

THE STANDARD

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MEDITATION

Not Here, But Risen

And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them: Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but he is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words.

Luke 24:5-8.

They remembered!

Somehow, deeply buried in their subconsciousness, these words of their Lord had been hid.

Yes, indeed, they had heard His words, spoken to them and to His disciples, while He was still in Galilee. Definitely He had told them, not simply that somehow He would have to suffer and die, but that He must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, that their leaders, the chief priests and scribes and pharisees would lay wicked hands on Him, maltreat and kill Him, and that He would rise again on the third day.

And He had enjoined them to go to Galilee, for He would go there before them!

But, although they had heard, His words at the time had not been received.

The message they conveyed was too strange, too remote from their conception and understanding, to register in their consciousness. It was so directly in conflict with their apperception of the Christ, that failed to receive it.

And they had paid no more attention to it!

Even when the dark and terrible part of this announced program had been enacted before their very

eyes, they had not remembered. For they had been in Jerusalem in "the hour." They had been witnesses of His suffering. They had followed Him to the Hill of the Skull, and had watched Him as He had appeared a helpless victim in the hands of His enemies, affixed to the terrible cross. They had listened to the jibes and sneers of spectators and passers-by, of chief priests and soldiers. They had stood by when His emancipated body was delivered into the loving hands of Joseph and Nicodemus, and they had followed in the sad and silent funeral procession on that late Friday afternoon. And, as inside the sepulchre in Joseph's garden the body had been prepared for the burial, they had watched outside, until all was finished, and the large stone had been rolled before the entrance of the grave.

And still they had not remembered!

The thing that had come to pass had been too dreadful. They were overwhelmed with a stupefying sorrow. And when they had returned from the sepulchre, to rest on the sabbath according to the commandment, it seemed to them as if all their hope had been buried with His body in Joseph's tomb!

And so, they commit the error of preparing their spices and, early in the morning of the first day of the week, making their way once more to the garden of Joseph to perform a last service of love upon the dead body of their Lord.

For, in the light of the words He had spoken to them concerning His death and concerning this third day, their returning to the grave on this early morning was a mistake.

Had they remembered His words they would now have been on their way to Galilee, with the glad expectation in their hearts to meet the risen Lord. Instead, with a crushing sorrow oppressing their soul they go to find the dead body of their beloved Master, to finish the preparations for the burial, which, as they imagined, had been all too hasty and imperfect, as they had been performed by Joseph and Nicodemus in the hour before the sabbath.

And yet even their error was committed in God's allwise providence, and under His direction.

For these women must become witnesses of the resurrection of their Lord! They must become recipients of the revelation of the risen Lord! And how could they receive the revelation of that resurrection, of that altogether marvellous resurrection on the third day, unless they first witnessed the empty grave and its wonders? O, if that resurrection of their Lord had been like that of Lazarus, they might simply have met Him, have fellowship with Him once more according to the former fashion, have served Him again, prepared His lodging and His food, spread His bed for Him. But now it was different. He had risen, yes, but not to return to them, and to resume the old mode of fellowship with them; and of their service He would be in need no more. And hence, the empty grave was an essential part of the medium through which the revelation of their risen Lord must come to them.

Even before they can begin to understand what it meant that He is risen, they must become witnesses of the fact that He is not here!

They must see the grave, the place where He lay, the wonder of the linen clothes.

They must hear the gospel of the risen Lord, proclaimed to them by a messenger from heaven in the empty tomb.

Then they may be reminded of the words which He spoke unto them, while He was still in Galilee.

And then they remember!

The Living One!

Why, pray, do ye seek Him among the dead!

The words could only serve to increase the amazement of the already perplexed women, as they stood in the empty tomb awkwardly holding in their hands the spices they had brought.

The Living One!

For this is what is emphasized by the words of the angel, as is clear from the original: Christ, whom ye seek among the dead, is the living One! He is not merely alive, but He is the living One! How, then, could death ever overpower Him? How could ye seek Him among the dead?

O, to be sure, there is a reference here to His resurrection. For as the risen Lord He is the living One in an altogether wonderful and unique sense of the word. He is not simply one of the living ones; He is not merely alive as these women were alive; He does not simply live again as once He was alive before the terrible crucifixion: He is now the Lord of life! Death has no more dominion over Him. He has life indeed, glorious, eternal life, in perfect fellowship with the Father, and on the high plane of the resurrection. In the sense in which He, as the risen Lord, is now the

living One, no one ever lived before Him in this world, not even in the first paradise, and in the original state of rectitude. And, moreover, as the living Lord He is the firstfruits of them that slept, and He will become the center of glorious life for all whom the Father gave Him. Because He lives, they all shall live also.

As the risen Lord He is the living One!

Why, then, seek ye Him among the dead?

And yet, He is the living One in still another sense. The words of the angel convey a deeper meaning. He is not only the living One now, in and after His resurrection, but He is the living One in Himself eternally. Is He not the Son of God, the only begotten of the Father, Who is eternally in His bosom? And is He, as such, not the living One, in an altogether unique, transcendent sense of the word? Does He not, in distinction from all creatures, have life in Himself? Yea, did He not declare Himself to be the life? He is the living One in the manger of Bethlehem, though He appears there in the likeness of sinful flesh. He is the living One when He walks among us in the form of a servant. He is the living One when He reaches down into the depth of our death on the accursed tree. . . .

How, then, could they now seek Him among the dead?

O, to be sure, until this moment there had seemed nothing absurd in their going to the grave on that third day of the week, taking their spices with them. For, as far as their consciousness was concerned, He was not the living One. He was dead, they thought. Death had swallowed Him up, they felt. They had not been mindful of His word. And so, they came to the grave, not, indeed, to seek the living One, but to seek the dead body of their beloved Lord. They sought one that had been overcome by death, as their spices plainly testified!

Yet, they had known, and now they were reminded of the truth, that He is, indeed, the living One.

How absurd, then, to seek Him here among the dead and that, too, as one that would be holden of death!

For, how could He be overcome of death?

When He, Who has life in Himself, Who is the life; He, Who had power to lay down His life, and power to take it again; He, Who is the living One, the Lord of life;—when He enters into death, how can He ever be overcome by the power of death? How could He ever be permanently shackled, or even for a moment be fettered by the chains of death? How could the result of the Life entering into death ever be anything else than that death would be swallowed up in victory?

Why seek ye the living One among the dead?

Is He not the life, and, therefore, also the Resurrection?

He died, yes, but as the living One!

He broke the bands of death!
The mighty Lord!

He is not here!
But He is risen!
Marvellous fact!

For, a fact the resurrection of the Lord is indeed. And the fact of the resurrection is plainly expressed in the words of the angel: He is not here, but He is risen!

No, the resurrection of the Lord on the third day does not mean that somehow His Spirit still lives, that He lived again in the minds of the disciples, that they were mindful of His wonderful instruction and of His marvellous life and work, and that as the living Lord in that sense they carried Him into the world on the wings of the gospel they preached. . . .

For had that been the meaning of the resurrection, He would have been still there, in the grave of Joseph on that early morning of the third day.

Yet, He is not here!

The resurrection of the Christ of God does not mean that He Himself lives in His spirit, which He commended to the Father in His dying moments on the cross, and that now He lives a life of glory in paradise. For had that been the idea of the resurrection, the body of the Lord must needs still have been there in Joseph's tomb so few hours after His death on the accursed tree.

Yet, He is not here. . . .

The resurrection on the third day does not even mean that another, a new and essentially different body was created for Him: the resurrection is no new creation, for then He must needs have been there on that early morning of the first day of the week.

However, He is not here!

Yes, indeed, He had been there in Hades, in the sepulchre of Joseph, He, the living One, the Lord of life. He had been there in the body that had been nailed to the cross. But He was there no more. The place His body had occupied was empty. And the explanation of His absence from the grave must surely not be found in the absurd story the soldiers had been bribed to spread that they, Roman soldiers, had slept while on guard, and that while they slept they had been witnesses that the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus! Nor is the explanation of His being in the grave no more that His body had already returned to the dust, for it was only the third day after His death, and God's holy one would not be permitted to see corruption. But He is risen!

Risen indeed!

Risen in the same body in which He had descended into the depth of death.

He is not here, but He is risen!

The resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is not a dream, nor an invention, nor a mere idea but a fact!

But it is more than that: though a fact, it also lies beyond the mere realm of facts. It belongs to those things which eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard, and have never arisen in the heart of man. It is a wonder!

He is not here, but He is risen!

Is there not a more comprehensive, a far deeper significance in these words of the angel than simply that He is no more in the grave, and that He departed from the grave by way of returning to life? Or else, why does not the angel tell these women at once where He is, that they may go and find Him?

Ah, but He is not here!

And does not that mean more than that He is not in the grave? Or is not the grave the ultimate, silent, but most powerless witness of what we are, and of the sphere of our present existence? Does not Hades encompass our present life on all sides? Does it not testify to the fact that we are in the midst of death, and that our life is "nothing but a continual death?" Does not the grave represent the corruption, the mortality, the weakness, the dishonour, the earthiness, the inevitable death of our life in this present death? . . .

He is not here!

He was here! For did He not come in the likeness of sinful flesh, even though He was without sin? And in that likeness was He not with us in the midst of death, mortality, weakness, corruptibility, shame? And did He not assume the image of the earthy, He, the Lord of heaven?

But He is here no more!

He is risen!

Nay, do not inquire where He is. Do not go forth to seek Him. For the inquiry would be foolish, and the effort would be vain. He is here no more. He is risen. He did not return to our sphere of corruption, and mortality, and weakness, and shame, and earthiness: He went on! He went into the sphere of immortality and incorruption, of strength and honor and glory, of the heavenly. With Him mortality has put on immortality, corruption incorruption, and the image of the earthy was replaced by the image of the heavenly!

Death is swallowed up in victory!

Do not try to find Him, He will come to you!

Come to the women, indeed, when He appears to them, to assure them that He lives!

Come to us in the Spirit, that we may live through Him!

Come to us in the final resurrection, that we may be where He is!

O, blessed resurrection!

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EDITORIALS

Conscience

The passage we last quoted from Romans is interesting with respect to our subject for several reasons, which we do not intend to discuss here, but which may be briefly mentioned.

1. The conscience of the Gentiles is mentioned here in close connection with "the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." 2:5. Of this revelation of righteous judgment the entire context speaks. God will render every man according to his deeds: tribulation and anguish upon every soul that doeth evil, glory, honor and peace to all that do good, Jews or Gentiles. Those that have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law, and those that have sinned without the law shall perish without the law. It is with a view to this judgment of God "in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men," vs. 16, that reference is here made to the "conscience" of the Gentiles.

2. It is also of interest that there is, according to this passage, a close relation between "conscience" and "the work of the law written in their hearts." The Gentiles have not the law, i.e. they do not have a special revelation of a code of laws, they live without the scope of the revelation God gave to His people Israel. But they do "by nature" the things of the law, and they are a law unto themselves. This does not mean that they do good and keep the law of God, but that they distinguish between good and evil, and in a formal sense arrange their lives according to the broad lines of the law of God. And the apostle explains this from the fact that they have "the work of the law written in their hearts." They do not have the law in their hearts, for that would mean that they love the law of God. But its ground work is engraven in their ethical makeup, so that they know what is good and evil in a moral sense. If the question is asked: how is this "work of the law" written in man's heart, the answer must, no doubt, be: a. By God's revelation in creation and providence. b. By a general testimony of the Holy Spirit in connection with and through this revelation. And "conscience" is connected with this "work of the law."

3. However, it is also evident from the passage that "conscience" is not the same as this consciousness and knowledge of good and evil in the Gentiles. It could not exist without it, but it is not identical with it. It is an additional testimony, a witness that is based upon this "work of the law" written in their

CONTENTS

	Page
MEDITATION	
NOT HERE, BUT RISEN	321
Rev. H. Hoeksema	
EDITORIALS —	
CONSCIENCE	324
SEPARATION OF CHRIST'S TWO NATURES	325
BENEDEN ALLE CRITIEK	326
Rev. H. Hoeksema	
THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE	
EXPOSITION OF THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM	327
Rev. H. Hoeksema	
ISRAEL'S DELIVERANCE UNDER DEBORAH AND BARAK	330
Rev. G. M. Ophoff	
DE KONING VAN 'T HEELAL	333
Rev. G. Vos.	
REGARDING THE UNIONS	336
Consistory of Holland, Michigan	
GEEN PLAATS DES BEROUWS	338
Rev. P. Vis	
KERKNIEUWS	340
Mr. S. De Vries	
DID GOD SUFFER IN THE SACRIFICE OF HIS SON?	342
Rev. C. Hanko	

hearts, but which is not the same as the latter. It is plainly a judgment that is passed upon one's acts after they have been committed ("sequent" conscience), a judgment that is in agreement with, that joins itself to the "work of the law" written in his heart. The Revised Version brings this out a little more clearly than the Authorized Version: "in that they shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness *therewith*, and their thoughts *one with another* accusing or else excusing *them*."

It seems then that, according to this passage, conscience is awareness of and agreement with a judgment which God passes upon every act of man, and which He inscribes in his heart in connection with the "work of the law" written in his heart.

Of course, with believers this judgment of God upon their acts after they are performed, is a judgment in the sphere of Christ, and they are aware of this judgment and appropriate it through faith. Hence, it happens that viewing and knowing themselves in the light of the fuller revelation of God through Christ, and by the grace of His Spirit, they not only see much more sin in themselves than the natural man, but they also willingly take God's side in judgment, condemn themselves, hate themselves, repent in dust and ashes. But hence, it also happens, that, though their own "conscience" accuses them and condemns them, as they are outside of Christ, their conscience in Christ through faith justifies them. Moreover, they are ingrafted into Christ, sanctified unto good works, and Christ bears fruit in and through them. And their "conscience" bears witness with the gospel and the Spirit of Christ of their joy in God, and their earnest desire to walk in all good works.

And thus the apostle speaks of his conscience as bearing him witness in the Holy Ghost, Rom. 9:1. And he writes that "the end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned, I Tim. 1:5. Love out of a good conscience is, in this case, love that carries away the approval of the gospel and of the Spirit of Christ, and a "good conscience" with respect to love is awareness of this approval. To hold the faith in a good conscience is, therefore, the Christian's calling, I Tim. 1:19. And a pure conscience, in which the mystery of faith must be held, is a conscience that is not defiled by strange doctrines, but listens to the testimony of the gospel through the Spirit of Christ. I Tim. 3:9.

There are a good many more questions that might be discussed. Is conscience infallible? What is a "weak conscience?" Why may something be sin for a man with a "weak conscience" though objectively it is not sin? etc. etc.

But I have already written more on this subject than I originally intended.

I merely meant to make a few suggestions to indi-

cate the direction a discussion on this matter by the Men's Society of Creston ought to follow.

And I hope that in this one respect I have been of service to them.

H. H.

Separation of Christ's Two Natures?

I was surprised to find, in *The Banner* of March 24, 1944, a statement by Prof. D. H. Kromminga to the effect that Christ *could* sin. The statement is made in answer to a question sent to him, and we quote it here in full:

In the discussion of which our brother makes mention opinion was divided. He was perfectly correct in taking the position that Christ *could* sin according to His human nature. If we view the human nature apart from His divine nature or Person it certainly can fall into sin, as our own case in Adam plainly shows. Moreover, we sorely need this human peccability of Christ in order to give real meaning to His temptation. In that temptation, for instance, by the devil in the wilderness at the beginning of His public ministry during and at the end of those forty days of fasting, He had to make good what Adam spoiled when he yielded to the temptation by the devil which came to him through Eve. And that was by no means the only temptation to which our Saviour was subjected in the days of His flesh, for we read that at its end the devil departed from Him "for a season" (Luke 4:13). This great temptation and all the others, recorded or not, seem to lose their meaning and reality if we assume that there was not a possibility of sin involved. And if those temptations were not fully real and very really withstood and overcome by our Saviour, how, then, can He have made good what our first father spoiled, and how can He have satisfied the demands of divine justice and the claims of God upon our human nature in our stead? So it would seem that the real reality of our redemption and of His substitution for us hinges upon this question.

Let me add at once that Prof. Kromminga in the next paragraph repudiates the position taken in the above quotation, and states the very opposite, and again I quote him:

"However, not less can and must be said on the other side. Our brother was also perfectly correct when he *limited* the possibility of Christ's sinning strictly to His human nature. And we must not overlook the fact that in His Person He was and is divine, God Himself, the second Person in the Holy Trinity. It is utterly inconceivable, how our human nature in personal union with the divine could have fallen". . . .

And he concludes his answer to this particular question with the following statement:

"It will be best to recognize the fact frankly that thus the arguments counterbalance each other, and that we have to leave the question just what it is: a question on which it is profitable to meditate, provided we honor and respect the mystery in which the answer lies hidden away from us."

Now, with all respect for the position that the union of the two natures in Christ is a profound mystery, which we shall never be able to fathom, it is nevertheless my conviction that the first paragraph we quoted from Prof. Kromminga's answer should never have been written, and that we must hold that it was absolutely impossible in the ethical sense that Christ should sin. To take the opposite position simply presupposes the separation of the human nature in Christ from the divine, and from the Person of the Son of God. Prof. Kromminga knows as well as I do that the Church from a very early date expressed the mystery of the relation between the two natures of Christ in the formula: "without change, without mixture, without division, without separation." This formula does not, and did not intend to, solve the mystery of the two natures, but it, nevertheless, delineated the proper limits within which believers may properly speak of and meditate on this mystery. But the first paragraph of Prof. Kromminga's answer moves beyond the boundaries fixed by Chalcedon, and postulates the separation of the two natures. The first part of Prof. Kromminga's answer implies the error that is known in *Dogmengeschichte* as Nestorianism, "which so emphasized the duality of the natures, and the continued distinction between the human and the divine in Christ, as to lose sight of the unity of person". . . . Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, II, 65.

And thus the professor needlessly involves himself in contradictions. For when, in the next paragraph, he states "it is utterly inconceivable, how our human nature in personal union with the divine could have fallen," he flatly contradicts the first statement "that Christ *could* sin according to His human nature." For the human nature of Christ was never separated from

the divine Person, and the Person of the Son of God could not sin in human nature. But in the first paragraph Prof. Kromminga plainly conceives of the human nature of Christ as separated from the divine Person. This he may not do.

He should recant that first paragraph.

H. H.

Beneden Alle Critiek

Dat is mijn oordeel over de jongste tirade van den heer Van Halsema tegen mij in *De Wachter* van April 11, 1944. Enkele vrienden vestigden mijn aandacht op het artikel, en van een dier vrienden ontving ik het nummer van *De Wachter*, waarin het voorkwam.

Het was natuurlijk mijne bedoeling om er op te antwoorden. Doch toen ik het stuk zelf gelezen had, zag ik er van af om te repliceren. Mijne redenen hiervoor zijn de volgende:

1. Het stuk heeft hoegenaamd geen positieven inhoud. Het zegt absoluut niets.
 2. Het is eene aaneenrijging van persoonlijke aantijgingen en hatelikheden, een vischwijf waardig.
 3. Zou ik er op antwoorden, dan zou ik van de *Standard Bearer* en vuilnisbak moeten maken. *De Wachter* moge zich voor dat doel laten gebruiken, het is beneden de waardigheid van ons blad.
 4. De heer Van Halsema openbaart zoo groote onkunde aangaande onze bedoeling en ons streven, dat ik het eene hopelooze zaak acht om hem de oogen te openen.
 5. Geen weldenkend mensch zal zijne goedkeuring hechten aan het schrijven van den heer Van Halsema. Wie 't wel doet is mij geen antwoord waard.
- 't Stuk is beneden alle critiek.
'k Wil er zelfs niet eens mee spotten.

H. H.

— NOTICE —

Young men desiring to prepare for the ministry of the Word in our Churches, and therefore seeking admittance into our Theological School are requested to appear at the next meeting of the Theological School Committee on the evening of May 22, at 8 o'clock on the First Protestant Reformed Churches of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Applicants must present a certificate of membership and recommendation from their own consistory and a certificate of health from a reputed physician.

The Theological School Committee.

The Triple Knowledge

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART TWO OF MAN'S REDEMPTION

Lord's Day XII

3.

Christ Our Chief Prophet

Thus far we saw that the Lord God had formed the first man Adam in such a way, and placed him in such a relation to Himself, that he could function as God's officebearer, as His friend-servant in the midst of the earthly creation. We called attention, too, to the three-fold implication of this office of man: he was prophet to know his God rightly, and to glorify Him in all things and before all creation; he was priest, in order that he might consecrate himself and all things in love to the Most High; and he was king, in order that all things might serve him, and he might serve his God. God's Name must be glorified, God's will must be done, God's kingdom must be established on earth, and His sovereignty must be acknowledged, also through the first Adam. Finally, we paid more particular attention to man's calling as God's prophet, noticed that through his disobedience and fall he became nothing but a prophet of the devil, loving the darkness and hating the light, and demonstrated that a continuous line of false prophets developed from fallen man, a line that will culminate in the false prophet pictured in the book of Revelation.

However, all this does not destroy or frustrate the counsel of the Most High, but must serve its realization. It is true, by willful disobedience man violated God's covenant, and fell away from his high estate of rectitude, so that he, and not God, is the author of sin. But this must not tempt us to deny that God is the Most High, and that He does whatsoever He pleases, even when the first man falls, violates the covenant, and becomes a servant of Satan. For even though it was, no doubt, the purpose of the devil to silence forever the voice of true prophecy, to change the truth into the lie, and the praise of God from man's mouth into blasphemy, yet God's purpose was the revelation of His greater glory, and His counsel must stand. He had anointed His own prophet from before the foundation of the world. The Son was ordained from eternity to become flesh, that He might stand at the head of a great congregation, and declare unto us the Father,

and reveal His glory, in such fulness and beauty as the first Adam would never have been able to conceive. He was anointed to do this antithetically, over against a world that loves the lie and walks in darkness, saving out of that world a people that in eternal glory would with Him and through Him declare the work of Him that called them out of darkness into His marvellous light. The work of the devil and the rebellion of the first man do not frustrate the purpose of God, but must serve His good pleasure to make room for the coming of the Messiah, the anointed of God, as the chief Prophet.

The confession of the Church, as expressed in the twelfth Lord's Day of our Heidelberg, that Christ is "ordained of God the Father, and anointed with the Holy Ghost, to be our chief Prophet and Teacher," is based on Holy Writ. As such He was announced in the old dispensation by Moses in Deut. 18:15-22: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken; according to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. But the prophet which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou shalt say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him."

It was necessary to quote the entire passage from Deuteronomy, in order to make plain that this passage does not speak of Christ as the chief prophet exclusively, but rather refers to the entire line of prophets that, in the old dispensation, declared the Word of God unto the people of Israel. This is evident, first of all from the context of this passage. The people are warned that, when they have come into the land of promise, they shall not do after the abominations of the heathen, with their divinations, observers of times, enchanters, witches, charmers, consultants of familiar spirits, wizards and necromancers. They shall not turn to these in order curiously to inquire into secret things. For the secret things are for the Lord their God, but the

revealed things are for them and for their children. And these the Lord will declare unto them through His prophet. And although it is true that the text speaks in the singular of the Prophet, and that, therefore, ultimately the reference is to the Christ, we would make a mistake if we would apply it exclusively to Him, and failed to include the entire succession of prophets that preceded Him. This is evident, too, from the last part of this passage, in which the people are taught to distinguish between the true and the false prophet. For false prophets will arise among them, men that pretend to speak in the name of the Lord, but who have not been anointed by the Most High, and in whose mouth the word of the Lord is not found; and they shall speak the lie, and tempt the people to apostatize from the living God. They must, therefore, distinguish between the true and the false prophet. And they may do this by applying this test, that the word of the Lord, spoken through His prophet, will surely come to pass, while the word of the false prophet shall fail. The latter they must not heed, neither need they be afraid of him.

Yet, on the other hand, there can be no doubt that these words of Moses refer also, have reference chiefly and centrally to Christ. For Christ is not only the culmination of the whole line of Old Testament prophets, the One to Whom they all point, but He it is also that spoke the Word of God in them and through them to the people of God of the old dispensation. Without Him they could not have been prophets. They spoke because His Spirit was in them. I Pet. 1:12. All through the old dispensation, from Abel to the last of the prophets, it was He who "fully revealed unto us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption." True, the Word had as yet not become flesh, and did not yet speak to us of heavenly things in personal union with our nature. This had to wait until the fulness of time. But He was anointed to be our chief Prophet from before the foundation of the world, and He began to function in that capacity from the beginning of history.

He functioned as such through visions and dreams, through types and shadows, through Moses and all the prophets, as well as directly in the revelation of the Angel of the Lord. In all the prophets He was the speaking Subject, the faithful Witness in all the witnesses, the Servant of Jehovah in all the servants. Always He is our chief Prophet. This is the reason why Deut. 18, though having reference also to all the prophets of the old dispensation, nevertheless speaks of Him. This is the reason, too, why the prophets of the Old Testament frequently speak as if they identify themselves with the person of the Christ. This is true, no doubt, of many of the psalms. It is emphatically true of Isaiah. Note the following: "Listen, O Isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The Lord

hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me; And said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. Then I said, I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God. And now, saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength. And he said, Is it a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth. Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and His Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see thee and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee." Isa. 49:1-7.

Or attend to the following passage: "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth me morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord God hath opened mine ears, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. For the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord God will help me; who is he that shall condemn me?" Isa. 50:5-9.

Evidently, passages like the above are not applicable in all their implication to the prophet. He speaks as he does, only because it is Christ speaking in and through Him.

Nor need there be any doubt about this frequent identification of Christ with the subject of the Old Testament prophet. That it is the Christ that speaks in Isa. 61:1-3, for instance, is directly proved in the New Testament. We read there: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound: to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint to them that mourn in Zion,

to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." To be sure these words also refer to the prophet himself. But they were not fulfilled in him. Their fulfillment must be found in Christ. And in Luke 4:16-21 we find the direct proof of this statement. For there we read that the Lord Jesus in the synagogue of Nazareth read this passage from the book of Isaiah, or part of it, "and closed the book, and he gave it again unto the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." When *the Lord* had read these words, they were fulfilled, not before. For He, and not Isaiah, was the real Subject that spoke in them.

The same is evident from a comparison of Isa. 8:18 and Heb. 2:13. In the former passage the prophet is speaking concerning himself. He appears in the midst of wicked Jerusalem together with his family and a few disciples, and declares: "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts which dwelleth in mount Zion." But from Heb. 2:13 we learn that it was not Isaiah, but the Lord Himself to Whom these words of the prophet have reference in their final meaning. He it is that is represented as having spoken them.

In the same chapter of the Hebrews, as a proof that Christ is not ashamed to call His people brethren, the words of Ps. 22:22 are quoted as being spoken directly by the Lord: "Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." Heb. 2:12. Many more quotations might be offered to show that the real Subject in all the prophets of the old dispensation was the Christ, the chief Prophet of God. All this corroborates the statement that the Prophet referred to in Deut. 18 is centrally none other than the promised Messiah.

And the New Testament clearly proves that this position is correct. For, first of all, we read several times in the gospel narratives that Moses spoke of the Christ. And this was generally known and admitted. When Phillip informs Nathanael about the Christ, he says: "We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." John 1:46. To the unbelieving Jews the Lord says: "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me." John 5:45, 46. Hence, the Jews expected the great Prophet. The Samaritan woman knew "that Messiah cometh which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us

all things." John 4:25. The carnal Jews of Galilee, when they had seen the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, want to take Jesus by force to make Him a king, saying: "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." John 6:14. The sojourners to Emmaus speak "concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people." Luke 24:19. And when the Lord would explain to them the necessity of the suffering of this Christ concerning whom they were having their discourse, He begins "at Moses and all the prophets," and expounds unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

But the words of Deut. 18 are also directly quoted and applied to the Lord as the chief Prophet. Thus in Acts 3:22, 23: "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." And Stephen, too, quotes this passage before the Jewish counsel: "This is that Moses which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear." Acts 7:37.

Christ, therefore, according to the testimony of all Scripture, is, indeed, our chief Prophet and Teacher, the true Subject in all the prophets, the One that declares the name of God unto His brethren, and reveals unto us the full counsel of redemption. He is the same as that Wisdom that is speaking in Prov. 8, Who was "set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." He is identical with that Wisdom who "hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars: she hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she also furnished her table. She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the high places of the city, Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled. Forsake the foolish and live; and go in the way of understanding." Prov. 9:1-6.

And as He functioned in the old dispensation speaking through and in the prophets, so He came personally in the fulness of time, to dwell among us, and speak to us face to face and mouth to mouth. For "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." John 1:14. And "no man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." John 1:18. He speaks, and is able to speak, of heavenly things, for he is the one "that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven." He is the light of the world, that shines in the dark-

ness, and they that follow him shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. John 3:19; 8:12; 12:35, 36, 46. He is the true and faithful witness, who receives not testimony from men, but whom the Father Himself bears witness as being sent from Him. John 5:32ff. He speaks the words of eternal life, and His words are spirit and life. John 6:63, 68. His doctrine is not His own, but the Father's Who sent Him, and if any man will do the will of God, he will surely acknowledge that Christ's doctrine is of God. For "he that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory, but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him." John 7:16-18. And He speaks the things which He has seen with the Father. John 8:38. And He always glorifies, not Himself, but the Father. John 17:4. Indeed, "God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." Heb. 1:2.

H. H.

Israel's Deliverance Under Deborah and Barak

Moab was subdued under the hand of Israel. The deliverer through whom the Lord had wrought was Ehud. The victorious achievement of Israel's faith was followed by a rest that lasted eighty years. "And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, when (and) Ehud was dead." It seems to be indicated in this verse that the eighty years of rest were the years of Ehud's government or nearly so. There was rest in the land only as long as the people obeyed God. Obedience was maintained through the effort of the judge. The passing of the judge was followed by open apostacy and thus also by new oppression. It is not likely that, after apostacy had set in, the periods of rest for long continued undisturbed. The language of the above-cited verse must thus be understood to connect the cessation of rest with Ehud's death.

The adversary whom God now stirred up against Israel was not a foreigner but a native; he was "Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor." We meet with this same pagan power in the eleventh chapter of the book of Joshua. Joshua had waged war with a Jabin, king of Hazor and his confederates, all the heathen kings of northern Palestine. They had formed a formidable combination, a vast multitude, even as the sand that is upon the seashore with horses and

chariots very many." "The Lord delivered them into the hand of Israel." The enemy was smitten until not one of them remained, so it is related. The entire league of powers was broken up at that time. Hazor, its capital, was destroyed as were also the other cities of the confederacy.

And yet some hundred fifty years later "Jabin, king of Hazor" again stands before us on the page of Holy Writ, a foe mightily oppressing the children of Israel (Jud. 4:3). Thus Hazor had been rebuilt and had again become a strong kingly capital, the seat of a military power with a standing army equipped with nine hundred chariots of iron (vs. 4). And the official title of the chief ruler of this re-established pagan kingdom was Jabin. The captain of his host was Siseria, "which dwelt in Harosheth of the gentiles," *"Harosheth"* from the Hebrew root *charash*, the smith. Thus the name suggests its connection with iron chariots. It was the place where iron was worked. Doubtless it had its site west of the Jordan near the foot of Carmel, while Hazor was situated on the road that led from Lake Merom to Zidon. From neither of these cities, it must be, could the movements of Israel toward Tabor be easily observed.

That the Canaanites, in process of time, found opportunity to re-establish themselves as a military power in northern Canaan finds its explanation only in Israel's disloyalty to God. In violation of the command of God, the people of Israel had concluded a covenant with the heathen and, according to the articles of this covenant, accepted them as their co-habiters in God's country. They reasoned that it was the part of wisdom to solicit the friendship of the heathen by intermarriages and by the acknowledgement of their religion. So they married with Amorites and Hivites. Peace came. Their position in Canaan was now safe, so they imagined. But little by little the old inhabitants of the land re-built and re-fortified the cities that Joshual had destroyed. It was plain that they might be preparing for war,—plain to all but to the Hebrews. They could see no cause to be alarmed. They even remained confident when, at Harosheth of the gentiles, smiths were industriously building chariots of iron. Perhaps their worldly affairs had so engrossed their attention that they did not even know what was going on their at Harosheth or, knowing, thought it bad policy even to investigate. Why do a thing suggestive to the heathen that they were not being trusted and so disturb the peace. Then it came to pass—the rush of the chariots and the onslaught of Canaanite forces, fierce and irresistible. "And the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin, king of Hazor." At least in the north, Israel groaned under the heel of the cruel oppressor. The servitude that followed lasted twenty years. The state of affairs in the north country is vividly described in the song of Deborah. "In the

days of Shamgar the son of Anoth, in the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through crooked ways. The villages ceased. . . . then was war in the gates" (Jud. 5:6-8).

The picture is that of a land enfeebled by hostile oppression. At least in the north the Hebrews were compelled to pay heavy tribute. Crops were assessed before they were harvested. The entire north country was overrun by thieving and murderous Canaanite spoilers and tax-gatherers. They roamed the highways, crowded the villages, and stormed the gates of the walled towns, so that the villages were deserted and those who must travel chose the tortuous bypaths of the mountains and the dales in order to elude the tyrant and his henchmen. There was safety only within the gates. Water had to be procured outside the city. With the enemy in the land, this water-drawing was a dangerous task. As the crowd was great and as every one wanted to get away first, there was no lack of contention among the Hebrews in the places of drawing water, chap. 5:11.

The misery of the people was indeed great what with their fields and rural districts devastated and rendered unsafe. What is more, there was not a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel, 5:8. The will to resist, a military virtue, born of a common faith in Jehovah, was completely lacking among the male population. There was no spirit left in them. Resistance in the open field there was none anywhere. At the mere sight of a Canaanite, the Hebrew, on the highway, in the field—the men as well as the women—would scamper, like a frightened doe, to the nearest place of concealment. Doubtless, during no other oppression was the lack of manly daring so amazingly conspicuous. The truth of these statements is born out by the following consideration. There is the case of Shamgar. His struggles were with the Philistines, who, in the period of Canaanitish oppression, harassed Israel in the south. "He also delivered Israel," but as unassisted. No man came to his aid. He stood quite alone. The one deed recorded of him—his slaying of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox-goad—anticipates the exploits of Samson. That was a remarkable demonstration of faith. But it was the faith of a solitary figure. Who knows but what his brethren, in their cowardice, may have frowned upon his doing. Such, at least, was to be the experience of Samson. Deborah uses the achievement of Shamgar to enhance by contrast the glory of the divine deliverance from the Canaanite oppression. She says in effect, "Such was your thralldom when Shamgar lived, but now consider what the Lord hath done!" (It cannot be, as some interpreters insist, that Shamgar wrought during the eighty years rest procured by Ehud. For during Ehud's days, such misery cannot have been visited upon Israel).

Another hero of faith, whose name appears in the "song" is Jael, not to be identified with the Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite, and the slayer of Sisera. The man Jael, too, seems to have been a hero without a following.

Finally, there is the reserve of Barak. Though he readily answered Deborah's call to arms, he refused to set out upon the venture, unless she go with him. He said to her, "If thou wilt go with me, than I will go, but if thou wilt not go with me, than I will not go" (chap. 4:8). His faith was equal to the proposed undertaking but only as supported by the inspiration of the one woman upon whom he must so heavily lean. The best of men in Israel, in this critical period, were low in spiritual vitality. And this time the Lord chose to revive their drooping spirits by His word as publicly proclaimed by a woman, despite the fact that, according to His own ordinance, the man is the head of the woman; the sphere of influence of the woman is the domestic circle, where all her energies are needed; and despite the fact that, in the New Testament Scriptures, His command is to the effect that in public, on the meetings for public worship, the woman shall be seen but not heard. Why then, in the case of Deborah, this radical departure from the norm if not to cover with reproach the spiritual lethargy, the state of shameful inaction, of the men?

Deborah was a prophetess—Hebrew *nabia* from *nava* to overflow—thus a fountain of praise and as such a spokesman of God and for Him, the inspired agent of the Spirit, who proclaimed God's Word and declared His greatness, glory and marvelous works of the past, present and future. It may be doubted whether the rendering, "wife of Lapidoth," can be received as a proper translation of the original. *Lapidoth* is from the Hebrew *lapid* meaning *lamp, flame*. Perhaps we therefore should interpret, "Deborah, a woman of a fiery spirit," considering that she was like a spiritual flame for Israel, instrumentally kindling, through her prophetic utterances, the flagging spirits of God's people. Of all the judges with the exception of Samuel, she alone was also endowed with the prophetic spirit. It was as prophetess that she was judging Israel at that time.

In vain do we look for a definite statement of the tribe to which she belonged. That she dwelt in Mount Ephraim, under a palm tree that was called by her name, would seem to indicate that she was a daughter of Ephraim. Yet some have ventured the view that she belonged to the tribe of Issachar, spent her youth in some village of this tribe, but, as her purpose matured, was compelled to seek a place of safety among the hills between Bethel and Rama, and that here under a palm tree she continued to prophesy and judge. This is certain that, at the time she sent and called Barak, she had already been active as prophet and

judge for several years. Her song furnishes us with a clue to the content of her discourse. "Lord, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchedst out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water. The mountains melted from before the Lord, even that Sinai from before the Lord, the God of Israel." Like every true prophet of God from Moses on she founded her admonition on Israel's history. And with reason. This history is a record of those marvelous doings of God—of the wonders of His grace—through which he brought Israel into being as a nation.

It manifests most wonderfully, does this history, that Jehovah constitutes the sole foundation of Israel's national existence, and that therefore, in choosing "new gods", Israel rejects his very Maker and Sustainer, the God of his salvation, which had brought him out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage to Mount Sinai and led him from there on into the promised land of his abode. Where was there another nation to which this occurred? "Hear O ye kings," cried the prophetess, "give ear, O ye princes: I will sing unto the Lord; I will sing to the Lord God of Israel." For Israel's sake, God came down from on high. And the creature, knowing its Lord, trembled, not only the earth but even Sinai, the firm. And the brazen heavens of the desert, losing their dryness, dropped water for His people.

Yet, despite his indebtedness to Jehovah, Israel chose new gods, and in this vile doing laid the foundation of all his woes and also of his present misery. "Then was war in the gates. . . ." For Him they had forsaken. Let Israel return to the Lord, and purge his land from every heathen taint. Then will he be free once more. So did she plead for a return to the Lord and raise her voice in passionate threatening against idolatry. Gradually her place of residence became a seat of justice and the center of reviving hope. Those who longed for righteous administration came to her; and the true fearers of Jehovah gathered about her. "And she judged Israel at that time." Finally, at the opportune time, when the dark spell that held the faithful had been broken, she sent and called Barak out of Kadesh-naphtali and thus turned to the tribes—Zebulun and Naphtali—in the heart of whose territory the tyrant had entrenched himself. God had spoken to her and she now imparts to Barak the divine communication, the Lord's plan of action. "Hath not the Lord God of Israel commanded saying, Go and draw toward Mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun? And I—the Lord—will draw unto thee to the river Kishon, Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and multitude; and I will deliver him into thy hand." "Arise Barak, and lead thy captivity captive," she said to him, seeing that he wavered.

That he went only after she promised to go with him, does not bespeak a lack of trust in God or inordinate fear of the adversary. But it may betoken a wavering faith in need of support. He had need of her presence at the scene of action to stamp the undertaking as divine for the sake of the tribes he must summon. He feared that they would readily respond only if they perceived that it was truly the prophetess of God who called them. As a matter of information, she also told him that the undertaking would not be for his honor in that the Lord should sell Sisera into the hand of a woman, doubtless Jael the wife of Heber. Her telling him this does not betoken certainly that in Barak one had to do with a self-seeking Hebrew who wanted the undertaking to succeed to his own glory. Were this true, it would be hard to account for the reference to his faith in the epistle to the Hebrews.

So Barak called the two tribes specified: "and he went up with ten thousand men at his feet: and Deborah went up with him". The drawing toward mount Tabor must be gradual, in small squads, for the tyrant must know nothing of the rising until the hosts were assembled. Though the Israelitish forces were to collect in the mountain, the battle had to be fought in the plain; for there only could the chariots of the enemy maneuver.

It was after all only a remnant that had heeded the call to arms—ten thousand footmen armed with sword and spear. Mention is made of this in the song. "Then rushed down the remnant of Israel against the princes of Barak and the people of Jehovah rushed down from the mountain with me, Deborah, against the mighty of the adversary" (chap. 5:13). (This rendering is strongly preferable when compared with the five verses that follow). It was truly a remnant that fought against Sisera, a mere ten thousand, collected from two tribes. The prophetess complains about this in her song. Reuben had been called but instead of responding he preferred to sit among the sheepfolds, to hear the bleatings of the flock (or, listen to the shepherd's flute). They thought upon the necessity of acting until the time for it was past. Gilead—the half tribe of Manasseh—tarried beyond Jordan, his excuse being that, because of distance, the plight of his brethren in the north country did not concern him. Dan and Ashur remained in ships, continued on the seashore and abode in their harbors, thus pretended to be engaged in maritime commerce, (chap. 5:15-17).

Deborah does not accuse the distant tribes, as Judah, Simeon, Ephraim, Benjamin, Gad, but extols their ancient glory. "Out of Ephraim was there a root of them against Amelek. . . ." This may have reference to Joshua the conqueror of Amelek. "After thee," says the prophetess to Ephraim, "Benjamin advanced against his enemies," in the person of Ehud, the second judge. Out of Michar—the half tribe of Manasseh

west of the Jordan—came down governors, orderers of the law, and out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the writer. Formerly famed for his exerpts with the pen, Zebulun has now become a people that jeopardized their lives unto death. The territory of Napthali was the theatre of war with Sisera. Though this tribe took no active part in the conflict, its princes “were with Deborah.” She makes no mention of Judah and Simeon, as these tribes lay outside of her range of vision.

Sisera was told of the presence of Israelitish troops in Mount Tabor. Without delay, he mobilized his troops quartered round about—the nine hundred chariots and all the people that were with him, from Hero sheth to the river of Kishon. He led his army to the plain of Jezreel on the southwest side of Tabor. Evidently he would surround the mountain, thinking that he must compel the Hebrews to ascend into the valley. Deborah observed and understood that the moment for action had arrived. “Up,” she cried to Barak, “Up; for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the Lord gone out before thee?” The Israelites rush down on the enemy and his ranks were broken. “The Lord discomfited Sisera. Everything turns to flight. All is lost. The whole army perished by the sword of God. Sisera, taking to his feet, fled in a northern direction toward Hazor to the tent of Jaer and perished by her hand. So had God again saved His people by another wonder of His grace.

Then sang Deborah her song and Barak sang with her—saying, Praise ye the Lord for the evanging of Israel. . . . The kings came and fought, then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach, by the waters of Megido; they took no gain of money. They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera. The river of Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon. O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength. There were the horses hoofs broken by means of the prancings, the prancings of the mighty ones.”

This part of the song forms a vivid description of the battle crisis. Kings came, heathen military leaders, powerful and eminent. A band of footmen, a handful of mountaineers, against a host of iron chariots. They came, did these kings; but they obtained no booty. They were destroyed. From heaven fought the stars against Sisera. The Kishon was an instrument of help against the foe. In its swollen condition it swept them away. The great truth that underlies these statements is that the whole irrational and inanimate creation was—and ever is—in league with God’s people and fought for them, because Jehovah, the Lord of creation, was for them. “O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength.” The victory over the adversary was her faith.

Some of the enemy had escaped, because Meroz, an Israelitish community of the country surrounding the theatre of battle, had not done its duty. Against its inhabitants, the prophetess utters a sentence of condemnation. “Curse ye Meroz. . . .curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord.” They left the cause of God to itself, when it was endangered in battle.

“But blessed among women be Jael.” Whoever is against God is cursed; but whoever is for Him is blessed. The irony of the closing part of her song—the part in which the mother of Sisera is mocked—springs from her consciousness of the greatness of God and the nothingness of His enemies.

G. M. O.

De Koning Van 't Heelal

(Psalm 72; Tweede Deel)

De vorige maal zagen we Jezus, met eere en heerlijkheid gekroond. We zagen den Zoon des Konings. De psalm is *voor Salomo!*

Het hoofdthema is: O God! Geef den Koning Uwe rechten, en Uwe gerechtigheid den Zoon des Konings! De Drieëenige God geeft Zijn rechten en gerechtigheid aan Jezus Christus, opdat Hij alles mag doen om Zijn Koninkrijk te verwerkelijken: schoone, lieflijke onderdanen werven, de vijanden vernielen, een nieuwe aarde en hemel te voorschijn brengen.

Voorts zagen we het begin van zulk een zaligheid. Nu verder.

In de dagen van Jezus zal de rechtvaardige bloeien, en de veelheid van vrede, totdat de maan niet meer zij.

Dit is poetische taal. Teruggebracht tot de proza van ons alledaagsche leven beteekent het: In de bedeeeling van Jezus Christus zal de vrede Gods gesmaakt worden als vrucht van het werk des rechtvaardigen en die bedeeeling heeft geen einde.

Ik dacht aan Jesaja bij het bestudeeren van dit vers. Daar staat: “Om den arbeid Zijner ziel zal Hij het zien, en verzadigd worden; door Zijne kennis zal Mijn knecht, de Rechtvaardige, velen rechtvaardig maken, want Hij zal hunne ongerechtigheden dragen.” Jes. 53:11.

Zoo loopt de lijn. Jezus is de knecht van God en Zijn naam is: De Rechtvaardige. Die knecht gaat onder in den eeuwigen dood, dragende de ongerechtigheden van Gods volk. Die dood heeft een vrucht. Door Zijn verzoenend sterven ontvangt Hij kracht en genade om Gods volk rechtvaardig te maken. En de vrucht is vrede.

Vrede is eigenlijk de hemel. Vrede met God is het heerlijkste wat er is voor tijd en eeuwigheid. O, als ik weten mag, dat God niets tegen mij heeft, dan is het goed, dan is alles wel. Vrede is de toestand en staat waar mijn hart en Gods hart één tempo van slaan hebben. Gods gedachten en Gods wandel worden de mijne. Ik wandel met God. Dat is vrede. Dat is dan ook de hemel.

Die zegen is de onze, mijn broeder, totdat de maan niet meer schijnt.

Die vrede wordt gevonden onder het bewind van Jezus. Dat leert het volgende vers. Want daar staat dat Jezus zal regeeren van de zee tot aan de zee en van de rivier tot aan de einden der aarde. Die regeering is vooruit getoond door Salomo. Daarom staat er dan ook aan het begin van dezen psalm: voor Salomo. Doch het was slechts een flauwe schaduw. Ze is vervuld in Jezus. Meer en meer wordt die profetie vervuld. En als straks alle volkeren der aarde het Evangelie gehoord hebben, dan houdt de maan op van schijnen en dan komt het einde.

Maar Jezus regeert. Dat wordt duidelijk in de kerk. Daar regeert Jezus. Door Zijn Woord, hetzij zooals het gepredikt wordt, of hetzij het tot openbaring komt in de ambten van ouderling en diaken. En voor allen is die regeering de vrede Gods die alle verstand te boven gaat. Zegt ge: voor mij is die regeering geen vrede, dan komt dat vanwege het feit, dat ge goddeloos zijt. De Heilige Schrift zegt hier en elders, dat "in Zijn dagen zal de rechtvaardige bloeien, *en de veelheid van vrede. . .*" Dus als ge geen vrede hebt, dan zijt ge niet van Hem. Een van beiden, ge wordt dan straks ingelijfd in Hem en smaakt vrede met al Gods volk of ge komt om in de rechtmatige oordeelen van dien Koning. Er is geen derde mogelijkheid.

Jezus regeert. In Zijn kerk is dat vrede voor een ieder.

Doch Hij regeert ook in de wereld daar buiten.

Dat is zoo, al worden de bergen verzet tot in het hart der zee. Dat is zoo, ook al worden de oorlogen nog zoo groot, zoodat ge de legers niet meer tellen kunt. Jezus regeert. Daarom is er Hitler, Stalin, Tojo, Roosevelt. God regeert door Jezus, door middel van alle dingen. Het gaat vandaag en alle dagen precies zooals de Generale Staf het hebben wil. Ook wordt er geen veldslag verloren voor den Koning der koningen. "Mij is gegeven alle macht, in den hemel op de aarde." Daar gaat niets af. Doch hier gaat het over de overwinningen van Koning Jezus, waardoor Hij Zijn kerk uit alle landen, talen en volkeren vergadert. De klank van dit gedeelte is universeel. Daarom schreven we boven deze artikelen: De Koning van 't *Heelal!*

O als dat niet geschied ware, dan zouden wij Hollanders voor eeuwig verloren gegaan zijn. Dan wer-

den er geen Engelschen, Duitschers en Franschen zalig. Dan zouden wij allen die niet tot Gods oude bondsvolk behooren nooit tot de zaligheid kunnen komen.

Maar nu worden de inwoners van dorre plaatsen zalig. En Zijn vijanden zullen het stof lekken.

De ingezetenen van dorre plaatsen. De bosschen van Noord-Europa zijn dorre plaatsen. Dit moet ge niet letterlijk opvatten. Die "dorre plaatsen" wil hetzelfde zeggen als "vijanden". Als ge een vijand van God en Jezus zijt dan is Uw woning in de dorre plaatsen. Of is het niet onbeschrijflijk dor, waar dan ook de zotte vijanden van God wonen? Zijt ge wel eens te eten geweest bij de goddeloozen? Ik denk er nog vaak om hoe ons dat eens overkwam. Alles in huis is daar dor en dood. Om onzentwil moest er dan gebeden worden. Evenwel terwijl we baden, stooten de kinderen elkaar aan: het was toch al te koddig! Hier zitten we voor een tafel vol met heerlijke spijzen en vader vraagt die rare bezoeker om te bidden. Het paste daar niet. Moeder had een vreemde glimlach op 't gelaat toen het gebed klaar was. En zoo was het ook met de gesprekken. . Alles is dor en dood, want God is daar niet in alle hunne gedachten. Alles ademt er vijandschap tot God.

Doch als Jezus zegenend binnentreedt dan wordt het anders. Dan zegt de stokbewaarder: Lieve heeren, wat moet ik doen om zalig te worden? En dan knielt de man neer; hij buigt zijn aangezicht ter aarde. Pas op, man; het is stoffig zoo dicht bij den grond. Leest den tekst nog eens? Die eerder woonde in dorre plaatsen zegt nu: Komt, kinderen, laat ons knielen voor God. Die eerst vijand van Jezus was ligt nu in het stof met zijn aangezicht ter aarde. Dan komt de vrede.

Zoo zal het gaan met alle soorten van menschen, tot zelfs de koningen ingesloten. We hooren hier van koningen van Scheba en Seba. Ze komen aan met geschenken voor Jezus.

Zoo zal het gaan en zoo is het alreede gegaan in de eeuwen die achter ons liggen. . We hooren hier van heidenen die Hem dienen. Dat is vervuld. Gij leest en bidt en smeekt en zingt Zijn psalmen. . Uwe oogen gingen open en gij zaagt dat Jezus waarlijk de Koning van Sion is. Daar gingt gij henen: gij gingt op reis naar Sion. Straks zal men U zeggen: De lofzang klimt uit Sion's zalen, tot U met stil ontzag!

Nu volgt een beschrijving van de reden waarom men Jezus dient. In de verzen 12-14.

Men heeft de groote goedheid en lieflijkheid van God gezien in dien Koning.

Ziet het maar aan hoe wonderlijk Hij is in Zijn liefde en genade. Daar zijn de nooddriftigen, de ellendigen en die geen helper heeft. En dat is een beschrijving van Gods volk dat ter neder ligt in de macht van de list en het geweld. Hun bloed vloeit.

Doch Koning Jezus redt, verschoont, verlost en

bevrijdt hen. En hun bloed is dierbaar in Zijn oog.

Die verlossende, reddende arbeid van Jezus wordt verkondigd. De Heilige Geest van denzelfden Koning past het toe aan de harten van de gekenden onder de heidenen.

En daar vallen ze. Ze buigen diep en aanbidden dien Koning, die David's troon beklom. Alle *die* heidenen zullen Hem gaarne dienen. Ze hebben het geleerd, dat Jezus de openbaring is van een liefde welker mate men niet kan benaderen. Zij is zóó groot, zóó diep, zóó onpeilbaar!

De liefde Gods! Is die niet wonderlijk geopenbaard in de verlossing van Gods volk? Daar gaat de Koning! Hij gaat onder in den eeuwigen dood. En Hij doet het omdat Hij den Vader bemint. Hij doet het om Gods wil. Vooraleer Hij verdwijnt in de schaduwen van den eeuwigen dood, hooren we Hem schreeuwen: O God! Om Uwentwil wordt Ik den ganschen dag gedood. Ik wordt geacht als het Slachtschaap! De Heere God wilde openbaren hoe lieflijk Hij is. Ja, waarlijk, des Heeren liefde is geweldig! Ziet maar naar dat vreeselijk kruis van Golgotha! Het is de Goddelijke openbaring van onbegrijpelijke liefde. Voor mij? Ik kan er niet bij, o God!

Zou ik dan niet knielen?

En Jezus?

De volgende verzen zullen het U zeggen.

Hij zal leven.

Dat heeft de hof van Jozef gezien. Hij is opgestaan. Hij had alles gedaan wat noodig was om de kinderen te verlossen, te redden, te verschoonen. En Zijn opstanding is het bewijs dat God Zijn rantsoen aannam.

Ook ontvangt Hij een loon. Den ganschen dag zal men Hem zegenen. Wie zal bij machte zijn om eenigzins af te meten al den lof die de Zone Gods ontvangt van Zijn dankbaar volk. En de einden van dien lof worden vager. Die einden zijn niet; ze lossen zich op in de wazige verten: ik zie een nimmer eindigende eeuwigheid van Lof des Heeren.

Is er een handvol koren in het land op de hoogten der bergen, de vrucht daarvan zal ruischen als de Libanon; en die van de stad zullen bloeien als het kruid der aarde.

De hoogten der bergen is Sion; de stad is Jeruzalem. Beiden zijn zij de kerk van Christus.

Het zaad dat zij ontvangen is het Woord van God en Zijn Geest.

De vrucht is de lof des Heeren.

Die vrucht zal ruischen en zijn als het bloeiende moeskruid.

Ruischen als de Libanon.

De Libanon ruischte vanwege het woud der cedars.

Als ge er een "pre-audition" van wilt hooren moet ge maar naar de kerk gaan. Luistert: Komt luistert toe, gij Godgezinden! Gij die den Heer van harte

vreest! Hoort, wat mij God deed ondervinden; wat Hij gedaan heeft aan mijn geest!

Luistert! Het is het ruischen van hemelsche klanken. Straks zal het voortgezet worden op de toppen der bergen in den hemel.

Zoo zal Zijn naam zijn. En de naam is uitdrukking van het wezen. Het wezen van Jezus is toch om den Vader te openbaren? Welnu, als ge al den lieflijken lof van God ziet in de kerk, is dat een openbaring van God. Want Hij is de Volzalige.

En die Naam van Jezus, die Lof van den God der zaligheden, zal zijn tot in eeuwigheid.

Iets daarvan kunt ge hier op aarde al zien.

Zijn naam wordt van kind tot kind voortgeplant. Toen ik er nog niet was heeft mijn grootvader gezongen van dien naam en pinkte mijn grootmoeder een traan uit het oog: ze was ontroerd bij het aanschouwen van zulke liefde. Mijn vader en mijn moeder zijn hen gevolgd, daar waar geen tranen vloeien.

En ik mag van dien naam zingen gelijk als zij.

Ook is het ons een genot om dien Naam onze kinderen in te prenten. Dan luisteren we of er geen weerklank komt uit den mond van ons zaad. Ons gebed strekt zich uit tot de monden van het zaad onzes zaads, tot hen die er nog niet zijn. Ik hoor mijzelf bidden voor de kinderen en kindskinderen die op de aarde zullen staan als Jezus komt. Of zij dien naam mogen uitspreken als Hij komt op de wolken des hemels. Is het geen heerlijke gedachte om hen te hooren jubelen in den geest: Deze God is onze God: we hebben Hem verwacht en Hij zal ons zalig maken?!

Het is dan ook geen wonder dat de psalm sluit met den lof des Heeren. Luistert! Geloofd zij de Heere God! De God Israels die alleen wonderen doet!

En geloofd zij den naam Zijner heerlijkheid tot in eeuwigheid, en de gansche aarde worde met Zijne heerlijkheid vervuld!

O, als dat mocht komen terwijl wij nog leven. Denkt er eens aan: de gansche aarde vol van Gods heerlijkheid! Nu zien we zoo vaak de schaduwen van Satan en Satan's werken.

Doch de heerlijkheid Gods vervulle de aarde! Amen, ja Amen.

Daar heeft David vrede. Zijn psalmende stem wordt niet meer gehoord op aarde. Hij galmt ze voorts uit in den hemel. Wij verlangen, verlangen!

G. V.

Have I the wedding garment on,

Or do I naked stand alone?

O! quicken, clothe, and feed my soul,

Forgive my sins, and make me whole.

Regarding The Unions

We are all aware that in this present day unionism is on the increase, and growing even during the war. In our own city this is the case also. Although we believe that in more than one respect labor has just complaints against capital, we also believe that the organizations are such that it is impossible for the Christian to affiliate with them and to do so out of faith. The latter is quite necessary for God's Word teaches that what it not of faith is sin.

Since practically the very beginning of the separate existence of our Protestant Reformed Churches, we as Churches have taken the definite stand that membership in worldly organizations of all kinds is incompatible with the Christian faith and with membership in the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. Very definitely our churches have expressed themselves in regard to membership in the ungodly unions. Difficult as that stand may be for the flesh we believe it is the only possible one in the light of the Word of God and that it must therefore be maintained. We realize that this stand has practical consequences for our daily lives, that it will be increasingly difficult to secure employment if the present wave of unionism continues unabated, but we also believe that we may not because of practical difficulties close our eyes to the character of such organizations and for bread's sake affiliate with them. Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. We shall not labor for the meat that perisheth but for the bread that cometh down from heaven. And the Lord God Almighty who has all things in His hand will certainly supply us with daily bread as long as we need it. He has said, Seek first the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you. We shall not be anxious about our daily bread—for all these things the Gentiles seek, but your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of them.

We wish to set forth briefly the more serious objections to affiliation in these organizations, and why we earnestly believe that it is impossible to maintain membership in one of these worldly unions and at the same time in the Church of Jesus Christ. We believe that membership in the lodge is incompatible with membership in Christ's Church and may not be condoned, and some of the reasons that obtain in regard to the lodge also obtain in regard to the unions, although in other respects there is a difference.

The following are some of the more serious objections we have to membership in the existing worldly unions of our day:

1. These organizations stand committed to the principle of the closed shop, according to which only union members shall be employed and every one that refuses

to join shall not be permitted to work in the shop. Also the Constitution of the United Furniture Workers of America (CIO) has this as its object. We quote Article II, Objects, Section 1 under d, "To reach and maintain agreements with employers as to wages, hours of labor and working conditions, and to seek through such agreements to establish closed shops and preference of employment for members of the United Furniture Workers of America". This is equally true of all the existing organizations of the CIO, AFL and the Brotherhood of Railways. Their ideal is that unless he is a member of one of these unions, and that no one shall be able to buy or sell except it bear the union label. This is literally predicted of the power of the Anti-christ in Revelation 13. We ask, how can a member of the church subscribe to such practices, and exclude from employment a fellow-brother who for conscience' sake will not join and sit down at the Table of the Lord with him and promise that he will love the brother and not only show this in words, but in very deed?

2. It is also evident that these organizations are committed to the principles of force and coercion, not only in gaining members but also in forcing their will upon the employer. All of them stand committed to the principle of the strike. It is true that they are willing to use the method of arbitration if this accomplishes their purpose, but it is equally true that all of them will take recourse to the strike if other procedures fail. And the strike is a method of force which cannot be approved in the light of Scripture. A strike is not the same as freely quitting one's job. When a man quits his job, he thereby asserts that he gives up his claim to the job, that the boss may hire another. The strike on the contrary is an organized effort to force the employer to accede to the will of the union—the members maintain their right to the job and will not allow the employer to hire others in their stead. This in an organized method of taking the law into one's own hands, as much as lynching is, and stands condemned for the very same reason. We are all more or less acquainted with the "sit-down" strikes that swept our nation a few years back. Some of the men of our own church were called out as National Guards to Flint to help preserve law and order. This principle of strike the unions still maintain. Also the Constitution of the United Furniture Workers of America, Article XLIX, Section 2, "In the event of trouble arising in any of the shops which would necessitate a strike, or lockout be declared. . . ." We ask, May the Christian commit himself to such a principle? On the contrary members of Christ's Church have the injunction of II Cor. 6:14-18, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what con-

cord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing: and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

3. But is it not possible in order to keep or to secure a job that one merely affiliate with one of those organizations and pay the dues, yet refuse to attend the meetings or otherwise take an active part? We should remember that the unions themselves demand the signing of a card, requesting membership, which card is a signed pledge to uphold the union in question. How can a Christian then sign such a card and intend not to support the union? The union itself will not allow a member to agitate against his union. Besides, a yea must according to the Word of God be a yea. No more than one may affiliate with a church without sincerely doing so, no more may one affiliate with any organization without doing so in sincerity. The fact simply remains, then, that membership in a union remains our act, a free act, for which we are responsible before God and before the law. Everyone that joins thereby assumes a place in the organization, and becomes responsible for its official position and official acts. In many instances one signs the pledge card and submits to the yoke of the union, in some instances new members even take a formal oath. But even if one does not sign an oath, or even a pledge card, but yet joins, the mere fact that he does not attend the meetings, that he prefers not to be held responsible, does not relieve him of his responsibility. The fact still remains that he *is* a member, that he expressed agreement with its principles by joining, and that he is committed as long as he remains a member to abide by the principle of the union and by its official decisions.

4. The oath or pledge which many organizations require is such that a Christian who by the grace of God has sworn allegiance to Christ and His cause and the principles of God's Word cannot possibly take in honesty. We here literally quote one of those oaths from the *Book of Laws* of the International Typographical Union (A.F.L.) pages 15, 16, "I hereby solemnly and sincerely swear (affirm) that I will not reveal any business or proceedings of any meeting of this or any subordinate union to which I may hereafter be attached, unless by order of the union, except to those whom I know to be in good standing thereof; that I will, without evasion or equivocation, and to the best of my ability abide by the Constitution, By-Laws and the adopted scale of prices of any union to

which I may belong; that I will at all times support the laws, regulations and decisions of the International Typographical Union in preference to others; that my fidelity to the union and my duty to the members thereof shall in no sense be interfered with by any allegiance that I may now or hereafter owe to any other organization, social, political, or religious, secret or otherwise; that I will belong to no society or combination composed wholly or partly of printers, with the intent or purpose to interfere with the trade regulations or influence or control the legislation of the union; that I will not wrong a member, or see him or her wronged, if in my power to prevent. To all of which I pledge my most sacred honor." Notice: that by this oath one pledges himself: (1) To carry out the decisions of the union at all times, (2) To seek the wellbeing of a fellow member in preference to a brother in Christ if the latter is not a member of the union, (3) And in case of conflict, swears to remain loyal to the union rather than to Christ and the Church. How dare the Christian Reformed Churches take the stand that the AFL and the CIO are neutral organizations, and that one can belong to them. How can any living member of Christ's Church possibly take such an oath!

Not all the organizations demand a formal oath. Some of them contain a pledge in the Constitution to which one consents by simply signing the pledge-card. Such seems to be the case also with the United Furniture Workers of America (CIO). The Preamble of this Constitution says among other things, "We pledge ourselves to labor unitedly for the principles herein set forth to perpetuate our union and work in concert and solidarity with other labor organizations." Each new member is required to take the following pledge, or obligation, "I most solemnly pledge on my word of honor to abide by the constitution and by-laws of the United Furniture Workers of America and of this local Union N..... to the full extent of my ability; at all times to regard the affiliation I hereby make, with pride, and will endeavor to aid in the success of my Union; I will never defraud or misrepresent the International Union and this Local Union, and will bear true and faithful allegiance to the officers and members. I will conduct myself at all times so as never to bring reproach upon myself, or any member or upon the United Furniture Workers of America and this local Union." Notice that by taking this pledge one: (1) promises to abide by the constitution and by-laws of the union, which includes the principles of the closed shop and of the strike. (2) Pledges to regard his affiliation at all times with pride and will endeavor to aid in the success of the Union, which means active aid toward the closed shop, even if a brother Christian must be excluded from the shop because he refuses to affiliate, and even if a strike is called. One pledges to give preference of employment

for members of the Union (Art. II) by consenting to the constitution. This pledge is not as definite as that of the Typographical Union quoted above, but primarily the same pledge is made.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, is it not our Christian duty to keep ourselves unspotted from the world? Should we not, as Daniel of old, purpose in our hearts that we will not defile ourselves. The higher wages and better living conditions that the Union promises ought not to confuse us as to the issue. Let us stand fast in the Lord, and put on the whole armor of faith that we may be able to stand in the evil day.

Surely there are many evils in the social-economic conditions of the world. Surely we may labor toward removal of injustices, but we must do so in a manner compatible with our faith. Otherwise we are no longer the salt in the earth, and if the salt have lost its savor wherewith shall it be salted. We may not be unequally yoked with the unbelievers. Let us be patient unto the coming of the Lord, and count all things but dung for the excellency of Christ. Let us testify against wickedness everywhere, and be faithful unto the end. He that shall endure unto the end shall be saved.

We might mention other things that clearly show that the ungodly labor organizations as they exist today are such that a Christian may not affiliate with them. But we think sufficient has been said, and the light Scripture sheds on our path is plain.

Stand fast in the Lord.

The Consistory of
the Protestant Reformed Church
Holland, Michigan.

Done in Consistory Dec. 8, 1943.

IN MEMORIAM

It having pleased our Heavenly Father to take unto Himself

MRS. R. NEWHOUSE

who passed away on April 5, at the age of 56 years, the Consistory of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church hereby wishes to express its sympathy to our brother and former elder, Mr. R. Newhouse.

May the God of all grace and comfort sustain him in his bereavement and sorrow, and may he say with the psalmist, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the dead of His saints", and experience through it all that all things work together for good to them that love God.

Rev. J. A. Heys, Pres.
Mr. D. Kooienga, Sec'y.

Geen Plaats Des Berouws

De woorden die hier boven verschijnen als het onderwerp van dit artikel, komen voor in Hebreëen twaalf, waar melding gemaakt wordt van het booze doen Ezau en van zijn vruchteloos geween. Wij lezen in dat hoofdstuk, dat Ezau geen plaats des berouws vond hoewel hij dezelve met tranen zocht.

Deze woorden staan daar in nauw verband met een voorafgaande vermaning. Wij worden daar in de vorige verzen vermaand om den vrede na te jagen met allen, en om te wandelen in de heiligmaking, zonder welke niemand den Heere zien zal. Daarom wijst de apostel ons er verder op, dat wij op elkander moeten toezien en dat wel met een drievoudig doel. Eerstens, opdat niemand verachtere van de genade Gods; tweedens, opdat niet eenige wortel van bitterheid, opwaarts spruitende, beroerte make en door dezelve velen ontreinigd worden; en eindelijk, opdat niet iemand een hoereerder of onheilige zij gelijk Ezau, die om eene spijs het recht van zijne eerstgeboorte weggaf, en daarna toen hij de zegening wilde beërven, verworpen werd, en geen plaats des berouws vond, hoewel hij dezelve met tranen zocht. Wij moeten dus, jagende na den vrede en wandelende in de heiligmaking, op elkander toezien, opdat niet iemand een onheilige zij gelijk Ezau, die in weerwil van zijne bittere tranen geen plaats des berouws vond.

Wij zijn met deze geschiedenis van Ezau waarvan de apostel hier melding maakt allen welbekend. Ezau zijnde de eerstgeborene had recht op de zegening van het eerstgeboorterecht, iets dat in die dagen van groote beteekenis was. Het bevatte het recht van hoofdschap over de broederen en hunne geslachten, een dubbel deel van de erfenis des vaders, het recht van priesterschap, de belofte om te leven in het land Kanaän, en het voorrecht om straks het groote zaad voort te brengen, dat de kop der slang vermorzelen zou. Maar dit alles had voor Ezau geen beteekenis. Vooral niet toen hem hongerde en hij zoo moede was dat hij dacht dat hij op het punt was om te sterven. Want hij leefde alleen voor het aardsche en had voor het hiernamaals geen oog noch hope. Vandaar dat hij om ééne spijs, al was het dan ook slechts een aardsche en daarom een voorbijgaande, zijn eerstgeboorterecht weggaf. Daarom draagt hij de naam van onheilig en profaan.

Maar Ezau kreeg later berouw. Vooral toen hij vernam dat Jakob hem de zegening ontnomen had. Want wij lezen in Genesis dat hij voor het aangezicht zijns vaders schreeuwde met eenen grooten en bitteren schreeuw en dat hij zijne stem ophief en weende. Hetgeen hij eerst voor eene aardsche spijs verkocht, zocht hij nu te beërven. Maar de apostel zegt in den brief aan de Hebreëren, dat hij geen plaats des berouws vond hoewel hij dezelve met tranen zocht.

Dat "geen plaats des berouws," wat wil dat eigenlijk zeggen? Wat is daarvan de beteekenis? Beteekent het soms dat Ezau wel oprecht berouw had maar dat hij geen plaats vond om het te betoonen? Was het nu soms te laat voor een oprecht berouw, zoodat het nu niet meer baten kon al ware het dat Ezau het had? Of is de gedachte misschien dat hij geen plaats des berouws vond in zijn eigen hart? Was het misschien zoo dat hij zich nu bekeeren wou maar niet kon? Waar was er geen plaats des berouws, bij Ezau, of bij Izak? Op dezen en dergelijke vragen moeten we een antwoord hebben.

Er zijn sommigen die meenen dat zij hier bewijs hebben voor de stelling, dat iemand zich oprecht bekeeren kan en toch kan verloren gaan omdat zijne bekeering te laat is. Men zegt dat Ezau hiervan een duidelijk bewijs is. Ezau's bekeering, zegt men dan, was eene waarachtige bekeering zooals wel blijkt uit zijne tranen, maar hij werd toch verworpen toen hij de zegening wilde beërven want zijn tijd van genade was voorbij. Maar het is duidelijk, deze verklaring kan heelemaal niet. Want niet alleen is er nergens bewijs dat Ezau zich waarlijk bekeerde en blijkt uit de geschiedenis wel het tegendeel, maar de Schrift leert ook overal dat eene waarachtige bekeering nooit te laat komt. Waar God de genade der bekeering schenkt daar geeft Hij ook de genade der verhooring.

Anderen meenen dat wij deze woorden moeten toepassen op Ezau zelf. Geen plaats des berouws ziet dan op Ezau's eigen hart. De gedachte is dan, dat na het bedreven kwaad het voor Ezau onmogelijk was om zich werkelijk te bekeeren en om waarachtig berouw te hebben. Al was het dat hij de zegening wilde beërven en dezelve ook met tranen zocht, hij werd toch verworpen want hij moest zich eerst bekeeren en dat kon hij niet. In eigen hart vond hij geen plaats des berouws. Degenen die deze verklaring zijn toegedaan zeggen dat de apostel ons er hier op wijst, evenals in Heb. 6:6, dat er sommigen zijn die onmogelijk wederom vernieuwd kunnen worden tot bekeering. Doch deze verklaring is, onzes inziens, niet de eenvoudigste. Ook, zij past niet in den tekst, zij is met zichzelf in strijd en de apostel had zich dan veel duidelijker kunnen uitdrukken. Maar bovendien, zij is ook in strijd met het verhaal van de geschiedenis in Genesis. Dat Ezau geen plaats des berouws vond, wil zekerlijk zeggen, dat hij wel zulk een plaats des berouws zocht. Maar als dit nu moest beteekenen dat hij die plaats bij zichzelf zocht, dan komt dit in strijd met Genesis. Want daar is het duidelijk dat het Ezau om heel iets anders te doen was dan om een plaats des berouws bij zich zelf.

Wij zijn daarom van oordeel dat we de woorden moeten doen zien op Izak. De zin wordt dan, dat Ezau een plaats des berouws zocht bij Izak, en dat hij het daar met tranen zocht, maar dat hij het niet verkreeg.

Deze verklaring is de eenvoudigste en is in harmonie met het overige van het vers. De apostel zegt eerst, dat Ezau de zegening wilde beërven nadat hij dezelve voor een spijze had weggegeven, en dan dat hij geen plaats des berouws vond hoewel hij dezelve met tranen zocht. Dit laatste, zooals wij reeds aantoonen, wil zeker zeggen, dat hij wel zulk een plaats des berouws zocht. Volgens den tekst, zocht hij dus beide, de zegening en een plaats des berouws. Hoe dat dit mogelijk is laat zich gemakkelijk verklaren. De zegening was door Izak reeds gegeven aan Jakob. Dus om deze nu nog te verkrijgen, zou Izak berouw moeten hebben van zijn doen. Vandaar dat Ezau, om de zegening nog te verkrijgen, een plaats des berouws zoekt bij Izak zijnen vader, en dit berouw door zijne tranen tracht te bewerken. Maar Izak had geen berouw. Ezau werd dus verworpen en de zegening ging hem voorbij. Daarom dat de apostel zegt, dat hij geen plaats des berouws vond en dat hij tevergeefs heeft geweend. Zoo is het in den tekst, en zoo vinden we het ook in Genesis. Wij doen de woorden daarom zien op Izak, en verklaren, dat het daar bij Izak was dat Ezau geen plaats des berouws vond.

Maar waarom heeft hij het daar tevergeefs gezocht? Lezen we niet dat hij nu de zegening zocht te beërven? En was het dan geen goed teken dat hij bitterlijk weende? Waarom vond hij geen plaats des berouws? Als we het oog op Ezau hebben en daar het antwoord zoeken, dan moet het luiden: omdat zijne bekeering niet oprecht was en zijne tranen niet echt. Dat kan niet anders, want die werkelijk klopt, wordt opengedaan; en die in oprechtheid zoekt zal vinden. En dat zulks werkelijk het geval was is heel duidelijk uit de geschiedenis. Zijn eerste gedachte en voornemen toen hij vernam dat de zegening hem ontgaan was, was om Jakob te doden. En in zijne woorden doet hij duidelijk uitkomen dat hij ook nu nog niets geeft om het geestelijke dat de zegening inhield, maar dat het hem alleen te doen was om de aardsche voorrechten en rijkdommen die zij met zich bracht. Het is nog dezelfde Ezau die veracht alles wat geestelijk is. En dat wel in weerwil van het feit dat God juist met eene luide stem gesproken heeft. De oorzaak ligt ten eerste bij Ezau zelf.

Maar met het oog op Izak mogen we zeggen, dat een plaats des berouws niet werd gevonden, omdat Izak de souvereine hand Gods juist duidelijk gezien heeft. Wel was het Izak altijd bekend geweest, dat het niet met Ezau, maar met Jakob was, dat God Zijn verbond zou voortzetten. Maar Izaak had Ezau lief, want hij at van zijn wildbraad. En hij had zich voorgenomen om tegen de geopenbaarde wil Gods in te gaan en om Ezau te zegen. Daarom dat hij zoo beefde toen hij Jakob zegende, meenende dat het Ezau was. Maar God deed hem op een wonderlijke wijze zien dat Hij waarlijk God is, dat

Zijn raad bestaat en dat Hij al Zijn welbehagen doet. Want Hij bestuurde het zoo dat in weerwil, ja, zelfs door middel van Izaks voornemen, Jakob de zegening verkreeg. Wanneer Izak dat ziet, verwerpt hij Ezau ook en hij zendt hem weg zonder te hebben gevonden een plaats des berouws. Niet slechts omdat hij niet anders kan, maar hoofdzakelijk omdat hij nu niet anders wil. Door Gods kracht wil hij zijn vleesch nu kruisigen en zich onderwerpen aan de hand van Gods soevereine en verkiezende genade.

En met het oog op God is het antwoord: Ezau vond geen plaats des berouws, opdat het voornemen Gods, dat naar de verkiezing is, zoude vastblijven, dat het niet uit de werken is, maar uit den roepende. Want, wel is het waar, in dien onbekeerden toestand kon God hem niet aannemen, moest hij hem de deur wel toelaten. Maar de genade om zich werkelijk te bekeeren en om oprechte tranen des berouws te weenen werd hem onthouden. En de reden is: het moet duidelijk gezien worden, dat het niet is desgenen die wil, noch desgenen die loopt, maar des ontfermenden Gods. Het moet openbaar worden, dat men zonder genade wel kan weenen, maar geen tranen van oprecht berouw; dat er voor dezulken wel een plaats is, maar niet bij God. Daarom vond Ezau geen plaats des berouws.

En zoo is het nog. Voor hem die geen andere tranen kent dan de tranen van Ezau, is en blijft het waar, geen plaats des berouws.

P. V.

Kerknieuws

Ge herinnert U zeker nog wel, dat in het jaar onzes Heeren 1935, er een kleine gemeente werd gesticht in het groote California; eenige mijlen verwijderd van het rumoerige Los Angeles. Negen huisgezinnen hadden toen het voorrecht om te organiseren. Het waren nu juist niet de edelsten en voornaamsten naar de wereld. Eenvoudige boeren, maar die toch wisten wat ze wilden, en wier hart klopte voor de gereformeerde waarheid zooals wij die belijden en onder ons wordt verkondigd.

Negen jaren mocht Bellflower bestaan. Ze is nu niet zooveel in ledental toegenomen; ze telt op dit oogenblik 13 huisgezinnen, 4 ongetrouwde leden en 48 gedoopte kinderen.

Klein als ze is, ze is toch actief. Ze heeft een Ladies' Aid, Men's Society, Catechism class en een Bible class. De diensten worden uitsluitend gehouden in des lands taal. Ook een eigenschap die getuigt van voortvarenheid. Er is vrede en eensgezindheid, en daar gebiedt de Heer Zijn zegen.

Dit mag ook worden gezegd van Redlands. Deze gemeente is dankbaar, dat ze weer een eigen leeraar heeft, die weer 't brood des levens onder hen mag breken. 't Is geen wonder, dat ze met vreugde soms nog terug denkt aan den vorigen leeraar Ds. Vos, die een elftal jaren onder henlieden mocht werkzaam zijn. 't Is te hopen, dat Ds. De Boer er ook zoo lang mag zijn, want als alles goed is, dan is het van veel geestelijk belang voor een gemeente wanneer een leeraar vele jaren mag arbeiden onder hen. En als hij zelfs een man is van studie (en dit moet) dan doet de gemeente er winst mee; en dit is zeer noodig in een afvallige wereld.

We mochten van South Holland, Ill. gemeente vernemen, dat ze actief is in de goede zin van 't woord. Ze heeft een gezonde actieve Young People Society, die iedere Zondag avond tezamen komt. En zich mag verblijden in een gestadigen groei. Er heerscht in deze vereeniging een levende belangstelling, ook ten opzichte van de noodzakelijkheid van een eigen school. Onlangs werd er nog een debat gehouden over dit onderwerp, met Oak Lawn.

Persoonlijk zie ik veel nut in de bespreking van onderwerpen als deze. Men ziet beide kanten en is zoo beter geschikt om zelf een oordeel te vellen.

South Holland heeft ook een mooie Ladies Aid Society. Ze bestaat uit 16 leden en Ds. Vermeer heeft de leiding.

South Holland gemeente is zich zelfen echter ook bewust, dat ze het volmaakte nog niet heeft bereikt. Ze zijn nog in de strijdende kerk hier op aarde, maar strijden toch de goede strijd, en naar eigen zeggen hebben ze vrede en vreugde in Jezus Christus hun Heere.

Weet ge wel dat Ds. Gritter een mooi werk heeft vervaardigd aan de "Testimony of Dordrecht"? Het geeft een compleet overzicht over de Canons of Dordt. Ook is hij bezig met de verklaring van "Our Baptism Form."

Er is natuurlijk veel meer nieuws uit 't Westen, maar de Concordia gewaagt hier wel van zoo voor en na.

Onlangs werden me een stapeltje bulletins ter hand gesteld van Creston gemeente, waarin ik dingen vond die m.i. aanbevelenswaardig zijn. Er wordt b.v. in vermeld uit wat tekst de Ds. gaat preeken. Het thema wordt aangegeven, en de punten bekend gemaakt. Ik vindt dit mooi en leerzaam. Vele gewone kerkmensen vergeten dikwijls spoedig deze veelbeteekende dingen, die niet van waarde zijn ontbloot bij het overdenken van een preek.

Ik zag ook in deze bulletins dat de Young People de "History of our Churches" bestudeeren en dat de vermaarde drie punten door hen worden behandeld.

Er wordt op deze wijze, dunkt me, liefde gekweekt voor onze kerken, en de onhoudbaarheid van een alge-

meene genade leer wordt goed duidelijk. Men vindt er ook nieuws van andere kerken; b.v. wanneer een Ds. wordt beroepen, of het beroep wordt aangenomen, ja dan neen; en zoo krijgt men het gevoel mee te leven ook met andere kerken in ons kerkverband.

Onlangs kwamen we als gemeente te zamen, in de basement van de Eerste gemeente, om een Zending te beroepen die onze gemeenten zal moeten vertegenwoordigen om de waarheid zooals wij die mogen belijden, te verkondigen ook buiten ons kerkverband. Ds. Heys van Hope gemeente werd gekozen, en de tijd zal het leeren of onze bedoeling Gods keuze is.

Er was echter ook nog andere arbeid te verrichten. Fuller Ave. wilde ook haar liefde bewijzen met een tastbare gave voor het kindje dat uit hare lendenen werd geboren. De kerkeraad kwam met een verzoek om \$10.000 beschikbaar te stellen voor dit doel. Het bleek echter al spoedig dat de gemeente er anders over dacht. Er kwam een voorstel om \$15.000 uit te keeren. Dit kwam er dan ook met algemeene stemmen door. En omdat het kindje nog jong is, en natuurlijk nog niet veel ervaring heeft opgedaan, werd besloten, dat dit geld niet anders mag worden gebruikt dan voor huishoudelijke artikelen.

De jonge gemeente geeft blijken van jeugdige moed en voortvarendheid. Er werd al een leeraar beroepen. Een mooi arbeidsveld voor de rechte man op de rechte plaats. De gemeente telt 33 huisgezinnen, 68 belijdende leden, en 75 kinderen. Het is niet ondenkbaar dat met een vijftal jaren dit getal is verdriedubbeld. Laat ons als Fuller Ave. verblijd zijn dat we waardig werden geacht om mee te werken aan dit goede werk. Gode komt toe de eer.

De vereeniging die ten doel heeft om een eigen school in het aanzijn te roepen is nog vlijtig werkzaam. Men heeft een maandelijks program. De gelden die worden bijeenverzameld door middel van het "budget system" bedraagt de som van zoo ongeveer \$100 per maand. Dit bedrag moest eigenlijk verdubbeld worden. De dingen waar het om gaat zijn het dubbel waard. Men mag natuurlijk ook wel geven buiten het envelop systeem. De wijze van geven is van minder belang. Ik wilde wel dat allen de noodzakelijkheid er van inzagen dat het van groot belang is dat we scholen hebben die we de onze mogen noemen. Ik kan niet anders zien of het eene zit onvermijdelijk aan het andere vast.

Ik vind het zeer leerzaam dat er een debat is begonnen in onze Standard Bearer over dit onderwijs. Ds. R. Veldman bepleit de noodzakelijkheid voor het bezit van eigen scholen. Ds. J. De Jong ziet het een beetje anders. Hij meent dat we nog een beetje moeten wachten.

Wanneer we dit debat, als gewone menschen, willen volgen, dan moeten we eerlijk zijn en niet eenzijdig oordeelen. Beide Ds. zijn goed Protestantsch Gerefor-

meerd. De laatste wijst daar zelfs op tot tweemaal toe. Hieraan mag dus niet worden getwijfeld.

Ds. Veldman is er in zijn ziel van overtuigd dat we scholen moeten stichten waar dit mogelijk is. Hij gaat uit van de veronderstelling dat we materiaal hebben, de onderwijzers en de kinderen, en daarom voorwaarts zij ons doel. Zijn standpunt is dat de bestaande Christelijke scholen niet geschikt zijn voor onze kinderen. Er bestaat een groot verschil. Het is een fundamentele kwestie die dateert van af 1924. Het is de leer der algemeene genade.

De Ds. is de gedachte toegedaan dat het huisgezin, de kerk, en de school niet van elkander kunnen worden gescheiden. En hij gaat uit van de gedachte dat het onverantwoordelijk is kinderen van Prot. Geref. ouders onderwijs te doen ontvangen 25 uur per week, 40 week per jaar, 12 jaar, 12,000 uur in een atmosfeer die Chr. Geref. is. Het onderwijs moet gebaseerd zijn op onze beginselen die naar den worde Gods zijn. Er is niets verlammerend dan wanneer het onderwijs van huisgezin, kerk, en school niet in harmonie zijn met elkander.

Ds. Veldman gaat voort met te zeggen, dat we goed moeten zien dat overal het stempel op is gedrukt van Christelijk Gereformeerd. Ook de onderwijzers en onderwijzeressen zijn het meerendeel Chr. Geref. Wanneer de leer-jaren van onze kinderen voorbij zijn, dan moeten we kunnen zeggen, dat we onze plicht hebben gedaan.

Nu is Ds. De Jong een andere gedachte toegedaan. Hij kan zich niet vinden in de gedachte en in het streven van Ds. Veldman. Hij ziet zeer goed, dat het een schoon ideaal is om onze kinderen te onderwijzen in onze Prot. Geref. beginselen; en wanneer het noodzakelijk is geworden dan moeten ook wij onze eigen scholen hebben. Hij meent echter dat de tijd er nog niet rijp voor is. En dan tracht Ds. De Jong dit duidelijk te maken met een paar beelden uit het dagelijksch leven.

Hij leeft in een goed huis. Het kon wel een beetje geriefelijker. Dit is waar. Hij begint echter eerst een berekening te maken, en als hij alles goed heeft overwogen, komt hij tot de conclusie dat het niet gaat; en daarom blijft hij maar in het oude.

Als ik de Ds. goed begrijp dan wil hij zeggen met dit beeld, als hij dit toepast op de Chr. scholen van vandaag: Ze zijn nog aardig goed, er wordt nog aardig goed onderwijs gegeven. Het is niet zoo schadelijk voor onze kinderen. 't Is tamelijk goed gereformeerd.

Ds. De Jong ziet in zijn verbeelding ook nog een ander huis. 't Is eigenlijk niet meer bewoonbaar. 't Is "an old shack." De huisgenooten zijn altijd ziek. Deze bewoner blijft er echter maar inwonen. Maar wat gebeurt nu op een gegeven oogenblik? Er komt brand ook vanwege de verwaarlozing van "the old shack". De man ontwaakt! Hij roept haastig zijn

vrouw en kinderen en ze ontkomen nog. Hij moet nu een andere woning opzoeken.

Uit een puur aardisch oogpunt is het natuurlijk zeer onverantwoordelijk om in een huis te wonen waar men altijd ziek is en dat in brand komt vanwege ouderdom.

Dit beeld nu toegepast op de bestaande Chr. scholen meent Ds. De Jong, dunkt me, te moeten constateeren: zoo ver is het nog niet gekomen. Wanneer het zoo-
ver komt dat wij met onze kinderen schipbreuk moeten lijden, dan kunnen we wel een aanvang nemen om scholen te hebben alwaar onze beginselen worden geleerd en op hooge prijs gesteld.

Ik ben echter van gedachte Ds. dat het dan te laat is. Dan staat het huisje in brand en er is geen spuit om het te blussen.

De Ds. gaat verder met te zeggen dat we een plicht hebben te vervullen in de bestaande scholen, want onze kinderen zijn daar, we stemmen in met hare principels, ze zijn gefondeerd op den Woorde Gods. En dan zegt de Ds. om nu deze scholen te verlaten en andere te bouwen, die we onze eigen scholen noemen, dat gelijkt te veel op weglopende broeders.

Ds. De Jong vergeet echter, dunkt me, dit eene alles in de war brengende feit, dat we in 1924 met onze kinderen zijn uitgeworpen. Tot onze schaamte moet het worden gezegd: we bleven toen wonen in het minder nette huisje, en m.i. is het in een periode van twintig jaren onbewoonbaar, en we moeten er uit; en ik zeg met Ds. Veldman, wie zal het ons euvel duiden, dat we eigen scholen verlangen voor onze kinderen. Scholen van vreemde smetten vrij.

Ik ben blij dat Ds. De Jong zegt dat er velen zijn in de Chr. Geref. Kerk die ons goed gezind zijn. Vergeet het niet echter, broeder: Ze blijven waar ze zijn, en zullen het u nooit toestemmen dat we onze beginselen moeten en willen toepassen ook in de hedendaagsche Christelijke scholen. En wanneer het ooit zoo ver komt dat we eigen scholen mogen bezitten, dan ziet men er niet van hunne kinderen. Zoo werken de dingen niet. Als men zoo met ons meeleeft waarom dan zich niet bij ons aangesloten, dan kunnen we zamen werken aan de beginselen die ons dierbaar zijn.

Het is m.i. ook wel een beetje ver gezocht, als Ds. denkt, dat het schrikbeeld hen altijd zal achtervolgen, zij die hebben gestreden voor de beginselen van eigen scholen, en hun best niet hebben gedaan om de bestaande scholen te reformeeren. 't Is dunkt mij wel gebleken dat we in deze twintig jaren van eigen bestaan verder van elkander zijn verwijderd als ooit te voren. Beginselen werken door, ook in verband met de school.

We mogen dan aannemen, dat beide Dss. gereformeerd zijn. De eerste blijft dit dan ook handhaven in zijn geheele pleidooi voor het bezitten van eigen scholen waarin we onze kinderen mogen onderwijzen volgens

onze beginselen. De tweede broeder wil onze beginselen laten werken in de bestaande scholen waarin men van onze beginselen niet veel moet hebben. Ds. De Jong aarzelt om die stap zoo maar te doen. Zijn denkbeeldig huisje is nog niet zoo slecht. 't Behoeft nog niet onbewoonbaar verklaard worden vanwege zijn ouderdom. Hij is zeer bang, dat we ons doel niet zullen bereiken op den ingeslagen weg. 't Is onverantwoordelijk. Hij ziet allerlei struikblokken.

Ds. De Jong vergeet m.i. dat wij Protestantsch Gereformeerd zijn en niet Christelijk Gereformeerd. Het eene sluit het andere uit. En wanneer onze beginselen gebaseerd zijn op Gods Woord (en dat zijn ze) dan moeten we ook de moed hebben om eigen scholen te bouwen waarin we onze kinderen kunnen onderwijzen en waarin we thuis gevoelen.

Zeg de kinderen Israels dat ze voorttrekken!

S. D. V.

Did God Suffer In The Sacrifice Of His Son?

The question whether God suffered in the sacrifice of His Son is as important as it is interesting. True it is, that a question of this kind leads us into the profound mysteries of God where we can only tread with fear and reverence, yet this need not deter us from listening to the testimony of Scripture on this subject. Whenever God speaks concerning Himself in His Self-revelation in the Scriptures, we do well to listen.

We are interested just now in the question whether the sacrifice of the only begotten Son of God on the cross involved suffering for God. The question does not particularly concern itself with the relation between the human and the divine natures of Christ. Nor is it merely a question of whether the Person of the Son of God tasted the suffering which He had to undergo in His human nature, although this question naturally enters in. But the subject is broader, including all three persons of the divine Trinity. Even as the sacrifice for sin on the cross was a divine act in which the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost participated, so the question arises, Did the triune God suffer in the sacrifice for sin that was brought in the Son on the cross?

We may well ask, Can God suffer? Does the eternally perfect and infinitely blessed God suffer even whole He reveals Himself in glorious majesty during the history of this present time; yet so, that His suffering in no way detracts from His glory? Did it actually cost God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost,

suffering to give His Son as a ransom for our sins?

Turning to Scripture we find a number of very significant passages that speak of the sufferings of God.

The first of these is in Isaiah 63:7-9, "I will mention the loving kindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which He hath bestowed on them according to His mercies, and according to the multitude of His loving kindnesses. For He said, Surely they are My people, children that will not lie; so He was their Saviour. *In all their afflictions He was afflicted*, and the angel of His presence saved them; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old."

The prophet is singing of the unchanging mercies of Jehovah toward Israel, His chosen. The Lord chose them unto Himself as His peculiar people, made them His children by the adoption to sons, delivered them from the house of bondage, led them through a waste and howling wilderness and took them unto himself in the land of promise. Underneath them were the everlasting arms. He loved them, He pitied them, He bestowed on them His mercies, His loving-kindnesses and all His great goodness as their Father and Saviour. Even in all their affliction He was afflicted. Israel's affliction did not leave God cold and feelingless, but was intensely felt by God Himself. Though He sent them these distresses, He was distressed with them.

A similar idea we find in Judges 10:16, "And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the Lord; and His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel." When Israel forsook the Lord He oppressed them by giving them over into the hands of His enemies, and when they repented and returned to the Lord His soul was grieved for their misery. There can be no doubt but that these passages have a direct reference to the suffering of God in His love toward His people.

Which throws a very peculiar light on a passage like Psalm 103:13, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.

On the other hand, there are also a number of passages in Scripture that speak of the Lord being grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known My ways." The word that is used here for being grieved means literally to loathe, to be weary of. Thus again the fact that God was weary of that generation that always erred in their heart does express a certain suffering on the part of God.

In Psalm 78:40 the Psalmist says, "How oft did they provoke Him in the wilderness, and grieve Him in the desert!" Here again Scripture speaks of God's

grieving, but this time the word is even more expressive, since it carries the significance of toiling in pain, suffering, being afflicted. This same word is used in Gen. 6:6, "And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart."

The objection may be raised that these are all anthropomorphisms, or rather, anthropopathism, that is, the ascribing of human emotions, passions and suffering to God. Just as the Lord cannot repent from a certain action in the sense that man repents from having taken a certain course so human weakness as displayed in suffering is strange to God, particularly since our suffering is the result of sin. Yet although we grant that there is nothing weak or human in the sufferings of God, nothing that in any way deprives Him of His glory, that still does not eliminate the possibility of divine suffering. And even though it is true that God speaks to us in a human language, since God must necessarily reveal Himself to us creatures through the channel of the human word, the fact remains that there must be certain divine emotions and experiences in the "soul-life" and "heart" of God which correspond to human sufferings as we know them. Although we can never fathom the mystery before us, Scripture tells us that God is afflicted in the affliction of His people, His soul is grieved in their misery, and God can be grieved at His heart. Even such attributes of God as mercy, compassion, longsuffering and pity, which we are accustomed to classify under the communicable attributes, each express a certain element of divine suffering.

This suffering of God becomes still more evident when we turn to such passages of Scripture as deal with the sacrifice of the Son on the cross.

We are reminded at once of the familiar passage, John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Emphasis necessarily falls on the fact that it was God's Son, the only begotten Son, Whom God gave. In distinction from us, who are children by adoption, He is the eternal, natural Son of God. He is not born, but begotten. In distinction from the Father He is the Son, the express image of the Father's likeness, yet co-eternal with Him, God of God. He is God's very own, the only One. The only begotten Son, recipient of all God's love, the central object of all His good pleasure. He is God Himself.

God gave Him, for such was His love for the world. Love, according to sovereign good pleasure, motivated God in giving the greatest of all gifts, the gift of His Son, the gift of Himself. It demanded divine suffering on the part of God to give Himself in His Son,

in order that we should not perish, but have everlasting life.

This is even more emphatically stated in Romans 8:32, "He that spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all." Here the emphasis falls once more on the fact that the only-begotten Son is God's very own. He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.

The giving of the Son is called here a delivering up. And this act is ascribed to the Triune God. The living God, the Triune God delivered up His Son. The Father delivered up His only begotten One, the Son delivered Himself up, and the Spirit delivered up the Son, Whose Spirit He is. God in the Son delivered Himself up to His own divine wrath as a sacrifice for sin.

True, we are dealing with a mystery that is as profound as it is amazing, yet Scripture is very definite, God spared not, but delivered up His Son for us all. God delivered Him up to come into this world in the likeness of sinful flesh in order that He might become sin and a curse for us. He delivered Him up to a life of suffering in our flesh, that He might walk the way of humiliation in perfect obedience. God delivered Him up to the agony of Gethsemane and to the accursed death of the cross. Even while God poured out the vials of His wrath upon His Son on the cross, He was still His Son, the obedient Servant, in Whom God was well-pleased.

The person of the Son of God suffered when He brought the sacrifice for sin. But no less was this a suffering of the Father and of the Holy Spirit. The text even suggests an alternative in the fact that God spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. It places God, as it were, before the alternative, spare His Son and give us over to eternal wrath, or deliver His own Son up to divine wrath and bring us into glory. In that alternative God did not hesitate to give up His Son. He chose the way of divine suffering. And what a suffering it demanded of Him. God Himself delivered up His own Son to the vials of His wrath to deliver us from them and bring us into glory. Such was His love whereby He loved us, that He was willing to suffer intensely in sparing not His Son from the agonies of death, that we may have life in His name.

It certainly must be granted that this divine suffering detracts in no way from, but rather serves to intensify the glorious blessedness of the ever-blessed God. He is not a cold, abstract Being, but is the living God, Who lives His own divine life perfectly and completely throughout all eternity. He loves His people, though unworthy in themselves, since He has chosen them as objects of His love in Christ Jesus. He loves them intensely, gloriously divine, with a

love that would not even spare the sacrifice for sin on the cross. Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God. Now we are sons, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when it shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

C. H.

IN MEMORIAM

Na eene lichamelijke ongesteldheid, door een ongeluk veroorzaakt, van eenige jaren is op Zondagavond, Maart 19, stil in den Heere ontslapen,

SANDER VAN DALFSEN

in den ouderdom van 66 jaren.

De laatste jaren waren voor den broeder, in meer den een zin, een gestadige dood. De Heere leidde hem en de zijnen in moeilijke wegen.

De Hollandsche Vrouwen Vereeniging, "Dient den Heere", wenscht hiermede onze innerlijke deelneming in dit verlies aan de weduwe en de kinderen te betuigen.

Wij mogen gelooven dat hij van alle lijden verlost is en ingegaan is in de eeuwige rust. Moge de Heere de weduwe en hare kinderen troosten met zijne genade.

Namens de Vrouwen Vereeniging,

Redlands, Calif.

Ds. P. De Boer, Pres.

Mrs. P. Kooiman, Secr.

What does the worldling gain
By all his vain pursuits?
His very pleasure gives him pain,
And misery are its fruits.

What anxious cares corrode
The mind intent on wealth!
His mammon oft becomes a load,
Which robs him of his health.

Does he his end attain,
And in full affluence roll?
What does the sordid creature gain,
When God demands his soul?

My heart to heaven aspire,
And seek thine all in God:
Nor e'er pollute thy pure desire,
By trifles on the road,