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MEDITATIE

Heilig In Al Uwen Wandel

Als gehoorzame kinderen, wordt niet gelijkvormig aan de begeerlijkheden, die tevoren in uwe onwetendheid waren; Maar gelijk Hij, Die u geroepen heeft heilig is, zoo wordt ook gijzelven heilig in al uwen wandel; Daarom dat er geschreven is: Zijt heilig, want Ik ben heilig.

I Petr. 1:14-16.

Hopende, wordt heilig!

Hoopt volkomenlijk op de genade, die u toegebracht wordt in de openbaring van Jezus Christus. . . .

En alzo hopende, met opgeschorte lenden uws verstands, en nuchteren zijnde, wordt, als gehoorzame kinderen, heilig in al uwen wandel!

Zoo is het verband.

Want een zeer nauwe, onverbreekelijke betrekking bestaat er tusschen des Christens hope en zijnen wandel in heiligmaking des levens.

De betrekking is wederkeerig.

Aan den eenen kant is het waar, dat een leven in hope een spoorslag is tot, en zich openbaart in een wandel in de vreeze des Heeren, in een reinigen van onszelfen, zoodat we, naarmate de hope vaster en levendiger wordt, we ook hoe langer hoe heiliger worden in al onzen wandel.

Dit is onvermijdelijk.

De reden hiervoor ligt in het voorwerp der hope, en in het karakter der hoop. Och, indien het voorwerp, waarop we hopen en waarnaar we met verlangen uitzien, niets anders ware dan uitwendige rijkdom en schatten; indien onze hope niets anders beteekende dan dat we uitzien naar een schoone plaats, "waar nimmer tranen vloeien," en "waar 't hart geen angst, geen

kommer kent, noch pijn; waar doorn noch distel groeien," er zou in de hope des Christens geen kracht verborgen liggen tot heiligmaking, geen streven zijn tot een heiligen wandel. Doch zoo is het niet. Het eigenlijke hart van de zaligheid, waarop de geloovige hoopt, ligt niet in uitwendigen rijkdom, maar in den geestelijken rijkdom van de volkomene gemeenschap der vriendschap van Gods verbond. In Zijn tabernakel te wonen, Zijne gemeenschap eeuwiglijk en in volmaaktheid te smaken, Zijne eeuwige gunst en goeder-tierenheid welbewust deelachtig te zijn en te genieten. Hem te kennen, zooals wij ook gekend zijn, Hem te zien, aangezicht tot aangezicht, en in volmaaktheid, zonder zonde en gebrek, Hem te dienen, te loven en te verheerlijken,—dat is het voorwerp van ons verlangen.

O, ja, bij die groote zaligheid behoort een nieuwe hemel en eene nieuwe aarde.

En de dood zal niet meer zijn, noch rouw, noch gekrijt!

Maar dat neemt niet weg, dat de Heere God Zelf, en het wonen in Zijne tente, en het smaken, dat Hij goed is, en het verheerlijken van Zijnen Naam in volmaaktheid, de eigenlijke zaligheid is, waarop de Christen hoopt.

Maar zoo verstaan, is de hope een kracht tot heiligmaking.

Want zullen we ooit in Zijnen tabernakel ingaan en bij Hem wonen, zullen we Hem ooit aanschouwen aangezicht tot aangezicht, dan moeten we Hem gelijk worden. Dan moeten we rechtvaardig worden, gelijk Hij rechtvaardig is; dan moeten we heilig worden, gelijk Hij heilig is; dan moeten we kennen, gelijk wij ook gekend zijn. Zonder de heiligmaking zal niemand den Heere zien.

En des Christens hope is eene zekere verwachting, met een sterk verlangen naar die volmaaktheid!

Hoe zou hij dan, als die verwachting en dat verlangen naar de eindelijke volmaaktheid levendig en sterk is, ook niet hier op aarde streven naar heiligmaking?

Maar aan den anderen kant is het ook evenzeer

waar, dat slechts in den weg der heiligmaking de hope levendig en helder zijn kan. Immers rust de hoop in de liefde Gods, die in onze harten uitgestort is door den Heiligen Geest, die ons is gegeven. Dat God ons heeft liefgehad met eene eeuwige liefde, en dat Hij Zijnen Zoon voor ons heeft gegeven, en dat Hij ons ook met Hem alle dingen wil en kan en zal schenken,— dat is de grond onzer hope. Van die liefde Gods tot ons getuigt Gods Geest met onzen Geest. Doch Hij getuigt alzoo, niet met den geest van hem, die in de zonde wandelt en de wereld liefheeft, doch slechts in zijn bewustzijn, die zichzelf reinigt en wandelt in heiligmaking.

Bij een slordigen levenswandel en een liefhebben van en jagen naar de begeerlijkheden dezer wereld verdooft het vuur der hope.

In den weg der heiligmaking is het getuigenis des Geestes, dat wij kinderen zijn en erfgenamen Gods, helder en sterk.

Hoopt volkomenlijk!

Wees heilig!

Wordt ook gij zelf heilig!

En dat in al uwen wandel!

Want Hij, Die u geroepen heeft, is heilig!

God is de Heilige! Hierop valt alle nadruk in den tekst.

En dat Hij de Heilige is, wil zeker, in den negatieven zin den woords, zeggen, dat Hij afgescheiden is van de zonde, de zonde-haat, en dat daarom de zondaar bij Hem niet kan verkeerren.

Doch daarin is de beteekenis van Gods heiligheid niet uitgeput. Heiligheid heeft immers eene positieve beteekenis. God is de Heilige in Zichzelf. Gods heiligheid is geen volmaaktheid, die eerst in werking treedt en tot openbaring kan komen, als de zonde in de wereld komt, doch is eene eeuwige deugd Gods. Ze houdt in, dat God de alleen Goede is. Hij is een licht, en er is gansch geen duisternis in Hem. Hij is het inbegrip van alle oneindige volmaakheden. Buiten Hem of zonder Hem is er geen goed. En omdat Hij de alleen Goede is, daarom is Hij ook volkomenlijk Zichzelf gewijd. Hij zoekt Zichzelf in geheel Zijn goddelijk leven en streven, in Zichzelf, maar ook in het schepsel. Om Zichzelf, Zijn naam, Zijn eer, Zijne goddelijke glorie concentreert zich heel Zijn goddelijk leven. En die volmaaktheid Gods, waardoor Hij, als de eeuwig en oneindig en eenig Goede, Zichzelf zoekt en bedoelt en toegewijd is, is Zijne heiligheid.

Hij is de Heilige!

Dat is Zijn Naam!

Maar daarom juist is bij het schepsel, het redelijke, op God aangelegde schepsel, heiligheid die genade, waardoor hij den Allerhoogste mag kennen en erkennen als den alleen-Goede; en Hem alzoo kennend, met eene geestelijke kennis der liefde, Hem zoekt, zich-

zelfen Hem wijdt met geheel zijne ziel, geheel zijn verstand, al zijn begeeren, en al zijne krachten, en met alle dingen. Het schepsel, dat iemand of iets anders zoekt dan den levenden God, is een onheilige, pleegt afgoderij, en maakt zich het voorwerp van Gods brandenden toorn. Maar:

“Wie heeft lust den Heer te vreezen,
’t Allerhoogst en eeuwig Goed,
God zal Zelf zijn Leidsman wezen,
Leeren, hoe hij wan’len moet.
’t Goed, dat nimmermeer vergaat,
Zal hij ongestoord verwerven;
En zijn God-geheiligd zaad
Zal ’t gezegend aardrijk erven.”

Wordt heilig in al uwen wandel!

Dat is de vermaning, die hier tot Gods volk komt.

En de vermaning veronderstelt, zooals wel vanzelf spreekt, dat degenen, aan wie ze gericht is, de inwendige, waarachtige heiliging des harten deelachtig zijn. De zondaar, de natuurlijke mensch, kan haar niet ontvangen, nog veel minder opvolgen. De zonde is niet slechts een kwestie van de daad, doch ze heeft de natuur zelf van den mensch aangetast en verdorven. De zondaar is van nature een onheilige. Zijn hart is verdorven. En zijn eigen natuur vermag hij niet te veranderen. Over zijn eigen hart heeft hij geen heerschappij. Het ligt niet in zijne macht om zichzelf te heiligen. Het zou geen zin hebben, om tot hem te komen met de vermaning: “Wordt heilig.”

Doch de zaak staat hier dan ook anders.

Het zijn zij, die reeds inwendig geheiligd zijn, tot wie deze vermaning komt. Het zijn degenen, die de apostel reeds had toegesproken als “de uitverkorenen, naar de voorkennis Gods des Vaders, in de heiligmaking des Geestes, tot gehoorzaamheid en besprenging des bloeds van Jezus Christus;” en die “wedergeboren zijn tot eene levende hoop, door de opstanding van Jezus Christus uit de dooden.”

Bovendien zegt de apostel niet: wordt heilig in het diepst van uw bestaan; maar: wordt heilig in al uwen wandel!

Onze wandel is ons daadwerkelijk leven.

Geheel ons actieve leven: inwendig en uitwendig naar ziel en lichaam; ons denken, en willen, en begeeren; ons spreken, en hooren, en handelen; ons leven als personen, en ons leven in betrekking tot anderen, in huisgezin, in kerk, en in het midden der wereld. . . .

Wordt in heel dezen wandel heilig!

Laat heel dat leven Gode gewijd zijn, zich om Hem concentreeren, op Zijn eer en roem gemunt wezen, door Zijne inzettingen worden beheerscht.

Laat het zoo worden!

Want ge zijt in beginsel geheiligd, maar ligt ook nog midden in den dood.

De zonde kleeft u altijd aan.

En om in allen wandel Gode gewijd te zijn, zult ge voortdurend moeten waken en bidden.

En den goeden strijd des geloofs strijden!

Wordt heilig!

Heilig in het midden der wereld!

Gode gewijd zijn in het midden eener wereld, die in al haar streven afwijkt van, en zich keert tegen den levenden God!

Dat is der geloovigen roeping!

En ook daarin ligt een oorzaak van strijd. Want juist omdat uwe roeping tot een heiligen wandel midden in de wereld tot u komt, zult ge steeds moeten worstelen om niet gelijkvormig te worden aan "de begeerlijkheden, die tevoren in uwe onwetendheid waren."

Zonde is begeerlijkheid.

Niet alsof het begeeren als zoodanig zondig is. Integendeel, de mensch is met een begeervermogen, als een begeerend schepsel door zijnen Schepper geformeerd. Het geheiligd begeeren richt zich echter op God. Het spreekt zich uit in de schoone en diepe woorden van Psalm twee en veertig:

" 't Hijgend hert, der jacht ontkomen,
Schreeuwt niet sterker naar 't genot
Van de frissche waterstroomen,
Dan mijn ziel verlangt naar God!"

Doch de van God afgevallen mensch richt zijn begeeren op zichzelf, op de dingen des vleesches en der wereld, op goud en geld en macht en eigen eer en roem. Hij staat met zijn begeeren tegenover God, en zoekt ver van Hem de weelde! Dat is de zondige begeerlijkheid. En de apostel spreekt hier van *begeerlijkheden*, in 't meervoud, omdat de begeerlijkheid zoovele vormen aanneemt als het menschelijke leven in het midden van en in verband met de wereld rondom den mensch veelzijdig is. Daar zijn de begeerlijkheid des vleesches, en de begeerlijkheid der oogen, en de grootheid des levens; de eierzucht, de zucht naar macht, de geldzucht, de genotzucht, de drankzucht, de vraatzucht, de heerscht, en wat dies meer zij. Altegaar zondige begeerlijkheden!

Die begeerlijkheden waren tevoren, dat wil zeggen, vóór hunne roeping, in hunne onwetendheid!

Ze hadden de begeerlijkheden lief! Ze jaagden naar de bevrediging hunner begeerlijkheden!

En ze wandelden in de begeerlijkheden in *hunne onwetendheid*. Onwetend waren ze, niet in natuurlijk zin, alsof ze zich niet bewust waren van zonde. Immers hebben ook de heidenen het werk der wet geschreven in hunne harten, waardoor ze het onderscheid kennen tusschen goed en kwaad. Doch wel waren ze geestelijk onwetend, en hadden ze geen rechte kennis van God, van de zonde, van de zaligheid van Gods

gemeenschap, en van de roeping des evangelies, waarmee ze thans geroepen waren.

Wordt die begeerlijkheden niet gelijkvormig!

Waat immers ge moet heilig worden in al uwen wandel in het midden der wereld!

En in die wereld schept de zondige mensch zich levensvormen, waarin hij uitdrukking geeft aan zijne begeerlijkheid, en waardoor hij zijne begeerlijkheden zoekt te bevredigen!

In die levensvormen, vormen van taal en mode, van muziek en dans, van genot en vroolijkheid, van handel en wandel, kan het geheiligd leven van de geloovigen zich niet uitdrukken.

Zij staan lijnrecht tegenover eenen heiligen wandel!

Wordt haar dan niet gelijkvormig!

Hebt de wereld niet lief, noch hetgeen in de wereld is!

Want al, wat in de wereld is, de begeerlijkheid des vleesches, en de begeerlijkheid der oogen, en de grootheid des levens, is niet uit den Vader, maar is uit de wereld!

Strijdt den goeden strijd des geloofs!

Wordt heilig in al uwen wandel!

Wordt heilig!

Want er is immers geschreven: Zijt heilig, want Ik ben heilig!"

En Hij, Die u riep is heilig!

Gelijk Hij dan, Die u geroepen heeft, heilig is, zoo wordt ook gijlieden heilig in al uwen wandel!

Wat bedoeld is, is natuurlijk de krachtdadige roeping Gods, waardoor de zondaar wordt overgezet uit de uisternis der zonde in het wonderbaar licht Gods. Wel is deze roeping altijd door het gepredikte woord des evangelies, maar zij zelve is niet een woord van menschen, maar de onwederstandelijke, almachtige roeping van Hem, Die de dooden levend maakt, en Die de dingen, die niet zijn, roept alsof ze waren! En het is eene roeping tot de zaligheid, die in Christus Jezus is, tot Zijne verlossing, de vergeving der zonden, gerechtigheid en het eeuwige leven.

Doch hier valt alle nadruk op het feit, dat God, die u riep, heilig is!

Juist daarom ligt er in deze roeping tot de zaligheid, ook tegelijkertijd eene roeping tot een heiligen wandel.

Hij, de Heilige, de alleen Goede, Die in alles Zichzelve zoekt, riep u! Hij riep u dus tot Zichzelve! Hij riep u, opdat ge Hem gewijd zoudt zijn, en opdat ge zoudt verkondigen de deugden Desgenen, Die u alzo riep!

En gij zijt immers kinderen! Als Hij spreekt "Zijt heilig, want Ik ben heilig," dan is het als gehoorzame kinderen uw lust om Zijn Woord te doen!

Opdat ge moogt zijn tot roem Zijner genade!

Heilig in al uwen wandel!

H. H.

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EDITORIALS

The Marks Of The True Church *

Twenty years ago today the Christian Reformed Church, convened in synodical gathering in Kalamazoo, Michigan, was travailing in the pangs of birth, about to be delivered of a doctrinal child. She labored hard, and even though some ten days before mother had been taken to the hospital, and a consultation of expert doctors and professors had been held, that had given detailed advice just how this particular case should be treated, when finally mother was brought to the synodical delivery room, it seemed as if there were no strength to bring forth. Some doctors even expressed as their opinion that the whole thing was premature, and that the consulting experts had been mistaken as to the time of delivery. They advised to wait, and to send mother back home until the time should be fulfilled for her to be delivered. For days she labored in vain. On the evening of the third of July, 1924, it was decided to allow her a few days of respite. The expert doctors would return on the seventh of July, determined, if still it seemed as if the expected child could not be brought forth in the normal and natural way, to force the birth, or to perform a Ceasarean operation if necessary. And thus it happened. During the interval between the third and the seventh of July, some of the experts made special study of the case, and on the evening of the latter date the delivery was forced. And mother gave birth to triplets! The firstborn bore a remarkable resemblance to old Arminius, and was called GENERAL GRACE; the second and third strongly suggested kinship with Pelagius, and, accordingly, their names were called SIN-RESTRAINT and MAN'S RIGHTEOUSNESS respectively.

Somehow the sons of the Christian Reformed Church, if I may make myself guilty of an inevitable mixture of metaphor, for I am now speaking of sons of flesh and blood, looked with grave suspicion upon these three doctrinal children, whose birth had been forced at the Synod of Kalamazoo. In fact, they insisted that they were not born of the Spirit and of the Word, but were children of adultery, and that, therefore, they should be expelled from the Christian Reformed home and family. However, mother refused to admit that she had played the harlot with Arminius and Pelagius, grew angry with her faithful sons, and cast them out of her house as bastards and not sons. These, being so cruelly and unjustly exiled, built their own home, and re-established their normal family life. And ever since, they claim that their re-established home and

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family are the proper Reformed heritage, and that they are the true and legal sons of the Protestant Reformation in the Calvinistic line, while the Christian Reformed Church is an adulterous woman, and they that justify her adulterous ways are bastards, and not sons.

This claim must always anew be emphasized and sustained, especially since our former adulterous mother and her unfaithful sons do not grow weary of repeating that we were expelled from home because we were rebellious, refractory, and stiffnecked children, that refused to heed wise and proper admonition. In other words, over against the doctrinally false and church-politically unjust attitude of the Christian Reformed Church we constantly face the obligation to maintain that not they, but we represent the proper continuation of the historical line of the Reformed faith, and the true Church of God in the world. What, then, could be more proper, on this twentieth anniversary of the "Three Points" than to examine the criterion according to which it must always be determined whether a certain visible church represents the true Church Catholic, and speak to you for a few moments on:

The Marks Of The True Church.

What is the idea of what is known as the marks of the Church? How are they possible, and why should they be necessary? In general, we may answer that the marks of the Church are such manifestations of the Church of Christ in the world as serve to identify a certain gathering of believers and their children on earth as a representation of the true body of Christ. They are characteristics by which the true Church may be recognized. The Church is the gathering of the elect into the spiritual Body of Christ. This gathering is effected by the Son of God Himself by His Spirit and Word. It is made out of the whole human race, and throughout the ages of history. This gathering, though made in the world, and out of the world, is not of this world. It is not physical but spiritual. It is not earthly, but essentially heavenly. The attributes of this Church are catholicity, unity, and holiness as we confess in the *Apostolicum*: "I believe an holy catholic church."

But we must understand at once that as such this Church is an object of faith, not of our experience or of human perception. Essentially, the Church is invisible, not in the sense that God is invisible, but in the sense that she escapes our human and earthly perception. We believe and confess that the Church is catholic, that is, the same all over the world and among all nations, as well as throughout all the ages of history. But this catholic Church is not as such perceived. On the earth we perceive but local churches, separated not only by reason of natural differences

due to distance and distinctions of a national and lingual nature, but also because of doctrinal divisions, and opposing articles of faith. We believe that the Church is one, one in hope and faith and love, one in Christ through the one Spirit; but here on earth we behold a church that appears rather hopelessly divided, the separate divisions of which refuse to recognize one another as belonging to the true spiritual Body of Christ, each with its own creed, its own ritual, and its own program of action. We believe that the Church of Christ is holy, holy in her Head, washed in the blood of the Lamb, sanctified in the Spirit, consecrated to God, and separated from the world. But in actual fact we see very little of this holiness. On the contrary, we perceive a gathering that is marred by much sin, hatred and envy, corruption and debauchery, division and schism, wrangling and controversy.

For this reason the distinction was always made between the Church visible and invisible. By this distinction was never meant that there are two churches, one visible and another invisible, a church within the church. The distinction does not refer to the fact that within the scope of the church in the world there are hypocrites, so that the church visible is the gathering of believers including the hypocrites, while the church invisible represents the true body of the elect and spiritual members of Christ. But it means that the Church, as the spiritual, heavenly Body of Christ, catholic and holy, is essentially invisible, but that through certain expressions and signs this invisible Church becomes visible in the world in the earthly gathering of believers and their children. As far as the Church as an organization is concerned this visible manifestation of the invisible, spiritual Body of Christ is effected by the confession and walk of the believers. Wherever a group of believers are gathered in the name of Christ, and confess their faith in Him, and seal their confession by a godly walk, there the Church invisible becomes visible on earth. But the marks of the Church do not refer to the manifestation of the invisible Body of Christ *as an organism*, but to the identification of the Church *as she is instituted by Christ* in the world, through the offices of ministers, elders, and deacons, and the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments. And the marks of the Church are those characteristics by which the invisible Body of Christ, gathered and instituted in the world, may be recognized.

But more must be said. For these marks of the Church do not merely serve the purpose of indicating the institution of the Church, and of distinguishing it from all other institutions on earth as the manifestation of Christ's spiritual body, the *ecclesia* called out and gathered by Him, but they are also means whereby the true Church may be distinguished from the false. They are distinguishing marks of *the true*

Church... Fact is that the church in the world is in a constant process of deformation. The reason for this is evident. The church in the world is not perfect. Always there is the carnal element, the chaff among the wheat, the tares in the field. This carnal element is represented not only by the carnal children and hypocrites, that always come up out of the bosom of the Church in the world, or add themselves to it for various fleshly reasons, but also by the old nature in the believers themselves. And the constant tendency of this carnal element is to corrupt the Church, to lead her astray from the truth as it is in Christ, and from the way of sanctification into the corruption of the world. The result of this constant process of deformation is that there are all sorts of gatherings in the world that assume the name of Church, but with different gradations of purity, until at last the Church reveals itself as utterly false. Always, therefore, there is a movement away from the true Church in the direction of the wholly false, and on the line of this movement there are several churches that are more or less relatively true and false. And by the marks of the true Church in the world are meant those distinguishing characteristics of the Church: institute by which the true Church may be recognized in the midst of and in distinction from all aberrations and deformations.

Now, in answer to the question: which are these distinguishing marks by which the true Church in the world may be known? the Church usually replied that there are three such marks: the pure preaching of the Word, the proper administration of the sacraments, and the proper exercise of Christian discipline, or application of the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Let us look at each one of these a little more closely, see what they have in common, and try to answer the question why these three serve as distinguishing marks whereby the true Church in the world may be recognized.

First of all, there is the preaching of the Word. What is it? We may reply that the preaching of the Word is that proclamation of the gospel of God that is authorized by Christ, is according to the Scriptures, and is performed by a preacher, that is, by one that is called and sent to preach, and that stands in the service of the living and powerful Word of God. It is not necessary for our purpose to elaborate upon all the different elements of this definition of true preaching. There is, however, one element that must have all the emphasis here, and that is, that true preaching of the Word is wholly dependent on, and must be strictly subservient to the Word which Christ Himself speaks as the chief Prophet of the Church. Unless He speaks, powerfully, efficaciously, through His Spirit, and unless it pleases Him to make the preaching by man subservient to His mighty Word, there is no preaching.

Preaching is powerful. It is a power of God unto salvation or unto damnation. It is not mere human persuasion. But it is powerful and efficacious, not because man speaks, not even because he takes the contents of his speech from the Scriptures, but because it is God through Christ that speaks through the preaching. From this it follows that not every one that takes a fancy to proclaim the gospel is a preacher. A preacher must be sent. He must be called. Hence, we insist that the only one that can preach, i.e. that is authorized to preach and whose word Christ will use as a medium to speak His own Word to His people, is the Church. For through the apostles the Lord called His Church in the world, and commissioned her to preach the gospel to all nations. And that Church has the guidance of the Holy Spirit, leading her into all the truth. Hence, the Church alone, and none other, is the preacher. And she fulfills this holy calling through the ministry of the Word, not only in the narrower sense, but also in the wider, including instruction and preservation of the truth, development of doctrine and the establishment of dogma in her confessions. One that is called by the Church, therefore, unto this ministry of the Word, may consider himself a preacher. But from this also follows that the preacher, that is the minister of the Word called by the Church, is strictly bound to the Word of Christ as contained in the Holy Scriptures. Only when, and in as far as, the Church proclaims the gospel of God according to the Scriptures, will Christ use the preaching to bring His own Word to His people, and is there true preaching at all.

The same element may be and should be stressed with regard to the sacraments. Sacraments are holy, visible signs and seals of God's invisible grace, which the Church is authorized to administer in the name of Christ, and which are subservient to His efficacious Word of grace just as the preaching of the Word. Also in the administration of the sacraments Christ is the chief Subject. The Reformed Church never believed in sacraments that in themselves had the power to convey grace and salvation apart from Christ and His Spirit. If Christ does not say: "I baptize thee," there is no baptism. If Christ is not present at the Lord's table, there is no Lord's Supper. If Christ does not say: "This is my body, this is my blood shed for you, take, eat, and drink," all our breaking of bread and pouring out of wine, our eating and drinking and speaking, are of no avail whatever. We may say that the sacraments are the wedding ring of Christ, the Bridegroom, to His Church, the Bride, which the Church may wear in His absence, until He come, and which is a sure pledge of His hearty love and faithfulness toward us. But even as a young lady cannot herself go to the jewelry store, buy a ring, and put it on her finger as a pledge of some young man's love to her

so no Church can herself institute sacraments and observe them. Christ must put the wedding ring on the finger of His bride every time the sacraments are celebrated. It follows again, first of all, that only one that is called can administer the sacraments, that is, the Church of Christ in the world; and, in the second place, that these sacraments must be observed by the Church according to the Word and institution of Christ. Only then, and only in as far as the Church is obedient to the Word of Christ, will Christ speak His own Word through that pledge sign of His love and faithfulness. And unless He does so, no group of people can possibly administer and observe sacraments.

Once more, the same idea appears on the fore in Christian discipline, or the application of the keys of the kingdom of heaven. The keys of the kingdom represent the power bestowed upon the Church by Christ to open and shut the kingdom of heaven to believers and unbelievers respectively. You understand, this power is more than the furnishing of mere information as to who are, and who are not in the kingdom of God, or as to whose sins are, and whose sins are not forgiven. Anyone that knows the Bible can do this. But the keys represent actual power over the consciences of men. It is such an opening and shutting of the kingdom of heaven as reaches out into the consciences of men, so that they either rejoice in the assurance of their salvation, or are convinced of their being outside of the kingdom and of Christ. But again, you understand that this is possible only when Christ Himself speaks and employs the keys. Ultimately, He alone holds the keys of David, and has power to forgive men's sins, or to retain them. If He does not open the kingdom to men, all men's work is utterly vain; if He does not shut the kingdom, no man can possibly expel anyone from it. And again, it follows, first of all, that one that handles the keys of the kingdom of heaven on earth, must be authorized and called to do so. Hence, only the Church can have that power. And, secondly, it follows that only when and in as far as the Church applies those keys of the kingdom according to the Word of Christ in the Scriptures, will Christ Himself work through the action of the Church, and speak His own Word of power. Unless Christ works, there is no keypower, no Christian discipline.

In view of all that has been said, it should be evident that these three distinguishing marks of the true Church, the preaching of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of Christian discipline, all concentrate around the first. The preaching of the Word is not only the chief distinguishing mark of the Church in the world, and the main commission she received from her Lord, it also dominates and controls the other two. All three depend upon and

derive their power and efficaciousness from the Word of Christ, which He speaks Himself to His people. Besides, without the preaching of the Word, by which the Church is called out of the world, there would be no Church to celebrate the sacraments, nor would the latter have any meaning. Sacraments are pledges, sign-pledges of the Word of Christ. And as to the keys of the kingdom of heaven, the preaching of the Word is their very essence, not only because the first and the main key is the preaching of the Word, but also because admonition and excommunication must needs be essentially preaching of the Word. Although, therefore, it certainly is true, that all these three are distinguishing marks of the Church, it is safe to say, that where there is pure preaching of the Word, there must also be proper administration of the sacraments, and the right exercise of Christian discipline. In short, it is not too bold to say, that one may sum up these remarks by saying that the pure preaching of the Word is *the* great and outstanding distinguishing mark of the Church. Where the Word is purely preached, there is the Church!

The reason why these three are marks of the true Church is now also evident. It is not accidental that these same marks, at least two of them admittedly, and the third by implication, are also presented as the means of grace. Means of grace are instituted means whereby Christ through His Spirit bestows His grace and salvation upon the Church. Christ alone gathers and builds His Church. No human power or ingenuity is able to do this for Him, or in His behalf. But it pleases Him to gather and to strengthen His Church through the means of grace, particularly through the preaching of the Word. Now, it has become plain that where Christ Himself does not speak His Word, there is no preaching of the Word; and where the Word is not preached by the Church, and according to the Scriptures, there Christ does not speak His Word. But where Christ does not perform His work of grace, and speak His Word, there the Church is not called out, the *Ecclesia* is not gathered, and is not built up in the most holy faith. Or, in other words, where the Word is not preached, there Christ is not present, and where Christ is not present there is no Church. It is evident, then, that the preaching of the Word is essential to the very existence of the Church. The two are inseparable. And therefore, the pure preaching of the Word is an infallible distinguishing mark of the true Church. Accordingly, the same is true of the proper administration of the sacraments, and of the faithful application of the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Where the Word is not preached at all, there the Church is become utterly false, which is the same as saying that there the Church does not exist. And where the preaching of the Word is corrupted, there the Church is corrupt, and moving in

the direction of the false Church.

In view of all this, it ought not be difficult to understand that in 1924, by the adoption of the "Three Points," the Christian Reformed Churches officially took an important step in the direction of the false Church, and became corrupt. In these points the Synod of Kalamazoo attempted to declare itself on the important questions of the grace of God, and of the state of the natural man. Trying to find support for the false position that the grace of God is common and general in the Standards of the Reformed Churches, and being unable to find any evidence of the theory of common grace in those Confessions, the Synod finally committed the fatal error of declaring that the preaching of the Word is a well-meaning offer of grace and salvation on the part of God to all men. By this declaration she not only corrupted the doctrine of sovereign election and efficacious grace, but she also corrupted the very conception of the preaching of the Word itself. For preaching is never an offer to all men, depending on man to bring it, and on relatively good men to accept it, but it is the pure proclamation of the gospel of Christ, in the service of the powerful Word of God Himself. And in that service preaching is not and cannot be grace to all that hear, but is both a savor of life unto life, and a savor of death unto death. The Synod of Kalamazoo declared plainly and deliberately that preaching in and by the Christian Reformed Churches will serve this twofold purpose of the Word of Christ no more, and accordingly the contents of the preaching must be corrupted. Hence, according to the chief criterion or distinguishing mark of the true Church, the Christian Reformed Churches have become corrupt. To have pledged ourselves to silence, and to have acquiesced in the adopted doctrine of 1924 would have been tantamount to a deliberate promise to corrupt the preaching, and to lead the Church in the direction of the false Church. But by the grace of God we refused, and chose rather to suffer injustice and reproach than to corrupt the Word of God. And we are confident that our action was of God. Were we placed before the same choice today as we confronted in 1924, we could but follow the same course. We could do nought else.

And for the same reason, we are also confident that God is with us. As He used us then unto the preservation of the truth and the Church in the world, so He will use us still. We may be small in numbers, but we are strong in the Lord, and in the power of His Word. His strength is made perfect in weakness. And our calling is very clear. It is to preserve and to proclaim, to develop and to teach the pure doctrine of the Word of God, especially as it concerns His sovereign grace, and the truth of His eternal covenant with His people in Christ Jesus, and to instruct the people of God to live and walk in the midst of this world of

darkness according to that truth. To do this with all our might, from the pulpit and in the catechism class, through the printed page and over the air, in our homes and in the schools where our children are instructed; to do this faithfully and emphatically, without ever growing weary and with every means at our command, in season and out of season,—that is our specific and very sacred calling! Doing this, but then emphatically only in as far as we are doing this, we shall work in the service of the work of God. "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord!"

H. H.

* Speech delivered by transcription on the Field Day, July 4, '44.

The C.L.A. and the Strike Question

The strike, as a refusal to work at a job which we still consider ours, and for one whom we still recognize as our employer, is rebellion against proper authority.

But it also obstructs, in fact, makes impossible the manifestation of true righteousness and justice, i.e. the justice and righteousness of God.

The very opposite is frequently stated as an argument in favor of the strike. The strikers claim to have a just and righteous cause. The laborer is oppressed. His wages are held to a minimum. Working conditions are bad. He is compelled to work long hours. And when he strikes the workman simply defends his right. He stands for the cause of justice and righteousness over against a cruel and unrighteous capitalism. If he does not use the power he has to better his condition by threatening the employer to refuse to work, and to prevent as much as possible others from working for an employer that deals unjustly with him, the laboring man, proud and mighty capitalism will grow more wantonly unjust and corrupt all the time. Hence, the workingman simply asserts his rights, and stands for the cause of justice, when he organizes a strike.

Let me reply, first of all, that I shall not attempt to deny the facts in the case.

It is not true, of course, that the employee is always right, or that justice is always on his side. Especially in the worldly unions it becomes more and more evident that in times of abundant work, as is the case in the present period of war-production, there is no limit to their demands upon the employer. Always they demand more wages and shorter hours, and always they contend for more power to assert themselves over against their employers.

There is no doubt, however, that often labor has

been and is oppressed by capital, and that the poor suffer at the hands of the rich.

Scripture, both in the Old and New Testament, frequently speaks of this cruel oppression, and threatens God's terrible wrath and retribution against the wicked oppressor.

The point, however, which I want to make in this connection is, that by taking the law in his own hands, organizing a strike, picketing the plant against possible "scabs," and thus using force, the laborer does not serve the cause of righteousness and justice, but makes it exactly impossible that righteousness becomes manifest.

Let it be understood, first of all, that the strikers do not usually intend to fight for justice. They are not motivated by a love of righteousness, which is of God, but by the desire to improve their own conditions. Earthy, material gain they have in mind.

But even apart from this, might does not make right.

And the use of force never determines what is just.

There are, indeed, powers in this world that have the authority and calling to determine what is right, and to defend the good over against the evil-doer. But this power is vested in the magistrates, and in no other man or body of men in the world. The union has power, but it is the power of numbers: it has no authority to render a verdict as to what is just or unjust in a given case.

Now, what happens, when a union organizes a strike?

First of all, the union renders a verdict in its own cause that it is just and right, a verdict that has no authority whatever.

Secondly, seeing it cannot obtain what it considers just in a proper and legal way, it tries to gain its end by using force against the employer.

Suppose that the strike is successful. Has the cause of justice and righteousness been served? Has it become evident that justice prevailed? Of course not. Only one thing was proved: the strongest party had the victory. And nothing else could possibly have been proved. The strike renders the manifestation of justice exactly impossible.

It proceeds on the basis that might makes right.

And this basis is thoroughly corrupt.

That strike is no means to establish social justice on the earth. The very opposite is true.

But, you probably ask, what redress has then the oppressed workingman? Suppose he has a just cause. And suppose he exhausted all legal ways and means to obtain justice, but he failed. And granted that the strike is contrary to Scripture, and that he may not employ force to gain his end? What must he do?

The answer of the Bible is without any question, that in such a case the believer in this world is to

suffer wrong in this world patiently, and proclaim to all oppressors that the Lord will come presently to maintain the cause of true justice and righteousness, to avenge His own, and strike down in His fierce wrath all the oppressors of the world.

I will not take time to prove that this is, indeed, the Biblical position.

I consider that this is so well known that it is quite superfluous to quote special passages.

If someone would differ with me on this point, and try to prove from Scripture that the Christian may employ force to gain his end in what he considers a just cause, I am willing to give him the opportunity in our paper.

In the meantime, I take it for granted that we all agree on this point.

And only if we act according to this position of Holy Writ can and do we, indeed, serve the cause of righteousness, the righteousness that is to be revealed in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But the striker is unwilling to serve this cause.

His position is un-Christian.

H. H.

The C.L.A. and the Use of the Strike

Dear Editor,

I owe you an answer to the questions put to the C.L.A. in one of your editorials in the May 15 issue of the Standard Bearer. It is unfortunate that there seems to be so much misunderstanding still about this strike question. I believe that much of it is due to the fact that what we say or write is too often misconstrued. Even you, Mr. Editor, seem to have drawn a wrong conclusion when you wrote: "Mr. Gritter defends the position that a Christian not only may, but is called to create better and more just social conditions by the use of force, and all the power at our command". I would find no fault with it if by "force" and "power" you *do not mean* the use of violence, intimidation and terrorism that usually accompanies strikes by worldly unions, and you *do mean collective peaceful action* to eliminate injustices and to oppose various sinful practices. Such a use of power the C.L.A. believes in. Because most people associate "force" and "power" with the evils mentioned above we prefer not to have those terms used in connection with C.L.A. activity unless they are fully explained.

You ask certain questions concerning the position of the C.L.A., and whether what I have publicly presented and defended is actually the position of the C.L.A. I can assure you that it is, provided that what

I have said and written is not misconstrued. So, for instance, when I mention a "collective cessation of work"—which I prefer to the use of the term "strike"—that does not necessarily mean collective quitting, in the sense that those involved relinquish all claims and do not intend to return. We take the position that when Christian workers collectively cease working in protest against an injustice by their employer, which he has obstinately refused to remove in spite of repeated and earnest appeals to do so by the workers, such employees retain a moral claim to their jobs and they may, in a peaceful manner acquaint the public with their grievances and request it not to lend support to the employer in continued imposition of the injustice by taking employment with him. At the same time the workers must uphold their promise to return to work when the injustice is removed. That is *their* moral obligation.

That position differs greatly from that of the worldly unions. Usually they strike first and talk afterwards. They strike for what they want, regardless of the justice or injustice of it, and not by any means *only against* the injustice of the employer. The worldly organization does not always have a moral claim but strikes nevertheless and will use violence, terrorism and bloodshed if necessary, to impose its will. Surely there is a real difference between that and the position of the C.L.A.

I do not recall that I have ever made the statement that when employees collectively cease working they thereby give up all claims to their jobs. However, I know where that misunderstanding came from. I have tried several times to make clear what the position on the strike is of those who administer the labor laws, and of the courts. There is a distinction made by the administrative bodies that is upheld by the courts. When employees strike because of some action by the employer that is a violation of a law the right to their jobs is protected by the boards and the courts. So, for instance, if an employer refuses to bargain with a union certified for that purpose, or if he discriminates against union members, he is guilty of violation of the law and the employees' right to their jobs is protected. The employer might hire other workers during the strike but he would have to offer re-instatement to all the old employees with payment for time lost. The law recognizes and protects the moral claims of the employees because their constitutional rights were denied them. I do not believe that anyone would want to say that such protection is contrary to Christian ethics. Would we want to do less when it is evident that the employer is responsible for the dispute?

But there is also another side to it. When employees strike because of something that is not a violation of a law the strikers do not have the protection of labor boards and the courts. When the matter in dis-

pute is purely one of bargaining, such as employment policies or higher wages, the employees are technically considered as having quit and the employer has the right to hire others and to retain them permanently. When the strike is settled he may or may not offer re-employment to the old employees and he is not obligated to pay lost wages. The employees meanwhile have the right to their constitutionally guaranteed expression of free speech by truthful statements and peaceful picketing. When slanderous or libelous statements are made, when picketing becomes violent or when entrances are blocked, an injunction against such practices will be issued by the courts.

Now, I have tried to make this clear: that the C.L.A. fully accepts the rights guaranteed to workers by the law and will vigorously defend them. However, because those rights are protected by labor boards and the courts the C.L.A. does not see the necessity and cannot justify the use of the strike weapon in such cases. In the matter of strikes in which no violation of a labor law is involved the C.L.A. accepts the position taken by the courts that such employees if they strike technically quit their jobs, under one condition. The C.L.A. takes the position that if the employees are in the wrong they have no rightful moral claim on their jobs. But, if the employer is in the wrong, if they strike against an injustice perpetrated by him, they do have a moral claim, altho not so recognized by civil law. There is a higher, divine law, demanding that justice be done because God demands it, on which the C.L.A. bases its claim. And, since the C.L.A. will justify a strike only when justice is on the side of the employees there can be no question about its condemnation of any other strike by a Christian organization.

It seems to me that we are getting much closer together than we had deemed possible some time ago. Principally we are agreed, so it appears to me, that employees, if dissatisfied, may collectively cease working. But, do such employees when they cease working retain a claim to their jobs, and are they justified in using peaceful means to persuade others from taking employment?, or, do they by ceasing work simply quit and relinquish all claims to the jobs they have left? The answer of the C.L.A. is: that all depends. If the employees are in the wrong, then there is no real justification for the strike, they must be considered as having quit their jobs, and they should not try to keep others from taking their former jobs in order to strengthen them in their unjustifiable action. If, on the other hand, the employer is in the wrong, and sincere efforts have been made to persuade him to deal justly, then if the employees strike they do have a moral claim to their jobs and they may by truthful and peaceful means seek to persuade others from taking employment so that they will not by so doing strengthen the employer in his unjustifiable action,

I trust that it is clear. I don't know how to make it any clearer. And I can assure you that that is the position of the C.L.A. and always has been. That it is not found thus fully explained in its official documents is true. But in principle it is found there.

Joseph Gritter,
Secretary, C. L. A.

Proud Ephraim and the Treacherous Cities

In this article we engage in a character study. And this study will result in our affirming anew God's appraisal of the natural man and of the flesh of the believers—the appraisal to the effect that this man and this flesh is carnal and in its carnality is thoroughly proud, vain, selfish, self-seeking, a deceiver and a false pretender to virtue and piety. The subjects of our study are the Ephraimites and the Succothites, the reaction of the former to the mighty achievements of Gideon's faith, and the response of the latter to Gideon's petition that they feed his hungry soldiers, in hot pursuit of the fleeing Midianite host.

Let us get before our mind the situation. The Lord had once more heard the groaning of His ill-deserving people. The yoke of the oppressor—now the Midianites had been lifted. The land was swiftly being cleared of them. For some years and at each return of the season, they had swarmed northern Canaan, plundering and destroying everywhere they went. The result was that the tribes of that part of the land had been rendered destitute. But the Lord had sent deliverance through the agency of Gideon and his band of three hundred warriors. The enemy was now in full flight in the direction of the Jordan which it had to cross to reach the homeland east of this river. So, to prevent their escape, Gideon sent messengers throughout all Mt. Ephraim, bidding the Ephraimites to hasten down against the Midianites and take before them the fords of the Jordan at Bethbarah. The men of Ephraim did as they were commanded without delay. The flight of the enemy was cut off. Two of their princes—Oreb and Zeeb—were captured and slain, and their heads brought to Gideon on the other side of the Jordan. But the men of Ephraim were in an evil mood. They contended with Gideon vehemently as the language of the Hebrew text brings out. They reproved, rebuked, scolded and admonished. What was their great grievance? Let us listen to their words. They said to Gideon, "Why hast thou served us thus, that thou callest us not, when thou wentest to fight with the Midianites?" Apparently they had a

point here. For Gideon had done just that. The tribes that had been summoned were Manasseh, Asher, Zebulon and Naphtali. The tribe of Ephraim had not been called. And the men of Ephraim were angry. Was it the anger of love? Had they yearned to come to the rescue of their oppressed brethren but could not because the opportunity had not presented itself and were they now indignant because, when the opportunity did finally present itself, they were not called? And was their wrath intensified by the consideration that, in refusing or neglecting to employ their manpower and in venturing the battle with but three hundred footmen, Gideon had taken an unwarranted risk—the risk of losing that war and of plunging, as a result, his people into even deeper misery? And did they find this thought too horrible to contemplate on account of their love of God's cause? Were they heroes of faith, eager to jeopardize their lives for brethren in distress?

The indignation of the Ephraimites was not at bottom love and faith, but pride, tribal jealousy and a carnal fear. This can be shown. Firstly, what had hindered them in the past from initiating a war of liberation in behalf of their afflicted brethren. Nothing at all certainly. Yet they had sat still in all those dark years. They were unwilling to stretch out a hand to repel the invasions and unwilling that others should take action. Secretly they hoped that Gideon's venture might fail, though the failure spell the defeat of God's cause.

Secondly, their indignation was too untimely to be at bottom love. The Lord by a wonder of His grace had again delivered His people. The men of Ephraim therefore should have been singing praises to Jehovah instead of quarrelling with His servant over a matter so ridiculous in the midst of his campaign. They were holding up the whole war. While they argued the enemy was escaping. They should have encouraged Gideon with appropriate greetings expressive of their delight in the achievements of his faith. Did they not perceive that God was with the man? How otherwise account for the military success of a fighting force so small in a war with a host so large.

Thirdly, the indignation of love is not appeased by flattery. And theirs was. Gideon said to them, "What have I done in comparison with you? Is not the gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer? God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb: and what was I able to do in comparison with you?"

He means to tell them that, as compared with theirs, his achievements were as nothing. Hearing him disclaim the glory and giving all credit to them, their anger subsides. Plainly these Ephraimites were smarting at the thought that an insignificant member

of Manasseh should reap greater glory than they. Their indignation was thus at bottom pride. Yet some of their anger may have been feigned, the purpose being to neutralize the bad impression of past inaction. But their pride had also been hurt. Now the proud man wants all the glory, and is therefore grieved by the successes of everyone but by those of himself. Hence the only kind of people that a proud man can have about him are the self-effacing, the kind of people ready to get down on their knees and kiss the toes of their idol and say to him, "Thou art the man and we are as nothing before thy face. Only what thou doest has meaning and significance; our accomplishments are of little account." Say that to a proud man and he will be that pleased with you that he will stop to kiss your toes, in his pride to be sure and if you persist in hailing him a man indispensable even to God. Finding the proud man in an evil mood and wanting to dispel the evil spirit that has taken possession of his spirit, begin talking to the man about himself and his wonderful works. The frown that darkens his visage disappears as by magic. Behold the man! His countenance now is wreathed in smiles, and he stretches out his arms to take you to his bosom. That demon pride! It dwells in all our bosoms. "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing." Let us then watch and pray, lest we fall into temptations.

Gideon knew that pride was the controlling emotion in the life of the tribe of Ephraim. The history of this tribe had taught him this. The Ephraimites were a proud and haughty people. So they stand before us on nearly every page of their history.

Gideon understood pride. He knew what will heal its wounds, namely a generous dose of flattery, which he is quick to administer. There is a question here. Did Gideon do right? The question can be answered. It is the contempt of irony that Gideon pours on their pretended deserts. For he magnifies out of all proportion their merits and denies his own. He hoped that the Ephraimites would understand and be ashamed. But they did not understand, it seems, for we read, "Then their anger was abated toward him, when he had said that." And they go home to bask themselves in the sunshine of their achievements. But what had they really done? At the call of Gideon they had left their tents not to engage in battle a mighty foe with a will to fight but to track down crowds of terrified and exhausted heathen, whose only thought was to escape God's country.

With his brethren quieted, Gideon again turned to the pursuit of the fleeing Midianites. As has already been explained, the Midianites did not flee in one body but in two divisions and directions. This explains the measures adopted by Gideon. Unable to pursue both himself, he called on Ephraim to cut off the other line

of flight across the fords of the Jordan. This had been done. It was now the task of Gideon to overtake the other fleeing body. Coming to Jordan, he passed over, he, and the three hundred men that were with him. "And he said unto the men of Succoth, Give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people that follow me; for they be faint, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian." "And the princes of Succoth said, Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thine army."

This is the second time that Gideon encounters such folly among his people. But he perceives that gentleness like that shown unto the Ephraimites would be out of place here. Ephraim had not refused assistance. Yet the Succothites and the Ephraimites do not differ fundamentally. Both are selfish and self-seeking. But with the latter, selfishness revealed itself as pride; with the former—the Succothites—as cowardice and treason combined. Gideon's men were not wearied to the point of exhaustion, for then they could not have prosecuted the pursuit. But they were in need of physical nourishment. Food would strengthen them. But what did Succoth? Instead of compassion, it consulted its own selfish interests. The rulers of Succoth consider, not their high calling, but their own material interests, and their own life. They consider the danger which might result from their siding with Gideon as would be indicated by rendering him aid. They reasoned that there might be a chance that Gideon might fail in his war with Midian. Zebah and Zalmunna might possibly conquer and return and take vengeance. So they speculate. They were men not quarrelsome but simply bent on safeguarding their own interests. They secretly wished that Gideon had not started that war. For it was not themselves that had suffered from the fury of the Midianites but their brethren west of the Jordan. But suppose now that Gideon should prove unable to bring that war to a successful issue. What then? As having reorganized their scattered forces and as greatly emboldened by the reverses of the would-be liberator of the Hebrews, might not the Midianites return with the return of the season and so widen the scope of their invasion as to include also the country of the Succothites. Be this as it may, the civic leaders are resolved to have nothing to do with Gideon. He started this war, let him now finish it, without involving the whole nation. He knew that his men would need bread. Why did he not see to it in the first place. Why should he expect them to make good his lack of foresight. So they tell him to be gone. They will show the Midianites where their sympathies lay. These Succothites were thoroughly wicked men, heartless and cruel. Let the pillage on the other side of the Jordan continue. What cared they so long as they were not

molested. But it need not be supposed that ostensibly they were that unfeeling. They may have wept over the plight of their brethren. And they may have wished Gideon well and even assured him that their prayers would accompany him. But let him first have the fists of Zebah and Zalmunna in his hand. Then they will side with him, then when they can do it without jeopardizing their own position in Canaan. The hand must be seized in order to apply the fetters to captives. The princes of Succoth do not believe that Gideon fights God's battles and that the Lord is with Him and will deliver the enemy in his hand. Yet the evidence is there in the form of the marvelous accomplishments of Gideon's faith and the faith of his three hundred. The trouble with the Succothites is that they lived for themselves and that thus the cause of Jehovah's covenant lay far from their heart. They loved neither God nor His people.

Gideon could not allow such treachery to go unpunished. But he does not chasten them at once. He can wait for he is not moved by a lust to avenge a personal injury,—wait he can until, returning with Zebah and Zalmunna as his captives, he can provide those self-seeking and heartless Succothites with the undisputed evidence that he fought indeed the warfare of God and that they thus offended not against him in the first instance but against Jehovah, and that therefore he may not allow them to have offended with impunity. So in the full confidence that God is with him, he tells the cowards what they can look forward to when he has returned to them the victor. He is sure of victory; but before he punishes them, they shall see that finished, the accomplishment of which they now doubt. When he shall stand before Succoth with the Midianite kings in chains, they will be glad to hail him as Israel's deliver and to generously provide his braves with bread. They now refuse him bread and doubtless refer him to the acacia-thorns and thistles of the desert. Let his men feed on that which can nourish not men but at best only the camel, that marvel of the desert. This mockery—not explicitly indicated in the text, it is true—may have determined the choice of the punishment. Gideon will tear their flesh with thorns of the wilderness and with briars.

Quitting the scene, Gideon hastens on and comes to Penuel and repeats his petition for bread that his hungry men may eat. But the men of Penuel answer him as had the princes of Succoth. They are imbued with an identical spirit. We must attend to the punishment with which Gideon threatens these men. He promises to break down their tower. "When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower." This seems to indicate that the threatened chastisements do indeed correspond to the expressions made use of by the ungrateful citizens. Because the nar-

rative is brief especially here, it must be supposed that the men of Penuel, in response to Gideon's threats, boasted in the security of their tower and thereby let it be known to him that he would find himself unable to lay hands on them. In reply he promises to tear down that strong hold of their pride and is again on his way.

Now Zebah and Zalmunna and their host were in Karkor. If this host had numbered an hundred and twenty thousand men that drew the sword, all that were left is fifteen thousand. A terrible slaughter had taken place in the ranks of the enemy. And they had perished by their own sword. "The Lord set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout and against the whole camp." What was left of this host were now in Karkor. In this place they felt themselves secure. For it was a hiding-place and the terrified enemy imagined that its location was unknown and also inaccessible to Gideon. For those who have made a study of this region now tells us that there is in Hauran an almost unassailable place of refuge for the robber tribes—the volcanic rock-desert of Safa and embracing a fertile district for some months of the year. Says Wetzstein, "Here is the stronghold of all the tribes of the eastern slope of the Hauran mountains." It is said that the people of Syria have a proverbial expression which asserts, "He fled into the Wa'r of the Safa." Bold and confident and full of energy in his faith in the Lord, Gideon with his band of three hundred—mark you, it is still the same small Gideon's band—follows the Midianites, what is left of them, into their hiding place. A stream of blood marked the path of the smitten enemy. The wounded had been left behind. Also prisoners must have been taken. It was perhaps from these that Gideon learned the way into the asylum of the foe. It is said in the sacred text that he went up by the way of them that dwell in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah. His route therefore can be traced but not with any degree of certainty, as the location of the two places named is uncertain. "Gideon smote the host while it was through itself secure." It felt itself secure, because it imagined itself to be beyond Gideon's reach. It was thus not watching, so that the attack was unexpected and sudden. The carelessness of the Midianites was of the Lord, also their terror, their unwillingness to resist and the thought that their only hope of saving themselves lay in flight. The first to flee were Zebah and Zalmunna. Gideon pursued and took them captive. At the sight of their two leaders in chains, the terrified host, now thoroughly disheartened, surrendered.

Gideon now returns before the sun was up (here the Hebrew text reads, "from the ascent of the sun," meaning from the east country, the home of the Midianites. Presently he stands with his two captives

before the civic leaders of unfaithful Succoth. He says to them, "Behold Zebah and Zalmunna, as to whom ye did mock me, saying. Are the hands of Zeba and Zalmunna already in thine hand that we should give bread unto thy men that are hungry? Taking the elders, Gideon carries out his threat. "He took the thorns and briers of the wilderness and gave them a lesson." He chastized the elders, the civic leaders only and not the common citizens. The names of these elders he had learned from a boy, caught on the way. Proceeding to Penuel, he brake down its tower and slew the men of the city, perhaps again only the elders.

G. M. O.

Gods Naam Nabij

(Psalm 75)

Men heeft gedacht, dat dit lied gedicht werd door een Asaf die leefde ten tijde van Koning Hiskia, toen de Heere een groote verlossing bracht door een Engel Gods. De Koning van Assyrië was gekomen met een groot heir tot de stad Gods en hij groote woorden gesproken tegen God en tegen Zijn volk. Toen had Hiskia boden gezonden tot Jesaja om door hem God te vragen. Later, toen hij de goddelooze brieven van Sanherib ontving was hij zelf naar God gegaan in het gebed. Later nog kwam het bericht uit den Hemel: Vrees niet, Ik zal voor U strijden! En de Heere had Zijn belofte vervuld, als altijd, want een Engel Gods kwam des nachts en versloeg 185,000 soldaten: des morgens vroeg waren die allen doode lichamen. Zie, zoo zegt men, toen is dit lied van psalm 75 gedicht. Het past precies.

Het kan best waar zijn. Ik weet het niet. Met zekerheid kan het niet gezegd.

't Geeft ook niet. Deze psalm wordt geduriglijk vervuld. In dezen psalm bezingt Gods volk de groote hulpe des Heeren. Zijn naam is altijd nabij, ook dan als het schijnt als alles tegen ons is. Evenwel, somtijds is het zóó duidelijk, dat we aan het zingen gaan. In zulke tijden is het goed om psalm 75 op te slaan.

Voor Asaf. Het kan best de Asaf geweest zijn die ten tijde van David leefde. Dit lied kan door David gedicht zijn en opgedragen aan Asaf, als leider der zangers in Israel, om door hen gezongen te worden.

Al-tasheth: verderf niet! Het is een Goddelijke sprake tegen den vijand. De Heere ontzenuwt hem als hij zich opmaakte om Gods volk te verscheuren. Dan dondert God hem toe: Verderf niet!

"Wij loven U, o God! wij loven dat Uw naam nabij is: men vertelt Uwe wonderen!" De laatste zin verklaart den eersten. Als Gods naam nabij is vertelt

men Zijn wonderen. Dat zal duidelijk zijn als we denken, dat Gods naam de uitdrukking van Zijn Wezen is. In den Naam Gods is uitgedrukt alles wat liefelijk en schoon, wat krachtig en wijs, wat recht en heilig is. Komt die naam nabij ons, d.w.z., wanneer God klaarblijkelijk die deugden bewijst door Zijn bijzonder ingrijpen in de historie, dan begint Gods volk te zingen. Dan vertelt men Zijn wonderen.

Het schijnt wel, dat een Koning in Israel of een groot generaal van Gods volk dit lied dichtte, want in vers 4 en vervolgens spreekt hij groote dingen, die bij het eerste hooren ons vreemd aandoen. Zoo zegt hij, b.v., "Het land en zijne inwoners waren versmolten, maar ik heb zijne pilaren vast gemaakt." Ik denk, dat onze godvruchtige vertalers daarom het woordje "ambt" in vers 3 ingevoegd hebben, daarbij eerst denkende aan David of Salomo en vervolgens aan den Christus. Want een bloot menschenkind kan zoo bout niet spreken.

Vers 3 zegt letterlijk: "Als ik den bestemden tijd zal ontvangen hebben, zoo zal ik gansch recht richten." Men ontvangt den bestemden tijd als in den raad Gods een zeker werk moet gewerkt worden. Ten opzichte van dat zekere werk is het dan de volheid des tijds.

Daarom geloof ik, dat dit lied gedicht is door David. En dat David zoo bout spreekt omdat hij alzo profeeteert van den Christus. En dan loopt alles los. Als Jezus den bestemden tijd van God ontvangt, dan zal Hij gansch richtig richten.

Ja, het land en zijne inwoners waren versmolten.

Dat is vaak geschied ten tijde van den gezalfde des Heeren, David den koning Israels. Men versmelt, wanneer men ineenkrimpt van angst. Als de vijand dicht bij is en ons dreigt op te slokken. Dan is er angst en smart.

Typisch mag dit gezegd van Gods volk in alle eeuwen. Wij en het land zijn versmolten van angst als we den vijand zien. Als Satan woedt en de wereld ons wil slachten, als de zonde in ons verleidt en het schijnt alsof we zekerlijk opgeslokt zullen worden, dan zegt de betere David: Ik heb zijne pilaren vast gemaakt!

Ja, dat is vervuld in Jezus. Door Zijn bloed heeft Hij de pilaren van Sion vast gemaakt. De geheele kerk en haar land zijn gefundeerd op het bloed van Jezus. Dat bloed overwint alle vijanden. Dat bloed is de ondergrond onzer pilaren. Naar Zijn (Gods) gemaakt bestek, in eeuwigheid zal rijzen.

En zoo spreekt David en zooveel later Jezus: Ik heb gezegd tot de onzinnigen: Weest niet onzinnig; en tot de goddeloozen: Verhoogt den hoorn niet, verhoogt uwen hoorn niet omhoog, spreekt niet met een stijven hals!

Die sprake gaat uit tot het goddelooze rot van eeuw tot eeuw. En het is ten finale altijd Jezus die zóó spreekt. En gij moet het in Zijn naam geduriglijk zeggen tot alle goddeloozen.

De onzinnigen, de dwazen, de gekken! Dat is de Bijbelsche naam voor de verworpenen. Hoe Goddelijk juist. Onzinnig is iemand die de dingen van Gods schepping niet verstaat. Er is letterlijk niets in 't gansche heelal dat de goddelooze verstaat. Ze mogen hun catalogussen opmaken van alles, hun tabulaties hebben van alle verhoudingen, hun opsommingen van de krachten en mogendheden, hun beschrijvingen zelfs van de dingen der ziel en des geestes in hun psychologie: het is alles onzin. Want ze missen een element: God!

Daarom zijn ze ook onzinnig als ze trachten om een wereld te scheppen uit al die dingen. Wereld beteekent *orde*. Men hoort veel van een *nieuwe orde*. Wel, men ontvangt wel een orde, doch van die orde der wereld zegt de Schrift die heilig is: Ze is de lust der oogen en de lust des vleesches en de grootheid des levens. Dat komt omdat zij onzinnig zijn.

Eindelijk, ze zijn onzinnig omdat zij met hun verkeerd verstand en met hun verkeerd ineenzettingen der dingen het goede einde missen. Ze komen er mee in de hel uit. En alle dingen moesten hen eigenlijk in den hemel brengen.

Desnietteenstaande verhoogden zij den hoorn en spreken zij met een stijven hals. Hoe dwaas!

Ziet ge het niet om U heen. Ik sidder er van als ik denk hoe we in Amerika aanstonds de overwinning in dezen oorlog zullen vieren. Wat stijven hals en wat verhoogde hoornen zullen we zien.

Doch Gods volk zegt: Gods naam is nabij, waarom wij dan ook Zijn werken vertellen.

Neen, men moest eigenlijk niet verhoogden in de wereld. Want verhoogden komt niet van het Oosten, noch van het Westen, noch van het Zuiden. Het Noorden wordt niet genoemd. (Zie, zoozeggen sommigen, het Noorden wordt niet genoemd, omdat de Assyriër van het Noorden kwam, al sprekende met een stijven nek; en het zou onzin zijn om van verhoogden te spreken dat mogelijk uit het noorden zou komen, waar de vijand uit het Noorden kwam tegen Israel.

Het woord voor het Oosten is in het Hebreeuwsch: de opgang der zon. Het Westen is de ondergang der zon en het Zuiden is de woestijn.

Welnu, vanuit al die streken is er geen hulpe voor Gods volk. Van het Noorden ook niet, want daar komen de drommen van goddeloozen aan.

Nu blijft er nog één weg open en die weg is naar Boven, naar God.

Daarom volgt het zielverrukkende: Maar God is Richter: Hij vernedert dezen en verhoogt genen!

Wanneer zullen we uit dat beginsel eens gaan leven? Of liever: wanneer zullen we *meer* daaruit gaan leven, want al Gods volk leeft uit dat beginsel, doch niet genoeg.

God vernedert en verhoogt.

En dat absoluut en van toepassing op allen. God

verhoogde Nebuchadnezar en ook Hitler. Als wij straks de overwinning krijgen, dan is dat niet vanwege den mensch doch alléén van God. Als Hitler straks in smart zich krommen moet, dan doet God dat. Ge zult zeggen: dat is een waarheid die ik allang wist, ze klinkt in Uw stukje afgezaagd, versleten, alledaagsch en triviaal. Dan vraag ik U: Hebt ge al eens uitgevonden, dat het o zoo moeilijk is op uit dat beginsel te leven? Laat iemand eens op Uw teenen trappen: wat doet en zegt ge dan? Zegt ge dan: God heeft gezegd: Vloek hem! Of zegt ge: Wacht, leelijke kerel; Ik zal U! Wordt Uw nek stijf en verhoogt ge Uw hoorn, of valt ge op de knieën en snikt tot God? Het laatste doet hij die weet, dat God vernedert en ook verhoogt. Het eerste doet hij die God uit het oog verloor.

Het is heilzaam om God te kennen en te zien. Hij is nabij, zegt de dichter. Ik verzeker U dat het waar is. Hij is zóó nabij, dat ge met Hem kunt wandelen, den ganschen lieven dag. Dan zal het U opgeschreven worden daarboven: en hij wandelde met God! Hij zag God in alles wat geschiedde! En: hij was Gode aangenaam!

De dichter zal het ons ook bewijzen, dat God het is die vernedert en verhoogt. Dat volgt in de verzen 9 en 10.

In vers negen staat: Want in des Heeren hand is een beker, en de wijn is beroerd, vol van mengeling, en Hij schenkt daaruit; doch alle goddeloozen der aarde zullen zijne droesem uitzuigende, drinken.

Wilt ge levendig commentaar op dat vers, zie dan om U heen in de wereld van vandaag. De groote oorlog met al zijn schreien en klagen, zijn bloed en tranen, zijn rouw en gekrijt (en wie zal er iets van zeggen?) is het uitzuigen van Gods beker vol van droesem, bezaksel, draf. God is op dit huidige oogenblik de natiën aan het vernederen. Neen, zegt nu maar niet, dat onze nationale vijanden alléén vernederd worden. Vraagt het aan de moeders der zonen die al schreiende hun nachten vullen met klacht en smart. Vraagt het aan een ieder die eenigzins diep leeft in onze dagen. Ik kan er in komen, dat men straks, als het nog erger wordt, de menschen den dood zullen zoeken en niet kunnen vinden. Des Heeren arm is zwaar op de volkeren der wereld. Men is aan het uitzuigen van den droesem van Gods beker.

En gij?

Voor U is de verhooging.

Voor U is er óók een beker. Gij moogt bij den kelk des heils Zijn naam vermelden en roepen Hem met blijde erkentenis aan!

Dat staat in het 10de vers. Daar staat: En ik zal het in eeuwigheid verkondigen, ik zal den Gods Jakobs psalmzingen!

Dat is de verhooging van vers 8.

Uwe verhooging ligt hierin, dat ge, allereerst, den Heere kent. Die kennis werd U gegeven in een levend

hart, door de wedergeboorte. Die kennis kwam tot Uw bewustzijn, want de Heere hield niet op om op Uw levend hart te tokkelen van liefde die eeuwig is. Ten tweede, gaf Hij U de wijsheid Gods in Uw oog. Daardoor kent ge de dingen en ziet die dingen in hun onderling verband. Dat verband ligt hierin, dat alles in hemel en op aarde aangelegd is op God. De weg gaat naar Vader's hart. Het centrale van die dingen, van dien Weg, is Jezus en Zijn hartebloed, waarop het volk en het land (dat is de hemel) gefundeerd is.

Doch de hoogste verhooring is dit, dat ge plaats (hemel) en gelegenheid (eeuwigheid) krijgt om dat ook te zeggen. Want de toekomst voor U is niets anders dan om *het* te verkondigen. En *het* zijn de groote werken Gods die Hij gewrocht heeft en nog werkt in Jezus Christus den Heere!

Ge krijgt zelfs een plaats in het gerichte. Ge ontvangt met Jezus de heidenen tot Uw erfdeel. Ge gaat de engelen oordeelen, zegt Paulus. Ge gaat op de hoogten der goddeloozen treden, zegt Mozes. Ge gaat in Zijn Eigen rechterstoel zitten, zegt Jezus.

Zoo kunt ge verstaan, dat de dichter zegt in Uwe plaats: Ik ga de hoornen der goddeloozen afhouden.

En ik zal mij verheugen tot in eeuwigheid over de verhooring van Gods volk, want de dichter besluit: de hoornen der rechtvaardigen zullen verhoogd worden. Dat volk ontvangt majesteit van God en groote heerlijkheid. Hun hoorn verhoogd, hun kracht vernieuwd, hun tong en keel begenadigd: Daar juichen, ook zingen zij!

G. V.

Debate

RESOLVED: *That Discipline Of Members That Belong To Worldly Organizations Should Be Left To The Ministry Of The Word.*

AFFIRMATIVE:

The undersigned feels constrained to make a few preliminary remarks before writing affirmatively concerning the above proposal. First of all let it be stated that he does not believe that the discipline of those that belong to worldly organizations should be left to the ministry of the Word. In fact, he does not consider a debate on this subject advisable, with the membership in worldly organizations by church members as prevalent as it is at present, without first emphasizing that he does not agree with the above proposal. The title of the debate implies that such membership is sinful and requires discipline. Therefore the expression "worldly organizations" means worldly in the evil sense of the word and includes such organizations as the union and the lodge. The

debate very plainly deals with the discipline of those who are *walking in sin*. The question is whether their discipline should be left to the ministry of the Word or whether the consistory should also apply the various steps of censure and ultimately excommunicate. The question is not whether such members of worldly organizations should be disciplined. That is a foregone conclusion. The undersigned nevertheless sees the danger in debating this matter because of the moral support it might unintentionally give to those who are members of worldly organizations and are contemplating such membership and are looking for arguments to uphold them in their sin. Both an affirmative and negative cannot be right and natural, one or the other in order to defend his position will have to pen down things which are not the truth of the matter. Those looking for moral support in their sinful walk will also naturally lift out just that which is pleasing to them, and one sees the danger that their conclusion may very well be that if their discipline is to be left up to the ministry of the Word their sin is not very great or else that the church is not sure of its stand, the matter is questionable, and therefore does not go through with its decisions and merely disciplines from the pulpit. Let it firmly be stated before we begin with this proposition that this is not the idea at all behind the act of leaving the discipline to the ministry of the Word. To leave such discipline to the ministry of the Word is not an admission that membership in worldly organizations is a minor thing and that a word here and there in the sermon is sufficient for such acts of faltering faith and that the case is not serious enough to take to the consistory.

However, the undersigned can see certain advantages in airing this question, and realizing that he owes the Standard Bearer readers and his worthy opponent, the Rev. H. Veldman, a few lines on the affirmative side of this proposition, he has decided to write a few thoughts about the affirmative side.

1. The Ministry of the Word is very really discipline.

Before we can properly consider the matter of leaving the discipline of members of worldly organizations to the Ministry of the Word it ought to be plain to us that the Ministry of the Word is very really discipline. This is not generally considered to be the case. By discipline one usually means visits by the consistory, the first step of censure, the second step of censure and excommunication. The ministry of the Word is seldom considered to be the exercise of Christian discipline. Yet this certainly is the case. Consider once that to discipline is to train. The word discipline comes from the same latin word as the word disciple. A disciple is one who follows another, believes what he believes and walks as he walks. The believer is the disciple of Christ, believing in Him

walking as He walked, and is therefore called a Christian. Now it is at once plain that to discipline is to make disciples, that is, to train one to walk more and more as a disciple. Christian discipline is then that art or practice of training God's children to walk as disciples of Christ.

The general opinion of discipline is that it is the process of punishing the wayward church members. This however is not the case. The church has not been given the keys of the kingdom of heaven to punish its members that walk in sin. Discipline is not such even when it is applied to those who ultimately are excommunicated, in fact excommunication is not punishment by the church. The church does not punish its members and does not punish the reprobate. The calling of the church is to train its members to a more godly walk of life. To the church were given the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Note well, *keys* were given to the church, not a sword or club. These keys are to open and shut the kingdom of heaven and are never to be used to beat one over the head. One is not given the keys for that purpose. One may use them as such, and in the Ministry of the Word one may be moved by concern for one's own cause rather than God's, and by means of a tongue lashing one may use these keys to beat a member over the head and try to punish him, but this is the calling of the church. It is the Ministry's of *God's* Word and not man's. When by the use of these keys one is excommunicated, that individual is not punished by the church, but he is declared to be outside of the kingdom of heaven and therefore in the sphere of God's wrath and punishment. Then the church does not punish him for his walk of sin but declares that God will do so.

The calling of the church is then to train its members by means of the Word of God to a holy walk. As long as one is a member of the church, the church must consider him an elect and labor with him to improve his walk that Christ may be seen in him.

For this work of training or disciplining God has given us His Word. In II Timothy 3:16, 17 we read, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Note how the idea of discipline is here indicated by the words, "Be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works," and that it is the Word which God gave us for that purpose. In the Ministry of the Word, God's Word is administered and applied to the lives of His people. Through that Word His people are instructed in the way they should walk and in the truth they must believe. Through it they are warned and rebuked, admonished and comforted, encouraged and nourished. It is a lamp unto our feet and a light upon our pathway.

You see then that the Ministry of the Word is very really discipline. To those who belong to worldly organizations this Word comes with rebukes and admonitions. It points to them the way they ought to walk. It calls them away from the world. It declares to them that they cannot serve God and Mammon, and that their unequal yoke with the unbeliever is very sinful in God's sight. It gives them examples of Israelites in the Old Dispensation who allied themselves with the world and were destroyed with the world. It encourages them and comforts them with the truth that God will have mercy and abundantly pardon all those who forsake their wicked way. It holds before their eyes the kingdom of heaven and Christ Jesus our king who supplies all our needs. In this way it trains them to walk as members of the body of Christ and citizens of the kingdom of heaven.

2. The Ministry of the Word is the chiefest means of Christian discipline.

Besides the Ministry of the Word there is also that other means of discipline consisting in censure and excommunication. Of this the Catechism declares in the answer to question 83, "The preaching of the holy gospel, and christian discipline, or excommunication out of the christian church; by these two the kingdom of heaven is opened to believers and shut against unbelievers." Likewise does the Belgic Confession mention these two in articles 29 as the keys of the kingdom of heaven. It requires but a little consideration to come to the conclusion that the Ministry of the Word is the greater of these. Even as the sacraments are dependent upon the Word and have no meaning apart from it, so too excommunication with its preliminary steps of censure which are barring from the sacraments have no meaning without the Word and cannot be applied without the Word. The consistory must make plain to the erring brother or sister that he is walking in sin, and this it can do only by referring him to God's Word. Excommunication is not on the same level with the Ministry of the Word. It is supplementary to it and is to be used only in certain particular cases where an added means of discipline is required.

3. Suggested reasons for leaving the discipline of those that belong to worldly organizations to the Ministry of the Word.

We might begin by stating that the Ministry of the Word is very well capable of handling the situation and is not in need of a supplementary means of discipline. When the Word is really administered—and by this we do not mean a word here and there in the sermon, but a clear and vigorous application of God's Word to the matter—it will have the two-fold effect of convincing the believer of his sin and the unbeliever

it will harden so that he seeks a church where he can get away from that Word of God and can hear man's word. We must not expect one sermon to convince such a wayward and faltering believer, but it is given us as we saw a moment ago to correct, reprove and instruct, and it will surely accomplish this.

We ought to remember that the discipline of members of worldly organizations requires a different treatment than such sins as theft, adultery, murder and despising the means of grace. Those who have been walking in such sins are always, and rightly so, demanded to confess their sins and their confession is not the case with those who belong to worldly organizations. Of them it is only demanded that they sever their connections with that worldly organization. The undersigned sees no reason why they should not confess their sin as well as those who commit any of the above mentioned sins and if it is done he stands corrected. But since in many churches this is not demanded, the Ministry of the Word surely is sufficient to train these members to walk worthy of their calling as children of God.

It may be objected that such members of worldly organizations who are not barred from the sacraments will be very detrimental to the faith of the rest of the congregation. We maintain that if the Word is really administered to these members of worldly organizations so that it is made very plain to them that they may not partake, you will not need to prevent them from partaking. They will refrain from doing so of their own accord.

In conclusion we may say that leaving the discipline of members of worldly organizations to the Ministry of the Word is more profitable for all those concerned. When such members are prevented from partaking of the Lord's Table and from having their children baptized and then after much labor by the consistory they sever their connections with this worldly organization, the feeling is very often left that a righteous walk was *forced* upon them. Neither the consistory that treated him, nor the treated brother, nor the congregation has the joy that would result when under the preaching of the Word that erring brother saw the sinfulness of his way and himself took the steps to sever his connection and walk as a child of God. When discipline has been left to the Ministry of the Word and the brother is convinced, no one need ever doubt that he severed connections for any other reason than that God's Word has trained him to walk as a member of the body of Christ and not as a member of the Anti-christ.

The assumption of this debate is, of course, that such a member of a worldly organization still attends church faithfully and comes under the preaching of the Word regularly. If such a member of a worldly organization does not attend church faithfully, it is

an entirely different matter and he must be treated for despising the means of grace. But if he attends faithfully and listens to God's Word, it will reprove, correct, instruct and thoroughly equip him unto every good work. As he grows in knowledge, he will grow in faith and bring forth the works of faith.

The allotted space is more than up. Having written one page of introduction I hope my opponent will forgive me for writing six pages rather than the assigned five. If he so desires, he may write six in his next contribution to this debate and I will write four.

J. A. H.

NEGATIVE:

RESOLVED: *That Discipline Of Members That Belong To Worldly Organizations Should Be Left To The Ministry Of The Word.*

When the undersigned is requested to refute the proposition that the discipline of members belonging to worldly organizations should be left to the ministry of the Word, and, by implication, maintain that Christian discipline must be applied to these members, it is, of course, not his task to prove the necessity of Christian discipline. This is established among us, according to Scripture and Confession. If in many churches the exercise of Christian discipline is sadly neglected or even mockingly ignored we maintain the sacred calling to use fully the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Furthermore, the undersigned is also of the opinion that the wording of the proposition is such that we must proceed from the assumption that this membership is contrary to Scripture and therefore condemnable and censurable. In the first place it is a fact that membership in worldly unions such as the A.F. of L. and the C.I.O. has been condemned officially by our churches, and that in connection with a concrete case which appeared some years ago at one of our classical meetings. And, in the second place, the proposition reads that the discipline of these members should be left to the ministry of the Word. This certainly implies that this membership is to be condemned and that we should not fail to emphasize this in the preaching of the Word.

Consequently we must proceed in this debate from the assumption that membership in worldly organizations is wrong. The expression "membership in worldly organizations" is rather broad in scope, it seems to me. Worldly organizations we understand to be organizations which are worldly in membership and principle. This does not mean that a member must be condemned merely because he happens to be a member of a certain union. As the editor of our Stan-

dard Bearer pointed out on page 117 of the December 15, 1943, issue, we must proceed from the standpoint that, in order to discipline a member even unto excommunication from the Kingdom of Heaven, the Church must be able to point out to such a member and to admonish him with respect to some concrete and definite act of sin which he commits and of which he refuses to repent and convert himself. When such a sin is established discipline must be applied. The affirmative in this debate must prove that all discipline of such erring members must be left to the ministry of the Word. It is our task to refute this contention. We shall, therefore, in this essay try to maintain that Christian discipline must be exercised, even unto the extent of excommunication, the so-called second key of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The discipline of members belonging to worldly organizations should not be left to the ministry of the Word, first of all, because such membership constitutes a very grievous sin. These unions as such violate every Christian principle so sacred to the Christian. They are, first of all, antichristian according to the literal wording of their constitution. The constitution, e. g., of the International Typographical Union declares, among other things, that "the members of said Union shall hold their Union in such esteem that their fidelity to it and their duty to its members shall not be interfered with by any allegiance that they may now or hereafter owe to any other organization, social, political, or religious, secret or otherwise." This constitution pledges its members to carry out the decisions of the union at all times, and demands of them to remain loyal to the union rather than to Christ and His Church. Such a union surely proclaims a principle which is a definite denial of the Christ Who is Lord and King of His people. In the second place, these unions are such that they are definitely worldly and materialistic in character, will not hesitate to use any illegitimate means to attain unto their ends, so that the Christian, belonging to such an organization, thereby also becomes guilty of unscriptural and godless practices. It is quite unnecessary in this essay to prove the methods of violence which the unions employ if they cannot gain their objectives in a peaceful way. Many incidents could be recorded in proof of this statement. The labor situation and its history during late years emphasize this fact very forcefully. And an organization which will use these illegal means of force and coercion reveals itself as wholly carnal and earthly and as trampling under foot the things eternal which the Christian holds sacred. Thirdly, these unions are such that they compel the Christian to seek the wellbeing of a union-member in preference to a brother in Christ, if the latter is not a member of the union. Does not the above quotation from the constitution of the Interna-

tional Typographical Union clearly declare that one's fidelity to the union and his duty to the members thereof shall in no sense be interfered with by any allegiance that one may now or hereafter owe to any other organization, social, political, or religious, secret or otherwise? If, then, my fidelity to the union and duty to its members is interfered with or opposed by a brother in Christ I am obliged to defend and uphold that union over against him, will prevent him even from obtaining a job, if need be. And with such a brother in Christ, whom I maltreat in the sphere of labor, I would then sit at meat at the table of the Lord?!

Such is unionism to-day. Furthermore, we are of the opinion that by becoming members of any union, corporation, or association, one becomes responsible for the principles on the basis of which such a body is organized as well as for all the acts performed and committed by or in the name of such an organization. The fact that in some cases one may become member of the union merely for the sake of a job without attending any of its meetings but merely pay his dues does not at all relieve him before God of his responsibility. Some would shield behind the excuse that they become members of a certain union without being aware of its constitution or principles. Does it, however, not reveal a lack of responsibility to join an organization and be ignorant of its basis? Moreover, if one, being a member of a union, pays his dues, he thereby is very actively and really supporting that particular organization. And, finally, to be a member of a union, merely for the sake of a job, and take no active interest or part in the activities of that organization certainly implies that such a person has chosen not to confess the Christ, to be a silent spectator in the struggle for the cause of God and His Christ in the midst of the world.

We may, therefore, conclude that members belonging to such a worldly organization are guilty of a very grievous sin. It is grievous sin because such membership involves us in a definite stand against the Christ, Who is King of His Church, is an act of hostility and enmity against the brother in Christ, who refuses to support such a worldly organization, and also involves us in the sin of allying ourselves with the carnal and materialistic forces of this world, who love and seek the things below at the cost of the righteousness of God.

Besides asserting that such membership constitutes a very grievous sin, we would declare, in the second place, that Scripture certainly exhorts the church that members, guilty of such grievous sins, be admonished and, if need be, disciplined. We know, of course, that a member is not disciplined for the sin he has committed but for his refusal to repent upon the labor of love bestowed upon him by those who exercise the

keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. The grievous character of union membership must, of course, be fully set forth in the preaching of the Word. If then, however, such a member continues in his sin and refuses to repent, this sin of union membership is sufficiently clear and concrete to require discipline and even excommunication upon the basis of Holy Writ. Does not our very form for the celebration of Communion declare that those who raise discord and munity in church and state shall be barred from the table of the Lord? Does not the very sacrament of Communion and also that of Baptism imply that we are separated from the world as a distinct people, that we acknowledge the Lamb that was slain and now liveth forevermore as Lord and King of our life, that we are His party in the midst of the world? Is it possible, then, to conceive of a sin more grievous than the denial of that Christ, Who Himself hath said that whosoever denies Him before men will also be denied by Him before His Father and the holy angels? Shall we, then, not have the boldness to declare, upon the basis of the holy Word of our God, that a person who denies the Christ and assumes a definite stand over against the church has not part in the Kingdom of God?

Finally, because of the grievous character of this sin and the calling of the Church to enforce Christian discipline such discipline may not be left to the preaching of the Word. In this connection the question may well be asked: Why should Christian discipline, wherever necessary, ever be left merely to the preaching of the Word? Is it not a fact that the purpose of Christian discipline is the glory of the Name of our covenant God, the purification of His Church, and the salvation of the elect sinner? To be sure, the glory of the Name of God and the purification of His Church, which implies that the people of God shall indeed present a united front in the midst of the world and separate themselves from the forces of evil, are in themselves sufficient reasons for Christian discipline. But we would emphasize at this time the third link in this triple reason for Christian discipline, namely that of the salvation of the elect sinner, or the erring child of God. And, mind you, this is God's purpose with respect to the exercise of the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. The Lord has given His Church these keys. It is not left to us to decide whether we will use them or not. The Divine injunction is clear. And why should we fear to use them in obedience to the Divine command? God Himself has declared that their purpose also includes the saving of His people who err and walk in sin. Consequently we must use the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven in the fullest sense of the word and we may have the assurance that exactly in that way will His Name be glorified, His Church purified, and His people saved. But, if the sinner continues in his sin, excommunication must be

applied. This discipline may not be left to the ministry of the Word. It is in fact that the ministry of the Word is not sufficient in the preservation and purification of the Church. Some members can be very bold and continue as members regardless of the severe and condemning tenor of the preaching. Because, therefore, the preaching is inadequate the second key of Christian discipline must also be applied. We must not be wiser than God in this respect. Let us walk in His ways and leave the future of the Church to her Architect and Builder. H. V.

Geen Roof Geacht

De lezer zal verstaan, dat het opschrift van dit artikel eene aanhaling is uit Fillipenzen 2:6. Volledig luidt de tekst, naar de Staten-vertaling, als volgt: "Hij, die geen roof geacht heeft Gode even gelijk te zijn". Deze aanhaling vormt een deel van de Klassesieke Schrift-plaats dat handel van Christus' diepe vernedering en van Zijne verhooging als de Knecht des Heeren.

Over dit gedeelte der Heilige Schrift is, in de geschiedenis der Kerk door theologen, reeds veel getwist. Het verschil liep (loopt) over de opvatting van de rechte verhouding tusschen de twee naturen van den Middelaar. Meer bijzonderlijk liep het verschil over de vraag: in hoever deel de menschelijk *natuur* van Christus in de eigenschappen der Goddelijke natuur. Het was met name na de Reformatie, dat dit verschil van opvatting over dit punt in de Christologie ontstond tusschen Lutherschen and Gereformeerden. En dit verschil van meening hangt in niet geringe mate af van de opvatting, die men heeft, en, de exegeze, die men heeft van Fil. 2:5-11.

De Luthersche opvatting van de verhouding der twee naturen staat onder de dogmatici bekend als de Kenosis Theologie. De onderliggende stelling hier is, dat het eindige deelen kan in het oneindige. De eindige menschelijke natuur van Christus deelt in de oneindige eigenschappen van Almacht en alomtegenwoordigheid, bezeten door Christus' goddelijke natuur. Deze deelneming in de goddelijk eigenschappen heeft dan plaats gehad in de Vleeschwording in Maria's schoot. Maar in den staat der vernedering ontledigde Christus zich, wat zijn menschelijke natuur betreft, van deze goddelijke eigenschappen. Dit zich ontledigen ziet dan niet zoo zeer op den *daad* van gehoorzaamheid als Knecht dan wel op Zijn ontledigen van Goddelijke eigenschappen.

Gereformeerden legden den nadruk niet op de eenheid van de twee naturen, doch op de eenheid des

Persoons bestaande in twee naturen. Het mensche-lijke en het goddelijke blijven bij hen naar de formule van Chalsedon "onvermengt, overanderd, en ongedeeld, ongescheiden". Hier is de ontleding daad van Christus' echt mensche-lijke wil. Het is hier offer-daad van den Priester Gods onder menschen.

Ziedaar, het dogmatisch vraagstuk, dat hier in het geding is!

Intusschen, echter, moeten we twee zaken niet voorbijzien. Ten eersten, moet gewaarschuwt tegen het gevaar van ons blind te staren, wat de behandeling van dit Schrift-gedeelte betreft, op het dogmatisch verschil, dat op dit punt bestaat. Immers, wij zouden dat doende, het eigenlijk onderwerp van den apostel gemakkelijk voorbijzien. En ten tweeden, moeten we er naar ijveren, om exegetisch te werk te gaan. Dat wil in dit verband negatief zeggen, dat noch de Luther-sche conclusies, noch die der Gereformeerden den door-slag mag geven in deze zaak. En positief legt dit ons onder den eisch, om den tekst zelf te laten spreken. Natuurlijk mogen we hier ook het werk van anderen raadplegen, doch de tekst hebbe het laatste woord.

Duidelijkheids-halve willen we ons plaatsen voor enkele pertinente vragen betreffende de zin van den tekst. Niet dat het gedachten-schema aldus geschapen den zin der tekst bepalen kan of mag, maar het diene alleen om richting te geven aan de *discussie*.

Onzes inziens hebben we ons te stellen voor de volgende punten van belang.

Ten eersten, stellen we ons voor de vraag, wat toch het eigenlijk onderwerp is, dat door den apostel behandeld wordt in dit hoofdstuk. En in nauwe aansluiting hiermede, hoe de inhoud van de verzen 5-11 staat in des apostel's betoog tot deze hoofdgedachte.

Verder, moeten we een antwoord hebben op de volgende pertinente vraag: Hoe wil den tekst ons verstaan hebben: "Christus Jezus. . . Die in de gestaltenis Gods zijnde"? Ziet dit op een historisch, chronologisch process zooals dit uitgedrukt wordt in de Twaalf Artikelen des geloofs? Wil de tekst hier ons bieden een inzicht in Christus Pre-Incarnatie, Zijn "zijn" in den beginne *voor dat Hij vleesch werd*? Of is dit zijn "in de gestaltenis Gods" gelijktijdig men vergunne mij de uitdrukking) met zijn dienst-knecht zijn tot den dood des kruises? Wat is het gezichts-punt van den heiligen schrijver?

Het antwoord op deze laatste vraag zal ten deele afhangen van de beteekenis der verschillende begrippen hier gebruikt en tendeele van hun plaats in des apostels redebeleid.

Laat ons de hierboven gestelde vragen op den voet volgen, om er, zoo mogelijk, een antwoord op te geven.

Het eerste aan de orde is wel de vraag naar het eigenlijk onderwerp in deze geheele perikoop. Onbevooroordeelt lezen van den tekst zal ieder moeten overtuigen, dat *het* onderwerp hier door den schrijver

behandeld is: De ootmoet en eensgezindheid van Christus wege vereischt voor de zijnen. "Er was", om Greidanus Kort. Verkl. te citeeren, "bij de Philippenzische geloovigen blijkbaar gemis aan innerlijke samenbinding en onderlinge liefde. . . en wekt hij hen op tot rechte onderlinge gezindheid, samenwerking, eenheid". bldz. 44. De inzet van den apostels betoog is derhalve niet dogmatisch, abstract, doch concreet en praktisch. Er moet verandering komen in het streven der geloovigen. Zoo actueel is de nood, dat hij in hoofdstuk 4:2 twee der geloovigen, die blijkbaar in oneenigheid leefden, bij name noemt en hen vermaant, "dat zij eens gezind zijn in den Heere". Het onderwerp is dus zeer praktisch. En het leerstellige moet dienen tot onderstaving van zijn vermaningen. Zulks is het geval met de verzen 5-11. Veel van de dogmatische waarde wordt ons hier geleerd, maar dogmatiek is het niet.

Slechts terloops komt de vernedering van Christus en Zijne gezindheid als Knecht hier ter sprake. De apostel wijst er op, dat hetzelfde gevoelen dat in Christus was ook in ons moet zijn.

Maar hieruit volgt voorts, dat er overeenkomst is tusschen de ervaring van Christus in Christus' les in de lijdens school en die van ons. Wanneer we dit voor de aandacht houden geraken we niet gemakkelijk van den weg. Dit is een fijn punt, dat we stevig vast moeten houden.

Dit punt vasthoudende, gaan we nu over tot eene tweede observatie. Het is van groot belang om verder een antwoord te geven op de vraag: Wat is het *historisch* gezichts-punt in Fil. 2:5-7 van: "Christus Jezus, die in de gestaltenis Gods zijnde, geen roof geacht heeft Gode evengeliek te zijn"? In nauw verband met deze vraag hangt de andere vraag aangaande de rechte opvatting van rangschikking der verschillende elementen in den tekst. De "vernietiging", (Statenvertaling) "ontleding" (Vert. Greidanus) en "aanneming van dienstknechts-gestalte". Volgen dezen momenten in Christus' lijden *naar den tekst* elkander temporeel, of is dit een uitvoerige beschrijving van Christus' gehoorzaamheids werk, en van de innerlijk streven dat daarin openbaar wordt? Indien 't laatste het geval is, dan hebben we hier te doen met nadere toelichting in de verzen 5-8.

Naar onze bescheiden meening is het laatste het geval. En daarom willen we trachten aan te toonen, dat het niet mogelijk is om exegetisch te handhaven, dat Paulus hier spreekt van historische, temporeele, opeenvolgende momenten.

Dat het hier gaat over "Christus Jezus" zooals hij "gevonden wordt als een mensch" moet wel toegestemd worden. Het gaat hier over den Christus zooals men Hem "aantrof"; Hij was mensch in heel zijn "habitus", zijn "behavior." Hij was mensch "in bestaan, leefwijze, houding, op aarde verkeerende, en onder menschen rondwandelende, onzer één zijnde, en door de

mensen als huns gelijke aangezien". (Greijdanus). Welnu, zie Hem dan wandelen! Wat is het dat nu uw oog treft—treft met den bril van Fil. 2:5-8 op? Treft u aanstonds zijn metaphysische, ontologische Goddelijke zijn? Ach, neen! Ons treft Zijn dienstknechts gestalte, zooals die reeds geteekend wordt in Jes. 53. Zoo teekent de pen van Paulus u en mij Hem hier! "Het gevoelen dat in Christus Jezus was" is het groot onderwerp hier. Het begrip "gevoelen" is vertaling van "phronein" in het Grieksch. Dit is niet slechts de faculteit van denken, noch van den wil, maar ziet op eene activiteit van de geheele ziel voortkomend uit het hart. Op de actie, het "bedenken", het bewuste streven en zoeken valt in dit begrip den nadruk. Zoo in vers twee waar "phroneite" vertaald wordt door "eensgezind zijn". Beter is de vertaling van Greijdanus "dat gij hetzelfde *bedenkt*". Ook valt op het bewuste, het etische streven den nadruk in andere Schriftuurplaatsen. Zoo b.v. Matt. 16:24; Rom. 8:5; Fil. 3:19; Col. 3:1.

Dit "bedenken" van Christus wordt uitgedrukt door den apostel naar twee zijden, te weten, beide negatief en positief.

Het negatief vingt ge in het opschrift dat boven dit schrijven geplaatst is. Hij heeft "Geen Roof Geacht Gode even gelijk te zijn." Over dit zin "geen roof geacht" bestaat verschil van meening. Dit verschil laat zich verklaren uit de aangelegenheid, dat het woord in het Grieksch "arpagmos" zoowel passief als actief kan worden genomen. De verschillende resultatende beteekenissen hierdoor veroorzaak kunnen gemakkelijker omschreven worden, dan door nauwkeurige definitie weer-gegeven. Volgens de passieve opvatting van het woord, ziet het op Christus niet *behoeven* te achten, dat Hij roof pleegde, en schuldig zou staan aan majesteits-schennis, indien hij zeide: Ik ben God. Hier valt de nadruk op Christus waardigheid zooals die waarlijk is. Echter, volgens de actieve beteekenis van "arpagmos" is de zin: Christus werd niet beheerscht door het motief van eene roover, die er gretig op uit is, om zichzelf te bevoordeelen. Hij was niet uit op eigen eer en aanzien onder menschen. Zooals blijken mag uit het bovengeschreven in de voorlaatste paragraph, geven wij aan deze laatste verklaring niet alleen de voorkeur, maar willen we staande houden dat deze beteekenis de eenige mogelijke is in het tekst verband. Het is de negatieve openbaring en blijk van Christus' "gevoelen".

Positief komt dit gevoelen van Christus duidelijk uit in zijn volkomene overgave tot den dood des kruises. Deze overgave was "Vernietiging" van zichzelf, Dienstknecht zijn, en dat *terwijl* Hij in de gestaltenis Gods was. Hier valt dus niet zoo zeer den nadruk op de naturen, als wel op wat de Persoon des Zoons *deed* in het vleesch. Niet op Zijn zijn, doch op zijn Priester-daad valt hier den nadruk. Natuurlijk

wordt deze daad oneindig diep omdat het den Persoon des Zoons was; het was Hij, in de gestaltenis Gods zijnde.

Ten besluite zijn gelooven we de volgende opmerkingen gebillijkt: Ten eersten, dat het overduidelijk is uit dit schriftgedeelte, beide voor de Filippenzische Christenen en voor ons heden ten dage, hoe we ons te gedragen hebben naar het voorbeeld van Christus. Nu is Christus' lijden veel meer dan voorbeeld; het is immers zoen-dood, straf-lijden voor onze zonde, het is de arbeid Zijner ziel. Toch is het des niet-te-min ook voorbeeld. Zie benevens Efeze 5:1, 2 ook I Pet. 2:21. Onverschrokken mag Christus als voorbeeld voor ons gepredikt. Indien dit niet mag heeft dan heeft Paulus' betoog hier geen zin! Doch laten van zulke dwaasheid zwijgen.

Ten tweede, is naar onze bescheiden meening, exegetisch het niet mogelijk om de Luthersche conceptie van de verhouding der twee naturen van Christus te redden. Hier is sprake, niet van afleggen van de Goddelijke eigenschappen door de menschelijke natuur, maar van de gehoorzaamheids daad geboren uit de gehoorzaamheids-streven van den Zoon Gods in de menschelijke natuur! En zoo is hier in Christus' voorbeeldig borgtochtelijk lijden een scherpe prikkel tot de nieuwe gehoorzaamheid.

G. L.

Thomas Aquinas and Common Grace

Cont. from the last issue of the S. B.

Again in Question 23, Article 3, reply objection 1. Summa Theologica I, we read: "God loves all creatures and all men, inasmuch as He wishes them all some good; but He does not wish every good to them all. So far, therefore, as He does not wish this particular good—namely, eternal life—He is said to hate or reprobate them."

In support of both the first and second contentions we read in Article 7 of Question 23, Summa Theol. I:

"Reply obj. 3. The good that is proportionate to the common state of nature is to be found in the majority; and is wanting in the minority. Thus it is clear that the majority of men have a sufficient knowledge for the guidance of life; and those who have not this knowledge are said to be foolish or half-witted; but they who attain to a profound knowledge of things intelligible are a very small minority in respect to the rest. Since their eternal happiness, consisting in the vision of God, exceeds the common state of nature, and especially in so far as this is deprived of grace through the corruption of

of the class in which they are placed by their similarity to Aquinas, the "Christian Aristotle".

In fine, what briefly, is the Scriptural and Reformed teaching on this subject?

1. God created man *in* His own image. Gen. 1:26, 27.

2. The man created in God's image was a rational-moral creature. This is often referred to as the formal aspect of the image of God; also as man's adaptability to the image of God. This rational-moral nature man retained after the fall, although it was no longer adaptable to the image of God.

3. The material aspect of the image of God consists in true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. These were not *dona superaddita*, however, for the image of God was very really part of the being of man in the state of rectitude. Col. 3:10, Eph. 4:24.

4. Man was created with a free will, not so that he was independently free, nor yet free in the highest sense, for he was yet free to sin, also.

5. Without entering detailedly into the nature of sin, suffice it to say that sin presupposed a rational-moral being through which it could come to manifestation, and in which it can work as an active lack (*privatio actiosa*). Rom. 8:7, Gal. 5:17.

6. The result of sin is two-fold: in the first place, man died the spiritual death. He not only lost God's image but the true knowledge became the lie, the righteousness became unrighteousness, the holiness became unholiness. Man became prophet, priest, and king of the devil. The ethical working of his nature became nothing else than a working of death. And if we speak of remnants of God's image in man, we understand only that man in his sin can still see that he was created in (but lost irrevocably), and is yet commanded to live in righteousness, truth, and holiness. Ps. 14, 53, Rom. 3:9-18, Rom. 5:12ff., and 8:5-8. and Eph. 2:1-3.

In the second place, man died the physical death, so that although death did not immediately take him, the power of death did take hold on all his members so that his life became "nothing but a continual death." And this temporal death is the beginning of eternal death, that is, the relation of the rational-moral man became instantly and everlastingly a relation of wrath in place of love.

This and this only is the teaching of Scripture on this score; no man *in puris naturalibus*; no common grace; only the sharp antitheses of good and evil, sin and grace, election and reprobation, love and wrath, the Church and the World, salvation and damnation.

H. C. H.

Editor's Note: This article was one of several papers delivered at the meetings of the philosophy club of our seminary during the past year. More will appear in the future, D.V.

NOTICE:—As is customary, the Standard Bearer is not published July 15 and August 15.

NOTICE

The annual meeting of the Reformed Free Publishing Society will be held in September. (Date to be announced later).

Three board members must be chosen from the following nomination (D. Jonker; H. Kaot; S. De Vries; Charles Pastoor; Stephen Bouma; Gerrit Pipe

Financial report will be given. Mr. Schaafsma who faithfully served us as Treasurer for 11 years, feels it necessary to resign due to lingering illness.

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the Creston Protestant Reformed Church hereby wishes to express its sympathy with their fellow office bearer brother D. Bloem, in the loss of his

MOTHER

who entered into the rest June 26, 1944.

May the Lord comfort the bereaved family.

The Consistory:

John D. de Jong, Pres.

P. Vanden Engel, Clerk.

IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies' Aid of the Protestant Reformed Church of Sioux Center, Iowa, wishes hereby to express its sympathy to Gertrude Jansen, in the loss of her sister,

LOUISE JANSEN

who was a loyal and faithful member of this Ladies' Aid. May the Lord prove again that He giveth grace for every trial.

Rev. M. Gritter, Pres.

Mrs. N. Buyert, Sec'y.

IN MEMORIAM

In the afternoon of July 11, the Lord in His infinite wisdom took out of our midst our beloved husband, father and grandfather

FREDERICK W. PIPE

at the age of 66 years.

We are greatly comforted and have the assurance that God whom he so faithfully served has taken him to His eternal Home.

Mrs. Frederick W. Pipe
Mr. and Mrs. John Pipe
Mr. Gerrit Pipe
Mr. and Mrs. Harry Niemeyer
Mr. and Mrs. Menzo Brummel
T/Sgt. Henry Pipe
Mr. and Mrs. Sam Zylstra
Pfc. Frederick Pipe Jr.
and 6 grand-children.

original sin, those who are saved are in the minority. In this especially, however, appears the mercy of God, that He has chosen some for that salvation, from which very many in accordance with the common course and tendency of nature fall short."

Taking these two teachings of Aquinas together, for they are indeed closely bound, what proper observations are allowed?

First of all, Thomas holds rather firmly, especially in the "Summa Theologica," that the man *in puris naturalibus* can never merit grace. However, even this proposition is not maintained strictly in his *Libri Sententiarum*, where he speaks of "preparation for grace." The man *in puris naturalibus* has only an "aptitude" for knowing and loving God, but that aptitude he does most certainly have, according to Thomas.

In the second place, it must be noted that the man *in puris naturalibus* is a good man, even though he lacks grace. This teaching is very prominent in both his "Libri Sententiarum," in the works of his transition period, and in the "Summa." But he does make distinction between natural and super-natural good. For example, in the "Libri Sententiarum," II D 28, Thomas answers the triple question, "Whether man can do any good without grace, and whether without grace he can avoid sin and fulfill God's commandments?" To the first question he answers, "Man through a free will is able to do both good and evil, not however in a meritorious act without the habitude of grace." To the second, namely, "*utrum homo sine gratia possit vitare peccatum*," he answers that man has also after the fall a free choice and pursuit of good and evil, wherein the potentiality of avoiding sin, at least the mortal sins, lies. To the third question he answers that the natural man can certainly fulfill the law of God in so far as the "substance of the work is concerned," although not according to the intention of the Lawgiver.

The same contention is made in the "Summa Th." I, qu. 23, art. 1, albeit in a somewhat different form:

"The end towards which created things are directed by God is twofold; one which exceeds all proportion and faculty of created nature; and this end is life eternal, that consists in seeing God which is above the nature of every creature, as shown above. The other end, however, is proportionate to created nature, to which end created being can attain according to the power of its nature."

In the third place, Thomas appears at times to place the teaching of God's goodness to all men behind this ability of the natural man to do good. This is evident when the Roman Catholic philosopher answers the question, "Whether man by himself is able to pre-

pare himself for grace without some grace?" (See "Libri Sententiarum"). It is further evident in Thomas's discussions in the "Summa Th.," questions 4, 5, 6, on whether the creature can attain at all to God's perfections. In the "Summa," however, man's goodness is generally attributed to his nature, where-with he was created, and the philosopher makes no further mention of any primary cause of man's goodness.

What conclusions are warranted now as to Thomas's teachings on common grace? First of all, the man *in puris naturalibus* as pronounced by Aquinas, and the man possessed of common grace as he is conjured up by the Christian Reformed Churches, are very much alike. The man who is capable of civic righteousness differs little if any from the man who can fulfill the Law of God "as far as the substance of the work is concerned"; nor does the man who is restrained in his sin by an operation (not saving) of the Holy Ghost upon his heart differ much from the man who can avoid the mortal sins.

In the second place, it is evident that the man *in puris naturalibus* and the common grace man are arrived at by different means. While Thomas denies completely that man became totally corrupt through the fall, the exponents of common grace agree that the first man *would* have been catapulted into deepest corruption, and even claim that man would have changed into a devil, had not God intervened with His common grace. The results of the two teachings are the same, but the means of arriving at the results differ, at least to some extent.

In the third place, we must observe the complete identity between the fundamental thesis of the first point of 1924 and Thomas's teaching of a favorable attitude of God towards all men.

Fourthly, one cannot fail to note how similar the two heresies are when their mutual purposelessness (in so far as the man *in puris naturalibus* and the object of common grace *themselves* are concerned) is considered. Both the man *in puris naturalibus* and the common grace man are incapable of advancing one step from their respective positions. Thomas, however, carries his theory to its logical end, doing violence to the doctrine of predestination by reducing, with his strong emphasis upon the natural and supernatural, the gulf between the elect and the reprobate to a mere difference of degree, and wiping out the sharp antitheses which mark the Scriptural conception from Paul through Augustine and Calvin even to the present time. This at least is in favor of Thomas, that he is honest, while the exponents of common grace refuse to admit the logical end of their heresy.

Finally, it may be said from an epistemological point of view that those who accuse us of being hard-headed logicians and rationalists might well take stock