

THE STANDARD

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MEDITATION

Fear Not, Little Flock!

Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Luke 12:32.

Fear not!

If ye seek the kingdom of God first, chiefly, constantly, this word is addressed to you, and you may hear it.

If ye seek the things that are below, the things of the world, the things that are seen, but that are temporal, this word of the Lord Jesus is neither meant for you, nor can ye hear it.

The entire context of this address of the Saviour to His little flock speaks of the things of the kingdom of God and the things that are upon the earth *as a contrast*. Not, indeed, as if they were a contrast in themselves, as if there were an irreconcilable conflict between "nature and grace". But as an object of our desire, of our seeking and striving, they stand opposed to each other. You cannot set your affection on the things above and on them that are below at the same time. Where your treasure is, there shall your heart be. If your treasure is in heaven the issues of your heart shall proceed to, and fasten themselves on the things that are heavenly; if your treasure is in the things that are seen, the affections of your heart cannot rise above them.

You cannot serve God and Mammon!

It is either-or, never both-and!

Such is the clear-cut instruction in the context. It was occasioned, it seems, by the request of a man who served as a particularly clear illustration of one

that seeks the things below, and who even would make use of Jesus' authority to help him in realizing his ambition: "Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me!" Perhaps, the man had a righteous cause. Part of the inheritance was probably his. But the deep and very serious trouble for him was, that because of his part of the inheritance he could not see the kingdom of God, and would make use of the King of that kingdom to satisfy his earthly and carnal ambition. And, having rebuked the man, the Saviour drew the picture of the covetous man, who lays up earthly treasures for himself, but who is not rich in God, in the parable of the rich fool; and then proceeds to apply it to His disciples by the exhortation not to seek earthly things, not to be anxious about meat and drink and clothing, but rather to seek the kingdom of God!

Fear not!

Only in the measure that we seek the kingdom does this exhortation not to fear have meaning for us.

If our affection is on the things below, and if we seek the things of this world, we are, perhaps, a successful man of the world, but the Lord would say: "Fear, thou fool, for it is God's pleasure to cast you body and soul into hell!"

But if we seek the kingdom of God, we may apparently have plenty of reason to fear, and have no place in the world, but the word of the Lord directly concerns us:

Fear, not, little flock!

It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom!

Be of good cheer!

Fear not!

Even though there are, apparently, abundant reasons to fear, be not afraid!

Fear is itself suffering. It is a feeling of terror

caused by the apprehension that a certain evil is impending and will befall us. The evil that is apprehended may be either unconditional and unavoidable, or its realization may be contingent upon a certain course of action on our part. A person may have an incurable disease, and fear the unavoidable suffering and ultimate death connected with it: the evil he fears cannot be escaped. Or, on the other hand, a soldier on the battlefield may be overcome with terror of the enemy, and he may flee to avoid the dreaded evil.

And always fear tends to and results in the endeavor to escape or avoid the impending evil as far as possible.

Fear not, little flock!

Fear not, although as you seek the kingdom of God, and because of this, dark clouds of evil lower, and storms of persecution threaten to break over your head!

For it is of this fear and of these evils that the Lord is thinking as He here addresses His little flock. The reference is to the fear that might fill the hearts of His disciples, of His Church in the world, because of the evils that threaten and beset those that faithfully seek the kingdom of God in the midst of a world that is opposed to that kingdom. For, let us clearly understand what it means to seek that kingdom. It does not simply mean to strive to enter into the heavenly glory of that kingdom in its future realization, though this is not excluded. But it signifies that we are, even now and in this world, spiritual citizens of that kingdom in which God is freely acknowledged and served as king, and that is established through the cross and the resurrection and exaltation of our Lord Jesus Christ. It implies that we have been translated from death into life, and from darkness into light, and that the righteousness of that kingdom, both in its juridical and in its ethical sense is ours. It means that we set our heart on the things of that kingdom and on its righteousness, and that we walk as citizens of that kingdom in the midst of the world of darkness and iniquity, proclaiming the Word of the kingdom, confessing the Lord of that kingdom, striving to manifest in our conversation the righteousness of that kingdom, and thus condemning the evil works of the kingdom of darkness.

So seeking the kingdom, fear not!

Your heart might, indeed, be filled with terror because of the evils that threaten you from every side.

For the world lies in darkness, and it hates the light.

Moreover, it strives for the realization of its own kingdom, the kingdom of Man, of this world, with its own righteousness, the righteousness, not of God, but of Man, without the Christ of God, without the cross and the atoning blood of the Lamb. And if you seek

the kingdom of God and its righteousness, and condemn the unfruitful works of darkness, and stand in the way of the realization of the proud kingdom of mere Man, that world will hate you, and persecute you, and speak and do all manner of evil against you for Christ's sake.

And many are the evils that mighty power of darkness that is called "world" may inflict upon you!

It may threaten to take away your name, your position in the world, your job, your possessions, your home, your liberty, yea, your very life on earth. Yea, the time will come that, if you persist in seeking the kingdom of God, they will make it impossible for you to buy or to sell: you will be considered and treated as an outcast, unworthy to occupy the very ground you stand on!

Fear not!

Not as if these evils are but imaginary. Not as if the threatening storm shall never break over your head; for it will.

But fear not, though these evils come!

Let them not fill you with terror!

And above all, let the fear of them never induce you to change your course of action and to abandon the cause of the kingdom of God!

Be faithful unto death!

Little flock!

With special and intentional emphasis, the Saviour here designates His Church as *little flock*.

For the "flock" is His Church, the company of those whom the Father gave Him out of the world. And all the emphasis in this connection is on that significant qualification *little*!

Always the flock of Christ is little!

It was little enough, indeed, at the moment when He first spoke these words, addressing the small number of His disciples that followed Him at the time. Even in comparison with Israel as a nation, as it existed at that time in the land of Canaan, His disciples constituted but a small group. For, He had come unto His own, and His own received Him not. And what did even all Israel amount to in number and power, in comparison with the mighty nations round about, the world-power of that time?

But little is the Church always!

The word which the Lord here speaks is not limited by time and place and circumstances. It never is. Christ still speaks. And always the content of His Word is the same. Always the Church is addressed as little, and always He exhorts that little Church never to fear, but constantly to seek the kingdom of God and its righteousness.

And when was the Church of Christ ever numerically strong?

All through the ages it was, and still is, a little flock. Perhaps, today, in spite of the grand display what is known as the Church makes in the world, in spite of the many churches, the magnificent edifices, the mighty efforts of those that prophecy, and cast out devils, and do many wonderful works,—the Church is smaller than ever. Ah, how relatively small is even the nominal Church in comparison with the mighty world! And in that nominal Church, how many are the thousands that have forsaken the kingdom, have denied the Christ and His Cross, have apostatized from the truth, and have been swallowed up by the enemy! How many of those that outwardly bear the name of Christ are seeking, not the kingdom of God, but the world and its lust! How small, in the midst of the "Church" is the number of those that outwardly still profess the truth! How (speaking from a worldly viewpoint) ridiculously small are we as Protestant Reformed Churches, that uphold the truth of God's sovereign grace! And how many even of those that thus outwardly profess the truth, will fall away when the fire of persecution will be started, and will prove to be reprobate! Do not even many of us already fearfully ask: "what shall we eat?" and: "what shall we drink?" rather than to seek the kingdom of God and its righteousness?

Little flock!

But why is the Church so little? Is this littleness, perhaps, emphasized, in order that we should be stirred into action, and put forth our every effort to make of this little flock a mighty army? Is the Church so little, perhaps, because we did not labor, and sacrifice, and preach the Word of God? Shall we send forth missionaries, and more missionaries, in order to gain souls for Christ, and lay the whole world at His feet?

But no, that would be of no avail to make the Church great in this world!

The word of Christ is absolute: He addresses the whole Church of all ages as a little flock. Besides, the gathering of the Church is not our work at all, but His, and His alone. We cannot even preach, unless He speaks!

The littleness of the flock of Christ has its ultimate and sole cause in the good pleasure of the Father, in His election and sovereign grace. He chose the Church to be little, for His strength must be made perfect in weakness, that His glory, the glory of His mighty grace in the Beloved might shine forth and receive all the praise!

But do you not see, why this word is here intentionally used, and why the Church is in this connection emphatically reminded of her littleness?

Do you not discern that this very littleness would seem an additional reason for fear? For this small-

ness in number means that the Church is also insignificant in the world, that she has no position, no influence no "vote," no power and no means to fight, and that the power of the world might constantly threaten to overwhelm her! This littleness of the Church might inspire her with the dread of being ultimately overcome, and might induce her to make an attempt to organize, to develop power in the world, at the expense of her specific character as a flock of Jesus Christ, and with the result that she would not seek the righteousness of the kingdom of God anymore!

But: fear not, little flock!

Make no attempt to develop a power that is not properly yours.

Let not your littleness be a cause of terror!

As a little flock, be of good cheer!

Fear not!

Be not afraid!

Rather consider that you *have* the victory!

For it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom!

And that consideration should be more than sufficient to drive out all fear!

The kingdom here is the ultimate and eternal realization of the kingdom of Christ in glory. It is the incorruptible and undefilable inheritance that fadeth not away, that will be given to the little flock when their Lord shall appear once more from heaven to make all things like unto Himself! And the glory of that kingdom is so unspeakable great and precious, that all the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with it! It would be better far to suffer all the evils of this present time a thousand times than to forfeit our place in that kingdom.

And its possession is fully *assured* you, little flock!

Nothing can deprive you of it!

For it is your Father's good pleasure to give it to you! Mark you well, He will *give* it you. You need not fight for it. You can do nothing to realize it. The enemy can do nothing to prevent its coming. He will *give* it you!

Such is His good pleasure, i.e. His eternal counsel, according to which He works all things, in which also the enemy, sin, evil, death, and all the powers of darkness have their proper place! It is His counsel unchangeable, as He Himself delights in it!

He, your Father, Who loved you even unto the death of His Son, will give it to you!

He, the Almighty, whom no one can possibly oppose, will give it to you!

The matter is fully determined!

Fear not!

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EDITORIALS

The New Schedule

At the annual meeting of the editorial staff of the Standard Bearer, which was held on June 4, it was decided to continue to edit our paper in the same manner as during the last three years. Accordingly, to undersigned was once more assigned the position of editor, clothed with dictatorial powers. But as these dictatorial powers mean mostly work, the editor was again appointed to draw up a schedule of subjects for the ensuing year, and to assign them to the various co-workers.

The Rev. Ophoff was granted the privilege to draw up his own schedule.

The schedule here follows. I wish to make just one remark with regard to it. Although the brethren S. Cammenga and W. Hofman were not definitely appointed to join the ranks of writers, I take for granted that this was simply overlooked, and that it was the understanding that they, too, should be assigned subjects. At any rate, I made use of my dictatorial powers to include them in the following schedule.

October 1

De Psalmen, G. Vos. The power of Public Opinion, J. De Jong. Plenary and Verbal Inspiration of Holy Writ, H. Veldman. The Authorship of the Book of Revelation, J. Heys. The History of the Christian School, II, M. Gritters.

October 15

De Psalmen, G. Vos. The Danger of Bolshevism in America, H. De Wolf. Kuyper's Calvinism as in his Stone Lectures; a Critique, I, G. Lubbers. The Term Law in the Epistle to the Galatians, L. Doezema. Unionism a Threat to Economic Liberty, R. Veldman.

November 1

De Psalmen, G. Vos. The Value of Religious Habits, A. Petter. Kuyper's Calvinism as in his Stone Lectures, a Critique, II, G. Lubbers. Inherited Traits of Character in the light of Creationism, L. Vermeer. God's Repentance, S. Cammenga.

November 15

De Psalmen, G. Vos. Personality in the Light of Traducianism, W. Hofman. Kuyper's Calvinism as in his Stone Lectures, a Critique, III, G. Lubbers. The Idea of Immediate Regeneration, A. Cammenga. Freedom of Religion, P. Vis.

December 1

De Psalmen, G. Vos. Who are Gog and Magog? P. De Boer. The Meaning of Philippians 2:6b, M.

Schipper. Freedom of the Press in Peace and in War, C. Hanko. The Kenosis of Philippians 2:7, J. Blankespoor.

December 15

De Psalmen, G. Vos. Communism and the Social Life of the First Church in Jerusalem, B. Kok. "Denying the Lord that Bought Them" in II Pet. 2:2, J. De Jong. The Nestorian Conception of the Natures of Christ, H. Veldman. The Concept "Servant of Jehovah" in Isaiah, J. Heys.

January 1

De Psalmen, G. Vos. Liberty in Relation to the Law, L. Doezeema. Debate: Resolved that Heidelberg Catechism Preaching is Ministry of the Word of God, I. Affirmative R. Veldman; Negative A. Petter. The Idea of Cooperation as an Element of Divine Providence, H. De Wolf.

January 15

De Psalmen, G. Vos. Debate: Resolved that Heidelberg Catechism Preaching is Ministry of the Word of God, II. Affirmative R. Veldman; Negative A. Petter. The Presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper, L. Vermeer. Miracles and the Laws of Nature, S. Cammenga.

February 1

De Psalmen, G. Vos. The Principles of Christian School Discipline, W. Hofman. The Organic Inspiration of Scripture, A. Cammenga. Punishment and Chastisement, P. Vis. The Apollinarian Conception of the Natures of Christ, M. Schipper.

February 15

De Psalmen, G. Vos. Debate: Resolved that the Underground Movement in Occupied Countries is Revolutionary, I; Affirmative C. Hanko; Negative J. Blankespoor. The Gift of Tongues, B. Kok. Anabaptism, an Evolution, P. De Boer.

March 1

De Psalmen, G. Vos. The Purpose of Abraham's Separation, M. Gritters. Pharaoh's Hardening Process, J. De Jong. Debate: Resolved that the Underground Movement in Occupied Countries is Revolutionary, II; Affirmative C. Hanko; Negative J. Blankespoor.

March 15

De Psalmen, G. Vos. The Relation Between the Four Kinds of Faith, H. Veldman. The outward Man and the Old Man, J. Heys. The Covenant of Sinai, P. De Boer. Common Grace in Schilder's Passion Trilogy, G. Lubbers.

April 1

De Psalmen, G. Vos. Man's Responsibility and God's Providence, L. Doezeema. Training Teachers for our Own Schools, R. Veldman. The Subconscious

in the Ordo Salutis, A. Petter. The Firstborn of Every Creature in Col. 1:15, H. De Wolf.

April 15

De Psalmen, G. Vos. Freedom of Speech in War-time, W. Hofman. The Radio and the Christian Home, S. Cammenga. Companionate Marriages, L. Vermeer. The Unity and Multiforimity of the Church, A. Cammenga.

May 1

De Psalmen, G. Vos. The Book of Life in Revelation, P. Vis. The Sphinx of Moscow; Biographical, J. Blankespoor. The Meaning of "Before the Foundation of the World" in the N. T., M. Schipper. Religious Freedom in Russia, C. Hanko.

May 15

De Psalmen, G. Vos. The Deaconate and Civic Charity, C. Hanko. Fairy Tales in Children's Readers, M. Gritters. The Orthodox Church in Russia, B. Kok. The Man Without a Wedding Garment in Matt. 22:11-14. J. De Jong.

June 1

De Psalmen, G. Vos. Matt. 22:31, 32 as Proof of the Bodily Resurrection, H. Veldman. The Time and Contents of Bereshith in Gen. 1:1, J. Heys. Russia After the War, P. De Boer. Friends of Mammon and Everlasting Habitations, G. Lubbers.

June 15

De Psalmen, G. Vos. The Formation of the Canon, L. Doezeema. Pacifism, R. Veldman. The term "Soul" in the O. T., H. De Wolf. The Motives of Idol Worship, A. Petter.

July 1

De Psalmen, G. Vos. The Fulfillment of the Immanuel Prophecy in Isa. 7:14-16. The Term "Soul" in the N. T., S. Cammenga. Death in its Various Phases, W. Hofman. The Idea of Pleroma in the N. Testament, A. Cammenga.

August 1

De Psalmen, G. Vos. The Psychological Body of I Cor. 15:44, P. Vis. The Baptism unto the Forgiveness of Sins, M. Schipper. The Special Significance of John the Baptist, M. Gritters. Dr. Kuyper's Conception of Christ's Human Nature as General, C. Hanko.

September 1

De Psalmen, G. Vos. The "Sign of the Son of Man" in the Parousia, J. Blankespoor. The Nearness of the Parousia, B. Kok. The Meaning of the Term "Son of Man," J. De Jong. The Suffering of God in the Death of Christ, H. Veldman.

September 15

De Psalmen, G. Vos. The *Non Posse Peccare* of Christ and His Temptation, J. Heys. Idolatry and

Image Worship, P. De Boer. Christ's Forbidding to Spread His Fame, L. Doezeema. Faith as a Function, A. Petter.

The following is a schedule of Rev. Ophoff's topics:

1. Samson's Journey to Timnah. 2. The Wedding Feast and the Treachery of the Philistines. 3. Samson's Revenge on the Philistines. 4. The disloyalty of the Men of Judah. 5. Samson in Gaza. 6. Samson's Fall. 7. Samson's End. 9. The Meaning and Significance of Samson. 10. Micah's Private Sanctuary. 11. The Exploration of the Tribe of Dan. 12. The Narrative of the Infamous Deed Perpetrated at Gibeah and Its Terrible Consequences. 13. The Chronology of the Book of the Judges. 14. The Canonical Significance of the Book of the Judges. 15. The Book of Ruth. 16. Faithfulness Unto Death. 17. Sorrow and Repentance. 18. The reward of Faithfulness. 19. The Israelite Without Guile. 20. Samuel's Parents and the Childless Hannah.

Church Historical Subjects

1. Christian Worship of the Ante-Nicene Age. 2. The Development of Catholic Theology. 3. Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity. 4. The Literary Triumph of Christianity over Greek and Roman Heathenism. 5. The Roman Hierarchy. 6. Church Discipline and Schisms. 7. Public Worship. 8. Development of Ecumenical Councils. 9. The Trinitarian Controversies.

H. H.

ANNIVERSARY

Den 26 sten July 1944, herdachten onze geliefde ouders

WILLIAM KOOIENGA

en

ANNA KOOIENGA — Visser

hunne 45 jarige echtvereniging.

Wij danken den Heere voor de rijke zegeningen hen en ons in dezen geschonken. Moge Hij hen ook verder het goede doen genieten in het overige van hun levensweg.

Hunne darkbare kindren:

- Mr. and Mrs. Jake Kooienga
- Mr. and Mrs. Henry Kooienga
- Mr. and Mrs. Dick Kooienga
- Mr. and Mrs. Edward Kooienga
- Mr. and Mrs. Arie Ponstein
- Mr. and Mrs. Martin Wustman
- Mr. and Mrs. John Lanning
- Mo. M. M 3/c and Mrs. Wilbur Kooienga
- en 24 Kleinkinderen.

1513 Godfrey Ave., Grand Rapids 9, Mich.

The C.L.A. and the Strike Question

There is one more point I meant to make in regard to the position of the C.L.A. with respect to the strike.

Thus far I argued that the strike is principally wrong because it is revolutionary. It is a refusal to work for those whom we regard as our employers, and to whom, therefore, we owe obedience and subjection according to Scripture. And, secondly, I showed that the strike cannot possibly stand in the service of righteousness, because it is not duly instituted authority that settles the issue in a strike, but mere force. The strongest wins.

The point I still wish to make is that for a Christian organization the use of the strike weapon is hopeless.

The people of God are a little flock. Thus they are called in Scripture, and thus they are throughout the ages. Even what is nominally known as the Church in the world is small in comparison with the unbelieving world and the forces that openly defy God and His Christ. Much smaller still is the Church that, even in a general sense, still professes the truth of the gospel. And very little, indeed, is the number of those that belong to the true, spiritual body of Christ, the true saints in Christ Jesus. They are small in number, weak in means and power, and insignificant in their position in the world. If their cause, in any department of the life of this world, depends on numbers and the use of force, it is absolutely hopeless. Their number is smaller, and their power is inferior, according as they are more truly faithful in their profession and walk to the truth as it is in Christ.

Necessarily, this is true for any truly Christian organization.

It is true for the C.L.A.

According as the Christian Labor Alliance is faithful to the Word of God and the precepts of our Lord, it will be small in numbers and of little power.

What do they amount to, from the aspect of power and influence, in the great industrial world of today? What significance can they expect to acquire, from a worldly viewpoint, in comparison with the mighty unions of the world? It is ridiculous even to speak of the power of the C.L.A. in this sense of the word.

Hence, their use of the strike weapon is hopeless.

Do not misunderstand me. Principally, the use of the strike weapon is always hopeless. This is true, not only for the C.L.A., but also for the A.F.L. and the C.I.O. It will never help to solve any social problem. It represents the class struggle. It leads to revolution.

But I am considering the strike now merely from the viewpoint of its being a temporary means to gain one's end, as an employment of power in the mighty

industrial struggle of today, a means of the laboring man to improve his social position. From this viewpoint I consider it ridiculous for the C.L.A. to speak of the strike weapon.

If, nevertheless, the Christian Labor Alliance insists on maintaining the strike clause, the result will be inevitably an attempt on her part to become strong in numbers at the expense of principle and true spiritual power.

And thus the C.L.A. will lose its distinctive character, and, hence, its reason for existence.

It will become like the salt that has lost its savor, and that is good for the dunghill.

H. H.

Reply to Mr. J. Gritter

In answer to the article by Mr. J. Gritter in the August number of our paper, the following may suffice.

1. I wish to point out that nowhere did I make the statement that "employees, if dissatisfied, may collectively cease working." Nor would I subscribe to this statement without important qualifications. Even if a man quits his job he has certain obligations before God, both with regard to his employer and to those that are dependent on him. The fact that he is dissatisfied with his job does not justify his quitting, unless he is sure of another job. And if his quitting would seriously handicap his employer, he would certainly have to serve notice of his intention to quit some time in advance to provide opportunity to his employer to find someone in his place. And what is true of the individual laborer is true with greater emphasis of an entire union or group of workingmen. But I will not elaborate on this point, because it is not the point at issue at present. If it is only understood that I am not responsible for the unqualified statement that "employees, if dissatisfied, may collectively cease working."

2. The position of the C.L.A., so I wrote, with regard to the strike, does not differ principally from that of the worldly unions. This statement still stands after I read the article by Mr. Gritter, in spite of his attempt to prove the contrary. According to the secretary of the C.L.A., the position of the Christian Labor Alliance regarding the strike is as follows: "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."

Now, this is exactly the position of all worldly unions. They advocate the use of the strike weapon only after all peaceful attempts at settlement of the issue involved have failed. Mr. Gritters tries to point out a real difference between the C.L.A. and the worldly unions by saying that the latter "usually strike first and talk afterwards." But this is by no means the official stand of the unions as defined in their constitutions. On the contrary, they usually have a clause insisting on arbitration first and the strike as a last resort. Let me adduce a few quotations in proof of this statement.

The following is from the *Constitution and Bylaws of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Stablemen and Helpers*:

"Sec. 60. When any difficulty arises between the members of any Local Union and their employers, the members shall lay the matter before their Local Union, and, if approved by the Union, the President shall appoint a committee to wait upon the employers and endeavor to adjust the difficulty; said committee shall report to the next regular or special meeting, and the Local Union shall then take such course as is prescribed in this constitution."

Here follows a quotation from the *Constitution of the International Union, United Automobile Workers of America*:

"Sec. 3. (of Art. L3). If the Local Union involved is unable to reach an agreement with the employer without a strike, the recording Secretary of the Local Union shall prepare a full statement and history of the matters in controversy and forward the same to the General President, who shall thereupon in person or by deputy visit the Local Union where the controversy exists and investigate the controversy and if possible effect a settlement."

One more quotation from the *Book of Laws of the International Typographical Union*, Art. XXV:

"Sec. 1. In the event of a disagreement between a subordinate union and an employer, which in the opinion of the local union may result in a strike, such union shall notify the president, who shall repair in person or by proxy to the place where said union is located, investigate the cause of the disagreement and endeavor to adjust the difficulty. If his efforts should prove futile, he shall notify the Executive Council of all the cir-

cumstances, and if a majority of said council shall decide that a strike is necessary, such union may be authorized to order a strike."

Now, this is exactly the position of the C.L.A. as explained by Mr. Gritter in his article of Aug. 1. There may be practical differences in regard to the execution of a strike. Mr. Gritter writes: "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." We have no dispute with the brother about this. We were arguing, not about accompanying circumstances of the strike, but about the strike as such. And then it should be plain that there is no principal difference between the conception of the strike as offered us by Mr. Gritter and that of the worldly unions.

3. Mr. Gritter defends picketing. It stands to reason that, as I cannot agree with him about the strike, I must differ with him on the question of picketing. Condemn the strike, and the question of picketing does not arise. But I, nevertheless, wish to point out the thoroughly unchristian character of this evil, even as advocated by Mr. Gritter. He writes: "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."

Now, this is a very strange method of reasoning. Mr. Gritter takes the position really that "peaceful and truthful" picketing is Christian just because it is peaceful and truthful. In other words, just because the pickets do not use violence, and do not hit the would be "scabs" over the head with a club or stone him, picketing is the Christian way of defending righteousness.

But let us see.

The job of the picket is to put the employer in such a bad light that no one will work for him. He walks in front of a store with a double sign on his back and

stomach, proclaiming that the storekeeper is "unfair to organized labor." Or he stands at the entrance of a factory informing everybody that would seek employment there that the employer is so evil and unjust a man that no one ought to work for him, and that it is positively immoral to seek employment in his place.

On whose authority does the picket spread this evil report of the employer? Who decides that the employer is unjust in his dealings with his workingmen? The union. No one else. It is the sole judge in its own case. And who guarantees that the picket tells the truth? Perhaps, the picket himself; perhaps, the union. But is it Christian ethics to spread one's evil report behind his back and that, too, without any authority whatsoever? Is it Christian to let a man be the sole judge in his own case, and act accordingly?

Peaceful picketing to me is, at best, a method of peaceful backbiting, and probably also of peaceful slander.

And they are not Christian activities, but the very works of the devil.

H. H.

As to "Touchy Topics"

In a contribution in this number of our paper Mr. G. Ten Elshof criticizes, and rather severely and completely condemns, the decision of our last Synod to invest the ten thousand dollars that accumulated in our Mission Fund for the time being in government war bonds.

Perhaps, others, such as the mission committee, are the proper party to reply to this article. It concerns a matter of finance. And if my memory is correct (I did not take the time to look it up), the proposal to invest this sum as was decided came from them.

Nevertheless, I consider it but proper to make the following remarks in connection with the article:

1. I cannot understand why such a question as the investment of a sum of money in a certain way by our Synod should be a "touchy topic," unless those that discuss it feel touchy about it, and manifest their touchiness in the way they write about it. And I felt a degree of touchiness in the article of Mr. Ten Elshof. Why not write in a simple, matter of fact, business-like way about so simple a matter as the investment of surplus money? If Mr. Ten Elshof disagrees with Synod on this point, that certainly is his privilege. If he wants to criticize that or any other act of Synod, he has that right. But why not simply express our disagreement, state the grounds, and suggest other ways of investing our money, instead of making a "touchy

topic" of so practical and prosaic a question?

2. If I understand Mr. Ten Elshof correctly, it is his opinion that the Synod did wrong in investing the money as it did, because the government makes use of that money in a cause for which the Church cannot be responsible. I disagree with the brother. I do not believe that any individual or group of individuals is responsible for what the government does with the money of the war bonds. That would not even be true of an investment in the bank. Still less is it true of government bonds. Not the individual citizen, but the government alone is responsible for the war and its execution. There can be no wrong in buying war bonds from this viewpoint.

3. The brother suggests several other ways in which the surplus money in question might be invested or used. But the brother is mistaken. He forgets that the Synod had no authority to juggle the funds of the churches. The mission fund surplus money was given by the churches for none other purpose than that of our home missions. And no ecclesiastical gathering has the power to spend the money given for a definite purpose for any other cause than that for which it was given.

H. H.

Information About Dr. Schilder

In the "Vrije Nederlander," a paper published in London, England, appeared an article containing the information that Dr. K. Schilder had been suspended from office by the Synod of the "Gereformeerde Kerken" in the Netherlands, and that he is "momenteel ondergetoken." The last phrase means that he has for the present disappeared, joined the "underground." This seems to imply that our esteemed brother was once again in trouble with the Nazis, and that they were looking for him.

The article in the "Vrije Nederlander" was based upon a rather lengthy article in another Dutch paper, "Het Handelsblad," and which was written by one who styles himself a "Gereformeerd" minister. In the same article that Reformed minister must have rather severely criticized the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands for the fact that they continue their doctrinal battles in times like the present; and, as we understood the report of that *Handelsblad*-article in the "Vrije Nederlander," also criticized several Reformed ministers for their attitude of rebellion against the present Nazi government in the Netherlands, and their open propaganda for the Oranje government in exile.

We must remember that "Het Handelsblad" is Nazi,

However, we would like to be able to read the article itself. Perhaps, it would give us a little more light on the whole matter than the report of it in the "Vrije Nederlander." Especially would we like to know on what grounds the Synod suspended Dr. Schilder. Then, too, it would be important to know just how far the indictment against the Reformed ministers is true, that they assume an attitude of rebellion against the present Nazi government.

In the meantime we were glad to read that Dr. Schilder is still alive.

H. H.

Proposal Of Local No. 12

The business agent of Local No. 12, the same local that proposed the anti-strike overture to the last annual convention of the C.L.A., having noticed that the *Standard Bearer* took interest in the matter, was kind enough to send me a complete copy of the above mentioned overture, and we here offer it to our readers:

To the Annual Convention of the Christian Labor Association of the United States.

An overture.

The board of the Christian Building Trades Local No. 12, proposes to this convention that it shall rescind its stand in regard the strike issue.

In its official documents the C.L.A. sanctions the labor strike (see paragraph below) and we feel that this stand should be changed, for reasons further explained here-in.

(In its program of action, the C.L.A. sanctions the labor strike. (page 38 of old book)

Art. 9 of the constitution, paragraph 3 gives state boards in consultation with the national executive committee, the right to call strikes.)

Grounds,

More than anything else, the strike weapon has become the sore spot in organized labor's action. Unscrupulous usage has forced public opinion and governmental sanction to frown upon organized labor as a whole.

The government has provided through legislation for machinery to take care of labor troubles more or less adequately.

The scriptures, upon which our organization is founded, give only scant reason, and that by far stretched implication, to believe that the strike may be alright, where these same scriptures are full of admonition toward the peaceful way of life.

In the thirteen years of operation of the C.L.A.,

it has found little use for the strike weapon, outside of a 'club' over the head of those with whom we seek to deal as bargaining agent, according to the gospel of peace.

IN VIEW OF THE FACTS the board of Local No. 12 feels that the Christian Labor Association should be the *first* to abolish the strike weapon officially, and erase every vestige of its existence from its official documents, and adopt an anti-strike policy.

If we want to live out our policy of class co-operation, or rather equality, we must first gain the confidence of those with whom we deal, and we cannot expect that if we pack a horseshoe in our glove. Fair dealings must go hand in hand with a confidential approach.

We believe we can operate without it, let us now show our courage to DO it, and draw the line of distinction that much tighter.

Let's live by faith, not by might.

The same brother also writes me as follows:

"Convention procedure in this question was also contrary to parliamentary law. First the time-limit of one hour. Second, the usurpation of much of that time by the National Secretary in defense of his position, *before* Local No. 12 had had a chance to explain the proposal.

"The editor of the C.L.H. states that we were not able to defend our position. In this case he is right, only he fails to state that he had tied a rope around our neck before we had a chance.

"When we saw the hopelessness of getting anywhere on the original proposal, we tried to get something by asking for a different word for *strike* in the constitution, and this too was denied, NOT because a word is hard to find, but because the C.L.A. was not ready to dispense with the strike weapon."

Although the writer, Mr. R. Tempelman, does not state whether or not he intended this for publication, we thought there was nothing secret about the whole matter, and that it was but fair to all concerned that we made it public.

And, thanks for the information.

H. H.

NOTICE, CONSISTORIES

Classis West, of the Protestant Reformed Churches, will meet in regular session, in Edgerton, Minn., the last Wednesday of September, i.e., the 27th, at 9 A. M. Those desiring lodging will please, write Mr. Wm. Huiskens, Edgerton, Minn.

Gideon the Judge Who Refuses to be King

The war of liberation against the Midianites had been brought to completion. Great has been the achievements of Gideon's faith. "Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also." So do they offer him the supreme authority and even express a willingness to make it hereditary. This offer of the people can apparently be defended by saying that there was need of a settled government, a center of authority which would bind the tribes together and lead them in war. Actually there was this need. But it arose from the nation's unwillingness to be one by a common faith in God, from the people's indisposition to turn from their abominations and to serve the Lord and to put their confidence in Him. Had they feared God and kept His covenant, they would have enjoyed unbroken peace and prosperity. Then the Lord would have commanded the blessing upon them in the city and in the fields, in the fruit of their body and the fruit of the ground and in the fruit of their cattle. Then he would always have caused their enemies that rose up against them to be smitten before their face and to come out against them one way and to flee before them seven ways, Deut. 28:2ff. But the carnal Israel did not want these good things from the hand of God on the condition that they be His people wholly consecrated to Him. If life could be had only in the way of obedience to God, they preferred death to life. What they desired is not a king disposed to rule over them as the vicegerent of Jehovah but a king prepared to give them prosperity and victory while walking with them in their sins. What they wanted is a king other than Jehovah. The offer they made to Gideon was therefore deeply sinful. And Gideon, being a man who feared God, turned the offer down. He said to them, "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the Lord shall rule over you."

Yet there was need of a king. But, as was just said, this need arose from the unwillingness of the people to keep Jehovah's covenant. In the language of the sacred narrator, every man did that which was right in his own eyes, Judges 21:25. Thus the need did not rise from the failure of Jehovah to provide the nation with the instruments that were needed for the exercise of His rule. He was the ever present king. His dwelling was among them. They had His law. They could contact Him in every crisis through the highpriest and learn His will. He atoned their sins through His priest and chastised them through their enemies. He raised up and inspired their leaders. And when they cried to Him by reason of their enemies

He sent deliverance. Why then did they ask for a king to rule over them? Because they rejected Jehovah that He should rule over them. In saying to Gideon, "Rule thou over us," they anticipate the sinful doing of their posterity. An identical request was directed to the aged Samuel. Both requests were one as to motive. Concerning this motive we cannot be mistaken because the Lord says to Samuel, "Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee" (I Sam. 8:7, 8).

Yet the kingship in Israel as such was not a sinful institution. The Israelitish nation was a type of the kingdom of heaven. The kingship was needed to complete this type. For the kingdom of heaven, too, has its king. And its king is Christ. God therefore had determined that Israel should have a king, and determined also that eventually they should resolve to set a king over them, like as all the nations that were about them, Deut. 17:15. "When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shall possess it . . . and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me." We should notice that God does not command Israel to set a king over them. We deal here not with a divine mandate but with a prediction. The Lord tells the nation what it will do eventually. Hence, in demanding a king, the people could not say, nor did they say, that they were carrying out a divine instruction, acting under the constraint of the law. For the Lord had not commanded. The reason undoubtedly was that the instruments through which Jehovah exercised His rule were adequate without a king so that the actual need of a king necessarily had to arise from the spiritual inability of the nation to serve God and to walk in the way of His precepts without the outward constraint of a strong center of authority. Thus the request for a king could not be to the people's honor. The motive could not be otherwise than wicked.

The statement was just made that the instruments through which Jehovah exercised His rule were adequate without a king. I quote here from a former article. After the death of Joshua there subsisted in the nation a government which is indicated by the name "elders". They were not chosen by the people but were the born princes and representatives of the people. Their task was to preside and to watch over the general interests of the nation and so to continue the rule of Moses and Joshua. For settlement of matters of general concern, they congregated in the central point of the land, which, in the time of the judges, was Shechem. They formed a high council in Israel

which, in great crisis, could confer its authority on a single individual. But it was not a law-making body, for Israel's sole king and legislator was Jehovah. His laws He had already communicated to the nation through the agency of Moses, and the elders were bound to act by the existing legislation as supplemented, in all matters of public importance, by the will of God as revealed through the instrumentality of the "breastplate of Judgment" or Urim and Thummim. As this device could be directly consulted solely by the highpriest, the finally decisive word of God could be had only from this dignitary, who thus, in a sense, came to take the place of Moses in the popular assemblies of the nation.

Besides as the council of elders as headed by the highpriest, the nation had also its judges which, according to the commandment of Moses (Deut. 16:18) the people chose for themselves in all their gates throughout the tribes. If the task of the council of elders was to watch over the general interests of the nation, that of the judges was to determine, in the light of Moses' laws, questions of dispute in contests of law between individuals. This being their task, they were cautioned by Jehovah against wrestling judgment, respecting persons, and taking gifts, Deut. 16:19.

In this connection attention must also be called to the Levites and to the cities of refuge. Although this is nowhere expressly stated, it is certain that the common Levites, as assistants to the priests, were given the task of teaching the nation the law and were therefore distributed among all the tribes.

The purpose of the appointment of the cities of refuge was to prevent the shedding of innocent blood, that is, of one who had killed his brother unintentionally. Certainly, though there was no king in Israel, the nation was not without its institutions for righteous administration, maintenance of order and preservation of national unity. But order was not maintained but gave way to chaos and discord of carnal self-will, licentiousness and passion. The national bond relaxed and the nation assumed the form of several independent and even rival little kingdoms. It was from this state of affairs and not from the lack of adequate government that the need of a king arose. It was on account of the prevalence of these conditions that the carnal Israel wanted a king to rule over the nation. But it must not be supposed that what they actually desired was a king to compel them by outward constraint to fear and serve God. What they desired is a strong and capable man at the head of the nation to free them from the results of their apostacy—which was war and oppression, chaos and passion—a man able to bring order out of chaos but at once willing to serve with them in Baal's temple. They wanted, as does the godless world of this day and

age, victory, freedom, and prosperity but not God. truth, righteousness. They wanted these things but not in the way of a heartfelt repentance of their sin and in the way of return to God. They wanted a man to realize for them a heaven on earth but a heaven without God in it. This comes out so plainly in the sequence of the narrative. They did not want the kind of a king that God said they should set over them one "whom the Lord thy God shall choose," one who "when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom . . . shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites," that it may be "with him," and that he may "read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and those statutes, to do them: that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel" (Deut. 17: 15ff). Eventually the people got their way or rather the Lord got His way. He had purposed that they should have a king. The purpose was achieved through their sinful desire and request for a king according to their heart.

It may seem strange, at first, that the people should propose to Gideon that he rule over them, he being a man who feared God. But he had gained a victory without parallel. A glory surrounds him in their eyes such as had distinguished no one else in the memory of man. He had put to shame the vain-glory of Ephraim. All that they had done was to track down a crowd of terrified heathen whose only thought was one of escape. But Gideon had finished the war with his 300 heroes. He had captured and destroyed not princes merely, as they had done, but the kings themselves. That was an accomplishment of greatest consequence. Bold and confident and full of energy in his faith in God, he even had followed the Midianites into their hiding place, where the terrified host had surrendered. Who but Gideon had dared to enter the terrible strongholds of those pagan hordes, there to seize his prey? That was an exploit of an astounding character. Then there was the imposing assurance, wisdom, moderation and strength of the man. How admirable the discreteness of his answer to Ephraim! Of what wonderful self-control had he shown himself capable in his dealing with those proud men! How startling the punishment of Succoth and Penuel, and the terrible retribution meted out to the kings! Indeed he was not a man to be trifled with. The people concluded that he would make them a wonderful king. So they came from far and near to see the hero. And they urgently pressed him and said, "Rule over us . . ." for they were dazzled by the accomplishments of the man. With him at the helm of the

state, their country would be safe. So they reasoned. For he was now their god. In him did they put their confidence. In him did they glory. He would save. "For thou," they said to him, "hast delivered us from the hand of Midian." He was the best ruler that could be found. And they looked no farther than the man. By his wisdom and by his power the victory had been won. It was thus not a victory granted them by Jehovah in response to and through the working of his faith. They doubtless valued his faith as do the modernists of this day and age value a man's faith in God and for the same reason, namely that faith is a power in man that drives him on to the performance of great deeds, qualifies him for big things. And in their present plight they needed such a man. He could be of great use to them,—a man the noblest in character, the most prompt and yet efficient in word and deed, formed for rule and yet without lust for rule. True, he was a righteous man who feared God and who yielded to the duties of true religion, but they could overlook that in him as long as he did not mix too much his religion and the business of caring for and managing their temporal affairs. And they would take care of that. Even his religious zeal, if directed in the right channels, could stand him in good stead as their ruler. Did not their posterity and spiritual kin offer the kingship to Christ—to Christ of all men!—and for essentially the same reason. He had shown them what He could do with a few crusts of bread—feed a vast multitude! And when they said among themselves, "That man shall be our king," they were seeking Him for that bread, for the mighty earthly advantages that would be theirs, were He their king. As the Israel of Christ's day, so, too, the Israel with which Gideon has to deal. It was spiritually blind. Thus it failed to discern spiritually the speech of God that rose from Gideon's military successes. The lesson of that victory was lost upon them. They saw but did not perceive. They heard but did not understand. That is indeed the meaning of their offering to him the kingship.

But Gideon stands firm. "I will not rule over you . . . The Lord shall rule over you." Yet he did a peculiar thing. He said to them, "I would desire a request of you, that ye would give me every man the earrings of his prey. . . And they answered, We will willingly give them. And they spread a garment, and did cast therein every man the earrings of his prey. . . And Gideon made an ephod thereof, and put it in his city, even in Ophrah. . ."

What was this ephod? Not, certainly, an idol, as some interpreters have conjectured. The ephod was one of the sacred garments of the highpriest. It was a vestment made "of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen," affixed to two shoulder pieces and a skillfully woven band which served as a girdle

for the ephod. The shoulder pieces displayed two onyx stones on which were engraved the names of the twelve tribes. Attached to the ephod by chains of gold was a breastplate that contained twelve precious stones in four rows again symbolizing the twelve tribes. In, next to, or in the breastplate were two other articles, not specifically described, but called Urim and Thummim, or breastplate of judgment. Through their use God's will was sought and obtained in national crises, the future revealed, and guilt or innocence established. But ephods were worn by persons other than the highpriest. The boy Samuel was dressed in an ephod as an attendant in the sanctuary. The description of the priests of Nob is that of men wearing a linen ephod. The ephod was worn by David when he danced in the procession that brought the ark to Jerusalem. But the ephod worn by the highpriest was of special design. In distinction from the ephod worn by the common priests and by the king on solemn and festive occasions, it must have been a rich and elaborate garment that included the *Breastplate of judgment*.

What now was the design of the ephod that Gideon made and put in his city? Doubtless it was not made after the pattern of the ephod worn by the highpriest. But the form of the words of the sacred text does not make it plain just what Gideon's ephod was, whether a garment or an instrument similar to the Breastplate of judgment or both. In all likelihood the latter. For we read, "And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested was a thousand and seven hundred shekels of gold; beside ornaments, and collars, and purple raiment. . . that was on the kings of Midian, and beside the chains that were about their camels' necks. And Gideon made an ephod thereof." Thus into the making of this ephod went purple raiment and gold. But no mention is made of precious stones. On the other hand, the language of the notice to the effect that Gideon "put it in his city. . . and all Israel went hither a whoring after it," seems to suggest that it was not a garment but some other rich and costly thing similar to the breastplate of judgment, thus a thing through which the divine will was to be learned. For it is not stated that the thing was to be worn nor that it was actually worn by any one. All that the text tells us is that Gideon put it in his city. But whatever this object may have been, Gideon's purpose in making it was to put it to some good and proper use. Doubtless it was to serve him as an instrument for learning God's will for the people. His doing was in perfect agreement with his stand that Jehovah was their king. He would judge them, certainly, but only as the vicerent of God. Thus it would seem that, having refused the hereditary kingship, Gideon set himself up as a kind of highpriest in the midst of his brethren with Ophrah Manasseh, his

own home city, as his religious headquarters. Did he do right? There is this to say in explanation of his deed. At the command of God, Gideon had already performed priestly functions. After throwing down Baal's altar, he had built up on its ruins the altar of Jehovah and had offered on it accepted sacrifice. It seems that Shiloh had already been deserted and that the high priest had been set aside, so that at the time the nation was without a religious center. Thus it would seem that the Levitical highpriest had suffered a temporary eclipse and that the sacrifices at a central sanctuary had ceased. So the Lord now chose—such seems to have been the conviction of Gideon—to dwell at Ophrah with Gideon as His chief representative in the capacity of priest. Certainly there was need of such a priest. Whether Gideon did well, the sacred narrator does not definitely tell us. But he does seem to suggest that the Lord frowned upon Gideon's doing. He reveals that Israel went thither—went to Ophrah—a whoring after Gideon's ephod: "which thing became a snare unto Gideon and to his house. The people of Israel went in crowds to Ophrah to see that thing that Gideon had made and set up even in his own house. They came, not because they were actually interested in God's will and bent in placing themselves under its direction, but to pay homage to that Ephod in Gideon's house. For they were now putting their confidence in Gideon, not in the Lord. The ephod, therefore, being a thing that Gideon, their hero and god had made and set up in his very house, also became to them an object of worship. It became to them the symbol of Gideon's presence and stood for all that Gideon had come to mean to them. They thought that by honoring and worshipping that Ephod it would somehow go well with them for Gideon's sake. So had Gideon, in making his ephod, supplied the people, unintentionally of course, with another idol. Thus the spiritual strength of the nation as a whole was not strengthened but weakened by Gideon's doing. But the fault lay with the people. They had turned faith into superstition. It is therefore a question whether in revealing to us this vile doing of the people and the fact that the thing became a snare unto Gideon himself and his house, the Lord means to tell us that he disapproved of Gideon's doing and that the thing's becoming a snare to him was his punishment. It would seem so. That ephod apparently helped him to retain the leadership of Israel under the supremacy of Jehovah; but by it he disregarded the lawful priesthood. But still there is the case of Samuel. Samuel offered sacrifices and mediated as judge between God and His people. Yet Samuel was not a Levite but an Ephraimite. It can no more be said of Gideon than of Samuel that he set aside the high priest. For during his judgeship as well as during the judgeship of the high priest was not function-

ing, had suffered, together with the symbolical worship at the sanctuary, an eclipse.

But wrong or right, the thing did become a snare unto Gideon. Just what became a snare unto Gideon and in what respect, we shall see in the next article.

That the people went awhoring after Gideon's ephod, proves conclusively that what they had their heart set on when they offered to Gideon the kingship is not a man who would rule them *under* the supremacy of Jehovah but an idol, a god other than Jehovah.

G. M. O.

De Vreeselijke Strijder

(Psalm 76)

Men zegt, dat deze psalm bij den vorigen behoort; men wil, dat in Psalm 75 de overwinning op den vijand geprofeteerd is en hier in Psalm 76 vervuld. Ook, dat de vijand de Assyriër is, die in één nacht 185,000 krijgslieden verloor door de sterke hand van één Engel Gods.

t' Kan best waar zijn. Evenwel is het niet dan een gissing, een onderstelling welke nooit inhoud kan zijn van ons geloof.

Bovendien, de psalm heeft een breedere toepassing. Het is de overwinnende God die Zijn vijanden verplettert alle eeuwen en ten finale in den oordeelsdag. Dan zullen ze tot in alle eeuwigheid hunne handen niet meer vinden. Vers. 6.

Een lied van Asaf, of voor Asaf.

Die Asaf mag benijd; men mag op hem jaloersch zijn. Stelt U voor: hij zong en leerde dit lied als de eerste. Hij heeft gezongen van God uit den treure. En de zang, op aarde begonnen waar zijn stem vaak stokte, is overgegaan in hemelsch zingen. Asaf is nu in den hemel. Doch wij zingen zijn liederen na.

God is bekend in Juda, zijn naam is groot in Israel.

Het maakt nog wel verschil of men God kent of dat men met Hem bekend is. Romeinen 1 vertelt ons, dat de heidenen God kennen, want al hetgeen van God kennelijk is in hen openbaar is, want God heeft het hen geopenbaard. Ook zegt de Heilige Schrift daar, dat die kennis Gods de onzienlijke dingen van God inhoud, namelijk, zijn kracht en Goddelijkheid.

Hier is het iets anders. Hier is het met God bekend zijn.

Daar zit liefde in.

Gods Naam is groot in Israel. Dat wil zeggen, dat de Heere Zich veel meer geopenbaard heeft in Israel dan in het heidendom.

Eigenlijk is het Jezus Christus, de Heere. Want de

naam Gods is nooit schooner geopenbaard dan in dien Zoon des welbehagens.

Ge zult dan tot mij zeggen: Hoe kan den naam van Jezus Christus in die dagen gezien en bekend worden?

Die naam van Jezus werd gezien in het bloed der offerenden, in land en volk, in priester en offerande. De geheele bediening van het Oude Testament openbaarde aan Israel den lieflijksten naam van God.

Vraagt het Paulus en hij zal het U zeggen. In I Cor. 10 zegt hij zonder het te verklaren: want zij dronken uit de geestelijke steenrots die volgde, en de steenrots was Christus. Ook zegt hij in hetzelfde hoofdstuk: En laat ons Christus niet verzoeken, gelijk ook sommigen van hen verzocht hebben. . . .

De Naam van God is Christus Jezus den Heere.

En die naam is bekend in Juda. (Zou de naam Juda hier een woordspeling zijn op het bekend zijn met Gods Naam? Juda is loven van God.)

Het beteekent dat men in Juda in aanraking gekomen is met dien naam. Men heeft daar den zaligenden invloed ervaren van dien naam. In Israel is die naam zeer groot. Dat zal verder verklaard worden in den psalm.

In Salem is Zijn hut en Zijn woning is in Sion.

De twee leden van dit vers beteekenen hetzelfde. Beide zien op het wonen van God in den Tempel te Jeruzalem.

God woonde daar want Hij voelde er thuis. Daar had Hij verzoening teweeggebracht door het Bloed. O ja, het was nog slechts in de bediening der schaduw, doch de vervulling moet komen, want God had het keer op keer beloofd. Hij woont te Jeruzalem, want Hij heeft Juda en Israel verlost met een Goddelijke verlossing.

Die verlossing zal voorts beschreven worden. Het volgende vers begint er van te gewagen.

Aldaar heeft Hij verbroken de vurige pijlen van den boog, het schild en het zwaard en den krijg. Sela.

Ge merkt wel, dat de verlossing hier als een feit gekonstateerd wordt. En dat is korrekt. Evenwel, moeten we letten op twee dingen. Eerst, dat de verlossing die toen ten tijde in Jeruzalem geschied was slechts een schaduwwele verlossing is onder een schaduwwele Verlosser, zooals David of Salomo. En, tweedens, dat daarom dit vers ook nog profetie is, die vervuld zou worden in de toekomst. Vandaag is het vervuld en zien we zelfs terug op de verlossing. Het is geschied op Golgotha. Daar heeft God verbroken de vurige pijlen en het zwaard en het schild en den krijg. Dat deed hij in de kruisiging van Jezus Christus. Die kruisiging is de veroordeeling van de wereld. Dat is nog wel niet geopenbaard, doch het is toch alreede beslist. Alle mogendheden en krachten en heerschappijen heeft God toen en aldaar naakt uitgetrokken en openlijk te schande gemaakt. Dat zult ge opmerken als ge gedenkt wie daar hangt te brullen aan het

kruis. Dat is het lieflijkste wat God ooit van Zich liet zien. Welnu, van dat lieflijkste zeide de gansche wereld en alle duivelen: Als we het koopen moeten geven we er 30 zilverlingen voor en als we het dan in handen krijgen achten wij het waardig om verworpen, gekruisigd, gesmaad en bespuwd te worden.

Toen verbroken de vurige pijlen van den boog Satans, alsook het zwaard en het schild van de machten der boosheid en den krijg. Tot in alle eeuwigheid zal het steeds geschreeuwd worden in de hel: Van Golgotha begon de nederlaag! En al wat men verder hoorde daar is de akelige echo van 't weenen.

Hoe zou het ook anders kunnen. Asaf zingt ervan. God is doorluchtiger en heerlijker dan de roofbergen.

Wat een kwalificatie van de goddelooze wereld: roofbergen! Denkt, b.v., aan Psalm 68:17.

Roofbergen, dat is de naam van de goddelooze wereld. Geeft de wereld kracht en macht en gelegenheid en ze gaan aan 't rooven.

Eerst rooven ze van God, want alles is van God. Dat is de origineele overtreding. Als God zijn. Hoovaardij en trotschheid.

En voorts van elkander. Hoe meer men de geschiedenis der aarde en der volken bestudeert hoe meer men zal zien, dat *roofbergen* een juiste naam is voor de wereld. Als schimmen zien we Nimrod, de Babelstad, Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon, Hitler. Het is alles rooven, rooven, rooven! En wat waar is van die ik opnoemde bij uitstek is waar van allen. Als sommigen niet zooveel hadden. Maar ge moogt gerust het lijstje langer maken en spreken van Nederland Engeland en Amerika. Nederland stal het schoone Insulinde, Engeland stal de halve wereld en de United States stal van Mexico en anderen.

Roofbergen! En van kind tot kind wordt het bestendigd. Men roemt van die godvruchtige Koningin Wilhelmina. 't Kan best waar zijn, doch ik versta dan niet, dat ze met alle geweld de roof van Insulinde bestendigen wil en rijk worden van de Shell Oil die er gevonden werd.

Maar 't zal verkeeren.

De stouthartigen zijn beroofd geworden, zij hebben hunne slaap gesluimerd; en geen van de dapere mannen hebben hunne handen gevonden.

Om te kunnen rooven moet men een stout hart hebben. 't Valt niet mee om te zondigen voor het aangezicht Gods en voor 't aangezicht van een mensch. Dan moet men een hart hebben dat hard is en zeer boos. Daar heeft men een hoerenvoorhoofd en weigert beschaamd te worden.

Doch ze zijn beroofd. God doet het. Hij scheurt het slachtoffer uit hunne rookflauwen. Al zullen de Javanen ook verloren gaan, zij zullen in het gericht opstaan tegen de Hollanders, omdat zij hen geroofd hebben. Het zweet en het bloed der Indianen in the United States schreeuwen tot God.

Doch de diepste roof is de roof van 's Heeren deugden, de verkrachting van alle recht en billijkheid.

Straks gaat God het zoeken en vinden. Hier wordt er van geprofeteerd.

En dan zullen ze hunne hand niet kunnen vinden. Zoolang God zweeg (en dat is nu al voor 6000 jaren) waren hunne handen vlug tot het rooven. Denkt hier aan de handen van Judas die 30 zilverlingen omknellen, de handen van Soldaten die de spijkers slaan in 't kruishout, de handen van de overpriesters en leiders van Israel die ze opheffen voor Pilatus, al roepende: Zijn bloed over ons en over onze kinderen! Denkt aan de handen van millioenen menschen voor 6000 jaren. Wat al bezigheid van rooven, steelen, vernielen!

Doch als God opstaat in den krijg dan zullen zij hunne handen niet kunnen vinden. De krijgers hebben slechts één potentia: te lijden van Gods schelden. Van Uw schelden, o God Jakobs! is te zamen wagen en paard in slaap gezonken.

Stelt U voor wat dat zeggen wil in den dag der dagen. Als alle roovers voor God verschijnen. Gij zult hen daar ge in glans verschijnt, als rook en damp die ras verdwijnt, verdrijven en doen dolen! Een slaap die eeuwig duurt. O, ze zullen wel bewust zijn! Er staat hier van sluimeren en van in slaap gezonken zijn. Maar dat ziet op de geheele onmacht der roovers. Ze zullen opgehouden hebben van stelen.

God is een vreeselijke Strijder! Zijn oordeel kan niet dan vreeselijk wezen. Als het aangezicht van God ten oordeel verschijnt aan alle roofbergen, dan zal er niemand kunnen bestaan. Dan zullen ze versmelten en vergaan tot in alle eeuwigheid.

De aarde vreesde en werd stil.

Tot nu toe is de aarde een tooneel van rumoer en het rauwe gekrijt van rebellie tegen God en mensch. Doch, zooals vers 8 ons leert, van den tijd Uws toorns af, zal het stille worden, angstig stil op aarde: God kwam ten oordeel. En alle mond wordt gesloten en het geheele menschedom is stil. Er is slechts een die spreekt, roept, brult, en die Eene is God.

Doch dan worden de zachtmoedigen der aarde verlost.

Zachtmoedigheid is de kracht om te kunnen lijden om Gods wil.

Die kracht wordt gevonden in Jezus Christus alleen.

Dat heeft Hij bewezen. Hij heeft geleden om Gods wil. Allen waren tegen Hem. De wereld haatte Hem; de duivelen waren Hem tegen; en de DrieEenige goot Zijn toorn over Hem uit. Hij ging alleen naar de diepste diepten der hel.

En dat heeft Hij gedaan om Godswil.

Doch de Zachtmoedige is verlost geworden. Dat heeft de wereld niet gezien. Dat zien ze pas op den oordeelsdag. Doch wij zien het door 't geloof. We gelooven Gods Woord dat vast is: en dat Woord spreekt

van de opstanding van Jezus en dat is de verlossing van den Zachtmoedige.

En zoo komen we bij U.

Ja, ik weet wel, dat het meervoud gebruikt wordt en dat deze psalm spreekt van zachtmoedigen. Doch denkt er aan, Uwe zachtmoedigheid is van Jezus. Het is de gave Zijner genade. Als gij lijdt om Gods wil, past het U om te zeggen: Ik ben zachtmoedig, doch niet meer ik, Jezus Christus is zachtmoedig in mij door Zijn Heilige Geest die mij is gegeven. Dan loopt het ios.

En zoo maakt de grimmigheid des menschen den Heere loffelijk.

Verstaat ge dat niet? Kunt ge het niet zien hoe de grimmigheid der menschen den Heere Loffelijk kan maken?

Komt, laat ons het duidelijkste voorbeeld uit den Bijbel nemen. Als Judas Jezus verkoopt en de haat der Schriftgeleerden en Overpriesters Jezus aan het kruis nagelen, is dat niet tot verhooging van Gods deugden? Hoe zult ge straks zingen: Gij hebt ons Gode gekocht met Uw bloed, als er geen Judas is en een soldaat die Hem aan het kruis hecht?

En zoo moet de toorn van menschen des Heeren lof verkonden! Wondere wijsheid van God!

En het overige van den toorn zal de Heere opbinden, omgorden, en gebruiken tot uitvoering van Zijn raad. Machteloos, geheel machteloos is de mensch in Gods handen.

Er blijft voorts slechts één ding over voor U om te doen, mijn broeder, en dat is ons opgeteekend in het laatste gedeelte van dezen psalm. Ge moet Uwe geloften maken voor God en ze ook betalen.

Dat beteekent dat ge den Heere moet prijzen. Ge moet geduriglijk zeggen: Gij, o mijn God zijt groot ea zeer te prijzen in Sion, de aanspraakplaats Uwer heerlijkheid.

Dat is het begin des hemels.

G. V.

IN MEMORIAM

The English Men's Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church mourns the loss of one of its very faithful members

FRED W. PIPE

The Society extends its heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved family and relatives. May the Lord comfort them in the knowledge that God has wiped all tears from his eyes and is rejoicing before Gods throne of Grace.

O. Van Ellen, Pres.

O. Vander Woude, Ass't. Sec'y.

The History of Christian Education In This Country

On the map one can almost trace the course of the White Horse of the Gospel, as it traversed Asia and Europe and then came to this country of ours. It travelled ever westward. In due time the Lord also brought the Gospel to these shores. And, as a necessary counterpart, there came also Christian Instruction. History proves that with the one belongs the other.

This article intends to review some of that history. There was a development of christian instruction also in Romish and Lutheran circles, but this article will confine itself mostly to the development of it within the nearer circle of our Reformed churches. To bring a little system into the historical facts we thought it best to divide the matter roughly, into two periods, the first period from 1628 to about 1857 and the second period from 1857 to our present day. The first period we will treat in this article.

Period 1628 to 1857

You will recall that the years 1607, 1620 and 1628 were the years in which the pioneers came to this country, in fact between the years 1628 and 1640 about twenty thousand Puritans migrated to these shores, seeking to carve out for themselves homes in this new country. Speaking generally we may say that these pioneers carried with them certain religious convictions. This was true especially of the Puritans. I will not at all deny that many, maybe the majority, of them came here for commercial reasons and some maybe came for reasons of baser sorts, but be that as it may I am convinced that the Puritans in general did have certain, definite religious convictions and that many of these convictions they borrowed from the Reformation. Although their creeds were harsh, extreme often and terroristic, in principle they believed in such doctrines as: election, regeneration, salvation only by faith and the final judgment. The Puritans also insisted that their children should be acquainted with the Shorter Catechism, which begins this way:

Ques: What is the chief end of man?

Ans; Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.

Their Creeds proved that they had been touched by the Reformation and one frequently hears the voice of Calvin or Luther in their essays.

It was one point however that these early Fathers showed kinship with the Reformation and that was, their extreme, almost super-extreme respect for the Infallible Word of God. Their faith in and respect

for the Word of God controlled them also in the matter of the education of their children. In England already they were committed to having, "Within every towne free shoole for the godly educacion of children in the knowledge and feare of God" (History of Modern Education, Parker, p. 56). They carried that determination with them across the Ocean. In fact, besides the political and economical motives, the Puritans were moved by the urge to keep and develop religious freedom, for themselves and also for their children. It is evident therefore that the early settlers insisted on basing the education of their children upon the Word of God.

Therefore we find that the Puritans from the very beginning insisted that their children should be instructed in the Word of God, in fact all education was made subservient thereto. I know they defaulted in this that they made of education a course in theology (thus confusing church and school), but we must endure these things when we stand at the beginning of such momentous matters as christian education. To the Puritans art, science and literature was simply out of the devil. The only thing that counted was an education permeated with religion. And we cannot but appreciate such an determination.

A quick glance at the education of those days will convince us that they meant to keep education on a strictly religious basis. The Massachusetts Law of 1647 read, in part, as follows: "It being the chief point of the old deluder, Satan, to keep men from the knowledge of the Scriptures . . . it is therefore ordered that every township . . . shall set up a grammar school". For the Puritan therefore education was the handmaid to theology. Religion also permeated the text books. Consider for instance their Boston Primer it taught the children the alphabet and proceeded as follows; "A. . . In Adam's fall we sinned all" and "Z. . . Zaccheus he did climb a tree, his Lord to see". Their text books contained prayers, short sermons, the Creed, Lord's prayer and the Decalogue. One of their readers was, "The Day of Doom", which contained one stanza reading as follows:

"You sinners are, and such a share,
As sinners may expect,
Such you shall have; for I do save
None but my own elect". . . .

Children had to learn all this and besides that they ought to learn a trade. But the chief thing was: the knowledge of God. In fact Parker says, "The Catechisms were considered the most important part of the Primers" (Page 77).

Thus it went on for some years. But, as one might expect, there came a violent re-action to their "narrow and bigoted view of education". Part of this re-action was wholesome since education had to

be more than a course in theology; part of it was unwholesome, because men began to shift the purpose and aim of education away from the Creator to the creature. Instead of the Creator being and remaining the center of all things, men began to put the creature in the center. Education gradually moved away from the theocentric to the anthropocentric. Men began to worship the creature more than the Creator Who is blessed forever; not God but man became the chief end, not the heavenly but the earthy, not the wisdom of God, but the wisdom of man became the propelling factor.

Especially in the early part of the eighteenth century there flowed into this country two streams of error. One of these was the wicked philosophy of such men as Rosseau, Voltaire, Locke and others who called themselves champions of the French Enlightenment. Rosseau in his then famous book, "Emile" wrote saying that his "Emile will know nothing . . . of God" that is when his dream-child would be fifteen years old Emile would still be ignorant of God (History of Education, Seely, page 251). Their motto was "Man is by nature good" or again, "man shall govern himself" (Lock's thesis). Their principle in short was that self enjoyment was the highest good and education had to help them to reach it. The "Back to nature", war-cry of the French Revolution, actually became the basis of a new system of education. The Word of God was dethroned and the goddess of Reason was enthroned. The creature above the Creator. This type of education found its ways to the shores of this country and became partly a model for the American system of Public Education.

The other stream of error which found its way down the slopes of the early American school history was the Prussian Centralization. Under the influence of Rosseau a certain Basedow commenced a system of education in Germany which did two things: (1) It made a public system of education that would be non-sectarian, and (2) it brought all education under the control of a National Council of Education. The State began to control and dictate education. That is what is meant by Prussian Centralization. Everything became centralized around the State. And, as Parker says, "The Prussian schools (volksschulen) served as a model for the American systems" (page 224). Secularization was achieved, so they thought, without eliminating religion entirely, for the German schools did not want to go to the limit of the French revolutionists. They would still leave room for religion. There would be Bible stories. Christ might be discussed, at least as to His "character" and He might be held before the children as the "ideal man". But doctrines and creeds were eliminated so as to make the instruction public, acceptable to infidel and believer alike. This was the model of Public School education. Such men as Froe-

bel, Horace Mann and Pestalozzi dashed from Europe to America, crying "Eureka, eureka" this was what America needed.

That was the Public School system.

In 1842 there was adopted this resolution, "No portion of the School funds shall be given to any school in which any religious sectarian doctrines or tenet shall be taught, inculcated or practised". And in 1847 it was Mr. Hodge who in America raised his voice and said, "The whole tendency of the instruction on this Plan (Pub. Sch. System) is not neutral but anti-religious" (Year Book, Chr. Schools, 1936, p. 66).

If there were any Puritans left, it was evident that in the public schools of America their children could no longer receive an instruction which was God-centered.

And it was that corrupted type of education which the Pioneers of the 1840-1850 era found when they arrived on these shores. But we shall treat that in another article.

M. G.

Touchy Topics

There are matters which we classify as touchy topics. They are matters which are subjects of debate and argument. If we would be known as being tactful and polite, we make it a point not to discuss such matters before certain people or groups of people because they have a tendency to cause an explosion and hard and bitter feelings and even sever friendships. Think for instance of life insurance, union membership, theological points of dispute, etc.

And so also the topic which we wish to discuss for a few moments could be classified as a touchy topic. It was incited by our Synodical Report where, among other things, we read that the sum of \$10,000 of surplus denominational money has been invested in government bonds. Carefully we read that minute again and when later we read it in another church paper of our denomination, we reluctantly came to the conclusion that it must be true.

Perhaps, you ask, is that so strange? And we reply, no indeed for other denominations, including those closest to us, have been doing that same thing for some time. Not only denominations but also individual churches which have profited financially from the activities of our international slaughter house.

Our first reaction, of course, after all these materially lean years, is to remark, "Well, well, that surely is nice that we have a little extra money. It seems

we've always been so poor and had to have special collections for this and pledges for that and now at last we have the tidy sum of \$10,000 to invest!"

And we would not wish to infer that those responsible for this decision nor that those who first proposed it, were not capable, conscientious, far-sighted individuals. Men of sound judgment and a high degree of sagacity. No doubt they were not so naive that they would not view such an action from all angles as well as its implications both now and in the years to come. For it is our belief that this decision has set a precedent and time alone will tell what its repercussions may be.

We would be the last to infer that this august body which we call Synod, would for one moment be influenced by the propaganda which is poured out over the air waves and voluminously rolled out of our printing presses. Such slogans as "Back the Attack" and "Give more than Before" and coarser ones such as "Slap the Jap in the Yap" would have absolutely no determining effect on their deliberations. It is our belief, and we hope to write about it sometime, that Christians are the only "smart" people in the world. Men possessing wisdom which is not of this world and which the world cannot understand will not easily be led to believe that the more bonds we buy, the shorter will be the war, and the more certain will the victory be for our side! Oh no, you can't fool a people that easily. Not that people who sing "Not to the strong is the battle; nor to the swift is the race. But to the true and the faithful—Victory is promised through grace!"

No doubt, too, but that the representatives of our denominations are men who are well acquainted with the waste and inefficiency as well as corruption which shields itself so adroitly behind the alibi—"But it's for defense!" They too must be aware of the thousands of people employed in ordnance work alone and whose chief activity seems to be the winding of red tape around as many things as come through their hands. They must have known that there are approximately 3,500 such people employed in the Detroit Ordnance Office alone. There are seventy two in the plant where the undersigned is employed. And it is perhaps best to quietly pass by their qualifications for the positions which they hold as well as the manner in which they spend their time. For we are eye-witnesses to it daily. Is it perhaps for these that we invest our surplus funds?

We don't actually believe, do we, that money will ever be the determining factor and that without it our boys will not have ships, planes and guns?

Let's not get so pious about the matter that we call this a righteous or holy war and that the fate of civilization or Christianity hangs in the balance! Maybe they could fool us twenty-five years ago and cry that

we had to make the world safe for democracy. They can't trip up this generation on that one. Now it's called the war of survival.

And so we wonder why we have made a monetary investment in that by which the world destroys itself. Taxes we must pay, our sons are drafted—but not our daughters—but we are not compelled to invest our church money in such a strange manner.

And, so it seems, there is but one other answer. And that is that we have no other place for it and it gives us a fair return on our investment. Is it possible that nothing less secular needs our aid? Are all our churches debt-free? Do we need no more for Christian School? Has our radio program been extended to the limit of its desirability? Are all our Church Periodicals on a sound financial basis? Have we considered the possibility that acts of mercy and institutions of mercy may need more hard cash after the war? Or would it not be possible to have a fund for those who actually suffer for the testimony of Christ and who for greater or lesser periods are hindered from earning their livelihood because of ungodly organizations?

We are well aware, of course, that there are some who will say, "Oh yes, but we can cash them in at any time after sixty days." But that is not the intention of our government and we do not believe it would be proper to invest it with such a thought in mind. You are expected to retain them until their maturity and not expected to cash them in anymore than a newlywed couple could say, "Oh well, if we can't make a go of it, we can always get a divorce!"

Mr. G. Ten Elshof.

ANNIVERSARY

On August 14, 1944, our beloved parents,

PETER ALPHENAAR

and

JOHANNA ALPHENAAR (Meert)

celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary. We extend to them our most hearty and sincere congratulations. We thank God that He has spared them for each other and for us and pray that we may have many more years together.

Their grateful children:

Mr. and Mrs. Dale Lemmer

Anne Alphenaar

Henrietta Alphenaar

Geraldine Alphenaar

Nellie Alphenaar

Carol Joan Alphenaar

Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Debate

Resolved That Discipline Of Members That Belong To Worldly Organizations Should Be Left To The Ministry Of The Word.

NEGATIVE-REBUTTAL:

In refuting the affirmative stand as set forth by my opponent, the Reverend J. Heys, the undersigned must remark at the very outset that there is much in his article with which he is in agreement. We, too, believe that the Ministry of the Word is very really discipline and that this first Key of the Kingdom of Heaven is the chief means of Christian Discipline. The rebuttal of the undersigned must therefore be directed primarily against the conclusion of the article of the affirmative which sets forth suggested reasons for leaving the discipline of those that belong to worldly organizations to the Ministry of the Word.

Without in any way feeling the need of disputing the contention that the Ministry of the Word is the chief means of Christian Discipline, the undersigned does desire to make a few remarks in connection with his opponent's remarks to the effect that the Ministry of the Word is very really discipline. I, too, believe, with my opponent, that "Christian discipline is, then, that art of practice of training God's children to walk as disciples of Christ." But my opponent continues then and writes: "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." Does my opponent wish to imply that discipline does not include punishment, but only instruction? Does the discipline of a child by his father not sometimes also include the use of the rod? Am I, then, not "training" my child when I inflict physical punishment? We understand that the Church, applying excommunication, does not inflict *her* punishment upon wayward members. When the Church applies the second step of Christian Discipline she carries out and executes *God's* judgment upon them. This my opponent himself declares when he writes: "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 the Kingdom of Heaven and therefore *in the sphere of God's wrath and punishment*"—the underscoring is of the undersigned. I am, therefore, somewhat at a loss to explain my opponent's emphasis upon the "training" or instructive aspect of Christian Discipline. In this debate, it seems to the undersigned, the emphasis falls upon its punitive aspect.

To be sure, the Ministry of the Word is very really discipline. It is this because God speaks His own

Word, also in the consciousness of the unbeliever, and therefore very really places that sinner, in his consciousness, outside the Kingdom of Heaven. Pure preaching of the Word will therefore render it quite impossible for many sinners to remain, even nominally, in the bosom of a certain church.

The undersigned had expected that his opponent, to show that the discipline of members belonging to worldly organizations should be left to the Ministry of the Word, would have advanced an argument to the effect that such membership, although to be condemned as sinful, is nevertheless not of such a nature that it demands excommunication. He advances three reasons in support of his affirmative stand. They are:

- 1—The Ministry of the Word is very well capable of handling the situation and is not in need of a supplementary means of discipline.
- 2—We should 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.
- 3—Sound preaching of the Word will compel unworthy participants to refrain from partaking of the sacraments. This reason may be considered identical with the first.
- 4—Leaving the discipline of members of worldly organizations to the Ministry of the Word is more profitable for all those concerned.

Firstly, then, we refute the assertion 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. On the one hand it may be declared that, upon the basis of this contention, the exercise of discipline to the extent of excommunication will never be necessary or required. This reason simply dispenses with the second key of Christian Discipline. The contention is that the preaching of the Word is very well able to handle the situation. This is a direct denial of the Scriptural command to use the second key of Christian Discipline. For, on the other hand, although it is true that the Ministry of the Word itself leaves no doubt as to the question whether one belongs or does not belong to the Kingdom of Heaven and certainly makes this clear in the consciousness of the individual involved, it is a fact that the mere preaching of the Word does not rid the Church entirely of erring and sinning members. There are always those present who will continue, boldly and insolently, as members of the Church if nothing else is done besides the admonition in the preaching of the Word. History abundantly proves that this is true. And Scripture verifies this when it repeatedly exhorts the Church of God to cast out from her midst those who conduct themselves unbecomingly in walk and in doctrine. In this connection and upon the same

ground we may also dispose of the third reason of my opponent when he declares that sound preaching of the Word will compel unworthy participants to refrain from partaking of the sacraments. Question and Answer 85 of our Heidelberg Catechism expressly speaks of those who despise the admonition and are forbidden the use of the sacraments. And, of course, we must ever be on our guard against the contention, so prevalent in many churches, that the preaching of the Word is sufficient and that therefore the application of excommunication should not be practiced by the Church of God in the midst of the world. The church that has relaxed in her duty to exercise both keys of the Kingdom of Heaven clearly violates her mandate from the living Christ and is not worthy of the name "church."

Secondly, to answer my opponent's second reason, namely that we should remember that the discipline of members of worldly organizations requires a different treatment than such sins of theft, adultery, murder, and despising the means of grace, the undersigned must confess that he is at a loss somewhat to understand this reasoning. My opponent believes that the sin of membership in a worldly organization should be treated in the same manner as sins such as theft, murder, adultery, etc. However, this is not done in many churches. Hence, the Ministry of the Word is surely sufficient to train these members to walk worthy of their calling as children of God. It seems to be the thrust of my opponent that those guilty of theft, murder, etc., must confess their sins, but that members of worldly organizations are not required to confess a specific sin but merely to sever their connections with that organization. To this we would say, in the first place, that the sin specifically in question in this debate is exactly a person's *connection* with e.g. a worldly union. Consequently, it is required of him that he make amends exactly by severing that connection. I am quite sure that anyone, who sees the error of his way and severs connection with an ungodly labor organization, will also confess his sin of having been a member of it. There are many who confess that a worldly union is wrong but refuse to sever connections. The sin involved is exactly that of membership and therefore confession of that sin must result in a severing of that worldly bond. But, the undersigned fails to understand this reasoning in connection with the current debate. The question is not: How must we receive erring members back into the fold?, but: Must the discipline of members of worldly organizations who refuse to leave their sin be left to the Ministry of the Word?

Finally, it certainly is not true that it is more profitable for all concerned to leave the discipline of members of worldly organizations to the Ministry of the Word. The contention is, then, that members

must not be forced or compelled to lead a godly walk. If we prevent members from partaking of the Lord's Table and presenting their children for baptism, these members, in order to partake of these sacraments, will even go so far as to sever connections with a worldly organization whereof they may be members. Is it, then, not a greater cause for rejoicing when such a member forsakes his evil way without any force or coercion whatsoever, because he saw the sinfulness of his way and voluntarily decided to sever connections due to his being influenced exclusively by the preaching of the Word? Then, it is elleged, we need not doubt that he severed connections for any reason other than the exhortation of the living God Himself.

This, we all readily perceive, is a very weak argument. In the first place, it may well be doubted whether anyone will sever connections with a worldly organization merely because it is his desire to partake of the sacraments. It is hardly conceivable that anyone will reject the things of this present time, even choose to suffer hardship and affliction, want and starvation, because of his desire for the means of grace if he does not have an inner desire in the things of God and of His Kingdom.

Secondly, we must not hesitate to "compel" a member of a worldly organization to refrain from partaking of the sacraments, because it is spiritually impossible for anyone who walks in sin to partake of the means of grace. To partake of Communion and present one's child for baptism must and can be done only in faith. The sacraments are signs and seals of the people and party of the living God in the midst of the world. They are our uniforms whereby we are separated from the world. It is therefore a spiritual impossibility to partake of the sacraments in a real sense of the word and simultaneously commit the sin which is involved in membership in a worldly organization. The one denies the other. Applying discipline we simply say to a particular member that he cannot partake of the holy sacraments.

Thirdly, inasmuch as he cannot partake of the sacraments, the Church may therefore not permit him to do so. The Church is called to preserve the purity of the Name of her God and of His Covenant in the midst of the world. The Church may not permit God's holy Covenant to be profaned. Consequently, it is *not* "profitable for all those concerned" to witness such spiritual lethargy and indifference on the part of the Church whereby the profanation of God's covenant and sacraments is permitted. This would surely have a devastating effect on the Church of God.

Finally, I repeat what I wrote in my first article. We must not be wiser than God. The Lord has commanded us to exercise the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. We may be afraid to use these keys because

of fearing the loss of that which we have. We may think it expedient to relax in the exercise of Christian Discipline because we do not desire to "lose" any members. We may fear to take a definite stand when the way becomes rough and hard. We may desire to keep our local church intact. However, we must not be wiser than God. His way is the only way. We may safely walk in that way, wherever it may lead us, in the belief that God will provide for His own and lead His Church into that glory which He has laid away for her.

H. V.

AFFIRMATIVE-REBUTTAL:

It becomes plain at once that the Rev. H. Veldman has three reasons in mind for maintaining that the discipline of members of worldly organizations may not be left to the Ministry of the Word. These reasons are: (1) This membership is a very grievous sin, (2) Scripture demands that Christian discipline be applied to all who commit such grievous sins, (3) Christian discipline is necessary for the purification of the Church and the salvation of the elect sinner, since the Ministry of the Word is not sufficient to accomplish this.

Not difficult is it to see that the first two reasons belong together. The reasoning of the Reverend is plainly this: (1) Scripture demands Christian discipline for all those who commit grievous sins. (2) Membership in a worldly organization is a grievous sin. Hence (3) we must apply Christian discipline to such members of worldly organizations. His reasoning in the last ground he gives is this: (1) God has given unto the Church the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. (2) It is a fact that the Ministry of the Word, the first key, is not sufficient to purify His Church and save His erring people. (3) Hence we must apply the second key, Christian discipline.

Let us examine these grounds of the Reverend in the order that he presents them. First of all he states that Christian discipline must be applied because of the grievousness of the sin. That membership in worldly organizations is a grievous sin is also our firm conviction. This we stated in our first essay. The very wording of the proposition implies that it is a great sin requiring discipline. That this is now a reason for the application of Christian discipline rather than the Ministry of the Word we are not ready to declare. We fear very much the implications of this reasoning. Consider once that back of this reasoning is the implication that Christian discipline is capable of more, and is more powerful than the Ministry of the Word. It makes the Ministry of the Word take

a back seat. Certain sins, so this reasoning runs, can safely be left to the Ministry of the Word, but as soon as the sin becomes grievous, it is no longer safe to leave it to the Ministry of the Word but a stronger, more capable key-power must be exercised. The teacher in his schoolroom disciplines his own pupils, but when they become so unruly that he can no longer manage them, he sends them to the principal. Is his act of sending them to the principal not an admission on his part that a higher and more capable power is needed than he possessed? Is this the way we must look at the relationship between these two keys of the Kingdom of Heaven? Certainly not! Whatever the reason or purpose of Christian discipline may be—and we do not feel that it is our duty to state here what they are, for we are dealing chiefly with the Ministry of the Word while the negative is dealing chiefly with Christian discipline—the grievousness of the sin cannot be the reason why we exercise Christian discipline. In our first essay we stated that it was a supplementary method of discipline not on the same level with the Ministry of the Word. Surely it is not above the Ministry of the Word. We look eagerly for Rev. Veldman's rebuttal to see just what he presents as the proper relationship between these two keys. Will he make them of equal significance or will he emphasize the view he here presents—be it by implication—that Christian discipline can do what the Ministry of the Word cannot do, and therefore has more significance than it?

After all is not every sin grievous in God's sight, and is the man who takes Christ's name in vain not just as antichristian as the man who is a member of an antichristian organization? Must Christian discipline not be applied to all sins then? Just what must be the standard or measuring stick? Must Christian discipline be applied to those sins which the Church considers to be of a grievous nature or to those which are grievous in God's sight?

The Reverend writes himself, "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." Notice: one is not disciplined for the sin he commits. Thus if I belong to a worldly organization and thus commit a grievous sin I am not disciplined for it. How then can the grievousness of the sin be the reason that Christian discipline must be exercised and it may not be left to the Ministry of the Word? We cannot follow this reasoning.

The Reverend states in the second place that Scripture demands the exercise of Christian discipline for all such grievous sins. This reason we expected to find in the Reverend's essay. Yet we were very disappointed by the fact that he gives not one text to

show that Scripture demands this. He quotes from the form for the Lord's Supper, and he does quote Jesus words which prove that membership in worldly organizations is a grievous sin, but he does not give us Scripture to prove that Scripture demands Christian discipline for members of worldly organizations. We must have at least one text that not merely states that these members may not partake of Communion, but one that will make plain that we may never leave it up to the Ministry of the Word to tell these members this but must always send the Consistory to advise the man that it has decided to refuse this to him.

We quoted 2 Tim. 3:16, 17 in our first essay. The Reverend will have to prove that when Scripture says, "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," that it is profitable to correct, instruct in righteousness and reprove members of worldly organizations only when it is used by the Consistory in Christian discipline. Since the Reverend gives us not one text from Scripture, we cannot refute his exegesis, for we know not what texts he has in mind. That makes it difficult for us to refute but also takes away all the force of his statement that Scripture demands it.

Again we agree with the Reverend when he states that the purpose of Christian discipline is to save the erring brother and purify the Church. The same is true of the ministry of the Word. But again we are disappointed in not finding any proof for the strong statement that, "It is a fact that the Ministry of the Word is not sufficient in the preservation and purification of the Church." Here again the Reverend is reasoning as in his first two grounds that Christian discipline is able to do something the Ministry of the Word is unable to accomplish.

But consider with me the following facts once: It is through the Ministry of the Word that God first calls us out of the darkness into His marvelous light and not through Christian discipline. Paul came with God's Word and administered it to the Greeks, and they were saved from their sinful way and unbelief. Jesus administered His own Word to Paul on the way to Damascus, and he was saved. Jesus gave Peter one glance thereby reminding him of His Word, and Peter ran out weeping bitterly, saved from his sin and purified. When Paul heard of sins in the Church, he administered the Word per letter to purify that church. You may say, "The church was not yet fully organized, and christian discipline could not be administered." That makes no difference for it still proves that the Ministry of the Word is able and sufficient. Mind you these sins were also of the same nature as that of belonging to worldly organizations. Read II Cor. 6

and note how Paul disciplines them with the Word of God in verses 16-18. Apparently Paul considered the Ministry of the Word to the Corinthians sufficient. But let me return to what I began to say. God saw fit in His infinite wisdom to use the Ministry of the Word to call us and bring us to the knowledge of our sin and deliverance. He chose to use it and it alone to bring us to faith and to the knowledge of our salvation, yea James says that He *begat* us with the Word of truth. The initial act of purifying us and saving us from our sin was accomplished by the Ministry of the Word. Why then, after we have been brought to the light by that Ministry of the Word, does the Ministry of the Word lose its force and power so that it is no longer sufficient? The Rev. Veldman declares, to explain his point, that some will be bold and continue as members regardless of the Ministry of the Word. But we ask, "Can Christian discipline purify the Church of the hypocrites who do not show their antichristian nature? Then we must also say of Christian discipline that it is insufficient to purify the Church. It has not become plain to us how Christian discipline can fulfill that which Rev. Veldman maintains the Ministry of the Word lacks.

Having written that we will limit ourselves to four pages since we wrote six in our first essay, we conclude that Rev. Veldman has proven that membership in worldly organizations is a grievous sin, but he has not given us one reason for not leaving their discipline to the Ministry of the Word.

We feel constrained to state that in spite of all we have written above we still believe that the discipline of members of worldly organizations should not be left to the Ministry of the Word. However our reasons are different than those presented by Rev. Veldman and are we believe based upon Scripture. We do not feel that it is our duty to present them here. If there has been any profit in this debate it must lie herein that it shows us that we can profitably make a study of and do a little research into the true relationship between the two keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.

J. A. H.

Report of Ministers' Conference

On April 11 the ministers of Classis East held the first meeting of their newly organized Ministers Conference.

Taking a lesson from the past the organization has adopted a setup different from the previous conferences which were organized only to pass out of existence after a few meetings. We may remember that the previous meetings were held after a day of busy classical activities, when some of the delegates were eager to spend a few quiet hours with relatives and friends, others had to hurry off to their trains. Now, however, we have an all-day meeting the day before Classis, with the ministers of Classis East only. The purpose of limiting the circle thus is not to be exclusive of course but to insure a reasonably solid attendance.

Our first meeting we considered a great success. After opening prayer and Scripture reading a few details of business were attended to and then as the main item we were favored with a very excellent paper by Rev. R. Veldman, on the subject: "The Tautology in the term 'Total Depravity'," built upon Scripture and the Confessions. A very warm and thorough discussion followed of penetrating questions, criticisms and counter-criticisms which did not abate until the clock told us our two and a half hours were up.

In the afternoon at 1:30 we met to hear a paper by Rev. W. Hofman, on "The Day of Jehovah". We were soon impressed with the fact that we were listening to another excellent paper, with an abundance of direct and indirect material from Scripture, gathered, analyzed and organized.

Because of the relative newness of the subject the discussion was at first hesitant and a little vague. But not for long. A discussion developed that matched the earlier one in eager and thorough penetration until again the clock put a stop to the discussion at its height.

So our first meeting became history. It was a day of wonderful promise for the future. All expressed satisfaction and joy at the edification and fellowship. Some even revealed delight. And we are glad to announce that although no provision is made as yet to record the discussions, we expect to publish the papers at the end of the year.

Our next meeting is on October 3. The papers assigned for that meeting are:

Church and State according to Art. 36—Rev. B. Kok.
Pluriformity of the Church according to Holy Scripture—Rev. A. Petter.

Advanced assignments for the January meeting are:
The Essentially Modernistic World-view of Common Grace—Rev. J. Heys.

The Motives of Idol-Worship—Rev. J. De Jong.

We already look forward to our next meeting.

Reporter.

IN APPRECIATION

The Mission Committee of the Protestant Reformed Churches gratefully acknowledges receipt of a legacy amounting to \$3799.35 bequeathed to the Mission Fund by the late brother Ben Voss of Edgerton, Minn.

This expression of love for the cause of propagating the truths which are our peculiar heritage spurs us on to ever greater objectives. May God keep us faithful to the charge He has given us.

Secretary of the Mission Committee.

NOTICE

The Annual meeting of the Reformed Free Publishing Society will be held Sept. 14, at the Fuller Ave. Church parlors. Three board members must be chosen from the following nomination. D. Jonker; H. Knott; S. De Vries; Chas. Pastoor; Stephen Bouma; Gerrit Pipe. All members are urged to be present. Financial report and activities of the board will be given. Readers and former members are again asked to join our society and give it their moral and financial support. After recess the speaker will be Rev. W. Hofman.

IN MEMORIAM

The English Men's Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church unite to express their sympathy to one of its members Mr. M. Swart in the loss of his son,

JOHN SWART

who was killed in action.

May our Heavenly Father who alone can comfort, sustain him and his in this their bereavement.

O. Van Ellen, Pres.

C. W. Doezeema, Sec'y.

IN MEMORIAM

Whereas it has pleased our Heavenly Father to take unto Himself our fellow society member,

FREDERICK PIPE

the Men's English Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church, of which he was such an unusually faithful member for so many years, wishes hereby to extend its sympathy to the bereaved.

O. Van Ellen, Pres.

C. W. Doezeema, Sec'y.

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland, Michigan hereby wishes to express its heartfelt sympathy with our brother-elder P. Schipper, in the loss of his

MOTHER

May the God of all grace comfort our brother in his bereavement.

Rev. W. Hofman, Pres.

J. H. Kortering, Clerk

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church hereby wishes to express its heartfelt sympathy to our Brother Elder M. Swart in the loss of his son,

JOHN SWART

May the Lord comfort the brother and his family, and also the widow of the deceased in this their bereavement by the assurance that our heavenly Father doeth all things well and nothing can separate us from His love.

H. Hoeksema, Pres.

G. Stonehouse Clerk

IN MEMORIAM

The English Men's Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Mich. hereby wishes to express its heartfelt sympathy to our fellow member, Mr. M. Swart, in the loss of his son,

Pvt. JOHN M. SWART

May the God of all grace comfort the brother and his family in this their bereavement by the assurance that God doeth all things well.

Mr. O. Van Ellen Pres.

Mr. O. Vander Woude Ass't. Sec'y.

O praise the Lord, for He is good,

His mercies still endure;

Thus let His ransomed testify,

From all their foes secure.

He has redeemed His captive saints,

From adversaries hands,

He gathered them and brought them back

In peace from hostile lands.