this spot Jehovah now took up His residence, and by His presence the very center and seat of His gracious government over a people with whom He now, after the holy warfare had been warred, took up His abode in a land converted by His might into a region of rest and peace. The city of Shiloh, in distinction from all other places (Gilgal, Nob, and Gibeon) where the sacred tent was placed, actually appears in the sacred record as a place so favored. It was at Shiloh where the host of the Lord was encamped while Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel. To Joshua and to the host at Shiloh, yea to the Lord Himself, the spies who had passed through the land (of Canaan) and described it returned. Here at Shiloh the lots were cast before the Lord in token that the rest now entered into was Jehovah's.

Jehovah's rest it was. For the battle had been His. Israel had gained the ascendancy because the wicked tribes infesting Canaan had been delivered into its hand by the Lord. The victory gained had been His gracious gift and the promised inheritance the spoil taken in a war He through the sword of Joshua had waged. The prize gained therefore belonged exclusively to the Lord. In consequence thereof it was He Who through the instrumentality of His servant Joshua distributed all the land which He swore to give unto their fathers; the land among the tribes. "The Lord gave unto Israel and they possessed it and dwelt therein."

And in this land the Lord with His people came to rest. He gave them rest round about "according to all that He swore unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them: the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass." Joshua 21:43-35.

Canaan was the Shiloh land, a country of rest and of a peace that consisted in God reigning in the midst of His enemies by Himself and through His people — a peace therefore that was at once a state of mind to be defined as a blessed inward quietude springing from the nation's consciousness that it was reconciled to God through the blood of the offering, that God therefore was on its side with His hand on the neck of the adversary.

It is plain that with the coming of the Lord to Canaan and in particular to the city of Shiloh — that seat of blessed reign of peace — Jacob's prophecy went into initial fulfillment. What in the first instance had risen

before the eye of this prophet when on his dying bed he jubilantly exclaimed, "The scepter will not depart from Judah until Shiloh comes," was the prospect of Jehovah entering His rest and tabernacling with his (Jacob's) seed in Canaan the Shiloh land.

G.M.O.

## A Final Word From The Disputants

I, the undersigned, B. Kok, have this to say.

1) Rev. Ophoff has taken exception to my statement in the Standard Bearer of January 1, which reads as follows: "I also wish to inform our readers that we were both limited by the editor to five typewritten pages which is equivalent to about four columns of the Standard Bearer. But lo, instead of four, my opponent used up more than eleven columns, or about three times the space allotted him. By taking such undue advantage he has really forfeited all right of expecting an answer from me." The brother maintains that five columns of this space was taken up by an "Introduction to the Debate," in which, according to him, he does not debate, but merely states the issues. This I could not see, but I am willing to let the readers judge. If in this statement I have wronged the brother I gladly retract.

2) The final paragraph of my rebuttal (The Standard Bearer for Jan 1) reads: "*I have come to the end of my allotted space of five typewritten pages, I hope my opponent does not again take undue advantage of me, by taking more than his allotted space.*" Reconsidering, I realize that the statement: "*I have come to the end of my allotted space of five typewritten pages,*" is incomplete. The sentence should read: "*I have come to the end of my originally allotted space.*" For the fact is that not for my first article, to be sure (the one appearing in The Standard Bearer for Dec. 15), but for my rebuttal, the editor, in view of the fact that my opponent had written more than he should have, allowed me as much space as I thought I would need, thus more space than was originally assigned to us. The reason I filled none of this extra space is that I had told my opponent that I was intending to limit myself to the space that was originally ours, and that my opponent said that he would try to do likewise.

3) There is abroad a rumor to the effect that my opponent took unfair advantage of me in this respect that he wrote his *first* article *after* he had read my *first* article. Another rumor has it that *after* he had his *first* article written, he read my *first* article and that, *in consequence* thereof, he made certain changes

in his *first* article or enlarged it.. There is sufficient objective evidence at hand to prove these rumors thoroughly false. Besides, anyone who compares his *first* article with my *first* article will easily and readily perceive that these rumors *must* be false. My opponent would be glad to have anyone in doubt about this approach him on the matter.

I, the undersigned, G.M. Ophoff have this to say.

1. I am grateful to the brother for these corrections and remarks.

2. I now realize that I should have limited myself to the space originally assigned to us, and also that it would have been better had I not involved the consistory of Hudsonville. My mistake is, that I made of our debate a controversy, while the purpose of the editor, in assigning to us the question in dispute, was not controversy but formal debate.

B. Kok.

G.M. Ophoff.

### NOTICE

Many requests have come to the board of the R.F.P.A. to publish church news, such as Trio's calls extended, and accepted or declined. Such notices will be gladly placed in the Standard Bearer until the Church News weekly is again published (which will not be until after the war). We will do this only under one condition, it must be officially, that is, the clerk of any consistory upon request of that body must mail that notice or news direct to our editor, Rev. H. Hoeksema, 1139 Franklin St., Grand Rapids, Michigan. Consistories please take notice of this.

Board of the R.F.P.A.

### ANNIVERSARY

It has pleased the Lord that my parents,

PETER VANDER GUGTEN

and

GERTRUDE VANDER GUGTEN

might celebrate their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary this Christmas, Dec. 25, 1943.

I am very thankful that the Lord has given me Christian parents who have taught me in His ways.

Together, we thank the Lord that He has spared us through all these years and pray that He may guide and direct our paths in the years to come.

Daughter,

Gertrude Janet.