

# THE STANDARD

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## MEDITATIE

### Zonde Gemaakt

*Want Dien, Die geene zonde gekend heeft, heeft Hij zonde voor ons gemaakt, opdat wij zouden worden rechtvaardigheid Gods in Hem.*

*II Cor. 5:21.*

Laat u dan toch met God verzoenen!

Gaat dan toch door het geloof in den staat der verzoening in, die immers, naar de bediening der verzoening, volkomen bereid is.

Gij, die hier wandelt temidden der duisternis, aanschouwt en verblijdt u door het geloof in het licht; gij, die van rondom en ook door uwe eigene consciëntie wordt aangeklaagd, dat gij tegen alle geboden Gods hebt overtreden, en nog altijd overtreedt, grijpt aan door het geloof in den Christus Gods uwe volkomene gerechtigheid; gij, die daar ligt onder het oordeel Gods, het oordeel der verdoemenis, dat van alle kanten op u aandringt, gelooft, dat de God uwer volkomene zaligheden u deed ingaan in den staat der verzoening, u met Zichzelven verzoend heeft!

De verzoening is immers een feit geworden!

God, Die u van eeuwigheid heeft liefgehad, heeft Zichzelven geopenbaard als de Verzoener in de volheid des tijds.

Want Hij, God, was in Christus de wereld met Zichzelven verzoenende, hunne zonden hun niet toerekenende.

In en aan het kruis van Christus werkt God. Daar openbaart Hij Zich als de Verzoener. Daar werkte Hij het werk Zijne onpeilbaar diepe liefde. Want daar maakte Hij Hem zonde voor ons, Die geene zonde gekend had, opdat wij zouden worden rechtvaardigheid Gods in Hem. Daarom is dat kruis het Woord der

verzoening. En dat Woord der verzoening wil Hij, dat gij zoudt hooren, verstaan, gelooven als het Woord Gods tot u, Zijn Woord der rechtvaardigmaking temidden van uwe zonde en schuld, van licht in de duisternis, van leven in den dood. . . .

Daarom legde Hij Zelf dat Woord der verzoening, Zijn Woord, in de apostelen.

Daarom baden zij van Christus' wege, alsof God door hen bade! . . . .

Daarom komt nog altijd die bede der gezanten, die bede Gods, door Zijn Woord, tot Zijn volk:

Laat u met God verzoenen!

O, ondoorgrondelijk mysterie!

Wie zal ooit peilen de diepte van Goddelijke wijsheid, en van Zijne eeuwige liefde, geopenbaard in het kruis van Golgotha?

Hij, Die daar hangt tusschen de moordenaren, werd inderdaad van menschen vervloekt en veracht, met de misdadigers gerekend, uitgestooten als een onwaardige, Die geen plaats gegund mocht worden zelfs temidden van zondaren en in eene zondige wereld, en dat ofschoon heel de wereld zich er van bewust was, en ook moest belijden, dat Hij onschuldig was, en dat er nimmer bedrog in Zijnen mond gevonden was.

Van menschen moest Hij lijden.

De wereld verguisde Hem.

Maar veel meer nog moest Hij lijden van Zijnen God! En dat is het mysterie!

Och, het is te verstaan, het ligt geheel binnen de perken van ons begrip, dat, als de Onzondige in deze wereld komt, onder ons woont, verkeert, wandelt, spreekt en werkt, de zondige wereld Hem niet hebben kan, niet verdragen wil, niet mag, Hem in haar midden niet zien kan. De duisternis toch haat het licht, en kan niet anders dan Hem haten, Die het Licht der wereld is. En de wereld ligt in de duisternis. En we verwachten het al, dat, als Hij, het Licht, de Rechtvaardige, de gansch Onzondige in de wereld komt, Hij het voorwerp zal worden van aller haat en verachting,

en men alles in het werk zal stellen, om Hem uit te werpen.

Ja, dat verstaan we.

Dat zondaren den Onzondige met de misdadigers rekenen, is volkomen begrijpelijk.

Maar dat God het ook deed. . . . wie kan 't doorgronden?

En dat Hij, Die geene zonde kende, noch ooit gekend had, zonde gemaakt werd, en dat door God, nu niet door zondige mensen, wie zal de diepte des lijdens ooit kunnen peilen die in die woorden uitgedrukt, ja, maar nochtans verborgen ligt?

God maakte Hem zonde voor ons!

Verschrikkelijk woord!

Want wat voor verborgen diepten van vreeselikheden ook nog meer in dit woord mogen liggen, het wil zeker zeggen, dat God Hem, den Christus, Zijn Knecht, Zijn Zoon in het vleesch, Hem, Die geene zonde kende, aan de plaats stelde, waar zondaren moesten staan, en dat ook inplaats van hen, zoo dat deze daar niet behoeften te staan omdat Hij daar stond; dat Hij, God, Hem daar stelde in de ure des oordeels, en der uitgieting van de violen des Goddelijken toorns, toen de hel daar was; dat Hij, de Allerhoogste, voor Hem, den Christus, die vreeselijke plaats des oordeels, waar de smarten der hel geleden werden, tot volle en vreeselijke werkelijkheid maakte, zoodat Hij, de Knecht des Heeren, in Zijne conscientie het door Goddelijke hand ingeschreven getuigenis las, dat Hij daar, naar 't heiligst recht, behoorde; dat God met vreeselijken ernst en volle werkelijkheid, Hem alle onze ongerechtigheden toerekende, op Hem deed aanloopen, zóó, dat Hij de volle verantwoordelijkheid voor die ongerechtigheden op Zich moest nemen, en Hij voor Gods aangezicht moest uitroepen: "dit kwaad roept om straf; sla Mij"; en dat God toen Hem als ééne gruwelijke klomp zonde, waarin de zonde der wereld samengetrokken was, behandelde, op Hem toornde, Hem de smarten van Zijne vloekende gramschap in ziel en lichaam, in merg en been, deed gevoelen, en Hem verliet tot in de hel toe, zoodat de kreet der vertwijfeling uit Zijne geprangde borst werd geperst: "Mijn God, mijn God, waarom hebt Gij Mij verlaten?". . . .

Bange werkelijkheid!

God heeft Hem tot zonde gemaakt!

Voor ons, in onze plaats, en ten onzen behoeve!

En toch, Hij kende geene zonde! Hij had nooit zonde gekend. Hij kende ook toen, aan het kruis, toen Hij zonde werd gemaakt, geene zonde!

Vreeselijk, maar ook aanbiddelijk mysterie!

Want immers, dat Hij geene zonde kende, wil zeker niet beduiden, dat Hij niet wist, wat zonde was, dat Hij hoegenaamd geen begrip had van de werkelijkheid der zonde, dat Hij geen oordeel kon vellen over de ongerechtigheid en verdoemelijkheid der zonde als opstand tegen God. Want dat kon Hij juist wel. Juist

omdat Hij geene zonde kende, wist Hij beter dan iemand anders, wat zonde is, en zag Hij de gruwelijkheid, de verwoesting, en de onuitsprekelijke dwaasheid der zonde in haar volle werkelijkheid.

Wetenschap van de zonde had Hij wel.

Maar Hij *kende* geene zonde.

En, o zeker, dat wil ook zeggen, dat Hij hoegenaamd geene zonde had. Hij was de Zondeloze. Hij had schuld noch smet. Ofschoon Hij uit ons was, wat Zijne menschelijke natuur betreft, ons vleesch en bloed aannam, toch werd Hij uit ons zondig en schuldig geslacht geboren zonder zonde. Zonder schuld kwam Hij in de wereld. Want wel nam Hij onze natuur aan, en werd Hij vleesch van ons vleesch, been van onze beenen, maar persoonlijk was Hij de Zoon van God, en de schuld van den eersten mensch, die ons allen wordt toegerekend, kon Hem niet toegerekend worden. En ofschoon onze natuur, ook in de maagd Maria bedorven was, geheel onrein, toch kwam Hij als de Vlekkelooze ter wereld. Want Hij werd niet ontvangen en geboren door den wil des mans, maar door den Heiligen Geest.

Hij was het heilig kind Jezus.

En toch ligt daar meer in dat beteekenisvol woord: "Die geene zonde gekend heeft."

De zondeloosheid van het heilig Kind Jezus wordt hier uit een ander oogpunt gezien, en dat juist om des te helderder de beteekenis in het licht te stellen van het vreeselijke feit, dat God Hem zonde maakte.

Anders toch zou de Schrift zich gemakkelijk aldus hebben kunnen uitgedrukt: "Hem Die geene zonde gehad heeft, heeft Hij zonde voor ons gemaakt." Thans echter staat daar met nadruk: "Hij kende geene zonde."

En dat teekent ons de rechtvaardigheid en vlekkeloosheid van den Heiland uit het oogpunt van Zijn eigen bewustzijn, en dat wel met de betrekking tot de schuld en de smet der zonde.

Uit het oogpunt der schuld kende Hij Zichzelven als rechtvaardig voor God en mensen! Hij had eene reine en vrije conscientie! Zijne conscientie klaagde Hem nimmer aan! En dat wilde immers zeggen, dat God Hem nimmer aanklaagde of veroordeelde? In onze conscientie lezen wij Gods oordeel over onze werken. God schrijft daarin Zijn vonnis over ons, en dat wel door Zijne openbaring, hetzij in schepping of door de Schrift, en door Zijn Geest, zoodat wij dat oordeel moeten lezen, en met dat oordeel moeten instemmen. En bij ons is dat zoo, dat wij door onze conscientie nooit iets anders dan zonde kennen. Altijd klaagt die conscientie ons aan. Altijd zijn we onszelf van Gods rechtvaardig en ook verdoemend oordeel over ons bewust. Maar bij den Heiland was dit juist andersom. Negatief gesproken had God nimmer in Zijne conscientie ook maar één veroordeelend woord geschreven; positief verstaan, had de Rechter van hemel en aarde altijd in Jezus' conscientie geschreven;

"Wel, Gij goede en getrouwe dienstknecht". . . .

Hij kende geen schuld!

Ook nadat Hij drie en dertig jaren in onze schuldelige en goddelooze wereld had gewandeld, gesproken, gewerkt, temidden ook van zeer sterke verzoeking, had Hij nimmer van den Vader iets anders gehoord dan Zijn goedkeurend, rechtvaardigend oordeel.

En Hij kende geen smet!

Nimmer had Hij ook maar een vlekje aan de reinheid Zijner natuur bespeurd. Nooit waren daar uit Zijn hart opgekomen booze begeerlijkheden, die moesten worden bestreden, onreine gedachten, die moesten worden terug gedrongen, lusten des vleesch, die moesten worden overwonnen. Integendeel, Hij was Zich ten volle en onophoudelijk bewust van volkomene toewijding met geheel Zijn bestaan aan den levenden God. . . .

Zijne spijze was, den wil des Vaders te doen!

Hij kende geen schuld en geen smet.

Hij schuwde de zonde, en haatte haar. Hij verfoeide de duisternis en had het licht lief. Hij rilde tot diep in Zijne ziel van alle contact met de zonde!

En Hij werd tot zonde gemaakt!

Diep, bitter lijden!

Heilige Paradox!

En ook: Paradox des Heils!

Paradox, ja, maar juist in deze Paradox ligt onze zaligheid!

En paradox zeker: of is het niet paradoxaal in den hoogsten graad om te zeggen: "Hem, Die geene zonde gekend heeft Hij zonde voor ons gemaakt"? Let er toch op: Hij kende geene zonde, geene schuld en geene smet; Zijne conscientie was zuiver en volkomen vrij, bleef zuiver en vrij tot op het kruis, tot in de bange duisternis, tot aan het geweldig oogenblik toe, waarop Hij den geest gaf, toe. Altijd door, onophoudelijk, ook aan het vloekhout, ja, vooral en met grooten nadruk daar, bleef God in Zijne conscientie schrijven: "Wel, Gij goede en getrouwe dienstknecht." En altijd door ook aan het kruis bleef Christus het woord van den Vader hooren: "Gij zijt Mijn Zoon, Mijn Geliefden, in Denwelken Ik Mijn welbehagen heb!" En toch, en terzelfder tijd, o ja, vooral ook en met grooten nadruk terzelfder tijd, schreef God in diezelfde conscientie van den Heiland alle zonden des volks met zulk vlammen schrift, dat Christus er van verschrok en al Zijne beenderen beefden in die bange ure!

Wie zal 't doorgronden?

Of is 't dan geen paradox, dat God toornde op Hem, Die Zijn gunst altijd Zich waardig had gemaakt, en Zich van die waardigheid ook bewust was; dat Hij toornde op Hem vooral, toen Hij Zich die gunst 't meest waardig maakte: aan 't vreeselijke kruis!

Wie zal 't peilen?

't Is een moment slechts van dat eeuwig doen des Vaders, waardoor Hij Hem, den Zoon in het vleesch, aan 't hoofd stelde van zondaren, maar dan van verlost en gerechtvaardigde zondaren, verkoren in Hem.

Wie zal 't doorschouwen?

Maar Paradox: noodzakelijk tot ons heil!

Of is ook dit misschien geen paradox: God rechtvaardigt den zondaar! Bij U is vergeving altijd geweest! God, Die den goddelooze rechtvaardigt, Die de wereld met Zichzelf verzoent, hunne zonden hun niet toerekende, Die de dooden levend maakt. . . .

Wie zal 't naspeuren?

Of ziet ge het dan niet, dat ook dit paradoxaal gesproken is: "opdat wij zouden worden rechtvaardigheid Gods in Hem!" Hij kende geene zonde, maar wordt tot zonde gemaakt; wij kennen niets anders dan zonde, maar worden rechtvaardigheid Gods in Hem! Wij kennen wel zonde, kennen nooit iets anders dan zonde. In onze conscientie schrijft God aldor, ja onophoudelijk, tot onzen laatsten snik toe, ook zelfs dan, ja vooral dan, als Hij ons óók rechtvaardigt: "vervloekt in uzelfen; altijd overtreedt ge Mijn gebod; gij zijt des doods schuldig!" En altijd lezen we dat vlammen schrift Gods in onze conscientie, en klaagt deze ons aan. En toch schrijft Hij ook een ander, een het eerste schrift overwinnend getuigenis in diezelfde ons aanklagende conscientie: "rechtvaardig, en des eeuwig levens waardig in Hem!" En ook dat schrift Gods, door den Geest van Christus, en door het Woord der verzoening in onze conscientie gegrift, lezen wij, laat Hij ons zelf lezen, maar nu door het geloof! . . . .

En zoo is 't ook nu reeds vrede!

En straks wordt het eeuwig en ongestoorde en onbestreden vrede, als die stem van 't mij aanklagend geweten geen oorzaak van spreken meer heeft, maar ik ook in mijn diepste bestaan verlost ben van alle smet der zonde, en rechtvaardigheid Gods ben geworden!

In Hem!

Maar ziet ge er dan althans niet iets van, dat het zóó moest met een Goddelijk moeten, dat het niet anders kon, dat juist Hij, Die geene zonde gekend heeft, zonde gemaakt moest worden voor ons, en dat wel door God?

Hij moest onze zonden wegdragen voor eeuwig, opdat wij rechtvaardigheid Gods zouden kunnen worden in Hem. Maar zou Hij onze zonden wegdragen, dan moest Hij ze dragen, dan moesten ze op Hem komen, dan moest God ze op Hem doen aanloopen, en dan moest Hij als de Zondelooze, met eene goede en vrije conscientie, in volmaakte gehoorzaamheid met al die zonden de hel opzoeken, om daar het volmaakte offer te brengen!

O diepte des rijkdoms!

Halleluja!

H. H.

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## EDITORIALS

### As To The Salvation Of Infants

I received the following question:

"What is the basis that godly parents may not doubt about the salvation of their children when they die in infancy?"

W. W."

The question is, of course, connected with I, 17 of the Canons of Dordrecht, which reads as follows:

"Since we are to judge of the will of God from his Word, which testifies that the children of believers are holy, not by nature, but in virtue of the covenant of grace, in which they, together with the parents, are comprehended, godly parents have no reason to doubt of the election and salvation of their children, whom it pleaseth God to call out of this life in their infancy."

First of all, I may remark that the above translation is less correct than the Dutch rendering of the same article. The words "godly parents have no reason to doubt," etc. are translated in the Holland as follows: "zoo moeten de godzalige ouders niet twijfelen," etc. And this is a more accurate rendering of the original: *pii parentes. . . dubitare non debent*. And there is a little difference, too, in the meaning of the two translations. To say that godly parents *have no reason* to doubt introduces an objective element in the statement of Art. 17, which, as it appears to me, our fathers tried to avoid, and which is not in the original: *dubitare non debent*.

It is, I think, important to notice this fact. Whatever may have been the reason why the fathers of Dordrecht inserted an article of this nature in the Canons (and, perhaps, it was occasioned by all sorts of slanderous accusations by the enemies of sovereign predestination, such as, that those who maintained the Reformed faith rejoiced in and gloated over a hell full of little infants), they certainly were careful not to make any objective statement of doctrine regarding the salvation of infants of believers that die in their infancy. Had they done this, or intended to do this, the article would have read as follows: "all infants of godly parents that die in infancy are elect and saved." Instead, our fathers here declared something about the subjective attitude of godly parents with respect to their children that are taken away in their infancy.

Secondly, we may also note that the article does not speak simply of "parents in the covenant," or

even of "believing parents," but of *pii parentes*, godly parents. There is a difference, of course, and this difference is quite intentionally maintained in the article. It is hardly accidental that the fathers of Dordrecht chose this term. Godly parents are in this case those parents who live a godly life particularly with regard to their children. They expect them in the fear of the Lord, they dedicate them to Him and His covenant even before they are born, they receive them from Him in faith, and when they grow up they exert themselves to bring them up in the fear and admonition of the Lord. Now, when from such parents God takes away their children in infancy, they "must not doubt their election and salvation."

The above remarks are necessary lest we receive the impression that in our Canons we confess that all children born within the scope of the visible line of the covenant of God with His people in the world, that die in infancy are surely elect and saved. No such objective declaration of doctrine is made in this article. Nor would such an objective statement be of much real doctrinal value. The term "infants" is a very relative one, and it is quite impossible to set an age limit to "infancy." The meaning of the term in the article is, no doubt, that early period of life in which the child cannot be expected to reveal any signs of grace or of being without grace. But how long does this period last? With some children it will last longer than others, and in all cases the exact limit will be impossible to determine.

Besides, there is no ground in Scripture to make such a statement. The basis for the statement that "godly parent must not doubt" is, according to the article in the Canons "that the children of believers are holy, not by nature, but in the virtue of the covenant of grace, in which they, together with the parents, are comprehended." Now, if the term "holy" is to be understood in the true, spiritual ethical sense of the word, which is, no doubt, its meaning here, the statement is not applicable to *all* children of believers. If we "are to judge of the will of God from his Word," we surely dare not say that all the children of believers are actually elect and holy. The Word of God teaches us quite the opposite. Never yet were all those true Israel that were of Israel. Only the children of the promise are counted for the seed. And not only Scripture, but also all history and all our experience teaches us that within the scope of the visible line of the covenant in the world there are many carnal children. To make an objective statement that all children of believers *that die in infancy* are surely saved, would, therefore require a special revelation in Scripture concerning those children. But also this is lacking. Nowhere does the Bible give us any ground for the dogmatic assertion that all the children of the covenant that die in infancy are saved.

The statement of David: "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me," (II Sam. 12:23) which is sometimes appealed to in this connection, cannot serve this purpose, because, apart from all other considerations, it most probably means no more than: "I shall follow the child in death." And the statement of Ahijah, the prophet, concerning the child of Jeroboam: "because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam," is still less to the point. (I Kings 14:13). For, in the first place, the son of Jeroboam was not likely an infant. And, secondly, he was surely not a child of "godly parents," for the very opposite was true.

Hence, the basis mentioned in Art. 17 of the Canons is not a ground for a general, objective declaration that all children of the covenant that die in infancy are surely saved, but for a subjective attitude of the parents, according to which they do not doubt their salvation.

But, you ask, if there is no Biblical ground for the objective declaration that all children of the covenant are surely saved if they die in their infancy, how can it be a ground for the advice to godly parents that they must not doubt their election and salvation? My answer is that this can only be considered as "a judgment of love." According to this judgment of love, we hold and believe that all are true members of the Church of Christ that do not in their position or in their walk and confession give reason to judge the contrary. Now, a child of godly parents, born in the covenant, is placed by God's own sovereign determination in the line of the holy seed. If it dies in infancy, this is all we know of it. It has no opportunity to reveal anything to the contrary, because God takes it away before it arrives to years of discretion. Hence, the fathers meant to say, in my opinion, seeing that the parents know nothing else of the child, according to God's own sovereign determination, than that it is born in the line of the holy seed, they ought not to doubt their salvation, according to the judgment of love.

To this, however, I wish to add my personal conviction, that parents that bring infants to the grave ought not to seek their ground of comfort in this judgment of love, but rather in the absolutely certain truth that God doeth all things well, and that He loves them, and causes all things to work together unto their salvation. He surely saves His Church out of our seed, and no one of that perfect, elect Church, shall be lost. That should be sufficient for us as god-fearing parents. It is a sure consolation, not only when our children are taken from us in infancy, but also when they grow up and, in spite of all our instruction and admonition, reveal themselves as profane and reprobate.

H. H.



## Conscience

I also received the following communication:

"Dear Sir:

"The question 'What is conscience?' came up in one of our meetings. It was assigned as after-recess material. We had a spirited discussion on the question but could not reach much agreement on it, and the general feeling was that there was much more in the question than we realized. Just before the meeting adjourned a motion was made to ask the editor of the *Standard Bearer* some time at his convenience in the not too distant future to answer the questions: 'What is conscience? Did Adam have a conscience in the state of rectitude? Will we have a conscience in that state of glory?'

"Will you give this matter your attention?

"We hope you will grant us this favor. In the meantime we look with anticipation for something in print in the *Standard Bearer*.

Respectfully yours,

Creston Prot. Ref. Men's Society.

John Oosse, Sec'y."

I am not surprised that the Men's Society of Creston as they were discussing this question developed "the general feeling that there was much more in the question than they realized." The question is a very old one, one that holds the interest of laymen and philosophers alike, and volumes have been written on it and its related problems. For the same reason it is quite impossible to give a satisfactory and complete answer to the question in the brief space of an article in our paper. Perhaps, the various questions suggested by the Men's Society of Creston, and others related to the subject of conscience, might be assigned as subjects to some of our associate editors to be discussed in the next volume of the *Standard Bearer*.

In the meantime, I can probably make a few brief remarks and suggestions on the subject that may serve to stimulate some more discussion in the meeting of the Creston Society. In this way I can at least indicate the direction which such a discussion should follow. For the Society of Creston this is, perhaps, more profitable than if I should write lengthy articles on the subject.

First of all, then, let me say that a distinction has been made between what is called "sequent conscience," and "antecedent conscience." Whether or not we agree that both these forms of conscience exist, it is important to take note of this distinction because this will help us in understanding the meaning and function of conscience itself. By "sequent conscience" is meant that function of conscience according to which its

judgment upon the ethical worth of a certain action *follows* the action itself. As soon as the moral agent performed a certain act, whether in his heart and mind only, or also in the outward deed, conscience appears as judge and expressed its verdict, whether the action was good or evil. By "antecedent conscience" is meant that function of conscience according to which it declares which of two or more alternative courses of action is right, and commands the moral agent to choose and take it, *before* the action itself is performed.

But I shall have to continue my remarks next time,  
D. V.

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 XII

Q. 31. Why is he called Christ, that is anointed?

A. Because he is ordained of God the Father, and anointed with the Holy Ghost, to be our chief Prophet and teacher, who has fully revealed to us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption; and to be our only High Priest, who by the one sacrifice of his body has redeemed us, and makes continual intercession with the Father for us; and also to be our eternal King, who governs us by his word and Spirit, and who defends and preserves us in (the enjoyment of) that salvation, he has purchased for us.

Q. 32. But why art thou called a Christian?

A. Because I am a member of Christ by faith, and thus am partaker of his anointing; so that I may confess his name, and present myself a living sacrifice of thankfulness to him; and also that with a free and good conscience I may fight against sin and Satan in this life: and afterwards reign with him eternally over all creatures.

1

Jesus is the Christ.

The above text of this twelfth Lord's Day does not offer a very correct rendering of the original German. Instead of the perfect tense: *has fully revealed* the

secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption," the German uses the present: "der uns den heimlichen Rath und Willen Gottes von unseren Erlösung vollkommen offenbaret." The words that are placed in parentheses, "the enjoyment of," do not occur in the original, and should be eliminated, especially because they certainly do not improve the sense. And instead of "he has *purchased* for us," it is more in harmony with the original to translate "he has *obtained* for us." In question and answer 32 the adjective "good" should be eliminated before "conscience," for the German simply reads: "mit freiem Gewissen"; and instead of "Satan" the original has *Teufel*, the devil.

In this Lord's Day the Catechism explains the significance of the name Christ, and treats of the offices of the Saviour. We may notice that, quite in harmony with the general character of the Heidelberg, and, more particularly, with this second part which treats of our redemption, our instructor considers the name Christ, and the offices of the Lord, only from the viewpoint of their significance for us and our salvation. The name Christ signifies that Jesus is *our* chief Prophet, who *reveals to us* the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption; that He is *our* only High Priest, who *redeemed us* and *intercedes for us*; and that He is *our* eternal King, who *governs us*, and *defends* and *preserves us* to the end. Yet, an exposition of the soteriological aspect of the work of Christ as God's Anointed, as His officebearer in the world, hardly exhausts the meaning of the name Christ. For that name has a far wider, a universal significance. It signifies that Jesus is the Firstborn of every creature, by Whom and unto Whom all things in heaven and on earth are created, Who is from all eternity ordained to be the Head over all things, God's official Representative in all the visible universe in the new creation, the Heir of the world, and that, too, *as* the Firstborn of the dead, and *as* the Head of the Church, the glorious Lord of lords and King of kings for ever! It is only in the very last part of the thirty second question that the Catechism refers to this eternal and universal aspect of Christ as God's officebearer in the words: "and afterwards reign with Him eternally over all creatures."

Strongly the Scriptures emphasize the importance of the confession that Jesus is the Christ. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God," I John 5:1. The faith that the historical Jesus, Who was born in Bethlehem, walked among us, suffered and died on Calvary, is the Christ, is here presented as a sure proof that one is born of God. Without being reborn it is impossible to believe that Jesus is the Christ. The disciples, by mouth of Peter, confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

And the Lord replies that flesh and blood did not reveal this unto Peter, but His Father who is in heaven. And upon the rock of this truth Christ will build His Church. Matt. 16:16-18. When the bread seeking multitude in Capernaum have become offended in Jesus, and He turns to His twelve disciples with the question: "Will ye also go away?" they answer, once more through Simon Peter: "Lord to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." John 6:67-69. The Samaritan woman reports to the men of Sychar that she has met the Christ; and after Jesus had taught two days in that city the men of Sychar themselves believed "that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." John 4:29, 42. Gradually, during Jesus' public ministry, as He taught and performed His marvellous works, it became the urgent and pressing question whether He were indeed the Christ. And there were many that believed He was. On the other hand, the more it became evident that Jesus of Nazareth claimed to be the Christ, the more the carnal Jews and their leaders hated, opposed, and persecuted Him. And it was, no doubt, because, on the one hand, the Jews refused to acknowledge Him as such, that they finally conspired to kill Him. They looked for a Christ, but for one altogether different from this Jesus of Nazareth. And it was ultimately because of His confession under oath that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God, that the Sanhedrin declared Him worthy of death. And when the apostles have been endowed with the power of the Spirit, they preach: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made this same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

In a sense, the whole epistle to the Hebrews may be said to be a treatise on the theme that Jesus is the Christ, the High Priest, to be sure, but then according to the order of Melchisedec, the glorious royal Priest. He is appointed heir of all things. 1:2; and He has obtained a more excellent name than the angels, 1:4; to Him it was said: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with oil of gladness above thy fellows." 1:8, 9. His excellency above the angels is evident from the Word of God to Him: "Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool," 1:13; in Him is fulfilled the testimony of the eighth psalm: "What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet," 2:6-8. He it is that is set

over the whole house of God, and that was counted worthy of more honor than Moses, as the builder is worthy of greater honor than the building, 3:3-6. And from God He received this honor, for he "glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." 5:5, 6. All that was prefigured in Melchisedec, the priest of the most high God, king of righteousness, king of peace, without beginning or end of days, a priest continually and for ever, is fulfilled in Christ, chapter 7. And He is not entered into holy places made with hands, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us, 9:24. And after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, He sat down at the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool, 10:12. 13. He is, indeed, the one that was promised all through the old dispensation, the expected One, the Messiah, and all the shadows are completely fulfilled in Him. Jesus is the Christ.

The name Christ is the same as the Old Testament name Messiah even as Jesus is the New Testament form of Jehoshua. It signifies the Anointed. It is, therefore, a title rather than a name, indicative of His official dignity rather than of His person and nature. In the old dispensation there were many anointed ones, types and shadows of Him that was to come. Those that were called to hold office in the kingdom of God as it existed in the old dispensation among Israel were anointed. Holy anointing oil, specially prepared for that purpose, was poured out over the head of the one that was called by God to function officially in the kingdom of God, as prophet, priest, or king. This ceremony of anointing had symbolical meaning. The oil used for anointing, fragrant and glittering, was symbol of the Holy Spirit. This is evident from several passages of Holy Writ. It is the meaning of the oil in the seven lamps of the golden candlestick that stood in the holy place of the tabernacle and the temple. The seven armed lamp was, no doubt, a symbol of the people of God as the light of the world, shining before the face of God, called out of darkness into His marvellous light, to declare His praises and reflect His glorious virtues. But the lamps were in themselves nothing. Without the oil they could not burn, and had no light. And thus the people were reminded that without the grace of God's Spirit they were not, and could not be the people of God.

This is evident, too, from the wonderful vision recorded in Zech. 4:1-6. The prophet beholds a golden candlestick, with a bowl containing oil above it, and pipes leading from the bowl to the seven lamps of the candlestick. The idea is, evidently, that the lamps are

constantly supplied with oil from the bowl through the seven pipes that lead to each of the lamps. And the angel interprets the vision to the wondering prophet in the words: "This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Without entering into a detailed explanation of this vision, it will be evident that the oil in the bowl constantly flowing into the seven lamps is symbol of the Holy Spirit by Whom alone the House of God, the true spiritual temple of the Most High can be built and maintained. And the same applies to the oil that was used for anointing. The holy ointment was fragrant and shining, a picture of life and light, and as such a symbol of the Holy Spirit. That this is, indeed, the meaning which Scripture attributes to the holy oil of anointing is plain from Isa. 61:1, where the gift of the Spirit is directly connected with the idea of anointing: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."

And even as the anointing oil was symbol of the Holy Spirit, so the ceremony of anointing was designed to express that the anointed one received the Spirit of God to qualify him for a certain office. Two ideas, therefore, were expressed or implied in the act of anointing, viz. those of ordination or appointment unto a certain office, and of qualification for that office. That Jesus is the Christ signifies, therefore, that He is God's officebearer, ordained and qualified by God Himself to function in behalf of God's covenant and kingdom in the world. As the Catechism reminds us, He is called Christ, that is anointed, "because he is ordained of God the Father, and anointed with the Holy Ghost," to be our Prophet, Priest, and King. Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed, i.e. He is officially ordained and qualified for the "things pertaining to God." And as all the officebearers of the old dispensation were but types and shadows of Him that was to come and all officebearers of the new dispensation are but reflections of Him, and function through Him, He is the Anointed *par excellence*, the "Son over his own house," the High Priest, the Prophet of all prophets, the Lord of lords, the King of kings.

Two questions arise here. First of all: what is the idea of an office, and what is an officebearer? And, secondly: what is the office unto which Christ was ordained and qualified?

As to the first question, we may remark that the office is essentially one, not three. We may, indeed, distinguish the one office into the three aspects of it that are denoted by the terms prophet, priest and king, but these may never be separated. They are not three



separate offices, but rather three different aspects or functions of the one office. There is one fundamental thought in them all, one idea lies at the basis of all three. And this fundamental notion may briefly be expressed by saying that by office is meant the position of servant-king in relation to God. We might also express the same idea by describing an officebearer as the official representative of the invisible God in the visible world. More fully defined, by office is meant the position in which man is authorized and qualified to function in the name of God and in His behalf in God's covenant and kingdom, to serve Him and to rule under Him. There are, therefore, two sides to the office. With relation to God the officebearer is servant. He may not act upon his own authority, and according to the imagination of his own heart. Nor does he function in his own behalf. On the contrary, he is a servant of the living God. In relation to God he is clothed with humility, prostrates himself in the dust, and always asks: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" It is his calling to know the will of God, to love that will, and to have his delight in performing it. He must love the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his mind, and with all his soul, and with all his strength. He is the servant of Jehovah. But, on the other hand, with relation to the creaturely sphere in which he functions, the kingdom of God in the visible world, the officebearer is king. He is clothed with authority and power to represent the sovereign God in the world. All creatures must serve him, in order that he may serve his God.

Thus the first man Adam was God's officebearer in the earthly creation. In the covenant-relation he was God's friend-servant, and as such dominion was given him over all the earthly creation. He was king under God. For this position he was ordained and qualified. For he was created after the image of God, in true knowledge of God, righteousness, and holiness. He knew his Creator in love, had his delight in doing the will of God, and consecrated himself and all things to the Lord of all. And he was placed at the head of the earthly creation. All creatures served him, that he might serve his God.

And in this he was the image of Him that was to come. However, he was no more than His image. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so far is Christ, the last Adam, exalted above the first Adam. We must not proceed from the idea that Christ's office consisted merely in this that, after Adam is fallen into sin, and with him the whole creation is made to bear the curse, He redeems His own, and delivers them from sin and death, in order to restore the original relationship and the first state of rectitude in Paradise. It is certainly true that this work of redemption and deliverance belongs to His

work as God's Anointed. He is, indeed, our chief Prophet to make known unto us, who are by nature in darkness, the whole secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption. As our only High Priest, He does intercede for us with the Father after He has obtained redemption for us by His perfect sacrifice on the accursed tree. And as our eternal King, He fought the battle for us against sin and death and all the powers of darkness, and gained the complete victory over them; and He preserves us unto the salvation He obtained for us. But this is not the whole of His work as God's Officebearer. If this were true, His work as God's Anointed would be finished, and He would cease to function in His office, as soon as the work of redemption were completed. But we know that this is not the truth. The Word of God emphasizes everywhere that Christ's office is without end, that His dominion is an everlasting dominion, that He must reign for ever, that He is Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. The last Adam does not appear simply as a Restorer of what the first Adam spoiled and destroyed by his disobedience. He is not ordained simply to repair the damage done by the powers of darkness. Nor dare we present the matter as if Christ were so to speak an afterthought of God, occasioned merely by the fact that sin came into the world. It is to be feared that some such conception is in the minds of many. Adam is the real and original officebearer of God, according to this view. And God's original purpose surely was that he should be the head of all His works, and that under him creation should normally develop to its highest possible state of glory. But sin entered. The first officebearer became unfaithful. And now God ordains Christ, His Son in the flesh, to take the place of the first Adam, and to restore righteousness and peace and lead all things to that perfection which Adam failed to attain.

Instead of all such erroneous notions, we must proceed from the correct and Scriptural viewpoint, that in His eternal counsel God decreed to unite all things in Christ, and to make Him the Head over all things, not only in the earth, but also in heaven. The last Adam in history is the first in God's counsel. He is not an afterthought. He does not occupy the second place. He is strictly first. For God purposed in His eternal good pleasure to reveal and glorify Himself in the realization of His everlasting kingdom and covenant, not in the first Adam, but in Christ, the firstborn of every creature, and that, too, *as the firstbegotten of the dead*, and, therefore, in the way of sin and grace. In the new creation, the new heavens and the new earth, in which the tabernacle of God shall be with men for ever and in heavenly beauty and glory, the covenant of God's friendship shall be perfected, God's House shall be finished, and

His kingdom shall be established, Christ shall everlastingly be the Head over all, the visible representative of the invisible God, the glorious Servant King, the Lord of lords, and the King of kings. King over all, He shall subject Himself unto the Father, that God may be all in all. Even angels and principalities shall for ever be subject unto Him. And in this glorious reign the Church shall participate. Such is the glorious office unto which Christ is anointed from before the foundation of the world.

H. H.

## The First Three Judges

As was pointed out, the first two chapters of the book of the Judges are introduction. Before the author begins his narrative, he explains why the Lord did not expel all the heathen nations from the promised land. The Lord left these nations in punishment of Israel's sin. His people had entered into a forbidden fellowship with the Canaanites and had tolerated their pagan worship. Still another reason is given. The Lord left these nations to prove Israel and to teach the people war.

The author also gives a bird's-eye view of the history that he is about to relate, chaps. 2:11-19. The picture is that of an ever returning cycle of unfaithfulness on the part of the people, oppression by the adversary, deliverance wrought by the Lord, and the return of the people to their idols. The history of Israel under the judges is a history of sin, repeating itself over and over, and of divine grace, constantly devising new means of deliverance.

"And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and served Baalim.

"And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel and he delivered them into the hands of the spoilers that spoiled them. . .

"Nevertheless the Lord raised up Judges, which delivered them out of the hands of the spoilers that spoiled them. For it repented the Lord because of their groanings.

"And it came to pass when the judge was dead, that they returned and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them."

Such were the round of events that recurred regularly and in the same sequence, in the time of the Judges, in all the ages of the Old Dispensation, and in the centuries of the new. The whole history of the church is shut up in those four sentences.

But who were those servants of Baal that, as delivered, were loyal to God so long as the judge lived but that returned and corrupted themselves anew when the judge was dead? They were not the true Israel. We have God's own word for it that His believing people did not serve Baal ever. There is this word of God to Elijah. "Yet have I left me seven thousand, all the knees of which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him." The seven thousand—there may have been more or even less than indicated by this number, for the number is symbolical—were the remnant according to the election, the true believers, always present in the nation. They were not of those that bowed their knees unto Baal. They served God in truth. Yet with the judge through whom God had wrought deliverance in his grave, and with Baal's temple again crowded with apostate Israelites, they, too, would pollute their way before the Lord. And it is not difficult to imagine in what respect. They got along too well with their apostate brethren. In their fear of the wicked, they were too ready to accept the baal-worship in their midst as a thing to be deplored but about which nothing much could be done; and too easily did they accustom themselves to the spectacle of Israelitish men offering God's gifts to Baal. Yet the law was most exacting. It demanded that the worshippers of the idol be put to death. Thus it placed God's believing people under the necessity of slaying their own kin. That they could not come to this is understandable. So the pagan worship continued to flourish with God's people looking on, vexing their righteous souls from day to day with the unlawful deeds of wicked men, yet taking no action against them beyond an occasional feeble protest. This was their sin.

Then the anger of the Lord would wax hot against His people not to consume them in His wrath but to burn the dross out of them in His love. Whithersoever they turned, they collided with God's hand as against them for evil through the agency of the adversaries of the nation. Then, in their extremity, they would cry unto God. And He would save them His believing people, by another wonder of His grace, save the nation for His people's sake, so that the nation would again see His works, as had the generation to which Moses and Joshua belonged. There would again be peace in God's country for forty years or more with God's people, it may be assumed, once more in power and with the Baal-worshippers more or less in hiding. During this time another generation would arise that knew not the Lord neither the work—the wonder of his grace—that he had wrought through the reigning judge. So when the judge died this other generation would again deny God and serve Baal. But this carnal seed would not even hearken unto their judges, the deliverers raised up by the Lord to regain

the lost liberties of the nation. Even during the lifetime of these judges, "they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the Lord; but they—this other generation—did not so."

Before we turn to the narrative proper of our book, just one remark. The deliverance that God wrought through the agency of the judges were very actually wonders—wonders of grace—as truly as were the ten plagues of Egypt and all the other mighty works of Moses and of Joshua his successor. It was through wonders that God brought the people of Israel as a nation into being. And it was through a series of wonders that the existence of the nation in Canaan was continued. The history of Israel therefore is typical, which is but another way of saying that it is prophecy, special and progressive revelation of the plan of salvation, a preindication of the heavenly kingdom of Christ and the appearance of this kingdom in glory. Herein lies the significance of Israel's history. Herein does this history differ from the history of all other peoples. It is not sufficient to say that the deliverance of the people of Israel from Egyptian bondage was a work of God. The rationalistic interpreters of the Old Testament Scripture have no quarrel with us if we say no more than this. The rising and setting of the sun are also God's works. He does all things. So, what must be added is that the deliverance of the people of Israel from Egyptian bondage was a *wonder* of God's grace. To rationalize the wonders of the Scriptures is an offence of the first magnitude. For the wonder is the sign of the operation of God's grace. It is precisely through the wonder of grace that God saves His people. The incarnation of Christ was of all the wonders the greatest. And the eventual passing away of heaven and earth and the appearance of the church with Christ in glory will be the concluding wonder of history. If God performs no wonders, Christ is still in the grave and the believers are still in their sins. Assuredly, God doeth all things. He saves His people by His outstretched arm. But the token, the sign, the evidence of this is precisely the arm of God as stretched out in the redemption of His people. The outstretched arm of God is thus the wonder. It was by His wonders, as performed in the sight of Pharaoh, that God drove home to the consciousness of this tyrant, that He, the Jehovah of the Hebrews, is the Lord, the God of all the earth. For the wonder is a new work of God, wrought upon the earthy. As such it forms the compelling evidence of the Lordship of God over all the earth and of the presence of His almighty power in the fulness thereof.

Herewith has been stated the fact and truth upon which we must stand, as upon a foundation, in inter-

preting the history of the people of Israel.

Let us now turn to the narrative proper of our book, the commencement of which is the statement to the effect that "the children of Israel (therefore) dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizites, and Hivites, and Jebusites" (chap. 3:4). All that precedes this statement is introduction.

"The children of Israel," of whom the author here says that they "dwelt among the Canaanites. . ." are still "that other generation" of which Joshua and his contemporaries were the immediate antecedents. This is proven by the circumstance that the first judge was Othniel, the nephew of Caleb and the conqueror of Kirjath-sepher, Jos. 15:16ff. When Joshua died, he was still in his prime. If at that time he was thirty years of age, he would be fifty three years of age when he assumed the judicial office, if, after the death of Joshua, a period of twenty years elapsed.

The passage, "And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites," is a significant citation. Deut. 20:17 contains the following: "Thou shalt utterly destroy the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites as Jehovah thy God hath commanded thee; that they teach you not to do after all their abominations." But, says the author, the reverse took place. The children of Israel, that "other generation," "that knew not the Lord nor all the works that He had done for Israel," having become weary of war, accepted the Canaanites as a people fit to dwell among, and concluded a peace with these pagan peoples, with the land still studded with pagan altars and temples. This, as has already been explained was their first great offense, after the death of their god fearing elders, who had seen all the great works of the Lord. As was said, their failure to cleanse the land of the apparatus of pagan worship was indicative of a wrong attitude toward God and thus preindicative of their openly choosing the idol in rejection of God. And so they did, shortly after the death of Joshua and of all the men of the generation to which he belonged. As Moses had foretold, they were soon initiated into the sins of their pagan neighbors. In violation of the command of God, they first made marriages with the Canaanites. "And they took their daughters to be their wives and gave their daughters to their sons" (chap. 3:6). The consequence of this intermarriage was that they "served their gods," namely the Baalim and the groves. Doubtless these shameful doings were, in a measure, representative of a policy of appeasement dictated by a lack of trust in God, and in consequence thereof, by fear of the Canaanites. Dispossessed, as they were, and shut up in their strongholds, the Canaanites, it may be assumed, were in an evil mood; and the thought of revenge was always present to their minds. Since the attempt to expell them from the soil of Canaan had

been but partially successful, the people of Israel were genuinely afraid of them. Unbelief reasoned that it was the part of wisdom to solicit the friendship of these pagan peoples by intermarriages and by the acknowledgement of their religion. So they married with Amorites, Hivites, Perizzites, and placed their gifts on Baal's altars. Peace came. Comfort and prosperity came. Their position was now safe, so they thought. For the Canaanites were no longer hostile. The observance of frontiers had helped to make things smooth, and they could agree on boundary lines of territory. But they would have lost their identity as a nation, had not the Lord intervened with His judgments.

God sold them into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, a monarchy of Western Asia, that stretched along the Euphrates away to the highlands of Armenia. The question why this king should come from a country so far away to fall upon the people of Israel, is best answered by saying that God sent him to chastize His people. But this king, to be sure, meant it not so. Believing, as he must have, that the invading Israelites had scarcely gained a secure footing, he might venture an inroad upon Canaan just at this time and even bring it into subjection to himself for a short time—eight years according to the narrative—and thus profit by the confusion which he thought that Israel's seizure of Canaan had produced. An additional motive would be that the nations on the nearer side of the Euphrates had not been able to withstand the advance of Israel.

Coming from the north, the invader over-ran the northern tribes and with little effort brought them under his iron heel. For the tribes had forsaken God and therefore had not the courage—the courage of faith—to resist. They were now in an evil case. For eight years they had to suffer a sore oppression. There were soldiers quartered in their cities, exacting tribute at the point of the sword, and their harvests were enjoyed by others. They learned that, having forsaken God, Canaan could be no peaceful habitation for them. Helpless in the grip of the invader-tyrant, they cried unto the Lord. And the Lord answered. Help came from the south. The deliverer was Othniel of the tribe of Judah. It is remarkable that Judah is seldom mentioned in connection with the troubles of the time. We can only conclude that, on a whole, this tribe, in obedience to the command of God, had pretty well freed its territory of the altars and temples of Baal, and was thus prosperous, strong, and united in a common faith in God. It is this tribe that, in Othniel, now came to the rescue of the hard pressed brethren in northern Canaan. Othniel was a man mindful of the law of God, a man who feared the Lord in truth. Evidently he was already in possession of a certain authority. He was one of those who, in

part at least, had shared the wars with Canaan. He was the son-in-law of the famed Caleb, and hence a head of the tribe of Judah. After the death of Joshua, Judah was the first to prosecute the war with the Canaanites. The first judge whom God appointed, must appear in Judah.

As to Othniel, we read of him that "the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. . ." exerted an extraordinary influence over his spirit, thus raised him up in the interest of the salvation of God's people, called him and qualified him for his task. "And he judged Israel and went out to war. . ." The judging of Israel by this man meant the inquisition into the religious state, condemnation of the idolatry of the tribes and a restoration of the service of God. In this way also the spiritual strength of God's believing people was revived by the Spirit so that, as once more united in a common faith in God, they, too, were raised up to do battle with the adversary. The judge and the people now went out to war: "and the Lord delivered Chushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand and his hand prevailed against Chushan-rishathaim."

The sacred author, in narrating the history of the public career of this judge, is exceedingly concise. He thought it necessary to devote but one brief sentence to his military undertaking. Yet the foe overcome was doubtless, in the point of view of nature, powerful and formidable. The victory achieved must therefore be contemplated as another wonder of grace. It was so decisive that the enemy repulsed never for centuries again crossed the Euphrates; for the next following judges have quite different enemies to contend with. So did the generation—God's believing people in this generation—that had not known all the wars of Canaan, now know war as taught by the Lord. Assuredly, it was God who taught them war. He did so by raising them up by His Spirit out of their spiritual lethargy, by restoring their soul by His promises and thus qualifying them to fight His warfare as inspired by His spirit, as impelled by a living faith that He gendered in them, and as sustained by the prospect of certain victory in the Lord. As has already been explained, Israel's wars with the heathen nations in and around about Canaan, were at bottom, spiritual conflicts, a choosing between Jehovah and the idol, a being pitted against the flesh and the devil, and the devil-gods in loyalty to Jehovah under the impulse of faith in God. Israel's victories over the heathen in battle were the achievements of faith. As such they were prophetic of the victory of Christ over the world through His atonement, Judges 3:1ff. Thus, they, too, had now seen the wonder, the arm of God stretched out in the deliverance of His oppressed people. And seeing they praised. And the land had rest forty years, i.e., during the rest of Othniel's life.

Some interpreters claim that of all the judges, with

perhaps the exception of Samuel, Othniel, in a sense, was the greatest. They base their claim on the following considerations. The spirit of Jehovah was upon him. The spirit of faith, of trust in God, of enthusiasm. It is the same spirit which God bestows upon the seventy also, who are to assist Moses (Num. 11:25). It was on that occasion that Moses exclaimed, "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them." In this spirit Moses and Joshua performed their great deeds. In this spirit Joshua and Caleb knew no fear when they explored the land. In this spirit, the spirit of obedience, which in faith performs the law, becomes a spirit of power. Of these seventy we are told that when they received the spirit of God, they prophesied. The Targum therefore translates both here and there "the Spirit of Prophecy". It does this, however, in the case of no other judge but Othniel. For although the "Spirit of Jehovah" is also spoken of in connection with Gideon, Jephthah and Samson, it merely gives "spirit of heroism". The first ground of this distinction conferred on Othniel, is the irreproachable character of his rule. No tragic shadow lies on his life, as on the life of the other heroes. His sun rose when Joshua's went down in death.

So runs the argument,—an argument with which we cannot agree. There is grounds for saying that, as a godfearing man, Othniel was outstanding and that his faith in God was implicit. But this was true of all the judges, not one excepted. That Othniel received the spirit of prophecy and of heroism, of faith and trust in God and that the others received only the spirit of heroism, cannot be. What Othniel received in the way of qualifications for his office, was bestowed upon them all. They all, without exception, were heroes and judges before the Lord, who taught God's people and fought God's warfare under the impulse of a living faith in God. What could the character of the heroism of the others be, if it did not spring from faith? As to Gideon and Samson and Jephthah, are they not included by the author of the epistle to the Hebrews in that "cloud of witnesses," by which we are encompassed about?

The second attack on Israel came likewise from the east, beyond the Jordan. The children of Ammon dwelt east of the Dead Sea. The hosts of Amalek roved lower down, to the southwest of Moab. With these neighbors north and south of him, Eglon, king of Moab, formed a league and warred against the Israelites west of the Jordan, after first having subjugated, it must be, either wholly or in part, the tribe of Reuben and also possibly the tribe of Dan. West of the Jordan it was Benjamin and Ephraim that suffered most under this invasion. Crossing the Jordan, the invaders possessed the city of Jericho. Here Eglon established his headquarters for the reception of the

tribute under which the tribes had been put.

Eglon's position in Canaan was truly precarious, should the courage of the nation revive. With the fords of the Jordan taken—and they were taken—Eglon and his army would face certain annihilation. The doing of the enemy was of the Lord. "(And) the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord: and the Lord strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel. . . ." Eighteen long years did the children of Israel serve Eglon. Neither in the land of Benjamin nor from the neighboring tribes of Judah and Ephraim, did the adversary meet with any resistance. Finally, in response to the cry of His people, the Lord raised up a deliverer, Ehud, of the tribe of Benjamin, a man left-handed but not, as some suppose with lameness in the right. It seems to have been a habit of this tribe to use the left hand.

Some interpreters think it strange that Moab appears as a dangerous enemy, since, under Moses, the conduct of Israel toward Moab had been friendly. An immediate motive that incited the people to war against Israel is sought. It is concluded that the tribes of Israel east of the Jordan had given occasion to many disputes with their neighbors, because otherwise a people so peaceably disposed as the Ammonites were at first toward Israel, would not have taken part in the war. But Balak, king of Moab, had viewed with alarm the people of Israel which was advancing to seek a settlement so near its territory. It was then that he sent for Balaam to curse Israel. Also there was the command that "no Moabite or Ammonite shall enter into the congregation of Israel" (Deut. 23:4). The doing of Balak and this command sufficiently marks the antagonism that existed between them. Why the invaders had resolved to attack the people of Israel just at that time, was of no moment to the sacred author. What had weight with him is that the Lord strengthened the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord." The invaders, certainly, were moved by hatred of God's people and were bent on conquest and plunder.

Ehud's deed is vividly narrated. He made him a dagger which had two edges, of a cubit length; and which he concealed under his raiment upon his right thigh. And he brought the present unto the king of Moab, for to him was entrusted the office of bearing to the king the yearly tribute. The presentation of the gift was, according to ancient custom, a lengthy ceremony. Several persons bore what one could carry. Ehud was not alone therefore. With him were his companions, whom he dismissed when he had made an end of offering the present, and accompanied them back to the borders. But he himself turns back from the borders of Eglon's territory, which he had seized from Israel. He must be alone with the Moabite, if his plan is to succeed. So his request is for a private



interview, as if he had some secret message to communicate,—a message from God, which the king, when alone with him rises to receive. Then he plunges the sword into the corpulent body of the king, that even the hilt enters the flesh. Then he rushed into the gallery that ran around the roof, locked the door, escaped to the mountains, called and lead the men of Ephraim to the place, where 10,000 Moabites fell, and the land west of the Jordan was free and long remained free.

G. M. O.

## Het Gebed Eens Bejaarden

(Psalm 71; Slot)

Als er nog iemand geweest is, die eenigzins twijfelde of deze psalm wel waarlijk Messiaansch is, die zal bij het lezen en bestudeeren van het slot zich geheel en al gewonnen geven. In dat slot worden er dingen gezegd, die alleen ten volle van toepassing zijn op Jezus. Luistert maar naar vers 20: "Gij, die Mij vele benauwdheden en rampen hebt doen zien, zult Mij weder ophalen uit de afgronden der aarde!"

Ziedaar een vers, geliefde lezer, dat wel kan dienen om een geheel boek te schrijven over de smarten van Jezus en Zijn verrijzenis uit den eeuwigten afgrond des doods. Hoe zou men dit vers alleen maar op David kunnen toepassen? Ik weet er dan geen raad mee.

God heeft David vele benauwdheden doen zien! Dat zal waar zijn. Denkt maar aan de benauwdheid die hij ervoer vanwege dien goddeloozen Saul. Of ook, denkt aan de vreeselijke benauwdheid die David moest ondervinden van een goddeloozen Absalom, een benauwdheid die zich uitstreckte over een langen tijd. David moest het eerst aanzien, dat zijn eigen vleesch en bloed, langzaam aan, sluiperig en echt scheinheilig, de harten stal van Israel. Hebt ge wel eens zulk gluipeerig gedoe gezien? Met een uitgestreken gezicht, valsch, vleiende, met zachte lieflijk klinkende tong paaiende, vellen zij het slachtoffer. Ik heb liever te doen met een ruw mensch dan met een vleierd. Hebt ge wel eens een slang aangevat? Laat het ding vallen; er is gif in! Dat gluipeerige volk broedt eieren uit. Breekt ge hun met zorg vervaardigde werken te berste, dan springt er een adder uit.

Dat ervoer David. Sommige psalmen die we behandeld hebben handelen geheel en al van dat slangenvenijn.

Dan wordt het benauwd.

Wat beteekent dat?

Dit: ge hebt dan geen plaats meer om te staan, te

liggen, te verkeerren. Ge komt dan in een staat en toestand die te nauw is voor U. Dan worden er zuchten en klachten en tranen gevonden. Ga naar David. Hij zal U er van vertellen.

Als ge evenwel de diepte van die benauwdheid eenigzins wilt benaderen, gaat dan naar Gethsemane. Daar wordt het zeer benauwd. Er heerscht een zwoele, drukkende atmosfeer. Messias kromt zich en alles perst in Hem. Daar komen de bloeddruppels al, bloed, bloed van een Lam.

Straks, als Hij meer krachten krijgt om te lijden, staat Hij op, spreekt een klagend, verwijtend woord tot Zijn jongeren en dan? O, geliefden, ik moet er niet inkomen! En toch moeten we wat zeggen van de benauwdheid van den Christus Gods. Alles in hemel en op aarde en vanuit de hel werkte mede om Jezus benauwd te maken. God zal benauwdheden doen zien. Daar komt een mensch met een lieve glimlach op 't gezicht. Hij is o zoo zacht en lief. O Rabbi! Rabbi! Hij valt Jezus om de hals en kust Hem! Past op! Er laaien vlammen uit de hel, Jezus! Het is een kus van den duivel!

En het arme slachtoffer? Waarom sloeg Jezus hem niet met Zijn heilige vuist ter aarde? Ik zal het U zeggen. Jezus zag dat God Hem benauwd wilde maken. Hij heeft nooit tegen God gerebelleerd. En daarom komt het vreemde woord van Jezus er uit, terwijl het bloed nog druipt: Vriend, waartoe zijt gij hier? Is het niet angstig benauwd rondom Jezus?

Zegt echter maar niet: Arme Jezus! Zegt het niet, want het is goddelijke wijsheid. En weest maar niet bevreesd, dat Judas zijn loon voor die kus ontliiep. Terwijl ik dit schrijf, roept men Judas in de hel al maar toe: Vriend, waartoe zijt gij hier? In de hel? Gij waart toch de geldddrager en vertrouweling van Jezus' volk? Waartoe zijt gij hier, Judas? Met Nero en Lucifer? Ach, weent over de verdoemden, doch niet over Jezus en de Davids.

En God heeft Jezus ook rampen doen zien.

Wat is een ramp?

Een ramp is, als hetgeen dat staan moest om U steun te geven, omver valt. Het is een ramp als Uw huis boven Uw hoofd ineens stort, als de watervloeden alles vernielen en meeslepen naar de oceaan, als de zon en de maan U begeven en niet meer willen schijnen, als het zeekasteel zoo angstig met een punt zijn boeg omhoogsteekt, om voorts onder de kokende golven te verdwijnen.

Jezus zag rampen. David ook. David zag de ramp toen zijn troon waggelde en hij vluchtte onder het vloecken van Simeï. Het was ramp toen zijn eigen zoon hem vervloekte. En David viel omver.

En Jezus? Moet ik van de rampen spreken die Messias ervoer?

Komaan dan. De aarde weigerde om Hem langer te dragen. Hier is de ladder. Vergeet de spijkers

niet en houdt de hamer vast. Dof hebben die slagen geklonken op de heuvel der doodshoofden. 't Is klaar. Daar hangt Hij.

Geliefden, Jezus had heilige voeten. En voor drie-en-dertig jaren wilde Jezus de aarde drukken. Hij wilde slechts een klein stukje lands om te wandelen. Doch neen, die voeten moeten van de aarde verhoogd. Het is de vloek die Jezus van de aarde ervoer.

Rampen van Jezus. Soms zeggen we: laat ons de stoelen in de zon zetten. We hebben gewacht al wachtende op de stralen die koesteren, koesteren. Dan is de blik zoo ruim en opgeruimd zitten we terneer.

Maar dat mocht niet voor Jezus. God deed Hem rampen zien.

Hij had al voor verscheidene uren het betraande gezicht van Maria gezien en het meewarige blikken van Johannes, daar vlak bij het kruis. De zon was vriendelijk tot zoo lang.

Maar dat mocht niet langer. De zon is een beeld. Een beeld waarvan? Weet ge dat niet? En ge zingt er toch van? Luistert: Gods vriendelijk aangezicht geeft vroolijkheid en licht voor alle oprechte harten, ten troost verspreid in smarten! Dat mocht niet langer.

En het werd nacht daar bij Golgotha. Rampen van Jezus!

Rampen? Moet ik U vertellen van die bange schreeuw? De aarde wilde Hem niet; de zon verborg zich. Maar in den donker kan ik nog tot den hemel bidden! O God! Ik ben zoo bang en zoo bevreesd. O God! kom Mij ter hulpe.

Maar de hemel zweeg. Neen, dat is zwakke theologie. Zweeg de hemel maar. Het was een grooter ramp dan dat. De hemel goot uit over het hoofd van Hem, die genaamd wordt de vreugde der Engelen, den last van al de fiolen van den toorn Gods. Jezus is in dat donker uur weggedrukt door God.

Rampen van Jezus.

Eeuwen van tevoren had Jeremia geklaagd: Ik ben de man die ellende gezien heeft door de roede Zijner verbolgenheid. Kom, Jeremia, kom naar den kruin van Hoofdschedelplaats en zing Uw klaagliederen! Maar neen, Jeremia heeft een rijkere theologie geleerd al die eeuwen in den hemel. Indien toen niet, nu weet hij, dat zijn klacht verdiept geworden is door Jezus. Als Jeremia luistert bij den kruispaal en het snikken van Jezus hoort in bangen nacht, dan ziet hij een grootere ramp dan de wondere omlaagdaling van Sion. Hij ziet nu, neen, het is donker, hij hoort van het mysterie der eeuwen eeuwigheid. Zware theologie! Hoe zullen we inleven in de rampen van Messias. Ik kan slechts aanbidden! Was dat voor mij?!

Neen, we weenen niet voor Jezus.

Al die benauwdheden en al die rampen waren Goddelijke wijsheid. Er moest het fundament gelegd worden voor veel lof. Lof van God.

Daarom lezen we: Gij zult Mij weder levend maken, en zult Mij weder ophalen uit de afgronden der aarde!

Toen ik voor de eerste keer geopereerd werd en weer bijkwam in mijn hospitaal kamertje te Kalamazoo, en toen ik het licht weer zag, toen heb ik een vreugde gesmaakt gelijk nooit eerder of later. Ik kan het nooit vergeten. Ik was zoo bevreesd geweest voor de operatie! Toen hoorde ik een nurse zeggen (ik kon nog haast niets zien) vlakbij mijn oor: Het is alles voorbij! Er begon wat te zingen, te jubelen in mijn binnenste hart.

Als dat nu zoo is met een ellendig zondig mensch die maar eventjes een doodgewone operatie ondergaat, hoe is het dan Jezus te moede geweest toen Hij Zijn heilige oogen opendeed in den hof van Jozef? Vlak bij Zijn oor hoorde Hij de lieflijke stem, trillende van Goddelijke min: Het is alles voorbij! Verrijs, Mijn Zoon! Tot in alle eeuwigheid nooit meer zulke operaties, zulke benauwdheden en rampen!

Opgehaald uit den afgrond van den eeuwigen dood!

Opgehaald, (in Openbaring 12 staat er, dat het kind werd *weggerukt* tot God en Zijnen troon!) opgehaald totdat Hij al de scharen menschen en engelen Gods overzien kan in de zalen des hemels. Een naam boven allen naam heeft de Liefhebber Uwer zielen, geliefde lezers!

De grootheid van Jezus wordt vermeerderd van geslachte en tot in geslachte. En van rondom wordt Hij vertroost. Ik kan er niet inkomen. Hebt ge wel eens gezien dat een moeder het snikkende kind vertroost? Dat is een beeld. Het kind had zwaar geleden. Het snikt nog na. En met zachte, bijna fluisterende stem, kreunt de moeder haar zang van troostende liefde. Jezus is door Zijn Vader getroost. Het staat er. Vers 21.

Zoo wordt het langzaam, zeer langzaam aan, duidelijker waarom Jezus het hoogste lied van dankbaarheid zingt voor God Zijn Vader. Het lied van Mozes en het Lam.

O Heilige Israels! Van Uwe trouw zal Ik zingen! Dat is het thema. Als ge mooie muziek hoort door de symphonies gespeeld, dan merkt ge, dan verlangt ge keer op keer naar het steeds wederkeerende thema. Welnu, de trouw van den Heilige Israels! Dat is het thema. Daar groeit een kind van God.

Het instrument der luit moet er dan zelfs bij te pas komen. Muziek van Messias. Harmonie en wegsleepende stijl van kwinkelen.

De lippen van Jezus zullen juichen en de ziel die Gij verlost hebt. De gansche dag des hemels zullen de lippen en de tong van Jezus de gerechtigheid verkonden.

Gerechtigheid?

Ja, geliefden, gerechtigheid. En dan sidderen we. Want we hadden de goddeloozen bijna vergeten.

Maar God vergeet niet om recht te doen.

Messias en David: ze hebben hunne smarten gehad. En het was wel. Het was noodig. David moest klagen en tranen in bittere smart: hij moest Gods heiligheid deelachtig worden. David moest in afschuw en afgrijzen in aanraking komen met valsche slangen, menschen die 's nachts wakker liggen en denken: Hoe zullen we het nu aanleggen? Voorzichtig nu, past op; doet de deur dicht; zacht gefluisterd; nu dan: hoe zullen we het aanleggen? Niet al te gek, anders loopt het in de gaten. En zóó, helsch voorzichtig, sloeg Absalom en zijn trawanten hun slag tegen den gezalfde des Heeren. Van buiten, uitwendiglijk de glimlach en het geveem om het volk te winnen, doch inwendig het gif van Satan, het knersen der tanden.

Er staat: die mijn kwaad zoeken.

En wat was het einde van dit gebroed?

Dit: "Zij zijn beschaamd, want zij zijn schaamrood geworden!"

David kwam terug op den troon.

Absalom hing voor tijd en wijle aan zijn haar in het woud doch daar komt een hard man met een speer. Hij bloedt en wordt begraven.

En de verachtelijke Achitofel?

Hij hangt zich op. Zijn laatste wijze (?) daad. Hij kon het van te voren uitrekenen: alles liep vast. En geen wonder: God streed voor David.

Doch er is een grotere diepte als ge Messias be-  
luistert.

Men zoekt en zoekt het kwaad van Jezus en van Jezus' gemeente.

Het schaamrood op de aangezichten der verworpenen is de weerkaatsing van hellevuur.

Vreeselijk zal het zijn te vallen in de handen van den levenden God!

Daarom, omdat de dingen zoo staan, geliefde lezer, daarom buigt het volk van God tot in het stof. Zij zijn zelf, van nature, niet vreemd aan alle valsheid en boosheid die Absalom en Achitofel kenmerkte. Het licht van Gods genade ontdekt ons aan onze zonden. Stil, ik hoor het bidden van een uit het bundeltje der levenden. De man is bang. "O God! wees mij, den zondaar, genadig!"

Als ge geleid wilt worden in de ware gestalte der ziel tot schulderkennis, gaat dan ter school bij David. Hij is er geweest met tranen en met zuchten.

En dan wordt het licht in de ziel. De fluisterstemmen van God die de ziel, die schreiend tot Hem vluchtte, van rondom vertroost.

Weest nu maar heel stil. Vlak bij het oor: Zijt welgemoed, mijn zoon, uwe zonden zijn u vergeven!

Ik wil geen andere hemel!

G. V.

## The Strength Of The Young Man

Samson was strong! It was he who slew a lion single-handed; it was he who carried the gates of Gaza to the crest of its hill; it was he who pulled a beam from out of the house by the very locks of his head and he rent new ropes as if they had been scorched jute. It was also Samson who pulled the pillars from under the Dragon theatre, killing thousands of Philistines with one stroke.

Samson was strong.

Yet he was very weak. He fell an easy prey to the wiles of his ungodly wife, Delilah. Samson could slay a thousand Philistines, but when the peculiar temptation struck, he fell as one who had no power at all.

For our strength lies not in muscles.

The strength of the young man. Men wanted to know wherein Samson's great strength lay and his history shows us plainly that it lay not in the build of his body or the tension power of his muscles, nor in his hair, but lay in the faith of God. The moment he betrayed his holy secret which he had with God, to the buxom that tempted him with her wiles, his power was gone. Already in Samson's days we see the truth of that word which says that our enemy is not one of flesh and blood merely, for had the enemy been one of flesh and blood, Samson could have matched his power easily; but his enemy was the Tempter and Samson fell before him.

We all envy the young man who with his robust body and broad shoulders steps out before the crowds. Strong, healthy and hale, with muscles fit for almost any task and endurance that amazes. With ease he lifts heavy weights and with equal ease he carries them wherever he will. He can handle a day's work and scarcely be tired when night falls. Give him the sledge and he will ring the bell every time. Fifty pound dumbbells he lifts above his head with ease. The young man is strong. It is a gift of God, peculiar to the young man, for God has called him to work and has given him the physique thereunto fitted. The Army wants young men such as these and thousands of them pass thru the gates on their way to the induction camps.

But the young man must not deceive himself to think that because he tips the scales for weight and can chin himself a hundred times, more or less, that he can rely upon this strength to see him through the spiritual warfare which every Covenant youth has to wage. The young woman often deceives herself to think that her beauty lies in the comeliness of her face, the color of her hair or in her general outward appearance. Likewise the young man is tempted to deceive himself by thinking that his strength lies in the physical things. We saw in Samson that his physical

strength availed nothing at all when he was put to the test, in fact his bodily strength was a liability rather than an asset, come the right temptation. Many of our young men go off to war concerning whom the reports later indicate that they were positively weak, not able to endure the slightest temptation.

Let the young man cultivate a strong body and develop his muscles, let him rejoice in the energy his God has given him; but let him remember that true strength does not lie in his muscular ability.

Shall we ask then, what IS the strength of the young man?

In I Joh. 2:14 John writes, "I have written you young men, because ye are strong". John writes about the young man who is really strong. In this same connection he writes, "Ye are strong. . . and ye have overcome the wicked one." Our strength therefore is determined by that question: Can you meet the wicked one, and stand? The young men of whom John writes, have come back from the battle field, they have overcome the wicked one and therefore John says of them, "Ye are strong". The enemy of us all and especially also of our young men, is the Wicked One the Evil One, the Devil, the murderer from the beginning. God hath raised him up as the "no" of God's "yes" and bringeth us face to face with him in order that as it pleased God to say "no" to all that denies Him, so we should do likewise. Our "yes" is and must invariably be "no", as we say yes to and in confession of God, we say no to all that is of darkness and sin. But this means spiritual warfare, battle and struggle, in which warfare it is required that we be strong, very strong. Paul also assures us that our warfare is not against flesh and blood, but against powers and spiritual wickednesses. If our warfare were against flesh and blood the young man's muscles would stand him in good stead, but now all the muscle power in the world is of no avail. For the fight is spiritual and the enemy is spiritual, that is, he belongs to another world than ours of flesh and blood, muscle and brawn cannot reach him or ward him off. Our Belgic Confession, when speaking of the Church and God's preservation of it, says that God preserves that Church "against the rage of the *whole world*." That is the position of the Church and that is the position also of you and me as young men in that Church of God. Life is not a rendezvous, playground, or a circus, but a battle-field where God has put us in order that we should confess His Name and partake of the victory which Christ Jesus has gained for us. But all this only in the way of carnage and warfare.

Our enemy is sin, the lust of sin and its temptation. Sin is an awful power. Witness how even the holiest have fallen before its power, such men as Noah, Abraham, Jehoshaphat and Uzziah and countless others.

When the movie industry entices you to enter its doors and enjoy her silver screen, you are faced with a temptation against which your muscle is of no avail whatever. When the card table, pool-hall or gambling den invites you in, you are at grips with a power against which your robust body can do nothing. When your very energy induces you to engage in immoral relationships you are in grips with a power against which the sturdy muscles you possess are no match.

Hence the young man is strong if he have the ability to crown his "yes" of the confession of God with the "no" of opposition to all that is contrary thereto. To these believing young men the holy apostle John says, "Ye are strong."

Again, in I Joh. 2:14 John says "Ye are strong" and then adds, "And the Word of God abideth in you." Here we have the principle of the young man's strength the Word of God abiding in him. God Himself is the eternal content of His own Word, for God speaks about Himself and unto Himself. God says, I Am God. That is the Word of God. But God also speaks concerning Himself unto us so that we hear Him speak. God does this through Jesus Christ and His Spirit and carries this Word unto us through the divine and infallible revelation of the Bible. That Word of God enters into our hearts, our wills and our desires, so that even as God says I am God, we also begin to say: God is God. We say, Thou art God. Then we have the Word of God abiding in us. And even as God hath raised up the devil in order to destroy Him with the infinite power of His Word, so likewise when that Word by grace dwells in our hearts there can no devil or satan successfully stand before us. But our power is ever and only the Word of God, as He Himself speaks it, and as we by faith speak it in Him.

Our Saviour was strong. He said, "It is written" and He could say "get thou behind me Satan". Jesus IS the Word of God, in Him that strength was perfect. Elsewhere we read, "Resist the devil and he will flee from thee" and again, "And the God of peace, shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." Not as if in this life we shall realize the complete victory, here it will be endless combat, but, as Scripture says elsewhere, he shall not overcome us. For the Word of God abideth in our hearts and that Word IS the victory.

Let the Word of God therefore abide in you, young men, and ye shall be strong. Grow up in Christ, says Paul. You have the Word among you, you carry it with you to the battle-field perhaps. Absorb that Word with an believing heart, have it in your mind, your memory, your wills. It is not enough to carry that Word in your pocket, but in your head and heart and will. Read it often, confess it, practice confessing it. With that Word in your hearts you will know evil

when you see it, you will begin to cry out your "no" as soon as the tempter presents his wicked wiles. Not as if we attain perfection in this either, nay, but this also is a constant battle, it being much easier to yield and oftentimes it seems more profitable to change your yes to no and no to yes. But says Paul, "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of HIS might". How? Put on the armour of faith and take that sword which is the Word of God. When the tempter hurls his words at you, rise up and say, "It is written." Say with Joseph, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" Make use of the admonitions your parents give you, the catechism you receive and listen attentively to the Word of God as it is preached, arm yourself with it. Then you shall be strong.

But keep on saying "I am weak". Do not tempt the Lord and boast that you can overcome the enemies. Nay, our strength is in the Lord and in His Christ, through the Spirit. God give us that strength always.

M. G.

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## The Value Of O. T. Revelation For The New Dispensation

### I. The Statement Of The Issue.

Whoever gives some serious and adequate thought to the question of the "value" of Old Testament Revelation for the believer in the New Dispensation, will find that he will be necessitated to first give account to himself of many related problems. In so doing he will discover that the question involves the conception of all history. For it concerns the entire work of God from beginning to end; the work of God in Jesus Christ in the unfolding of His council and the establishment of His tabernacle with man.

And, most emphatically, a proper treatment of the subject requires an answer to the question of the proper, divinely arranged relationship between the Old and New Testaments or Covenants. To see this relationship one must see the genius of Old Testament revelation.

Various questions arise when we thus look at our subject under consideration. First of all there is the term "Old Testament revelation". And again here we will needs have to define each term separately again. What is "revelation"? What is the Old Testament in distinction from the New Testament? And then again: Is "New Testament" identical with "new dispensation"? What is the difference between "Dispensation" and "Covenant" if there be any? And only

after we have a rather clear picture of this all in our mind, will we be able to give an answer to the question of the "value" of the Old Testament revelation for us who live in the new dispensation.

We purpose to write two articles on this subject. In the first article we will attempt to gain this "clear picture", and in the second we purpose to discuss the matter of the "value" that Old Testament revelation has for us upon whom the end of the ages has come.

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Let us consider these terms, which we just enumerated, one by one.

We begin with the term "revelation". To ascertain an answer to the question what revelation is, we will call attention to two matters. 1. To the usage of the term in Scripture. 2. To the conception which we must form from this all.

The terms employed in Scripture are in the Old Testament: "Galah", "Raah" and "Yadah". "Galah" means: to uncover. Gen. 35:7; I Sam. 2:27; 3:21 and Hosea 7:1. The second, "Raah" means: to see, and in Niphal: to be seen, to appear unto. Gen. 12:7; 17:1; 18:1. The third word "Yadah" means: to know, and in the intensive forms of the verb: to make known, to teach.

In the New Testament there are, among other words employed, especially two that merit our attention. The first of these is the verb "apokaluptein", with the corresponding substantive: "apokalupsis". (Compare our English: apocalypse). It means: to take the cover off, to remove that which hides an object from the eyes. Thus we have some clear examples of this usage of this verb in Rom. 1:17, 18 and in 8:18. The former referring to the taking away of that which covered the wrath of God and the latter bringing into view the glory of the new heavens and earth. And this actual uncovering is referred to by the use of the substantive in I Peter 1:13 which speaks of the revelation (apokalupseos—uncovering) of Jesus Christ in the day of His coming. However "apokaluptein" may also refer to the taking away of the covering of our minds eye. Of this we have a striking example in Eph. 1:18. Here it has the resultant meaning of illumination. There is also the word "phaneroun". It refers to the actual bringing into view, the manifestation of the thing itself. A clear case of this we have in John 17:6 and Col. 1:26.

In a general way we see in these Scripture passages the following.

1. That in all revelation there is a subject that reveals. Much of the modern psychology to the contrary is even the case among men. But it is always the case with God's revelation. God is always in the nominative case.

2. Closely related to the former is that God always



reveals an object. One may say that God reveals Himself. Never in the sense of "seeing God immediately, but in and through all the works of His hands. Revelation is always Self-revelation.

3. And also that revelation presupposes someone *to whom* God reveals. It also must have the dative case. This is man and angels, created for the very purpose of receiving this revelation.

The above does not purport to be an exhaustive statement. It only intends to be used as a working basis in our discussion.

When we turn, with what we have thus far observed, to the question of the "Old Testament revelation" we find it quite relevant to the subject. Before we ask what must be understood by Old Testament revelation we do well and ask just what is meant by Old Testament. The term in our subject evidently does not refer to the Covenant of friendship with Adam. The Old Covenant would then be that with the first Adam, while the New Testament would be that in the Second Adam. Applied to our subject we would have a discussion of the value of God's covenant with Adam for us his posterity under the Protevangel. Gen. 3:15. And then the discussion would needs center about Rom. 5:12-18.

Old Testament—refers to covenant of God during the time between the Protevangel and the coming of Christ in the flesh and His meritorious labors and His exaltation on God's right hand after He had brought about the cleansing of the sins of His own. Thus speaking of the Old Testament we must not be confused, neither identify it with the "Law and the Prophets" the "Scriptures". In the Scriptures we never read of the Old Testament" in the sense of the Scriptures. To be sure they do reveal to us the Old Covenant. But in our subject "Old Testament" is not at all the same as the "Scriptures". In fact Jesus speaking of the Scriptures has many names of them, but He never calls them the Old Testament. When He contrasts the Old and New Covenants it touches the relationship of guilty man to God. It becomes a question of His flesh and blood. Matt. 26:28; I Cor. 11:25 and Heb. 9:20ff. Christ's blood is the basis of the New Testament. And the Old Testament was also founded on blood. Ex. 24:6-8.

Thus understanding the question our thoughts are without doubt led to look for the differences of the "two covenants" Gal. 4:24. Sinai, Jerusalem which is earthly on the one hand. And Sarah, Jerusalem, the heavenly city of the living God, the new covenant, in the Mediator, Jesus, whose blood speaketh better things than Abel, (Heb. 12:24) on the other.

Around the "Old Covenant" are many laws and ordinances. Temple-ordinances they are. The ordinances governing the feast days, the Old Testament lunar calender. Of this calender Paul is speaking in

Gal. 4:10. Then there were the laws regarding cleanliness, the stranger, the eunuch; ordinances of the priesthood according to Aaron's house. The whole ritual of the ceremonial law!

In and through this ritual God revealed the Christ, who had been promised to the fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God came to Israel at Mt. Sinai and uncovered before their eyes the CHRIST! He spoke in it to Israel of "better things to come".

We believe that what we have thus far written is sufficient to give us a clear picture of what we understand, nay, what the Scriptures would have us understand with Old and New Testament.

A few remarks may also be in order as to the term "dispensation" in our subject.

Although the terms "Old and New Testaments" and "Old and New Dispensations" are closely and inseparably connected, yet they must never be confused or identified. To do this would be disastrous for the correct understanding of our subject.

Therefore just a word about the meaning of the term "dispensation" as employed in Scripture.

The Greek term for dispensation is "oikonomia". The word literally means: the governing of a house, that is, of its affairs. Thus it is employed of the stewardship, the administration amongst men. Concretely conceived it then refers to: a steward. Thus it is used in Luke 16:2 where the unjust steward is told to render an account of his stewardship.

In a figurative sense it also is used in referring to the office of the apostles. They have received a dispensation, an administration of the grace of the New Covenant in Christ Jesus. Through them the knowledge of Christ and the blessings in Him must become the conscious possession of the believers. Eph. 3:2; Col. 1:25; I Cor. 9:17.

But it also is used of God's management, arrangement of, realization of the entire work of salvation, the establishment of the covenants old and new. As such it is closely allied in meaning to the council and purpose of God. For it is really God's wise providence. Possibly we may call it His special providence, although I'm somewhat afraid of this latter term. But when I employ it I mean all God's providence which is really one causing all things to really and effectually work for the good and eternal salvation of the elect.

Thus the term is used in Eph. 1:10. It here refers to that arrangement of the successive events of time, all leading to the fulness of times, in which God will reunite all things under one head, even Christ.

There is thus understood really no "Old" dispensation! It is called old not because it is old in itself, but because of its relation to the "covenant" that it supervises and controls. And it is "new" because of its supervision, its arrangement of the "new" Covenant in Christ Jesus.

We now live in the New Covenant. We now live in the arrangement of God's wise purpose according to which in His dispensation He works all things according to the council of His will. Eph. 1:11.

We now live in the new dispensation. Christ has nailed the ordinances of the Old Covenant to the cross! And that under the dispensation of God.

The issue before which we are now faced is:

1. Not what value do the Old Testament Scriptures have for the church in the New Testament dispensation. That is certainly an allied question, but is really not the question.

2. But what value do the Old Testament ordinances now have for us today. Do the ordinances that were nailed to the cross have any value for us, now that they have been nailed to the cross? To this question we hope to give some attention in the next article.

G. L.

## — Book Review —

REV. HERMAN HOEKSEMA — *The Amazing Cross*.

183 pp. Eerdmans Publ. Co. \$2.00.

So much that is being published these days on Lenten themes is superficial and misleading. Too often the stress is laid on the external aspects of our Lord's passion, as if the things that matter most about the Christ on the cross are His "manliness", "heroism", "patience under tremendous strain", etc. In not a few Lenten books the cross of our Saviour is presented as something to be described rather than *expounded*. There is a lot of sentimentalism printed about Calvary that is thoroughly unbiblical.

Here is a book that goes to the heart of the real Lenten theme. Part I deals with the relation between our Lord's sufferings and such truths as God's judgment of the world, His judgment of the Church and the Political World-power. Part II is an excellent exposition of our Saviour's obedience. The chapter on Gethsemane, entitled "Before the Gates of Hell" is exceptionally good.

The title of the book is exceedingly appropriate. The author has exalted the *amazing grace* of our *amazing Redeemer* who died an *amazing death*, that by His *amazing resurrection* from the dead we might preach an *amazing Gospel*.

Rev. Leonard Greenway.

Christian High School  
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

## Our Own School Movement

It is quite significant that a meeting of this nature can be planned and successfully carried out, especially in the times in which we are now living.

It means that the present world-wide conflagration which has made such inroads into our thoughts and lives, has not destroyed your interest in your home problems, particularly in the education of your covenant youth. It also means that as a Protestant Reformed group you love and cherish your distinctive principles to the extent that you desire to apply them to every sphere of life and feel the need of a thoroughly Reformed training for your children, so that you are striving to have a school of your own. And even though the war efforts prevent you from erecting a school building to fully realize your purpose, you have the courage to proceed with your plans and are even laying post-war plans to be carried out in the future.

No doubt the audience this evening could be much larger, and the interest shown thus far could be more extensive. Yet the groundwork is laid so that the movement is bound to gain momentum as the work is carried on.

You realize that I speak as an observer interestedly viewing your efforts from a distance. This does place me at a disadvantage in making a speech, but does not prevent me from raising questions which you either have met or are bound to meet repeatedly in a movement of this kind. I present these questions for your consideration.

My first question may not seem to be logically the first question that would be raised, but I consider it of primary importance.

It can be stated in this form: what name do you intend to place over the portals of your new institution?

The name, if it is to have any significance at all, must express the true essence of the institution in distinction from all others. It must serve as a seal of the fundamental principles underlying the institution, and must carry those principles on into the generations to come. As soon as a school does not live up to its name it has no right of further existence under that name. We might ask: what do you mean when you speak of "our own school"?

It is questionable whether this matter was always given its just consideration when our present Christian schools were organized. I recall seeing the inscription over one of our present Christian schools which read: Christian and Grammar School. Possibly the founders of that institution did not approve of calling it a Christian Grammar School because they could not conceive of such a thing as "Christian grammar". Whatever the case may be, the name is

The name of your school must express what it is.

quite expressive of the character of much of the instruction in our present schools.

From our own experience we know that our present Christian schools are frequently nothing more than a school with the Bible. The sessions are opened and closed with prayer, a few hymns are sung, sometimes even of a questionable nature, there is a Bible lesson, and as for the rest the school goes over to a general routine of the day. The text books, the lessons, and possibly even the atmosphere of the schoolroom differs in nothing from any public school. In some cases the teacher knows so little of sound Reformed doctrine that she could not possibly apply it in her instruction. Particularly such subjects as history and geography are taught from the same approach as in the public schools, except that the theory of evolution is avoided. In our high school conditions are no different. There entertainment and sports even play an important role in the curriculum of the school. The high school publications, such as their annuals, carry hardly a spark of christianity in them.

In many ways our present schools give an academic training, plus a certain amount of christianity, such as might be expected in a "Christian and Grammar School". The theory of "common grace" is the underlying cause for this condition.

The question may well be asked: what do you mean when you speak of "our own schools"? You certainly do not favor a church school. Your intention is not in the least to take the responsibility of the instruction away from the parents by laying it at the door of the church. The training of the covenant child belongs with the office of believers, and we have no intention of destroying this principle. Nor is your purpose to create a school which only carries the outward distinction that it is open only to Protestant Reformed children and boasts a teacher's staff of persons who can prove their membership in some Protestant Reformed Church. That mere outward distinction does not make it a school of "our own".

We want a Christian School, call it by whatever name you deem proper, that is based on sound doctrine, where the instruction is permeated with the Truth of the Word of God. Basic Christian instruction is more than a daily Bible lesson, more than a Christian atmosphere, and more than an occasional application of some moral axioms. A passing remark or a story with a Christian moral applied to the lesson of the day, does not make a school Christian. The instruction must be permeated with the Truth of Scripture, or it fails to meet its requirements. No teacher is fit to teach Arithmetic unless she carries in her soul the conviction that one and one are two, not simply by some natural law, but because God's ordinances govern the whole universe. She must not merely say so, but that conviction must govern all her instruc-

tion. She cannot possibly teach Geography unless she is constantly aware that she is dealing with God's earthly creation, God's world. And she has no right to teach history unless she sees in all of history the unfolding of God's eternal thoughts and purposes, even the development of His covenant.

In one word, also in the sphere of instruction, the question is always: God or Baal. We must absolutely maintain that God is God, the Sovereign and ever-blessed Lord, besides Whom there is no other. To deny Him, to ignore Him, or even to slight Him is to rear up an idol before His face. Serve Him we must, for we either love and serve Him with all that is in us, or we bend the knee to Baal. The choice is inevitable. But it must always be for God and against Baal. There is no alternative.

The name of your school must express what it is.

My next question is this: Is it imperative to have our own schools wherever possible?

I prefer to put the question in this form, rather than to ask whether it is necessary. Your presence here tonight seems to imply that you are convinced of its necessity, or at least have a definite interest in the matter. Besides, we might ask whether it is necessary when we really mean, is it worth the effort and the sacrifice? We may be counting the cost with the sole purpose of making that our main objection against it. If it is imperative we also weigh the cost, but only with the purpose of finding ways and means to gain our end.

Is it essential to the proper development of our children and to the future of our Protestant Reformed Churches? Does God demand it of us as Christian parents who cherish the unadulterated milk of the Word and desire to preserve it for ourselves and our children? We are aware of our responsibility toward ourselves as covenant parents, and toward our children as the covenant seed, the church of tomorrow. We realize that our children spend twenty-five hours of each week, for forty weeks of each year, for a period of nine to twelve years under the direct influence of the instruction of their teachers. Estimated on the basis of twelve active hours per day, this amounts to almost three years of their lives. We fully realize the import of entrusting our children to the influence of others for such a long time, especially during their most impressionable years, which mean so much to their proper development. From that aspect we ask, is it imperative to have our own schools?

In this connection the question might be raised: But is it not our duty to exert our influence on our present schools? A counter-question could be placed: How much of this has been done in the past? And in how far has this succeeded? The question may even be considered: In how far are we justified in urging our convictions upon children of parents who are

definitely opposed to those convictions?

Another question suggests itself: Is this a proper time for such an undertaking? It has been said: This should have been done immediately after our churches came into existence. Yet regardless of anything else, you cannot turn back the clock of history. Besides, there is a definite advantage to beginning now. We have had ample time and opportunity to become more thoroughly established in the truth of God's sovereign grace and more mellowed in our convictions. From that aspect this seems to be the ideal time. And as for the war that is being waged, if ever we are called to labor and to watch in prayer, to hold that which we have that no man take our crown, it is now.

A final question, then, is this: What can be done?

If you are at all convinced that it is imperative to establish a school of our own, you must continue to strive unwaveringly toward that goal. Much work must be done in many ways. Your conviction must become the conviction of all. A solid foundation must be laid that your school may truly have a right of existence, that it may be worthy of its name, and that it may be able to withstand all the winds and storms that are sure to assail it in the future.

But above all, we must all be spiritually strong enough to support such a gigantic, yet worthy undertaking. We must ever more determinedly apply our principles to our whole lives, placing God first in everything, committing our way to Him, and serving Him in all things unto the praise of His glory. If we so strive we shall not strive in vain. C. H.

\*A talk given at the Chr. School Aux. meeting, Jan. 6, 1944.

#### IN MEMORIAM

Op Maandag, 21 Februari, behaagde het den Heere uit ons midden tot Zich te nemen,

MRS. JACOBA ZOETEWEE

in den ouderdom van ruim 71 jaar.

De zuster was een getrouw lid van onze Hollandsche Vrouwen Vereeniging "Dient den Heere" en van onze gemeente alhier.

Wij mogen gelooven dat de Heere haar tot Zich nam in den ruste die er overblijft voor het volk van God, en dat zij nu jubelt voor den troon Gods en des Lams.

Moge de Heere de bedroefde kinderen en verder familie, en ons allen, trooste met Zijne genade in dit ons verlies dat haar gewin was.

Namens de Vrouwen Vereeniging,  
Ds. P. De Boer, Pres.  
Mrs. P. Kooiman, Secr.

## Tithing and Christian Stewardship

The underlying basis of christian stewardship is the fact that all things belong to God in the absolute sense of the word. God is the sole Possessor of the whole universe and all that it contains. That this is true follows from the fact that He is the Creator of all things. He conceived all His creatures in His eternal counsel and He brought them forth by the word of His power. All things, therefore, have their source in His will and are made to exist by His almighty power. And not only do all things have their origin in God's creative work but they also continue to exist because He upholds them by His omnipresent power. All things are absolutely dependent upon God for their existence, so much so that, if He would but for an infinitesimal moment withdraw His sustaining power, they would be obliterated. God's ownership is therefore an essential one because all things, which belong to Him, are wholly dependent upon Him for their existence. In this light we can understand that it is impossible for anything to exist if it does not belong to God. And thus we may also conclude that all things very really belong to God since it is impossible for anything to exist apart from Him.

Scripture teaches this absolute ownership of God on almost every page. Not only is there the clear account of the origin of all things in the first part of Genesis but there are also an almost innumerable number of texts that either state this truth in so many words or unmistakably imply the same. Notice, for example, the following: Neh. 9:6, "Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee." Ps. 24:1 "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein". Ps. 50:10-12 "For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof." Isa. 66:1 "The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?"

We consider this truth of God's absolute ownership as vital with a view to all true stewardship. It stands to reason that only he who is willing to confess this absolute ownership of God can be a steward in the true sense of the word. For stewardship most certainly precludes absolute ownership. There is indeed a relative ownership among the stewards, and therefore the Lord has given the commandment, "Thou shalt not

steal", but absolute ownership is precluded. God is not and can never be a steward because all things belong to Him; He is the Lord and Master of all things, Who may do with all His possessions whatsoever He pleases and is not accountable to anyone. And since God is the absolute Owner of all things, it must follow that man is not and can never be an owner in that same sense; he is never more than a steward, who must give an account to the Owner for all that he has done with His possessions. Now, the question is not whether man is a steward. Scripture teaches very plainly that he is. It doesn't essentially make any difference whether he will admit that or not; the fact remains that he is. Every man will some day have to give an account of his stewardship to God. The question for us, however, is whether we actually assume that position of stewardship with a view to the things that God has given us. And then we may say without fear of contradiction that only the christian can and will do this. It is for that reason that we speak of *christian* stewardship. For true stewardship implies that we confess that we possess nothing and that all things belong to God. And only the christian will do that. The principle of the natural man is adverse to this true stewardship because he always proceeds from the assumption that he is lord and master of all that he possesses. He does not recognize the living God as the Sovereign of heaven and earth nor will he acknowledge God's righteous demand that he serve Him with all that he has. The natural mind is enmity against God and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. It is not difficult to understand that this principle makes it wholly impossible for the natural man to assume the correct attitude with a view to his true position in respect to God, the world in which he lives and, more particularly, the things which he calls his own. As long as a man proceeds from the assumption that he himself is lord and master of his goods, he cannot perform his calling as steward in respect to God. No matter how honest and just he may be in the disposition of his goods, as long as he does not recognize the absolute ownership of the living God, he cannot be approved of God as a good steward and all his works are an abomination to the Lord. It is very well possible, for example, that, from the natural point of view, an atheist is a much better manager and can do far more with what he has than a christian who has the very same amount of goods; however, the fact remains that in the sight of God not the atheist but the christian is truly a steward. For all true stewardship is possible only upon the basis that God is the absolute Owner also of those things that we call our own, that it is rightfully His because He made it and upholds it, that He has the perfect right to dispose of it as He pleases and therefore to demand of us that we do with it as He commands us.

True stewardship is all comprehensive. It does not begin with the material things which God has given us but with one's self. It does not merely confess that what we have, we have received from the Lord but it also confesses that we ourselves belong to Him and that what we are, we are as the result of His will, power and grace. It is the christian's comfort that he is not his own but belongs to his faithful Saviour Jesus Christ. And Scripture tells us in I Cor. 6:20 "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's". This fact must be acknowledged first; only then can we assume the correct attitude in respect to the material things which we possess. Then we will also understand that we cannot actually give the Lord anything. David confesses this in I Chron. 29:12, 14, "Both riches and honor come to thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee."

Confessing therefore that what we have, we have received of the Lord and that which we give to Him is that which He has first given to us, we humbly acknowledge our calling to be faithful stewards over the gifts of God. And if we are truly faithful stewards, we shall contribute liberally to the support of God's Kingdom, for that is a vital part of our stewardship. We say "a part", because there is far more to our stewardship of material things than that. We have the calling to use all that God has given us in such a way that He may be glorified therein. And that is just as true of our buying and selling as it is of our giving for charity and kingdom causes. That the christian has a calling with a view to the support of the Kingdom of God ought to be apparent to all of us. We do not consider it necessary to quote a number of texts to establish this fact. Should anyone be inclined to doubt this fact, we may refer him to such chapters as II Cor. 9; Phil. 4:15-18, etc.

Now, the question often arises: how much should we set aside for the Lord? Is there a standard with which we may or must comply? In the old dispensation the Lord required tithes. A tenth part of the fruit of the land, of the corn, wine and oil, as well as a tenth part of all the flocks had to be given to the Lord, so much so that, if he would hold back any part thereof, he was robbing God. (Mal. 3:8-10).

There are many today who are of the opinion that we should adhere to this system of tithing and accept it as a standard for our giving to the Lord. And there are many things that can be said in favor of this. It has been said, for example, that if everyone



would give a tenth of his income, the church would have much more than it has at present. We are inclined to believe that this is true. Now, everyone knows his own business best, yet, if the many reports which one hears so often are true, there is reason to believe that there are many people who do not nearly approximate a tenth of their income in their giving to the Lord. We do not doubt that in many cases people give more than a tenth. However, we are also convinced that there are even more that do not give anywhere near a tenth, although they are much better able to do so, than those that give more. One often finds that those who can do the most actually do the least. In the second place, the tithe is a much better standard than that which is adopted by many, namely, to give in the light of what others give. According to this method one compares his possessions with the possessions of another, lets the other give first and then determines accordingly what he shall give. In the third place, the standard of the tithe is much better than that of many, namely, to give as little as necessary.

However there are also things to be said against tithing. Perhaps the greatest objection is that it is not only required but also not even recommended for the church of the new dispensation. No one can deny that the tithe is an old dispensational institution. The apostle Paul gives us a new standard for our giving now. He says in I Cor. 16:2, "Upon the final day of the week let everyone of you lay by him in store, as God has prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come". And in II Cor. 9:7 he says, "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."

To give as the Lord has prospered us, that is the rule.

This makes our giving a matter of conscience. The amount that we give reflects our estimation of what God has given us. It might be well to remember this because it means that if the Lord has prospered us and given us much and we give but very little for the cause of His Kingdom, we make Him a liar and find ourselves in the company of Ananias and Sapphira. We have become guilty of robbing God. We are unfaithful stewards.

Let our giving, therefore, be according as God has prospered us. And let us give freely and gladly, realizing that what we give, we have first received from God. Let us regard it as a high privilege that we may seek His Kingdom and that we may give for the cause of that Kingdom of the things which He adds unto us. Then we are faithful stewards.

H. D. W.

## IN MEMORIAM

Very unexpectedly on February 28, 1944, the Lord in His infinite wisdom took unto Himself our beloved husband, father, son and brother,

NICK A. KIMM, age 49

Though the suddenness of his departure was a great shock and we do not understand God's ways, we desire to submit humbly to His will. We are comforted to know that he knew "in whom he believed" and that our loss is his gain.

Mrs. Alice Kimm  
Willemina,  
Audrey  
Winona  
Ethel  
Clarence  
Mrs. J. R. Kimm (mother);  
Mr. and Mrs. H. Kimm  
Mrs. K. Dykema,  
Mr. and Mrs. H. Cok  
(brothers and sisters).

Manhattan, Mont.

Woensdag, 13 Maart, heeft het den Heere behaagd uit ons midden te nemen onze geliefde echtgenoot, vader en grootvader,

MR. H. ZYLSTRA

in den ouderdom van 70 jaar. Schoon wij hem missen mogen we toch gelooven dat zijn sterven hem tot gewin was, om zonde en strijd zijn Heere te dienen. Mogen zijn geengaan ons tot een spoorslag zijn om ons huis te bereiden.

Namens echtgenote en kinderen:

Mrs. H. Zylstra  
Mr. en Mrs. N. Gorter  
Mrs. en Mrs. S. Aardema  
Mr. en Mrs. P. Zylstra  
Mr. en Mrs. H. Zylstra  
Mr. en Mrs. F. Zylstra  
en 12 kleinkinderen

Doon, Iowa.

The Consistory of the Creston Protestant Reformed Church hereby wishes to express its sympathy to our fellow elder, Stephen Kuiper, in the loss of his wife

NELLIE KUIPER

who passed away on February 26, at the age of 44 years.

May our covenant God comfort the bereaved family and may they richly experience that the Lord is a strong tower in the day of trouble.

John D. de Jong, Pres.  
P. Vanden Engel, Clerk,

Grand Rapids, Mich, March 1944