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MEDITATION

Thou Hast Dealt Well

Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O Lord, according unto thy word. Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments.

Ps. 119:65, 66.

Lord, Thou hast dealt well!

This acknowledgement, and that, too, as a matter of experience, dominates this entire section of the psalm.

Enemies there were, haters of God and of His Word, that "forged a lie against" the psalmist, hated him, persecuted him, and spoke all manner of evil against him falsely.

And the inspired psalmist, as the servant of the Lord, had been in distress, afflicted, no doubt, because of and by the hatred of the enemies of Jehovah. Of this affliction he speaks twice in this section.

However, in the midst of affliction and persecution by the enemy, the psalmist had not become unfaithful, had not departed from the ways of the precepts of the Lord, but had loved and kept His testimonies.

And through it all, he had come to acknowledge by experience, that the Lord is faithful, that His promises are sure, that His Word is true, and that always Jehovah deals well with His servants. Even when suffering and tribulation is our lot, even when the enemies rise up against us to destroy our soul, the Lord is good, and He causes all things to work together for our salvation.

Such had been the experience of the psalmist.

Looking back upon the affliction of the past, he

now clearly discerns that it was good for him to be afflicted.

Lord, thou hast dealt well with thy servant!

According unto thy word!

O, but indeed, that is the Word of the Lord throughout, that He always deals well with His servants!

Particularly it is His Word, that even when He casts us in the crucible of trial and tribulation, through that very suffering of this present time He deals well with His servants.

It is this which the psalmist here confesses.

In the first part of the text he speaks of experience. He is looking back. The immediate past brought him suffering. He has been sorely tried. But the affliction, for the moment, is passed. And now it is all over, he may and does, indeed, testify from experience that the Lord dealt well with him. He can see it now. Perhaps, this fact was not always so clear to him while he was in the midst of his suffering. But in retrospect he discerns it clearly. And now he compares this experience with the Word of God, and he acknowledges that the two are quite in harmony, that the Word of the Lord is faithful and true: Lord, thou hast dealt well with thy servant, according unto thy word!

This implies, that the Word of God assures His servants in this world, that the Lord will always deal well with them.

And, indeed, it does!

When the psalmist speaks here of the Word of God, he refers not to any special and particular revelation which he had received, but to the entire revelation of God in Christ, as it had always been addressed to all the servants of Jehovah in the midst of this present world, as it gradually increased and grew in riches and clarity, as the poet possessed that Word of God in the testimonies of the Lord which he knew and loved; as it was centrally and completely fulfilled in

the fulness of time in Jesus Christ our Lord, in His incarnation and sojourn among us, in His Word and work, in His death and resurrection, and exaltation at the right hand of God, and in the pouring forth of the Spirit of the exalted Christ, the Lord of all; as it directs the eyes of our hope to the final goal, His coming again with power and glory, to reveal His glory, and to establish His eternal kingdom in which the tabernacle of God will be with men.

The gospel!

The gospel of the promise!

And that Word throughout, emphatically and in various ways, assures the servant of the Lord, that He will always do well with him, will never leave or forsake him, will be a shelter to him in the time of storm, a strong tower into which he may always run and be safe, that He will sustain and keep him, that not a hair will fall from his head against the Lord's will, that He will bring it to pass, and that He will cause all things to work together for his good, even also and emphatically the apparently evil things of this present time; and that absolutely nothing, on earth or in heaven or in hell, can possibly separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Such is the Word of God.

It is a light in darkness.

It is a strong assurance of salvation in the midst of the sufferings of this present time.

A mighty consolation in the time of trouble!

The faithfulness of this Word the poet had experienced. And of it he sings: Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O Lord, according unto thy word!

Let us not misunderstand this confession, and give it an erroneous application. The psalmist does not have in mind any temporal or material good the Lord had bestowed on him. When he acknowledges here that the Lord had dealt well with him, he does precisely not mean that his pathway through this present life had been bright and rosy hitherto, and that he had been spared suffering and affliction. The very contrary is true. His way had not been characterized by material prosperity. Emphatically he speaks of his affliction. But in and through that affliction the Lord had dealt well with him. Nor does this well-dealing of the Lord refer to the fact that the affliction which the psalmist experienced belongs to the past, and the Lord had delivered him out of all his troubles, so that for the present, at least, his way was one of joy and prosperity. On the contrary, he regards his affliction, the sufferings he had endured, as the Lord's dealing with him. Even though it were true, that the enemies of the Lord had inflicted this suffering upon him, he now realizes that through the enemies it was the Lord that was dealing with him. and so, the affliction itself was a good to him. In the

tribulation the Lord dealt well with him.

Abundantly evident this becomes in the rest of the section.

Does he not clearly express that he regards the affliction itself as a good? Before he was afflicted he went astray, but now he had kept the Word of God. It was good for him to be afflicted, that he might learn the statutes of the Lord.

The well-dealing of the Lord, of which the psalmist speaks, does not have reference to all, therefore to any natural, earthly, material, temporal good, but to the spiritual heavenly, eternal blessings of the kingdom and covenant of God, as they will ultimately be realized in all their fulness in the final glory of God's heavenly house, the heavenly perfection of His eternal covenant of friendship.

And thus is the promise of the Word of God throughout.

Not that His people will be excused from, will be spared the sufferings of this present time, is the promise of God to them. On the contrary, not only do they lie in the midst of death with all the world, and must they, therefore, endure with the world the sufferings of this present time in general; but they must also expect that special tribulation which is the fulfillment of the sufferings of Christ. "In the world ye shall have tribulation!"

And ahead still looms the great tribulation that shall leave no room in the world for the faithful. . . .

But be of good cheer!

The Lord deals well with His servants!

Such is His Word!

And that Word is the revelation of His eternal counsel concerning our salvation.

In that counsel He has so willed and arranged all things, even all the sufferings of this present time, even all the powers of darkness that rave and rage furiously against the Church, that they must all work together for the final salvation of them that love Him, who are the called according to His purpose.

That counsel He reveals and realizes in time, so that all things are made subservient to the purpose of our final glory.

And always it is true: The Lord deals well with His servants.

According to His Word!

Thy servant!

Serious qualification indeed!

Not with all, not with the reprobate wicked, that depart from His ways and love iniquity, does the Lord deal well.

The contrary is true. Even their prosperity is designed by Him to serve as slippery places on the which

they hasten to their destruction. Even when they are made to grow as the grass, it is that they may be destroyed for ever.

He loveth the righteous!

His servants!

They are those that love Him, that stand in covenant relation to Him, that know Him and keep His commandments, and in this world represent the cause of the Son of God. Them, and them exclusively, He doeth good, and with them He deals well even in all the experiences and vicissitudes, all the sufferings and afflictions of this present time.

Not, indeed, as if they had ought to boast.

For they are not servants of Jehovah of themselves. On the contrary, they were children of wrath, even as also the others. And if God's well-dealing with them depended at all upon anything they are or accomplish, they could expect nothing else than eternal wrath and darkness and damnation. But they are servants because God ordained them as such in His eternal good pleasure. That is why He could deal well with them when they were yet enemies, and give His only begotten Son, that they might not perish, but have life, and become His servants indeed. . . .

And always He dealt well with them.

He forgave all their iniquity, and cleansed them from all their guilt, clothing them with His own righteousness in Christ Jesus their Lord.

He quickened them together with Christ, called them out of darkness into His marvellous light.

He changes them from servants of sin and the devil into His own by the wonder of His grace.

He preserves them by His power through the faith He gives unto them.

And He makes them more than conquerors even in the midst of their enemies.

His servants they are, yes, but solely through His sovereign grace!

That no flesh should glory in His presence!

Blessed acknowledgement!

For not a mere doctrinal statement is found in these words, but a glad and joyful and thankful acknowledgement of Jehovah's faithfulness as it was experienced by the psalmist.

And blessed are they, indeed, that may thus acknowledge and taste the goodness of the Lord!

More blessed still are they, that may be so taught and upheld by the grace of their God, that even while they are in the midst of affliction they may joyfully confess: "Lord, thou art dealing well with thy servant, according unto thy Word!"

That is the victory of faith!

The psalmist here is after all speaking in retro-

spect. He was afflicted, but the affliction is now past. And he reaped and is enjoying the fruit of tribulation. It has become a matter of his experience that it was good for him to be afflicted. He received the fruit of righteousness. He was sanctified through suffering. Before he was afflicted he wandered, but now he keeps the Word of his God. He is able to see the salutary effect of affliction as it was sanctified unto his heart by the grace of God. And so, speaking in the past tense, he rejoices in the Lord and confesses: Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O Lord, according unto thy word!

How blessed, however, even in the midst of tribulation to glory!

O, it is not easy, it is impossible for the flesh (and how mighty is often the flesh in us!) to rejoice in the well-doing of the Lord, even when the way grows dark, and all things appear to be against us! When we suffer, not only the sufferings of this present time in general, but also the tribulation that comes upon the servants of the Lord exactly because they are His servants; when it seems as if God's cause in the world must suffer defeat, and the wicked prosper; ah, then, we are so easily inclined to cry out in doubt and fear: "Is there knowledge in the Most High?"

The more faithful we are as servants of the Lord, the more we suffer affliction!

How can it be, then, that the Lord deals well with His servants? . . .

Then, too, how often we, too, seek the "good" in the things of this present time, the things that are seen, rather than in the spiritual things of the kingdom of God! For we are earthly, and our desire is after earthly things. And the flesh darkens our understanding, so that we do not clearly discern the good. . . .

We glory also in tribulation, yes, but with fear and trembling. . . .

And well may, if our faith is to have the victory in the midst of the suffering and tribulation of this present time, the prayer of the psalmist be constantly in our heart and on our lips: "teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I have believed thy commandments." Judgment, that is, clear and distinct spiritual discernment of the real, eternal, spiritual good, that we may be sober, and evaluate all things in the light of the eternal; and knowledge, true spiritual, experiential knowledge of that eternal and spiritual good,—that is what we need daily, to be able to rejoice in the well-dealing of the Lord in the midst of trouble.

Then, and then only, faith can have the victory, and we may glory even in tribulation!

Blessed glorying!

H. H.

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EDITORIALS

Condemned Without A Hearing

In the *Missionary Monthly* Dr. Beets comments on the latest news item concerning Dr. Schilder and his suspension as follows:

Great names have adorned that Theological School of the Seceder Church. Van Velzen, Brummelkamp, and in later years the famous Dr. Herman Bavinck. More recently we think of the beloved Profs. Bouwman and Greydanus and Honig. When Prof. Honig was retired a young and able preacher was chosen to succeed him: Klaas Schilder. An able man. Highly gifted. Clever. He received part of his higher training in Germany. Relations between him and the brethren of the Free University must have been strained somewhat so that the way did not seem open, or feasible, to obtain his Doctor's degree at Amsterdam, the site of the Free University.

At the last General Synod which we attended, in 1939, at Sneek, we received the impression, right or wrong, that Dr. Schilders' relationship to different brethren of the cloth, was not quite affable. While he was here in America some years ago, some of us received the impression that he was rather too friendly with some who did not agree with certain doctrinal deliverances of his own denomination about which there had been considerable dispute in the Christian Reformed Church.

In recent years Prof. Schilder had been interned by the invading Germans. Evidently on account of our brother's patriotism. And we praised him for his loyalty to his country. But now, we infer from certain Dutch papers, that *doctrinal* differences between Dr. Schilder and others, differences particularly about certain deliverances of General Synods of his denomination, have led to his *suspension*.

If that means suspension (schorsing), in the ecclesiastical sense, we shall heartily *deplore* such. And ascribe it to a certain leaning of our brother to *disagree* with his fellow believers or as the expression perhaps should be, his inability to do teamwork. If

it means that, as a result of his loyalty to his country, the invader has again interfered, in his functioning as professor—we admire his bravery.

But we *fear* the suspension involves *church* discipline. If that is the case, let us here in America pray for the peace in the Dutch Jerusalem. It is suffering aplenty in recent years. For that matter, if we are well informed, *both*, the Theological School at Kampen, and the Free University in Amsterdam, have been *closed* by the invader. . . And Dr. Kuyper's "standard," a daily, has shrunk to be a weekly—and that a very small one, at times. The Lord be merciful to the churches of the Netherlands, as well as to those every where who are loyal to His Word.

Now, in all seriousness, I would like to ask Dr. Beets whether he considers it an act of Christian brotherliness to condemn a man without a hearing, on the basis of impressions and suspicions? In my opinion this cannot even be considered "fair" according to the standard of what Dr. Beets would call "common grace," let alone that of Christian love.

From what brother Beets writes it is evident that he knows no more about the matter than we do. He is not acquainted with the facts in the case. He is not even sure whether the "suspension" in question refers to an ecclesiastical act of discipline. His source of information was evidently the same as ours.

Yet, he evidently means to leave the impression that the suspension of Dr. Schilder must have been just, and that he must have made himself worthy of it.

And consider the "grounds" on which Dr. Beets attempts to justify his act of leaving this impression.

1. The relation between Dr. Schilder and the brethren of the Free University must have been strained somewhat" already in and before '29 when Dr. Schilder went to Germany to study for his doctor's degree. An impression.

2. In 1939 Dr. Beets "received the impression, right or wrong," that the relationship between Dr. Schilder and "different brethren of the cloth" was not quite affable. Another impression.

3. "Some of us received the impression" that, while Dr. Schilder was in our country a few years ago, he was "rather too friendly with some, who did not agree with certain doctrinal differences of his own denomination, about which there had been considerable dispute in the Christian Reformed Church." A third impression.

This statement is ambiguous, and as it stands there is not true. The writer probably expressed the matter in this way to make it fit the case. The reference is, we surmise, to the doctrinal conclusions of

Utrecht, 1905. And these are, indeed, doctrinal deliverances of his own (Dr. Schilder's) denomination," but it is not true that the dispute in the Christian Reformed Church before 1924 concerned these, except very indirectly and by remote implication.

These are the "grounds."

And on these "impressions" Dr. Beets draws the following, rather contradictory conclusions:

1. He infers that Dr. Schilder is suspended on account of doctrinal differences.

2. He is not sure that the "suspension" refers to an act of ecclesiastical discipline: the Nazis may have interfered once more with his work.

3. If it does refer to ecclesiastical suspension, it must be due to Dr. Schilder's tendency to disagree with others, his "inability to do teamwork." Cf., however, 1, which mentions doctrinal differences.

4. If it is a matter of patriotism, Dr. Beets commends him for it, and praises his bravery.

What shall we say about all this?

I certainly do not praise Dr. Beets for casting slurs on the good name of Dr. Schilder, and for condemning him without giving him the opportunity of a hearing.

But let us discuss the matter somewhat in detail.

To begin with the last mentioned matter, if it is a matter of patriotism because of which Dr. Schilder is persecuted by the Nazis, I cannot commend him. Also in this respect I must disagree with Dr. Beets. I believe that the Bible plainly teaches us that the individual Christian must be in subjection to the powers that be, even though they attained to power by usurpation. The passage in Rom. 13 that refers to this matter was written at the time when Rome had usurped the world-power. As long as the house of Orange is dethroned, and the German government rules in the Netherlands, it is the duty of the individual Christian to be in subjection to the latter. But I do not believe that Dr. Schilder's opposition to Nazism was a matter of patriotism, but of principle. One that has read his "Geen Duimbreed" cannot but agree with this. It was opposition, not to the German government in the Netherlands, but to the principles of Nazism.

And as to the grounds which Dr. Beets suggests for the conclusion that the suspension of Dr. Schilder was justified, I wish to remark:

1. The fact that Dr. Schilder's relationship to some of the brethren in the ministry was not very affable must certainly be discarded as a ground for suspension. I happen to know that his relationship to many others was very "affable." And personally I have learned to know him as a very loveable character. It is true that he was not very "affable" to a man like Dr. Hepp. But this is true of many in the Nether-

lands. And those that read the pamphlets on "Dreigende Deformatie," may find a reason for this in the sickly note of conceit and superiority that characterizes these.

2. The suggestion that Dr. Schilder did not agree with the conclusions of Utrecht is too far fetched. I know that Dr. Beets does not state this in so many words, but he suggests it, nevertheless. Putting this suggested ground of suspension plainly would give it this form: "because Dr. Schilder was rather friendly with some in this country, whose dissention was very remotely concerned with the conclusions of Utrecht, the former's suspension must have been justified." A little silly, is it not? Besides, how about others? I think it would not be difficult to find many direct statements in the writings of Dr. Hepp and others that are in conflict with the conclusions of Utrecht.

3. As to the "impression" which "some of us" received that Dr. Schilder was rather too friendly with the Protestant Reformed people and leaders, whose fault, if fault it was, was that? I am not a little surprised that Dr. Beets even dares to touch upon this subject. Let us consider this matter in its proper light. How did the Christian Reformed Jerusalem receive this minister and professor in good standing of a sister Church?

The professors of the Theological School and some ministers of the Christian Reformed Churches had written him a letter, when he was still in the Netherlands, asking him to come. I have this from Dr. Schilder himself.

The Banner wrote editorials against him, asking the Christian Reformed people not to invite him to speak.

When he came to Grand Rapids, his lecture engagements were cancelled as a result of the agitation against him.

The professors of the Theological School turned a cold shoulder to him. When he spoke in my church, after he had been in Grand Rapids four days, he did not know that professors Berkhof and Volbeda had been given reserved seats right in front of him. Except for a single luncheon, which was not even attended by all the professors, they never even sought any contact with him. What wonder, then, that they drove him to us, who certainly did not give him the impression that we agreed with him or he with us, but welcomed him heartily and treated him friendly. I can assure Dr. Beets, on the basis of Dr. Schilder's own testimony, that the latter was deeply grieved when he left Grand Rapids because of the cold-blooded and unbrotherly treatment accorded him in Christian Reformed Jerusalem.

Friendly to us? How about the meeting in the Pantlind, at which Dr. Beets himself presided? Surely, this meeting was not planned or held at my request?

Dr. Schilder thought that he would effect a union between the Christian Reformed and Protestant Reformed Churches. That, I think, was to his credit, though he was mistaken. But the meeting was planned, not by us, nor at our request, but by some Christian Reformed brethren, who invited me to consent to and to be present at such a conference, which I did. But I let it be known very specifically to those that invited me, that I would attend only on condition that the principles that separated us be discussed. And to this they agreed. And who discussed principles at that meeting? I did, and our men that were present did, and no one else did or was willing to enter upon a thorough discussion.

Dr. Beets knows all this.

What impression, do you think, did all this leave upon Dr. Schilder?

When about midnight of that same day when the conference was held he left my house, he said to me, flatly and somewhat slangily, with reference to that meeting and to the attitude of the Christian Reformed leaders there: "Ik heb de smoor in."

Rather friendly with us? In the light of the facts, I am astounded that Dr. Beets even dares to mention this.

Personally, I am not in a position to express a motivated opinion about the suspension of Dr. Schilder.

But neither is Dr. Beets.

And I love the brother too much to let the "impressions", suspicions and suggestions of the *Missionary Monthly* pass unchallenged.

H. H.

Abimelech's Fall

Appearing on a rock, above the rabble that crowned Abimelech king, Jotham, like a impersonation of conscience, speaks his parable. The thrust of this remarkable production already has been given in my analysis of the vile strategy that Abimelech employed in achieving his purpose. Let us now examine with care the argument of this significant discourse. Jotham lays before the Schemites the facts, when he says to them (verses 17, 18), "For my father fought for you, and adventured his life far, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian: and ye are risen up against my father's house this day, and have slain his sons, three score and ten persons, upon one stone, and have made Abimelech, the son of his maidservant, king over the men of Shechem, because he is your brother." The Shechemites then have made Abimelech king. He had given them to understand that the seventy sons were scheming to establish themselves as lords

over their brethren. To avoid being shackled to seventy such tyrants, they had better make *him* king. Certainly, one king is all they needed. The Shechemites were agreed. So they followed Abimelech and slew the seventy. The latter was done as a matter of expediency, for the good of the land. At least, so Abimelech must have insisted. For the seventy, finding themselves outdone by Abimelech, would not sit still. It was best therefore that they be put out of the way quickly. This had been done. But the Shechemites could also have selected one out of the seventy to rule over them and put to death Abimelech, if they thought him dangerous. And he was a dangerous man, a worthless person. Yet despite the fact of his being what he was—an upstart, a man, who, in order to attain his end, had disowned his deceased father and deliverer of Israel, openly repudiated Jehovah and gone over to the side of Baal, and a man who, as they well knew before they made him king, was planning to murder seventy righteous men—his own brothers—in order to entrench himself in power—despite all this, they made the man king and turned against Gideon's house—the seventy. Such was their doing in spite of what Gideon had been in his lifetime—a godfearing man—and in spite of what he had done for them as their judge—delivered them from the hand of Midian—and in spite of what these brethren were—peaceable and righteous men, innocent of the vile ambition ascribed to them. And what did they give as a reason of their doing? The fact that Abimelech was their brother, bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh. As if that really had any weight with them! As if that was the true reason of their choice! As if they actually cared at all to whom Abimelech was related by blood, so long as he was the kind of a man he was—a devotee of Baal, a thoroughly godless and unprincipled person—and was therefore ready to serve their diabolical purpose—the purpose of ridding themselves of Jehovah—and cooperate with them in exterminating the hated house of Gideon and restoring the worship of Baal, whose altars and shrines Gideon had destroyed! Abimelech was just the kind of a man for which they had been looking, the very man they could use. They needed him as much as he wanted them. That was the real reason they had crowned him king and not that he was related to them by blood. But when asked to justify and rationalize their atrocious crimes, they would not so much as touch upon their real motives but say, “He is our brother.” They were thoroughly profligate men not only but past-masters in the art of simulation. Fact is that their aims were that wicked that they recoiled from allowing them to stand out clearly before their minds. They wanted to be ignorant of the vile implications of their doings and therefore avoided even making mention of them to themselves and to one another. Their saying,

“He is our brother,” is plainly indicative of their hopeless attempt to silence the accusing voice of conscience, through convincing themselves, if they could, that their contemplated crimes were really no crimes at all but good works done by just men in the interest of their commonwealth. “The heart of man is deceitful more than anything. Who will know it?”

It is well to notice that Jotham was careful not to accuse them directly but contented himself merely with laying before them the bare facts. He says to them not, “Now therefore ye have *not* done truly and rightly, but wickedly,” but he says “*If*,” mark you, “*if* ye have done truly and rightly, in that ye have made Abimelech king,” and, “*if* ye have dealt truly and sincerely with Jerubbaal and with his house this day, but *if* not, let fire come out from Abimelech. . . .” Jotham is aware that the men are too wicked and hard to receive admonition and rebuke, that, should he accuse them directly, they, in their hatefulness and stubbornness, would insist that they had done no wrong and, stopping their ears, would refuse to hear him out. Jotham knew, that, should he accuse them directly, all that he would accomplish is to start an argument. And he wants no argument. There is nothing to argue about. They knew that they had done wickedly; and in their hearts they were accusing themselves and one another. His manner of approach therefore was well chosen. It cut short all argument and could occasion no opposition. It was only calculated to place them directly before the bar of their own conscience to be severely condemned at that bar. So, instead of outright upbraiding and rebuking them, he lays before them the facts. Let them now judge. If they have dealt truly and sincerely with Jerubbaal and with his house this day, then let them rejoice in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in them. But if not, let fire come out from Abimelech and devour the men of Shechem, and the house of Milo; and let fire come out from the men of Shechem and from the house of Milo, and devour Abimelech. And their hearts replied, must have replied, for God is and maintains himself in the hearts and minds of wicked men, “We have done wickedly and therefore are to be devoured by the curse of God.” They could silence godly men, raising their voice in protest of their doing. But the voice of conscience they could not silence but only oppose, sear, as with a hot iron, through speaking lies in hypocrisy. And this they did. For instead of repenting, they continued to rejoice in Abimelech and he in them. But their conscience persisted to affirm what Jotham had told them, namely, that they were cursed of God and that sooner or later the curse would work itself out in the fire coming out from Abimelech and devouring them and in the fire coming out from them and devouring him. It must not be supposed that they wanted it so. They desired no trouble with him nor

he with them. Why should they? Doubtless they persuaded themselves and one another that their was no reason why they couldn't make a success of their union. But Abimelech well realized that his royalty depended upon their favor and must bend to every whim of theirs, if it would avoid a fall. And they knew that he would use every means necessary to maintain his authority, when popular favor deserted him. As they were men steeped in crime and sin, each knew that the other could not be trusted, so that from the beginning Abimelech eyed the Shechemites with suspicion and they were afraid of him. Yet on the surface they were friends and it seemed that the alliance would endure. But the era of good feeling was not of long duration. It could not be, for God had cursed. We now quote the sacred narrator, "When Abimelech had reigned three years over Israel, Then God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech: that the cruelty done to the three score and ten sons of Jerubbaal might come, and their blood be laid upon Abimelech their brother, which slew them; and upon the men of Shechem, which aided him in the killing of his brethren."

It is doubtful that by the evil spirit which God sent between Abimelech and the Shechemites is to be understood merely an evil frame of mind and heart. The text lends no support to this interpretation, as it asserts that the evil spirit was *sent* by God. This language would seem to indicate that what is meant is an evil personal spirit from the realm of darkness. God sent this spirit to fire the imagination of the two parties by seducing speech whispered, so to say, in their souls, arouse in them all their latent hatred and distrust, and inspire them, through the lusts that burned in their bosoms, to take action against each other. This interpretation of the text is favored by all that the Scriptures teach about the character and doings of satan and his angels, and about the great influence that they have with wicked men. According to Holy Writ, the hearts of such men are the devil's playground. What deserves the emphasis here is that the evil Spirit was sent *by God*. The implication is that also these spirits are under His supreme control, that He sends them as He wills to do His bidding. How he can use them without involving Himself in their guilt and destroying their responsibility and as keeping Himself unspotted from their contagion, are matters that defy our powers of penetration. To return to the case at hand, what it teaches is that the discord that now arose between the two parties is ascribable to the sovereign and efficacious will of God, that is, to the divine will that has the power to produce the effect that God, in His sovereign good pleasure, decreed, that thus this discord was

indeed the working out of the curse of God in punishment of sin. If God has no such will, it would be senseless for Him to curse and even to threaten wicked men with punishment.

Thus the covenant between Abimelech and the Shechemites could not last. For it was conceived in sin and the making of it was inspired by hatred of and opposition to God. And God is not mocked. Hence the experience which here presents itself is a type of all covenants between the wicked. For every such alliance is, as to its essential character, a sinful conspiracy against God and the right. This is true of every alliance between the worldly states and of every treaty made. They cannot endure as over them hovers the curse of God from the moment of their inception. This is one of the great lessons of history.

With the sending of the evil spirit, the men of Shechem began to plot against Abimelech, in the language of the narrative, they dealt treacherously with him. They were now resolved to rid themselves of him. Some interpreters conjecture that, through his tyrannies, his reign had become insufferable. But the narrative plainly indicates that this conjecture is wrong. It will be shown in the sequence that, on their standpoint, they had no complaint against him. But how then is the sudden uprising to be explained? The Lord sent an evil spirit among them. Therefore his downfall was remarkable for its suddenness, so plainly the result of divine vengeance, which it would not have been, had Abimelech made himself insufferable through atrocious misrule. Men could then still say that the catastrophe that overtook him was brought on by himself. Yet the operation of the evil spirit the hearts of the Shechemites must not be imagined to have been mechanical. Wicked men can have no true regard for one another. In their hearts the Shechemites must have despised Abimelech all along. But now, with the evil spirit from God playing upon their wicked minds and hearts, a consuming hatred of him burns in their bosom and embodies itself in action. Their minds are suddenly made up. Abimelech must go. They have had enough of the man. As king he was their creation. Theirs was also the right to dispose of him at will. So they reasoned. It was truly a government of the people, for the people, and by the people, there in Shechem, democracy in its heyday.

They set liars in wait for him in all the mountain passes in the hope of seizing him on his journey between Shechem and some neighboring village. They must have contemplated doing their king to death. But Abimelech, being forewarned, failed to make his appearance. In the meantime, the conspirators fell to robbing "all that came along that way by them." Some interpreters maintain, on the ground of the statement, "And the men of Shechem dealt treacherous-

ly with Abimelech," that the robberies were regarded as carried on by the Shechemites, but in such a manner as to make them appear to be ordered or instigated by Abimelech. This is not unlikely. But it is also likely that in these robberies, taken collectively, we have to do with a case of sheer banditry. The Shechemites were wicked and lawless men exceedingly. Had they previously murdered seventy innocent men they now went to plundering unsuspecting wayfarers out of sheer lust of the loot, while waiting for their man in the mountain passes.

The scene now changes. According to Lev. 19:24, the yield of the fourth year fruit planting had to be brought as "praise-offerings" to Jehovah. The men of Shechem brought the prescribed offerings, but went with them into the house of Baal and there placed Jehovah's gifts on Baal's altars. So did they prostitute the service, ordered by Jehovah, to their devil-god. All this we learn from the 27th verse that reads, "And they went into the fields, and gathered their vineyards, and trode their grapes, and made merry, and went into the house of their god, and did eat and drink—and cursed Abimelech." The wine made these men rash and thoughtless and loosened their tongue. The things that hitherto they had dared to mention only in secret, they now divulge. They fill the air with maledictions against Abimelech. Among them was also found a certain free-booting adventurer, Gaal by name, who recently had come to Shechem with his followers, plainly with the purpose of getting himself elected as party leader of the large faction opposed to Abimelech. Doubtless he had already gone far in making them see that he was their man. But it seems that they were still undecided. For he seized upon that occasion of boisterous merrymaking to persuade them that, with him at the head of their commonwealth, they had nothing to fear from Abimelech. He deemed the occasion opportune, for the Shechemites were in a reckless mood. So he orated to them in the following boastful language. "Who is Abimelech, and who is Shechem, that we should serve him? Is he not the son of Jerubbaal? and Zebul his officer? Serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem: for why should we serve him? And would to God this people were under my hand! then would I remove Abimelech." Then he addressed Abimelech, whom he imagined as standing before him but who actually was miles removed from that scene, "Increase thine army and come out!"

The man Gaal was plainly a fool. Yet in this fool the wine-heated rabble now put their confidence. They would do anything to free themselves of Abimelech, take any risk, however great. For the thing was of the Lord. As to Abimelech, he was a thoroughly godless personage. But he was not a nonentity. Doubtless his name indicates that he was a man of imposing

presence. And if the manner in which he addressed himself to the task of crushing the revolt against him bespeaks cruelty, it also brings him into relief as a most able soldier, as a man full of natural daring and courage. Plainly his downfall cannot be ascribed to a lack of natural military sagacity, to ignorance of the arts of effective warfare, but only to the hand of God, suddenly reaching down from heaven, snatching him from his throne, and casting him headlong into hell.

But we must now examine that boasting speech of Gaal, in particular, the following statements contained in it. "Who is Abimelech, and who is Shechem, that we should serve him? Is he not the son of Jerubbaal? . . . Serve the men of Hamor, the father of Shechem. . . ." The antithesis is plainly between Abimelech and Shechem on the one hand, and the men of Hamor, the father of Shechem, on the other. Gaal's counsel is that the latter be served, and his promise is to the effect that he will remove for them the former. But there is this question. Who is Shechem and who are the men of Hamor the father of Shechem? Plainly, Shechem is Abimelech. The reason that Gaal refers to him by these two names is that he is of the family or tribe of the pagan Shechemites on the side of his mother. Thus as the son of Jerubbaal, he was to Gaal Abimelech—the name given him by his father; but, as he had as his mother a woman of the family of Shechem, Gaal surnamed him Shechem. Gaal's argument is plain. Abimelech had been made king on the ground that, on his mother's side, he was a descendent of Shechem, and was thus Shechem. But he was still too much of Israel, being, as he was, the son of Jerubbaal, the antagonist of Baal. By what right then does he, Abimelech command their homage! The reaction of the pagan Shechemites and the apostate Israelites must be made complete. As yet this has not been done. But let it be done now this day by the deposition of that son of an Israelite and enemy of their god, and by the elevation to the throne of one whose pedigree is pure, of one whose father as well as whose mother is of the stock of Hamor. Then only will they be wholly in the service of the men of Hamor and of Hamor's god. He, Gaal, answers these requirements. He, therefore is their man.

The statement was just made that, *on their position*, the Shechemites really had no complaint to make against Abimelech. Assuredly, the view, according to which he, by his tyrannies, had made himself insufferable is contradicted by the fact that nothing is said of this in the narrative and secondly by the fact that, in urging Abimelech's deposition, Gaal presents no other reason for the taking of this step but that he, though a Shechemite on the side of his mother, was a son of Jerubbaal. Not a word does he say about Abimelech's tyrannies. This certainly would have to

be considered strange, if it were true that Abimelech's brief reign had been characterized by all manner of abuses. It seems that Gaal was actually at a loss how to rationalize Abimelech's deposition. He can think of but one reason. And the one reason that comes to his mind is extremely flimsy. It was altogether without strength. For that Abimelech was the son of Jerubbaal, could, on their position, be no real objection. For the man had broken with Gideon and his God and had gone over to the side of Baal. And his murder of the seventy formed conclusive proof that he had done so wholeheartedly. Why then bring up the matter of his parentage? What difference could it make to them who his father was, so long as their devil-god was also the god he worshipped? It is safe to conclude therefore that, from a worldly point of view, Abimelech had given them a good reign. The man had too much worldly wisdom to do anything at all that would lose him the favor of the populace by whose consent he ruled. He had been what in our modern language is called a benevolent dictator, or perhaps not even a dictator, but a worldly-wise ruler who had made it a point to interfere very little with the private affairs of his subjects. And yet, try as he did to retain their favor, things suddenly went wrong, and, to his amazement, he found that they were plotting against his very life. Why this sudden change? God had cursed. And the curse of the Almighty will work itself out! For God is not mocked.

The scene changes. In that crowd that hung there, as spellbound, on the lips of the wine-heated orator, was present one Zebul by name, the overseer of the city under Abimelech. He was not one of the party that feasted, for he chose to remain faithful to his lord. Yet he listened quietly and with apparent approbation to the speech of Gaal, but inwardly his anger burned. For Gaal in his drunken audacity had referred to him as Abimelech's tool and had disclosed the idea that he, too, must be overthrown. Zebul conveyed to Abimelech a full report of what went on in Shechem. "Gaal the son of Ebed and his brethren be come to Shechem, and, behold, they fortify the city against thee," was his message to his lord. He also counsels Abimelech how to proceed against the rebellious city. The counsel was adopted; "and Abimelech rose up, and all the people that were with him, by night and they laid wait against Shechem in four companies." Acting upon the advice of Zebul, he placed himself in ambush, so as not to be prematurely observed. As it now had become his business to watch over the city, Gaal, in company with Zebul, whom he did not in the least suspect, betook himself to the gate of the city. Looking out in the distance, he saw troops descending from the mountains. Zebul thought it too soon to divulge the truth and therefore deceived and mocked him by saying, "It is the shadow of the

mountains that thou seest." But the body of troops advanced, and presently their identity could no longer be mistaken. And Gaal was sorely afraid; for he was a braggard and a coward. Zebul now derided the man. Said he to him, "Where is now thy mouth, wherewith thou saidst, Who is Abimelech, that we should serve him? Is not this the people that thou hast despised? Go out, I pray now, and fight with them." There is nothing left for Gaal but to risk his fortunes in combat. But he is far from being a match for Abimelech; and is completely routed, he and his men. Gaal fled through the open gate of the city, but the road, up to the threshold of the gate, was covered with the wounded and the slain. Gaal's authority was gone; and Zebul now expelled him and his followers from the city. Abimelech, instead of prosecuting the attack, retreated to a neighboring city. Imagining that he would take no further action, the people went out of the city to till their fields. It was told Abimelech and he rose up against them and smote them. Thereupon he took the city. Slaying its inhabitants, he razed it to the ground and sowed it with salt. He thereupon sets fire to the temple of El berith (not to be identified with the temple of Baal berith) and all the lords of upper Shechem, who had taken refuge in the hold of this temple, perish in the flames. Then Abimelech went to the neighboring Thebez and took it. Here he met his doom. There was a strong tower within the city whither fled all they of the city and gat them up on its top. Here his skull was broken by a piece of millstone cast upon him by a woman. But while in the throes of death, Abimelech thinks only of his own honor. Calling to his armourbearer, he said to him, "Slay me that men say not of me, A woman slew him." So did the curse of God find the Shechemites and thereupon after God had done with him, Abimelech, the scourge of the Almighty. G. M. O.

Contribution

Esteemed Editor:

Allow me please a little space for a reply to your article entitled "As to 'Touchy Topics.'" But first let me thank you for your generosity in allowing my material to be published in its entirety even though I apparently came in the back door after the guests had been advised as to who and what was to be found in the chambers of the Standard Bearer. I shall make no conjectures for this manner of dealing nor shall I allow myself to be disturbed by the conjectures and insinuations of others.

In the first place you seemingly do not understand why this matter is a touchy subject and that is very

understandable in view of the fact that as a clergyman you are perhaps not so rudely approached nor personally harrassed nor embarrassed by the bond drives with which we are all acquainted. You have never been personally "bawled out" by a foreman for your refusal to participate nor called into a high executive's office for the same reason. Perhaps you have never contacted these super-patriots who if they know you do not make regular "investments in freedom" practically "blow up" in your face. I am sorry for your sake, as well as for others, that I did not clarify or explain my reasons for the title which you seem to feel is not the proper one for this material. I assure you that it is not due to any personal "touchiness" on this matter as those with whom I have discussed it may well testify.

I also realize that this material *could* have been stated in a simple, matter of fact business like way but I believe that each contributor is entitled to his own method of presenting his material. It could even have been done poetically had I been so inclined.

In the second place, you seemingly regard as of little importance how moneys or funds are invested. Are there no ethical implications whatsoever? Is it *simply* a cold financial transaction? If you were a Christian who had surplus money and an individual sought to borrow it for the purpose, let us say to make it very clear, of purchasing and operating a brothel, would you loan it to him and with a shrug of the shoulder say "I am not responsible!" But, you may say, this is the government. True. But you do not owe it as you owe taxes and other statutory assessments. Do you not by this manner of investment acquiesce to the disposal thereof by your purely voluntary act? Do we not as a denomination now have a \$10,000 stake in the war of the world with all that that implies? Is it not true that where your treasure is, there is your heart also?

In the third place you speak of the impossibility of juggling funds. And in this instance you are correct. Synod may not do this of its own accord. But would it not be at all possible to gain the consent of the donors for expenditure of at least a part of this fund for things that are more urgent? If I had budgeted my personal funds and set aside \$100.00 in the middle of the summer for next winter's coal and if my child should need an operation and my medical fund was not sufficient, it would require but elementary logic as to where I would get at least \$100.00 for the hospital bill. I certainly would not reason thus that I do not need the coal now but I need more medical funds so I will raise my assessment for that fund and invest the surplus from the other. Can't or Mayn't church funds be adjusted just as logically provided the consent of the legal claimants to a fund is obtained? Or why couldn't the surplus of this fund be "invested"

in the theological school or needy churches fund. Is it perhaps because the rate of interest isn't as high or is it a poor risk?

Neither is it clear from the minutes that this was a Mission fund. Allow me to quote a part of that minute: "— our treasurer has a good balance in nearly all of his accounts. Due to this fact, — recommended to invest \$10,000 of this money in government bonds." Could a mere mortal ever conclude from such a minute that this was only Mission fund money which was invested? I had already tried to obtain a better explanation but such was not forthcoming until I read yours.

One more remark. You state in your first paragraph that it was decided to invest this money "for the time being in government war bonds." Does this mean for ten years or do you also feel that there are no moral obligations implied when an investment of this nature is made?

Thanking you kindly for the space again allotted me and trusting that I shall from some source or other receive a full answer to the questions which I have raised, I remain,

Fraternally yours,
George TenElshof

Except a few more insinuations and a little more sarcasm, there is nothing new in the above contribution in addition to what the brother wrote before. To the tone of the article I have no desire to reply. It is true that Mr. TenElshof is entitled to his own method. So am I. As to the contents, I refer to my former reply. If anyone feels, however, that he can enlighten the brother more fully, he is welcome.

Ed.

Spoken By Jeremy The Prophet

"Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value." Matt. 27:9.

The above heading will perhaps evoke but little interest to those who are not acquainted with the problem which the text presents. Nor will the reading of the text and the context arouse much curiosity. The context relates how Judas returned to the temple and cast the thirty pieces of silver, his traitor's reward, at the feet of the chief priests and elders. And these latter, considering it unlawful to put the money in the treasury of the temple because it was the price of blood, decided to buy a field to be used as a cemetery

for strangers. And then we read in the verse following the text quoted above, "And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord had appointed me." Although this is still a part of the quotation which we have in the text (Matt. 27:9), it is evident that this was literally fulfilled by the chief priests, for we read in the verses 7 and 8 of the same chapter, "And they (the chief priests) took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day." *The problem. . . .*

Aceldama.the field of blood!

We all know the story. We have read it many times. Yet, even so, we have perhaps never realized that there was a problem of any kind here. If, however, we have taken the time and pains to look up this which "was spoken by Jeremy the prophet," we will also be aware of the problem that exists here. The fact is that one looks in vain for the above quotation in the writing of Jeremiah. In Jeremiah 18:2 we read of the "potter's house" and in chapter 19 of "the valley of the son of Hinnom." We are told that this valley, which was near Jerusalem, is to be identified with the potter's field which was purchased with the traitor's thirty pieces of silver. Apart from this we find nothing in the prophecy of Jeremiah that seems to bear any relation at all to the above mentioned quotation.

Now, what is remarkable is that we do find a passage, that is somewhat similar to this quotation, in the prophecy of Zechariah. A comparison between Matt. 27:9, 10 and Zechariah 11:12, 13 will show that if the former is a quotation of the latter, it is by no means literal. Yet, the similarity is so great that one can hardly escape the conclusion that Matthew must certainly have had the prophecy of Zechariah in mind when he interpreted the purchase of Aceldama as the fulfillment of prophecy. The passage in Zechariah, to which we have reference and which we mentioned above, reads: "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was priced at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord." I think we may, in this connection, safely dismiss the contention on the part of some that "unto the potter" in the above quotation of Zechariah is incorrect and that it should read "into the treasury." We do so upon the basis, that if Matthew had this passage in mind, which we have every reason to believe, then he also must have been mistaken when he spoke of "the potter" instead of "the treasury," as is the contention of those who hold this view.

In the light of the above the question naturally arises, how must it be explained that Matthew interprets the purchase of Aceldama as the fulfillment of that "which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet?" If he had said, "Zechariah the prophet," we would have no difficulty since from all appearances he seems to have had the passage of Zechariah in mind and simply quoted it in his own words since he was interested not so much in the words as in the idea expressed by Zechariah. However, Matthew speaks not of Zechariah but of Jeremiah and therefore the problem, how this is to be explained, presents itself.

Various Explanations Offered. . . .

As is to be expected, Bible expositors give many and various solutions to this problem. It will not be possible in this article, nor is it necessary to present and refute all the explanations that have been offered. We call attention therefore to only a few of the more commonly accepted ones.

Perhaps the most simple of all the explanations is that Matthew had in mind a certain prophecy of Jeremiah which was never written or, if written, was lost. This, of course, is no solution at all. It amounts to simply an easy way to avoid the difficulty. It is at most an assumption for which there is no basis except that one cannot find this quotation in the prophecy of Jeremiah.

According to others we have here a slip of the memory on the part of Matthew. He really intended to write Zechariah instead of Jeremiah or simply forgot that the quotation was that of Zechariah. But also this is no solution. Moreover, it is a view to which we can never subscribe if we hold to the Divine and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. It is very well possible that Matthew may have made a mistake but it is not possible that the Holy Spirit should be mistaken.

Upon the same ground we must also reject the view which holds that the Jews may have deleted this passage from the book of Jeremiah. Besides one naturally wonders when this could have been done and why it should have been done with this particular passage.

Finally there is a popular view that contends that this apparent enigma is the result of a transcriber's error. According to this view Matthew did write "Zechariah." However, instead of writing the full name, he wrote the Greek abbreviation of it, which is "Zriou." Now, in the course of rewriting someone wrote "Iriou" which happens to be the abridged form of "Jeremiah." Thus through the simple change of a Z to an I, what was originally Zechariah became Jeremiah. One feels immediately that this is also merely an attempt to get rid of the dilemma. Besides there is no basis at all for this contention.

Correct View. . . .

Since all the above views and all similar views, which attempt to explain Matthew's reference to Jeremiah as an error, are either untenable or fail to give a satisfactory solution to the problem, there seems to be but one alternative and that is to explain Matthew's statement as it stands. Then we must hold first of all that Matthew wrote exactly what he intended to write and that he actually regarded the purchase of Aceldama as the fulfillment of the prophecy of Jeremiah. In the second place we must hold that Matthew had in mind the words of Zechariah and purposely quotes in a free way this prophecy of Zechariah when he declares that the purchase of the potter's field by the chief priests is the fulfillment of that which was spoken by Jeremiah.

In this connection we may quote Alfred Edersheim, a well known writer of sacred history. He says, "And 'the potter's field'—the very spot on which Jeremiah had been Divinely directed to prophesy against Jerusalem and against Israel; how was it now all fulfilled in the light of the completed sin and apostacy of the people, as prophetically described by Zechariah! This Tophet of Jeremiah, now that they had valued and sold at thirty shekel Israel's Messiah-Shepherd—truly a Tophet, and become a field of blood! Surely, not an accidental coincidence this, that it should be the place of Jeremy's announcement of judgment: not accidental, but veritably a fulfillment of his prophecy! And so St. Matthew, targuming this prophecy in form as in its spirit, and in true Jewish manner stringing to it the prophetic description furnished by Zechariah, sets the event before us as the fulfillment of Jeremy's prophecy." Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus The Messiah*, Vol. II, p. 576.

According to this interpretation, Matthew sees in the purchase of the potter's field the fulfillment of both the prophecy of Zechariah and that of Jeremiah.

It is not difficult to see that we have here the fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy. This is especially plain when we understand what took place at that time. Zechariah goes to the princes of Israel and says, "If you think it is right, pay me what I'm worth and if not, forbear." And the princes of Israel pay him thirty pieces of silver, the price of a common slave. That was Israel's valuation of the servant of the Lord and therefore of the Lord Himself, as is clear from what the Lord says to Zechariah. How clearly then was this prophecy fulfilled when Israel pays thirty pieces of silver to get rid of its Prince! The Lord had tested Israel and Israel in the blindness of its sinful heart had valued the invaluable One and found Him worth thirty pieces of silver! Truly a fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah.

However, the question still remains, why does Matthew speak of the prophecy of Jeremy? What place does the prophecy of Jeremiah have in the picture?

The connection must undoubtedly be found in "the potter's field" of which both Zechariah and Jeremiah speak. According to Zechariah, the money was "cast to the potter." According to Jeremiah 18 and 19, the prophet went to the potter's house and then to the "valley of the son of Hinnom." Here in this valley he prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem. Assuming now that the potter's field was located in this valley, we find that Israel buys the very spot where Jeremiah had many years before predicted its downfall.

Now the point to be noticed here is that it was by means of the price with which Israel had sold the Christ that it buys this field. Through its sale of the Messiah, Israel sealed its doom. And it completes the transaction when, by the price of the sale, it buys the field where its doom was foretold. *Yes, Israel buys its cemetery by selling the Prince of Life! And for Israel, spiritually, there is nothing left but a burying ground.* How clearly then also the prophecy of Israel's doom, as spoken by Jeremiah, is fulfilled through the fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah.

And thus we can understand that Matthew, although he quotes the prophecy of Zechariah, can truly say, "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet!"

H. D. W.

History of Christian Education in This Century (II)

When the men of De Afscheiding came to this country in the middle of the nineteenth century they confessed that one of the reasons for their coming was "That we may enjoy that great privilege of seeing our children instructed in christian schools, a privilege that we lack here, since in the public schools a general moral instruction is given which may offend neither Jew nor Romanist, while free schools are barred." (Pamphlet; *Landverhuizing*, Brummelkamp en Van Raalte).

So there came to this country at least a nucleus of men who clearly saw that Christian Instruction was necessary. They had written it as their conviction that "Christian parents cannot answer for it that they have not the opportunity to have their children instructed according to their convictions, yes, every heart trembles when they take the baptismal vow because they swear falsely" (*Gedenkboek*, Vijftigjarig Jubileum, P. 6).

From which historical facts it seems to be evident that the men who landed on our shores in and around 1850 felt the necessity of positive christian instruction and based the necessity for this also upon the promise they had given at Baptism that they would educate their children religiously.

But now one finds a very strange thing, and that is, that although these people purportedly came to these shores to find christian instruction, yet one has to search the pages of history with a spot-light to find mention of any such schools existing. A careful study of history from about 1840 to about 1890 shows that very, very little came of any actual christian school movement. It is true that in and about 1849 we find a report reading as follows: "Schools were erected but few in number." And Dr. Wyckoff also reported that "the colony is paying as much attention as possible to schools and christian education . . . they have a Dutch school and an English one in the City and at Zeeland a Dutch School" (Yearbook, Chr. Sch. 1925-1926, P 81-82). Nevertheless in the year 1875 came this report, "Outside of Grand Rapids there are three places where christian instruction is given, in Muskegon, Grand Haven and Kalamazoo." A good twenty five years had passed and yet the matter of christian instruction seems to have been woefully neglected. A christian school made its appearance in Grand Rapids in 1855-1856, in 1875 Williams St. school appeared. There were also churches here and there where the pastors gathered the children in the church building or in private houses and gave them instruction.

In De Wachter (1870) we hear the sigh, "How terrible and discouraging is the condition in America . . . we feel painfully the serious want and unjustifiable neglect of our children" (Yearbook, 1925-1926, P. 86). An attempt was made at a school in Pella in 1861 but in 1867 it had ceased to exist (The Christian Reformed Church, Beets, P. 139). And from 1849 on, for several years a school was maintained by Peter De Jong. But after all it remains a fact that the christian school did not take hold in America until about a half century after the men of de Afscheiding landed here. It seems the Pioneers had either forgotten their high ideal or were content with something less than positive christian education in the christian school. The Pioneers for instance settled in Holland 1847-1850 yet the first officially established christian school is 1902; in Pella they arrived in 1847 yet the school dates at that place from 1911. We could go on to show that almost one half century went by without an established christian school, barring then the few exceptions which we mentioned above.

Now, what happened during that near-half-century? This article must be historical rather than an interpretation of tendencies, but it is a matter of

history that during those fifty years two things happened:

First of all on April 7, 1894 (where seven members were present, alas) there was a discussion of the burning question, "Why is it that Christian instruction in this country does not make any progress?" And at that time there were three answers given. I shall quote just one at this time, and that was as follows: I quote again, "The ministers do not show enough interest" (Yearbook, 1925-1926, P. 92). In many cases there was even active opposition. These ministers, in turn, often reflected the sentiment of the consistories. It is a matter of history, e.g. that in 1883 a certain Mr. Tuininga asked the church of Grand Haven to use the basement for the purpose of giving covenant education. It was denied him. We read further that attempts were made to interest the consistories of the 1st and 2nd Christian Reformed churches there, but these attempts met with the same failure. There were also ministers who were exceptions to these rules, there were some who championed the cause with might and main and we often read of ministers who dared the wrath of their consistories, even to such lengths that consistory members laid down their offices and families left the church. In Patterson, for instance, the minister, Rev. Van Vlaanderen had an elder say to him, "If you mention it again I will walk out." And the Rev. answered him thus, "You are not brave enough to do that." Later, as a consequence of this, we read that practically the entire consistory resigned.

From these things it is evident that it took much fighting of the good fight to establish christian schools. A great many people in those days simply did not realize the necessity of christian education, and neither did they want to pay the expense of such schools of their own.

But one cannot leave it there. We ask, how could it ever be that people did not realize the need of christian schools? History bears me out when I say that many people at that time (as today also) thought that the public schools in this country weren't so bad. Weren't they neutral? And couldn't the existing public schools be "christianized?" People were slow to detect what Mr. Hodge had said about the instruction in the public schools being anti-religious. Many people argued that a christian home and a christian church was enough. At public gatherings you might hear a speaker say "Let us do everything in our power to make the public schools christian." In De Wachter of Feb. 5, 1896 you may read an article saying, "Let us at least make an attempt to save the public school before establishing a separate school."

But there were everywhere men who by the spoken and the written word fought on, insisting that "a christianized public school would never satisfy" and

that a "public school cannot be made christian" (Mr. Bennink).

Gradually we see the christian school gaining foothold. Slowly on churches, pastors and consistory awoke to their high calling.

And thus the flourishing era of the christian school period began. We find schools in Chicago since 1884, Patterson, N.J. since 1892. In Wisconsin, Sheboygan, 1898, Holland Michigan 1902. From there it traveled toward the regions beyond the Mississippi. Sioux Center being one of the first, 1903, Orange City 1904, Hull, 1909, Rock Valley 1911.

Today it numbers about one hundred schools in about eighteen states and Canada. It has grown into a mighty plant. We are in danger of becoming popular. It is a mighty plant, but there are signs of root-disease, some branches bear no fruit and some bear bitter fruit of world-conformity. Except we abide in the fundamentals of covenant, antithesis, and heavenly mindedness we make sad history today.

M. G.

Door Gods Arm Verlost

(Psalm 77)

Het is Asaf gegeven veel te zingen aangaande de benauwdheid en de verlossing. Daarom hebben zijn psalmen een Messiaansche klank. Ook hier beluisteren we een dieper zuchten en schreeuwen dan van een gewoon mensch. Het is de kreet van Messias die eeuwen van te voren zijn lijden deed vooruitlijden door de Profeten.

"Mijne stem is tot God en ik roep, mijne stem is tot God, en Hij zal het oor tot mij neigen!" Ziedaar de aanhef.

Allereerst zien wij hier het aanwenden van de beste medicijn tegen benauwdheid. Met nadruk wordt het ons gezegd, dat Asaf in moeite zich tot God wendde. Het staat er tweemaal in het eerste vers. In moeite is God de eenigste medicijn.

Voorts toont het gebruik van het werkwoord "roepen", dat zijn benauwdheid groot geweest is. Het werkwoord *roepen* heeft de idee van een luid geluid, gelijk aan den donder. Het is een schreeuwen geweest.

Eindelijk zit er groot geloof in dit roepen. Terwijl Asaf roept, weet hij dat God zal hooren. Het is hier zoo geheel anders dan in het roepen van de heidenen tot hun afgod; of ook geheel anders dan het tegenwoordige bidden van de valsche kerk. Dat de vraag zoo vaak gedaan wordt: worden alle onze gebeden verhoord? toont dat er iets fundamenteels ontbreekt aan onze beschouwing van het gebed. Zekerlijk, *alle bidden* wordt verhoort! Daar gaat niets af. Jezus zeide het

immers: die bidt ontvangt! Doch hier zit het hem: alle bidden is geen bidden. Wanneer het object van uw gebed de levende God is, bidt ge oprecht. Niemand kan de zotte gebeden van onzen tijd bidden voor het aangezicht van Hem die waarlijk God is!

Doch Asaf *bidt*! Daarom kan hij temidden van zijn benauwd roepen zeggen: "en Hij zal het oor tot mij neigen!"

"Ten dage mijnen benauwdheid zocht ik den Heere; mijne hand was des nachts uitgestrekt en liet niet af; mijne ziel weigerde getroost te worden."

Zalig, welgelukzalig, is de mensch die God zoekt! Versta mij wel, alleen die mensch is zalig die *den waren God* zoekt. Velen zoeken een afgod. En vinden duisternissen en grootere benauwdheden. Doch hoe zal ik weten dat ik vat heb aan den waren God? Het antwoord ligt voor de hand. Alleen die God is waard gezocht te worden, die Zich openbaarde in Zijn Woord. Alle idee van God die niet in de Heilige Schrift vervat is, is afgod en leidt ten verderve.

En zulke zoeken houdt aan. Den ganschen nacht hield Asaf aan. Figuurlijk uitgedrukt, gewaagt Asaf van een staan met uitgestrekte arm voor Zijn aangezicht. En als men dan aankwam dragen met veel en velerlei om Asaf in zijn smart te troosten, zoo wees hij al zulk pogen van de hand. Zijn ziel weigerde om zoo getroost te worden.

Wat de oorzaak van Asaf's leed is weten we niet. Evenwel schijnt het in verband gestaan te hebben met zijn zonde. Want dan maken we misbaar voor Gods aangezicht. Asaf getuigt ervan. Hij zegt: Dacht ik aan God zoo maakte ik misbaar; peinsde hij op God zoo werd zijn ziel in het binnenste van hem overstelpt.

Dat zit zoo: God bracht Asaf's zonde in het licht van Zijn aangezicht, Zijn openbaring, Zijn wet. Zoo kunt ge verstaan dat God Asaf's oogen wakende hield en dat hij in stomheid verslagen was. Verslagenheid der ziel is de vrucht van twee dingen: onze zonde en de liefde Gods. Als we beseffen dat we tegen Hem dien we liefhebben gezondigd hebben, dan breekt ons het hart en wordt de geest verslagen. Dan is de mond stom. Denkt b.v. aan Rom. 3:19. Als God straks de zonde in 't eeuwig licht van Zijn oordeel openbaart, dan wordt alle mond gestopt en dan is de gansche wereld voor God verdoemelijk. (In het hart, want objectief is dat nu ook alzoo voor God.) Welnu, die stomheid en het bewustzijn van onze doemwaardigheid is ons deel nu al reeds. En dat is genade. Wij hebben onzen oordeelsdag elken dag.

En dan breekt ons hart en worden wij verslagen. Omdat de liefde Gods in ons hart is uitgestort.

Asaf is voorts aan 't mijmeren gegaan over het verleden. Hij zag daar zijn snarenspeel. Dat snarenspeel vertegenwoordigt in een woord de verlossing waaraan hij deel had, de ervaringen van goedertierenheid, de toezeggingen, de genade en Gods wondere

barmhartigheden.

Hij wist dat hij verlost was in Gods erbarmen. De toezeggingen Gods waren in het verleden zijn deel geweest.

Doch die holpen hen nu niet!

Nu is hij in barmhartigheid. *Nu* wenscht hij te zingen en te kwinkeleren van zijn God.

En het schijnt wel alsof al die heerlijkheden van verlossing en genade een einde hebben. Het was nu eenmaal een feit, niet te ontkennen, dat hij in benauwdheid verkeerde. De groote vraag in zijn nacht is: Waar is God op wien ge bouwdet, en aan wien ge uw zaak vertrouwdet?!

Wel, hij zal de eene mogelijkheid zich voor stellen. Ze is deze: God gaat mij in eeuwigheden verstooten. Voortaan gaat Hij niet meer goedgunstig zijn. Hij was goed gunstig tegenover mij in het verleden, zoodat mijn snarenspeel weerklonk in groote blijdschap, doch dat is uit. God is veranderd tegen mij ten kwade. Het is uit met al Zijn goedgunstigheid. Nog erger: Zijn goedertierenheid houdt op in eeuwigheid! Van nu aan vergeet Hij zijne genade en vanwege grooten toorn over mijne zonde heeft Hij van nu aan Zijn barmhartigheid toegesloten. Hij heeft geen medelijden meer met mij. Het is finaal afgesloten.

Deze mogelijkheid heeft Asaph over wogen doch de vrucht is wrang. Het werd er niet beter op. "Daarna zeide ik: Dit krenkt mij!" Geen wonder. Die eerste mogelijkheid is vreeselijk. Het is een *onmogelijkheid*. Gods genade, gunst, goedertierenheid en goedgunstigheid zijn eeuwig en nemen nimmer een einde. Als die deugden ooit zouden ophouden, dan houdt God op.

Dat zag Asaf en daarom zeide hij *daarna*: Dit krenkt mij! Geen wonder. Hij had God lief en wilde daarom God handhaven in zijn binnenste hart, ook dan zelfs wanneer hij in groote benauwdheid en duisternis was.

Wat dan?

Dit: de rechterhand des Heeren verandert! De rechterhand des Allerhoogsten is de uitvoering van Zijn Raad. En dan schijnt het alsof we in de elkander opvolgende oogenblikken een verandering zien in God, doch het is slechts schijn. Wij veranderen, God nooit. Denkt aan het beeld van een stroom die een scheepje op haar boezem draagt. Als dat scheepje stroom op glijdt, gaat alles wel. Als dat scheepje stroom op vaart, is alles hem tegen. Zoo ook met ons. Als we in het licht wandelen voor Gods aangezicht dan hoort de wereld uw zangen, met Amen Amen na. Doch als we in de zonde wandelen dan is God een worstelaar die tegen ons in het strijdperk treedt. Dan gaat het tegen stroom op.

En dan gaat Asaf het verleden nog eens zien. En daar ziet hij de wonderdaden des Heeren die Zijn volle uit alle hunne benauwdheden verlost heeft,

En temidden van al Gods wonderwerken zag hij dat eene groote wonderwerk van Israel's verlossing uit Egypte. Israel was in het diensthuis der zonde en groote benauwdheid was hun deel. Doch toen de Heere hen in het hart greep en deed roepen om verlossing, toen heeft Hij Mozes, Aaron en Mirjam gezonden om Zijn volk te verlossen. En waar het eerst scheen alsof alles hun tegen was, wordt voor hunne verwonderende oogen geopenbaard, dat alles voor hen is. Met zingen en met juichen worden ze door den Heere geleid waar een land vloeiende van melk en honig.

En daarom zullen we psalmen zingen in den nacht totdat geen maan meer schijnt. Ik mag in den nacht benauwd worden en omringt van droefenissen. Geen nood. God is de eeuwig getrouwe VerbondsGod. Hij zal Zijn Verbond in eeuwigheid gedenken. Ik weet nu, in den nacht, dat Zijn rechterhand verandert. Na het zure geeft Hij 't zoet.

Het slot van mijn psalm in nacht zal dit finale couplet hebben: Ik zal God mijn God nog loven!

Om Jezus wil, Wiens nacht, Wiens eeuwige nacht een einde had tot den glorieuzen morgen der opstanding!

G. V.

Foreknowledge and Predestination

There are possibly no two other terms in the field of theology more commonly confused and misunderstood than the terms foreknowledge and foreordination, or the more familiar word, predestination.

Both these terms have this in common that they are Scriptural terms, each referring to some definite phase of the eternal counsel of God's will, in which divine election and reprobation take a prominent place. They are intimately related to each other as cause and effect, since God's sovereign foreknowledge is the determining cause of His eternal predestination.

Turning to the Scripture we meet various passages, particularly in the New Testament, that speak of God's foreknowledge. Peter addresses the strangers of the dispersion as "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father," making God's foreknowledge the basis for their election. I Peter 1:2.

In this same chapter he speaks of Christ as a lamb without spot or blemish "Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world." verse 20. Although the translation speaks of "foreordained" the word in the original is the same as is used in the second verse and definitely means "foreknown." (The word is *proginoskoo*, not *pro-ordizo*). The Dutch accordingly has "voorgekend." Thus Peter speaks also of Christ, as well as of the elect, as having been foreknown from all eternity. He was foreknown as

the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world.

In his Pentecostal address Peter speaks of Christ as having been delivered into wicked hands to be crucified and slain "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." Acts 2:23. Never could wicked hands have taken Him had these hands not been determined by God according to His eternal foreknowledge. God determined the time, the place, the occasion, the circumstances and the persons for carrying out the atrocious act of crucifying the Lord of glory. By that very act He would make atonement for sin. God willed to save His people, whom He foreknew as His own, by the death of His Son on the cross.

In this connection it is interesting to note that when Scripture states that God knows His people, this divine knowledge of His own is rooted in foreknowledge. God says of Abraham, Gen. 18:19, "For I know him that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him." This can only mean that God knew Abraham with an eternal knowledge. He foreknew him in sovereign, unchangable love. And that is true of all His people. He has chosen them on the basis of His eternal foreknowledge. By grace He redeems them on the cross, makes them His people through the indwelling Spirit in their hearts and blesses them with all spiritual blessings to fit them to His service. God forms them as His own according to His eternal good pleasure.

But Scripture also speaks of predestination. In the first chapter of Ephesians Paul states, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption through Jesus Christ unto Himself according to the good pleasure of His will." Verse 5. And in the eleventh verse, "Being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His will." Both passages refer to the divine purpose of God's predestination. God predestinated His people unto a very definite purpose, a definite and exalted glory, which is realized in their adoption unto Himself in Christ Jesus.

A very significant passage for our purpose is Rom. 8:29, "For whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." This passage is particularly significant because both foreknowledge and predestination are mentioned together. The more so, because they are mentioned in their relation to one another. The apostle is giving assurance of the fact "that all things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to His purpose." He does this by showing that the salvation of the called ones is an established fact with God Himself from eternity.

The chain of salvation is eternally bound fast in God. For whom He foreknew He also predestinated. . . . and whom He predestinated He also called, and whom He called He also justified, and whom He justified He also glorified. (verses 29 and 30). The viewpoint is not of what takes place in time, but of what is established already in the counsel of God's will. The elect are not only foreknown and predestinated, but they are also called and justified and glorified in God's eternal decree. Nothing can change that established fact. It rests on eternal foreknowledge, which is the divine motive why God predestinated them to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. No wonder, then, that all things must necessarily work together for good for those who love God.

In speaking of God's foreknowledge we may never forget that God is God, the wholly Other, also in His eternal foreknowledge. Man knows as man, but God knows as God. Man may make certain observations of existing circumstances and thereupon make some uncanny predictions. The weatherman, for example, may be quite correct in determining the weather and temperature more than twenty four hours in advance. The news commentator may shock the world with his predictions based on events that have already transpired. But in either case this foreknowledge is only a conclusion based on certain established facts. And the prediction has but a limited degree of certainty and accuracy. But God's foreknowledge is original in God, sovereignly independent from any outside circumstances or conditions.

God's foreknowledge is even the determining cause for that which is. God does not see in advance that a certain series of circumstances must have a certain definite result, but God wills the circumstances and the conditions in His eternal foreknowledge. But God is the originator, the creative cause of all that He foreknows. He wills it, determines it, and it happens accordingly. He foreknows it because He wills it so. As an artist conceives of a beautiful painting in his own mind and gives expression to it only as his brush sweeps over the canvas, so God in His eternal foreknowledge conceives of all things which He calls into being in time.

In that way God also foreknows His people in Christ Jesus. He does not foreknow His people because of foreseen faith and works and perseverance, as the Arminian likes to present it. Election based on such a knowledge is no election, is not worthy of the sovereignly independent God. Such a presentation of God's foreknowledge is a flat denial of God Himself. Not God, but man then determines who shall be saved to enter into God's glory.

On the contrary, God foreknows His people in Christ Jesus with an eternally sovereign, independent,

determinative, creative knowledge. God foreknew Christ, Who is the Son, the express image of His likeness and the effulgence of His glory. God willed that Christ should be the Servant par excellence, in Whom all the fulness of divine blessedness should dwell forever. In Christ God foreknows His people, chosen unto Himself with a foreknowledge of love. God knows them collectively as the assembly of the elect, the body of Christ. But He also knows them individually, each one by name according to his person and nature, according to his place and position in the household of faith. He conceived of them as so many brethren in Christ Jesus, and engraved them in the palms of His hands. He loves them for His own Name's sake in Covenant friendship, delighting in them as His masterpiece, which perfectly shows forth the glorious praises of His name forever.

That is God's foreknowledge. In distinction from that, predestination is the eternal act of God whereby He sovereignly determines all things to serve His supreme purpose, the most excellent glory of His Name. This predestination is God's plan of the ages. Not as an architect makes a blue-print of the structure he intends to build, which is but a lifeless slip of paper and becomes useless as soon as the structure is complete. God's predestination is the almighty, living thought of the eternally counselling God, coming into full expression when God's counsel is realized. As a result of this divine decree He commands and it stands forth. All rational and irrational creatures, men and angels, good and evil, things in heaven and things on earth belong to that living counsel of the Most High. The time and place of our birth and death, our daily existence and our place in life form a part of that decree. Even the good works of the believers have been prepared beforehand that they may walk in them during this present time. Eph. 2:10. Together all things serve the purpose which God has established from eternity in that counsel of His will.

Especially God's people form an integral part of that predestination. "For whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren." God's foreknowledge is the divine motive for His predestination. God willed Christ to be the Firstborn, for which reason He gave Him many brethren, God chose these brethren, ordained them unto eternal life. Election is first of all personal. Every one of the elect is personally chosen, known of God. Each one has his name written in the book of life from before the foundation of the world. But election also includes that God has ordained them to become partakers of a definite and exalted glory, the end unto which they were chosen. That end is the adoption to sons, the conformation into the image of God's Son, so that He is the Firstborn among many

brethren. Many sons must carry and radiate the glory of the Firstborn of the Father. His glory must be reflected by thousands upon thousands who are sons through Him and are made like Him. So that even as He reflects the glory of the Father, the Triune God, so God Himself may be glorified forever in Christ and in all those who belong to Christ. The glorified saints shall share the likeness and life of Christ, to be like unto God, as sons in His house, to dwell with Him, to experience and tell His praises forever.

Foreknowledge and predestination, though each distinct in itself, are most intimately related. The former is the divine motive for the latter, that to God may be the praise and glory eternally.

C. H.

Plenary and Verbal Inspiration Of Holy Writ

Inspiration is that act of God, whereby He moved holy men so that they infallibly, unerringly wrote the Word of God. This refers, of course, to the original manuscripts. We believe that these Divine Scriptures, in their entirety, are the direct product of the living God and of the power of His grace. Although mention, then, can be made of the Divine and human "factors" with respect to the composition of the Bible, these "human factors," although referring to the holy men who wrote the Scriptures, must never be regarded as anything else than the Divinely willed and prepared instruments whereby the living God revealed unto us and bestowed upon us His own Word.

We can distinguish between "plenary" and "verbal" inspiration, although they are very closely related. "Verbal" inspiration signifies, naturally, that the holy writers were verbally inspired. The very words and letters which they wrote were written with infallible accuracy, as directly under the influence of the Spirit of God. This is clearly proved by a passage such as Gal. 3:16. There we read: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." In this text the apostle Paul bases an argument upon a single letter, distinguishing between the plural "seeds" and the singular "seed."

Plenary inspiration is closely related to the above-mentioned idea of verbal inspiration. The word "plenary" signifies "full, complete." When associated with inspiration it conveys the thought that every word, in its order, is infallible, that the entire Bible is completely the inspired Word of God. Verbal inspiration, when applied to the entire Bible, is necessarily

plenary inspiration. It is possible, however, to divorce the two, to conceive of certain parts of Scripture as being verbally inspired without necessarily confessing that the entire Bible is Divinely inspired. This error has been committed in the past. We believe, however, that inspiration is also plenary, that all of Holy Writ is directly the product of the living God. Verbal inspiration must therefore be applied to the entire Word of God. This truth is based upon a passage such as 2 Tim. 3:16. There we read: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." It is true that this text is more difficult than may appear at the first glance. However, we may safely assert that the translation which we have quoted is a correct rendition of the text. Space hardly allows me to enter into a detailed discussion of this passage. We would, in this connection, refer the inquiring reader, if he can read the Holland, to page 540 of Volume 8, where the editor of our Standard Bearer explains this passage in detail. Suffice it at this time to say that all Scripture, the entire Bible is given us by inspiration of God. Plenary inspiration has the support of Holy Writ.

It is not the purpose of this article to dwell at length on the idea of inspiration. This has been done in our paper not so long ago. I would rather view the words "plenary" and "verbal" in their relation to one another and emphasize that they are inseparable, that verbal inspiration can be maintained only on the basis that all Scripture is inspired, and that, naturally, plenary inspiration rests on the supposition that the Bible is verbally God's own book. The idea has been advanced that the Bible contains the Word of God, that the Word of God is in the Bible. All Scripture, then, was not Divinely inspired. Certain parts may be God's own Word, but this could not be said of the entire Word of God. We maintain, on the other hand, that God Himself is the Author of the entire Bible and that He did not leave a solitary part of it to the imagination of man.

Plenary inspiration is necessary because the denial of it must lead the Church of God into a hopeless subjectivism. Presuppose that only parts of the Word of God are inspired, but that other parts of the same Scriptures are of man. What will be the result? Who, then, will determine what is and what is not the Word of God? Which parts of Holy Writ can then serve as a rule for our life and conduct? To which parts of the Scriptures can we submit as speaking to us with Divine authority? We would therefore drift into a hopeless subjectivism. Moreover, if man must determine what is and what is not the Word of God, the result will be that the Bible will necessarily be unclothed of all Divine authority. We cannot be certain that any particular passage of the Scriptures is

Gods' own Word. And man's word carries no authority. We thereby lose the Scriptures as an infallible norm for our life and walk.

Plenary inspiration is necessary, in the second place, because the denial of it would imply that the Scriptures are characterized by all the shortcomings and corruptions of man. If the Bible is not the Word of God it is, of course, the work of man. There is no other alternative. If only parts of Scripture are verbally inspired the other parts of Holy Writ must necessarily be the product of the mind of man. The implications of this reasoning are far-reaching indeed. Presuppose that the living God had left the writing of His Word of truth to man. What guarantee have we then, that men would not write those Scriptures, that will of God in harmony with their own tastes and dislikes? First of all, man is by nature a liar and the truth is not in him. He loves the darkness and hates the light. He loves iniquity and unrighteousness and hates all goodness and righteousness. What assurance have we that man would not write the Word of God according to his own inclinations and desires? It is surely hardly conceivable that man, as the author of the norm for our life and conduct, would ascribe all the glory and honour unto the living God. How, then, could the living Lord entrust the writing of His Word to carnal and sinful man? Moreover, in the second place and in close connection with this, man, although renewed in principle by the grace of the living God, is but in principle holy. He has but a small beginning of obedience. He is and remains, as long as he is in this earthly tabernacle, a child of God only in principle. And the Scriptures clearly emphasize that the heart is subtle, more subtle than any other thing. The flesh is in conflict with the Spirit, also in the child of God. This is certainly a fact to be reckoned with. And although it is true that he in principle understands the things which are of the Spirit of God and also rejoices in those things, yet he does the things he would not and does not the things which he would perform. And this is true especially as far as his attitude toward the Word of God is concerned. The history of the Church of God throughout the ages testifies loudly to this effect. Is it not an undeniable fact that, in the course of the history of the Church, the attempt has repeatedly been made to distort the Word of God so as to be able to maintain one's own evil and sinful inclinations. Is it not true that man, to maintain his own worldly-mindedness, has deliberately distorted the Word of God? Are not our Reformed confessions also a testimony against the winds of heresy which have never failed to blow upon the ocean of time? Did not vain man continually attack the Divine Sonship of our Lord, God's absolute sovereignty and man's utter depravity, the particular character of the passion of the Christ, and the

efficacy of Divine grace? Is it not true, also of ourselves, whereby we persistently would seek ourselves, and that this struggle demands much prayer and faith to uphold the testimony of Holy Writ? Yea, do we not have the testimony within our hearts that the inspiration of the Scriptures is also plenary? Let us, when analyzing the question whether the Scriptures are wholly the Word of the Lord, examine our own hearts. Who, then, would dare deny that there is continuous conflict within us against the Scriptures? Our own heart therefore loudly testifies that the Word of God is *not* as we would have it be, and that consequently the Scriptures could not have been written by man. How differently the Bible would have been written if the Lord had left it in our hands! Surely, plenary inspiration is necessary because of our own evil passions and desires—otherwise we would never have had a Word of *God*.

Thirdly, plenary inspiration is necessary because the Word of God is a revelation of the things which never could have entered into the hearts and minds of man. Not only does the Word of God speak of things which are spiritually repulsive to our own heart and flesh, but it also reveals things to us which could possibly arise in the imagination of man. Scripture speaks of heavenly things, directs us to the culmination of God's eternal counsel in the new heavens and upon the new earth. Even as the natural man does not understand the spiritual things of the Spirit, so also the earthy man, with his earthy knowledge and wisdom, cannot reach unto the things which are heavenly and eternal. We can only conceive of earthy things. This accounts for the fact that Scripture's description of the heavenly Jerusalem is clothed in an earthy language adapted to our earthy existence. If we, therefore, are to have revelation, if we are to be have knowledge of the heavenly things, if we are to be comforted in the midst of this earthy vale of tears with respect to the heavenly glories which await us, only He, Who is in heaven and descended from heaven, can reveal these things unto us. This, too, is an undeniable fact. How could God leave the writing of heavenly matters, then, to men who could possibly conceive of them?

For these reasons we must maintain the plenary as well as verbal character of Divine inspiration. Every word of the Scriptures, also in its order, is the direct product of Divine inspiration. Only thus can the authority of Holy Writ be established. And this is indispensable as far as our comfort and spiritual life are concerned. A word of man is meaningless and without authority. The Bible, however, is the Word of God. And this does not merely imply that it is an authoritative rule for our life so that we must be subject to it. It also means that God will maintain His own Word, that the Bible is faithful and true, that

its promises are Yea and Amen, and that it is a sure guide which leads us unerringly into the glory which the Lord holds before us in the Scriptures and which He shall bestow upon all those who love His appearing.
H. V.

The Authorship Of The Book Of Revelation

When speaking of the authorship of any one of the books of the Bible, we must always bear in mind that we can speak of a twofold authorship of each book. Scripture is the word of God and in no sense is it the word of man; yet it pleased God to have His Word recorded for us through the instrumentality of men in the way of organic inspiration. Therefore we can speak of a primary and a secondary authorship. The primary authorship of every book of the Bible must be ascribed to God, but the secondary authorship is to be ascribed to some man whom God chose, prepared, inspired, illumined and moved to record His Word in human language. These human authors number forty or more. The exact number cannot with certainty be stated. In the book of Psalms you have more than one author. It is debated whether Paul is the author to the Epistle to the Hebrews or some other Apostle or Exangelist. Similarly it must be determined whether the Gospel according to John, the Epistles of John and the Revelation of John are written by the same man. There is not agreement either on the authorship of this book of Revelation, and it is interesting to consider the arguments for and against the common conception that the Apostle John is the author.

If we were to ask the question, "To whom must the authorship of the book of Revelation be ascribed?" we would have to answer in the light of the above that the primary authorship is to be ascribed to God while the secondary authorship is to be attributed to a certain John. However we feel that when we are assigned the topic, "The Authorship Of The Book Of Revelation," our essay is meant to be one on the human or secondary authorship of the book of Revelation. There is and can be no dispute about the primary authorship unless it would be presented by the unbeliever who denies that the Bible either whole or in part is the Word of God. In verse one we read very plainly that it is the "Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto Him." There is no argument possible then that this is not the Word of God. If our essay were meant to serve the purpose of refuting the stand that this book is not the Word of God, we feel that we would not be assigned to write about the authorship of just one book of the Bible and that a different

title would be chosen and so worded to indicate that we must show that the book of Revelation is the Word of God. On the other hand the secondary authorship of this book of Revelation is and has been debated for quite some time. We will therefore present to you in this essay the arguments for and against the view that this book was written by the Apostle John.

The authorship of the book of Revelation has been ascribed to no less than three men named John: namely, the Apostle John, John Mark and a certain elder named John. Those who hold to the view that the author of this book is a certain elder named John deny also that the epistles of John were written by the Apostle John and maintain that both the epistles and the book of Revelation were written by this elder named John. They base their contention on the fact that in neither of these books does the author claim to be the Apostle John. In the Epistles he merely identifies himself as "The elder," and in the book of Revelation merely "John."

Besides being attributed to one of these three men called John there was also a sect that attributed the authorship of this book to Cerinthus. We dismiss this view immediately for in the fourth verse the author plainly identifies himself as John.

That the Apostle John was the author was first denied by Dionysius of Alexandria. Before his time the authorship was ascribed to the Apostle. It was Luther who in later years expressed his conviction that the Apostle was not the author and who diffused this stand through his influence.

1. The first argument that is raised against the Apostle being the author is that the author merely calls himself John and in verse nine of chapter one presents himself as their brother and companion. Still more conclusive they maintain is the fact that he is called the "servant" of Christ in the first verse of chapter one.

2. The second argument raised is that the author of this book sees in the twenty-first chapter twelve foundations to the new Jerusalem and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Were the author of this book the Apostle John, then he would see his own name and himself among the four and twenty elders before God's throne. This would be impossible it is maintained for John was yet alive and on this earth.

3. Thirdly it is stated that the style of writing displayed in this book is very different from that in both the Gospel according to John and the Epistles of John.

4. A fourth argument is that when John states in chapter one verse nine that he was on the Isle of Patmos "for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ," this does not mean that he was banished to this Isle as a form of persecution because he

preached the Word of God and testified of Jesus Christ. Rather, it is contended, does this mean that God brought John to this Isle that he might receive these visions and the testimony of Jesus Christ in order to record it for the Church. He was not banished because he testified of Christ but God sent him there in order that he might testify of Him. He was not exiled because he preached the Word of God but God sent him there in order that he might become the secondary author of this portion of the Word of God. Such is the interpretation of this verse according to this view.

You feel at once that all four of these arguments are very weak and that not one of them proves that the Apostle John is not the author of this book. Although these arguments may cause one to hesitate a moment and consider the matter, not one of these arguments is strong enough to cause us to conclude that the author could not possibly be the Apostle John.

These four grounds in the first place certainly do not prove that the author is John Mark. Neither do they prove that a certain elder by the name of John wrote it. They are attempts to discredit the Apostle as the author but in no way do they bring anything positive.

That John merely calls himself "John" is not an argument against ascribing the authorship to the Apostle. Rather is it quite a strong argument for maintaining that it is the Apostle. Consider once that the author writes to the seven churches which are in Asia. The author knows that these seven churches will know who he is. Now whom would you suggest as the one most apt to be known by these churches? Would you not think of the Apostle before you would think of John Mark or some elder in Jerusalem. If there were another John which these churches knew so well, in fact so much better than the Apostle John, would we not expect to hear just a little about him somewhere else in the New Testament? This certainly does not prove that it cannot be the Apostle.

The same thing is true of the expressions he uses to identify himself. To be brief let it be stated that the Apostle would be very correct to state that he is a "brother and companion" with the church. Likewise would the Apostle himself be the last one to deny that he is a "servant" of Christ. It may also be pointed out that Paul declares of himself in the Epistle to the Romans that he is a "servant of Jesus Christ." Neither is it true that Paul always designates himself as an apostle. In neither his Epistle to the Philippians, his first and second Epistles to the Thessalonians nor his Epistle to Philemon does he mention his apostleship. In Philippians one he again calls himself a "servant of Jesus Christ."

Another fact to remember is that there is no need

for John to make mention of his apostleship in this book. What he writes, he explains in verse one of chapter one, is the Revelation of Jesus Christ which He gave to His servant John. He is not writing an Epistle to rebuke or warn the church as Paul does in his Epistles. When one does this, he finds need of making mention of his apostleship that his word may be respected as being sent by God. Now when John records what Jesus revealed unto him, this is not necessary. In fact what John declares in verse one of chapter one commands far more respect to his writing than could ever be accomplished by calling attention to his apostleship.

That the style of writing is different is to be expected since it is not an epistle or an account of Jesus works while in the flesh but a record of the visions he has seen and of the words he has heard. Even those who present this argument that the style differs from the Gospel according to John and from that of the Epistles of John admit that the difference of style is not conclusive evidence that it was not written by the Apostle.

Neither does the fact that the Apostle would be seeing his own name in the foundation of the new Jerusalem make it impossible for him to be the author of this book. What John sees is a vision and there are many other things which have not yet taken place which have not yet taken place which John was privileged to see in a vision.

The attempt to read verse nine of chapter one in such a way that John is on the Isle of Patmos to be able to write this testimony of Jesus is but an attempt to refute the tradition that John the Apostle was on the Isle of Patmos as a form of persecution meted out to him by Domitian. It does not prove this tradition to be false and is a forced translation of verse nine for it does not take into account the fact that John states plainly that he was a "companion in tribulation" with the church of that day which was suffering under the persecution of Domitian. Even if one wants to read the passage to mean that he was there in order to write this testimony of Jesus Christ, it does not deny that God caused Domitian to inflict this form of persecution upon John that he might receive and write this testimony of Christ.

In our mind it is firmly established that the Apostle John is the author of this book and we see no reason for thinking otherwise.

J. A. H.

CLASSIS EAST

will meet in regular session D.V. Wednesday, October 4, at 9 A.M. at Fuller Ave.

D. Jonker, stated clerk.

Proofs For The Existence Of God *

It might be well to state at the outset of this paper that the thoughts and ideas conveyed subsequently have been borrowed from and in many phrases quoted literally from far superior minds than the author's, and are not interpretation from original sources as much as from other commentator's views of the philosopher's ideas. Any personal opinions will be expressly stated and will in the main be found in the conclusion of this paper. However, as this paper is meant merely to serve as an introduction to the discussion for this evening's subject, and as the subject matter at times went far beyond the author's comprehension and logical powers, the few personal ideas that are given, are done so more with the thought in mind to provoke discussion and to figuratively, 'stick my neck out,' than to attempt a definite, conclusive, and correct view point relative to the subject.

This introduction will then, first of all, list the different rational proofs usually given for the existence of God. Secondly, it will treat each proof or argument separately, calling attention to the argumentation of some of its leading proponents as well as the argumentation used in the refutation of their views by other philosophers. And thirdly, it will attempt to point out the value of these formal arguments and propose a doctrinally as well as rationally sound conclusion from the surface that has been scratched of the subject assigned.

To my mind the subject given me, does not interest itself in the first place with Scriptural evidence adduced to prove the existence of God, for Scripture assumes that God exists, and nowhere in Scripture can we find a syllogistic statement to prove the reality of God. But the subject is interested mainly with the rational or formal arguments advanced by philosophers throughout the ages, with which they attempted to prove, apart from faith as the believer possesses it, that there is a God that very really exists. By God we mean the eternal, self-existent, and absolutely perfect free personal Spirit, distinct from and sovereign over the world He has created. This definition, I believe, the majority of philosophers mentioned in the introduction had in mind when they included in their system of philosophy proofs for or against the existence of God.

To list then the arguments usually advanced in the proof of God's existence. There are some four or five, beginning with what is usually called the Ontological Argument, or Being Argument. This argument simply and briefly stated might be said to infer the existence of God from the idea of God that is in the human mind. In other words, if there were no God, no one would have thought of God. The second

argument to be considered is the Cosmological Argument, or the evidence for God's existence as First Cause. The World or Universe argument it is sometimes called. The point is that everything must have a cause. The universe must have a cause, and therefore, there must be some Being outside of the universe who caused it. It explains where the world came from, if we believe in the existence of God. Thirdly, the Teleological Argument, or the evidence afforded by the presence of order and adaptation of the universe. The argument runs like this: the order, the harmony, and the apparent purpose in the universe suggests an intelligent Creator. The universe seems to be headed in a certain direction, or that somebody is guiding the universe. From this we conclude the existence of God. The fourth argument is the Moral Argument. The moral order in the universe points to a moral being as ruler of the universe. Everybody has conscience, or a sense of right and wrong. Where do they get it? From a moral Being as Guider of the universe. Lastly, the Historical Argument is sometimes used to prove God's existence. The argument is that every race believes in some God. (*Consensus gentium*). All men everywhere live on the belief of the existence of God.

There is perhaps sufficient material for discussion in the first four named arguments, so that we will not attempt to introduce a discussion on the last one.

The Ontological or Being argument distinguishes itself from the other arguments in that it is based upon a priori knowledge, whereas the Cosmological, Teleological, and Moral arguments logically ascend from facts of experience to causes or principles. An a-priori argument is one which proceeds from the necessary ideas of reason to the consequences necessarily deduced from them, or the truths necessarily involved in them. This distinction is important to bear in mind for it plays an important role in the refutations to the ontological argument advanced by both Thomas Aquinas and Kant.

Although St. Augustine concludes to the existence of God from the undeniable existence and possession by man of some truth, it is in Anselm that we find the first philosophic attempt to prove the existence of God. In fact, the fame of Anselm is connected chiefly with his ontological argument as he gives it in his work, "Proslogium." A summarized statement of his argument as recorded by Ueberweg, is as follows: I quote, "The ontological argument is an attempt to prove the existence of God, as following from the very idea we have of Him. By the word, God, we understand, by definition, the greatest object or being that can be conceived. This conception exists in the intellect of all such as have the idea of God, and in the intellect of the atheist as well, for the atheist un-

derstands what is expressed by the words: *the absolutely greatest*. But the greatest cannot be in the intellect alone, for then it would be possible to conceive something still greater, which should exist not only in the intellect but also in external reality. Hence, the greatest must exist at the same time in the intellect and in the sphere of objective reality. God, therefore, is not simply conceived by us; He also really exists." (end of quote).

From Dr. Stob's notes we get the following syllogistic statement of Anselm's ontological argument:

"All men have, or can have, the idea of God.

The idea of God is the idea of something than which a greater cannot be conceived.

But that than which a greater cannot be conceived cannot exist in the mind alone. (If it did, a greater, namely, one which existed in reality as well, could be conceived).

Hence, since God (as something than which a greater cannot be conceived) exists in the understanding, He must exist also in reality, since that is a superior existence." (end of quote).

Thus we see that according to Anselm, man has the idea of a perfect being. Perfection involves among other qualities that of existence. (Otherwise we could think of a more perfect being, one who did possess existence). Therefore, God exists.

This argumentation we can readily see involves no sense perception or fact based on experience, but is entirely a-priori. For this reason, Thomas Aquinas can find no place in his system of thought for the ontological argument of Anselm. For, according to Thomas, our rational knowledge must always begin with sensation. Says he, and I quote Ueberweg, "God's being is not immediately certain for us, because we do not know what God is. God's existence, so far as our knowledge is concerned, is something to be proved, and the grounds for this proof are to be sought in that which is more knowable to us. . . . The system of faith which presupposes the existence of God, proceeds from the consideration of God to the consideration of the created world: but in philosophy we must advance from the knowledge of creature to the knowledge of God. . . . In a certain sense, man has naturally the knowledge of God. He has it in so far as God is for him the happiness for which he naturally seeks: for seeking implies a kind of knowledge. But for certain and clear knowledge, proof is necessary." (end of quote).

Thus we see that the ontological argument of St. Anselm has no validity for Thomas Aquinas.

However, in Descartes we have a revival, slightly modified, of the ontological argument of St. Anselm. According to Descartes, the very conception of an infinite and absolutely perfect Being logically implies the existence of such a Being. For a being that did

not exist could not be infinite and perfect, since it would lack one essential quality of infinitude and perfection, viz., existence. Existence is as definitely implied in the existence of God as the consequence that its three interior angles are equal to two right angles follows from the definition of a triangle. Descarte says, and I quote from Rand's, "Modern Classical Philosophers," "By the name God, I understand a substance, infinite, eternal, and immutable, independent, all-knowing, all-powerful, and by which I myself and everything that exists, if any such there be, were created. But these properties are so great and excellent, that the more attentively I consider them the less I feel persuaded that the idea I have of them owes its origin to myself alone. And thus it is absolutely necessary to conclude, from all that I have before said, that God exists: for though the idea of substance be in my mind owing to this, that I myself am a substance, I should not, however, have the idea of an infinite substance, seeing that I am a finite being, unless it were given me by some substance in reality infinite.

"And I must not imagine that I do not apprehend the infinite by a true idea, but only by the negation of the finite, in the same way that I comprehend repose and darkness by the negation of motion and light; since on the contrary I clearly perceive that there is more reality in the infinite substance than in the finite, and therefore that in some way I possess the perception of God before that of myself; for how could I know that I doubt, desire, or that something is wanting to me, and that I am not wholly perfect, if I possessed no idea of a being that is more perfect than myself, by comparison of which I know the deficiencies of my nature?" (end of quote).

If we are given the reality of self we can logically infer the reality of God, and from that the reality of nature and other cells. Of course, these are inferences, and they are not as the self is for Descarte, directly necessarily implied as the precondition of the possibility of thinking. Dr. Jellema in his classroom notes states: "We have here a contrast between two kinds of logic, viz. the transcendental logic of Kant is implicit in Decarte's proof of self. The proof of God and nature is by means of traditional deductive logic. God is not for Descarte a precondition of thinking. (Here is where Descarte differs from Augustine). Abstract reasoning was for Descarte the criterion for certainty. If we accept the criterion we can be sure of: 1) Our own existence, and 2) the existence of God. God's reality is inferred from our own self-existence." (end of quote).

Now in this paper we cannot delve into the processes of thought employed by Descarte to prove the existence of self. But it must be stated that he concludes to the existence of self from the fact that he

is a conscious, thinking, substance. He can in his mind form a clear and distinct idea of his body and its attributes, as well as of his soul and its attributes. In his logic he clearly and distinctly defines these attributes and comes to the conclusion of his own existence.

Now Descarte says that we can form a clear and distinct idea of God, also. If we have this idea of God such that we can clearly define Him and sharply distinguish Him from other beings, Descarte says that proves the existence of God, because we must assume that just as the cell exists, and I exist, so anything of which I have a clear and distinct idea must exist.

From this discussion of Descarte's ontological argument we realize that two different formulations of syllogism are possible. And this Dr. Stob very nicely compiles in his notes on Descarte. They follow, and I quote:

"First Formulation:

That of which I have a consciousness as clear as my consciousness of myself, must exist. I am as clearly conscious of God, as of myself. Hence, God exists.

Second Formulation:

The idea of God is the idea of an all-perfect Being. To a perfect Being, the attribute of existence necessarily belongs. Hence, God of necessity exists." (end of quote).

Commenting upon the arguments or proofs advanced by these famous philosophers, it seems to me that we must conclude that Descarte's arguments for God follow logically enough from his premises. If clearness and distinctness of ideas is a sufficient proof of the existence of corresponding objects in any case at all, the idea of God is assuredly such a case. If a finite mind could not of itself conceive the infinite, and yet as a matter of fact does conceive it, God must actually exist in order to make any such idea possible. If for example we see a certain picture in Beacon Lights, we are compelled to assume the existence of a cut with the same characteristics as the picture. If the positive idea of an infinite Being has been imprinted upon the infinite mind, an infinite Being must exist to have produced the idea.

(To be continued.)

D. Vander Wal

* Paper read at a meeting of the student philosophy club of the Protestant Reformed Seminary.

A glorious banner Thou hast given
To those who fear Thy name,
A banner to display abroad
And thus Thy truth proclaim

Report Of Classis West—Convened Sept. 27, 1944 at Edgerton, Minn.

The Rev. S. Cammenga, pres. of the last Classis opened the session. The roll-call revealed every congregation to be represented with two delegates, except Redlands and Manhattan, with one each. Rev. P. De Boer took the chair and Rev. S. Cammenga kept the minutes for this session of Classis. The minutes of the last meeting were read and their recording approved. The church visitors for the Calif. churches report that they have done their work and their report on the visit is accepted. The Classical Comm. also renders its report. Then came the report of the Sermon Committee, that is, the committee which seeks to gather sermons for reading purposes. In connection with this report, and after lengthy discussion, Classis decides to have each minister send up three sermons, two English, one Dutch, between now and Jan 1; these sermons to be mimeographed and seventy bound copies to be made available for the consistories. The entire matter is placed in the hands of the present sermon committee., Revs. Blankespoor and Vis. To the table came also a communication from the Rev. H. De Wolf, expressing his farewell to Classis West and his best wishes to her in all her labors. A consistory asked advice in re a certain matter, which Classis gave.

Afternoon Session:

Orange City's consistory came asking for financial support in the matter of certain necessary church repairs. It was granted. Pella asks for classical appointments, two per month; Manhattan came with the same request, the two appointments to run two successive Sundays. Both these requests are granted

and a committee is appointed to regulate the schedule for these appointments. The appointments were adopted as follows:

Manhattan, last two Sundays of each month, as follows:

Oct. Rev. Blankespoor
Nov. Rev. S. Cammenga
Dec. Rev. A. Cammenga
Jan. Rev. M. Gritters
Feb. Rev. P. Vis

Pella, as follows:

Oct. 8 Rev. J. Vanden Breggen
Oct. 22 Rev. S. Cammenga
Nov. 12 Rev. J. Blankespoor
Nov. 26 Rev. M. Gritters
Dec. 10 Rev. P. Vis
Dec. 24 Rev. G Vos
Jan. 15 Rev. A. Cammenga
Jan. 29 Rev. J. Vanden Breggen
Feb. 12 Rev. S. Cammenga
Feb. 26 Rev. J. Blankespoor

Classis proceeds to vote its Church Visitors, as follows: Primi: Revs. G. Vos and M. Gritters; secundi: resp. Revs. S. Cammenga and J. Blankespoor. Motion prevails to have the ministers from Calif. visit Calif. churches and also Manhattan church on their way to the March Classis. It also votes a member to the Deputaten Comm. in view of the fact that Rev. Lubbers is now with Classis East, the member voted to be proposed to Synod is Rev. G. Vos. To the Classical committee Classis votes Revs. J. Blankespoor and A. Cammenga.

Two brethren, representing the Western Christian High School appeared at our Classis seeking to address her on behalf of that Institution. Rev. P. De Koekkoek and Prin. J. Vander Ark seek

to have Classis advise the churches to take up periodic collections for the Christian High. Classis answers them as follows: that inasmuch as there are churches resorting under this Classis that have their own local schools to support, Classis cannot as Classis advise our churches to financially support this Christian High. We advise the Board of Chr. High to address the consistories in Sioux and Lyon County and Minn. directly and ask for their financial support.

Rev. L. Doezeema is appointed to thank the ladies of the Edgerton Church for their fine services. Sioux Center invites Classis to have its next meeting there. So decided, on first Wed. of March 1945 D.V. Questions of D.K.O. Art. 41 are asked and favorably answered. Script minutes are read and approved. Rev. De Boer speaks a few words of thanksgiving and farewell after which Rev. G. Vos closes this session in thanks to the faithful God for all His love over us.

M. GRITTERS, Stated Clerk.