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MEDITATIE

Onderzocht Door De Profeten

Van welke zaligheid ondervraagd en onderzocht hebben de profeten, die geprofeteerd hebben van de genade aan u geschied; Onderzoekende, op welken of hoedanigen tijd de Geest van Christus, die in hen was, etc.

I Pet. 1:10-12.

Begeerlijke zaligheid!

Want van de zaligheid, waarvan de apostel in het onmiddelijk verband gesproken had, doch thans als zeer begeerlijk, zooals mag blijken uit de houding van de Oud Testamentische profeten zoowel als van de engelen,—van de zeer begeerlijke zaligheid spreekt hij hier.

De zaligheid der zielen!

Die zaligheid bezitten we ook thans.

Hem, Dien we niet zien, hebben we lief. In den opgestanen en verheerlijkten Christus gelooven we, en verheugen we ons met eene onuitsprekelijke en heerlijke vreugde. Want we hebben de eerstelingen des Geestes, en die eerstelingen doen ons ook thans, in deze wereld, en terwijl we nog midden in den dood liggen, deelen in al de geestelijke zegeningen in den hemel in Christus Jezus.

Doch de vervulling wacht nog. Het einde onzes geloofs, de volkomene zaligheid der zielen, waarvan we hier en thans een voorsmaak hebben, verkrijgen we hier nog slechts in hope, straks in eeuwige werkelijkheid.

En die zaligheid is zeer te begeeren.

Zie het slechts aan de houding der Oud Testamentische zieners.

Ze zagen iets van deze zaligheid.

Doch het weinige, dat ze zagen, was genoeg om hen begeerig te maken en te doen ondervragen en

onderzoeken naar de beteekenis van hun eigen vergezichten!

Ze begeerden te weten voornamelijk iets aangaande den tijd, en aangaande het karakter van den tijd van het lijden, dat op Christus komen zou, en de heerlijkheid daarna volgende.

Aangevuurd door het begeerlijke van hetgeen ze van verre zagen, spanden ze zich in, om een helderder blik te erlangen in de heerlijkheden des heils.

Ze ondervraagden en onderzochten.

En zelfs de zalige engelen turen op het mysterie des heils, begeerig om in de komende heerlijkheden in te zien!

Heerlijke vreugde!

Van welke zaligheid. . . .

't Was nog de tijd der schaduwen!

De zaligheid was nog niet. De heiligen hadden de belofte nog niet verkregen.

Zij, die leefden uit het geloof, aanschouwden de belofte slechts van verre, omhelsden haar, en beleden door 't geloof in de belofte, dat zij gasten en vreemdelingen op aarde waren.

De dingen, die ons nu aangeziend zijn door degenen, die ons het evangelie verkondigd hebben, konden toen nog niet worden bediend. Ze waren nog niet. Want de Heilige Geest was nog niet van den hemel gezonden. En Hij kon nog niet komen, overmits Jezus nog niet verheerlijkt was.

Vandaar, dat 't geloof zich altijd moest vestigen op de schaduwen, en door de schaduwen op de toekomst, waarin de vervulling der belofte lag. En vandaar ook, dat de zieners, de profeten, zij, wien het vergund werd de toppen der bergen te beklimmen, om vandaar een vergezicht te erlangen in de dingen, die ons thans aangediend zijn; zij, in wie de Geest was en werkte, beduidde en tevoren betuigde, juist altijd hun ondervragenden en onderzoekenden blik vestigden op "het lijden, dat op Christus komen zou, en de heerlijkheid daarna volgende."

't Meervoud is hier gebezigd: ze onderzochten en

ondervraagden naar de *smart*en en *verdrukkingen*, die op Christus komen zouden, en naar de *heerlijkheden*, daarna volgende.

Want dat de Christus *moest* lijden, daarvan getuigden niet slechts al de schaduwen, maar daarvan getuigde ook de Geest van Christus, die in de zieners der oude bedeeling was. Zoo was het immers reeds voorzeggd in het Paradijs door het woord Gods, dat wel beloofde, dat het zaad der vrouw den kop der slang zou vermorzelen, maar dan slechts in een weg, waarin de slang zijne verzenen zou vermorzelen. In het licht van dat eerste profetische woord zagen alle profeten altijd den Christus, Die te komen stond. Ze zongen van Hem als van God verlaten, als een worm en geen man, als een smaad van menschen, en veracht van het volk; als den Bespottte, tegen Wien men de lip uitstak, over Wien men het hoofd schudde, van Wien men zeide, dat ook God, op Wien Hij vertrouwde, Hem niet wilde helpen. Men zong van Hem als de van alle zijden benauwde, omsingeld door sterke stieren van Basan. Men zag Hem als iemand, Wiens kracht verdroogd is, die uitgestort is als water, Wiens beenderen men kon tellen, Die een schouwspel is van allen, Wiens kleederen men onder zich verdeelde, en over wiens gewaad men het lot wierp. Ps. 22.

En zoo zagen Hem, en spraken van Hem al de profeten.

Hij gaf Zijnen rug, dengenen, die Hem sloegen, en Zijne wangen dengenen, die Hem het haar uitplukten; en voor smaadheden en speeksel verborg Hij niet Zijn aangezicht. Jes. 50.

Ze zagen Hem als een rijsje opgeschoten, als een wortel uit een dorre aarde. Gedaante noch heerlijkheid had Hij, en Hij had geen gestalte, dat men Hem zou begeerd hebben. Veracht was Hij, en de onwaardigste onder de menschen, een man van smarten voor Wien een iegelijk zijn aangezicht verborg. Hij werd verwond om onze overtredingen, en verbrijzeld om onze ongerechtigheden. Hij werd verdrukt, en als een lam ter slachting geleid, zonder Zijnen mond open te doen. En uit het land der levenden werd Hij afgesneden. Het behaagde den Heere Hem te verbrijzelen, en God maakte Hem krank. Jes. 53.

Zoo getuigde de Geest van Christus, Die in hen was, van het lijden, de smarten en verdrukkingen, die op Christus komen zouden.

Doch daarna volgden er heerlijkheden!

Heerlijkheden voor Hem den Christus, en heerlijkheden ook voor de Kerk, voor de Zijnen.

En ook daarvan getuigde de Geest van Christus in de profeten. Immers, ook temidden van al Zijn lijden stelde de Christus den Heere geduriglijk voor Zich, en was Hij verzekerd, dat Hij nimmer zou wankelen, omdat de Heere aan de rechterhand was. Daarom was Zijn hart verblijd, en verheugde zich Zijne eer, want

Zijn vleesch zou zeker wonen. God zou Zijne ziel in de hel niet verlaten, noch toelaten, dat Zijn heilige verderving zou zien. Integendeel, Hij zou Hem door de diepte der Hel heen het pad des levens bekend maken, en Hem verzadiging van vreugde geven voor Zijn aangezicht, en liefelijkheden aan Gods rechterhand eeuwiglijk. Ps. 16.

Heerlijke dagen zouden volgen op de smarten van den Knecht des Heeren.

Want Hij zou verhoogd worden als Koning over Zijn volk, en regeeren van zee tot zee, en van de rivier tot aan de einden der aarde. Alle koningen der aarde zouden zich voor Hem nederbuigen, en alle heidenen Hem dienen. En Hij zou den nooddriftige redden, en den ellendige, die geen helper heeft. Hij zou het opnemen voor armen en nooddriftigen, en de zielen der nooddriftigen verlossen. Zoo zou Hij Zijn volk richten met gerechtigheid, en de ellendigen met recht. De rechtvaardige zou in Zijne dagen bloeien, en de veelheid van vrede. En Hij zou nederdalen als een regen op het nagras, en als de droppelen, die de aarde bevochtigen. Ps. 72.

Heerlijkheden daarna volgende!

Op Hem zou de Geest des Heeren rusten, de Geest der wijsheid en des verstands, de Geest des raads en der sterkte, de Geest der kennis en der vreeze des Heeren. Hij zou niet richten naar het gezicht Zijner oogen, noch naar het gehoor Zijner ooren bestraffen. Met gerechtigheid zou Hij de armen richten, en de zachtmoedigen met rechtmatigheid. Gerechtigheid zou de gordel Zijner lenden zijn, en ook de waarheid. En Zijn koninkrijk zou gekenmerkt worden door welvaart en voorspoed en universeelen vrede. Wolf en lam, luipaard en geitenbok, het kalf en de jonge leeuw en het mestvee tezamen, zouden met elkander in vrede verkeerden. Nergens zou men meer leed doen op gansch den berg van Gods heiligheid, want de aarde zou vol zijn van de kennis des Heeren, gelijk de wateren den bodem der zee bedekken. Jes. 11.

Heerlijkheden!

Want als Zijne ziel zich tot een schuldoffer gesteld zou hebben, zou Hij zaad zien. Hij zou de dagen verlengen, en het welbehagen des Heeren zou door Zijne hand gelukkiglijk voortgaan. Door Zijne kennis zou Hij velen rechtvaardig maken. Jes. 53.

Sions licht zou komen, en de heerlijkheid des Heeren zou over haar opgaan, en Zijne heerlijkheid zou over haar gezien worden. En de heidenen zouden tot haar licht komen, en koningen tot den glans, die over haar zou zijn opgegaan. Van verre, van oost en west, van noord en zuid, zouden hare zonen en hare dochteren komen, en haar hart zou verwijd worden om te ontvangen de menigte der heidenen. Hun zilver en hun goud zouden ze met zich brengen naar Jeruzalem, tot den Naam des Heeren, dewijl Hij Sion heerlijk zou hebben gemaakt, Vreemden zouden hare muren bou-

wen. Koningen zouden haar dienen. Hare poorten zouden steeds openstaan, zij zouden des nachts niet gesloten worden, opdat de stad Gods altijd zou mogen ontvangen het heil der heidenen, en hunne koningen tot haar mochten worden geleid. Jes. 60.

Het lijden, dat op Christus komen zou, de smarten, die over Hem zouden komen, en de heerlijkheden daarna volgende!

Heerlijkheden voor Hem: verlossing, opstanding, verheerlijking, verhooging aan de rechterhand des Vaders! En heerlijkheden voor de Zijnen: vergeving en volkomene verzoening, rechtvaardiging en eeuwige heerlijkheid!

Begeerlijke zaligheid! Onuitsprekelijke vreugde!

Begeerlijk ook zelfs in de vergezichten der profeten!

Volheid van heil!

Begeerlijke zaligheid!

Begeerlijk zelfs in zoover als de profeten een inzicht hadden in de dingen, waarvan ze profeteerden.

Want ook zij verstonden den vollen rijkdom hunner eigen profetie niet. De Geest van Christus getuigde wel in hen, en beduidde wel de dingen aangaande het lijden van Christus, en aangaande de heerlijkheden daarna volgend; en hetgeen de Geest alzoo getuigde, daarvan spraken zij tot het volk. Doch hetgeen zij alzoo door den Geest van Christus, den Geest der profetie, spraken, als Hij vaardig over hen was, bleef ook voor hen grootendeels verborgen.

Want de Geest van Christus werkte wel in hen als Geest der profetie, maar was als Geest van den verhoogden Heiland nog niet uitgestort, en woonde ook in de profeten niet.

Ze bedienden niet zichzelf, niet de kerk der oude bedeeeling, maar ons deze dingen.

Niet alsof door hun profetie ook zijzelf, en het volk Gods, voor wie ze profeteerden, niet iets zagen van de werkelijkheid, die te komen stond, en niet werden gesterkt in de hope der vervulling van de beloften. Doch het volle heil van Gods verbond kenden ze niet.

Eerst moest de Zoon Gods vleesch worden, om onder ons te wonen en ons den Vader te openbaren. Eerst moest het lijden, waarvan de profeten spraken, op den Christus komen, en moest Hij aller ongerechtigheden dragen, om verzoening teweeg te brengen in Zijn bloed, en alle weldaden des heils voor de Zijnen te verdienen. Eerst moest Hij uit de dooden worden opgewekt, en zelf het leven in onverderfelijkheid en onsterfelijkheid bezitten. Eerst moest Hij aan de rechterhand Gods verhoogd worden, ver boven alle macht en kracht en heerschappij, en Zelf de belofte des Heiligen Geestes ontvangen, opdat Hij Zijne gaven des heils zou mogen mededeelen aan Zijne Kerk. En dan eerst zou de belofte des Geestes, de belofte, dat God Zijnen Geest zou uitstorten op alle vleesch, op zonen

en dochteren, op dienstknechten en dienstmaagden, kunnen worden vervuld.

En alleen door dien Geest, die van den hemel zou komen, zouden de dingen, die de profeten zelf slechts van verre zagen, nabij komen, verstaan worden door de prediking des evangelies, en in het bezit kunnen worden gesteld van al de ergenamen der belofte.

En de profeten verstonden dit.

Het was hun geopenbaard, dat zij niet zich zelf, maar ons bedienden deze dingen.

Niet alsof zij ons kenden.

Maar wel zoo, dat zij duidelijk zagen, dat de dingen, die hun door den Geest der profetie werden geopenbaard, en die zij zelf niet verstonden ten volle, tot eene andere bedeeeling dan die der schaduwen behoorden. Niet tot den tijd van het aardse Jeruzalem, met zijn aardse tempel, zijn aardse priesters, zijn aardse altaar en gedurige offeranden, en van het aardse en nationale Israel, maar tot eene gansch nieuwe en andere bedeeeling behoorden deze dingen.

En ook niet zoo, alsof ze zelf gansch geen belang hadden bij de dingen, die ze door den Geest van Christus, die in hen was, in de verte zagen, en waarvan ze, ver boven hun eigen begrip uit, spraken.

Immers zou de belofte ook aan hen worden vervuld, al waren ze ook niet meer op aarde.

Ook in den hemel, ja, vooral in den hemel, zou de Geest der belofte en der kennis en wijsheid worden uitgestort. En, ofschoon zij de belofte niet ontvingen zijn ze immers toch in het geloof gestorven!

Van verre ziende, en geloovende, en omhelzende de belofte!

Begeerig naar het volle heil!

Onuitsprekelijke heerlijkheid!

Met sterk verlangen zagen de profeten naar de vervulling er van uit.

Daarom ondervraagden en onderzochten ze hunne eigene profetie. Ze hebben ondervraagd en onderzocht van de zaligheid, die de Kerk der nieuwe bedeeeling thans bezit, van de genade, die aan ons is geschied door de zending des Geestes, en door de verkondiging des evangelies.

En met verlangen uitziende naar de heerlijkheid, die op het lijden van Christus zou volgen, onderzochten ze bijzonderlijk, wat de Geest van Christus beduidde en tevoren getuigde aangaande den tijd, en het karakter des tijds, waarin dit lijden zou plaats hebben, en waarin de heerlijkheden zouden worden gerealiseerd.

En zelfs begeeren de engelen, die ook zelf bij deze zaligheid belang hebben, die van haar ook kennis hebben, voor wie echter de eindelijke volheid des heils ook nog niet geopenbaard is, in de dingen dezer zaligheid in te zien.

Alles wacht en verlangt naar de vervulling!

Kom, Heere Jezus!

H, H,

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EDITORIALS

As To Our Moral Obligation

I take it for granted that all our readers, even those that thus far have revealed little or no enthusiasm for a school of our own, and among these even those who definitely opposed it especially by the "moral obligation" argument, will have to agree with me, that our obligation to the existing schools and school societies can be none other than, and is rooted in the obligation of the parents with regard to the education of their children.

These school societies are, with respect to the instruction of our children only a means to an end.

If parents were in a position to give their children all the education they need, personally and at home, there would be no need of these societies. In fact, in that case it would be their sacred calling to provide such instruction themselves. Apart from the Church to which the ministry of the Word is entrusted, they are the only responsible party before God with respect to this instruction.

Or even, if all could afford to employ a private tutor to educate their children, the school society might be discarded.

However, this is impossible.

Parents lack time and ability to give their children a complete education according to the requirements and demands of modern life. And they lack the means to employ private teachers. Hence, they band together, organize societies, in order that together and with united efforts they may accomplish what individually they are not able to do. And these societies establish schools, determine the character of the education their children shall receive, and employ the teachers that shall furnish such education as the parents determine that their children shall have.

It should be plain then, that the moral obligation of these societies can be none other than that of the parents individually.

Nor can the obligation of the parent to the society of which he is a member be any other than to cooperate and put forth all his efforts to fulfill his obligation with respect to the education of his children.

That obligation, as we have seen, is that he shall instruct them "in the aforesaid" doctrine to "the utmost of his power," or "help or cause them to be instructed therein."

This latter phrase includes the instruction they receive in the school.

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This part of his obligation he fulfills through the means of the school society.

For the parent that is Protestant Reformed this obligation, which he solemnly and very definitely assumes by covenant-vow before God and the Church, means that he will work to the utmost of his power, also through the school society to provide for his children an education that is in harmony with Protestant Reformed doctrine and principles.

It follows, then, that this is his moral obligation with respect to the society of which he is a member.

He must seek the good of that society.

That surely is his moral obligation.

And because the society exists for the purpose of so serious a matter as the education of covenant children, he certainly has the moral obligation to seek the very best for it.

Hence, he must work to the utmost of his power to make the society an efficient means unto the end of providing a Protestant Reformed education for his children and the children of his fellow members.

Other obligations he may have toward the society and toward the school certainly follow from and are subservient to this one fundamental obligation. With a view to this great calling he pays his dues and school tuition, he takes part in the activities of the society, watches over the school and over the appointment of teachers.

All his effort must be directed to that one end: that the society may be a means to help him to instruct his children in "the aforesaid doctrine to the utmost of his power."

Is it possible for the Protestant Reformed parent to do this through the existing schools and school-societies?

Yes, if there is no opportunity for him to send his children to a school of Protestant Reformed parents, or to organize a society for the establishment of such a school. In that case he meets his assumed obligation with a view to the education of his children in the "aforesaid doctrine" *to the utmost of his power*, by sending his children to one of the existing Christian schools, or to a Lutheran school if necessary, to the best school he can find, and by supplementing and correcting such instruction at home in as far as it may be necessary.

No parent dare send his children to the public school on the pretext that the existing schools are not Protestant Reformed.

And in that case he has the moral obligation to work to the utmost of his power for the good of the society to which he belongs, and of the school to which he sends his children. And as far as cooperation on

the basis of the constitution of such a society permits him, he will try to make that society and school a means to instruct his children according to Protestant Reformed principles.

But the above question must be answered with an unqualified *No* if he is strong enough, has the means and the opportunity, to establish a school of his own choice in cooperation with other Protestant Reformed parents.

For in that case he does not "help or cause them to be instructed in the aforesaid doctrine *to the utmost of his power*".

He is satisfied with the line of least resistance.

For he knows very well that, whatever efforts he may put forth *to improve* the school to which he sends his children, it is a foregone conclusion that he can never make it the means to instruct his children according to the Protestant Reformed conception of the truth.

He may remove certain evils, protest against the presentation of all kinds of dramas and moving pictures in the schools, against the singing of a few Arminian hymns, or even against the direct inculcation of the theory of common grace, perhaps; but he will never be able to make the school a means for the instruction of the children along Protestant Reformed lines.

This is impossible, first of all, because his influence is very limited. The Christian Reformed parents control the existing schools. They permit the Protestant Reformed parent to send his children to their schools, and to support their cause financially; but for the rest they pay very little attention to him as soon as he insists on positive, Reformed principles. This I could easily prove, if it should be required.

But this is impossible especially because of the very principle of cooperation. By joining an existing society he waives the right to insist on positive, Protestant Reformed education. He has no right to demand such education of the existing schools.

And if he had the right it would be physically impossible to realize it, even in any local school where he might be represented in substantial numbers of members, for the simple reason that the whole school system, as to teachers, books, propaganda, etc. is under Christian Reformed control.

Nor can an instance be mentioned where this was ever attempted even by those who insist that it is our moral obligation to cooperate with the existing schools as long as possible.

Hence, I maintain, that in such cases, i.e. wherever there are a sufficient number of Protestant Reformed parents, and they have the means and power, their sacred moral obligation with respect to the existing societies is to leave them, and to establish societies and schools of their own, where they may instruct their

children "in the aforesaid doctrine to the utmost of their power."

And why, pray, should they not do this?

There is nothing separatistic in a movement to establish our own school.

Is not, after all, a Christian school a strictly local affair? Does not each school society exist by itself? It is true that there is a Union of Christian Schools, and that many local schools, perhaps most of them, are members of this union. But this does not bring all the schools under one board, or unite them into one body. Each society has authority in its own domain, and is strictly autonomous. The Christian school is a local matter.

But if this is so, what would be more natural, in places where there are a sufficient number of Protestant Reformed parents, than to band together, organize their own local society, and establish their own local schools, where their children can be instructed along Protestant Reformed lines?

There is then, absolutely no reason why, for instance, in a city like Grand Rapids, where some six hundred families are found belonging to the four Protestant Reformed Churches in that city, we should not have two or three schools of our own.

By establishing such schools we would simply fulfill our obligation before God.

We would only be doing what the Christian Reformed people have done before us.

We would do the very same thing the Reformed (Gereformeerde) people in the Netherlands did years ago, when they separated from the existing Christian school, and established schools of their own.

We would do no harm to the existing schools in any sense. They can very well get along without us, as far as the financial support of their schools is concerned.

And we could be of real influence by doing so.

As matters stand now, we have no influence at all. We are divided. We are scattered over several societies and schools. We have no power. We cannot let our voice be heard. We develop nothing. And we deliver our children to Christian Reformed schools and teachers to instruct them according to their view.

If, however, we would unite as one people, loving the cause of definite Christian instruction according to "the aforesaid doctrine", and strive for the realization of the ideal to establish and complete our own system of education, higher and lower, we could, with God's blessing, be a power for good even for the existing schools and for the cause of Christian instruction in general.

From whatever angle one considers this matter, therefore, the conclusion is always that it is our moral

obligation, both with respect to our children before God, and with respect to the Christian School Movement, that we organize our own societies, and establish our own schools.

Those who harp on our "moral obligation" as an argument against a separate school movement, have no ground to stand on.

H. H.

The Triple Knowledge

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART TWO
OF MAN'S REDEMPTION

Lord's Day XII

5.

After The Order Of Melchisedec. (Cont.)

In both these respects, that the priestly office and the kingship were combined in one person, and that he was a priest for ever, Melchisedec is a type of Christ. Christ is the real Melchisedec, the royal priest, the king of righteousness, and the king of peace. He functions in both the royal and the priestly office.

From this viewpoint it may be said, indeed, that there was a figure or image of this priesthood in that of the first Adam in paradise in the state of rectitude. He was an earthly image of the eternal, heavenly priest-king. For Adam was very really priest of the Most High. This we cannot understand as long as we see the essence of the priesthood and of the priestly function in the offering up of bloody sacrifices. For this there was no room in the original state of righteousness. This was added after the fall, and became necessary because of sin. But bloody sacrifices are not an essential element of the priesthood. Even as the prediction of future events, though belonging to the office of the prophet among Israel, cannot be considered essential to the prophetic office, so the offering up of bloody sacrifices, though for a time necessary on account of sin, is not the essence of the priesthood. The central idea of the priestly office is that of consecration of oneself and all things to the living God. A priest is a servant of God. He loves God. He consecrates himself to the Holy One. He serves in God's

tabernacle, in His house. In this sense, Adam was surely priest of the most high God in the midst of the earthly creation. All things must serve him, that he might serve his God, and be consecrated to Him with all his heart and mind and soul and strength. And as priest he was also king. Dominion was given him over all the earthly creation. The royal and the priestly offices were harmoniously united in his person. And this was but proper. Only the servant of God has the right to have dominion, for only as long as he stands in the right relation to the Creator of all things, that is, in subjection and obedience, can he properly rule over all things in the name of the Lord, and according to His will. Prostrating himself in the dust before the Sovereign of heaven and earth, and consecrating himself and all his power, together with the whole earthly creation, to the living God, Adam in the state of rectitude might have dominion and sway the royal sceptre over all creatures. He was priest-king, servant-king, king under God.

Among Israel this was different. Aaron was priest, but he did not sway the sceptre. The two offices were strictly separated in Israel's theocracy. The king might not minister at the altar, the priest could not occupy the throne. Hence, Aaron, though prefiguring a phase of the priestly office of Christ, was not His perfect type. The perfect type is found in the figure of Melchisedec, king of Salem, the priest of the Most High. His priesthood is realized in Christ. For Christ is the perfect Priest, the perfect Servant of Jehovah, Whose meat it is to do the Father's will, and Who, as the Son of God in human nature is consecrated to Him with His whole being. He is the only High Priest over His brethren, and is set over the whole house of God, to accomplish all things pertaining to God. And having accomplished all, and having become revealed as the perfect Servant of Jehovah, Who became obedient unto death, even unto the death of the cross, He is exalted at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, henceforth expecting till all things shall be put under His feet. Hence, the priesthood of Melchisedec is fulfilled in Him. He entered in the sanctuary above, not made with hands, and constantly consecrates Himself and all things to the Father; and He has all power and authority in heaven and on earth, and sits in His Father's throne. As the perfect High Priest, He is also King of righteousness, and on the basis of God's own everlasting righteousness He is King of peace!

And His priesthood is without end. It is everlasting. This was not, and could not be true of the priesthood of Aaron. It represented but a phase of the priestly calling of Christ, that phase which had become necessary on account of sin. And this phase could not be everlasting. It belonged to the way the High Priest must travel to realize His everlasting priest-

hood; it was part of the work that must be performed to build the House of God. It was accomplished in the perfect sacrifice of Christ on the cross, and there it came to an end. Of this phase of the priesthood of Christ that of Aaron was a shadow. Hence, while the eternal priesthood of Christ could be typified in just one figure, that of Melchisedec, the priesthood of Aaron must be spread over a long line of generations. For the blood of bulls and of goats could never blot out sin. It must ever be repeated until the perfect sacrifice of reconciliation had been offered in the blood of the cross. But it could not last for ever. Not only must there come an end to the sacrificing of bulls and goats, but also the perfect sacrifice of the High Priest Himself could never be repeated. This phase of the priesthood of Christ was finished when the High Priest laid down His life as a ransom for many. But the priesthood of Christ did not reach its end on Golgotha. It is everlasting. He is a priest after the order of Melchisedec. For ever He consecrates Himself, and His people, and all things, in perfect love to the Father. And presently He will come again to perfect the work the Father gave Him to do, to finish the House of God, and establish it in heavenly beauty in the new Jerusalem. Then the tabernacle of God will be with men. In that tabernacle all things will be sanctified to God. And in that everlasting House of God Christ will for ever be the perfect King-Priest, the King of righteousness and the King of peace, after the order of Melchisedec!

6.

The One Sacrifice.

The Heidelberg Catechism, as we stated before, does not discuss the priesthood of Christ after the order of Melchisedec, but considers it solely from the viewpoint of the work of redemption He was and is to accomplish for His people. We would almost feel inclined to apologize for having gone off on a tangent as far as we did in our previous discussion, were it not true that for a full understanding of the significance of Christ as the Anointed of God it is quite essential to consider Him in this wider connection. Now, however, we may return to the Catechism, which teaches us that to the work of Christ as Priest belong especially two elements: 1. That "by the one sacrifice of His body He has redeemed us," and 2. That "He makes continual intercession with the Father for us."

The way into the sanctuary of God, and into the glory of His priesthood after the order of Melchisedec, lay for Christ over the accursed tree. To His perfect obedience and consecration to the Father belonged "the one sacrifice of His body." For He was appointed

High Priest at the head of a people that were by nature sinful, guilty and damnable before God, "that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Tit. 2:14. "Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." Heb. 2:17. For it pleased God to make reconciliation through Him. For, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." Hence, this faithful and merciful High Priest is authorized to send out the word of reconciliation: "Be ye reconciled to God. II Cor. 5:19, 20. For "when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." Rom. 5:10. The High Priest according to the order of Melchisedec, standing at the head of a people in sin, estranged from God, and children of wrath, must bring "the one sacrifice of his body" to make reconciliation for the sins of His people.

Reconciliation is a covenant idea. It presupposes a relation existing between the parties that are to be reconciled, whether of friendship or of love or of obligation. Perfect strangers are not reconciled. One can speak of reconciliation between man and wife, between friend and friend, between a subject and his king, between father and son. With respect to divine reconciliation, the relation that is presupposed is the eternal covenant of God with His people. When God, through Christ, reconciled us unto Himself He revealed His eternal covenant love and friendship toward us. Reconciliation presupposes, however, also that the relation between the parties to be reconciled has been violated, so that it cannot function, and the parties are at variance with each other. With respect to divine reconciliation the cause of this separation and variance lies wholly with man. By his wilful disobedience he violated the covenant of God, and became an object of wrath by nature. As such all men come into the world, also God's own elect. They are enemies of God, and have forfeited all right and claim to God's favor. And the act of reconciliation consists in the removal of the cause of the separation and variance. It is that act of God whereby he changes the state of the sinner from one of guilt, in which he is the proper object of God's wrath, into one of righteousness, in which he is the object of God's love and favor.

These main elements of divine reconciliation must be clearly understood and born in mind, lest we misrepresent this fundamental truth of salvation. God is the Reconciler. Never may we represent the matter as if God were the One that is reconciled. This error is often committed. According to this presentation of the matter, God and the sinner are at variance, and

Christ steps in between, intervenes with His sacrifice, in order to bring the two parties together. But Scripture never supports this view. It never speaks of God and the sinner being mutually reconciled. Nowhere do we read that God reconciled Himself to us, or that Christ reconciled God to His people. But always it represents God as the Reconciler, and His people as those that are reconciled to Him by His gracious act. Christ is not a third party intervening between God and us, but He is the revelation of God the Reconciler. For God was in Christ reconciling, not Himself, but the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. We are in a state of guilt and under wrath by nature, and God removes the guilt, and translates us into a state of favor and friendship.

The way of this reconciliation is that of satisfaction. Men may be reconciled to one another by merely "forgetting and forgiving" whatever may be the cause of their separation. But this is impossible with God. The cause of our alienation from God *must be removed*. And a basis of reconciliation must be established in the righteousness of God. This cause of our separation from God is our sin, the sin that is ours in connection with the whole human race in Adam, and which we can only increase daily. For it is because of the guilt of sin that we lie under the judgment of damnation, and are the objects of the wrath of God. By nature we lie in the midst of death. If, therefore, reconciliation is to be established, the guilt of sin must be removed, blotted out, and righteousness must be established. But how is it possible to remove sin? Only by the satisfaction, the perfect satisfaction of the justice of God against sin. There is no other way. Whatever a supercilious modernism may mockingly object to this truth when it speaks of "blood-theology," and whatever it may try to offer instead about a God that is all love, and that is so merciful that He is ready to overlook sin, to wink at it, simply to act as if it had never been committed, the truth of satisfaction for sin is emphasized throughout Scripture, and must be strongly maintained as belonging to the fundamentals of the Christian faith. God cannot deny Himself. And He is righteous and just. Hence, there can be no reconciliation without satisfaction.

But what is satisfaction? How can the justice of God against sin be satisfied? Only by a perfect sacrifice. And what is a perfect sacrifice? It is the offering up of oneself, with an act of perfect obedience and in the love of God, to God's perfect justice against sin. The punishment of sin is death. One, therefore, who would satisfy the justice of God and make an atonement for sin, must suffer this punishment. He must taste death in all its implications, eternal death. The vials of God's wrath must be poured out over him, and must be emptied. But in suffering this agony of the wrath of God, these torments of hell, in dying this

death, he must not be merely passive, still less dare he be rebellious against the heavy hand of God upon him: he must perform an act in suffering, he must be obedient in dying, he must still love God when His heavy hand oppresses him. Mere passive suffering is no sacrifice. Even the damned in hell suffer the wrath of God, without ever atoning for their sin. To satisfy the justice of God one must perform an act that is the perfect antithesis of the act of willful disobedience of man in the first paradise. His act must be the perfect *Yes* over against the sinner's *No*. He must will to die for God's righteousness. He must *offer himself*.

And that is the meaning of the cross!

On Golgotha our only High Priest offered the "one sacrifice of his body" to satisfy the justice of God against sin. And this sacrifice was vicarious, substitutional. Voluntarily He entered into death, and suffered the deepest agonies of hell, not for His own sins, but for the sins of those whom the Father had given Him. And thus our only High Priest "by the one sacrifice of His body, has redeemed us," purchased us free from the bondage of sin in which we were held, obtained eternal and perfect righteousness for us, and merited for us the favor of God. Thus His sacrifice is the offering of reconciliation. God was in Christ reconciling us unto Himself.

He was able and authorized to make this perfect sacrifice, and to make it instead of all His own. For, as to the first, He is without sin. He had no original sin, for He is the person of the Son of God in human nature, so that the guilt of Adam's transgression could not be imputed unto Him; and He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, so that His nature was undefiled. "For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." Heb. 7:26. He is the Lamb without blemish. He was able to become perfectly obedient, even unto the death of the cross. He could offer to God the perfect *Yes* over against the terrible and wanton *No* of sin. And He could lay down His life, that He might take it again, for voluntarily He had assumed human life, and from the Father He had received commandment and authority to lay it down. And, as to the second, namely, that He was able and authorized to bring that perfect sacrifice for His own, we must remember, first of all, that He represented them all in virtue of His eternal anointing. God had chosen His elect in Him, and He was the head of all His own. Election is the basis of vicarious atonement. Without eternal, sovereign election, substitutional atonement is impossible. Either Christ represented His elect on the cross, and died in their stead; or He represented no one, and His death is in vain. And because He is the person of the Son of God that died, He could suffer death for all His own so as to satisfy

for them all, and redeem them unto life. All the vials of God's wrath, under which we all would have had to perish everlastingly, were poured out on Him in the moment of the cross, and in perfect obedience He bore that wrath even unto the end. For "Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." It is finished!

Some of the elements of this doctrine of vicarious atonement by the one sacrifice of Jesus on the cross will have to be discussed more elaborately in connection with other parts of the Heidelberg Catechism. But even here they had to be briefly touched upon, in order to set forth the meaning of this sacrifice of our High Priest in our stead and in our behalf, and to maintain the truth of vicarious atonement over against several false theories that have been developed to explain the death of Christ.

First of all, there is the so-called *moral theory* of the suffering of Christ. It denies that the death of Christ was a sacrifice for sin in the proper sense of the word, and, of course, also that He died in our stead. Christ's death was no satisfaction of the justice of God in respect to sin. According to this theory, the true purpose of the death of Christ is to exert a salutary, reformatory influence upon the moral condition of man. Christ left us a worthy example, when He willingly sacrificed His life for the truth. Or, He revealed that God will suffer with us, and that He entered into all our afflictions and death, in order that He might be able to sympathize with us. But in whatever way this theory may try to explain the real character and purpose of the death of Christ, it denies that it is an offering for sin, and that He died in our stead to satisfy the justice of God; and it insists that Christ's suffering meant to make a moral impression upon us, and to exert an improving influence upon mankind. To consider the suffering Man of sorrows tends to the moral uplift of men.

It is hardly necessary to point out that this theory stands in direct contradiction to the testimony of Scripture.

H. H.

Our help is in the glorious Name,
The Name of matchless worth;
Of Him to Whom all power belongs,
The Lord of heaven and earth,

The Preaching of the Gospel as Keys of the Kingdom

The kingdom of heaven has keys. Christ tells us so in saying to Peter, "I give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. . . ." Through this speech, He set the kingdom—His kingdom—before us under the image of a walled city with a gate that is locked and unlocked, opened and shut — opened to admit the friends, the rightful residents, and closed to shut out the enemy. In his vision, John sees this same kingdom—the holy Jerusalem—ascending out of heaven from God with its gates not closed at all, the reason being that there is no necessity, as the earth has been cleansed from the godless race of men that corrupted it. But as this cleansing has not yet taken place, the gates of Christ's kingdom at present are also closed to shut out this godless race.

The conclusion to which this brings us is that Christ's kingdom is a present reality and that the view according to which it will not be brought into being until the second return of Christ is fallacious. "The kingdom is within you," said Christ to His militant church; its laws are written on the tables of the heart of all its citizens so that through their good conversation the kingdom attains visibility also before the eyes of its enemies. This already suggests that Christ's kingdom is a heavenly spiritual entity. Nothing that is of this earth and of sinful flesh belongs to it. It excludes the carnal seed in the church and all that is of the flesh in the believers. As to its origin, it is God's conception and creation and His alone. As to its character it is the kingdom of righteousness—the righteousness that God prepared for it through the atonement of His Son, its eternal king. Therefore of all the kingdoms that be, it is the only abiding entity. It is the only kingdom that comes. And it comes through all the opposition of wicked men to it. And when Christ shall appear, it will appear with Him in glory.

It is for this kingdom and its coming, and for this kingdom only, that God's believing people pray. Thus they pray not for the coming of the kingdoms of this earth; for, doing so, they pray against the Scriptures and thus pray in vain.

Being what it is, a heavenly-spiritual entity, this kingdom as was said, has enemies. To these enemies the kingdom must be closed. To the believers it must be opened. Both are done by the preaching of the Gospel. Thus the keys of this kingdom are verily the preaching of the gospel. This is the subject on which I speak. I have arranged my material under the following three points. First, how the kingdom is opened and closed by the preaching of the gospel; second, the necessity of the opening and closing of the kingdom; and finally, the giving of the preaching of

the gospel as the keys of the kingdom to the church.

We speak here of keys plural and not of key because the Bible does so. The kingdom has but one key; but this one key, as all keys, opens and closes, unlocks and locks the kingdom. Therefore the Scriptures speak of *the keys* of the kingdom of heaven. Whereas the preaching of the gospel are the keys, I think that an answer to the question, "What is the gospel," fits logically into the thought-structure of this speech of mine. It is necessary to first raise and answer this question if the treatment of our subject is to be brought to a successful issue.

The gospel is glad tidings, according to the Greek word of which our word gospel is the translation. But a glad tidings concerning whom and what? The answer is the phrase, occurring over and over in the New Testament Scriptures, "Gospel of Christ," and the phrases, "Gospel of peace," and "Gospel of the kingdom," and "Gospel of God." The gospel is a glad tidings of Christ. As the genitive here is objective, it means that the gospel sets forth Christ in the relation which He sustains to the triune Jehovah, to His people, and to all things, sets forth Christ in all His worth, significance and glory in these relations. The gospel then is the glad tidings concerning the Christ. And this is at once the Bible. The entire Bible as to its whole content is gospel in that all the lines of thought that run through the Scriptures converge in Christ. The Bible reveals the Christ as the Christ of God and the triune God as the God and father of Christ and of Christ's people, thus reveals God in the face of Christ as the God of our salvation. The gospel is also the glad tidings of peace and of the kingdom because it sets forth that peace and that kingdom that God prepared for His people through Christ. The gospel is the glad tidings of God. Here the genitive is possessive, so that the thought conveyed is that the gospel is God's. He conceived of it and realized it. This then is the gospel.

However, we should be more definite and also can be by briefly answering the question: Just what does the gospel tell us concerning the Christ. The heart of the matter can be set forth in the following language.

Christ is the Christ of God by God's eternal appointment and anointing in time. Thus Christ is very and true eternal God, the only begotten Son of God, co-essential and co-eternal with the Father. Through His atonement He, as the Christ of God, redeemed His people from all their sins, realizes in them the fruits of His cross, and thereby leads them, through sin and suffering and death, to their everlasting destination—them, His people, chosen with Him before the foundation of the world to life everlasting, crucified with him,

(Address delivered on the occasion of the commencement exercises of our Theological Seminary.)

buried with Him, raised with Him and thus also set with Him in heaven and blessed with all spiritual blessings approximately 1900 years ago. This is the gospel, the heart and soul of it. It is a good gospel, a glad tidings, exceedingly so. For according to this gospel all the elect of the past and the present and the future—the sum-total of elect, thus also the elect still to be born—are legally in heaven, saved to the uttermost in Christ their head by a faith that cannot cease and is thus indestructible because Christ prays for them. According to this good gospel, each one of God's people—thus also each one of those of His people still to be born—is in heaven and occupies his own place in that great family of redeemed and from that place he shall never be moved. According to this good gospel, all the wicked even now are in the place of eternal desolation. According to this good gospel, the church is glorified, the new heaven and the new earth are here and the tabernacle of God is with men on the new earth. Does this sound strange to your ears? Don't we understand our own doctrine of sovereign election? Thus to preach this good gospel is to preach a finished work of Christ, finished in the legal sense. We therefore would not trade in this gospel for the pseudo-gospel of the Arminian, according to which the salvation of a man is contingent upon his own capricious will and not on the will of God, according to which therefore a true believer—mark you, a true believer—can plunge back into hell even as standing in the very shadows of the gates of the kingdom of heaven.

Now this good gospel, as preached, as rightly preached, to be sure, opens the kingdom to believers i.e. to the elect of God who in time become manifest as believers and shuts the kingdom to the unbelievers who in time become manifest as unbelievers, persistent unbelievers. And, mark you, it does so before their own consciousness. For consider that we now have to do with the preached gospel, with the gospel as preached to men and in men, their hearts and minds.

Now just what does it mean that the preached gospel opens the kingdom to the believers before their own consciousness and closes the kingdom to unbelievers. What does it mean when you open your house to your friend? It means that you bid him to come in and to be thoroughly at home in your domestic circle. It means that you render accessible to him all the good things in this circle, namely your very self, your society and fellowship and the society and fellowship of your loved ones. And when you close your home to the hurtful person, you forbid him to set his foot on your doorstep and thereby shut him out from your fellowship and from the society of your family and from all the rights and privileges of a beloved friend. So does the preaching of the gospel open the kingdom to the believers, render accessible to them before their own consciousness God's throne of grace, the blessed society

and fellowship of God and of Christ and all the treasures of the kingdom and the privileges of those whom God calls His sons. But as to the unbelievers, the wicked, the impenitent, they are shut out from the kingdom with all its blessings and treasures—shut out before their own consciousness by this same preaching of the gospel and thus shut up now and everlastingly in outer darkness. This is the work, the operation of the gospel as preached, as truly preached, rightly preached.

This raises the question, just how is the kingdom opened and closed by the preaching of the gospel? And how is it to be explained that the gospel, as preached, has this effect?

If the how of the matter is to be understood, we must consider first of all that the elect, i.e. the believers, are justified and that the sins of the wicked are retained. As to the believers, their justification is implicit in their being chosen unto life everlasting in Christ and predestinated unto the adoption of children, implied further in their being crucified, buried, raised and set in heaven with Christ. Being justified and forgiven, they are as guiltless as they would be had they never sinned and as positively righteous as they would be had they themselves all their life kept the law of God with all their mind, heart, will and strength. God justified them. He did so through His vesting them with the satisfaction and righteousness—with all the good works—of Christ; and so, in the point of view of His own personal righteousness, He made it lawful for Himself to actually save them from all their sins. There could be no actual deliverance from sin and its consequences were God's people not righteous in Christ, were they thus guilty and condemnable. For guilt calls for wrath and death and everlasting desolation. All the treasures of the kingdom, every blessing that God bestows, are included in the fact of the justification of God's people. Hence, only the believers, the elect of God, such as repent of and forsake their sins, are blessed and none other, for only the believers are justified.

Now consider further that the written record of the justification of the believers is our Bible, the gospel, the glad tidings. The scriptures, the gospel pronounces God's people justified, that is, righteous in Christ and thus forgiven. And it declares, does the gospel, the sins of the wicked retained. Just because of this, the gospel, as rightly preached, opens the kingdom to the believers and closes it to the unbelievers before their own consciousness. The gospel justifies, forgives God's people, pronounces them forgiven.

The author of our Heidelberg Catechism has a fine understanding of these matters. He puts the question, "What are the keys of the kingdom of heaven?" Ans: "The preaching of the gospel and Christian discipline or excommunication." Excommunication, rightly considered, is essentially nothing else but the preaching

of the gospel. Then this author puts the question, "How is the kingdom of heaven opened and shut by the preaching of the gospel?" Ans: "When it is declared to all and every believer that all their sins are really forgiven them of God; and on the contrary, when it is declared unto all unbelievers that they stand exposed to the wrath of God and to eternal damnation." The thought conveyed is that the gospel as preached opens the kingdom to the believers because it justifies them and that this same gospel closes the kingdom to the unbelievers because it declares unto them that their sins are retained. It ought to be plain also just why the preached gospel, through its justifying the penitent sinner in his heart, opens to him the kingdom, renders that kingdom with all its treasures accessible to him before his own consciousness. If a man knows that his sins are forgiven, that thus he is righteous before God in Christ, he knows at once that he is God's son and thus God's heir and a joint heir with Christ and that therefore the kingdom with all its treasures and blessings are rightfully his in Christ. For those whom God justified them He also glorified. How needful this knowledge of their justification is to the believers is apparent. Consider that the believer, in himself guilty and condemnable and vile and worthy of hell, does something amazing. He calls God, that great and terrible God, Father. And he appears before the face of that terrible God and petitions Him for grace and life and forgiveness, and for His fellowship in Christ, yea, he petitions Him for all things, for heaven and earth for the kingdom and all its treasures. How does he have the courage? He has the courage because he knows himself justified, knows therefore that being justified, all things are His.

So, too, it is plain why the preached gospel, through its retaining the sins of the wicked in their own minds and hearts, closes to them the kingdom before their own consciousness. If a man knows in his heart that his sins are not forgiven, that God sets his sins before His face, he, that wicked one, concludes at once that the kingdom and its blessings and treasures are not his and that in God's house there is for him no place. It is God's will that the unbelieving have knowledge of this. For the unbelieving are the wicked who do not repent, who cannot will to repent. They are the wicked who hate God and despise His Christ. God cannot, without denying Himself, look on, while the wicked hate Him, without telling them in their hearts, through His preached gospel, that He judges them in this life and will judge them in the life to come.

As all these statements strongly suggest, the true preacher of the gospel is Christ and none other than He. This is plain from a consideration wherein the work of preaching the gospel consists. It consists in speaking God's gospel—the gospel that justifies sinners who truly repent and retains the sins of the im-

penitent in the hearts of men, believers and unbelievers alike, so that the former know themselves as righteous in Christ and the latter as men with sins retained. Thus it consists—does this work of preaching the gospel—in sanctifying the gospel of forgiveness of sins unto the hearts of the believers, in causing this gospel to dwell richly in them and in speaking the gospel of the retention of sins in the hearts of the wicked, so that they actually know themselves as unforgiven and shut out of the kingdom. Who is equal to this task? The angels in heaven? No, not the angels. Not one of them even if that one were Gabriel. The apostles, were they still with us in person? No, not the apostles. Not one of them even if that one were Paul. There is but One who can speak this gospel of the forgiveness of sins in the heart of the believers, but One who can tell them that they are justified and saved, tell them so that they believe and are assured, and that One is Christ. He tells His people, speaks the gospel of forgiveness of sin in their hearts, and certainly in their hearts alone and not in the hearts of the wicked, the impenitent. The gospel of the forgiveness of sin is a gospel only for the penitent and not for the wicked. The latter can derive not an atom of comfort from it. The human bearer of the gospel, in his carnality and for the sake of his bread and butter, may justify in his perverted preaching the carnal seed in the church, may tell this seed that they go to heaven even though they forsake not their sins, yet this seed is still ill at ease in Zion and this because Christ does not speak. Yea, he does speak in the hearts of this evil seed—speaks the gospel of the retention of sins. But the believers, as assured by Christ, knew themselves as the justified one. *Justified* is their new name; and this their name, they find in the scriptures. Looking into the scriptures, they see themselves in heaven, set there with Christ. And they have peace and joy for they know that their salvation is near.

It is plain then that the preached gospel that opens and closes the kingdom through its justifying the believers and retaining the sins of the impenitent is the gospel as preached by Christ. The church however has received from Christ the mandate—the right and duty—to proclaim, bear the gospel of God through which He, Christ, preaches. Said Christ to Peter and to all His apostles and to the church of all ages, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven," or, John 20:23, "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." This, in other words, is what Christ said, "I will give unto you the keys of the kingdom of heaven," i.e. "I will give unto you my gospel and the authority to proclaim

it. Proclaim then this gospel of the forgiveness and the retention of sins. Publish unto my people that their sins are forgiven them and unto the wicked that their sins are retained. And knew for certain that, through your proclamation of God's gospel, I justify my people in their hearts before the bar of their conscience and retain the sins of the wicked likewise in their hearts before the bar of their conscience.' Certainly, the church forgives sins but only in the sense that she proclaims the gospel of forgiveness through which Christ forgives.

It is thus the calling of the church, through its ministry, to publish God's gospel, the gospel through which Christ accomplishes His work, His great, glorious and terrible work. As was said, the work of Christ consist in His gathering His sheep, His elect, further in His opening to them the kingdom through His justifying them in their hearts by their living faith in God's gospel, thus by their faith in Him and in His God,—the faith that God gives them. Thus it consists, does this work of Christ, in His sanctifying His people wholly—spirit, soul and body,—in order that they may be preserved blameless unto His coming. It consists does this work of Christ, in shutting the kingdom to the carnal seed in the church and thus preparing them for the doom to which they have been appointed.

Now if Christ performs His work, through the gospel, as preached by His church, it follows that the church must make it her aim to preach God's gospel purely and fully, and thus must certainly refrain from adultering and corrupting God's gospel, from obscuring it, from mixing it with human philosophy, with the lies of the devil. The church, in a word, must preach *God's* gospel and not the wisdom of man. All that is of man, of sinful flesh, in the proclamation of God's gospel by the church, is so much useless material, useless to Christ for the accomplishment of His work. Examples of such useless materials is the heresy according to which God well-meaningly offers His salvation, the forgiveness of sins and life eternal, to all men and the heresy that, in consequence thereof, the salvation of man is contingent on man's own capricious will instead of on the unchangeable will of God. "I give unto you the keys of the kingdom," said Christ to His church. "Whose soever sins ye remit are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain are retained." What now is the mandate implicit in this declaration? Not this certainly, "Offer the forgiveness of sins unto all men indiscriminately and tell them that if they choose to receive this divine pardon, I and my Father will forgive them? Not this certainly but this, "Preach to my people the gospel to the effect that their sins are pardoned, that my God and their God forgive them, the penitent ones, and I assure you, my servants, that I will put this gospel in their hearts

so that they will know themselves forgiven." "And tell the wicked that, according to God's gospel, their sins are retained; and I assure you that I will put this message in the hearts of the wicked and thereby shut them out from the kingdom and so prepare them for the doom to which they have been appointed." It has been said that the servants of Christ cannot preach the gospel of forgiveness of sin to the penitent, the elect of God, because, not being able to judge the heart, they do not know who the penitent and the impenitent are. This is true. The servants of Christ cannot judge the heart. But Christ can. He knows who His people are; and this is sufficient, as He is the true preacher of the gospel. These faultfinders should realize that their criticism strikes at the very scriptures and at their own Heidelberg Catechism. Certainly the servants of Christ, being mere men, do not know the heart. An therefore they publish to every man, not that God forgives them, but that He pardons and saves whosoever believeth, namely, His people, the penitent ones, and that He retains the sins of the wicked.

But certainly, there are other requirements. The full truth of the salvation of God's people must be told and explained, that faith is of God and that faith is the fruitage of the working of His mighty love and that its source is His sovereign election and further that God sovereignly hardens whom He will through His gospel. Further, sin must be exposed and denounced, sin as to all the forms which it assumes in the present time and as it riots in the carnal seed of the church and in the flesh of the believers. And this preaching must be directed to every man and every man must be told that he must repent and that repenting and believing, he is forgiven and saved, and that persisting in his unbelief, he is damned.

In the light of these observations, it ought to be plain that the task of handling the keys of the kingdom is a difficult one. It is a task from which sinful flesh must needs recoil. For to handle these keys, to truly preach God's gospel, is to tell men the full truth about God *who is God*, about God as revealed in the face of Christ. To preach God's gospel is to preach a gospel through which Christ shuts out of the kingdom the wicked, the carnal seed. And that seed is the preacher's own brethren according to the flesh. It may even include his own children. To truly preach the gospel is to expose sin. Therefore the preacher who truly preaches God's gospel cannot avoid stepping on the toes of men. And he will be hated for it. But he may console himself with the thought that it is better for him to step on the toes of unspiritual men than to step on God's toes through his obscuring and adulterating God's gospel. Doing the latter he will loose his life, though for the present he may be saving it. Christ, while He walked among men, truly preached God's

gospel and see what befell Him. Paul truly preached the gospel and see what befell him; and see what befell all the prophets.

It requires a great love to truly preach God's gospel, a love so great that the servant of Christ has great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart for his kinsmen, his unbelieving and impenitent brethren according to the flesh, to whom Christ shuts the kingdom. Paul knew this sorrow. It shows that he was a true Christian. For those kinsmen over whom he grieved were always on his track. Like dogs they were hounding him to the death on account of his gospel. Had he not grieved over these kinsmen, had the thought that God was shutting them out of His kingdom filled his soul with a carnal glee, he would have been committing murder in the pulpit and he himself would have been reprobated.

Who then is equal to the task of handling the keys of the kingdom? Nobody. But God calls His servants and those whom He calls He also qualifies.

But preaching God's gospel is certainly a task as glorious as it is terrible and impossible. For through God's gospel as truly preached Christ accomplishes all His work. He gathers His church and shuts the kingdom to the wicked. And through His realizing the promise, the prophecy, in that gospel, He does a great work: He destroys the work of the devil and all violence which exalts itself against him till the full perfection of His kingdom takes place wherein God shall be all in all. It means that the gospel of God as truly preached by God's servants under the impulse of love is the faith—the faith of the church—that overcometh the world.

G. M. O.

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church hereby wishes to express its sincere sympathy to one of its members, Mr. Henry A. Schut, in the death of his youngest child,

JOAN SCHUT

who the Lord took unto Himself at the tender age of 8 years.

May the ever faithful covenant God, Who doeth all things well, comfort the bereaved family with His Holy Spirit, and give grace to abide in His will.

Consistory of Hudsonville,

Rev. Bernard Kok, Pres.

Mr. T. Miedema, Clerk.

Uit Dien Drom

(Psalm 73; Tweede Deel)

De vorige maal hebben we gezien hoe Asaf in groote moeite gekomen was in zijn harteleven. Hij had de goddeloozen gadeslagen. Dat wil zeggen, de rijke goddeloozen van zijn tijd. En hij had hun deed en leven vergeleken bij het deel der godvruchtigen. En bij die vergelijking was hij aan 't weenen gegaan. 't Was dan ook vreeselijk. De goddelooze rijken ging alles wel: er waren geen banden tot hunnen dood toe en hun kracht was frisch elken morgen. En zij gebruikten hun kracht om te vreten en te zwelgen, te onderdrukken en te spotten, te blazen en te woeden. Doch Gods volk leed. Hun straf of kastijding was er elken morgen. Hun deel was tranen en smart.

Hij had eindelijk gevraagd, bevende, Zou God het eigenlijk wel weten? Misschien heb ik tevergeefs mijn hart gezuiverd en mijne handen in onschuld gewasschen. Wat voordeel heb ik wanneer ik mijzelf kruisig en tracht om God te dienen? Zij doen het niet en hebben rust in de wereld. Zij vermenigvuldigen hun vermogen. Wat er over is laten zij na aan hunne kinderen. Dus het liep over lange jaren. Neen, God weet het niet.

Toch wilde hij niet alzoo spreken. Asaf was een leider in Israel. En terwijl hij zoo leed en vroeg heeft hij toch niets uitgelaten. Hij gevoelde dat zulks trouweloos zou zijn. Als Asaf die beschouwing van de wereld aan Gods volk verteld zou hebben, dan zou hij velen hebben doen struikelen. En dat wilde hij niet.

Maar, hij wilde het verstaan. En dat ging niet. 't Ging hem als met de Emmausgangers veel later: hij vond geen plaats voor het lijden en het kruis.

En het einde was moeite, moeite, des avonds en des morgens.

Totdat hij inging in Gods heiligdommen.

En daar ligt het keerpunt.

Wat zijn Gods heiligdommen?

Gods heiligdom is de plaats waar God woont op aarde.

Ge zult dan tot mij zeggen: maar hoe heb ik het nu? Woont God niet overal? Is er wel één plekje in den hemel, op de aarde of in de hel waar God niet woont? God is toch de alomtegenwoordige?

En dan is het antwoord van God zelf: Neen, Ik woon niet overal. Ik woon alleen waar Ik Mij thuis gevoel. Gods heiligdom is God's tehuis. God is wel overal, doch Hij *woont* niet overal. Waar God woont daar openbaart Hij Zich in al Zijn deugdenbeeld. Daar laat Hij Zich zien in al Zijn liefde en genade. Waar God woont daar omhelst Hij de aarde en den mensch. Deze laatste zin is een uitdrukking van Zijn verbond.

Ge kunt dat ook zien in het Bijbelsche beeld van den regenboog. Die boog in den hemel is een beeld van Gods armen die de geheele aarde en al de menschen van 't eeuwig welbehagen omhelzen. Gods heiligdom is de plaats waar de hemel de aarde aanraakt en kust.

Dat heiligdom onder de Oude Bedeeling is Sion, Jeruzalem, de Tempel, het Heilige der Heiligen, de Arke des Verbonds, het Verzoendeksel, het Bloed!

En in dat laatste, in dat Bloed zit de sleutel tot het verstaan van Gods heilighdommen. (Dit meervoud van heiligdom geeft uiting aan het overstelpende der Godsopenbaring.)

In dat Bloed ligt alles.

Dat Bloed spreekt ons toe van Jezus, Jehovah Heil!

Het heiligdom is de plaats en de gelegenheid waar God Zijn schepsel opneemt in de armen van eeuwigen min. Het is de plaats waar alle zonden en schuld en duisternis opgeheven worden, weggeslingerd tot in de diepten der zee. Het is de plaats van het eeuwig licht. Daar woont God. Met U en mij, mijn broeder.

Asaf is naar God gegaan en heeft Hem zijn nood geklaagd. Hij heeft Hem alles verteld wat we lezen in de verzen 2 tot 16.

En toen heeft de Heere Asaf opgenomen in Zijn armen en hem uit "dien drom van nevelen" opgehaald en hem gezet "en rapport" met Zijn Eigen licht. De Heere heeft tegen Asaf gezegd: Zie, Mijn knecht, uw moeite komt hier van daan, dat gij maar een heel klein stukje van Mijn raad ziet! Gij ziet noch het begin, noch het einde aller dingen! Gij ziet net maar het kleine stukje van het nu! En ook dat kleine stukje ziet ge slechts als een gebrekkig en een zondig mensch. Ge ziet wel die oogen die van vet uitpuilen, de harde tong der goddeloozen, die schik hebben van haten den ganschen dag, ge ziet wel den rijkdom van vet en dikheid, van geld en goed, van gezondheid en welvaart—doch ge ziet hun hart en innerlijke leven niet! Ge hebt nog nooit gezien Mijn vloek in hun hart. Ge zijt onkundig aan den worm die knaagt aan het innerlijke van hun bestaan. De voorsmaak van de hel hebt ge nog nooit gezien in den onlust van hun diepe leven. Dat volk waarover gij gestruikeld zijt heeft werkelijk geen blijdschap. Zelfs in het lachen hebben zij smart. Dat volk vindt nu al uit, dat de aarde met al hare schatten geen ware blijdschap geeft aan zijn bezitter.

Evenwel, Asaf, hier, kom nu en zie eens op hun einde!

En toen is Asaf aan 't gruwen gegaan. Hij zag hun einde. En let wel hij heeft hun einde gezien uit het oogpunt van God's nu! Luistert maar naar Asaf's verdere klanken van dit schoone lied: Gij zet ze op gladde plaatsen!

Hebt ge er op gelet, dat Asaf opeens vervalt in het gebruik van den tweeden persoon? Hij zegt: *Gij* zet

ze op gladde plaatsen. Het toont ons, dat Asaf met God Zelf te doen gekregen had. Dat hebben onze vaders verstaan die de psalmen op rijm gezet hebben. Want ze zingen: "Om met de *Godsspraak* raad te plegen!" Asaf heeft geluisterd naar de Gods openbaring.

God heeft een raad. En in dien raad is alles opgenomen wat geschiedt in de geschiedenis. En Asaf mocht voor een oogenblik inzien in dien raad van God. En wat hij daar gezien heeft van Gods raad over de goddeloozen heeft hem doen gruwen. Toen heeft Asaf niet meer geweend, of het moest zijn over zijn vroegere dwaasheid. Maar hij heeft wel gegruwd. Daar heeft hij gezien, dat alle rijkdom en goede gaven Gods voor de goddeloozen evenzoovele gladde plaatsen zijn. Och, of het tegenwoordige Israel zulks mocht zien! Want ze zien het zeker niet. Anders zouden ze niet zoo dwaas spreken van de algemeene genade. Vandaag zegt het groote meerendeel der Kerk, dat God uit liefde den goddeloozen verrijkt met alle goede gaven. Vandaag gaan de leermeesters in Israel niet naar de heilighdommen Gods om met de *Godsspraak* raad te plegen, doch ze zijn naar de Heidenen gegaan: ze hebben geluisterd naar Plato en Aristoteles. Nu zeggen ze ons, dat alle goede gaven die de goddeloozen ontvangen evenzoovele bewijzen zijn dat God hen liefheeft, niet liefheeft in dezelfde mate waarmede Hij Zijn volk bemint, doch wel liefheeft, zij het dan in mindere mate. Maar gladde plaatsen? O neen!

Wat stond men toch veel vaster in vroegere jaren!

Leest nu eens de berijmde psalm 73:9. Daar vindt ge geen algemeene genade. Daar staat: Dit duurde, tot ik uit dien drom van nevelen ging in 't heiligdom om met de *Godsspraak* raad te plegen. Daar zag ik op wat gladde wegen de voorspoed zelfs de boozen leidt; en hoe Ge in 't eind hun val bereidt!" Hebt ge het gezien hoe onze vaders spreken van een *bereiden van God* van hun val? God zet de goddeloozen op gladde plaatsen met het doel om hen te doen vallen in verwoestingen! Leest nu ook eens den onberijmden psalm op deze plaats. Daar staat dit: "Immers zet Gij ze op gladde plaatsen, Gij doet ze vallen in verwoestingen!" Verklaard in het verband zijn die gladde plaatsen al hun rijkdom, hun gezondheid, hun gaven en talenten. Hoe vreeselijk!

En zegt nu niet, dat wij behagen scheppen in die vreeselijke dingen! Want, eerst, belijden wij zelf, dat wij ook waardig zijn om zoo door God behandeld te worden. Wij zijn, om met Asaf te spreken, groote beesten bij God! Wij zijn ook kinderen des toorns van nature, net zooals de goddeloozen. En, tweedens, wij belijden die vreeselijke dingen, enkel en alleen omdat God het ons geopenbaard heeft. Als God zoo duidelijk ons openbaart, dat het geheele leven der goddeloozen niets anders is dan een voorbereiding tot

hun eeuwig verderf, hoe zullen wij dan anders spreken? En, derdens, wij hebben een diep medelijden met die stakkerds. Niet omdat zij niet waardig zijn om zoo vreeselijk behandeld te worden, want God is recht, maar, omdat wij nog aan hen vast zitten door de band des bloeds. Wie zou niet weenen bij den rand van de poel des vuurs? Met een siddering die door onze ziel waart, zeggen we het: Vreeselijk zal het zijn te vallen in de handen des levenden Gods! Wie zou niet weenen bij het zien en hooren van zulk een vloek Gods? Ja, zelfs is mij het haar te berg gerezen als ik op Uw gerichten heb gestaard; Uw oordeel, Heer, kan niet dan vreeselijk wezen!

Mocht Israel het Asaf nazeggen: "Hoe worden zij als in een oogenblik tot verwoesting, nemen een einde, worden te niet van verschrikkingen!" Wie leeft daaruit vandaag? Hun getal is weinigen. Wie denkt er aan vandaag, dat de goddeloozen tieren en razen in al hun rijkdom aan den rand van een eeuwig afgrond en dat terwijl ze razen in al hun rijkdom aan den rand van een eeuwig afgrond en dat terwijl ze razen en tieren, de Heere gedurig zegt: Ik vloek U! Ik vloekte U van eeuwigheid en Ik zal U vloeken tot in alle eeuwigheid? Wie durft te wonen bij een eeuwig gloed?

Wie zegt het Asaf na vandaag, als we gevraagd worden om een oordeel over de goddeloozen: Hun leven gaat als een droom voorbij! Wie durft te belijden, dat het sterven der goddeloozen juist is als het ontwaken uit een droom, als ze niets anders zien dan het Oog van God, vlammend van toorn en grimmigheid? En let wel, terwijl ik dit schrijf vlamt dat Oog over alle goddeloozen. Doch de stakkerds zien het niet en weten het niet. Ook wordt het hun niet aangezegd die beter konden weten. De goddeloozen zeggen vandaag: God ziet het niet en merkt het niet op als we booselijk spreken van verdrukking! En de leeraars in Sion zeggen: God heeft U lief! Zullen de goddeloozen niet opstaan tegen dit geslacht van leeraars en hun in het oordeel van God verdoemen? Zullen ze hen niet toegillen: Gij hadt beter kunnen weten en hebt het ons nooit aangezegd, dat de toorn Gods in die dagen over ons was ten kwade? Neen, maar gij hebt ons geleerd in Uw algemeene genade, dat de gladde plaatsen Gods bewijzen waren van Zijn zoogenaamde liefde over ons. Dan zullen ze eindigen met te schreeuwen: De Heere verdoeme U!

Doen wij dan anders, geliefden!

Eerst, zijt niet nijdig op de dwazen, ziende der goddeloozen vrede. Omarm Uw kruis en weet dat het een goede weg van God is naar den hemel.

Tweedens, durft de overtuiging uws geloofs te hebben en een God te verkondigen die den ganschen dag de goddeloozen haat, zoo haat dat Hij hen op gladde plaatsen zet, opdat ze tot in der eeuwigheid verwoest

mochten worden. Getuigt daarvan, al moet ge om dat getuigenis dan ook lijden. Zoo is het immers gegaan in 1924? Daar zijt ge uitgeworpen omdat gij de waarheid gesproken hebt aangaande God tegenover de goddeloozen. De Drie Punten zijn evenzoovele omtuiningen tegenover psalm 73. Doch gij, rechtvaardigt gij God.

Derdens, getuigt dat ge waard zijt van nature om ook zoo verworpen te worden. Uw naam is een groot beest bij God. Vers 22. Verhoovaardigt U niet tegenover den goddelooze.

Vierdens, zijt tevreden met Uw lot. Al gaat het dan langs onbezaaide wegen. Al moet ge dan ook 's morgens schreien vanwege de kastijding. Die zware weg en al dat gewezen is Uw weg naar het hemelsche Paradijs. En weet, dat terwijl gij schreit onder de slaande hand Gods, Hij op U neerziet met oneindige liefde. Als het schijnt dat alles tegen U is dat een ieder er genot in heeft om U te vertrappen, zegt dan eerst: Ik ben het waard; en, tweedens, God heeft mij lief en Hij zendt al dit kwaad om mijn bestwil. Dan zal Uw besluit zijn: Maar de Heer zal uitkomst geven. Kent Gij een schooner lied?

Als het er nu op aan komt is er dan werkelijk wel iets hier op aarde dat U de ruste kan schenken? Is er zelfs in den hemel iets waarin ge kunt rusten? Neem nu het liefste wat ge U nu maar kunt denken, is er dan iets wat ge op kunt wegen tegen de liefde Gods in Christus Jezus, die naar de hel gegaan is om U te redden? Hebt ge wel ooit een liefde ontmoet onder de menschenkinderen gelijk de liefde Gods? Neen toch?

Welnu dan. Nu zijn we klaar om met Asaf te zingen: Gij zult mij leiden door Uw raad en daarna zult Gij mij in heerlijkheid opnemen.

En terwijl de goddeloozen rondom mij zijn, zal ik die arme stakkerds beklagen. Ik zie God die uitroeit al wie tegen Hem afhoereert.

Maar mij aangaande, Ik zal al mijn vertrouwen op den Heere HEERE zetten om al Zijn werken te vertellen. Dat is immers al een hemel op aarde?

Het is still geworden in 't gemoed van Asaf.

We hooren het hem zeggen en fluisteren het hem na: het is mij goed nabij God te wezen! Wat hunkeren, wat verlangen!

G. V.

NOTICE

Classis East will meet in regular session D. V., Wenesday morning, July 5, at 9:00, at the First Protestant Reformed Church,

D. Jonker, S. C.

Excommunication of Baptized Members?

This subject as we wrote in our last article is put in question form because there is no unanimity of action and conception about this matter in Reformed Churches. It concerns the important question of discipline of adults who were baptized but who refuse to make a confession of faith and partake of the Lord's Supper, and also such adults who have committed sins for which members of the Church of Jesus Christ are disciplined.

I also gave in my last article a brief sketch of some of the actions and opinions of Reformed leaders from the sixteenth century, up to the recent discussion in the Netherlands at the interrupted Synod of 1939.

Since writing the last article I have borrowed Rutger's *Kerkelijke Advies*, which contains the report of Bavinck and Rutgers on this question which they gave to the Synod of Middelburg in 1898. This report states very clearly the difference of opinion. In the main there are two positions.

The one position is that which was originally the position of John á Lasco in the Old Netherland Church in London. The other position is that taken by Gijsbertus Voetius and followed generally by Reformed Churches.

It was the practice of John á Lasco to urge the children, (of believing parents) twelve and fourteen years of age, to partake of the Lord's Supper. And if at the age of fifteen yet one was refused permission to come to the Lord's table because of ignorance or misconduct such a one was seriously admonished. Finally if such admonition or censure was to no avail when such a person reached the age of eighteen or at the most twenty, they were excluded and no longer considered to belong to the communion to which they belonged as children, and were formally excommunicated.

On the other hand there was the position of Voetius. Voetius considered baptized children to be members of the Church of Jesus Christ. These children who had not yet come to years of discretion he called incomplete members of the Church.

His position accordingly is that these can only be treated as incomplete members also. But with respect to the adults who refuse to make a confession and become united with the communion of the Church, Voetius denies that they can be excommunicated. The argument is that they are not members and therefore cannot be treated under Church discipline.

In the main, it is pointed out by Bavinck and Rutgers, this is the position of the Netherlands Reformed Churches. They remark, however, that it was strange that the simple, clear statement of John á Lasco, which

is appealing, did not receive wider recognition. Upon further reflection they could see several reasons why such a position of Voetius was accepted above that of John á Lasco. Two main reasons given are: 1. That in the growth in number in the Reformed Churches there was at the same time a loss of spirituality, which made it difficult for the church to maintain the old firm position. 2. The position of the Reformation to admit those of twelve to fourteen years of age to the table of the Lord was no longer followed. As the age of the years of discretion was changed so it also became evident that the reasons for not coming to the table of the Lord were not only ignorance and misconduct but other serious objections such as lack of confidence and assurance. And therefore the church could not exclude such from its communion.

However, a very good observation made in this report ought to be kept in mind in our consideration of this question of excommunication of so-called baptized members. The report makes the point that there is no principle difference. It shows that the position which says excommunication does so upon the principle that baptized members who because of their own guilt do not come to confession ought to be formally declared not to be members of the Church. The other position which says "not to formally excommunicate", does so on the principle that they are not at all members even. Essentially therefore the position is the same.

The problem is to make a clear statement of advice for the Church to follow in its practice. Bavinck and Rutgers attempted to do that. They attempted to keep the good points of both positions. They condemned the practice of some congregations which gave a church position to adult baptized members, for example, to allow them to remain undisturbed in their church membership, or even to give them attestation of membership by baptism when they left for other churches, or other such rights in the church. They gave a three point advice, which is as follows: 1. Baptized children are members of the Church even though they are incomplete members. And as members of the Church they are objects of discipline but this must also be "incomplete" consisting only of admonition.

2. Such baptized members coming to years of discretion and still not making confession must be seriously admonished by the Church. If they through their own guilt do not come to confession and heed the admonition, it must be considered that they have lost their membership, and it is desirable that the consistory express this not later than their thirtieth year. These baptized members thus cease to be members of the church and thus are not objects of church discipline either.

3. That these are not members of church means that they are not to be considered such either from any

aspect. Their children are also not to be considered "children of believing parents".

From this advice of Bavinck and Rutgers it is plain what their stand is in regard to the principle of the matter and the action to be taken with such so-called adult baptized members. The only thing that is not clear is whether they favor the more formal excommunication by the church or the mere announcement that N.N is no longer a member.

In our church the custom has been to treat all such cases of discipline of so-called adult baptized members by having the consistory seek the advice of Classis and upon approval of Classis to announce that such a member has been erased.

My conclusions in regard to these matters are as follows:

1. It seems that everyone would agree that each consistory and pastor should very seriously begin to labor with its young people to show them their calling to confess their faith and to come to the table of the Lord.

2. In the second place it seems to me that with regard to those who do not do so each consistory should consider the circumstances and attitude of each individual separately. An age limit cannot be set for all upon which labor should cease, and final action taken. Although the age limit set by Bavinck and Rutgers is not without value. Such an age limit will become much clearer and more defined in a church where faithful, systematic, and serious labor is expended.

3. It also is my conclusion that where there is indifference, or enmity shown that in such cases final action must be taken immediately. By that I mean discipline must be exercised and seriously and systematically executed. This is evidently necessary in the case of public sin. It is altogether a wrong notion that with such young people, from the ages of eighteen and above who show definite hostility to the Church of Christ or even indifference that an attitude of watchful waiting should be taken with them, with the hope that sometime in the indefinite future they may be converted. The correct view of discipline will refute such a conception. True discipline seeks to bring the command to repent seriously and effectively to such young folk. Such action would be sanctifying for other young folk, for the entire church, and for those disciplined themselves if they were truly covenant seed. I think it is an Arminian influence that gives rise to the conception that the Church should be lenient and allow young folk plenty of time to decide. The Arminian influence is that it presents the matter in such a way that it is up to the individual to "accept" Christ at his own time. It is a serious calling which must be heeded in the acceptable time of the Lord, and the refusal to heed such must also therefore be looked upon as a serious sin.

The above conclusions are not at all different from the well-known Reformed teachings. However, coming to the question of what this final action of discipline should be, whether it should be merely erasure, "royeeren", or excommunication, my conclusion is that we should use the word excommunication in order to avoid misunderstanding as to the serious principle and action involved.

I am aware of the fact that the brothers Bavinck and Rutgers do not become explicit about this in their report, although Rutgers himself at another time said not to excommunicate. I am aware too that the different Synods of the Netherlands with the exception of the last interrupted Synod of 1939 either did not care to make an explicit statement or advised against excommunication.

But I believe this hesitancy is due not to a lack of insight into the principle of the matter but to lack of courage of decision.

The Churches of the Netherlands do not care to use the term erasure. But our Churches in America from their decision in the Christian Reformed Synod of 1918 expressed themselves further than the Churches of the Netherlands by committing themselves to definite disciplinary action of such members. They, however, only came to the conclusion, final erasure.

Because of the principle involved, that baptized children are in the covenant, that is in the communion and fellowship of Jesus Christ, therefore I believe they should be treated in cases of discipline in the usual way, excommunication. That is the idea of the Reformation expressed in the action of John á Lasco. That is the principle recognized in all Reformed Churches. That is how some leaders, for example J. Jansen in 1922 have expressed themselves. The term erasure it seems to me is contradictory to the disciplinary action itself to which our Churches are committed. That finally is in harmony with the teaching and action shown in the Bible. Compare the words of God to Moses and the actions taken in Deut. 13:6, 11; Lev. 24:10 ff.

L. D.

IN MEMORIAM

It pleased our heavenly Father to take out of our midst and unto Himself our beloved husband and father,

PETER VANDER GUGTEN

May 25, 1944, at the age of 55 years.

We are abundantly comforted in the knowledge that his declining days were filled with strong hope and peace, through the grace of our God Who doeth all things well.

Mrs. P. Vander Gugten—Joldersma
Miss Gertrude Janet.

The Employment of Mothers in War Industries

Long range guns which can shoot twenty years into the future are now firing on the United States in a war potentially as destructive as that being fought around the world today. No section of the country is out of their range. We refer to the employment of mothers in War Industries and consider the children the victims of this prevalent destructive power. In the comparative quiet Mid-West this is no problem, but it is a very real one in many Industrial Centers. This, however, does not necessarily exclude all those not living in such cities because principally this subject includes all mothers engaged in work other than that of the home. It includes all those not found in their homes, be they part or almost full time farmers (such being the case with many in agricultural districts) or be they found busy with some work other than the home. Some mothers seem to have a delight in doing most anything except filling their place in the home.

The war, however, has increased this tremendously, making drastic inroads into millions of American homes. Due to a patriotic spirit (though they be few in number) or financial needs or that almost indomitable desire for more money and higher standards of living many mothers have left their homes and the sacred heritage of their children to work in war industries. A few statistics will suffice to show how great this number has become. In 1943 from 17 to 20 million women were employed in this country of which several million were mothers. As can be expected today this number is even larger. But it is also natural that this change has caused untold alterations in the American homes, including many problems and evils. The foremost question which faces them seems to be that of their children. What must they do with them? Their children, given of the Lord, are no longer an asset but a liability and a burden. Where there are no children the question of the advisability and right of wives being employed doesn't even seem to arise. Broken homes, one often working on a night shift and the other on a day shift, doesn't even seem to phase them. But those having children are confronted with a problem. Hence the world has found "reason" to practice birth-control and have few or no children.

But this matter of the children of these employed mothers has become such a great problem that even the world sees it and apparently has no real solution. And when the world sees problems of this nature the evil is quite well advanced and the results appalling. The most extreme cases are almost unbelievable. Let me narrate a few. A twelve-year-old child is locked out of the house all day while her parents are at work.

A woman on the grave-yard shift drives her car close to the windows of her place of employment and her four children sleep in the automobile. Others are chained to a tree or a trailer camp while the parents are at work. Such cases, our papers say, can be multiplied by the thousands. Some mothers turn them over to day nurseries, others have maids, still others have grandmothers willing to care for them, and in some homes father is home with them one half of the day when he is not employed and mother the other half when she is home. Most of these naturally realize that these means are very inadequate, but the cause of our country must not suffer. They are quite determined and willing to sacrifice all for the latter. Therefore they are making all kinds of attempts to solve this problem.

Many arguments have been given, pro and con. Those defending the employment of mothers forward the following arguments. Mothers are needed in industry, if it is to fulfill its vital part in the war effort. Our country, they say, is facing a crucial shortage of labor, and about the only resources we have are the able and willing mothers. Besides as a practical matter the employment of mothers is entirely feasible. The individual community normally can provide whatever child-care facilities are needed and the economical support obtained by it is very desirable. Such employment will even help to *reduce* the percentage of juvenile delinquency. Those opposing it advance these arguments: There is no need for a general policy of employing mothers. They say in the first place that we are not fully and efficiently using the services of those already engaged in War Industries as a source of workers. Moreover, we have not yet fully employed women other than mothers. They also advocate that women with children, as a group, make the least dependable source of workers. Finally, such is bound to mean inadequate care for their children, even if adequate care could be provided. The result of such improper care we see before our own eyes in the increased juvenile delinquency.

We could give many more of their arguments, but the above will suffice to show us how the people at large view these things from a purely natural viewpoint. We naturally agree with the latter. This, to my mind, must become evident from the pure utilitarian viewpoint. The resulting evils and deficiencies of the employment of mothers of which we read in almost every paper is most natural. It would be a wonder if there were no increase in juvenile delinquency. The children of teen-age need mother's care just as much as the younger ones. Think of all the sex immorality and corruption found among this group. Take mother out of the home and you undermine the basis of all society, state and government. Nevertheless millions are seeking the solution to their problems in having

others care for their children. By trying to suppress one evil across the ocean they cause many more to arise in their own homes.

However, to all this we as christians must add another objection which really is the most important of all. Mother has only one place and that is in the home. God has placed her there. The covenant mother has received children of the Lord and she with her husband is called upon to instruct them in the way of the Lord and the "aforesaid doctrine". Even many in the world realize that the home and the parental instruction is of fundamental importance. And they view the child only from the viewpoint of the body and this life. The child must be taught good morals, behaviour and conduct and must become a respectable citizen and a worthwhile contribution to society. True as this all may be, they "forget" all about the precious souls of their children. They fail to see the Divine calling in respect to those little image-bearers of God. In connection with this we can also add that many a "christian" mother fails to see this, or at least fails to live and act accordingly. Many a mother in our own homes is so busy with the physical needs of her children that she fails to provide for the spiritual. She finds time, no, makes time to provide for the body, for clothes and food, but just doesn't seem to be able to find time to instruct and teach her own dear offspring the precious things of God. But this we do find with a *christian* mother. This is her solemn duty. With baptism she with her husband has made that pledge to God. True it is that the father is first of all responsible for these things in respect to his children, but the mother too has a very important calling in respect to this matter. She is with her children most of the time, while father often and usually is absent during the day. What a wholesome influence she can exert by christian teachings, examples and morals! This a christian mother does too. Her main interest is her home, her children. She doesn't want to be in every place and do most everything except the things God has called her to do. If she doesn't have this desire she isn't worthy of the name of a christian mother. Scripture teaches very plainly that father and mother are the first ones called upon to instruct their children and not the church or the school, much less a certain nursery or maid. Neither can anyone replace mother, not even with the best of care. There is no one in the whole world who can replace mother's care, love and patience. It, moreover, is her God-given duty to be in the home and in no other place. Our children are not little animals, for whom most everybody can provide, but they are precious souls of God given to that particular father and mother. These children they must instruct. Take this important cog out and the evil and detrimental results are inevitable.

Are christian mothers then unpatriotic when the

government needs help? By no means. They are most patriotic when they take their place in the home. Taking the future into consideration, as we always should do, they really do much less for their children both as image-bearers and citizens of their country when in the factory than in the home. The above-mentioned arguments, which can be proven with statistics, also show that there really is no need of mothers being employed in War Industries. And even if that need would be there, mother cannot and may not be taken from her children and home.

In conclusion we can give a few remarks. With the several million mothers employed in factories we see another sign of the times. In the midst of all the abnormalities of our day the home has and is becoming another addition to the list. But let us beware! Now more than ever do we need christian mothers in the home. Through the means given us of God, namely the Word, they with their husbands are laying the foundation of the future course. With a christian home we can expect christian children in a christian church with a christian school.

J. B.

Kerknieuws

Het schijnt wel of de oorlog de menschen meer ernstiger doet leven; tenminste wanneer men ook hier en daar, van ginds en elders berichten hoort, dat ook de wereld meer biddende wordt, zou men bijna tot de conclusie komen dat ze nog niet zoo slecht is, 't is omdat de Schrift niet wordt geloofd, die zegt dat het tegenovergestelde de waarheid is. Men sluit dan ook moedwillig de oogen voor de werkelijkheid.

Ook het goddelooze Rusland dat zich in het verleden er op beroemde met God te hebben afgerekend, schijnt nu toch weer een god te willen omhelzen. De kerk die er eertijds werd vervolgd mag nu weer een beetje ruimer adem halen; en wat christen verheugt zich niet in deze dingen? Ik heb er echter niet van gehoord dat Stalin hartgrondig is veranderd. De Russische beer is dunkt me niet te vertrouwen. 't Is niet meer als een politieke streek, en hij zal achter de oorlog met Stalin aan 't hoofd wel weer zijn venijn uitspuwen tegen de Kerke Gods.

Ook Amerika beroemt zich er op dat het zeer godsdienstig is, en er wordt veel gedaan om een beetje godsdienstig te blijven. We vechten toch ook voor de vier vrijheden, en een van deze is vrijheid van godsdienst. De geestelijke arbeid onder de soldaten laat in het geheel genomen veel tot wenschen over. In het

leger en op de vloot wordt niet veel ware godsdienst gevonden. Men vloekt het honderd uit, en hij die bidt wordt ook aldaar gesmaad. Het zal mij eens benieuwen wat voor vrijheid van godsdienst de ware Kerk achter de oorlog mag genieten? Ik kan niet zeggen dat ik er nu zoo veel van verwacht. De tijd zal 't leeren.

Ge hebt zeker ook al gehoord dat er een beweging op trouw is gezet om zoo spoedig mogelijk wanneer de "invasion" begint de klokken te doen luiden, en om dan bid-uur te houden. Dit is uitgedacht door een man die de eerste beginselen van het gebed niet verstaat. Ik heb er niet van gehoord wat de inhoud van zulk bidden zal moeten zijn. Wanneer het een veroetmoedigen is voor den Heere in zak en asch van wege onze zonden dan behoeven we waarlijk niet te wachten al eer de "invasion" haar tien duizenden slachtoffers vraagt. Als ik me echter niet vergis dan is het geheel iets anders. Men wil God inroepen dat Hij onze wapenen zegent zoodat we de oorlog mogen winnen. In Duitschland en Engeland met Rusland doet men dit natuurlijk ook. Ge ziet zeker wel de onmogelijkheid van zoo'n gebedsverhooring. Is het overduidelijk dat wij de oorlog moeten winnen? Het paste beter om te bidden: Uw wil geschiede. Ik ben er tamelijk zeker van dat wij als Protestantsche Gereformeerde Kerken aan dien onzin niet meedoen, want dit is m.i. niet vroom. 't Is zeker wel noodig dat we des Zondags in onze gemeentelijke bijeenkomsten ook de oorlog met al den gruwel die er mee gepaard gaat biddende voor Gods aangezicht te gedenken in overeenstemming met het allervolmaakste gebed, want zoo alleen worden onze gebeden verhoord.

Fuller Ave. moest ook 147 afstaan voor 's Lands dienst. We hebben tot op dit oogenblik er nog niet van gehoord dat er van de onzen zijn gesneuveld. Gode de eere, want wij zijn ook niet beter dan anderen.

Nu de Winter weer voorbij is, is ook de activiteit in de gemeente aanmerkelijk verminderd. De vereenigingen en catechezaties vergaderen niet meer. Er is nog een klas overgebleven voor hen die belijdenis des geloofs wenschen te doen in de jongste toekomst. Sommige menschen zijn van gedachte dat dit niet is in overeenstemming met de Schrift. Wanneer we het echter beschouwen in het rechte licht dan is het nog niet zoo onschriftuurlijk. Bij onze kennis van eigen schuld komt toch ook te pas kennis der Schrift. Als de Catechismus vraagt: Waaruit kent gij uw verdorvenheid, dan is het antwoord: uit de Wet Gods, en deze ligt vertolkt in Diens Woord. Men moet echter nooit gebruik maken van zoo'n klas om bij-zaken want deze beantwoorden niet aan de werkelijkheid.

Er werd ook in onze kerk-bulletin vermeld dat er nog verscheidene boeken zijn te verkrijgen: "In the Midst of Death". Ge weet dat ook dit boek is ge-

schreven door Ds. Hoeksema. Het handelt over de eerste vier Zondagen van de Catechismus. De leestof is van veel waarde voor ons en onze kinderen, en we moesten er gretig gebruik van maken. Als zoo langzamerhand de geheele Catechismus in boekvorm verschijnt, en we de verzameling er van in ons bezit hebben, beteekent dit meer dan een boekdeel in de boekenkast. Het heeft waarde ook voor de toekomstige geslachten onder ons Protestantsch Gereformeerd volk. Wij lezen niet genoeg waarmee we winste kunnen doen. Daarom is ook onze kennis te oppervlakkig. Onze Standard Bearer wordt ook niet genoeg gelezen en daarom heeft ook deze een kwijnend bestaan. Ook wij leven dikwijls te oppervlakkig.

Ik heb er nog niet van gehoord dat Concordia is omgedoopt in een andere meer voortreffelijke naam. De toekomst zal het ook moeten leeren of dit halfmaandelijksche blad elke week kan verschijnen. Ik hoop maar dat het kan. Het moet echter niet geschieden ten nadeele van de Standard Bearer. De medewerkers aan Concordia moeten niet vergeten dat ze geregeld ook hunne artikelen opzenden voor onze Vaandeldrager. Anders was het maar beter dat Concordia niet verschijnt, alhoewel het anders dunkt me toch wel een plaats heeft in ons midden.

Er zijn ook weer drie andere boeken gereed voor de pers, geschreven door Ds. Hoeksema. Laat ons ook hiervan bezitter zijn en er op inschrijven wanneer ze geadverteerd worden. Geoordeeld naar de overige werken van dezen schrijver zullen we zeker niet beschaamd worden.

Er zijn ook nu weer een verzameling van meditaties gereed die beschikbaar zullen worden gesteld voor onze soldaten. Voorwaar geen overbodige weelde voor hen die zich nu bevinden in een wereld vervreemd van God en Zijn dienst. Men moet niet na laten ze te lezen en overdenken.

De "Young People's Federation" ziet met blijdschap vooruit naar het oogenblik dat ze de 30ste en 31ste Augustus een gezamenlijke bijeenkomst zullen hebben D.V. Dit is dan de vierde Conventie. Dat dit van veel geestelijke waarde is behoeft zeker niet worden gezegd.

Er worden ook nu weer voorbereidende maatregelen genomen om een "Field-Day" te hebben dit jaar. We moesten het eens probeeren dit jaar om deze dag een succes te doen zijn. Ook voor deze dag zijn we niet meer zoo met enthousiasme vervuld. In het begin van onze bijeenkomsten was dit zoo geheel anders. Toen was het: Hoe vroolijk gaan de stammen op. Jong en oud wilde hier een wijle toeven. Als men niet kan dan is men natuurlijk vrij, en als men niet wil ook. 't Was anders wel mooi dat een ieder er gebruik van maakte, en wanneer de band der eenheid wordt gevoeld gaat men zich niet ergens elders vermaken.

Ge leest zeker ook de stukken die in de Standard

Bearer verschijnen over het voor en tegen van onze eigen scholen. Het wordt m.i. langzamerhand goed duidelijk door dit schrijven dat bij ons allen er een groote verantwoordelijkheid bestaat om mede werkzaam te zijn aan dit voortreffelijk werk, dat zeker Gods goedkeuring zal wegdragen. Dit kan natuurlijk niet worden gezegd wanneer men de kinderen onderwijs doet ontvangen in de publieke school; en hoe christen ouders dit soms nog kunnen goed praten is onbegrijpelijk. Zij verstaan zeker niet de verantwoordelijkheid.

Hier in Amerika wordt van verantwoordelijkheid toch niet veel meer verstaan. Dat komt maar al te dikwijls uit in de menselijke samenleving. Terwijl de oorlog bij de dag verschrikkelijker wordt en meer en meer slachtoffers vraagt kondigen de C.I.O. en A.F.L. maar doodeenvoudig hunne "strikes" aan, en men trapt alle recht met voeten en men laat alles draaien om de dollar, ook ten koste van eigen vleesch en bloed die moeten vechten in de vreemde voor eigen Vaderland. En als aanstonds de bange ure van "invasion" nadert en dit wordt werkelijkheid, dan maar bidden voor de overwinning, waarvoor men nu klaarblijkelijk geen gevoel heeft. De kerk die de oogen sluit voor dit "Union Monster" gaat niet vrij uit, en de christen die lid is van zoo'n union mag ook wel eens eventjes stil staan op pad en weg en gehoor geven aan 't woord der Schrift als het komt met de vermaning: Komt uit van haar mijn volk en heb aan hunne werken geen deel.

Ge hebt zeker wel in Concordia gelezen dat Ds. R. Veldman van de 1st Church werd beroepen in de 4th Church om onder hen het brood des levens te breken. Men heeft er aldaar aardig wat moed toe. Zooals het meestal gaat met beroepen, is dit ook nu het geval. Er worden vele gissingen gemaakt. Het voor en tegen wordt van beide gemeenten overwogen. De eene gemeente wil gaarne houden wat ze heeft, en de andere wil gaarne hebben wat ze niet bezit. 't Is echter ook in dezen: de mensch wikt, maar God beschikt. Ik hoorde ook iemand zeggen, eerst gaf Fuller Ave. \$15,000 aan deze gemeente, en nu ze dit hebben probeeren ze ook nog om onze Ds. zien tekrijgen. Het werd eenigzins verwijtend gezegd.

Nu is dit natuurlijk foutief gezegd. De vierde gemeente heeft natuurlijk het volste recht om een Ds. te beroepen en is zeker vrij in hare keuze. 's Heeren aangezicht wordt in dezen gezocht door beide gemeenten. Er wordt gevraagd om licht en wijsheid. En zoo indien weg ontvangen beide gemeenten wat hen van Gods wege toekomt. Het menselijke moet dan ook nooit op de voorgrond. Waarschijnlijk is het al beslist als de Junie 15 Standard Bearer verschijnt. De Concordia zal ons er wel iets van mededeelen. Daar rekenen we dan maar op.

S. D. V.

God's Counsel and Human Freedom

Our first task is to define terms. In the abstract, we can speak of three kinds of human freedom, to wit, moral freedom, metaphysical freedom and psychological freedom. Moral freedom is to be defined as the ability of man—the natural man dead in his trespasses and sins—to do the right and (or) the wrong as he chooses. Metaphysical freedom has reference to the counsel and providence of God. Here the question is whether God's counsel is the determining necessity of man's deeds (works, words and thoughts) and thus whether these deeds proceed from the store of God's sovereign providence. To maintain the affirmative is to hold that man, God's rational creature, is metaphysically bound. To answer in the negative is to hold that man is free. Psychological freedom raises the question whether man is the subject of his own actions and can act in agreement with his nature and thus whether his works are the free and unhampered expression of his true inner self. To say that they are, is to maintain that man is psychologically free. To maintain that they are not, is to hold that man is psychologically bound. Now the position which I occupy in this essay is the following. Man is morally bound, i.e. being, as he is, by nature dead in sin, he can only will to do evil; he cannot will to do, think or desire the truly good. If it were otherwise, man would not be spiritually, ethically dead. One of the certain implications of the theory of common grace is, that man is morally-spiritually free. He can will to do also the truly good. For, according to this theory, there resides in this man, devoid of the life of regeneration, a principle of true goodness, from which his good deeds proceed, must proceed, if they are truly good—good in the spiritual-ethical sense. And as this principle of true goodness in depraved man, must certainly be a part and parcel of him, fundamentally and radically changing his nature, the theory of common grace is a negation of the doctrine of the total depravity of man. If the exponents of common grace reject these conclusions—conclusions that logically follow from their premises,—they find themselves shut up in their thinking in an unscriptural and thus impossible psychology.

The position which I take in this essay is further that man is metaphysically bound. By this I mean that, as an ethical-rational creature, he in all his works, is the product of God's counsel, which is sovereign and that he comes forth out of the womb of a sovereign providence, yet not so that God is the author of sin. Our position is, that God determinately wills sin, is thus the determining necessity of sin without being its author. Sin, as a historical phenomenon, originated not in God but in man. Another certain implication of the theory of common grace is that man is

metaphysically free, for it—this theory—holds to a well-meaning offer of salvation to all men—an offer that is well-meaning on the part of God.

Finally, my position is that man, though morally and metaphysically bound, is, in his moral and metaphysical bondage, psychologically free. And by this I mean, as has already become plain, that, in his moral and metaphysical bondage, man remains the willing and desiring subject of his deeds, his deeds are truly the man, the index to his character and nature, that thus, with the sovereign counsel of God, suspended over him as the sovereign necessity of all he desires, wills, thinks and does, he is not, under the mighty hand of God, compelled to do what he hates and to refrain from doing what he has willed and purposed, so that he would pursue a course of life opposite to that which he now follows if God would only leave the man alone. So absolutely free, in this sense, is man—psychologically free in his metaphysical bondage and also in his moral bondage—that the wicked boast of being the masters of their own destiny and, contrary to the witness of their own conscience, conclude that there is no God. So absolutely free is man psychologically, as far as his consciousness is concerned, that his metaphysical bondage is not a matter of experience but a thing that must be believed.

Man, then, is psychologically free, though morally and metaphysically in bondage. Let us now see what this does not mean. It does not mean that a man, at any moment can will to do anything. I can name a thousand things that I at this moment and in the present setting of my life, I cannot will to do. For example: I cannot at this moment will to walk from here to Lansing, or even attempt it. I cannot even will to stop reading to you this essay, leave this house and walk around the block. I could will to do such a thing, at least, I could, and certainly would leave this house, could and would will to do so, if it were burning down over my head. But this detracts nothing from the truth of my previous statement, as, in this case, the setting has changed. In a word, psychological freedom does not spell, to use a dutch term "willekeur", i.e., arbitrary, purposeless and unmotivated and thus irrational conduct. There are then definite limits even to man's psychological freedom. The setting of his life at each successive moment of his existence, compels him not to do the thing that he will not, but to will to do the thing that he does and this often contrary to what he would at the moment like to be doing. I here distinguish between liking and desire and will, the determinate will of a man, that crystallizes in action. To illustrate, A lad has just been asked by one of his companions to go fishing. But the errand that he is doing under the instructions of his parent causes him to refuse. That lad wills to do the thing that he does, but con-

trary to what he would like to be doing. Hence, though psychologically free—he chooses to obey his parent—he would rather go fishing. Fact is then that man is hemmed in on every side, restricted to and directed in, a definite course of life by circumstances, the setting of his life, which has largely been determined for him. There is then also such a thing as the bondage of circumstances. But the point is that also in this bondage, man is still psychologically free. Because what he does, he chooses, wills to do. Some one may ask: Is this always true? Does a man will to be sick and does he will to die? Only the Christian does. But let us consider that being sick and dying is not a man's own act. But even in sickness the wicked one is still psychologically free. Fact is that he does not want to be sick. He is rebellious. His rebellion is his act. And what he does—he rebels—he wills to do. Thus, he is certainly psychologically free. Yet he is not truly free, for he is in rebellion against God.

Thus, we come to our final observation on this point. Psychological freedom does not spell true freedom. This brings us to the question, what is true freedom? This question may be briefly answered thus. True freedom is to love God and, under the constraint of this love, to will what He wills and to abide in the sphere of His law, His ordinances, for man.

Psychological freedom then does not spell "willekeur". Nor does it mean that man, before his own consciousness, does not act under constraint. He always does. He acts under the stress, constraint of circumstances and the setting of his life. And as the latter proceed from the sovereign counsel of God, the Christian plainly perceives, spiritually discerns, and acknowledges, that he is being lead onward, directed by God's counsel, led by his very hand. But the point is that also in what we may call the bondage of circumstances, man is still absolutely psychologically free, in that, what he does also in this, let us say, bondage, he chooses and wills to do. That man in all the kinds of bondages, enumerated above, is absolutely psychologically free, must, by all means be maintained. To deny this is to negate human accountability. I, of course, am not unmindful of the fact, that there are different degrees of moral responsibility, depending on the character and measure of the constraint and the mental state of the subject man.

Now the term freedom, appearing in my topic, is the signification of psychological freedom. Having now, to the best of my ability, stated what is to be understood by this freedom, we may now confront the question how this freedom is to be harmonized with the conception of a sovereign counsel and providence of God. Before we make any attempt at harmonization, let us emphasize the fact as such. And the fact is that, according to Scripture, man is psychologically free even with his deeds—desires, volitions and his

thoughts—sovereignly determined by the sovereign God through His counsel and providence. We need not pause here, at least not very long, to prove from the Scriptures the truth of this statement. Human accountability is implied in divine punishment. And if man is accountable, he must be psychologically free. The exponents of common grace charge us with denying or at least minimizing human accountability. The charge is as absurd as it is untrue. If man is not accountable, psychologically free, it is wrong even to confront him with the law of God. If man is not accountable, all exhortation and admonition is senseless and useless and strictly unnecessary and uncalled for. As to the sovereignty of God's counsel, certainly one of the foundation truths of the Bible is that this counsel is sovereign and absolutely so, and that it is according to the counsel—the counsel of His will—that God worketh all things. Fact is, that what meets us on every page of Scripture either directly or indirectly, is the teaching that God is sovereign, that He is the sovereignly determining God with respect to all things, that thus He doeth all things.

But the question is, how can man be psychologically free with this counsel of God suspended over him, so to speak, as the determining factor of all his deeds? Do not the conceptions of psychological freedom and a sovereign counsel exclude each other? Is not the sovereignty of the counsel necessarily destructive of psychological freedom and thus also of moral responsibility? As we are dealing here with facts, they do not exclude each other, sovereignty is not destructive of psychological freedom in man.

But can the two be harmonized? Can we harmonize the two to our own satisfaction? We certainly can, if what is meant whether the two can be harmonized logically. Fact is, that logically, purely logically, there is no conflict at all between the two. We emphasize this and shall also demonstrate it, in opposition to the exponents of common grace, who maintain that logically, that, at least according to human logic, there is indeed conflict here. But this contention is wrong and as dangerous as it is wrong. The logical conflict here is of man's own making. It is not found in the Scriptures. Logical conflict arises from a doing that consists in placing a wrong, unbiblical construction upon the proposition that man is psychologically free. Logical conflict there is only if it be maintained—in opposition to the plain teachings of God's Word—that psychological freedom in man implies that man thinks and wills and works independent of the sovereign will, counsel and providence of God. Were it true, there would indeed be logical conflict. For were this true, man, too, would be sovereign in his doing as God is sovereign. Now a sovereign creature and a sovereign God are logically exclusive entities as there can only be one sovereign ruler in the universe. Thus human

freedom, with the construction of the exponents of common grace upon it, does indeed involve us, in our thinking, in a logical difficulty, contradiction with respect to the point at issue. Let us make this very plain. If man works independent of God's sovereign will, He, too, is sovereign,—sovereign as God is sovereign. Now the proposition: man is sovereign, is equivalent in meaning to the proposition: God is not sovereign. Now the two propositions: "God is sovereign", and "God is not sovereign", are certainly contradictory. Fact is then that there is no logical conflict at all between the right, the Biblical conception of human freedom and the Biblical doctrine that God's will is the sovereignly determining factor of man's works, deeds, including desires, volitions and thoughts.

(To be continued)

G. M. O

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On May 28, 1944 our dear parents,

MR. KLAAS TIGCHELAAR

and

MRS. K. TIGCHELAAR—Sybesma

commemorated their 40th Wedding Anniversary.

We, their children, extend to them our most sincere and hearty congratulations. Together with them, we thank our heavenly Father, Who has spared them for one another and for us, and it is our sincere prayer, that the Lord may continue to be with them the remainder of their pilgrimage.

Their grateful children:

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Vos

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Glupker

Mr. and Mrs. Donald Tigchelaar
and 4 grandchildren.

Grand Rapids, Michigan.

IN MEMORIAM

Whereas it pleased our Covenant God to take out of our midst on May 25, 1944, our brother-elder

MR. PETER VANDER GUGTEN

the Consistory of the Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Haven, Michigan, wishes hereby to express sincerest sympathy to the bereaved family.

May the God of all grace speak to their hearts words of consolation, and apply this affliction to their spiritual well-being. May He cause them also to glory in tribulation, knowing the hope that is set before them.

The Consistory,

Rev. A. Petter, Pres.

Mr. G. Vander Lee, Clerk.

THE STANDARD

Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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MEDITATIE

Onderzocht Door De Profeten

Van welke zaligheid ondervraagd en onderzocht hebben de profeten, die geprofeteerd hebben van de genade aan u geschied; Onderzoekende, op welken of hoedanigen tijd de Geest van Christus, die in hen was, etc.

I Pet. 1:10-12.

Begeerlijke zaligheid!

Want van de zaligheid, waarvan de apostel in het onmiddelijk verband gesproken had, doch thans als zeer begeerlijk, zooals mag blijken uit de houding van de Oud Testamentische profeten zoowel als van de engelen,—van de zeer begeerlijke zaligheid spreekt hij hier.

De zaligheid der zielen!

Die zaligheid bezitten we ook thans.

Hem, Dien we niet zien, hebben we lief. In den opgestanen en verheerlijkten Christus gelooven we, en verheugen we ons met eene onuitsprekelijke en heerlijke vreugde. Want we hebben de eerstelingen des Geestes, en die eerstelingen doen ons ook thans, in deze wereld, en terwijl we nog midden in den dood liggen, deelen in al de geestelijke zegeningen in den hemel in Christus Jezus.

Doch de vervulling wacht nog. Het einde onzes geloofs, de volkomene zaligheid der zielen, waarvan we hier en thans een voorsmaak hebben, verkrijgen we hier nog slechts in hope, straks in eeuwige werkelijkheid.

En die zaligheid is zeer te begeeren.

Zie het slechts aan de houding der Oud Testamentische zieners.

Ze zagen iets van deze zaligheid.

Doch het weinige, dat ze zagen, was genoeg om hen begeerig te maken en te doen ondervragen en

onderzoeken naar de beteekenis van hun eigen vergezichten!

Ze begeerden te weten voornamelijk iets aangaande den tijd, en aangaande het karakter van den tijd van het lijden, dat op Christus komen zou, en de heerlijkheid daarna volgende.

Aangevuurd door het begeerlijke van hetgeen ze van verre zagen, spanden ze zich in, om een helderder blik te erlangen in de heerlijkheden des heils.

Ze ondervraagden en onderzochten.

En zelfs de zalige engelen turen op het mysterie des heils, begeerig om in de komende heerlijkheden in te zien!

Heerlijke vreugde!

Van welke zaligheid. . . .

't Was nog de tijd der schaduwen!

De zaligheid was nog niet. De heiligen hadden de belofte nog niet verkregen.

Zij, die leefden uit het geloof, aanschouwden de belofte slechts van verre, omhelsden haar, en beleden door 't geloof in de belofte, dat zij gasten en vreemdelingen op aarde waren.

De dingen, die ons nu aangeziend zijn door degenen, die ons het evangelie verkondigd hebben, konden toen nog niet worden bediend. Ze waren nog niet. Want de Heilige Geest was nog niet van den hemel gezonden. En Hij kon nog niet komen, overmits Jezus nog niet verheerlijkt was.

Vandaar, dat 't geloof zich altijd moest vestigen op de schaduwen, en door de schaduwen op de toekomst, waarin de vervulling der belofte lag. En vandaar ook, dat de zieners, de profeten, zij, wien het vergund werd de toppen der bergen te beklimmen, om vandaar een vergezicht te erlangen in de dingen, die ons thans aangediend zijn; zij, in wie de Geest was en werkte, beduidde en tevoren betuigde, juist altijd hun ondervragenden en onderzoekenden blik vestigden op "het lijden, dat op Christus komen zou, en de heerlijkheid daarna volgende."

't Meervoud is hier gebezigd: ze onderzochten en

ondervraagden naar de *smart*en en *verdrukkingen*, die op Christus komen zouden, en naar de *heerlijkheden*, daarna volgende.

Want dat de Christus *moest* lijden, daarvan getuigden niet slechts al de schaduwen, maar daarvan getuigde ook de Geest van Christus, die in de zieners der oude bedeeling was. Zoo was het immers reeds voorzeggd in het Paradijs door het woord Gods, dat wel beloofde, dat het zaad der vrouw den kop der slang zou vermorzelen, maar dan slechts in een weg, waarin de slang zijne verzenen zou vermorzelen. In het licht van dat eerste profetische woord zagen alle profeten altijd den Christus, Die te komen stond. Ze zongen van Hem als van God verlaten, als een worm en geen man, als een smaad van menschen, en veracht van het volk; als den Bespottte, tegen Wien men de lip uitstak, over Wien men het hoofd schudde, van Wien men zeide, dat ook God, op Wien Hij vertrouwde, Hem niet wilde helpen. Men zong van Hem als de van alle zijden benauwde, omsingeld door sterke stieren van Basan. Men zag Hem als iemand, Wiens kracht verdroogd is, die uitgestort is als water, Wiens beenderen men kon tellen, Die een schouwspel is van allen, Wiens kleederen men onder zich verdeelde, en over wiens gewaad men het lot wierp. Ps. 22.

En zoo zagen Hem, en spraken van Hem al de profeten.

Hij gaf Zijnen rug, dengenen, die Hem sloegen, en Zijne wangen dengenen, die Hem het haar uitplukten; en voor smaadheden en speeksel verborg Hij niet Zijn aangezicht. Jes. 50.

Ze zagen Hem als een rijsje opgeschoten, als een wortel uit een dorre aarde. Gedaante noch heerlijkheid had Hij, en Hij had geen gestalte, dat men Hem zou begeerd hebben. Veracht was Hij, en de onwaardigste onder de menschen, een man van smarten voor Wien een iegelijk zijn aangezicht verborg. Hij werd verwond om onze overtredingen, en verbrijzeld om onze ongerechtigheden. Hij werd verdrukt, en als een lam ter slachting geleid, zonder Zijnen mond open te doen. En uit het land der levenden werd Hij afgesneden. Het behaagde den Heere Hem te verbrijzelen, en God maakte Hem krank. Jes. 53.

Zoo getuigde de Geest van Christus, Die in hen was, van het lijden, de smarten en verdrukkingen, die op Christus komen zouden.

Doch daarna volgden er heerlijkheden!

Heerlijkheden voor Hem den Christus, en heerlijkheden ook voor de Kerk, voor de Zijnen.

En ook daarvan getuigde de Geest van Christus in de profeten. Immers, ook temidden van al Zijn lijden stelde de Christus den Heere geduriglijk voor Zich, en was Hij verzekerd, dat Hij nimmer zou wankelen, omdat de Heere aan de rechterhand was. Daarom was Zijn hart verblijd, en verheugde zich Zijne eer, want

Zijn vleesch zou zeker wonen. God zou Zijne ziel in de hel niet verlaten, noch toelaten, dat Zijn heilige verderving zou zien. Integendeel, Hij zou Hem door de diepte der Hel heen het pad des levens bekend maken, en Hem verzadiging van vreugde geven voor Zijn aangezicht, en liefelijkheden aan Gods rechterhand eeuwiglijk. Ps. 16.

Heerlijke dagen zouden volgen op de smarten van den Knecht des Heeren.

Want Hij zou verhoogd worden als Koning over Zijn volk, en regeeren van zee tot zee, en van de rivier tot aan de einden der aarde. Alle koningen der aarde zouden zich voor Hem nederbuigen, en alle heidenen Hem dienen. En Hij zou den nooddriftige redden, en den ellendige, die geen helper heeft. Hij zou het opnemen voor armen en nooddriftigen, en de zielen der nooddriftigen verlossen. Zoo zou Hij Zijn volk richten met gerechtigheid, en de ellendigen met recht. De rechtvaardige zou in Zijne dagen bloeien, en de veelheid van vrede. En Hij zou nederdalen als een regen op het nagras, en als de druppelen, die de aarde bevochtigen. Ps. 72.

Heerlijkheden daarna volgende!

Op Hem zou de Geest des Heeren rusten, de Geest der wijsheid en des verstands, de Geest des raads en der sterkte, de Geest der kennis en der vreeze des Heeren. Hij zou niet richten naar het gezicht Zijner oogen, noch naar het gehoor Zijner ooren bestraffen. Met gerechtigheid zou Hij de armen richten, en de zachtmoedigen met rechtmatigheid. Gerechtigheid zou de gordel Zijner lenden zijn, en ook de waarheid. En Zijn koninkrijk zou gekenmerkt worden door welvaart en voorspoed en universeelen vrede. Wolf en lam, luipaard en geitenbok, het kalf en de jonge leeuw en het mestvee tezamen, zouden met elkander in vrede verkeerden. Nergens zou men meer leed doen op gansch den berg van Gods heiligheid, want de aarde zou vol zijn van de kennis des Heeren, gelijk de wateren den bodem der zee bedekken. Jes. 11.

Heerlijkheden!

Want als Zijne ziel zich tot een schuldoffer gesteld zou hebben, zou Hij zaad zien. Hij zou de dagen verlengen, en het welbehagen des Heeren zou door Zijne hand gelukkiglijk voortgaan. Door Zijne kennis zou Hij velen rechtvaardig maken. Jes. 53.

Sions licht zou komen, en de heerlijkheid des Heeren zou over haar opgaan, en Zijne heerlijkheid zou over haar gezien worden. En de heidenen zouden tot haar licht komen, en koningen tot den glans, die over haar zou zijn opgegaan. Van verre, van oost en west, van noord en zuid, zouden hare zonen en hare dochteren komen, en haar hart zou verwijd worden om te ontvangen de menigte der heidenen. Hun zilver en hun goud zouden ze met zich brengen naar Jeruzalem, tot den Naam des Heeren, dewijl Hij Sion heerlijk zou hebben gemaakt, Vreemden zouden hare muren bou-

wen. Koningen zouden haar dienen. Hare poorten zouden steeds openstaan, zij zouden des nachts niet gesloten worden, opdat de stad Gods altijd zou mogen ontvangen het heil der heidenen, en hunne koningen tot haar mochten worden geleid. Jes. 60.

Het lijden, dat op Christus komen zou, de smarten, die over Hem zouden komen, en de heerlijkheden daarna volgende!

Heerlijkheden voor Hem: verlossing, opstanding, verheerlijking, verhooging aan de rechterhand des Vaders! En heerlijkheden voor de Zijnen: vergeving en volkomene verzoening, rechtvaardiging en eeuwige heerlijkheid!

Begeerlijke zaligheid! Onuitsprekelijke vreugde!

Begeerlijk ook zelfs in de vergezichten der profeten!

Volheid van heil!

Begeerlijke zaligheid!

Begeerlijk zelfs in zoover als de profeten een inzicht hadden in de dingen, waarvan ze profeteerden.

Want ook zij verstonden den vollen rijkdom hunner eigen profetie niet. De Geest van Christus getuigde wel in hen, en beduidde wel de dingen aangaande het lijden van Christus, en aangaande de heerlijkheden daarna volgend; en hetgeen de Geest alzoo getuigde, daarvan spraken zij tot het volk. Doch hetgeen zij alzoo door den Geest van Christus, den Geest der profetie, spraken, als Hij vaardig over hen was, bleef ook voor hen grootendeels verborgen.

Want de Geest van Christus werkte wel in hen als Geest der profetie, maar was als Geest van den verhoogden Heiland nog niet uitgestort, en woonde ook in de profeten niet.

Ze bedienden niet zichzelf, niet de kerk der oude bedeeeling, maar ons deze dingen.

Niet alsof door hun profetie ook zijzelf, en het volk Gods, voor wie ze profeteerden, niet iets zagen van de werkelijkheid, die te komen stond, en niet werden gesterkt in de hope der vervulling van de beloften. Doch het volle heil van Gods verbond kenden ze niet.

Eerst moest de Zoon Gods vleesch worden, om onder ons te wonen en ons den Vader te openbaren. Eerst moest het lijden, waarvan de profeten spraken, op den Christus komen, en moest Hij aller ongerechtigheden dragen, om verzoening teweeg te brengen in Zijn bloed, en alle weldaden des heils voor de Zijnen te verdienen. Eerst moest Hij uit de dooden worden opgewekt, en zelf het leven in onverderfelijkheid en onsterfelijkheid bezitten. Eerst moest Hij aan de rechterhand Gods verhoogd worden, ver boven alle macht en kracht en heerschappij, en Zelf de belofte des Heiligen Geestes ontvangen, opdat Hij Zijne gaven des heils zou mogen mededeelen aan Zijne Kerk. En dan eerst zou de belofte des Geestes, de belofte, dat God Zijnen Geest zou uitstorten op alle vleesch, op zonen

en dochteren, op dienstknechten en dienstmaagden, kunnen worden vervuld.

En alleen door dien Geest, die van den hemel zou komen, zouden de dingen, die de profeten zelf slechts van verre zagen, nabij komen, verstaan worden door de prediking des evangelies, en in het bezit kunnen worden gesteld van al de ergenamen der belofte.

En de profeten verstonden dit.

Het was hun geopenbaard, dat zij niet zich zelf, maar ons bedienden deze dingen.

Niet alsof zij ons kenden.

Maar wel zoo, dat zij duidelijk zagen, dat de dingen, die hun door den Geest der profetie werden geopenbaard, en die zij zelf niet verstonden ten volle, tot eene andere bedeeeling dan die der schaduwen behoorden. Niet tot den tijd van het aardse Jeruzalem, met zijn aardse tempel, zijn aardse priesters, zijn aardse altaar en gedurige offeranden, en van het aardse en nationale Israel, maar tot eene gansch nieuwe en andere bedeeeling behoorden deze dingen.

En ook niet zoo, alsof ze zelf gansch geen belang hadden bij de dingen, die ze door den Geest van Christus, die in hen was, in de verte zagen, en waarvan ze, ver boven hun eigen begrip uit, spraken.

Immers zou de belofte ook aan hen worden vervuld, al waren ze ook niet meer op aarde.

Ook in den hemel, ja, vooral in den hemel, zou de Geest der belofte en der kennis en wijsheid worden uitgestort. En, ofschoon zij de belofte niet ontvingen zijn ze immers toch in het geloof gestorven!

Van verre ziende, en geloovende, en omhelzende de belofte!

Begeerig naar het volle heil!

Onuitsprekelijke heerlijkheid!

Met sterk verlangen zagen de profeten naar de vervulling er van uit.

Daarom ondervraagden en onderzochten ze hunne eigene profetie. Ze hebben ondervraagd en onderzocht van de zaligheid, die de Kerk der nieuwe bedeeeling thans bezit, van de genade, die aan ons is geschied door de zending des Geestes, en door de verkondiging des evangelies.

En met verlangen uitziende naar de heerlijkheid, die op het lijden van Christus zou volgen, onderzochten ze bijzonderlijk, wat de Geest van Christus beduidde en tevoren getuigde aangaande den tijd, en het karakter des tijds, waarin dit lijden zou plaats hebben, en waarin de heerlijkheden zouden worden gerealiseerd.

En zelfs begeeren de engelen, die ook zelf bij deze zaligheid belang hebben, die van haar ook kennis hebben, voor wie echter de eindelijke volheid des heils ook nog niet geopenbaard is, in de dingen dezer zaligheid in te zien.

Alles wacht en verlangt naar de vervulling!

Kom, Heere Jezus!

H, H,

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EDITORIALS**As To Our Moral Obligation**

I take it for granted that all our readers, even those that thus far have revealed little or no enthusiasm for a school of our own, and among these even those who definitely opposed it especially by the "moral obligation" argument, will have to agree with me, that our obligation to the existing schools and school societies can be none other than, and is rooted in the obligation of the parents with regard to the education of their children.

These school societies are, with respect to the instruction of our children only a means to an end.

If parents were in a position to give their children all the education they need, personally and at home, there would be no need of these societies. In fact, in that case it would be their sacred calling to provide such instruction themselves. Apart from the Church to which the ministry of the Word is entrusted, they are the only responsible party before God with respect to this instruction.

Or even, if all could afford to employ a private tutor to educate their children, the school society might be discarded.

However, this is impossible.

Parents lack time and ability to give their children a complete education according to the requirements and demands of modern life. And they lack the means to employ private teachers. Hence, they band together, organize societies, in order that together and with united efforts they may accomplish what individually they are not able to do. And these societies establish schools, determine the character of the education their children shall receive, and employ the teachers that shall furnish such education as the parents determine that their children shall have.

It should be plain then, that the moral obligation of these societies can be none other than that of the parents individually.

Nor can the obligation of the parent to the society of which he is a member be any other than to cooperate and put forth all his efforts to fulfill his obligation with respect to the education of his children.

That obligation, as we have seen, is that he shall instruct them "in the aforesaid" doctrine to "the utmost of his power," or "help or cause them to be instructed therein."

This latter phrase includes the instruction they receive in the school.

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This part of his obligation he fulfills through the means of the school society.

For the parent that is Protestant Reformed this obligation, which he solemnly and very definitely assumes by covenant-vow before God and the Church, means that he will work to the utmost of his power, also through the school society to provide for his children an education that is in harmony with Protestant Reformed doctrine and principles.

It follows, then, that this is his moral obligation with respect to the society of which he is a member.

He must seek the good of that society.

That surely is his moral obligation.

And because the society exists for the purpose of so serious a matter as the education of covenant children, he certainly has the moral obligation to seek the very best for it.

Hence, he must work to the utmost of his power to make the society an efficient means unto the end of providing a Protestant Reformed education for his children and the children of his fellow members.

Other obligations he may have toward the society and toward the school certainly follow from and are subservient to this one fundamental obligation. With a view to this great calling he pays his dues and school tuition, he takes part in the activities of the society, watches over the school and over the appointment of teachers.

All his effort must be directed to that one end: that the society may be a means to help him to instruct his children in "the aforesaid doctrine to the utmost of his power."

Is it possible for the Protestant Reformed parent to do this through the existing schools and school-societies?

Yes, if there is no opportunity for him to send his children to a school of Protestant Reformed parents, or to organize a society for the establishment of such a school. In that case he meets his assumed obligation with a view to the education of his children in the "aforesaid doctrine" *to the utmost of his power*, by sending his children to one of the existing Christian schools, or to a Lutheran school if necessary, to the best school he can find, and by supplementing and correcting such instruction at home in as far as it may be necessary.

No parent dare send his children to the public school on the pretext that the existing schools are not Protestant Reformed.

And in that case he has the moral obligation to work to the utmost of his power for the good of the society to which he belongs, and of the school to which he sends his children. And as far as cooperation on

the basis of the constitution of such a society permits him, he will try to make that society and school a means to instruct his children according to Protestant Reformed principles.

But the above question must be answered with an unqualified *No* if he is strong enough, has the means and the opportunity, to establish a school of his own choice in cooperation with other Protestant Reformed parents.

For in that case he does not "help or cause them to be instructed in the aforesaid doctrine *to the utmost of his power*".

He is satisfied with the line of least resistance.

For he knows very well that, whatever efforts he may put forth *to improve* the school to which he sends his children, it is a foregone conclusion that he can never make it the means to instruct his children according to the Protestant Reformed conception of the truth.

He may remove certain evils, protest against the presentation of all kinds of dramas and moving pictures in the schools, against the singing of a few Arminian hymns, or even against the direct inculcation of the theory of common grace, perhaps; but he will never be able to make the school a means for the instruction of the children along Protestant Reformed lines.

This is impossible, first of all, because his influence is very limited. The Christian Reformed parents control the existing schools. They permit the Protestant Reformed parent to send his children to their schools, and to support their cause financially; but for the rest they pay very little attention to him as soon as he insists on positive, Reformed principles. This I could easily prove, if it should be required.

But this is impossible especially because of the very principle of cooperation. By joining an existing society he waives the right to insist on positive, Protestant Reformed education. He has no right to demand such education of the existing schools.

And if he had the right it would be physically impossible to realize it, even in any local school where he might be represented in substantial numbers of members, for the simple reason that the whole school system, as to teachers, books, propaganda, etc. is under Christian Reformed control.

Nor can an instance be mentioned where this was ever attempted even by those who insist that it is our moral obligation to cooperate with the existing schools as long as possible.

Hence, I maintain, that in such cases, i.e. wherever there are a sufficient number of Protestant Reformed parents, and they have the means and power, their sacred moral obligation with respect to the existing societies is to leave them, and to establish societies and schools of their own, where they may instruct their

children "in the aforesaid doctrine to the utmost of their power."

And why, pray, should they not do this?

There is nothing separatistic in a movement to establish our own school.

Is not, after all, a Christian school a strictly local affair? Does not each school society exist by itself? It is true that there is a Union of Christian Schools, and that many local schools, perhaps most of them, are members of this union. But this does not bring all the schools under one board, or unite them into one body. Each society has authority in its own domain, and is strictly autonomous. The Christian school is a local matter.

But if this is so, what would be more natural, in places where there are a sufficient number of Protestant Reformed parents, than to band together, organize their own local society, and establish their own local schools, where their children can be instructed along Protestant Reformed lines?

There is then, absolutely no reason why, for instance, in a city like Grand Rapids, where some six hundred families are found belonging to the four Protestant Reformed Churches in that city, we should not have two or three schools of our own.

By establishing such schools we would simply fulfill our obligation before God.

We would only be doing what the Christian Reformed people have done before us.

We would do the very same thing the Reformed (Gereformeerde) people in the Netherlands did years ago, when they separated from the existing Christian school, and established schools of their own.

We would do no harm to the existing schools in any sense. They can very well get along without us, as far as the financial support of their schools is concerned.

And we could be of real influence by doing so.

As matters stand now, we have no influence at all. We are divided. We are scattered over several societies and schools. We have no power. We cannot let our voice be heard. We develop nothing. And we deliver our children to Christian Reformed schools and teachers to instruct them according to their view.

If, however, we would unite as one people, loving the cause of definite Christian instruction according to "the aforesaid doctrine", and strive for the realization of the ideal to establish and complete our own system of education, higher and lower, we could, with God's blessing, be a power for good even for the existing schools and for the cause of Christian instruction in general.

From whatever angle one considers this matter, therefore, the conclusion is always that it is our moral

obligation, both with respect to our children before God, and with respect to the Christian School Movement, that we organize our own societies, and establish our own schools.

Those who harp on our "moral obligation" as an argument against a separate school movement, have no ground to stand on.

H. H.

The Triple Knowledge

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART TWO OF MAN'S REDEMPTION

Lord's Day XII

5.

After The Order Of Melchisedec. (Cont.)

In both these respects, that the priestly office and the kingship were combined in one person, and that he was a priest for ever, Melchisedec is a type of Christ. Christ is the real Melchisedec, the royal priest, the king of righteousness, and the king of peace. He functions in both the royal and the priestly office.

From this viewpoint it may be said, indeed, that there was a figure or image of this priesthood in that of the first Adam in paradise in the state of rectitude. He was an earthly image of the eternal, heavenly priest-king. For Adam was very really priest of the Most High. This we cannot understand as long as we see the essence of the priesthood and of the priestly function in the offering up of bloody sacrifices. For this there was no room in the original state of righteousness. This was added after the fall, and became necessary because of sin. But bloody sacrifices are not an essential element of the priesthood. Even as the prediction of future events, though belonging to the office of the prophet among Israel, cannot be considered essential to the prophetic office, so the offering up of bloody sacrifices, though for a time necessary on account of sin, is not the essence of the priesthood. The central idea of the priestly office is that of consecration of oneself and all things to the living God. A priest is a servant of God. He loves God. He consecrates himself to the Holy One. He serves in God's

tabernacle, in His house. In this sense, Adam was surely priest of the most high God in the midst of the earthly creation. All things must serve him, that he might serve his God, and be consecrated to Him with all his heart and mind and soul and strength. And as priest he was also king. Dominion was given him over all the earthly creation. The royal and the priestly offices were harmoniously united in his person. And this was but proper. Only the servant of God has the right to have dominion, for only as long as he stands in the right relation to the Creator of all things, that is, in subjection and obedience, can he properly rule over all things in the name of the Lord, and according to His will. Prostrating himself in the dust before the Sovereign of heaven and earth, and consecrating himself and all his power, together with the whole earthly creation, to the living God, Adam in the state of rectitude might have dominion and sway the royal sceptre over all creatures. He was priest-king, servant-king, king under God.

Among Israel this was different. Aaron was priest, but he did not sway the sceptre. The two offices were strictly separated in Israel's theocracy. The king might not minister at the altar, the priest could not occupy the throne. Hence, Aaron, though prefiguring a phase of the priestly office of Christ, was not His perfect type. The perfect type is found in the figure of Melchisedec, king of Salem, the priest of the Most High. His priesthood is realized in Christ. For Christ is the perfect Priest, the perfect Servant of Jehovah, Whose meat it is to do the Father's will, and Who, as the Son of God in human nature is consecrated to Him with His whole being. He is the only High Priest over His brethren, and is set over the whole house of God, to accomplish all things pertaining to God. And having accomplished all, and having become revealed as the perfect Servant of Jehovah, Who became obedient unto death, even unto the death of the cross, He is exalted at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, henceforth expecting till all things shall be put under His feet. Hence, the priesthood of Melchisedec is fulfilled in Him. He entered in the sanctuary above, not made with hands, and constantly consecrates Himself and all things to the Father; and He has all power and authority in heaven and on earth, and sits in His Father's throne. As the perfect High Priest, He is also King of righteousness, and on the basis of God's own everlasting righteousness He is King of peace!

And His priesthood is without end. It is everlasting. This was not, and could not be true of the priesthood of Aaron. It represented but a phase of the priestly calling of Christ, that phase which had become necessary on account of sin. And this phase could not be everlasting. It belonged to the way the High Priest must travel to realize His everlasting priest-

hood; it was part of the work that must be performed to build the House of God. It was accomplished in the perfect sacrifice of Christ on the cross, and there it came to an end. Of this phase of the priesthood of Christ that of Aaron was a shadow. Hence, while the eternal priesthood of Christ could be typified in just one figure, that of Melchisedec, the priesthood of Aaron must be spread over a long line of generations. For the blood of bulls and of goats could never blot out sin. It must ever be repeated until the perfect sacrifice of reconciliation had been offered in the blood of the cross. But it could not last for ever. Not only must there come an end to the sacrificing of bulls and goats, but also the perfect sacrifice of the High Priest Himself could never be repeated. This phase of the priesthood of Christ was finished when the High Priest laid down His life as a ransom for many. But the priesthood of Christ did not reach its end on Golgotha. It is everlasting. He is a priest after the order of Melchisedec. For ever He consecrates Himself, and His people, and all things, in perfect love to the Father. And presently He will come again to perfect the work the Father gave Him to do, to finish the House of God, and establish it in heavenly beauty in the new Jerusalem. Then the tabernacle of God will be with men. In that tabernacle all things will be sanctified to God. And in that everlasting House of God Christ will for ever be the perfect King-Priest, the King of righteousness and the King of peace, after the order of Melchisedec!

6.

The One Sacrifice.

The Heidelberg Catechism, as we stated before, does not discuss the priesthood of Christ after the order of Melchisedec, but considers it solely from the viewpoint of the work of redemption He was and is to accomplish for His people. We would almost feel inclined to apologize for having gone off on a tangent as far as we did in our previous discussion, were it not true that for a full understanding of the significance of Christ as the Anointed of God it is quite essential to consider Him in this wider connection. Now, however, we may return to the Catechism, which teaches us that to the work of Christ as Priest belong especially two elements: 1. That "by the one sacrifice of His body He has redeemed us," and 2. That "He makes continual intercession with the Father for us."

The way into the sanctuary of God, and into the glory of His priesthood after the order of Melchisedec, lay for Christ over the accursed tree. To His perfect obedience and consecration to the Father belonged "the one sacrifice of His body." For He was appointed

High Priest at the head of a people that were by nature sinful, guilty and damnable before God, "that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Tit. 2:14. "Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." Heb. 2:17. For it pleased God to make reconciliation through Him. For, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." Hence, this faithful and merciful High Priest is authorized to send out the word of reconciliation: "Be ye reconciled to God. II Cor. 5:19, 20. For "when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." Rom. 5:10. The High Priest according to the order of Melchisedec, standing at the head of a people in sin, estranged from God, and children of wrath, must bring "the one sacrifice of his body" to make reconciliation for the sins of His people.

Reconciliation is a covenant idea. It presupposes a relation existing between the parties that are to be reconciled, whether of friendship or of love or of obligation. Perfect strangers are not reconciled. One can speak of reconciliation between man and wife, between friend and friend, between a subject and his king, between father and son. With respect to divine reconciliation, the relation that is presupposed is the eternal covenant of God with His people. When God, through Christ, reconciled us unto Himself He revealed His eternal covenant love and friendship toward us. Reconciliation presupposes, however, also that the relation between the parties to be reconciled has been violated, so that it cannot function, and the parties are at variance with each other. With respect to divine reconciliation the cause of this separation and variance lies wholly with man. By his wilful disobedience he violated the covenant of God, and became an object of wrath by nature. As such all men come into the world, also God's own elect. They are enemies of God, and have forfeited all right and claim to God's favor. And the act of reconciliation consists in the removal of the cause of the separation and variance. It is that act of God whereby he changes the state of the sinner from one of guilt, in which he is the proper object of God's wrath, into one of righteousness, in which he is the object of God's love and favor.

These main elements of divine reconciliation must be clearly understood and born in mind, lest we misrepresent this fundamental truth of salvation. God is the Reconciler. Never may we represent the matter as if God were the One that is reconciled. This error is often committed. According to this presentation of the matter, God and the sinner are at variance, and

Christ steps in between, intervenes with His sacrifice, in order to bring the two parties together. But Scripture never supports this view. It never speaks of God and the sinner being mutually reconciled. Nowhere do we read that God reconciled Himself to us, or that Christ reconciled God to His people. But always it represents God as the Reconciler, and His people as those that are reconciled to Him by His gracious act. Christ is not a third party intervening between God and us, but He is the revelation of God the Reconciler. For God was in Christ reconciling, not Himself, but the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. We are in a state of guilt and under wrath by nature, and God removes the guilt, and translates us into a state of favor and friendship.

The way of this reconciliation is that of satisfaction. Men may be reconciled to one another by merely "forgetting and forgiving" whatever may be the cause of their separation. But this is impossible with God. The cause of our alienation from God *must be removed*. And a basis of reconciliation must be established in the righteousness of God. This cause of our separation from God is our sin, the sin that is ours in connection with the whole human race in Adam, and which we can only increase daily. For it is because of the guilt of sin that we lie under the judgment of damnation, and are the objects of the wrath of God. By nature we lie in the midst of death. If, therefore, reconciliation is to be established, the guilt of sin must be removed, blotted out, and righteousness must be established. But how is it possible to remove sin? Only by the satisfaction, the perfect satisfaction of the justice of God against sin. There is no other way. Whatever a supercilious modernism may mockingly object to this truth when it speaks of "blood-theology," and whatever it may try to offer instead about a God that is all love, and that is so merciful that He is ready to overlook sin, to wink at it, simply to act as if it had never been committed, the truth of satisfaction for sin is emphasized throughout Scripture, and must be strongly maintained as belonging to the fundamentals of the Christian faith. God cannot deny Himself. And He is righteous and just. Hence, there can be no reconciliation without satisfaction.

But what is satisfaction? How can the justice of God against sin be satisfied? Only by a perfect sacrifice. And what is a perfect sacrifice? It is the offering up of oneself, with an act of perfect obedience and in the love of God, to God's perfect justice against sin. The punishment of sin is death. One, therefore, who would satisfy the justice of God and make an atonement for sin, must suffer this punishment. He must taste death in all its implications, eternal death. The vials of God's wrath must be poured out over him, and must be emptied. But in suffering this agony of the wrath of God, these torments of hell, in dying this

death, he must not be merely passive, still less dare he be rebellious against the heavy hand of God upon him: he must perform an act in suffering, he must be obedient in dying, he must still love God when His heavy hand oppresses him. Mere passive suffering is no sacrifice. Even the damned in hell suffer the wrath of God, without ever atoning for their sin. To satisfy the justice of God one must perform an act that is the perfect antithesis of the act of willful disobedience of man in the first paradise. His act must be the perfect *Yes* over against the sinner's *No*. He must will to die for God's righteousness. He must *offer himself*.

And that is the meaning of the cross!

On Golgotha our only High Priest offered the "one sacrifice of his body" to satisfy the justice of God against sin. And this sacrifice was vicarious, substitutional. Voluntarily He entered into death, and suffered the deepest agonies of hell, not for His own sins, but for the sins of those whom the Father had given Him. And thus our only High Priest "by the one sacrifice of His body, has redeemed us," purchased us free from the bondage of sin in which we were held, obtained eternal and perfect righteousness for us, and merited for us the favor of God. Thus His sacrifice is the offering of reconciliation. God was in Christ reconciling us unto Himself.

He was able and authorized to make this perfect sacrifice, and to make it instead of all His own. For, as to the first, He is without sin. He had no original sin, for He is the person of the Son of God in human nature, so that the guilt of Adam's transgression could not be imputed unto Him; and He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, so that His nature was undefiled. "For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." Heb. 7:26. He is the Lamb without blemish. He was able to become perfectly obedient, even unto the death of the cross. He could offer to God the perfect *Yes* over against the terrible and wanton *No* of sin. And He could lay down His life, that He might take it again, for voluntarily He had assumed human life, and from the Father He had received commandment and authority to lay it down. And, as to the second, namely, that He was able and authorized to bring that perfect sacrifice for His own, we must remember, first of all, that He represented them all in virtue of His eternal anointing. God had chosen His elect in Him, and He was the head of all His own. Election is the basis of vicarious atonement. Without eternal, sovereign election, substitutional atonement is impossible. Either Christ represented His elect on the cross, and died in their stead; or He represented no one, and His death is in vain. And because He is the person of the Son of God that died, He could suffer death for all His own so as to satisfy

for them all, and redeem them unto life. All the vials of God's wrath, under which we all would have had to perish everlastingly, were poured out on Him in the moment of the cross, and in perfect obedience He bore that wrath even unto the end. For "Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." It is finished!

Some of the elements of this doctrine of vicarious atonement by the one sacrifice of Jesus on the cross will have to be discussed more elaborately in connection with other parts of the Heidelberg Catechism. But even here they had to be briefly touched upon, in order to set forth the meaning of this sacrifice of our High Priest in our stead and in our behalf, and to maintain the truth of vicarious atonement over against several false theories that have been developed to explain the death of Christ.

First of all, there is the so-called *moral theory* of the suffering of Christ. It denies that the death of Christ was a sacrifice for sin in the proper sense of the word, and, of course, also that He died in our stead. Christ's death was no satisfaction of the justice of God in respect to sin. According to this theory, the true purpose of the death of Christ is to exert a salutary, reformatory influence upon the moral condition of man. Christ left us a worthy example, when He willingly sacrificed His life for the truth. Or, He revealed that God will suffer with us, and that He entered into all our afflictions and death, in order that He might be able to sympathize with us. But in whatever way this theory may try to explain the real character and purpose of the death of Christ, it denies that it is an offering for sin, and that He died in our stead to satisfy the justice of God; and it insists that Christ's suffering meant to make a moral impression upon us, and to exert an improving influence upon mankind. To consider the suffering Man of sorrows tends to the moral uplift of men.

It is hardly necessary to point out that this theory stands in direct contradiction to the testimony of Scripture.

H. H.

Our help is in the glorious Name,
The Name of matchless worth;
Of Him to Whom all power belongs,
The Lord of heaven and earth,

The Preaching of the Gospel as Keys of the Kingdom

The kingdom of heaven has keys. Christ tells us so in saying to Peter, "I give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. . . ." Through this speech, He set the kingdom—His kingdom—before us under the image of a walled city with a gate that is locked and unlocked, opened and shut — opened to admit the friends, the rightful residents, and closed to shut out the enemy. In his vision, John sees this same kingdom—the holy Jerusalem—ascending out of heaven from God with its gates not closed at all, the reason being that there is no necessity, as the earth has been cleansed from the godless race of men that corrupted it. But as this cleansing has not yet taken place, the gates of Christ's kingdom at present are also closed to shut out this godless race.

The conclusion to which this brings us is that Christ's kingdom is a present reality and that the view according to which it will not be brought into being until the second return of Christ is fallacious. "The kingdom is within you," said Christ to His militant church; its laws are written on the tables of the heart of all its citizens so that through their good conversation the kingdom attains visibility also before the eyes of its enemies. This already suggests that Christ's kingdom is a heavenly spiritual entity. Nothing that is of this earth and of sinful flesh belongs to it. It excludes the carnal seed in the church and all that is of the flesh in the believers. As to its origin, it is God's conception and creation and His alone. As to its character it is the kingdom of righteousness—the righteousness that God prepared for it through the atonement of His Son, its eternal king. Therefore of all the kingdoms that be, it is the only abiding entity. It is the only kingdom that comes. And it comes through all the opposition of wicked men to it. And when Christ shall appear, it will appear with Him in glory.

It is for this kingdom and its coming, and for this kingdom only, that God's believing people pray. Thus they pray not for the coming of the kingdoms of this earth; for, doing so, they pray against the Scriptures and thus pray in vain.

Being what it is, a heavenly-spiritual entity, this kingdom as was said, has enemies. To these enemies the kingdom must be closed. To the believers it must be opened. Both are done by the preaching of the Gospel. Thus the keys of this kingdom are verily the preaching of the gospel. This is the subject on which I speak. I have arranged my material under the following three points. First, how the kingdom is opened and closed by the preaching of the gospel; second, the necessity of the opening and closing of the kingdom; and finally, the giving of the preaching of

the gospel as the keys of the kingdom to the church.

We speak here of keys plural and not of key because the Bible does so. The kingdom has but one key; but this one key, as all keys, opens and closes, unlocks and locks the kingdom. Therefore the Scriptures speak of *the keys* of the kingdom of heaven. Whereas the preaching of the gospel are the keys, I think that an answer to the question, "What is the gospel," fits logically into the thought-structure of this speech of mine. It is necessary to first raise and answer this question if the treatment of our subject is to be brought to a successful issue.

The gospel is glad tidings, according to the Greek word of which our word gospel is the translation. But a glad tidings concerning whom and what? The answer is the phrase, occurring over and over in the New Testament Scriptures, "Gospel of Christ," and the phrases, "Gospel of peace," and "Gospel of the kingdom," and "Gospel of God." The gospel is a glad tidings of Christ. As the genitive here is objective, it means that the gospel sets forth Christ in the relation which He sustains to the triune Jehovah, to His people, and to all things, sets forth Christ in all His worth, significance and glory in these relations. The gospel then is the glad tidings concerning the Christ. And this is at once the Bible. The entire Bible as to its whole content is gospel in that all the lines of thought that run through the Scriptures converge in Christ. The Bible reveals the Christ as the Christ of God and the triune God as the God and father of Christ and of Christ's people, thus reveals God in the face of Christ as the God of our salvation. The gospel is also the glad tidings of peace and of the kingdom because it sets forth that peace and that kingdom that God prepared for His people through Christ. The gospel is the glad tidings of God. Here the genitive is possessive, so that the thought conveyed is that the gospel is God's. He conceived of it and realized it. This then is the gospel.

However, we should be more definite and also can be by briefly answering the question: Just what does the gospel tell us concerning the Christ. The heart of the matter can be set forth in the following language.

Christ is the Christ of God by God's eternal appointment and anointing in time. Thus Christ is very and true eternal God, the only begotten Son of God, co-essential and co-eternal with the Father. Through His atonement He, as the Christ of God, redeemed His people from all their sins, realizes in them the fruits of His cross, and thereby leads them, through sin and suffering and death, to their everlasting destination—them, His people, chosen with Him before the foundation of the world to life everlasting, crucified with him,

(Address delivered on the occasion of the commencement exercises of our Theological Seminary.)

buried with Him, raised with Him and thus also set with Him in heaven and blessed with all spiritual blessings approximately 1900 years ago. This is the gospel, the heart and soul of it. It is a good gospel, a glad tidings, exceedingly so. For according to this gospel all the elect of the past and the present and the future—the sum-total of elect, thus also the elect still to be born—are legally in heaven, saved to the uttermost in Christ their head by a faith that cannot cease and is thus indestructible because Christ prays for them. According to this good gospel, each one of God's people—thus also each one of those of His people still to be born—is in heaven and occupies his own place in that great family of redeemed and from that place he shall never be moved. According to this good gospel, all the wicked even now are in the place of eternal desolation. According to this good gospel, the church is glorified, the new heaven and the new earth are here and the tabernacle of God is with men on the new earth. Does this sound strange to your ears? Don't we understand our own doctrine of sovereign election? Thus to preach this good gospel is to preach a finished work of Christ, finished in the legal sense. We therefore would not trade in this gospel for the pseudo-gospel of the Arminian, according to which the salvation of a man is contingent upon his own capricious will and not on the will of God, according to which therefore a true believer—mark you, a true believer—can plunge back into hell even as standing in the very shadows of the gates of the kingdom of heaven.

Now this good gospel, as preached, as rightly preached, to be sure, opens the kingdom to believers i.e. to the elect of God who in time become manifest as believers and shuts the kingdom to the unbelievers who in time become manifest as unbelievers, persistent unbelievers. And, mark you, it does so before their own consciousness. For consider that we now have to do with the preached gospel, with the gospel as preached to men and in men, their hearts and minds.

Now just what does it mean that the preached gospel opens the kingdom to the believers before their own consciousness and closes the kingdom to unbelievers. What does it mean when you open your house to your friend? It means that you bid him to come in and to be thoroughly at home in your domestic circle. It means that you render accessible to him all the good things in this circle, namely your very self, your society and fellowship and the society and fellowship of your loved ones. And when you close your home to the hurtful person, you forbid him to set his foot on your doorstep and thereby shut him out from your fellowship and from the society of your family and from all the rights and privileges of a beloved friend. So does the preaching of the gospel open the kingdom to the believers, render accessible to them before their own consciousness God's throne of grace, the blessed society

and fellowship of God and of Christ and all the treasures of the kingdom and the privileges of those whom God calls His sons. But as to the unbelievers, the wicked, the impenitent, they are shut out from the kingdom with all its blessings and treasures—shut out before their own consciousness by this same preaching of the gospel and thus shut up now and everlastingly in outer darkness. This is the work, the operation of the gospel as preached, as truly preached, rightly preached.

This raises the question, just how is the kingdom opened and closed by the preaching of the gospel? And how is it to be explained that the gospel, as preached, has this effect?

If the how of the matter is to be understood, we must consider first of all that the elect, i.e. the believers, are justified and that the sins of the wicked are retained. As to the believers, their justification is implicit in their being chosen unto life everlasting in Christ and predestinated unto the adoption of children, implied further in their being crucified, buried, raised and set in heaven with Christ. Being justified and forgiven, they are as guiltless as they would be had they never sinned and as positively righteous as they would be had they themselves all their life kept the law of God with all their mind, heart, will and strength. God justified them. He did so through His vesting them with the satisfaction and righteousness—with all the good works—of Christ; and so, in the point of view of His own personal righteousness, He made it lawful for Himself to actually save them from all their sins. There could be no actual deliverance from sin and its consequences were God's people not righteous in Christ, were they thus guilty and condemnable. For guilt calls for wrath and death and everlasting desolation. All the treasures of the kingdom, every blessing that God bestows, are included in the fact of the justification of God's people. Hence, only the believers, the elect of God, such as repent of and forsake their sins, are blessed and none other, for only the believers are justified.

Now consider further that the written record of the justification of the believers is our Bible, the gospel, the glad tidings. The scriptures, the gospel pronounces God's people justified, that is, righteous in Christ and thus forgiven. And it declares, does the gospel, the sins of the wicked retained. Just because of this, the gospel, as rightly preached, opens the kingdom to the believers and closes it to the unbelievers before their own consciousness. The gospel justifies, forgives God's people, pronounces them forgiven.

The author of our Heidelberg Catechism has a fine understanding of these matters. He puts the question, "What are the keys of the kingdom of heaven?" Ans: "The preaching of the gospel and Christian discipline or excommunication." Excommunication, rightly considered, is essentially nothing else but the preaching

of the gospel. Then this author puts the question, "How is the kingdom of heaven opened and shut by the preaching of the gospel?" Ans: "When it is declared to all and every believer that all their sins are really forgiven them of God; and on the contrary, when it is declared unto all unbelievers that they stand exposed to the wrath of God and to eternal damnation." The thought conveyed is that the gospel as preached opens the kingdom to the believers because it justifies them and that this same gospel closes the kingdom to the unbelievers because it declares unto them that their sins are retained. It ought to be plain also just why the preached gospel, through its justifying the penitent sinner in his heart, opens to him the kingdom, renders that kingdom with all its treasures accessible to him before his own consciousness. If a man knows that his sins are forgiven, that thus he is righteous before God in Christ, he knows at once that he is God's son and thus God's heir and a joint heir with Christ and that therefore the kingdom with all its treasures and blessings are rightfully his in Christ. For those whom God justified them He also glorified. How needful this knowledge of their justification is to the believers is apparent. Consider that the believer, in himself guilty and condemnable and vile and worthy of hell, does something amazing. He calls God, that great and terrible God, Father. And he appears before the face of that terrible God and petitions Him for grace and life and forgiveness, and for His fellowship in Christ, yea, he petitions Him for all things, for heaven and earth for the kingdom and all its treasures. How does he have the courage? He has the courage because he knows himself justified, knows therefore that being justified, all things are His.

So, too, it is plain why the preached gospel, through its retaining the sins of the wicked in their own minds and hearts, closes to them the kingdom before their own consciousness. If a man knows in his heart that his sins are not forgiven, that God sets his sins before His face, he, that wicked one, concludes at once that the kingdom and its blessings and treasures are not his and that in God's house there is for him no place. It is God's will that the unbelieving have knowledge of this. For the unbelieving are the wicked who do not repent, who cannot will to repent. They are the wicked who hate God and despise His Christ. God cannot, without denying Himself, look on, while the wicked hate Him, without telling them in their hearts, through His preached gospel, that He judges them in this life and will judge them in the life to come.

As all these statements strongly suggest, the true preacher of the gospel is Christ and none other than He. This is plain from a consideration wherein the work of preaching the gospel consists. It consists in speaking God's gospel—the gospel that justifies sinners who truly repent and retains the sins of the im-

penitent in the hearts of men, believers and unbelievers alike, so that the former know themselves as righteous in Christ and the latter as men with sins retained. Thus it consists—does this work of preaching the gospel—in sanctifying the gospel of forgiveness of sins unto the hearts of the believers, in causing this gospel to dwell richly in them and in speaking the gospel of the retention of sins in the hearts of the wicked, so that they actually know themselves as unforgiven and shut out of the kingdom. Who is equal to this task? The angels in heaven? No, not the angels. Not one of them even if that one were Gabriel. The apostles, were they still with us in person? No, not the apostles. Not one of them even if that one were Paul. There is but One who can speak this gospel of the forgiveness of sins in the heart of the believers, but One who can tell them that they are justified and saved, tell them so that they believe and are assured, and that One is Christ. He tells His people, speaks the gospel of forgiveness of sin in their hearts, and certainly in their hearts alone and not in the hearts of the wicked, the impenitent. The gospel of the forgiveness of sin is a gospel only for the penitent and not for the wicked. The latter can derive not an atom of comfort from it. The human bearer of the gospel, in his carnality and for the sake of his bread and butter, may justify in his perverted preaching the carnal seed in the church, may tell this seed that they go to heaven even though they forsake not their sins, yet this seed is still ill at ease in Zion and this because Christ does not speak. Yea, he does speak in the hearts of this evil seed—speaks the gospel of the retention of sins. But the believers, as assured by Christ, knew themselves as the justified one. *Justified* is their new name; and this their name, they find in the scriptures. Looking into the scriptures, they see themselves in heaven, set there with Christ. And they have peace and joy for they know that their salvation is near.

It is plain then that the preached gospel that opens and closes the kingdom through its justifying the believers and retaining the sins of the impenitent is the gospel as preached by Christ. The church however has received from Christ the mandate—the right and duty—to proclaim, bear the gospel of God through which He, Christ, preaches. Said Christ to Peter and to all His apostles and to the church of all ages, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven," or, John 20:23, "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." This, in other words, is what Christ said, "I will give unto you the keys of the kingdom of heaven," i.e. "I will give unto you my gospel and the authority to proclaim

it. Proclaim then this gospel of the forgiveness and the retention of sins. Publish unto my people that their sins are forgiven them and unto the wicked that their sins are retained. And knew for certain that, through your proclamation of God's gospel, I justify my people in their hearts before the bar of their conscience and retain the sins of the wicked likewise in their hearts before the bar of their conscience.' Certainly, the church forgives sins but only in the sense that she proclaims the gospel of forgiveness through which Christ forgives.

It is thus the calling of the church, through its ministry, to publish God's gospel, the gospel through which Christ accomplishes His work, His great, glorious and terrible work. As was said, the work of Christ consist in His gathering His sheep, His elect, further in His opening to them the kingdom through His justifying them in their hearts by their living faith in God's gospel, thus by their faith in Him and in His God,—the faith that God gives them. Thus it consists, does this work of Christ, in His sanctifying His people wholly—spirit, soul and body,—in order that they may be preserved blameless unto His coming. It consists does this work of Christ, in shutting the kingdom to the carnal seed in the church and thus preparing them for the doom to which they have been appointed.

Now if Christ performs His work, through the gospel, as preached by His church, it follows that the church must make it her aim to preach God's gospel purely and fully, and thus must certainly refrain from adulterating and corrupting God's gospel, from obscuring it, from mixing it with human philosophy, with the lies of the devil. The church, in a word, must preach *God's* gospel and not the wisdom of man. All that is of man, of sinful flesh, in the proclamation of God's gospel by the church, is so much useless material, useless to Christ for the accomplishment of His work. Examples of such useless materials is the heresy according to which God well-meaningly offers His salvation, the forgiveness of sins and life eternal, to all men and the heresy that, in consequence thereof, the salvation of man is contingent on man's own capricious will instead of on the unchangeable will of God. "I give unto you the keys of the kingdom," said Christ to His church. "Whose soever sins ye remit are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain are retained." What now is the mandate implicit in this declaration? Not this certainly, "Offer the forgiveness of sins unto all men indiscriminately and tell them that if they choose to receive this divine pardon, I and my Father will forgive them? Not this certainly but this, "Preach to my people the gospel to the effect that their sins are pardoned, that my God and their God forgive them, the penitent ones, and I assure you, my servants, that I will put this gospel in their hearts

so that they will know themselves forgiven." "And tell the wicked that, according to God's gospel, their sins are retained; and I assure you that I will put this message in the hearts of the wicked and thereby shut them out from the kingdom and so prepare them for the doom to which they have been appointed." It has been said that the servants of Christ cannot preach the gospel of forgiveness of sin to the penitent, the elect of God, because, not being able to judge the heart, they do not know who the penitent and the impenitent are. This is true. The servants of Christ cannot judge the heart. But Christ can. He knows who His people are; and this is sufficient, as He is the true preacher of the gospel. These faultfinders should realize that their criticism strikes at the very scriptures and at their own Heidelberg Catechism. Certainly the servants of Christ, being mere men, do not know the heart. An therefore they publish to every man, not that God forgives them, but that He pardons and saves whosoever believeth, namely, His people, the penitent ones, and that He retains the sins of the wicked.

But certainly, there are other requirements. The full truth of the salvation of God's people must be told and explained, that faith is of God and that faith is the fruitage of the working of His mighty love and that its source is His sovereign election and further that God sovereignly hardens whom He will through His gospel. Further, sin must be exposed and denounced, sin as to all the forms which it assumes in the present time and as it riots in the carnal seed of the church and in the flesh of the believers. And this preaching must be directed to every man and every man must be told that he must repent and that repenting and believing, he is forgiven and saved, and that persisting in his unbelief, he is damned.

In the light of these observations, it ought to be plain that the task of handling the keys of the kingdom is a difficult one. It is a task from which sinful flesh must needs recoil. For to handle these keys, to truly preach God's gospel, is to tell men the full truth about God *who is God*, about God as revealed in the face of Christ. To preach God's gospel is to preach a gospel through which Christ shuts out of the kingdom the wicked, the carnal seed. And that seed is the preacher's own brethren according to the flesh. It may even include his own children. To truly preach the gospel is to expose sin. Therefore the preacher who truly preaches God's gospel cannot avoid stepping on the toes of men. And he will be hated for it. But he may console himself with the thought that it is better for him to step on the toes of unspiritual men than to step on God's toes through his obscuring and adulterating God's gospel. Doing the latter he will loose his life, though for the present he may be saving it. Christ, while He walked among men, truly preached God's

gospel and see what befell Him. Paul truly preached the gospel and see what befell him; and see what befell all the prophets.

It requires a great love to truly preach God's gospel, a love so great that the servant of Christ has great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart for his kinsmen, his unbelieving and impenitent brethren according to the flesh, to whom Christ shuts the kingdom. Paul knew this sorrow. It shows that he was a true Christian. For those kinsmen over whom he grieved were always on his track. Like dogs they were hounding him to the death on account of his gospel. Had he not grieved over these kinsmen, had the thought that God was shutting them out of His kingdom filled his soul with a carnal glee, he would have been committing murder in the pulpit and he himself would have been reprobated.

Who then is equal to the task of handling the keys of the kingdom? Nobody. But God calls His servants and those whom He calls He also qualifies.

But preaching God's gospel is certainly a task as glorious as it is terrible and impossible. For through God's gospel as truly preached Christ accomplishes all His work. He gathers His church and shuts the kingdom to the wicked. And through His realizing the promise, the prophecy, in that gospel, He does a great work: He destroys the work of the devil and all violence which exalts itself against him till the full perfection of His kingdom takes place wherein God shall be all in all. It means that the gospel of God as truly preached by God's servants under the impulse of love is the faith—the faith of the church—that overcometh the world.

G. M. O.

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church hereby wishes to express its sincere sympathy to one of its members, Mr. Henry A. Schut, in the death of his youngest child,

JOAN SCHUT

who the Lord took unto Himself at the tender age of 8 years.

May the ever faithful covenant God, Who doeth all things well, comfort the bereaved family with His Holy Spirit, and give grace to abide in His will.

Consistory of Hudsonville,

Rev. Bernard Kok, Pres.

Mr. T. Miedema, Clerk.

Uit Dien Drom

(Psalm 73; Tweede Deel)

De vorige maal hebben we gezien hoe Asaf in groote moeite gekomen was in zijn harteleven. Hij had de goddeloozen gadeslagen. Dat wil zeggen, de rijke goddeloozen van zijn tijd. En hij had hun deed en leven vergeleken bij het deel der godvruchtigen. En bij die vergelijking was hij aan 't weenen gegaan. 't Was dan ook vreeselijk. De goddelooze rijken ging alles wel: er waren geen banden tot hunnen dood toe en hun kracht was frisch elken morgen. En zij gebruikten hun kracht om te vreten en te zwelgen, te onderdrukken en te spotten, te blazen en te woeden. Doch Gods volk leed. Hun straf of kastijding was er elken morgen. Hun deel was tranen en smart.

Hij had eindelijk gevraagd, bevende, Zou God het eigenlijk wel weten? Misschien heb ik tevergeefs mijn hart gezuiverd en mijne handen in onschuld gewasschen. Wat voordeel heb ik wanneer ik mijzelf kruisig en tracht om God te dienen? Zij doen het niet en hebben rust in de wereld. Zij vermenigvuldigen hun vermogen. Wat er over is laten zij na aan hunne kinderen. Dus het liep over lange jaren. Neen, God weet het niet.

Toch wilde hij niet alzoo spreken. Asaf was een leider in Israel. En terwijl hij zoo leed en vroeg heeft hij toch niets uitgelaten. Hij gevoelde dat zulks trouweloos zou zijn. Als Asaf die beschouwing van de wereld aan Gods volk verteld zou hebben, dan zou hij velen hebben doen struikelen. En dat wilde hij niet.

Maar, hij wilde het verstaan. En dat ging niet. 't Ging hem als met de Emmausgangers veel later: hij vond geen plaats voor het lijden en het kruis.

En het einde was moeite, moeite, des avonds en des morgens.

Totdat hij inging in Gods heiligdommen.

En daar ligt het keerpunt.

Wat zijn Gods heiligdommen?

Gods heiligdom is de plaats waar God woont op aarde.

Ge zult dan tot mij zeggen: maar hoe heb ik het nu? Woont God niet overal? Is er wel één plekje in den hemel, op de aarde of in de hel waar God niet woont? God is toch de alomtegenwoordige?

En dan is het antwoord van God zelf: Neen, Ik woon niet overal. Ik woon alleen waar Ik Mij thuis gevoel. Gods heiligdom is God's tehuis. God is wel overal, doch Hij *woont* niet overal. Waar God woont daar openbaart Hij Zich in al Zijn deugdenbeeld. Daar laat Hij Zich zien in al Zijn liefde en genade. Waar God woont daar omhelst Hij de aarde en den mensch. Deze laatste zin is een uitdrukking van Zijn verbond.

Ge kunt dat ook zien in het Bijbelsche beeld van den regenboog. Die boog in den hemel is een beeld van Gods armen die de geheele aarde en al de menschen van 't eeuwig welbehagen omhelzen. Gods heiligdom is de plaats waar de hemel de aarde aanraakt en kust.

Dat heiligdom onder de Oude Bedeeling is Sion, Jeruzalem, de Tempel, het Heilige der Heiligen, de Arke des Verbonds, het Verzoendeksel, het Bloed!

En in dat laatste, in dat Bloed zit de sleutel tot het verstaan van Gods heilighdommen. (Dit meervoud van heiligdom geeft uiting aan het overstelpende der Godsopenbaring.)

In dat Bloed ligt alles.

Dat Bloed spreekt ons toe van Jezus, Jehovah Heil!

Het heiligdom is de plaats en de gelegenheid waar God Zijn schepsel opneemt in de armen van eeuwigen min. Het is de plaats waar alle zonden en schuld en duisternis opgeheven worden, weggeslingerd tot in de diepten der zee. Het is de plaats van het eeuwig licht. Daar woont God. Met U en mij, mijn broeder.

Asaf is naar God gegaan en heeft Hem zijn nood geklaagd. Hij heeft Hem alles verteld wat we lezen in de verzen 2 tot 16.

En toen heeft de Heere Asaf opgenomen in Zijn armen en hem uit "dien drom van nevelen" opgehaald en hem gezet "en rapport" met Zijn Eigen licht. De Heere heeft tegen Asaf gezegd: Zie, Mijn knecht, uw moeite komt hier van daan, dat gij maar een heel klein stukje van Mijn raad ziet! Gij ziet noch het begin, noch het einde aller dingen! Gij ziet net maar het kleine stukje van het nu! En ook dat kleine stukje ziet ge slechts als een gebrekkig en een zondig mensch. Ge ziet wel die oogen die van vet uitpuilen, de harde tong der goddeloozen, die schik hebben van haten den ganschen dag, ge ziet wel den rijkdom van vet en dikheid, van geld en goed, van gezondheid en welvaart—doch ge ziet hun hart en innerlijke leven niet! Ge hebt nog nooit gezien Mijn vloek in hun hart. Ge zijt onkundig aan den worm die knaagt aan het innerlijke van hun bestaan. De voorsmaak van de hel hebt ge nog nooit gezien in den onlust van hun diepe leven. Dat volk waarover gij gestruikeld zijt heeft werkelijk geen blijdschap. Zelfs in het lachen hebben zij smart. Dat volk vindt nu al uit, dat de aarde met al hare schatten geen ware blijdschap geeft aan zijn bezitter.

Evenwel, Asaf, hier, kom nu en zie eens op hun einde!

En toen is Asaf aan 't gruwen gegaan. Hij zag hun einde. En let wel hij heeft hun einde gezien uit het oogpunt van God's nu! Luistert maar naar Asaf's verdere klanken van dit schoone lied: Gij zet ze op gladde plaatsen!

Hebt ge er op gelet, dat Asaf opeens vervalt in het gebruik van den tweeden persoon? Hij zegt: *Gij* zet

ze op gladde plaatsen. Het toont ons, dat Asaf met God Zelf te doen gekregen had. Dat hebben onze vaders verstaan die de psalmen op rijm gezet hebben. Want ze zingen: "Om met de *Godsspraak* raad te plegen!" Asaf heeft geluisterd naar de Gods openbaring.

God heeft een raad. En in dien raad is alles opgenomen wat geschiedt in de geschiedenis. En Asaf mocht voor een oogenblik inzien in dien raad van God. En wat hij daar gezien heeft van Gods raad over de goddeloozen heeft hem doen gruwen. Toen heeft Asaf niet meer geweend, of het moest zijn over zijn vroegere dwaasheid. Maar hij heeft wel gegruwd. Daar heeft hij gezien, dat alle rijkdom en goede gaven Gods voor de goddeloozen evenzoovele gladde plaatsen zijn. Och, of het tegenwoordige Israel zulks mocht zien! Want ze zien het zeker niet. Anders zouden ze niet zoo dwaas spreken van de algemeene genade. Vandaag zegt het groote meerendeel der Kerk, dat God uit liefde den goddeloozen verrijkt met alle goede gaven. Vandaag gaan de leermeesters in Israel niet naar de heilighdommen Gods om met de *Godsspraak* raad te plegen, doch ze zijn naar de Heidenen gegaan: ze hebben geluisterd naar Plato en Aristoteles. Nu zeggen ze ons, dat alle goede gaven die de goddeloozen ontvangen evenzoovele bewijzen zijn dat God hen liefheeft, niet liefheeft in dezelfde mate waarmede Hij Zijn volk bemint, doch wel liefheeft, zij het dan in mindere mate. Maar gladde plaatsen? O neen!

Wat stond men toch veel vaster in vroegere jaren!

Leest nu eens de berijmde psalm 73:9. Daar vindt ge geen algemeene genade. Daar staat: Dit duurde, tot ik uit dien drom van nevelen ging in 't heiligdom om met de *Godsspraak* raad te plegen. Daar zag ik op wat gladde wegen de voorspoed zelfs de boozen leidt; en hoe Ge in 't eind hun val bereidt!" Hebt ge het gezien hoe onze vaders spreken van een *bereiden van God* van hun val? God zet de goddeloozen op gladde plaatsen met het doel om hen te doen vallen in verwoestingen! Leest nu ook eens den onberijmden psalm op deze plaats. Daar staat dit: "Immers zet Gij ze op gladde plaatsen, Gij doet ze vallen in verwoestingen!" Verklaard in het verband zijn die gladde plaatsen al hun rijkdom, hun gezondheid, hun gaven en talenten. Hoe vreeselijk!

En zegt nu niet, dat wij behagen scheppen in die vreeselijke dingen! Want, eerst, belijden wij zelf, dat wij ook waardig zijn om zoo door God behandeld te worden. Wij zijn, om met Asaf te spreken, groote beesten bij God! Wij zijn ook kinderen des toorns van nature, net zooals de goddeloozen. En, tweedens, wij belijden die vreeselijke dingen, enkel en alleen omdat God het ons geopenbaard heeft. Als God zoo duidelijk ons openbaart, dat het geheele leven der goddeloozen niets anders is dan een voorbereiding tot

hun eeuwig verderf, hoe zullen wij dan anders spreken? En, derdens, wij hebben een diep medelijden met die stakkerds. Niet omdat zij niet waardig zijn om zoo vreeselijk behandeld te worden, want God is recht, maar, omdat wij nog aan hen vast zitten door de band des bloeds. Wie zou niet weenen bij den rand van de poel des vuurs? Met een siddering die door onze ziel waart, zeggen we het: Vreeselijk zal het zijn te vallen in de handen des levenden Gods! Wie zou niet weenen bij het zien en hooren van zulk een vloek Gods? Ja, zelfs is mij het haar te berg gerezen als ik op Uw gerichten heb gestaard; Uw oordeel, Heer, kan niet dan vreeselijk wezen!

Mocht Israel het Asaf nazeggen: "Hoe worden zij als in een oogenblik tot verwoesting, nemen een einde, worden te niet van verschrikkingen!" Wie leeft daaruit vandaag? Hun getal is weinigen. Wie denkt er aan vandaag, dat de goddeloozen tieren en razen in al hun rijkdom aan den rand van een eeuwig afgrond en dat terwijl ze razen in al hun rijkdom aan den rand van een eeuwig afgrond en dat terwijl ze razen en tieren, de Heere gedurig zegt: Ik vloek U! Ik vloekte U van eeuwigheid en Ik zal U vloeken tot in alle eeuwigheid? Wie durft te wonen bij een eeuwig gloed?

Wie zegt het Asaf na vandaag, als we gevraagd worden om een oordeel over de goddeloozen: Hun leven gaat als een droom voorbij! Wie durft te belijden, dat het sterven der goddeloozen juist is als het ontwaken uit een droom, als ze niets anders zien dan het Oog van God, vlammend van toorn en grimmigheid? En let wel, terwijl ik dit schrijf vlamt dat Oog over alle goddeloozen. Doch de stakkerds zien het niet en weten het niet. Ook wordt het hun niet aangezegd die beter konden weten. De goddeloozen zeggen vandaag: God ziet het niet en merkt het niet op als we booselijk spreken van verdrukking! En de leeraars in Sion zeggen: God heeft U lief! Zullen de goddeloozen niet opstaan tegen dit geslacht van leeraars en hun in het oordeel van God verdoemen? Zullen ze hen niet toegillen: Gij hadt beter kunnen weten en hebt het ons nooit aangezegd, dat de toorn Gods in die dagen over ons was ten kwade? Neen, maar gij hebt ons geleerd in Uw algemeene genade, dat de gladde plaatsen Gods bewijzen waren van Zijn zoogenaamde liefde over ons. Dan zullen ze eindigen met te schreeuwen: De Heere verdoeme U!

Doen wij dan anders, geliefden!

Eerst, zijt niet nijdig op de dwazen, ziende der goddeloozen vrede. Omarm Uw kruis en weet dat het een goede weg van God is naar den hemel.

Tweedens, durft de overtuiging uws geloofs te hebben en een God te verkondigen die den ganschen dag de goddeloozen haat, zoo haat dat Hij hen op gladde plaatsen zet, opdat ze tot in der eeuwigheid verwoest

mochten worden. Getuigt daarvan, al moet ge om dat getuigenis dan ook lijden. Zoo is het immers gegaan in 1924? Daar zijt ge uitgeworpen omdat gij de waarheid gesproken hebt aangaande God tegenover de goddeloozen. De Drie Punten zijn evenzoovele omtuiningen tegenover psalm 73. Doch gij, rechtvaardigt gij God.

Derdens, getuigt dat ge waard zijt van nature om ook zoo verworpen te worden. Uw naam is een groot beest bij God. Vers 22. Verhoovaardigt U niet tegenover den goddelooze.

Vierdens, zijt tevreden met Uw lot. Al gaat het dan langs onbezaaide wegen. Al moet ge dan ook 's morgens schreien vanwege de kastijding. Die zware weg en al dat gewezen is Uw weg naar het hemelsche Paradijs. En weet, dat terwijl gij schreit onder de slaande hand Gods, Hij op U neerziet met oneindige liefde. Als het schijnt dat alles tegen U is dat een ieder er genot in heeft om U te vertrappen, zegt dan eerst: Ik ben het waard; en, tweedens, God heeft mij lief en Hij zendt al dit kwaad om mijn bestwil. Dan zal Uw besluit zijn: Maar de Heer zal uitkomst geven. Kent Gij een schooner lied?

Als het er nu op aan komt is er dan werkelijk wel iets hier op aarde dat U de ruste kan schenken? Is er zelfs in den hemel iets waarin ge kunt rusten? Neem nu het liefste wat ge U nu maar kunt denken, is er dan iets wat ge op kunt wegen tegen de liefde Gods in Christus Jezus, die naar de hel gegaan is om U te redden? Hebt ge wel ooit een liefde ontmoet onder de menschenkinderen gelijk de liefde Gods? Neen toch?

Welnu dan. Nu zijn we klaar om met Asaf te zingen: Gij zult mij leiden door Uw raad en daarna zult Gij mij in heerlijkheid opnemen.

En terwijl de goddeloozen rondom mij zijn, zal ik die arme stakkerds beklagen. Ik zie God die uitroeit al wie tegen Hem afhoereert.

Maar mij aangaande, Ik zal al mijn vertrouwen op den Heere HEERE zetten om al Zijn werken te vertellen. Dat is immers al een hemel op aarde?

Het is still geworden in 't gemoed van Asaf.

We hooren het hem zeggen en fluisteren het hem na: het is mij goed nabij God te wezen! Wat hunkeren, wat verlangen!

G. V.

NOTICE

Classis East will meet in regular session D. V., Wenesday morning, July 5, at 9:00, at the First Protestant Reformed Church,

D. Jonker, S. C.

Excommunication of Baptized Members?

This subject as we wrote in our last article is put in question form because there is no unanimity of action and conception about this matter in Reformed Churches. It concerns the important question of discipline of adults who were baptized but who refuse to make a confession of faith and partake of the Lord's Supper, and also such adults who have committed sins for which members of the Church of Jesus Christ are disciplined.

I also gave in my last article a brief sketch of some of the actions and opinions of Reformed leaders from the sixteenth century, up to the recent discussion in the Netherlands at the interrupted Synod of 1939.

Since writing the last article I have borrowed Rutger's *Kerkelijke Advies*, which contains the report of Bavinck and Rutgers on this question which they gave to the Synod of Middelburg in 1898. This report states very clearly the difference of opinion. In the main there are two positions.

The one position is that which was originally the position of John á Lasco in the Old Netherland Church in London. The other position is that taken by Gijsbertus Voetius and followed generally by Reformed Churches.

It was the practice of John á Lasco to urge the children, (of believing parents) twelve and fourteen years of age, to partake of the Lord's Supper. And if at the age of fifteen yet one was refused permission to come to the Lord's table because of ignorance or misconduct such a one was seriously admonished. Finally if such admonition or censure was to no avail when such a person reached the age of eighteen or at the most twenty, they were excluded and no longer considered to belong to the communion to which they belonged as children, and were formally excommunicated.

On the other hand there was the position of Voetius. Voetius considered baptized children to be members of the Church of Jesus Christ. These children who had not yet come to years of discretion he called incomplete members of the Church.

His position accordingly is that these can only be treated as incomplete members also. But with respect to the adults who refuse to make a confession and become united with the communion of the Church, Voetius denies that they can be excommunicated. The argument is that they are not members and therefore cannot be treated under Church discipline.

In the main, it is pointed out by Bavinck and Rutgers, this is the position of the Netherlands Reformed Churches. They remark, however, that it was strange that the simple, clear statement of John á Lasco, which

is appealing, did not receive wider recognition. Upon further reflection they could see several reasons why such a position of Voetius was accepted above that of John á Lasco. Two main reasons given are: 1. That in the growth in number in the Reformed Churches there was at the same time a loss of spirituality, which made it difficult for the church to maintain the old firm position. 2. The position of the Reformation to admit those of twelve to fourteen years of age to the table of the Lord was no longer followed. As the age of the years of discretion was changed so it also became evident that the reasons for not coming to the table of the Lord were not only ignorance and misconduct but other serious objections such as lack of confidence and assurance. And therefore the church could not exclude such from its communion.

However, a very good observation made in this report ought to be kept in mind in our consideration of this question of excommunication of so-called baptized members. The report makes the point that there is no principle difference. It shows that the position which says excommunication does so upon the principle that baptized members who because of their own guilt do not come to confession ought to be formally declared not to be members of the Church. The other position which says "not to formally excommunicate", does so on the principle that they are not at all members even. Essentially therefore the position is the same.

The problem is to make a clear statement of advice for the Church to follow in its practice. Bavinck and Rutgers attempted to do that. They attempted to keep the good points of both positions. They condemned the practice of some congregations which gave a church position to adult baptized members, for example, to allow them to remain undisturbed in their church membership, or even to give them attestation of membership by baptism when they left for other churches, or other such rights in the church. They gave a three point advice, which is as follows: 1. Baptized children are members of the Church even though they are incomplete members. And as members of the Church they are objects of discipline but this must also be "incomplete" consisting only of admonition.

2. Such baptized members coming to years of discretion and still not making confession must be seriously admonished by the Church. If they through their own guilt do not come to confession and heed the admonition, it must be considered that they have lost their membership, and it is desirable that the consistory express this not later than their thirtieth year. These baptized members thus cease to be members of the church and thus are not objects of church discipline either.

3. That these are not members of church means that they are not to be considered such either from any

aspect. Their children are also not to be considered "children of believing parents".

From this advice of Bavinck and Rutgers it is plain what their stand is in regard to the principle of the matter and the action to be taken with such so-called adult baptized members. The only thing that is not clear is whether they favor the more formal excommunication by the church or the mere announcement that N.N is no longer a member.

In our church the custom has been to treat all such cases of discipline of so-called adult baptized members by having the consistory seek the advice of Classis and upon approval of Classis to announce that such a member has been erased.

My conclusions in regard to these matters are as follows:

1. It seems that everyone would agree that each consistory and pastor should very seriously begin to labor with its young people to show them their calling to confess their faith and to come to the table of the Lord.

2. In the second place it seems to me that with regard to those who do not do so each consistory should consider the circumstances and attitude of each individual separately. An age limit cannot be set for all upon which labor should cease, and final action taken. Although the age limit set by Bavinck and Rutgers is not without value. Such an age limit will become much clearer and more defined in a church where faithful, systematic, and serious labor is expended.

3. It also is my conclusion that where there is indifference, or enmity shown that in such cases final action must be taken immediately. By that I mean discipline must be exercised and seriously and systematically executed. This is evidently necessary in the case of public sin. It is altogether a wrong notion that with such young people, from the ages of eighteen and above who show definite hostility to the Church of Christ or even indifference that an attitude of watchful waiting should be taken with them, with the hope that sometime in the indefinite future they may be converted. The correct view of discipline will refute such a conception. True discipline seeks to bring the command to repent seriously and effectively to such young folk. Such action would be sanctifying for other young folk, for the entire church, and for those disciplined themselves if they were truly covenant seed. I think it is an Arminian influence that gives rise to the conception that the Church should be lenient and allow young folk plenty of time to decide. The Arminian influence is that it presents the matter in such a way that it is up to the individual to "accept" Christ at his own time. It is a serious calling which must be heeded in the acceptable time of the Lord, and the refusal to heed such must also therefore be looked upon as a serious sin.

The above conclusions are not at all different from the well-known Reformed teachings. However, coming to the question of what this final action of discipline should be, whether it should be merely erasure, "royeeren", or excommunication, my conclusion is that we should use the word excommunication in order to avoid misunderstanding as to the serious principle and action involved.

I am aware of the fact that the brothers Bavinck and Rutgers do not become explicit about this in their report, although Rutgers himself at another time said not to excommunicate. I am aware too that the different Synods of the Netherlands with the exception of the last interrupted Synod of 1939 either did not care to make an explicit statement or advised against excommunication.

But I believe this hesitancy is due not to a lack of insight into the principle of the matter but to lack of courage of decision.

The Churches of the Netherlands do not care to use the term erasure. But our Churches in America from their decision in the Christian Reformed Synod of 1918 expressed themselves further than the Churches of the Netherlands by committing themselves to definite disciplinary action of such members. They, however, only came to the conclusion, final erasure.

Because of the principle involved, that baptized children are in the covenant, that is in the communion and fellowship of Jesus Christ, therefore I believe they should be treated in cases of discipline in the usual way, excommunication. That is the idea of the Reformation expressed in the action of John á Lasco. That is the principle recognized in all Reformed Churches. That is how some leaders, for example J. Jansen in 1922 have expressed themselves. The term erasure it seems to me is contradictory to the disciplinary action itself to which our Churches are committed. That finally is in harmony with the teaching and action shown in the Bible. Compare the words of God to Moses and the actions taken in Deut. 13:6, 11; Lev. 24:10 ff.

L. D.

IN MEMORIAM

It pleased our heavenly Father to take out of our midst and unto Himself our beloved husband and father,

PETER VANDER GUGTEN

May 25, 1944, at the age of 55 years.

We are abundantly comforted in the knowledge that his declining days were filled with strong hope and peace, through the grace of our God Who doeth all things well.

Mrs. P. Vander Gugten—Joldersma
Miss Gertrude Janet.

The Employment of Mothers in War Industries

Long range guns which can shoot twenty years into the future are now firing on the United States in a war potentially as destructive as that being fought around the world today. No section of the country is out of their range. We refer to the employment of mothers in War Industries and consider the children the victims of this prevalent destructive power. In the comparative quiet Mid-West this is no problem, but it is a very real one in many Industrial Centers. This, however, does not necessarily exclude all those not living in such cities because principally this subject includes all mothers engaged in work other than that of the home. It includes all those not found in their homes, be they part or almost full time farmers (such being the case with many in agricultural districts) or be they found busy with some work other than the home. Some mothers seem to have a delight in doing most anything except filling their place in the home.

The war, however, has increased this tremendously, making drastic inroads into millions of American homes. Due to a patriotic spirit (though they be few in number) or financial needs or that almost indomitable desire for more money and higher standards of living many mothers have left their homes and the sacred heritage of their children to work in war industries. A few statistics will suffice to show how great this number has become. In 1943 from 17 to 20 million women were employed in this country of which several million were mothers. As can be expected today this number is even larger. But it is also natural that this change has caused untold alterations in the American homes, including many problems and evils. The foremost question which faces them seems to be that of their children. What must they do with them? Their children, given of the Lord, are no longer an asset but a liability and a burden. Where there are no children the question of the advisability and right of wives being employed doesn't even seem to arise. Broken homes, one often working on a night shift and the other on a day shift, doesn't even seem to phase them. But those having children are confronted with a problem. Hence the world has found "reason" to practice birth-control and have few or no children.

But this matter of the children of these employed mothers has become such a great problem that even the world sees it and apparently has no real solution. And when the world sees problems of this nature the evil is quite well advanced and the results appalling. The most extreme cases are almost unbelievable. Let me narrate a few. A twelve-year-old child is locked out of the house all day while her parents are at work.

A woman on the grave-yard shift drives her car close to the windows of her place of employment and her four children sleep in the automobile. Others are chained to a tree or a trailer camp while the parents are at work. Such cases, our papers say, can be multiplied by the thousands. Some mothers turn them over to day nurseries, others have maids, still others have grandmothers willing to care for them, and in some homes father is home with them one half of the day when he is not employed and mother the other half when she is home. Most of these naturally realize that these means are very inadequate, but the cause of our country must not suffer. They are quite determined and willing to sacrifice all for the latter. Therefore they are making all kinds of attempts to solve this problem.

Many arguments have been given, pro and con. Those defending the employment of mothers forward the following arguments. Mothers are needed in industry, if it is to fulfill its vital part in the war effort. Our country, they say, is facing a crucial shortage of labor, and about the only resources we have are the able and willing mothers. Besides as a practical matter the employment of mothers is entirely feasible. The individual community normally can provide whatever child-care facilities are needed and the economical support obtained by it is very desirable. Such employment will even help to *reduce* the percentage of juvenile delinquency. Those opposing it advance these arguments: There is no need for a general policy of employing mothers. They say in the first place that we are not fully and efficiently using the services of those already engaged in War Industries as a source of workers. Moreover, we have not yet fully employed women other than mothers. They also advocate that women with children, as a group, make the least dependable source of workers. Finally, such is bound to mean inadequate care for their children, even if adequate care could be provided. The result of such improper care we see before our own eyes in the increased juvenile delinquency.

We could give many more of their arguments, but the above will suffice to show us how the people at large view these things from a purely natural viewpoint. We naturally agree with the latter. This, to my mind, must become evident from the pure utilitarian viewpoint. The resulting evils and deficiencies of the employment of mothers of which we read in almost every paper is most natural. It would be a wonder if there were no increase in juvenile delinquency. The children of teen-age need mother's care just as much as the younger ones. Think of all the sex immorality and corruption found among this group. Take mother out of the home and you undermine the basis of all society, state and government. Nevertheless millions are seeking the solution to their problems in having

others care for their children. By trying to suppress one evil across the ocean they cause many more to arise in their own homes.

However, to all this we as christians must add another objection which really is the most important of all. Mother has only one place and that is in the home. God has placed her there. The covenant mother has received children of the Lord and she with her husband is called upon to instruct them in the way of the Lord and the "aforesaid doctrine". Even many in the world realize that the home and the parental instruction is of fundamental importance. And they view the child only from the viewpoint of the body and this life. The child must be taught good morals, behaviour and conduct and must become a respectable citizen and a worthwhile contribution to society. True as this all may be, they "forget" all about the precious souls of their children. They fail to see the Divine calling in respect to those little image-bearers of God. In connection with this we can also add that many a "christian" mother fails to see this, or at least fails to live and act accordingly. Many a mother in our own homes is so busy with the physical needs of her children that she fails to provide for the spiritual. She finds time, no, makes time to provide for the body, for clothes and food, but just doesn't seem to be able to find time to instruct and teach her own dear offspring the precious things of God. But this we do find with a *christian* mother. This is her solemn duty. With baptism she with her husband has made that pledge to God. True it is that the father is first of all responsible for these things in respect to his children, but the mother too has a very important calling in respect to this matter. She is with her children most of the time, while father often and usually is absent during the day. What a wholesome influence she can exert by christian teachings, examples and morals! This a christian mother does too. Her main interest is her home, her children. She doesn't want to be in every place and do most everything except the things God has called her to do. If she doesn't have this desire she isn't worthy of the name of a christian mother. Scripture teaches very plainly that father and mother are the first ones called upon to instruct their children and not the church or the school, much less a certain nursery or maid. Neither can anyone replace mother, not even with the best of care. There is no one in the whole world who can replace mother's care, love and patience. It, moreover, is her God-given duty to be in the home and in no other place. Our children are not little animals, for whom most everybody can provide, but they are precious souls of God given to that particular father and mother. These children they must instruct. Take this important cog out and the evil and detrimental results are inevitable.

Are christian mothers then unpatriotic when the

government needs help? By no means. They are most patriotic when they take their place in the home. Taking the future into consideration, as we always should do, they really do much less for their children both as image-bearers and citizens of their country when in the factory than in the home. The above-mentioned arguments, which can be proven with statistics, also show that there really is no need of mothers being employed in War Industries. And even if that need would be there, mother cannot and may not be taken from her children and home.

In conclusion we can give a few remarks. With the several million mothers employed in factories we see another sign of the times. In the midst of all the abnormalities of our day the home has and is becoming another addition to the list. But let us beware! Now more than ever do we need christian mothers in the home. Through the means given us of God, namely the Word, they with their husbands are laying the foundation of the future course. With a christian home we can expect christian children in a christian church with a christian school.

J. B.

Kerknieuws

Het schijnt wel of de oorlog de menschen meer ernstiger doet leven; tenminste wanneer men ook hier en daar, van ginds en elders berichten hoort, dat ook de wereld meer biddende wordt, zou men bijna tot de conclusie komen dat ze nog niet zoo slecht is, 't is omdat de Schrift niet wordt geloofd, die zegt dat het tegenovergestelde de waarheid is. Men sluit dan ook moedwillig de oogen voor de werkelijkheid.

Ook het goddelooze Rusland dat zich in het verleden er op beroemde met God te hebben afgerekend, schijnt nu toch weer een god te willen omhelzen. De kerk die er eertijds werd vervolgd mag nu weer een beetje ruimer adem halen; en wat christen verheugt zich niet in deze dingen? Ik heb er echter niet van gehoord dat Stalin hartgrondig is veranderd. De Russische beer is dunkt me niet te vertrouwen. 't Is niet meer als een politieke streek, en hij zal achter de oorlog met Stalin aan 't hoofd wel weer zijn venijn uitspuwen tegen de Kerke Gods.

Ook Amerika beroemt zich er op dat het zeer godsdienstig is, en er wordt veel gedaan om een beetje godsdienstig te blijven. We vechten toch ook voor de vier vrijheden, en een van deze is vrijheid van godsdienst. De geestelijke arbeid onder de soldaten laat in het geheel genomen veel tot wenschen over. In het

leger en op de vloot wordt niet veel ware godsdienst gevonden. Men vloekt het honderd uit, en hij die bidt wordt ook aldaar gesmaad. Het zal mij eens benieuwen wat voor vrijheid van godsdienst de ware Kerk achter de oorlog mag genieten? Ik kan niet zeggen dat ik er nu zoo veel van verwacht. De tijd zal 't leeren.

Ge hebt zeker ook al gehoord dat er een beweging op trouw is gezet om zoo spoedig mogelijk wanneer de "invasion" begint de klokken te doen luiden, en om dan bid-uur te houden. Dit is uitgedacht door een man die de eerste beginselen van het gebed niet verstaat. Ik heb er niet van gehoord wat de inhoud van zulk bidden zal moeten zijn. Wanneer het een veroetmoedigen is voor den Heere in zak en asch van wege onze zonden dan behoeven we waarlijk niet te wachten al eer de "invasion" haar tien duizenden slachtoffers vraagt. Als ik me echter niet vergis dan is het geheel iets anders. Men wil God inroepen dat Hij onze wapenen zegent zoodat we de oorlog mogen winnen. In Duitschland en Engeland met Rusland doet men dit natuurlijk ook. Ge ziet zeker wel de onmogelijkheid van zoo'n gebedsverhooring. Is het overduidelijk dat wij de oorlog moeten winnen? Het paste beter om te bidden: Uw wil geschiede. Ik ben er tamelijk zeker van dat wij als Protestantsche Gereformeerde Kerken aan dien onzin niet meedoen, want dit is m.i. niet vroom. 't Is zeker wel noodig dat we des Zondags in onze gemeentelijke bijeenkomsten ook de oorlog met al den gruwel die er mee gepaard gaat biddende voor Gods aangezicht te gedenken in overeenstemming met het allervolmaakste gebed, want zoo alleen worden onze gebeden verhoord.

Fuller Ave. moest ook 147 afstaan voor 's Lands dienst. We hebben tot op dit oogenblik er nog niet van gehoord dat er van de onzen zijn gesneuveld. Gode de eere, want wij zijn ook niet beter dan anderen.

Nu de Winter weer voorbij is, is ook de activiteit in de gemeente aanmerkelijk verminderd. De vereenigingen en catechezaties vergaderen niet meer. Er is nog een klas overgebleven voor hen die belijdenis des geloofs wenschen te doen in de jongste toekomst. Sommige menschen zijn van gedachte dat dit niet is in overeenstemming met de Schrift. Wanneer we het echter beschouwen in het rechte licht dan is het nog niet zoo onschriftuurlijk. Bij onze kennis van eigen schuld komt toch ook te pas kennis der Schrift. Als de Catechismus vraagt: Waaruit kent gij uw verdorvenheid, dan is het antwoord: uit de Wet Gods, en deze ligt vertolkt in Diens Woord. Men moet echter nooit gebruik maken van zoo'n klas om bij-zaken want deze beantwoorden niet aan de werkelijkheid.

Er werd ook in onze kerk-bulletin vermeld dat er nog verscheidene boeken zijn te verkrijgen: "In the Midst of Death". Ge weet dat ook dit boek is ge-

schreven door Ds. Hoeksema. Het handelt over de eerste vier Zondagen van de Catechismus. De leestof is van veel waarde voor ons en onze kinderen, en we moesten er gretig gebruik van maken. Als zoo langzamerhand de geheele Catechismus in boekvorm verschijnt, en we de verzameling er van in ons bezit hebben, beteekent dit meer dan een boekdeel in de boekenkast. Het heeft waarde ook voor de toekomstige geslachten onder ons Protestantsch Gereformeerd volk. Wij lezen niet genoeg waarmee we winste kunnen doen. Daarom is ook onze kennis te oppervlakkig. Onze Standard Bearer wordt ook niet genoeg gelezen en daarom heeft ook deze een kwijnend bestaan. Ook wij leven dikwijls te oppervlakkig.

Ik heb er nog niet van gehoord dat Concordia is omgedoopt in een andere meer voortreffelijke naam. De toekomst zal het ook moeten leeren of dit halfmaandelijksche blad elke week kan verschijnen. Ik hoop maar dat het kan. Het moet echter niet geschieden ten nadeele van de Standard Bearer. De medewerkers aan Concordia moeten niet vergeten dat ze geregeld ook hunne artikelen opzenden voor onze Vaandeldrager. Anders was het maar beter dat Concordia niet verschijnt, alhoewel het anders dunkt me toch wel een plaats heeft in ons midden.

Er zijn ook weer drie andere boeken gereed voor de pers, geschreven door Ds. Hoeksema. Laat ons ook hiervan bezitter zijn en er op inschrijven wanneer ze geadverteerd worden. Geoordeeld naar de overige werken van dezen schrijver zullen we zeker niet beschaamd worden.

Er zijn ook nu weer een verzameling van meditaties gereed die beschikbaar zullen worden gesteld voor onze soldaten. Voorwaar geen overbodige weelde voor hen die zich nu bevinden in een wereld vervreemd van God en Zijn dienst. Men moet niet na laten ze te lezen en overdenken.

De "Young People's Federation" ziet met blijdschap vooruit naar het oogenblik dat ze de 30ste en 31ste Augustus een gezamenlijke bijeenkomst zullen hebben D.V. Dit is dan de vierde Conventie. Dat dit van veel geestelijke waarde is behoeft zeker niet worden gezegd.

Er worden ook nu weer voorbereidende maatregelen genomen om een "Field-Day" te hebben dit jaar. We moesten het eens probeeren dit jaar om deze dag een succes te doen zijn. Ook voor deze dag zijn we niet meer zoo met enthousiasme vervuld. In het begin van onze bijeenkomsten was dit zoo geheel anders. Toen was het: Hoe vroolijk gaan de stammen op. Jong en oud wilde hier een wijle toeven. Als men niet kan dan is men natuurlijk vrij, en als men niet wil ook. 't Was anders wel mooi dat een ieder er gebruik van maakte, en wanneer de band der eenheid wordt gevoeld gaat men zich niet ergens elders vermaken.

Ge leest zeker ook de stukken die in de Standard

Bearer verschijnen over het voor en tegen van onze eigen scholen. Het wordt m.i. langzamerhand goed duidelijk door dit schrijven dat bij ons allen er een groote verantwoordelijkheid bestaat om mede werkzaam te zijn aan dit voortreffelijk werk, dat zeker Gods goedkeuring zal wegdragen. Dit kan natuurlijk niet worden gezegd wanneer men de kinderen onderwijs doet ontvangen in de publieke school; en hoe christen ouders dit soms nog kunnen goed praten is onbegrijpelijk. Zij verstaan zeker niet de verantwoordelijkheid.

Hier in Amerika wordt van verantwoordelijkheid toch niet veel meer verstaan. Dat komt maar al te dikwijls uit in de menselijke samenleving. Terwijl de oorlog bij de dag verschrikkelijker wordt en meer en meer slachtoffers vraagt kondigen de C.I.O. en A.F.L. maar doodeenvoudig hunne "strikes" aan, en men trapt alle recht met voeten en men laat alles draaien om de dollar, ook ten koste van eigen vleesch en bloed die moeten vechten in de vreemde voor eigen Vaderland. En als aanstonds de bange ure van "invasion" nadert en dit wordt werkelijkheid, dan maar bidden voor de overwinning, waarvoor men nu klaarblijkelijk geen gevoel heeft. De kerk die de oogen sluit voor dit "Union Monster" gaat niet vrij uit, en de christen die lid is van zoo'n union mag ook wel eens eventjes stil staan op pad en weg en gehoor geven aan 't woord der Schrift als het komt met de vermaning: Komt uit van haar mijn volk en heb aan hunne werken geen deel.

Ge hebt zeker wel in Concordia gelezen dat Ds. R. Veldman van de 1st Church werd beroepen in de 4th Church om onder hen het brood des levens te breken. Men heeft er aldaar aardig wat moed toe. Zooals het meestal gaat met beroepen, is dit ook nu het geval. Er worden vele gissingen gemaakt. Het voor en tegen wordt van beide gemeenten overwogen. De eene gemeente wil gaarne houden wat ze heeft, en de andere wil gaarne hebben wat ze niet bezit. 't Is echter ook in dezen: de mensch wikt, maar God beschikt. Ik hoorde ook iemand zeggen, eerst gaf Fuller Ave. \$15,000 aan deze gemeente, en nu ze dit hebben probeeren ze ook nog om onze Ds. zien tekrijgen. Het werd eenigzins verwijtend gezegd.

Nu is dit natuurlijk foutief gezegd. De vierde gemeente heeft natuurlijk het volste recht om een Ds. te beroepen en is zeker vrij in hare keuze. 's Heeren aangezicht wordt in dezen gezocht door beide gemeenten. Er wordt gevraagd om licht en wijsheid. En zoo indien weg ontvangen beide gemeenten wat hen van Gods wege toekomt. Het menselijke moet dan ook nooit op de voorgrond. Waarschijnlijk is het al beslist als de Junie 15 Standard Bearer verschijnt. De Concordia zal ons er wel iets van mededeelen. Daar rekenen we dan maar op.

S. D. V.

God's Counsel and Human Freedom

Our first task is to define terms. In the abstract, we can speak of three kinds of human freedom, to wit, moral freedom, metaphysical freedom and psychological freedom. Moral freedom is to be defined as the ability of man—the natural man dead in his trespasses and sins—to do the right and (or) the wrong as he chooses. Metaphysical freedom has reference to the counsel and providence of God. Here the question is whether God's counsel is the determining necessity of man's deeds (works, words and thoughts) and thus whether these deeds proceed from the store of God's sovereign providence. To maintain the affirmative is to hold that man, God's rational creature, is metaphysically bound. To answer in the negative is to hold that man is free. Psychological freedom raises the question whether man is the subject of his own actions and can act in agreement with his nature and thus whether his works are the free and unhampered expression of his true inner self. To say that they are, is to maintain that man is psychologically free. To maintain that they are not, is to hold that man is psychologically bound. Now the position which I occupy in this essay is the following. Man is morally bound, i.e. being, as he is, by nature dead in sin, he can only will to do evil; he cannot will to do, think or desire the truly good. If it were otherwise, man would not be spiritually, ethically dead. One of the certain implications of the theory of common grace is, that man is morally-spiritually free. He can will to do also the truly good. For, according to this theory, there resides in this man, devoid of the life of regeneration, a principle of true goodness, from which his good deeds proceed, must proceed, if they are truly good—good in the spiritual-ethical sense. And as this principle of true goodness in depraved man, must certainly be a part and parcel of him, fundamentally and radically changing his nature, the theory of common grace is a negation of the doctrine of the total depravity of man. If the exponents of common grace reject these conclusions—conclusions that logically follow from their premises,—they find themselves shut up in their thinking in an unscriptural and thus impossible psychology.

The position which I take in this essay is further that man is metaphysically bound. By this I mean that, as an ethical-rational creature, he in all his works, is the product of God's counsel, which is sovereign and that he comes forth out of the womb of a sovereign providence, yet not so that God is the author of sin. Our position is, that God determinately wills sin, is thus the determining necessity of sin without being its author. Sin, as a historical phenomenon, originated not in God but in man. Another certain implication of the theory of common grace is that man is

metaphysically free, for it—this theory—holds to a well-meaning offer of salvation to all men—an offer that is well-meaning on the part of God.

Finally, my position is that man, though morally and metaphysically bound, is, in his moral and metaphysical bondage, psychologically free. And by this I mean, as has already become plain, that, in his moral and metaphysical bondage, man remains the willing and desiring subject of his deeds, his deeds are truly the man, the index to his character and nature, that thus, with the sovereign counsel of God, suspended over him as the sovereign necessity of all he desires, wills, thinks and does, he is not, under the mighty hand of God, compelled to do what he hates and to refrain from doing what he has willed and purposed, so that he would pursue a course of life opposite to that which he now follows if God would only leave the man alone. So absolutely free, in this sense, is man—psychologically free in his metaphysical bondage and also in his moral bondage—that the wicked boast of being the masters of their own destiny and, contrary to the witness of their own conscience, conclude that there is no God. So absolutely free is man psychologically, as far as his consciousness is concerned, that his metaphysical bondage is not a matter of experience but a thing that must be believed.

Man, then, is psychologically free, though morally and metaphysically in bondage. Let us now see what this does not mean. It does not mean that a man, at any moment can will to do anything. I can name a thousand things that I at this moment and in the present setting of my life, I cannot will to do. For example: I cannot at this moment will to walk from here to Lansing, or even attempt it. I cannot even will to stop reading to you this essay, leave this house and walk around the block. I could will to do such a thing, at least, I could, and certainly would leave this house, could and would will to do so, if it were burning down over my head. But this detracts nothing from the truth of my previous statement, as, in this case, the setting has changed. In a word, psychological freedom does not spell, to use a dutch term "willekeur", i.e., arbitrary, purposeless and unmotivated and thus irrational conduct. There are then definite limits even to man's psychological freedom. The setting of his life at each successive moment of his existence, compels him not to do the thing that he will not, but to will to do the thing that he does and this often contrary to what he would at the moment like to be doing. I here distinguish between liking and desire and will, the determinate will of a man, that crystallizes in action. To illustrate, A lad has just been asked by one of his companions to go fishing. But the errand that he is doing under the instructions of his parent causes him to refuse. That lad wills to do the thing that he does, but con-

trary to what he would like to be doing. Hence, though psychologically free—he chooses to obey his parent—he would rather go fishing. Fact is then that man is hemmed in on every side, restricted to and directed in, a definite course of life by circumstances, the setting of his life, which has largely been determined for him. There is then also such a thing as the bondage of circumstances. But the point is that also in this bondage, man is still psychologically free. Because what he does, he chooses, wills to do. Some one may ask: Is this always true? Does a man will to be sick and does he will to die? Only the Christian does. But let us consider that being sick and dying is not a man's own act. But even in sickness the wicked one is still psychologically free. Fact is that he does not want to be sick. He is rebellious. His rebellion is his act. And what he does—he rebels—he wills to do. Thus, he is certainly psychologically free. Yet he is not truly free, for he is in rebellion against God.

Thus, we come to our final observation on this point. Psychological freedom does not spell true freedom. This brings us to the question, what is true freedom? This question may be briefly answered thus. True freedom is to love God and, under the constraint of this love, to will what He wills and to abide in the sphere of His law, His ordinances, for man.

Psychological freedom then does not spell "willekeur". Nor does it mean that man, before his own consciousness, does not act under constraint. He always does. He acts under the stress, constraint of circumstances and the setting of his life. And as the latter proceed from the sovereign counsel of God, the Christian plainly perceives, spiritually discerns, and acknowledges, that he is being lead onward, directed by God's counsel, led by his very hand. But the point is that also in what we may call the bondage of circumstances, man is still absolutely psychologically free, in that, what he does also in this, let us say, bondage, he chooses and wills to do. That man in all the kinds of bondages, enumerated above, is absolutely psychologically free, must, by all means be maintained. To deny this is to negate human accountability. I, of course, am not unmindful of the fact, that there are different degrees of moral responsibility, depending on the character and measure of the constraint and the mental state of the subject man.

Now the term freedom, appearing in my topic, is the signification of psychological freedom. Having now, to the best of my ability, stated what is to be understood by this freedom, we may now confront the question how this freedom is to be harmonized with the conception of a sovereign counsel and providence of God. Before we make any attempt at harmonization, let us emphasize the fact as such. And the fact is that, according to Scripture, man is psychologically free even with his deeds—desires, volitions and his

thoughts—sovereignly determined by the sovereign God through His counsel and providence. We need not pause here, at least not very long, to prove from the Scriptures the truth of this statement. Human accountability is implied in divine punishment. And if man is accountable, he must be psychologically free. The exponents of common grace charge us with denying or at least minimizing human accountability. The charge is as absurd as it is untrue. If man is not accountable, psychologically free, it is wrong even to confront him with the law of God. If man is not accountable, all exhortation and admonition is senseless and useless and strictly unnecessary and uncalled for. As to the sovereignty of God's counsel, certainly one of the foundation truths of the Bible is that this counsel is sovereign and absolutely so, and that it is according to the counsel—the counsel of His will—that God worketh all things. Fact is, that what meets us on every page of Scripture either directly or indirectly, is the teaching that God is sovereign, that He is the sovereignly determining God with respect to all things, that thus He doeth all things.

But the question is, how can man be psychologically free with this counsel of God suspended over him, so to speak, as the determining factor of all his deeds? Do not the conceptions of psychological freedom and a sovereign counsel exclude each other? Is not the sovereignty of the counsel necessarily destructive of psychological freedom and thus also of moral responsibility? As we are dealing here with facts, they do not exclude each other, sovereignty is not destructive of psychological freedom in man.

But can the two be harmonized? Can we harmonize the two to our own satisfaction? We certainly can, if what is meant whether the two can be harmonized logically. Fact is, that logically, purely logically, there is no conflict at all between the two. We emphasize this and shall also demonstrate it, in opposition to the exponents of common grace, who maintain that logically, that, at least according to human logic, there is indeed conflict here. But this contention is wrong and as dangerous as it is wrong. The logical conflict here is of man's own making. It is not found in the Scriptures. Logical conflict arises from a doing that consists in placing a wrong, unbiblical construction upon the proposition that man is psychologically free. Logical conflict there is only if it be maintained—in opposition to the plain teachings of God's Word—that psychological freedom in man implies that man thinks and wills and works independent of the sovereign will, counsel and providence of God. Were it true, there would indeed be logical conflict. For were this true, man, too, would be sovereign in his doing as God is sovereign. Now a sovereign creature and a sovereign God are logically exclusive entities as there can only be one sovereign ruler in the universe. Thus human

freedom, with the construction of the exponents of common grace upon it, does indeed involve us, in our thinking, in a logical difficulty, contradiction with respect to the point at issue. Let us make this very plain. If man works independent of God's sovereign will, He, too, is sovereign,—sovereign as God is sovereign. Now the proposition: man is sovereign, is equivalent in meaning to the proposition: God is not sovereign. Now the two propositions: "God is sovereign", and "God is not sovereign", are certainly contradictory. Fact is then that there is no logical conflict at all between the right, the Biblical conception of human freedom and the Biblical doctrine that God's will is the sovereignly determining factor of man's works, deeds, including desires, volitions and thoughts.

(To be continued)

G. M. O

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On May 28, 1944 our dear parents,

MR. KLAAS TIGCHELAAR

and

MRS. K. TIGCHELAAR—Sybesma

commemorated their 40th Wedding Anniversary.

We, their children, extend to them our most sincere and hearty congratulations. Together with them, we thank our heavenly Father, Who has spared them for one another and for us, and it is our sincere prayer, that the Lord may continue to be with them the remainder of their pilgrimage.

Their grateful children:

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Vos

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Glupker

Mr. and Mrs. Donald Tigchelaar
and 4 grandchildren.

Grand Rapids, Michigan.

IN MEMORIAM

Whereas it pleased our Covenant God to take out of our midst on May 25, 1944, our brother-elder

MR. PETER VANDER GUGTEN

the Consistory of the Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Haven, Michigan, wishes hereby to express sincerest sympathy to the bereaved family.

May the God of all grace speak to their hearts words of consolation, and apply this affliction to their spiritual well-being. May He cause them also to glory in tribulation, knowing the hope that is set before them.

The Consistory,

Rev. A. Petter, Pres.

Mr. G. Vander Lee, Clerk.