

THE STANDARD

Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XXI

NOVEMBER 15, 1944

NUMBER 4

MEDITATIE

Gebouwd Tot Een Geestelijk Huis

*Tot welken komende, als tot eener levenden
Steen, van de menschen wel verworpen, maar
bij God uitverkoren en dierbaar; Zoo wordt
ook gijzelven, als levende steenen, gebouwd
tot een geestelijk huis, tot een heilig priester-
dom, om geestelijke offeranden op te offeren,
die Gode aangenaam zijn door Jezus Chris-
tus.*

I Petr. 2:4, 5.

Wonderlijke werk van God!

De Kerk wordt gebouwd tot een geestelijk huis!

Uit alle geslachten, talen, natiën worden de uitverkorenen getrokken, geroepen, geheiligd, en vergaderd tot eene geestelijke woning!

Van het begin der schepping tot het einde, in de oude en in de nieuwe bedeeing, eeuw in eeuw uit, worden menschen van de meest verschillende hoedanigheden en karaktertrekken, klein en groot, arm en rijk, blank en zwart, tot één geheel vergaderd en gevormd, dat straks als een heilige tempel des Heeren geopenbaard zal worden, een volkomen werk Gods, een heilig priesterdom, om eeuwiglijk geestelijke offeranden op te offeren, Gode welbehagelijk!

Een werk, waarvan ieder straks tot in alle eeuwigheid zingen zal:

“Dit werk is door Gods alvermogen,
Door 's Heeren hand alleen geschied.
Het is een wonder in onz' oogen,
Wij zien het, maar doorgronden 't niet.”

En zoo komt God dan tot Zijn eer!

Juist doordat Hij wonderen doet, komt Hij tot openbaring als God, als de eeuwige Heer, de alleen Heerlijke en Machtige, de Onvergelykelijke. . . .

Niet, voorwaar, door het werk van menschen kan

Hij geopenbaard worden of verheerlijkt worden. Niet doordat Hij en 't nietig schepsel iets samen tot stand brengen, kan het openbaar worden, dat Hij GOD is. Niet doordat Hij iets werkt, dat het schepsel ook werken kan, en dat daarom door den mensch kan worden verstaan en doorgrond, wordt Hij verhoogd en groot gemaakt. Doch alleen door Zijn eigen werk openbaart Hij Zichzelve. Juist daar, waar de menschen voor het onmogelijke staan, werkt God. Hij roept de dingen, die niet zijn, alsof ze waren, en maakt de dooden levend. Hij doet wonderen, Hij alleen!

Want Hij is God!

De geheel eenige Heer!

De Souverein van hemel en aarde!

De God, Die een ontoegankelijk licht bewoont, en Die bij niemand te vergelijken is, en bij Wien niemand ooit vergeleken kan of mag worden!

Hij bouwt Zijn huis, Hij alleen; niemand bouwt het met Hem, of is Hem in 't bouwen behulpzaam.

Goddelijk wonderwerk!

Een geestelijk huis!

Daartoe worden de geloovigen gevormd, gebouwd.

Ze hebben in en op zichzelve, als individueele geloovigen, los van elkander en los van het geheel, geen beteekenis, noch zaligheid, evenmin als steenen beteekenis hebben op zichzelf, afgedacht van het gebouw, waarin ze worden ingezet.

Naar Gods eeuwig bestek zijn de uitverkorenen niet een bloot aantal menschen, een willekeurige hoop, waarvan men af kan nemen en waaraan men kan toevoegen zonder het geheel te beschadigen; een hoop gezaligden zonder eenheid of verband, zonder idee of doel; maar een gebouw, een geheel, dat door ééne hoofdgedachte beheerscht wordt, waaraan alle onderdeelen ondergeschikt zijn, en dat door alle deelen, elk op zijn eigen plaats moet gediend worden; een schoone tempel, elk onderdeel waarvan de harmonie en schoonheid van het geheel moet uitbrengen en dienen.

Gij wordt gebouwd tot een geestelijk huis!

Eén schoon geheel, door ééne Goddelijke gedachte beheerscht! 't Gebouw, dat naar Gods gemaakt bestek in eeuwigheid zal rijzen! 't Gebouw van Zijne gunstbewijzen en eeuwige goedertierenheden!

Ach, hoe God-onteerend, hoe alle heiligheden met voeten tredend, spreekt de profane mensch, die niet verstaat, dat God GOD is, en dat Hij ALLEEN God is, van dit Goddelijke werk der zaligheid en der verlossing! Deze spreekt, alsof het werk Gods, in plaats van één schoon geheel te zijn, in stukken en brokken te voorschijn komt. Die stelt het voor, alsof de Kerke Gods eigenlijk niet anders is dan een hoop van geredde menschen, die God nog bijtijds uit de klauwen van Satan kon verlossen. Een derde spreekt, alsof het werk Gods in elk opzicht eigenlijk afhangt van den mensch, en alsof het, niet God, maar de mensch is, die de Kerk bouwt en vergadert.

Gij *wordt* gebouwd!

Ge verstaat zelf niet hoe, maar gij *wordt* gebouwd!

Gij bouwt niet uzelf. Gij zet uzelf niet in 't bouwwerk van Gods gunstbewijzen in. God is de bouwmeester.

Gij wordt *gebouwd*. Ge wordt niet maar netjes op een hoop gezet, maar naar Goddelijke conceptie zóó gebouwd, dat ge straks, wanneer het gebouw voltooid zal zijn, allen tezamen ééne idee belichaamt, ééne Goddelijke gedachte voorstelt en dient: de heerlijkheid van Gods wonderlijke genade in den Geliefde; de schoonheid en liefelijkheid van het ééne Goddelijke deugdenbeeld in den Zoon, in Jezus Christus onzen Heer!

Gij wordt gebouwd tot een *geestelijk huis*.

En dit wil allereerst zeggen, dat God in u Zijne eeuwige verbondsgedachte verwerkelijk. Het huis, dat Hij bouwt, is een huis Gods, een Bethel, eene woning Gods. En als gij tot zulk eene woning Gods gebouwd wordt, dan houdt dit in, dat God in u wonen, en bij u verkeeren wil, en u Zijne goedertierenheid en eeuwige gunst wil doen smaken, gemeenschap met u hebben wil, Zich op het allerhoogst aan u wil openbaren, zoodat ge Hem kent, Hem ziet aangezicht tot aangezicht, in Zijne geheimen ingaat, Zijn vriend zijt, in Zijn tabernakel onder één dak met Hem leeft en verkeert.

Het wil ook zeggen, dat ge in die gemeenschap der vriendschap Hem dient, en uzelfen Hem toewijdt, met geheel uw hart, geheel uw verstand, geheel uwe ziel, en al uwe krachten.

Want Hij is en blijft GOD, ook in Zijn huis.

En als God is Hij de geheel eenige Heer.

En ook als uw Vriend, en in de gemeenschap der vriendschap, blijft Hij de geheel eenige Souverein, uw Heer! En als gij gebouwd zijt geworden tot een geestelijk huis, eene woning Gods, en Hij bij u is en uw God is, dan zal Zijn dienst u ten volle een liefdedienst zijn, zoodat het uw hoogste genot is Zijnen

wil te kennen om dien te doen, en Hem welbehagelijk te zijn. Met geheel uw bestaan, en met alle dingen, zult ge Hem dan volkomenlijk uzelfen toewijden. Gij zult als Zijn vriend regeeren over al de werken Zijner handen in de nieuwe schepping, en alle dingen zullen u onderworpen zijn, opdat gij Hem zoudt dienen, en Hij alles zij in allen.

Hij uw Vriend-koning.

Gij Zijn vriend-knecht.

Gods Verbond en Koninkrijk, tempel en priester, zullen dan volmaakt één zijn.

Daarom kan de apostel schrijven in één adem van een geestelijk huis en een heilig priesterdom. Het huis *is* het priesterdom!

En daarom kan hij van dat huis, dat ook het priesterdom is, zeggen, dat het gebouwd is, om geestelijke offeranden op te offeren, die Gode aangenaam zijn door Jezus Christus.

Dan geen bloedige offeranden meer. Het geestelijk huis is eens voor altijd door bloed gereinigd in het volkomen offer van Jezus Christus onzen Heer.

Dan ook geen uitwendige offeranden meer, gelegd op een bepaald daartoe afgezonderd en geheiligd altaar, van de vrucht des lands.

Maar dan zullen we de waarachtige offeranden der toewijding van onszelfen en alle dingen, door woord en daad, Gode brengen, eeuwiglijk en altoos!

Gebouwd tot een geestelijk huis!

Een heilig priesterdom!

Gode geestelijke offers brengend!

Heerlijke woning Gods!

Wonder van genade!

Tot Welken, dat is tot den Heere, dat is tot den Christus Gods, komende, wordt gij gebouwd!

Christus is de Hoeksteen, de Hoofd des hoeks, de voornaamste, en alles bepalende fundamentsteen van dit geestelijk huis.

De hoeksteen van een gebouw was immers de sluitsteen van het fundament, waarbij heel het fundament, waarbij dus ook heel het gebouw past en zich moet aansluiten, waardoor de verdere afmetingen en vormen en lijnen van heel het gebouw reeds zijn bepaald.

En die Hoeksteen van het geestelijk huis Gods is Christus!

Daarom is er immers "ook vervat in de Schrift: Ziet Ik leg in Sion eenen uitersten Hoeksteen, Die uitverkoren en dierbaar is."

Christus, het Lam, dat staat als geslacht, de Christus Gods, De Zoon, Die vleesch werd, Zich met ons vereenigde, en onder ons tabernakelde, Die ons den Vader heeft geopenbaard, Die aan het vloekhout onze zonden droeg en wegdroeg, Die in de dienstknechtsgestalte Zich vernederde tot in den dood, ja, den dood des kruises, Die door God den Vader is opgewekt ten

derden dage in onverderfelijkheid en onsterfelijkheid die opgevaren is ten hemel, de gevangenis gevangen wegvoerend, Die verhoogd is tot een Heer en Christus boven alle dingen aan de rechterhand des Vaders, Die de belofte des Heiligen Geestes heeft ontvangen, en op den Pinksterdag tot de Zijnen terug keerde en inkeerde in den Geest, Die door apostelen en profeten verkondigd is geworden van den aanvang der wereld af,—die Christus is de uiterste Hoeksteen van het geestelijk huis.

Tot Hem komende, wordt gij gebouwd!

Op Hem wordt het geheele huis opgetrokken. En buiten Hem is er geene woning Gods.

Hij is als Hoeksteen verkoren, en door God gelegd in Sion.

Uitverkoren is Hij, niet in den zin, dat Hij uit andere steenen gekozen werd. Dit kan in de eerste plaats reeds nooit de idee der Goddelijke verkiezing zijn. Waar zou de hooge God toch steenen vinden voor Zijn eeuwig huis? Dit is, in de tweede plaats, hier absoluut buiten gesloten, want deze Hoeksteen is geheel eenig. Hij is de eeuwige, en de eenig geboren Zoon van God, God uit God, Licht uit Licht, wezenlijk God Zelf! En dit is, in de derde plaats, niet waar, omdat Hij, Christus de Heer, de allereerste, de geheel eenige Uitverkorene is.

Och, als menschen een huis bouwen, wordt eerst het huis zelf in plan gezet, en wordt de vormen de grootte van het huis eerst bepaald, om dan te berekenen, hoe groot en hoe zwaar het fundament moet zijn, en welke hoeksteen er in en bij dat fundament past.

Doch zoo is het niet met het geestelijk huis, dat God de eeuwen door bouwt en straks in al zijne schoonheid openbaren zal.

't Gaat immers in den diepsten zin des woords niet om dat huis, maar om de openbaring van de heerlijkheden der deugden Gods! En om die heerlijkheid Zijner deugden op 't hoogst te openbaren, heeft God Zijn Zoon verordineerd als Eerstgeborene aller creatuur, en als Eerstgeborene uit de dooden, opdat in Hem al de volheid der Godheid wonen zou, en de heerlijkheid van Zijn deugdenbeeld in en door Hem zou uitstralen. En opdat diezelfde heerlijkheid op duizend- en millioenvoudige wijze uit God door Christus zou schitteren, gezien, gekend, gesmaakt, en verheerlijkt zou worden, daarom heeft God aan dien Christus eene Kerk, een geestelijk huis gegeven, een huis, dat op Hem zou worden gebouwd.

Christus de uitverkoren hoeksteen!

De van God verordineerde Zoon tot Christus!

De eerste Verkorene, waarop alle andere verkorenen volgen, en op Wien ze alle zijn aangelegd!

En van God is Hij ten Hoofd des hoeks gelegd!

Hij legde dezen Steen in Sion vóór de grondlegging der wereld, in Zijnen eeuwigen raad. En Hij legt Hem in Sion de eeuwen door, door de verkondiging der hei-

lige profeten. Hij legt Hem, als Hij Zijnen Eerstgeborene in de wereld zendt, als Hij tot ons spreekt door Zijnen Zoon, als Hij Hem overgeeft in den dood des kruises, als Hij Hem uit de dooden opwekt in heerlijkheid, als Hij Hem verhoogt aan Zijne rechterhand, en Hem de belofte des Heiligen Geestes schenkt, en als Hij door Hem Zijnen Geest in de gemeente uitstort. . .

Dan is de Steen gelegd!

Dan is eindelijk de Steen, Dien de bouwlieden verachtten en verwierpen, maar Die Gode dierbaar was, tot een Hoofd des hoeks geworden!

Wonderlijk werk van Gods alvermogen!

Van Hem alleen!

Wonder van genade!

Tot Welken komende wordt gij gebouwd!

Tot Welken komende, als tot eenen levenden Steen, wordt gij ook zelven als levende steenen gebouwd!

En immers, ook dit is Gods wonderwerk der genade!

Het is immers niet zoo, dat God dien levenden Hoeksteen in Sion legt, dat Hij ons er nu voorts mee in kennis stelt, dat die Steen daar gelegd is, en dat wij nu tot Hem komen, om ons tot een geestelijk huis te laten bouwen. De zaak staat immers niet zoo, dat Hij een levende Steen is, en dat wij ook levende steenen zijn, en dat wij nu onszelf op dien Hoeksteen metselen en tot een geestelijk huis laten opbouwen. Wij zijn nog minder dan doode steenen! Met de bouwlieden van ouds verachten en verwierpen ook wij altijd weer den levenden Steen, den door God gelegden Hoeksteen in Sion.

Er is in heel dat geestelijk huis niets van ons werk.

't Is alles werk van Zijne genade!

Hij, de Christus, is de eenige levende Steen.

Buiten Hem, en zonder verband met Hem, is er in geen enkelen steen van heel het huis eenig sprankje van leven.

Maar God Zelf brengt ons in contact, in levend verband met dien eenen levenden Steen. Hij trekt ons tot Hem, want niemand kan tot Hem komen tenzij de Vader, Die Hem gezonden heeft, hem trekke. Hij hecht ons door het levend cement des geloofs aan dien levenden Steen, zoodat door dat levend contact het leven van den Hoeksteen ook ons deel wordt. Hij maakt ons in geestelijken zin aan den Hoeksteen gelijkvormig.

En Hij zet ook steen na steen, de eeuwen door, een ieder op zijne eigene plaats in het geestelijk huis in.

Totdat het straks in heerlijkheid als voltooid geopenbaard zal worden!

Tot prijs Zijner heerlijkheid!

H. H.

The Standard Bearer

Semi-Monthly, except Monthly in July and August

Published by

The Reformed Free Publishing Association
946 Sigsbee Stree, S. E.

EDITOR — Rev. H. Hoeksema

Contributing editors—Revs. J. Blankespoor, A. Cammenga, P. De Boer, J. D. de Jong, H. De Wolf, L. Doezeema, M. Gritters, C. Hanko, B. Kok, G. Lubbers, G. M. Ophoff, A. Petter, M. Schipper, J. Vanden Breggen, H. Veldman, R. Veldman, L. Vermeer, P. Vis, G. Vos, W. Hofman, J. Heys, Mr. S. De Vries.

Communications relative to contents should be addressed to REV. H. HOEKSEMA, 1139 Franklin St., S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Communications relative to subscription should be addressed to MR. GERRIT PIPE, 946 Sigsbee Street. S. E., Grand Rapids, Mich. All Announcements and Obituaries must be sent to the above address and will not be placed unless the regular fee of \$1.00 accompanies the notice.

Subscription \$2.50 per year

Entered as second class mail at Grand Rapids, Michigan

CONTENTS

MEDITATION—

GEBOUWD TOT EEN GEESTELIJK HUIS73

Rev. H. Hoeksema

EDITORIALS:—

THE EVANGELICAL AND THE REFORMED CHURCH.....73

EXPOSITION OF THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM79

Rev. H. Hoeksema

AMMON'S ANSWER AND JEPHTHAH'S REPLY82

Rev. G. M. Ophoff

CONTRIBUTION85

Mr. Geo. Ten Elshof

DE LES DER HISTORIE85

Rev. G. Vos

THE ORIGIN OF THE SOUL88

Rev. L. Vermeer

GOD'S REPENTANCE90

Rev. S. T. Cammenga

GLEANINGS FROM TWENTY YEARS92

Rev. W. Hofman

FREEDOM OF RELIGION94

Rev. P. Vis

EDITORIALS

The Evangelical and The Reformed Church

The union of the Reformed Church in the United States, and the Evangelical (Lutheran) Church was really effected in the year 1934.

As early as 1932, the General Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States adopted a tentative plan of union, which was referred to the several classes of that denomination (as well as to the districts of the Evangelical Church), and which was adopted at a special meeting of the same General Synod held in Cleveland, Ohio in 1934. This plan consisted of twelve articles, which, for a full understanding of the matter, we quote here in full:

"Preamble. The Reformed Church in the United States and the Evangelical Synod of North America, under the conviction that they are in agreement on the essential doctrines of the Christian faith and on the ideals of the Christian life as contained in the Old and New Testaments and as defined in their respective standards of doctrine, do hereby declare their desire to be united in one body according to the articles mutually agreed upon as follows:

I. Name.

"The name of the Church formed by this union shall be "The Evangelical and Reformed Church." Congregations and institutions may retain their names, but they shall designate their membership in The Evangelical and Reformed Church.

II. Doctrine.

"We acknowledge and accept the historical confessions of the two Churches as the doctrinal basis of the union.

III. Supreme Judicatory.

"The Evangelical and Reformed Church shall establish, as its supreme judicatory for the prosecution of its work, a representative body to be known as 'The General Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church.'

IV. The General Synod.

How Constituted.

"The General Synod shall be constituted of an equal number of ordained ministers and lay members to be chosen by the Classes which are now in the Reformed Church in the United States and by the Districts of the Evangelical Synod of North America. The basis of rep-



PHOTO OF THE WHOLE CONFERENCE

representation shall be: one minister and one layman for every 20 congregations or major fraction thereof. Each Classis and District shall have at least one minister and one lay member as representatives in the General Synod. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the members of the body. The members of the General Synod shall be elected by the Classes and the Districts in the same manner as these now choose delegates to their respective supreme judicatories, until a uniform mode of election shall have been provided by the General Synod.

V. Functions of the General Synod.

"1. The General Synod, through boards and other agencies by it, shall carry on the general work of the Church which is now conducted by the General Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States and the General Conference of the Evangelical Synod of North America.

"2. The specific work of the General Synod shall be: Foreign Missions; Home Missions; Education; Publication; Ministerial Relief; Benevolent Activities, and such other work as will promote the kingdom of God and pertains to the Church as a whole.

"3. The work of foreign missions, of home missions, of education, of ministerial relief, and of publication shall be consolidated under the direction of the General Synod as rapidly as the laws of the State, the charters, constitutions, and the property rights of the boards of the respective Churches will permit. In the original constitution of the boards of the General Synod due recognition is to be given to representation of each of the consolidated churches.

"4. The boards are to be governed according to their respective charters. At the regular meeting of the General Synod each board is to submit for review a report of its operations during the time elapsed since

the last regular meeting of the General Synod.

"5. The General Synod shall review proceedings of the Classes, the districts and the Synods, which they shall submit to each regular meeting of the General Synod.

"6. The General Synod shall have power to maintain correspondence with other denominations; to hear and determine complaints and appeals; to decide controversies between subordinate judicatories; and to give counsel in cases referred to it by one or more judicatories.

"7. The General Synod shall promote the reorganization of Classes and Districts into conferences which shall be constituted on a territorial basis and shall have the same status as Classes or Districts. However, the General Synod shall not have power to unite subordinate judicatories of the consolidated churches except at their request.

"8. The General Synod shall meet in regular session quadrennially, or more frequently, as the General Synod may determine, and in extraordinary session at such time and place as it may determine.

"9. The General Synod shall have authority to initiate action for the preparation of a Constitution for the Evangelical and Reformed Church.

"The constitution shall be adopted by a two-thirds vote of the General Synod and shall be approved in such manner as the General Synod shall determine.

VI. Officers.

"1. The General Synod shall elect officers, who shall perform the duties that are customary in judicatories of that sort.

"2. The General Synod shall appoint or elect agencies for its administrative and promotional work.

VII. Subordinate Judicatories.

"Until by regular action of the General Synod according to Article V, Section 7, it is otherwise determined, the Synods, Classes, and Districts shall continue; and each shall conduct its business in its own way. Whatever action is submitted to the subordinate judicatories by the General Synod shall be disposed of in the same way as these subordinate bodies disposed of such action by the General Synod or General Conference prior to the union.

VIII. Rights of Property.

"1. The Congregations, Classes, Synods, and Districts shall continue to exist and to do their work in the way it was done prior to the union; they shall also

continue to hold and to supervise whatever property they possess and institutions they control. Congregations, judicatories, or institutions may unite by mutual agreement, and such union shall be confirmed in case of congregations by the Classes or Districts, or by each as the case may require; in case of judicatories and institutions by the General Synod.

"2. The theological seminaries, colleges, academies, and benevolent institutions that are under the control of the subordinate judicatories of the respective Churches shall continue under the supervision of the Synods, Classes, or Districts, which were in control of them before the union. Those institutions, however, which were under the control of the supreme judicatories of the united Churches shall pass under the control of the General Synod. In the constitution of the boards of directors of these institutions the interests of the groups previously in control shall be properly recognized. A union of these schools may be effected according to the provisions defined in the previous paragraph of this article.

"3. At the first session of the General Synod a committee on charters shall be appointed, which shall recommend the procedure to be adopted to safeguard the institutions and their charters.

IX. Authorizing of Ministers.

"Candidates for the ministry, after the union, and until a uniform method is prescribed by enactment of the General Synod, shall be authorized to perform ministerial acts by the Classes or Districts in the same way as they were authorized before the union. The ministers of the Churches in the union shall be enrolled as ministers of the Evangelical and Reformed Church.

X. Members.

"Men, women, and children shall be admitted into the fellowship of the Evangelical and Reformed Church through baptism and profession of faith according to the custom and usage of each congregation prior to the union. When they shall have been admitted, they shall be enrolled as members of The Evangelical and Reformed Church.

XI. Worship.

"The freedom of worship at present enjoyed by the negotiating Churches shall not be interfered with in The Evangelical and Reformed Church.

XII. Approval of Plan of Union.

"The Plan of Union shall be submitted to the supreme judicatories of the Reformed Church in the United States and the Evangelical Synod of North America. Each Church shall proceed according to its own constitution in the approval or disapproval of the Plan of Union. When the Plan has been approved by regular action of the two negotiating Churches, the president and the secretary or stated clerk of the

Supreme Judicatory of each Church shall report the action to the Commissions on Union of the negotiating Churches, who shall then request the officers of the supreme judicatories to call a special meeting of each judicatory at the same time and place. In joint session of the judicatories the final report of the action of the Churches on the Plan of Union shall be made. The supreme judicatories of the Churches that have approved the Plan of Union shall declare by joint resolution, that the union of the Church is duly effected at that time. Then the delegates, duly elected by the Churches entering into the union to constitute the original General Synod, shall effect an organization by the election of officers and proceed to the transaction of business. From the time of the organization of the General Synod until a constitution shall have been adopted, as heretofore provided, this Plan of Union shall be the fundamental law of The Evangelical and Reformed Church.

"2. The number of delegates to which each of the uniting Churches shall be entitled in the first General Synod shall be determined by the Commissions on Union and be announced to the stated clerks or secretaries of the Classes and Districts three months before the meeting of the supreme judicatories for the consummation of the union.

"3. Any part of this Plan of union may be revised or amended by The Evangelical and Reformed Church in the same way as the constitution of said Church is revised or amended.

"We recommend that the present Commission on Closer Relations and Church Union be continued with instructions to carry out the provisions of Article XII, should the Plan of Union be approved by the Reformed Church in the United States and Evangelical Synod of North America."

As already stated, this Plan of Union was adopted by both Churches in 1934, and the merger was accomplished.

More about this in the next issue, D. V.

H. H.

NOTICE — SUBSCRIBERS

Will subscribers who are willing to donate copies of October 1 and October 15, 1943, Volume 20, of the Standard Bearer, please send them to or contact:

Ralph Schaafsma
1101 Hazen St., S. E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The Triple Knowledge

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART TWO

OF MAN'S REDEMPTION

Lord's Day XII

7.

Atoned For The Elect (cont.)

We will close this chapter by adding to what has been said about Christ's dying and making satisfaction for the elect only a few remarks concerning the Arminian presentation of this matter.

First of all, it should be evident that the Arminian view of election can be of no value or help to him in the defense of a *Christus pro omnibus*, a Christ for all. The former cannot really serve as a basis for the latter.

Also the Arminian professes to believe in the truth of election. It is too plainly taught in the Scriptures to be denied altogether. No one who believes the Bible, and claims to derive his doctrine from the Scriptures, can simply ignore the truth that God has chosen His people from before the foundation of the world. But the Arminian offers his own explanation of this truth. He has his own conception of sovereign election unto salvation. According to him, eternal election is based on God's prescience, His foreknowledge of those that would believe in Christ, and that would persevere unto the end. He did not choose sovereignly, without respect to works. He chose them that, in His foreknowledge or prevision, He knew would accept Christ as their Saviour.

But let us suppose for a moment that this view is correct. Can the doctrine of universal atonement be made to rest upon this view of election as its basis?

Plainly, this is impossible.

If God foreknew from eternity the number of them that will believe in Christ, and accept Him as their Saviour, it is evident that this number is fixed. It cannot be changed. No one can add to it, nor can anyone ever subtract from it. For, either God foreknew this number with divine certainty, and then the number of the foreknown elect is unchangeably determined; or the number of them that are saved is undetermined, contingent upon the mind and will of man, but then even God does not foreknow it. But again, if God foreknew with absolute certainty the number of them that would be saved in Christ, if He had written all

their names in the book of His foreknowledge from before the foundation of the world, He has that number in His mind and heart eternally, and eternally, with an unchangeable love, He loves them. He knew them as such in the hour of Christ's suffering on the accursed tree. And Christ as the Son of God knew them. What is more, if He foreknew all that would believe and be saved through the blood of Christ, He also knew with the same divine, unchangeable certainty, all that would reject the Christ and hate Him, and crucify Him afresh. And even as He knew His own in love, so He foreknew the enemies of Christ in divine hatred. Foreknowing this, and knowing this, i.e. being unchangeably mindful of this foreknowledge in love and foreknowledge of hatred, is it even conceivable that God gave His Son unto the death of the cross for those whom He foreknew as His everlasting enemies in wrath and hatred? And is it conceivable that Christ, also foreknowing all that would not believe in Him, would, nevertheless, pay the price of their redemption for them?

It should be evident that the doctrine of an election based on the foreknowledge of God cannot possibly serve as the ground of the theory that Christ shed His lifeblood for all.

He necessarily atoned only for the elect.

Finally, it must be pointed out that the Arminian doctrine of a *Christus pro omnibus*, of universal atonement, is, in principle, a denial of vicarious atonement.

If Christ died for all, *He died instead of no one!*

And if the Arminian will only be consistent, and carry out his doctrine to its utmost consequences, he will prove to be a modernist. History, the history of dogma, clearly proves this statement. No church can with impunity deny the doctrine of sovereign election and of particular atonement.

That is the grave danger for the church of the Arminian view.

Let us make plain the intrinsic necessity of the movement from Arminianism to modernism, from the doctrine that Christ died for all to the denial that He atoned at all, i.e. that He fully satisfied for all our sins.

What is the implication of the doctrine of vicarious atonement and satisfaction? It means: 1/. That sin is guilt, liability to punishment, worthiness of God's wrath and damnation. 2/. That the justice of God must be satisfied if the sinner is ever to be received by God in favor, be freed from the power of death, and be made worthy of life. 3/. That the justice of God can only be satisfied by a payment that is made for sin, and that this payment must consist in bearing the wrath of God and the punishment for sin by an act of perfect obedience in love. 4/. That, while the sinner can never perform this act of perfect obedience and satisfy the justice of God. God ordained His only begotten Son to represent them as the Christ, and to

perform the act of obedience unto and in death *for* them, *in their stead*. 5/. That Christ did just this on the cross. He represented us. He was our Vicar. And because He was legally before God our Vicar, He was able to take our sins, the guilt and responsibility for them, upon Himself. And He suffered and died in our stead. He fully paid for all our sins. This is simply an objective fact. All the guilt of sin of those for whom Christ died on the tree is for ever blotted out. Objectively, they whom Christ represented on the cross are justified and worthy of eternal life. They can never be condemned.

Let us clearly understand this, for the truth of vicarious atonement means exactly this.

Suppose that one hundred people owe a debt of one thousand dollars each to a certain creditor. And imagine that some millionaire, loving those people and understanding that they have nothing to pay their debt, approaches their creditor and pays him one hundred thousand dollars to cancel the debt of the one hundred. Are not all the one hundred debtors debt-free? Can the creditor ever exact another payment from them? You agree: their debt is paid once for all; no payment can be demanded of them anymore. Suppose their benefactor announces to the one hundred debtors that he fully paid all they owed their creditor; and suppose again that they do not believe him; does that make any difference as to their debt-free state? You say: of course not, for their being free from all debt does not depend upon their believing the fact of its having been paid, but simply upon the act of their benefactor by which he satisfied the demands of the creditor. Their benefactor vicariously satisfied the righteous demand of their creditor, and for ever paid all their debt in their stead. Suppose that the law of the land is that any debtor that does not pay his debts can be sentenced to jail; can the one hundred for whom their benefactor paid, ever be so sentenced, whether they believe or disbelieve that their debt is paid? Of course not. They are free from punishment.

Now let us apply this illustration to the vicarious atonement and satisfaction of Christ according to the Arminian view that Christ died for all. What follows? You answer: if Christ really satisfied for the sins of all men, if He really paid the debt for all, it must follow that all are objectively justified before God, and that all are saved. And you are right. For their justification, the cancelling of their debt with God and their eternal righteousness does not at all depend upon their faith in this objective justification, but only on the objective fact of the vicarious satisfaction of Christ, their benefactor. Suppose they do not believe that Christ's sacrifice atoned for their sins; does that make the fact of none effect? Of course not. Can God justly demand payment for their sins from them? No; the punishment for sin is born once for all, and

all are free and worthy of life.

Vicarious atonement necessarily implies that all for whom Christ atoned are absolutely, objectively, for ever free from the guilt of sin, and worthy of eternal life.

If, then, Christ vicariously atoned for all men, all are saved, and all will have eternal life.

But the fact is, and even the Arminian must face it, that all men are not actually saved.

The Arminian proposition, therefore, must be, and actually is: Christ died for all men, but all men are not justified and saved.

What follows from this Arminian proposition as to the value and power of the death of Christ? This, that although He died for all men, He did not vicariously atone for all, for if He had all men would be justified before God and be worthy of eternal life.

And, therefore, the man who teaches that Christ died for all men must deny that His death has the power of vicarious satisfaction. He must invent other theories of the death of Christ, such as the governmental, the moral, the mystical conception, which we already discussed, and exposed as false and contrary to Scripture.

And thus, Arminianism is, in principle, nothing but modernism.

The doctrine of universal atonement is very dangerous for the Church of Christ in the world.

And this also holds for the camouflaged Arminianism that professes to believe in sovereign election, and in particular atonement, but presents the gospel as a well-meaning offer of salvation on the part of God to all men without distinction. God's well-meaning "offer" of salvation cannot possibly be wider in scope than the objective satisfaction and justification of the cross of Christ. And those that preach a well-meaning offer of God to all men, must and will ultimately embrace the doctrine of universal atonement also.

Let us contend for the true faith, and by God's grace keep ourselves far from all these Arminian corruptions!

8.

Christ Our Intercessor.

In the eighth chapter of his epistle to the Romans, the apostle Paul writes: "who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." vs. 34.

Yea rather!

The meaning is, that however important it may be that Christ died, and that, therefore, there is no power anywhere in the universe that is able to condemn us, it is of still greater importance that He is risen again,

that He is exalted at the right hand of God, and that in heaven He makes intercession for His people with the Father. In fact, His death would be of no avail, could be of no benefit to us, had He not also risen again, for His resurrection is God's own seal upon His vicarious sacrifice and perfect obedience. And again, the power of His resurrection would never become a power of salvation for us, had not the risen Christ also ascended up to heaven, and were He not at the right hand of God, ever living to make intercession for us. What we need is the living Christ to save us. We do need the Christ crucified, Who was delivered for our transgressions, the *Jesus for us*. But no less do we need the Christ exalted, the living Christ Who has the power to deliver us from the bondage of sin and death, and to make us actual partakers of eternal life, the *Christ in us*. Even as it belonged to the office of the typical high priest of the old dispensation to sacrifice in behalf of the people, but also to pray for them, and to bless them with the blessings of Jehovah their God, so it belongs to the high-priestly office of our Saviour, not only that He brings the perfect sacrifice in their stead and in their behalf, but also that He intercedes for them, and makes them partaker of all the spiritual blessings of grace.

The work of Christ is not finished on the cross.

It is true that just before He died the Saviour cried out: "It is finished." But this next to the last cross utterance dare not be interpreted as signifying that all that pertains to the work of salvation, as far as our Lord was concerned in it, was now accomplished, and that henceforth He can rest and wait for the fruit upon His labors. The outcry must rather be understood as having reference to His suffering, to the perfect sacrifice which He was to bring on the cross. In His flesh He must suffer death in all its horrible darkness. He must taste the depth of death before He gave up the ghost. He must bear the full burden of the wrath of God against the sin of His people. There was, therefore, a measure for His suffering. And that measure was now filled. Whatever He had to suffer in the flesh had been born to the end. Obediently He had entered into the nethermost parts of the earth. Of this He is conscious even at the cross. The head of the serpent had been crushed. He may now give up the ghost, confident that He shall presently enter into the glory of His resurrection. And with a view to this accomplished sacrifice He cried out: "It is finished."

But His work as Saviour is not ended with His death on the cross.

He arose, and He entered into the glory of the Father, not merely in order to enjoy His own glory, but that the salvation He merited for His people by His perfect obedience might become the possession of all the Father had given Him.

Nor do the blessings of righteousness and life come into the possession of sinners merely by His being proclaimed and preached in all the world, and by men's accepting this Christ as their personal Saviour.

Nor again may the matter of salvation be presented as if Christ is the mediator of atonement and reconciliation, on the basis of Whose perfect sacrifice we obtained the right to righteousness and life, and that now it is God, *apart from Christ*, Who makes us partakers of the benefits of Christ.

On the contrary, all the work of salvation is accomplished and perfected through Christ as the Mediator. Out of God and through Christ we receive all the blessings of grace. He is not only the Mediator of reconciliation, but also the Mediator of the application of this salvation to us, of our actual deliverance from the dominion of sin and death, of our regeneration and calling, our faith and justification, our sanctification and perseverance, our perfection and glorification. This truth is expressed in the confession that Christ is our intercessor with the Father. As the High Priest of His people He is ascended into heaven, entered into the true holy of holies, ever lives to make intercession for them, in order that He may bless them with all the spiritual blessings in heavenly places which He merited for them by His perfect sacrifice and obedience.

Thus the Heidelberg Catechism teaches us.

Speaking of Christ as our only High Priest, the instructor not only mentions the perfect sacrifice of His body, whereby He has redeemed us, but also emphasizes that He "makes continual intercession with the Father for us." And to this continual intercession of our only High Priest we must now pay particular attention.

Scripture very frequently refers to this prayer of Christ in our behalf.

It teaches us that we *have* a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, and that He is not an high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but Who is in all points tempted even as we are, though without sin. And it is exactly because of the presence of this great high priest in the inner sanctuary of God that we may come boldly unto the throne of grace, confident that we will obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Heb. 4:14-16. He is the forerunner, Who entered into the holies for us, there to remain an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Heb. 6:20. In distinction from all priests that were before Him, "this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Heb. 7:24, 25. And "we have an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the

Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." Heb. 8:1, 2. "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." Heb. 9:24. While, therefore, we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh, and while, moreover, we have in that holiest an high priest over the house of God, we may surely draw near, and ourselves enter into the sanctuary, with a true heart, and in full assurance of faith. Heb. 10:19-22. "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." I John 2:1. Who then is he that condemneth? Christ has not only died, He is also risen, He is also at the right hand of God, He also makes intercession for us. Rom. 8:34.

Hence, according to Scripture, Christ is not only our High Priest in that He redeemeth us by the one sacrifice of His body, but also in His continual intercession, which has its answer in His blessing us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. H. H.

Ammon's Answer and Jephthah's Reply

As was said, Jephthah's right to wage war with the Ammonites was implicit only in his divine calling. He therefore must wait with drawing his sword until God raised him up; until God's Spirit raised him up. And Jephthah did wait for the unction of the Spirit; but in the meantime he could request the Ammonites to justify, if they were able, their invasion of God's country. He did so. The question he put to the king of Ammon was pertinent. "What hast thou to do with me, that thou art come against me to fight in my land?" As was said, it was a most embarrassing question that Jephthah put to the Ammonite king. It is about as embarrassing a question as could be put to any government of this day and age, embarked as they all are, on policies of imperialism. For it is a question of right before God, and for such a question the Ammonite king was ill prepared. For the answer that was needed and wanted was not one divulging the truth but one that would justify thievery and murder, in a word, the vile ambitions of a depraved man. But, as was said, the king had an answer. He said to the messengers sent by Joshua: "Because Israel took away my land, when they came up out of Egypt, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and unto Jordan: now, therefore, restore these lands peaceably." Thus what the king of Ammon maintained is that when Israel came up

out of the land of Egypt they took from him the land between Arnon, Jabbok and Jordan, about co-extensive with the inheritance of Reuben and Gad. The messengers communicated the king's reply to Jephthah, who was ready with an answer. The king of Ammon was told that what he said was utterly untrue. Israel took not away the land of the children of Ammon. The facts in the case, as presented to the king by Jephthah's messengers, are precisely these. Coming up from Egypt and having arrived at Kadesh, the people of Israel petitioned the king of Edom for a passage through his land; but the king would not hearken. The petition was repeated to the king of Moab, and he, too, refused. Having been forbidden by the Lord to employ force in dealing with these two kings and their peoples, they went their way, circumventing the land of Edom and the land of Moab, as they went and pitched finally on the other side of Arnon. In Heshbon (Num. 21) ruled the king of the Amorites. He, too, received a request to allow the people of Israel to pass through his land. Not only did he refuse, but, adding insult to injury, he even mobilized his military forces and made war against Israel. That move resulted in his downfall. For the Lord delivered him and all his people into Israel's hand. They smote him and possessed all his land with its inhabitants, all the coasts of the Ammorites, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and from the wilderness even unto Jordan. This precisely was the territory that the king of the Ammonites was now claiming for himself and his people. But Jephthah insisted that the king's claim did not even wear the appearances of truth. And Jephthah was right. But the matter of the king's claim to this territory is rather complicated. To understand his argument, we must be clear on the following. Firstly, we must pay attention to the fact that the Ammonites and the Amorites were two different peoples. The former were descendents of Lot, while the latter were Canaanites, under the curse of God. Secondly, the contested territory originally had belonged to the Moabites and partly to the Ammonites, as appears from Joshua 13:25, a passage that reads, "And their coasts—the coasts of Gad—was Jazer, and all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the children of Ammon, unto Aroer, that is before Rabbah." Thirdly, the king of the Amorites had obtained it by conquest from Moab and from Ammon, though perhaps not so much from Ammon as from Moab. So, when Israel finally arrived upon the scene, the contested territory was in the hands of the king of the Amorites, who reigned at Heshbon. Thus the ground on which the king of the Ammonites was now urging his claim seems to have been this, namely, that at least a part of the contested territory originally had belonged to his people as a gift of their god Chemosh, and that Israel therefore, instead of taking

the land for themselves, should have restored it to his people, after having wrested it from the Amorites.

Jephthah replies firstly that "now the Lord God of Israel hath dispossessed the Amorites from before His people of Israel, and shouldest thou possess it? Wilt thou now," he says to the king of Ammon, "possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever the Lord our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess." Jephthah here directed the attention of the Ammonite king to the ground on which he, the king, and his people were basing their title to the land where they now dwelt. Their ground was that, as they said, Chemosh their god had given them their present possessions, that is, had given them the victory over the original inhabitants of the land where they now dwelt. And yet they denied Israel's right to the land that Israel's God had given His people. They demanded that Israel restore the contested territory to them, the Ammonites. Jephthah's aim was to expose, on the ground of their own forms of pagan thought, the unreasonableness of their demand.

The remainder of Jephthah's reply is directed against the claim of the king to the contested territory on the ground that the land originally belonged to his people, if not the whole land then at least a part of it, and it must be, a very insignificant part. By far the most of the contested territory must have belonged to Moab. For the king is asked, "Art thou anything better than Balak the son of Zippor, the king of Moab? did he ever strive against Israel, or did he ever fight against them?" If any nation could maintain a claim, it was Moab; but Balak, the king of Moab, never raised it, nor did he make war on that account. Besides, it was three hundred years ago now that Israel drove out the Amorites. "Why therefore," says Jephthah to the king, "did ye not recover them within that time?" Not once, in all the three hundred years had either Ammon or Moab claimed the land. The only explanation of this was that all along it has been acknowledged that the claim had no foundation. Jephthah concludes that "I have not sinned against thee, but thou dost me wrong to war against me: the Lord the Judge be judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon." But the king of Ammon "hearkened not unto the words of Jephthah which he sent him."

We must attend more closely to Jephthah's reply. Jephthah, it is said by some interpreters, at least appeared to recognize Chemosh as a local deity to whom the Ammonites were indebted. He conceded, so it is said, that it was Chemosh who had given the Ammonites the victory as invaders of the country where they dwelt. The Ammonites could be expected to regard the concession as a confession of what Jephthah believed to be the truth about Ammon's deity, namely, that he

actually existed and that he was a god to be reckoned with. Attention is called to the fact that in Deut. 2:19 it is remarked that "Jehovah gave the land to the sons of Ammon for a possession." But Jephthah, it is maintained, connects the same sentiment with the name of Chemosh, whom Ammon credits with his warlike achievements. It is held that Jephthah thereby achieved his aim, which was to point out, in the most striking and conclusive manner, that if Ammon refused to recognize the rights of Israel to its territory, he at the same time undermined, in principle, his own right to the country he inhabited. It is asserted further that, in conceding the existence of Chemosh as a local deity, supreme in his own domain, Jephthah was compelled to refrain from claiming for Jehovah a universal domain, thus compelled to refer to Him as a national deity, which he also did by calling Israel His people.

Now this interpretation of Jephthah's reply, of its purposes and aims, is thoroughly wrong. If it were true, Jephthah would have involved himself in the heinous sin of denying Jehovah before the heathen. For the substance of this interpretation is that Jephthah placed Jehovah in the same category with Chemosh. To do that is, on the one hand, to deny that Jehovah is *the* God, only and true, and on the other hand to ascribe being to gods that the Scriptures call vanity. That Jephthah fell into this sin in a well-meaning attempt to dissuade the Ammonites, is refuted by the following facts: 1) Jephthah's being raised up by the spirit of God to deliver Israel immediately after his fruitless negotiations with the king of Ammon; 2) the achievements of his faith—by faith he overcame the world as represented by Ammon; 3) his being given a place, by the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, in that company of heroes of faith, by which the church is compassed about. If Jephthah conceded the existence of Chemosh, there is absolutely no point to his argument; in this case, the argument is without force. For if, in Jephthah's reply, Jehovah is but a national deity, same as Chemosh, if He is not God, only and true, and as such the creator of heaven and earth, He has no right to this earth, not even to the smallest part of it. Jehovah is all or He is nothing at all. And the same holds true of Chemosh. If Jehovah and Chemosh are but two gods, two of many gods, neither is God and in this case neither has land to bestow upon his devotees. Thus, if in the reply, the reference is merely to two national gods, Jephthah did not point out that if Ammon refused to recognize the rights of Israel to its territory, he at the same time undermined his own right to his land. For if the reference was to two local deities, neither Israel nor Ammon had rights to any land.

Yet at first glance it does seem as if the reference is to two local deities. Consider once more the lan-

guage of that reply. "Wilt thou not possess that which Chemosh thy God giveth thee to possess? So whosoever the Lord our God will drive out from before us, them shall we possess." The first impression received is, that the antithesis is between "Jehovah our God" and "Chemosh thy God", between "that which Chemosh giveth thee" and "that which Jehovah giveth us". Apparently the reply does ascribe being, power and right to Chemosh as well as to Jehovah. Apparently the reference is to two local deities indeed. Actually however the reference is to Chemosh, to be sure, but to the Jehovah of Israel as the only true God and thus to Chemosh as a nonentity. The concluding statement of Jephthah's reply has great weight here. It shows how the reference to Chemosh and Jehovah is to be interpreted. It indicates the principle of truth that underlies this reference. It gives force and meaning to the entire argument. This concluding statement reads, "The Lord the Judge, be judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon. Jephthah said not, 'the judge Chemosh,' or 'the judges Chemosh and Jehovah,' but he said, 'Jehovah, the Judge be judge this day. . . .'" This certainly is a reference to Jehovah as the only true God and to Chemosh as a nonentity. What is here claimed for Jehovah is a dominion that is universal. What comes plainly out here is that Jehovah is God and none else and that Chemosh is therefore vanity, an idol, the work of men's hands. As interpreted in the light of this concluding statement, it will be seen that the reference to Chemosh, as being a deity with lands to bestow, partaker of the character of irony, sarcasm; it thus will be seen that we have to do here with a statement, the intended implication of which is the opposite of the literal sense of the words. This is the implication: "Wilt thou not possess that which a not-god giveth thee to possess? So, whomsoever the only true God, the Lord our God, shall drive out from before us, them will we possess," or "If you Ammonites lay claim to a land that, on your position, you do not even possess as, according to your false belief, it was given you by your idol, a god non-existing, we without question do right in possessing a land given us by the only and true God, our Lord and God; and in the attempt to wrestle from us this land, you fight against and revile the God who is God." Jephthah did not dispute Ammon's claim to his land. He was aware that it was given him of God through His providence. What Jephthah, by implication, disputes is that Ammon possesses his land on the ground that it was given him by Chemosh. His argument, concisely stated is this: "You claim that which, on your position, you do not possess; so we claim that which we do actually possess." It must not be supposed that the Ammonites failed to grasp the real intent of Jephthah's words. The heathen nations surrounding the holy land knew

that the Jehovah of Israel was the God. The report of his marvelous works had penetrated that heathen world. And it lived in constant dread of Jehovah. In one of the wars with the Philistines, the ark of God was carried into the camp of Israel. When the Philistines heard of it, "they were afraid, for they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore. Woe unto us! for who shall deliver us out of the hands of these mighty gods? these are the gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness," (I Sam. 4:6-8).

We just saw that, according to Deut. 2:19, God gave the land to Ammon. He did so in the same way that He gives the land to every nation, namely, according to His counsel, in His providence and usually through unrighteous wars of conquest. The history of the nations is on a whole a history of such conquests, of expansion through violence, through thievery and plunder, through the subjugation of the weaker nation by the stronger. Thus the territory that each nation possesses, is, in this sense, given it of God. But as it came into the possession of what it holds through unlawful violence, it does not hold what it has in God's favor. Nor does it have a right to what it possesses. Only God's people have rights, the rights that were won for them by the atonement of Christ. It is folly therefore, for a nation to take up arms against the invader on the grounds that it has a right to its territory. If it were wise, it would discern that the invader was sent of God to scourge it for its sins and, as so discerning, would humble itself under God's mighty hand. As to Israel of the Old Testament Dispensation, it too, had received its land from God. It had received this land according to God's promise made unto the fathers, in covenant relation with God, and in God's favor, had thus received this land in fulfillment of a promise and as a gift of God's grace. This can be said of no other nation on the earth. Israel's wars of conquest were ordered by Jehovah. They were thus holy wars, Jehovah's wars. This can be said of the wars of no other nation. Israel therefore had a right to its territory, a right given it of God. Ammon had right not even to his own territory, much less to Israel's. Yet here he was in God's country, poised for an attack upon God's people because he wanted their land. He was told of the wrongness of his doing. But he would not hearken unto the words of Jephthah. He hardened his heart. As Pharaoh, he said in his heart, Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice. "Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah. . . . and he passed over unto the children of Ammon." This could be expected. For Ammon would not hearken. "And the Lord delivered them into his hands. And he smote them—with a great slaughter. Thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel. G. M. O.

Contribution

Esteemed Editor:

It is to my deep regret that you have deemed my former communication to be so full of sarcasm and insinuations that you will no longer exchange views on the matter. I will admit that I attempted to present the matter in a manner which might arouse some from what appears to be a deep sleep or a careless indifference, but I had not intended to deliberately and maliciously attack anyone personally only insofar as was necessary to clarify or substantiate my argument.

Hence I am now submitting an apology which is conditional but if the "ifs" are true it is of course an admission on my part that I have greatly erred. It goes as follows:

IF — PECCAVI *

If

I have wounded any soul today,
There is a song that goes that way,
And, if I have, I too will say—
Peccavi!

If

I have written something rude
And used examples which were crude
Or hid the truth beneath a hood—
Peccavi!

If

So it seems, I have annoyed
And means and methods have employed
At which some hearts weren't overjoyed—
Peccavi!

If

I, a creature of the dust,
Have drawn conclusions so unjust
That in me you have lost your trust—
Peccavi!

If

You should think me so unwise
That you my reasonings despise
And (what is worse) refuse replies—
Peccavi!

If

You have thought "He's being 'smart'
And seeks to tear the church apart"
(Though it is dearest to his heart)—
Peccavi!

If

Bonds are for the church to buy
To gather interest bye and bye,
To profit while our brethren die—
Peccavi!

If

It is wrong to be forthright
To hold your point with all your might
And not to hush in cringing fright—
Peccavi!

If

By these lines I could amend
And gain again an esteemed friend,
I'll keep on saying to the end—
Peccavi!

*Literally means "I have sinned".

Respectfully yours,
George Ten Elshof.

Responsum:

SI

Sub conditione vult dicere frater "Peccavi,"
Et revocare quod prius ab illo noxie scriptum;
Oportet et me laete "Absolvo te" dicere illi,
Veniam dare ei, *sub conditione eadem*.

Hermanus.

De Les Der Historie

(Psalm 78; Tweede Deel)

Dit lied bezingt de groote daden Gods. Het inbegrip dier daden is de historie van Israel, vervuld, vol gemaakt door Jezus; ze is ook een les voor de kerk van het Nieuwe Testament.

In het begin hebben we opgemerkt, dat we moeten hooren met liefde en zóó gehoorzaam zijn. Het is de mond des Heeren die spreekt.

En dan, nadat we in liefde het oor geneigd hebben, zullen we alle de redenen des Heeren niet verbergen voor onze kinderen. We zullen spreken en zingen van de "loffelijkheden des Heeren, Zijne sterkheid en de wonderen die Hij gedaan heeft!"

Dat zullen we nu voortzetten.

Asaf zal ons verder onderwijzen in wat de Heere door Zijne mond sprak.

Eerst wijst hij ons op Gods getuigenis in Jakob en Zijne wet in Israel.

De mensch had behoefte aan zulk een wet.

Eerst al, omdat hij geestelijk zedelijk schepsel is.

Alles heeft een wet. Ook datgene wat niet denken en loven, bidden en smeeken kan. Er is een wet voor het beest en voor de roode klei, voor damp en rook, voor bergen en dalen en bloemen. Doch de mensch is naar Gods beeld geschapen en daarom heeft hij een hoogere wet noodig. Die wet was Adam ingeschapen. Hij had God geduriglijk lief met al wat in en aan hem was. Doch die wet der liefde kwam tot hem en vervulde hem als een aardsch schepsel. Hij ontving haar als een mensch die uit de aarde aardsch was. Doch nu heeft hij die wet dubbel noodig. Hij is een zondaar geworden. En ofschoon die wet van God nog spreekt in zijn hart en hem veroordeelt, toch is die stem niet meer zoo krachtig als voorheen. Doch vaardigt God diezelfde wet van Adam weer uit doch nu voor zondaren die door Hem bemind zijn. "Ik ben de Heere uw God die u uit Egypteland, uit het diensthuis uitgeleid heb!"

Het is heerlijk om de geboden Gods te hebben.

Hoeveel te meer we inzien in de wet die der vrijheid is en daarbij blijven, hoe meer we zalig zijn. Dit zit zóó: de wet Gods weerspiegelt de groote deugden Gods. In één woord is de wet vervuld, en dat ééne woord is liefde, Goddelijke liefde. Gij zult liefhebben den Heere uwe God. . . .

De wet is heerlijk. Straks zien we diezelfde wet, vervuld als Jezus klaagt en schreit aan de kruispaal. Hij is die wet aan 't vervullen. Hij buigt recht door angstig lijden en sterven wat hij krom maakten. En Hij doet voor allen wat de kinderen Gods hadden moeten doen, van Adam of aan tot het laatste kind van God in de dagen van Antichrist.

De wet en de geboden Gods zijn heerlijk. Want het leven ten volle naar die geboden is de hemel daarboven bij God. In den hemel zal men niets doen dan God liefhebben en naaste minnen om Godswil.

En dan zijn er velen die in onzen dag zeggen: preekt toch niet die akelige wet Gods! Mirabile dictu.

En waarom gaf God die wet aan het geslacht van Jakob en Israel?

Hij gaf die wet aan een schreiende en worstelende Jakob, opdat hij dezelfde wet zou vertellen aan Juda. En Juda zou het zijne zonen vertellen. En zoo komt die wet eindelijk bij U in Grand Rapids en in Edgerton hier en overal waar het volk van God woont.

Het staat er: "opdat zij ze hunnen kinderen zouden bekend maken: opdat het navolgende geslacht die weten zoude, de kinderen die geboren zouden worden, en zouden opstaan en vertellen ze hunnen kinderen. . . ."

Wat een roerende, verrukkelijke waarheid!

Wordt ge niet ontroerd bij het lezen en het zingen van dit lied?

Luistert naar die klanken:

"Want God heeft Zijn getuigenis gegeven
Aan Jakobs huis: een wet, om naar te leven,
Die Israel zijn nageslacht moet leeren,
Opdat men nooit haar kennis moog' ontberen;

God vordert, dat de naneef, eeuwen lang,
Van kind tot kind, dit onderwijs ontvang'."

In ons eerst stukje kwam die waarheid ook al te sprake. 'k Zal er nog wat van zeggen.

We weten, dat God alles doet wat noodig is tot de komst en de daarstelling van Zijn koninkrijk. En toch is het óók waar, dat de Heere al die dingen van Zijn heerlijk koninkrijk werkt in ons en door ons. En zoo kunt ge het zien in uwe kinderen en in Uzelf of Hij Zijn eeuwige verkiezing aan het uitwerking is in Uw geslacht, dan wel Zijn verwerping.

Ik wil mijzelf en U een vraag doen. Hoe zien we op deze kinderen terneer? Wat zeggen we tot onze kinderen? Hier staat dat de vaders zullen spreken van Gods daden en geboden en wetten tot hunne kinderen die na hen ook weer hetzelfde zullen doen. Zóó en niet anders wordt de godsvrucht voortgeplant. We zongen zoo even "Van kind tot kind, *dit onderwijs ontvang'.*" Gebeurt dat bij ons? Of groeien de kinderen verwilderd en dom en dwaas op? Hoe zullen de kinderen de loffelijkheden Gods vertellen en in verrukking er van zingen als wij hen nooit leeren? Maakt ge U wel eens bezorgd over de kinderen die nog niet geboren zijn? Welnu, ge kunt Uwe kindskinderen zien in de lievelingen die om Uw schoot en knie dartelen. Gij zijt de man en de vrouw die het stempel zet op het nageslacht, uitzonderingen daargelaten. Toen Paulus aandachtiglijk Timotheus bestudeerde smaakte hij het geloof, dat eerst in zijn grootmoeder en later in zijn moeder geleefd had.

Waarom moeten we zóó met kinderen en ongeboren kinderen handelen?

"Opdat hunne hoop op God zou zijn!" En dat is in één woord heerlijk. Als uwe hoop en de hoop Uwer kinderen op God is gesteld, laat het dan maar stormen in de eeuwen der geschiedenis der wereld. Dan mag Pilatus spotten en het volk te hoop loopen; dan mag de mensch der zonde ons benauwd maken en Antichrist Uwe kinderen weigeren brood te verkoopen; geen nood: want dan zijn wij en zij veilig. Als het anker Uwer hoop en de hoop Uwer kinderen op God is, dan kan Uw levenscheepje nooit losgeslagen worden. Want dan wordt ge in veilige haven binnengeleid, daarboven bij God.

De hoop is verwachting. Dan verwacht ge een eeuwigheid van Godlof uit uw keel. De hoop verwacht de vervulling van Gods beloften.

De hoop is ook verzekerdheid. Ge zijt dan niet bang meer. Ge weet dat Uw deel zeker is bij God.

De hoop is ook het verlangen der liefde. De liefde Gods die in Uw hart uitgestort is richt zich op het voorwerp der hope en dat is de hemelsche erfenis. En als ge mij dan vraagt: waar bestaat die erfenis in? Dan antwoorden wij in één woord: die erfenis is om voor God te mogen staan van eeuwigheid tot eeuwigheid en te zeggen, te zingen en te jubelen: Deze

God is onze God en Hij is genadig en barmhartig, lankmoedig en groot van goedertierenheid! En de vertrekken van het paleis Gods zullen Uwe jubelstem weerkaatsen. In steeds wijder kringen verspreidt zich die lof van God en zal de nieuwe aarde en de nieuwe hemel vervullen.

Dat is dan ook de reden waarom wij de kinderen psalmversjes leeren. Ze moeten wennen en voorbereid worden voor het hemelleven.

Nog een vraag: Vindt ge die voorbereiding ook in de publieke school?

We moeten verder.

Onze kinderen moeten de wet des Heeren ontvangen "opdat zij niet zouden worden gelijk hunne vaders, een wederhoorig en wederspannig geslacht, een geslacht dat zijn hart niet richtte, en welks geest niet getrouw was met God."

Wat een vreeselijk voorbeeld ter waarschuwing!

Ge vindt in de kerk Gods van alle eeuwen zulk een geslacht van dat soort vaders. Even zij aangestipt, dat wij allen zoo zijn van nature, doch dat is de gedachte hier niet. Hier wordt een bijzondersoort menschen beschreven. Het zijn de vaders die verworpen wierden. Het zijn de verharden onder ons, die er zullen zijn tot den laatsten dag.

Dat volk is wederhoorig en weerspannig.

De eene beschrijving ziet op hun hart en die andere op hun uitwendig leven. Wederhoorig menschen zijn menschen die in het hart zeggen: Ik wil niet gehoorzamen al praat ge nog zoo veel. Wederspannige menschen zijn rebellen die de daad bij het woord voegen en opstaan tegen God die Zijn geboden aan Jakob gaf.

Hier is het groote verschil tusschen het geslacht dat naar God vraagt en de wederhoorige en weerspannige: Gods volk richt zijn hart en de andere niet. Zijn hart niet richten wil zeggen, dat men zijn hart in de verkeerde richting stuurt. Het gerichte hart is het hart dat naar God uitgaat. Zie verder het 37ste vers. Daar staat: "want hun hart was *niet recht met Hem!*"

Daarom was hun geest dan ook niet getrouw met God.

Beteekent dit soms dat men zonder zonde is? Natuurlijk niet. Als het dat beteekende, dan was er niet een die zalig werd. Het beteekent, dat men van de partij des levenden Gods is ten allen tijde. Ook dan als men gezondigd heeft. Dan gaat men naast God staan en dan richt men zichzelf en dan zegt men met God: des doods schuldig; dan verliest men zijn leven; dan haat men zichzelf. Dat zijn de getrouwen met God. Het is het volk, dat Jesaja beschrijft als hij zegt: "kinderen die niet liegen zullen!" De fundamentele leugen spreekt dat volk nooit. De fundamentele leugen is ook de ontrouw en vindt haar uitdrukking in des duivels venijn: Er is geen God!

En nu volgen verder de voorbeelden uit de geschiedenis van Gods volk.

De kinderen van Efraïm die, alhoewel zij gewapende boogschutters waren, omkeerden ten dage des strijds. We weten niet, en de geleerden zijn het er ook niet over eens, wanneer dit geschied is. Het hindert niet. Het voorbeeld is teekenend. Hier was het volk van God, organisch, in de slagorden Israels. Zij gingen op marsch naar den Filistijn of Amoriet. En toen het er op aankwam keerden zij zich om en gingen op de haal. Principieel doet Gods ware volk dat nooit. Er is iets in hen, dat nooit op de haal gaat. En dat iets is het leven Gods zelf. Wilt ge een voorbeeld? Zie dan naar Job. Daar ging het om tusschen God en Satan. Satan zeide, dat Gods volk, als het er op kwam, den Heere zou zegenen in Zijn aangezicht. En God zeide: beproef het. En ofschoon de duivel alles probeerde, was het slot van die zijde van Job's geschiedenis, dat Job in alle deze dingen niet zondigde en den Heere niets ongerijmds toeschreef. Hoe zou het ooit kunnen? Dat "iets" in ons is het leven Gods zelf. Daarom zegt Johannes, dat die uit God geboren is niet "kan" zondigen. Neen, uit dat oogpunt keert zulk een nooit terug van den vijand. Hij is getrouw in zijn geest. Wilt ge daar meer commentaar over, leest dan Psalm 44:18-23.

En waarom handelt dat valsche volk zoo?

Hier is het antwoord: zij vergaten Gods daden en wonderen die Hij hen getoond had.

Iets te vergeten is eigenlijk verschrikkelijk. Als men iets vergeet, dan bestaat zulk een ding niet meer voor ons. Onze eeuw wordt vooral door dit kwaad gekenmerkt. Is het dan ook wonder, dat men vandaag meer bezig is met de daden der menschen en de wonderen die de mensch gedaan heeft? Daar komt alle pelagianisme uit voort. Staande temidden van Gods getuigenis van Zichzelf moesten we eigenlijk de heelen dag op onze kniën liggen en almaar loven en prijzen den levenden en grooten God! Vergeten? God vergeten? Zijn daden en wonderen vergeten? Het is in één woord vreeselijk.

Stelt het U voor, wilt ge? Daar staat God te midden van de menschenkinderen. Hij buigt Zich terneer en kleedt hen, ja, ook de verwatenen. Hij loopt hen vooruit en zet ze neer aan den disch. Hij geeft hen eten en drinken en vroolijkheid. Hij staat vlak bij hen en zegt: hier, hier hebt ge adem in Uwe longen! Ademt toch, want anders sterft ge. Straks liggen ze te slapen. Ze weten van niets, doch God staat bij hun bed, bij alle millioenen bedden en zegt tegen de grooten en de kleinen: hier is adem voor Uwe longen, en hier zijn Mijne vingers om Uw hart, anders zoudt ge sterven. En het hart van die menschen tikt en slaat en leeft.

En al dien tijd, voor eeuwen, vergat men God. Is het niet vreeselijk?

Kunt ge er eenigzins inkomen hoe er toorn opge-

stapeld wordt in het hart van God over zoo groote goddeloosheid?

Ik hoor U zingen van uit de verte: Ik zal nauwkeurig op Uw werken en derzelver uitkomst merken. En, inplaats van bittere smart, daarvan spreken dag en nacht!

Ik smeek U: vergeef ze niet, het is God die U barmhartigheid bewees!

Vergeef ze niet: het is Zijn liefdevol hart!

G. V.

The Origin of the Soul

Undertaking to write on this subject, we are very conscious of the fact that when we have finished, there will be much that was left unsaid concerning this subject, and that it will be far from us to have written the final word about the origin of the soul. Only we desire to review a few ideas concerning the soul's origin and then seek to trace in few words the line of thought we believe will give us somewhat of a conception on this subject.

At the outset we may mention the fact that there are predominantly three theories concerning the origin of the soul. The first theory is called Creationism. This name is self-explanatory, in so far that it suggests to us the idea of creation. The soul is created. Not only the original soul of Adam is thus created by God, but every soul of every mortal that ever has lived or ever shall live upon earth, is created by God almighty. And that creation of every soul did not take place in the beginning of time, or at the time Adam was created, but the creation of each soul takes place at the time of generation and birth of the individual. There are various opinions as to the exact time of this creation, whether at the time of generation or later at the further development of the child. But the main point of this theory is that the soul is created separately during that time. Also, according to this theory, God is the creator of that soul. He creates a new soul whenever a new body has been generated. And He unites that newly created soul with that newly generated body. Such is the idea contained in the theory of creationism, and this theory has been mainly believed by Reformed people, although there were also some who could not find themselves in this explanation of the origin of the soul.

Secondly, there is the theory of Traducianism. This view sets forth the idea that the soul is not a new creation of God, but rather is the fruit of generation. Accordingly, there is no direct act of God taking place at the time of the birth of a child, even though this all takes place under the predestinated course of God's

counsel. But God does not create the soul in distinction from the body which is generated by the parents. The soul also is generated with the body and thus both body and soul are products of the act of the parents. There is nothing especially divine in the matter of the soul. This theory is believed mostly by the Lutherans, although there were also some from Reformed circles who believed in this idea concerning the origin of the soul.

The third theory is called Pre-existentialism, which claims that God created every soul of man in the beginning of time. In other words, when God made the heavens and earth in the beginning, including man, He also created all souls, then and there. Thus the soul was created for you and me previous to our existence, long before we ever were generated or born, yea, in the very beginning of time. There were, according to this view billions upon billions of souls created by God in the beginning and being reserved for the individuals for which they were intended, were each one placed in the body of such a person at the time of his or her birth. Though this view seems very absurd, yet it claimed its followers throughout the history of the church. Howbeit the first two views were the generally accepted views of the Christian world, and they will claim the most of our discussion.

If we were forced to choose between Creationism and Traducianism, we too would choose Creationism, if for no other reason than that view claims that the spiritual element of man comes exclusively from God, and not from man. It certainly must be held fast to, that God lighteth every man that cometh into the world. John 1:9vv. And even though it is true that the image of God in man has spiritually-ethically changed into its opposite, nevertheless it is exactly in that opposite that reveals that man is also the product directly of God the Creator. Man definitely bears, though it be in but a formal way, the stamp of God upon him, and this stamp is never erased. It marks man as the image-bearer of God, with God's light shining upon him, even though the darkness which enshrouds man, cannot comprehend that light of God. And that light is surely born primarily in the soul of man. So that in Creationism man is upheld as the creature of God, not only in the beginning, but also today and throughout the history of man.

However to hold to Creationism exclusively and deny any of the elements contained in Traducianism, would not do justice to what is revealed to us in Holy Scripture either. The view that man generates and produces both soul and body in his offspring, has much that appeals and contains certain elements that cannot be denied. For instance the traits of character of a parent visible in the child, cannot merely be explained as physical, i.e. in the body only. For not only does one see physical likenesses in the child but certainly

also psychical, likenesses in the soul. In fact even the moral-ethical side of a parent is generally revealed also in the offspring. This is even corroborated by the Scriptures when it teaches us in Matt. 7:16 that men do not gather grapes from thorns, nor figs from thistles. Like produces like. Mental and moral, as well as physical qualities appear in the offspring, even though these various qualities are often rather curiously distributed. Sometimes these qualities concentrate in one of the offspring, and sometimes these qualities are distributed to many of the offspring. In fact this distribution of the qualities of parents in the offspring is so apparent, that oftentimes the ancestral quality leaps as it were over one or more generation and reappears in a distant relative. Certainly there is something to the view that the soul of man is generated in the child, and thus we cannot entirely overlook the theory of Traducianism.

To obtain a somewhat independent conception of the subject matter, we would submit first of all a short study of the creation of man according to Genesis 2:7, where we read: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul". First of all it is plain from this text that man was created very distinctively, that is, man was *formed* by God in distinction from the animal which was created by God also but so that *the earth brought forth the animal*. See Gen. 1:24. So that it is first of all plain that God *formed* the whole nature of man with an act of His own hand, thereby revealing that man was made in God's own image. Secondly it is equally plain from the text that God did not merely create from the dust of the ground a molded form of a man, such as a piece of dead clay formed to look like a man, but that instead God created a complete *man*, a complete living organism or nature. Thirdly, when we read then that God blew into him the breath of life, this cannot mean that God blew into man a soul, but that God gave another element to man, which is distinct from the animal, in that man is, by that breath of God, a distinct, spiritual, personal nature fit and able to live the life of God in a creaturely way. So that we may conclude that man was created entirely different from any other creature, in that God *formed* him from the dust of the ground, breathing at the same time into him the breath of life, and that this whole process of creation was directly worked by the hand of God. A complete man was formed from the dust of the ground, and God breathed in that man the breath of life enabling that man to be the perfect image-bearer of God in this world.

In the light of the foregoing, it is not so difficult to regard the origin of our soul somewhat differently than both Creationism and Traducianism conceive of it. If man brings forth a complete person, then he

brings forth a man as God created it and formed it with His hand. Man does not then bring forth merely a dead *form* of a man wherein God creates a soul every time a manchild is begotten. But man brings forth a human nature, complete as to body and soul. On the other hand man is not the only active party in begetting and giving birth to a child. God too operates with His Spirit in that complete human nature at the same time, and makes of that human nature a *personal* nature and a *spiritual* nature. This act of God makes of each human being a personal, spiritual, responsible being before God, without detracting in the least from the organic unity man sustains to his parents and for that matter to the whole human race as created in Adam.

The above stated view also can be maintained with a view to the birth of Christ, who assumed the whole complete human nature and was in all things like unto us, with the exception of sin. When we read in Luke 1:35: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee (Mary) and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that Holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God", this refers not to that act of God whereby the *person of the Son* came from heaven and assumed the human nature, but it refers to the complete, human nature which was born in the virgin Mary and brought forth from her, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Mary the virgin, brought forth the complete human nature, as to body and soul, perfectly like unto us in *all* things, only by the power of the Holy Spirit that complete, human nature, as to both body and soul, was kept holy by the Holy Spirit. But that human nature, brought forth by Mary, became personalized by the fact that the *person of the Son of God* came down and assumed that complete human nature.

In like manner now parents produce their likeness, as to both body and soul, while at the same time God works in that otherwise impersonal and unspiritual nature, a spiritual, personal being. Thereby this offspring reveals that he is not as the beast of the field, nor a product of evolution merely, but a product of God, a complete *human being*, personal, spiritual, and responsible to God for all his acts, whether they were good or evil. O true, there is also that organic unity which makes him a part of the whole human organism and makes him co-responsible with others, in the calling wherewith he is called. He has therefore responsibilities and duties to perform toward his fellow man also, and especially toward those who brought him forth, namely, his parents. And the parents in turn have a calling toward their offspring. For the sins of the parents will be visited upon the children, even unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me, says God in His Holy Law. And it is surely true that we can see plainly the marks of the parents, and

the inherited traits in the children. The looks not only, but also the behaviour of the parents are easily discernable in the children. It is for that reason that good, upright, God-fearing parents, training their children in the way in which they shall go, have the joy and comfort at their decease, that the children will not depart from these ways of the Lord. It is also for that reason that all training is home-centered and the home will be reflected in the school and the church and in all other spheres of life. Like produces like, even as like seeks like. We with our children are a marvel of God's creation, and it is God's eternal good pleasure to bring forth His adopted and blessed children, from our children.

L. V.

God's Repentance

The subject of the repentance of God has always been considered one of the more or less difficult subjects found upon the pages of the divinely inspired Scriptures. Consequently, much has been written in an attempt to arrive at a clear understanding of what Scripture means when it speaks of repentance on the part of God.

In the treatment of the subject at hand, it is first of all necessary for us to determine who and what God is concerning Whom the Scriptures tell us that He repents. Turning to God's own revelation, the Bible, we find that there God describes Himself to us as the infinite and eternal One, the I AM, the God Who always is, and never becomes. He says of Himself that He is the same yesterday, today and forever; with Whom there can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning. (James 1:17)

Further, He reveals Himself as the God Who is a willing and decreeing Being. This act of God's willing and decreeing is known as His counsel.

In respect to this counsel of God we may say first of all that it is all-comprehensive. It is no mere "blue-print" which God has drawn, and according to which all things now take place in heaven and in the earth. If this were true, His counsel would be no more than a plan of an architect who determines in detail how the structure that is to be built shall be made, but who does not at the moment know what will become of the building after it has been completed. This, however, is the truth concerning *God's* counsel, namely, that God has not only eternally determined how things shall be created in the beginning, but also controls the development of His entire creation in time. To that we must add also this that God not only has planned, and does even now control all things, but in His counsel too,

He has determined the eternal end and purpose of all things. All things must serve that purpose without exception.

In the second place, we may express that God's counsel is always reaching His desired effect. Nothing can withstand the decreeing God in all His sovereign counsel and will. By the greatest to the smallest thing in His creation He is served, be it willingly or unwillingly. *His* counsel shall stand and He shall do all His good pleasure, the Bible teaches us. Thus, it must follow that nothing can ever, nor does ever really oppose Him to hinder Him in His work.

Thirdly, we must bear in mind that God's counsel is unchangeable. It is the counsel of an unchangeable God, Whose works are in perfect and absolute harmony with His Perfect Being. Neither can there be anything that would persuade God to leave His perfect way, for He is the highest good, and cannot be tempted with evil. Unchangeably therefore, His will is done eternally, and in time from the beginning of Genesis 1:1 to the full realization of the tabernacle of God as it shall be with men when Christ shall have come again.

What has been said is certainly based upon the Word of God. Do we not read in Numbers 23:19: "God is not a man, that He should lie, neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and will He not do it, or hath He spoken, and will He not make it good"? And again, does not Isaiah 46:10b inform us that "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure"?

Now it is in apparent contradiction to the above named passages of the Word of God, that the same Word of God also instructs us that God *repents*. Some of such passages are: Gen. 6:6 "And it repenteth Jehovah that He had made a man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart."

Then, too, a passage such as I Samuel 15:11 expresses: "It repenteth Me that I have set up Saul to be king, for he is turned back from following Me." Among others setting forth the same thought are: Ex. 32:14; Jer. 18:8; Jonah 3:10.

With the foregoing in mind, we must bear in mind, in the second place, that in respect to the term "repentance" Scripture means the following: First of all in the Old Testament the word originates from a verb meaning to pant, to groan, consequently the meaning: to lament, grieve, repent. In the New Testament we find two words one of which means to think with, to care afterwards, to repent one's self, while the other means to consider with, to change one's mind, to repent.

Taking all these words together, we must come to the conclusion that repentance *with us*, is to change one's mind, reverse one's purpose. In that sense I am about to, or have done something, something else inter-

venes, and upon consideration I do not carry out my original intention, but take another step instead. This is however *never* true with the Lord our God! With Him there can be no change of purpose. His work is perfect; let us never overlook that truth. With God, we might possibly define repentance as that act of the Triune God, whereby He, for the sake of attaining His unchangeable purpose, employs means which would seemingly altar His original intention.

With that idea in mind, we may, no doubt, proceed to enter somewhat more in detail upon the subject which is being treated.

It must become clear to us, that when we speak of God as repenting, we are using finite terms for an infinite act of God. We use a term taken from the realm of the creature to express an act of the Sovereign Creator. We then speak anthropomorphistically about God. In other words, we speak about God in terms of a man. In human language therefore, do we speak about Him. We might here also remind ourselves that the fact that God must speak to us in human language is not a result of sin. Even in the state of righteousness in the original Paradise God had to speak to Adam language which he, as a creature, even though he was created in God's own image, could understand. True enough, Adam had more capacity to receive and grasp the Word of God's revelation before the fall than after it, but this does not alter the fact that whenever the Lord God had revealed Himself God had to speak upon the level of Adam's own finite nature. Even is this true presently when the church shall have entered the new heavens and the new earth in which righteousness shall dwell, for even there in heaven we will receive God's revelation in a human, though glorified nature.

Upon investigation, we find that it is solely in the Old Testament that Scripture speaks to us concerning repentance on the part of God. Certainly the reason for this must be sought in the fact that the Old Testament is filled with figures, types and shadows. In that dispensation the Lord revealed Himself to His creature in a much more simple form than He did in the times in which the New Testament was written. Israel was yet a child before the coming of the Christ, and was under tutors and governors. Thus it necessarily follows that the mode of revelation had to be different than after the coming of the Saviour.

We must also bear in mind, and that especially, that prior to the advent of Christ, the Spirit, although active, was not as yet poured out into the church. Consequently, we have a much broader revelation of the deeds of the Lord our God in the inspired writings of the evangelists and apostles than we do of the writers of the Old Testament canon. We would almost expect that we would read in one or more of the Gospel narratives that it repented Jesus that He had chosen Judas, who betrayed Him; and Peter, who

denied Him. However; if we clearly understand that the revelation of the New Dispensation is different from that of the old, we have no difficulty whatever.

With the above things in mind, it would be well for us now to express ourselves specifically in regard to the seemingly difficult passages of Holy Writ which we quoted at the beginning of our discussion.

We must understand, that Scripture, in speaking concerning the repentance of God, speaks in the same anthropomorphistic terms as it does when it attributes hands and feet, eyes and ears, etc. to the Lord God. All of us surely are well aware of the fact God is a Spirit, and therefore does not have bodily members and organs such as we have. Neither is it true that our hands and feet, and eyes and ears are represented in God. Rather does God, as the all-seeing One represent that power of sight in our eye, and His perfect sense of hearing in our ear. So too, when we see some of God's acts, since we cannot know His original intention at the moment, speak of God, no, rather God speaks of Himself, to us as a God who repents.

Just as we, then, conceive of the Almighty having an absolute eye and ear so also do we conceive of an *absolute act of repentance* on the part of God. We must carefully avoid making God's act of repentance an act of a succession of moments or hours, as is characteristic of *our deeds*, but must maintain that, even as all of God's works are eternal, so also is His repentance. Thus, we may submit, that God *eternally* repents having made man on the earth. *Eternally* He repents having made Saul king over Israel, and eternally He repents over Nineveh.

Does this mean that there is a change in God? On the contrary. We *do* change when we repent, for our repentance is an act of a few moments. The Lord Jehovah, however, doesn't change, for His act is an eternal act of repentance. If it were true that there is a change in God when He repents having made man on the earth, or having made Saul king, then it must follow too that there is a change in God also when He forgives our sins. Legally we were children of the devil, and legally God's wrath was upon us, in time, before the first advent of Christ. But we were in Christ *eternally*. Thus, God does not change when He forgives us, but is ever the same, having chosen His church before the world's foundations. It is for that very reason to that He can love us even while we were enemies. The same is true of God in respect to His eternal hatred of the wicked. He hates the wicked *eternally* and shows to them no favorable attitude whatever. Not even in time. God cannot deny Himself!

In the light of all which has been written, we maintain that in respect to Nineveh, God had proclaimed: in forty days Nineveh shall be destroyed. The inhabitants of Nineveh show an attitude of humility and sor-

row for sin. Consequently, Nineveh is *not* destroyed. Did God change His plan because of their repentance? Not at all. God never even intended to destroy the city. But, when He comes with the statement: "Nineveh shall be destroyed," it is as John Calvin puts it, "Because He did not wish them destroyed, but reformed, and thereby saved from destruction." Eternally God decreed *not* to destroy the city of the Ninevites.

With regard to God having repented making man on the earth, we find that it was never even God's intention to destroy all mankind from off the face of the earth at that time. In order, however, to bring out what He might have done, and what He does actually do, we read immediately in Gen. 6:8, "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord."

In respect to Saul, God never intended to have the house of Saul sit upon the throne of Israel at Jerusalem. Saul was not the type of Christ, it was *David*. Indeed, if God had intended to choose the house of Saul to function in the same capacity as David was to function, then, of course, we would ascribe a change in purpose to God. But, it was always God's intention that the house of David would sit on the throne at Jerusalem. But, in order to prove to the wicked element among Israel that the king of *their* choosing would not succeed, God places Saul in the kingly office for a time, instead of His chosen, David.

When, then, we come upon passages of Scripture which speak of God repenting having done something, we do well to always bear in mind, that that which in our terms is called repentance, is on the part of God but a means to an end, the end which is the realization of His original eternal purpose.

S. T. C.

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan hereby wishes to express its heartfelt sympathy to our brother consistory member, Deacon S. De Young, in the loss of his mother,

MRS. C. DE YOUNG

May the Lord comfort the bereaved with the assurance in their hearts that the Lord has taken her to her Eternal Home.

The Consistory of the
First Protestant Reformed Church.

H. Hoeksema, Pres.
G. Stonehouse, Clerk.

Gleanings From Twenty Years *

We have called these sad facts because they reveal the following. There is a difference of *at least* \$525 in receipts and actual cost of the paper each year. This means that, on an average, 310 subscriptions are not paid for yearly. Secondly, they reveal that the Standard Bearer is still a babe; supported and fed by mother and attached to her apron strings at 20 years of age. Thirdly, that there is much precious material (books and pamphlets in Tower Room at Fuller Ave.) going to waste in cold storage. This material will soon be of no value at all for much of it is in the Holland language. Finally, they reveal that, apparently, there is no cooperation or communication between those responsible for the contents and those responsible for the publishing of the Standard Bearer.

It is understood that the purpose of the Standard Bearer is primarily to propagate the truth and not at all to make money. Though it may never make money, we believe that, at least, it can stand on its own feet without the support of special gifts and collections. We can even vision the possibility of the publication earning money and in substantial amounts; or if preferred, of reducing its subscription rates to a great extent.

These facts certainly demand action, and we would propose the following. Normally, with few exceptions, every copy of the Standard Bearer should be paid for by a subscriber. (At present the Standard Bearer is being sent free of charge to all our Young People in the service and as such is doing a splendid service. It might be necessary on a special occasion of this nature to ask help, but normally, it should not be required and all subscriptions should be paid for). Those who are unwilling to give 11¢ per copy for material of the Standard Bearer's value certainly are not reading the paper; with such we are better off without. It has also been reported at this meeting that many of the arrearages of former years have been paid, and that, therefore, the faith, expressed in sending it to non-payers for a time after their subscriptions had run out, has been amply rewarded. But even then the facts still reveal that about 250 do not pay for the paper. At least, 150 of these can and should do so. Therefore, if a subscriber does not pay his fee, and can, he should no longer receive the paper.

As to the books in the Tower Room, if nothing else, we should give them away. Our purpose is to propagate the truth and certainly they are not doing that where they are at present. Undoubtedly, the two radio programs sponsored by the Eastern group and The Western Societies, would welcome them as gifts to be offered over the air to all those writing in and acknowledging the programs.

It would seem beneficial if there were periodic meetings between the Editorial and Business staffs of the paper to discuss problems of mutual interest and consideration.

Finally, the Standard Bearer should be in every Protestant Reformed home, and paid for by the family receiving it, and in many thousands of homes outside our denomination. We see no reason why it could not have a paid subscription and circulation of 5,000 copies or more. This would bring the price way down, for printing costs do not increase proportionately with a rise in circulation.

The question remains—how shall we accomplish these ideals? Perhaps, they could be attained along the following lines. It is possible that a full time agent might be appointed for our 3 publications: The Standard Bearer, Beacon Lights, and the newcomer, Concordia. At the same time this individual could act as agent for the books now appearing from the pen of the Rev. H. Hoeksema. With these supplying his basic income it is conceivable that this agent could earn between \$3000-\$4000 per year, or more, according to his own initiative. You are, perhaps, smiling at that figure as did those who heard the original remark. Let's look at it a moment. The agent would be paid on a commission basis for all collections and new subscriptions received. He should be responsible for all collections of subscriptions and thus receive commission on all renewals. A man of initiative should soon be able to boost the circulation of the Standard Bearer to 5,000 and the Beacon Lights to 4,000 while Concordia, because of the nature of the paper, might never be raised above 1,000. If he were, on the basis of these figures, paid 50 cents per subscription collection from the Standard Bearer he would receive in one year \$2500 from that source, plus his commissions while securing the new subscribers. From the Beacon Lights he should receive 25 cents per subscription collection which would net another \$1000. The Beacon Lights could pay this commission by raising its subscription price 25 cents per year; so also Concordia. From Concordia he would receive some \$250; for a total of \$3750. From sale of books, he should certainly make commissions in a years time of \$600. (Based on the sale of 1000 books at an average price of \$1.50 and current rate of commission of 40%). It is conceivable, if this agent were a man of ability, that he might at the same time serve the Churches in other capacities e.g. Stated Clerk and Treasurer of the Classis and Synod. This would net him about \$450 more. This would make a gross total of \$4750, which, less travelling and expenses, would be a net income of some \$3000 or more, according to the man's ability and personal initiative. He could certainly make a comfortable living in a pleasant position in a worthy Kingdom cause.

If the appointment of a full time agent is not feasible or possible, local agents could be appointed to accomplish the same end in each congregation; on the same basis of remuneration. Subscriptions might be raised by a special drive of intense effort. Upon the basis of the present figures, if 2000 copies of the Standard Bearer were printed and sent out and if 1800 of these were paid for, the magazine would already be standing on its own feet and comfortably set. Thus the money now collected to support it could be diverted into other channels.

There are several other suggestions of value. More societies, such as this, might be organized in other localities, where our Church membership would warrant it. This, too, has been suggested before and for the details of working it out we refer you to Volume 17, number 11, page 256 of the Standard Bearer. *This* society should certainly be increased in size. (Both these could be accomplished by an agent, by the way). To arouse interest in the present organization, there is, even now, no reason why some members from our outlying Churches should not be included in the Board. At all times the organization and cause should be kept vividly before the minds of our people, to hold their interest. It was not even asked to announce this meeting on our Church bulletins, at least not in Holland. As a valuable source of income, notices of anniversaries, weddings, etc. should be encouraged.

It is evident that many more things could be suggested and said than we have done. We would like to make it very clear and emphasize that our only purpose has been to arouse some thoughts for discussion—nothing more. It would be presumptuous on our part to assume to have solved all the perennial problems of the Standard Bearer, which more and wiser men, have been dealing with for the past twenty years. We have only brought out some facts and laid our interpretation upon them to arouse interest in our Standard Bearer and present—"Gleanings from Twenty Years."

In closing we present a poem which was found in one of the early issues of the Standard Bearer. The original is in Holland and our translation is rather free. Anyone interested can look up the original in Volume 2, number 15, page 401.

STANDARD BEARER

Standard bearer—read and studied, here and there
and everywhere;
Of the readers, of Church papers, Standard Bearer
has a share.
With its contents, most its readers, are completely
satisfied,
For the 3 points the "Synod", it has persistently de-
nied.

In its contents is agreement, but the title that it bears—

“Standard Bearer”—seems presumptuous—that that name it wears.

With the contents, as we write this, will most everyone agree,

But that the name has been well chosen, many people cannot see.

That’s, however, not in order, for the name the knowledge gives,

Of its origin and purpose, and for the cause that it still lives.

Let us therefore, take a look, and a wee bit closer go,

That the meaning—“Standard Bearer”—all the readers thus may know.

Standard—precept—law, are and have been all well-known,

Through the ages they appear; and e’en in Old Testament are shown.

Therefore, Standards: binding rules—are, of course, authorities,

Raised above us, given power; rooting out atrocities.

When with this Standard in the land, rule is wielded over all,

There is order, right and union, there is peace, for which men call.

And when all, with one accord, from that Standard do not stray,

There is blessing,—truth remains; they will hold it thus for aye.

“Bearer”—holder of a standard,—those who wield the rule must be,

And when many work together, there is strength in unity.

But, however, OUR Standard, is of greater, higher, right

It is the Banner of our King; raised by Christ and in His might!

It is THE STANDARD—staff and banner—battle flag with this express:

“For the Great Exalted Captain—advancing in His Righteousness”.

Beneath this standard, we will fight for: Truth and Right, in Jesus’ name,

“Till the last apostate brother, by God’s grace, is brought to shame.

That the foremost of the princes, shrank before God’s battle flag,

Does not cause us much of wonder, for here too, we see them lag.

For also when our Standard rose, many tried to kill the babe,

Stunt its growth, or smother mother; by God’s grace, it grew and stayed.

And what else could one expect, for when God is our intent,

When we seek the truth of Scripture, and in that our efforts spent,

Then to those who would defy us, while we write to glory God,

Comes, as foregone conclusion, shame—of all their purpose odd.

This does not mean, in any case, that we those persons hate,

But rather that our purpose is,—admonishing that sinful state—

To lead them back to God’s own truth, and by God’s grace, we prayed,

That they shall see: apart from Christ—God’s grace is NOT displayed.

Standard Bearer—Flag of Truth—Watchword—Motto, proudly waves,

Proclaim loudly, in all ages, that by Sovereign Grace, God saves.

Standard Bearer—by God’s power, seek and strive with all your might,

By the grace that God shall give you, to proclaim His Truth and Right.

W. H.

*Speech delivered at the Annual meeting of the R.F.P.A. on Thursday evening, September 14, 1944 in Fuller Ave. Comments and criticisms concerning any of the material here presented is invited.

Freedom Of Religion

Freedom of religion. We hear those words almost every day. In fact, today both in the Church and in the world men speak of it almost daily. And no wonder, for it is one of the freedoms for which we are said to be fighting this war and for which we are paying a tremendous price. However, we may add immediately, if it happens to be *true* freedom of religion that is at stake, then we may well speak of it and fight for it, for true religion is a boon.

Still the question cannot be suppressed: but is it

truly real freedom of religion that is at stake? And if so, will it become a blessed reality after the war is won? These questions, as well as many others, must have an answer. However, to answer them we must bear in mind that freedom of religion is closely related to Christian liberty. For when we speak of freedom of religion we naturally ask immediately what it stands for and what it implies. And in answering this question it makes a great deal of difference where we go to find the answer. For if we take notice of the different nations we soon discover that opinions vary as to what freedom of religion really means. That is true even of the Allies. Though they are fighting side by side in an all out battle for religious freedom they have not definitely decided what it shall imply nor are they in agreement as to the conception of it. Think only of Russia. Therefore to consult the great men of the world as to the meaning of religious liberty can only lead to confusion and we are sure that even the answer of the best would hardly satisfy. However, if we look at freedom of religion in the light of christian liberty the answer is plain, and also the reason why it is necessary but nevertheless is so often lacking. Hence we must take our subject in close connection with christian liberty.

And speaking of christian liberty, we may say that it is the state in which a man's inner nature is in perfect accord with the law of God. As man is by nature he hates that law and cannot desire even for a moment to love or keep it. Therefore natural man is in bondage and his only liberty is to sin. But by a wonder of God's grace the believer is delivered from the bondage of sin and death and he again has his delight in the law of God. In principle he again loves the Lord his God with all his heart and soul and mind and strength, and it is his desire to serve and glorify Him. Therefore, in principle he is again a free man who walks in the sphere of God's law and thus enjoys God's favor and peace.

And this liberty the christian can never lose. Man may deprive him of his name and position, may behead him on the scaffold or burn him at the stake, but he will never succeed in taking from him his christian liberty. His delight in God's law cannot be bound with shackles of steel, and no tyrant or dictator can ever destroy it. Christian liberty, therefore, is always victorious. It is a life that cannot die.

But for that very reason the Christian's calling is to manifest that life in the midst of the world. By sovereign grace he has been called from death unto life and he stands as a free man in the midst of a world in bondage to sin. Therefore, to the praise of his God, in the home and by the way, in church and school, in his work and play, he must walk as a free man and thus reveal the life that is from above. But to do this is also his desire. For by the indwelling of the Spirit

he delights in God and it is his heart's desire to keep all of God's commandments. Hence, both his desire and calling is to reveal his christian liberty, elsewhere and always.

To do this, however, the christian in a sense is dependent upon his fellowmen. For he daily comes in contact with them and in many ways if they so desire they can interfere with his calling and hinder him in his task. If he is to be faithful to his calling and realize the desire of his heart, they must allow him to preach and teach and to walk in the light in every sphere of life. It is now the right to do this, as given him by his fellowman, that bears the name of freedom of religion. Christian liberty, therefore, refers to our relation to God, freedom of religion to our position among men. Christian liberty delivers us from the law of sin, freedom of religion gives us the right to manifest this without interference in the midst of the world.

From the foregoing it is not difficult to determine what true freedom of religion should be and of what it should consist. First of all, since christian liberty cannot thrive without the Scriptures, it implies freedom of the Bible itself. Should the Bible be removed or shackled in any way the exercise of christian liberty would become quite impossible, for the very life of the christian is dependent on the Word of God. Secondly, it also implies that the christian must have the right to interpret the Bible in its own light without being limited by any human power from without. No one may force certain views upon him, but he must be at liberty to explain Scripture as he understands it. Thirdly, it also includes the right to expound the Scriptures in preaching and teaching wherever the christian may desire to do so. For the Church has received the injunction of her Lord to preach the gospel unto all creatures and christian parents are admonished to declare the mighty deeds of Jehovah to the generations following. Therefore true freedom of religion must needs include the right for the gospel to run its course and to instruct men everywhere in the fear of God. And finally, it also means that the christian must have the right to live according to the Word of God in every sphere of life. Wherever he goes and in everything he does he must be at liberty to do the will of God. In every sphere of life he must have the right to let his light shine unmolested and undisturbed.

Since the nature of true freedom of religion is such, it is not difficult to understand that it has often been found wanting in the past and that its history is one of continual battle. For natural man hates God and does not desire to see the manifestation of His grace in the exercise of christian liberty. Therefore instead of allowing the christian true freedom of religion he either advocates a liberty that is a sham or he seeks to

deprive the christian of liberty altogether. But regardless which course he may choose to follow, his aim always is to keep the christian's light under a bushel. And history proves that in the past natural man has tried this in a threefold way. Firstly, by means of the state. The state with its sword power has often been used by ungodly men to interfere with the internal affairs of the church, to persecute its members and to kindle the fire at the stake. Secondly, the church itself has often been a menace to religious liberty. That was especially the case at the time of the reformation when the Roman Catholic Church denied the common member the right to interpret the Scriptures, thus shackling the Scriptures and bringing the common member in bondage to the Church. And that was also the case at any time when an ungodly majority in the church lorded it over the faithful minority. And, finally, society too, with its public opinion, carnal lusts and hatred of the church, has often been used as an efficient instrument to deprive the christian of his religious liberty. By persecution and by depriving the christian of name and position in the world it has often made the exercise of christian liberty difficult.

Nor is freedom of religion what it might and should be today, not even in our United States. For we notice in the first place, that our nation allows also freedom of irreligion. A man is at liberty to serve God or Satan, to erect a church or a theater, to walk the way to heaven or hell. In this respect our land is truly a land of the free, that is, a land in which a man may live as he pleases. This is not true freedom of religion, but only the freedom of indifference. And secondly, we notice, too, that it is not quite as easy to exercise christian liberty in our land as it might appear. It is becoming ever more difficult for the christian labor man to find himself a job without denying his christian principles by joining an ungodly union. To preach the gospel over the air on a large scale is well nigh impossible. And to let our light shine in every sphere of life already means that we have no place in society and politics and that we are hated and despised.

Therefore we should have no foolish illusions in regard to freedom of religion in the future. For Scripture tells us that men shall increase in wickedness and that sin shall abound. Rather than to build high hopes for the future we must expect that in the future the state, the false church and society will unite their power and deprive us of the liberty which we today still enjoy. Yea, even so that in the future the christian cannot buy or sell except he have the mark of the beast.

Therefore, on the one hand, we do well to redeem the time and to appreciate and make use of the liberty which today still is ours. True, this liberty is not

what it might and should be, but we must remember that even this liberty shall be taken from us in the future. When that day comes only he will be able to stand who has made use of his liberty in the past. Therefore our place in public service, in the catechism room and in society life should never be found vacant, in order that we may be able to stand in the evil day.

But, on the other hand, it behooves us to look forward to the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then our christian liberty shall be perfected. And in the new creation we shall exercise it unmolested and undisturbed.

May we learn to pray with the church of all ages: Come, Lord Jesus, yea, come quickly.

P. V.

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Redlands, California, hereby expresses its sincere sympathy to our brother-deacon, Mr. J. Noordmans, and family in the loss of his father,

MARCUS NOORDMANS

at the age of 78 years.

May the Lord abundantly comfort the bereaved in the loss they have sustained, and cause them to experience the nearness of God also in this sorrow.

The Consistory,

J. Van Der Wal, Clerk.

P. De Boer, Pres.

NOTICE

Communications relative to renewal of subscriptions and membership fees or gifts should now be sent to Mr. Gerrit Pipe, 946 Sigsbee St., Grand Rapids 6, Michigan.

The day is Thine, and Thine the night,
And Thine the shining sun;
At Thy command earth's bounds are set,
And changing seasons run.