

# THE STANDARD *Bearer* A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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## MEDITATIE

### God, Die De Dooden Levend Maakt

*Het boek des geslachts van Jezus Christus, den zoon van David, den zoon van Abraham. Abraham gewon Izak, en Izak gewon Jakob, en Jakob gewon Judas, en zijne broeders; En Judas gewon Fares en Zara bij Tamar. . . .*

*Matt. 1:1-3.*

De vleeschwording des Woords!

Hoe in de geslachten, die tot op Abraham terug gaan, het vleesch, dat de Zone Gods straks uit Maria zal aannemen, *gewerd*, dat wordt ons hier in het boek des geslachts van Jezus Christus geteekend.

Dit toch ligt aangeduid in de beteekenis van het oorspronkelijke woord, dat hier door *geslacht* is vertaald. Het woord is letterlijk *genesis*, en *genesis* beteekent *wording*, *oorsprong*, zoo dat we vertalen mogen: "het boek der wording van Jezus Christus." En deze "wording" ziet niet op Zijne geboorte, want deze wordt ons beschreven van vers achttien tot het einde in ditzelfde hoofdstuk, terwijl het opschrift, waarmee dit hoofdstuk aanvangt, slechts de eerste zeventien verzen dekt. In deze verzen hebben we dus eene aanduiding van de *wording van Jezus Christus* in de geslachten der voorvaderen.

Maar daarom moet dan ook vaststaan, dat we hier het geslachtsregister, niet van Jozef, maar van Maria hebben.

Schijnbaar is dit anders.

Aan het einde toch van dit boek des geslachts lezen we: "En Jakob gewon Jozef, den man van Maria, uit welke geboren is Jezus, gezegd Christus."

Twee dingen staan echter vast. Maria was uit den zaden Davids, want naar het vleesch is Christus uit Davids geslacht. En Jozef, de man van Maria, was niet Jezus' vader, want de Christus Gods is niet vleesch

geworden door den wil des mans. Hebben we hier dus het boek des oorsprongs en der wording van Jezus Christus, dat is, niet de rechtelijke, maar de organische lijn der geslachten, die op Jezus Christus uitloopen, dan moet de lijn tot op Christus doorgaan, dan kan ze niet met Jozef worden afgebroken, dan loopt ze door over Maria. Alleen, wanneer we hier het geslachtsregister van Maria hebben, kan men het opschrift recht laten wedervaren: het boek der *genesis* van Jezus Christus.

En Jozef dan?

Hoe kan hij dan in dit "boek des geslachts van Jezus Christus" worden ingeschoven?

Als die lijn van Davids geslacht, waaruit de Christus zou geboren worden, opdat het *menschelijk* onmogelijke en hopelooze der belofte volkomen aan het licht mocht treden, op eene maagd uitliep, dan had Jakob (vs. 16) geen zonen, dan was Maria erfdochter, en dan werd haar man bij het geslacht van Jakob ingelijfd.

Bovendien werd Jozef dan in de registers opgeschreven als de wettige vader van Jezus.

En zoo werd ook aan de maagd, die zwanger werd en eenen zoon baarde, bescherming gegeven tegen den laster van goddelooze tongen.

Ontfermende wijsheid Gods!

De wording van Jezus Christus!

De zoon van David . . . de zoon van Abraham!

Jezus! Dat was Zijn naam onder de menschen.

En met dien naam verdween Hij onder de menschen. Want, behalve dan door degenen, die op de vervulling der belofte hoopten, en die het Woord Gods in verband met dien naam gegeven kenden en geloofden, werd er aan den naam Jezus destijds geen bijzondere beteekenis meer gehecht.

Wie kon zijn zoon nu geen Jezus heeten?

En was Jezus niet de zoon van Joseph, den timmerman? Kende men niet zijn vader, en zijne moeder, en zijne broeders en zusters? En was hij bovendien ook niet de Nazarener? Wat bijzonders zou men dan

uit Nazareth mogen verwachten?

Neen; wat de menschen betrof, wat het vleesch aanging, was er ook in dien naam gedaante noch heerlijkheid. Hij duidde eenvoudig aan, dat deze Jezus, met vele andere Jezussen, zijne plaats innam onder de menschen.

Jezus, zoo heette Hij. En als men daar nu verder niet meer van zei, en er geen bijzondere beteekenis aan hechtte, zou men geen bezwaar inbrengen.

Met den naam Christus stond het eenigszins anders. Want Christus was niet Zijn naam, doch Zijn titel. En over dezen titel zou eerst nog eens gedisputeerd moeten worden! Want *Christus* is Messias, Gezalfde, de Verwachte, Degene, Die komen zou. En ofschoon de naam Jezus wel door een mensch onder de menschen gedragen kon worden, en men Hem alzoo dien naam misgunde noch betwistte, dat *Jezus is de Christus*, zou men ontkennen. Daartegen zou het vleesch zich met al zijn kracht verzetten tot het bittere einde, het einde des kruises toe.

En toch, Hij is Jezus, de Christus!

Jezus, niet maar onder andere Jezussen, maar als Degene, Die ook metterdaad was, wat Zijn naam aanduidde: Jehovah Heil, de God onzer volkomene zaligheid, Die Zijn volk zalig zal maken van hunne zonden. En deze Jezus, wat ook het vleesch daartegen mag murmureeren, is wel metterdaad de van God van eeuwigheid verordineerde en gezalfde Christus, Die Israels troon uit het slijk zou doen verrijzen, op den troon Davids zou zitten tot in eeuwigheid, en op dien troon over alle volkeren zou regeeren.

Daarom is Hij ook zoon Davids en zoon Abrahams. Dat kon niet anders.

Zoo was het immers eeuwen tevoren aan Abraham geopenbaard, toen de Heere God hem het evangelie verkondigde (Gal. 3:8): in u zullen alle volken gezegend worden. Op Abraham rustte de belofte, en op zijn zaad. En dat zaad was Christus. Want "zoo zijn de beloftenissen tot Abraham en zijn zaad gesproken. Hij zegt niet: En den zaden, als van velen; maar als van één: En uwen zade; hetwelk is Christus." Jezus, Die Zijn volk zal zalig maken van hunne zonden, en in Wien alle volken zouden gezegend worden, moest dus zoon van Abraham zijn.

Maar de Christus moest ook uit Davids geslacht geboren worden.

David was immers de door God aangewezen koning Israels; en zijn geslacht was het koninklijk geslacht. Uit Abraham, door Juda, liep de lijn van het eeuwig koningschap over David. Zoo was het geopenbaard: "Wanneer uwe dagen zullen vervuld zijn, en gij met uwe vadersen zult ontslapen zijn, zoo zal ik uw zaad na u doen opstaan, dat uit uw lijf voortkomen zal, en Ik zal zijn koninkrijk bevestigen. Die zal Mijnen Naam een huis bouwen; en Ik zal den stoel zijns koninkrijks bevestigen tot in eeuwigheid, Ik zal hem tot

eenen Vader zijn, en Hij zal Mij zijn tot eenen zoon; dewelke, als hij misdoet, zoo zal Ik hem met eene menschenroede, en met plagen der menschenkinderen straffen. Maar Mijne goedertierenheid zal van hem niet wijken, gelijk als Ik die weggenomen heb van Saul, dien Ik van voor uw aangezicht heb weggenomen. Doch uw huis zal bestendig zijn, en uw koninkrijk tot in eeuwigheid, voor uw aangezicht; uw stoel zal vast zijn tot in eeuwigheid." II Sam. 7:12-16.

Op Davids zaad was Israels hope gevestigd.

Daarvan zong het vrome volk reeds in de oude bedeeling:

" 'k Heb eens gezworen bij Mijn eigen heiligheid: Zook Ik aan Davil lieg'; zoo hem Mijn woord misleid! Zijn zaad zal eeuwig zijn; zijn troon zal heerlijk pralen, Zoo duurzaam als de zon, zoo glansrijk als haar stralen; Bevestigd als de maan; en aan des hemels bogen Staat Mijn getuige trouw te schitt'ren in elks oog."

En die hope werd vervuld in Jezus van Nazareth!

Het boek des geslachts van Jezus Christus is open ter inspectie!

Zoon Davids . . . Zoon Abrahams!

Wonder Gods!

De wording en oorsprong van Jezus Christus!

Of wie wordt bij het lezen van dit boek des geslachts van Jezus Christus niet getroffen door het menschelijk-onmogelijke dezer wording, en door de openbaring daarin van het wonder Gods, Die de dooden levend maakt?

't Is metterdaad een leven uit de dooden!

Dat wil dit door den Geest geïnspireerde boek ons aanstonds reeds doen verstaan door de rangschikking in drie maal veertien geslachten. vs. 17.

Gij yerstaat immers, dat deze symboliek met opzet zoo gekozen is. In de werkelijkheid der menschelijke historie was het zoo niet. Er waren meer geslachten. Met opzet zijn sommige geslachten overgesprongen om tot de symboliek van drie maal veertien te komen.

En spreekt dan deze symboliek er reeds niet luide van, dat God juist daar Zijne wondermacht openbaart, waar alle menschelijke mogelijkheid heeft opgehouden, opdat Hij Zich zou openbaren als den God, Die de dooden levend maakt? Worden door deze drie maal veertien dan geen drie perioden in de verwachting Israels aangeduid van tweemaal zeven ieder? En is zeven, als zes pus één, als arbeid en ruste, dan geen symbool van het volmaakte werk Gods, van de komst van Zijn koninkrijk, van de vervulling der belofte? En wijst dan dit tweemaal zeven niet op een dubbel wachten van Gods volk in de oude bedeeling, zoodat het wel moest schijnen alsof God de belofte telkens vertraagde? En ontving het dan in deze periode van tweemaal zeven niet dubbel voor al zijne zonden? En liep dan niet telkens, tot driemaal toe, deze periode uit op eene menschelijke

onmogelijkheid, zoodat men wel des wachters moede moest worden of op hoop tegen hoop gelooven moest?

Van Abraham tot David!

Tweemaal zeven! Lang had men gewacht! De tijd was lang voorbij! Maar in David scheen dan toch de vervulling der beloften te zijn aangebroken! Dan neen! Weer wordt de belofte verschoven. David zal den Heere geen huis bouwen. Weer wordt er gesproken van zijn zaad! En vandaar gaat het al naar beneden. Van David tot . . . o schrik! . . . de Babylonische wegvoering: de dood, het graf. 't Is nu verloren! Dan neen! De belofte blijft spreken. Zerubabel komt! De prins! Maar ach! ook zijn glans verdooft, en 't wordt al donkerder, tot er eindelijk niets overblijft dan eene maagd uit het huis van David, en Ezau zit op diens troon! . . .

Driemaal veertien!

Menschelijke onmogelijkheid!

Maar ook zoo blijft de belofte spreken. Want immers eene maagd zal zwanger worden en eenen zoon baren, en zijn naam zal zijn Immanuel!

Menschelijke onmogelijkheid, maar Goddelijk wonder! Leven uit den dood! Daar in de kribbe van Bethlehem ligt het eindpunt van de geslachten Abrahams en Davids, Jezus Christus. En daar is de openbaring van God, den God onzer zaligheid, Die immers de dooden levend maakt? . . .

Driemaal veertien!

Van Abraham tot David den koning; van David tot de wegvoering; van de wegvoering tot de maagd! . . .

De mensch gaat onder! In 't vleesch is geen hoop!

De belofte blijft werken, wordt vervuld!

De wording van Jezus Christus. . .

Goddelijk wonder!

Leven uit den dood!

Ach, zoo was 't bij deze wonderlinge wording van Jezus Christus altijd weer!

Abraham gewon Izak? . . .

Gewon? Ja, maar niet anders dan door het geloof in de belofte; door een geloof van hope tegen hope; door een geloof, dat weliswaar niet bezweek, maar dat in 't lange wachten toch bijna onderging. Want Abraham had de belofte. Hij zou zaad zien! En naar dat zaad verlangde hij met al, wat in hem was. Zeer begeerde hij om Christus' dag te zien. Maar uit het oogpunt des vleesch bleek het al aanstonds onmogelijk, dat hij ooit dit zaad zou voortbrengen. Want schoon hij zich al sterk mocht gevoelen naar het vleesch, bekwaam om zaad voort te brengen, Sara was onvruchtbaar! En ach! hij en zijne gade beproefden het wel door het vleesch, en wilden het vleesch wel in dienst stellen van Gods belofte. En kon hij dan bij Sara het zaad niet voortbrengen, uit Hagar zou hij de vervulling der belofte zien. En 't vleesch had succes! Doch niet bij God. Het "laat Ishmael voor uw aangezicht leven"

vond bij God geen genade. En 't werd al later en al donkerder! Ook Abrahams lichaam verstierf. . .

't Was menschelijk onmogelijk geworden!

En als de belofte zich aan Abraham en Sara herhaalt, lachen beide: wie verwacht nu kinderen in den avond des levens?

En dan wordt zij vervuld! Goddelijk wonder! Leven uit de dooden!

En Izak gewon Jakob!

Ja, maar ook hier door de belofte! Terwijl Ishmael in menigte uitbreekt, is Rebekka onvruchtbaar. En als God eindelijk het gebed verhoort, dat Izak en Rebekka tot God opzenden, is alles verkeerd: Ezau staat op Jakob's plaats, en Jakob's vleesch, schoon hij zijnen broeder schier wanhopig bij de hielen houdt, is niet bij machte de plaats der belofte te veroveren. . .

Doch in de "wording" van Jezus Christus, die immers in Jakob's lendenen was, wint de belofte het! De meerdere gaat den mindere dienen!

Menschelijke onmogelijkheid! Goddelijk wonder!

En Jakob gewon Juda! O, Jakob had veel zaad, bij vier vrouwen, want hij wilde altijd de belofte Gods voorthelpen. Maar Rachel is onvruchtbaar, Ruben bedrijft schande, Simeon en Levi zijn woestaards, en in profetische verwondering moet Jakob eindelijk toch het zaad vinden in Juda, den vierde!

Juda! Gij zijt het!

En Juda? Ach, 't wordt al droeviger naar het vleesch! Hij gewon Fares en Zara . . . bij Tamar, zijne eigene schoondochter! Want Juda had zich eene Kanaanietische tot vrouw genomen. En bij haar meende hij door het vleesch het zaad der belofte te verwekken. En 't scheen te gelukken. Drie zonen werden hem uit haar geboren. God doodde de eerste! En als Juda diens vrouw, Tamar, aan den tweede, Onan gegeven had, om toch zaad te houden, deed de laatste het nog schandelijker dan de eerste zoon, en God doodde hem ook! En als Juda nogmaals voorbereidselen maakt om Tamar voor zijn derden zoon als vrouw te bewaren, vreest Tamar, dat God ook hem zal dooden, en waar zij ook het zaad der belofte wil zien, verkleedt ze zich als eene hoer en verlokt ze haar eigen schoonvader tot bloedschande! . . .

En zie! 't gelukt!

Of liever: nu werkt de belofte! Juda gewon Fares!

Waar Juda 't zaad der belofte bedoelde voort te brengen, daar doodt God het in Zijnen toorn! Als Juda zeker, bij 't inkeeren tot de "hoer" aan het zaad der belofte niet denkt, gewint hij het tegen wil en dank!

Waar is nu het vleesch? Te schande gemaakt!

Wonderlijke wording van Jezus Christus! Leven uit de dooden! Ook in de kribbe van Bethlehem! Geboren uit eene vrouw, ja, maar zonder de wil des mans!

De dingen, die onmogelijk zijn bij de menschen, zijn mogelijk bij God!

Die de dooden levend maakt!

H. H.

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## EDITORIALS

### Arminianism Gone Wild

The above caption characterizes a good deal of so-called "evangelical" preaching in our country. A very good illustration of this may be found in a book that was recently sent to me by the Zondervan Publishing House. The book bears the title "Ye Must Be Born Again," and its author is Hyman Appelman, who himself attributes the sensationalism that characterizes his preaching to the fact that he is a converted Jew. Since I received the book, the author was invited to conduct a series of "evangelistic" meetings in Grand Rapids, which by this time are concluded. Moreover, the editor of *The Banner* wrote a critical editorial, condemning Mr. Appelman's preaching as "thoroughly Arminian." At the same time, however, he writes that "it is by no means a pleasant task to criticize the preaching of some of those who are agreed with us on certain cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith," and he finds that it is a case of truth being "mixed with error." And he appears to think that it is a matter of misplaced emphasis, for "Appelman's teachings . . . stress human responsibility at the expense of divine sovereignty." Mr. Appelman is said to have taken the editor of *The Banner* to task for his criticism, and according to reports of his statements he claimed to be as good a Calvinist as his critic. This is, perhaps, hardly true, although, in my opinion, it is indisputable that the difference between Mr. Appelman and the editor of *The Banner* is certainly only a matter of degree, not of principle. In proof of this, I refer not only to the statement of the editor himself that Appelman's teachings "stress human responsibility at the expense of divine sovereignty, but also to the teachings of the "Three points," and the position always assumed by the editor of *The Banner*, according to which we must believe the contradiction that God is gracious in the preaching of the gospel to all the hearers, and that He will save only the elect; that saving grace is a well-meaning offer on the part of God, and that it is sovereign. If the editor of *The Banner* will be honest, he may certainly find the same two irreconcilable lines in Mr. Appelman's book which he always tries to draw himself. If the editor of *The Banner* will take the trouble to re-examine his own sermons on the "Three Points" he will discover that some of his statements are strikingly similar to some of those made by Mr. Appelman. Hence, the editor of *The Banner* is hardly in a position to criticize Mr. Appelman's preaching.

As for us, we do not consider such preaching truth

mixed with error, but a corruption of the truth; we do not agree with Mr. Appelman on some cardinal points, but differ fundamentally with his preaching along the entire line; and for us it is not a matter of stress on human responsibility at the expense of God's sovereignty (which by the way is nonsense anyway, since man can never be responsible for the work of God), but Appelman's preaching is an out and out denial of God's sovereignty. He literally denies that God is the Lord in the matter of salvation. Appelman does not preach the *God* of the Scriptures, the *Christ* of the Scriptures, the *atonement* of the Scriptures, the *sinner* as he is presented in the Scriptures.

Consider this: "God is ready, God is willing, God is eager, God is anxious, God is pleading for the privilege (sic!) of washing away the sins of every soul in the precious blood of His Son and heir. But His hands are tied, His power is limited, His grace is constrained by you. If you want to be saved, God is willing to save you. If you don't want to be saved, there isn't anything that even God can do to rescue you from that pit of eternal burning." I consider this a description, not of God, but of an idol. Appelman preaches a mighty sinner and a poor, weak God, that must beg the sinner for privileges! To me, this is blasphemy. p. 109.

Note this: "He did that for you and for me. I wonder if you can say to this Jesus now, 'Lord, the love of Christ does constrain me and if there is anything you have left undone here where I live, that I can do, to the best of my power and ability you can count on me. I am going to do it.' " If this means anything, it means that Christ left things undone which we must do for Him. The success of Christ's work depends on us. It is in need of being supplemented by us. Appelman does not understand, or deliberately denies, that Christ perfects His own work, gathers and preserves His own elect, and that no man, even though he be a preacher, can do this for Him. p. 93.

Attend to this: "Yes Jesus bore the sins of every one of us in His own body on that cursed tree. His blood was shed for every soul to the ends of the earth. . . . Surely, there is no soul who may not be washed free and clean, holy and wholesome in the blood of the Lamb. That is the greatest news, the best news, the most inspiring news. It is shouting good news. Jesus Christ died for all men. His blood is available for the cleansing of all souls from all sins. Freely, bountifully, lovingly, eagerly, God proffers that cleansing tide to all sinners alike." The last sentence is quite in harmony with the First Point of 1924. The editor of *The Banner* c.s. preach the same thing. But here you have the doctrine of a Christ *pro omnibus*, of universal atonement. It is the doctrine that Christ also died for those that are not actually justified. And this means that Christ's death is not in itself justifying. It is a denial of vicarious atonement itself. p. 126.

Listen to this: "Believe and be born again. What more do you want? How much easier, how much simpler can God make it? Will you accept God's offer? Will you be born a child of God? Oh, what mighty gifts, what mighty blessings, God stands ready to shed on everyone of us through faith in His Son. God is waiting for you, pleading with you. If you really want to be a child of God; if you really want to be certain of your salvation, of your everlasting life, of your fellowship with Christ, of your home in heaven, come and accept Jesus as your Redeemer, by faith. (Thus far there is really nothing over which the editor of *The Banner* ought to stumble H.H.). God will do the rest. Every man, woman, and child has faith enough, if you will evercise it, to come to Christ, to accept the free gift of God's love." How Mr. Appelman can have the audacity to tell his audience that he is a Calvinist, is beyond all comprehension, even, I am sure, beyond his own. Here he teaches freewill, regeneration by faith, and he attributes faith to all men! pp. 25, 26.

I could quote much more. But let it be sufficient. Mr. Appelman's preaching is an example of Arminianism gone wild.

H. H.

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## The Evangelical and The Reformed Church

We stated that the action of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States, in 1932, whereby the proposed Plan of Union was unanimously adopted, must be considered of principal importance. For, as far as the Synod was concerned, the Reformed Church had simply shifted to the confessional basis of the Evangelical Synod of North America: the Augsburg Confession, Luthers Catechism, and the Heidelberg Catechism.

However, we recall that this resolution and proposal was to be referred to the classes of the Reformed Church in the United States, and to the districts of the Evangelical Synod of North America, for their approval. It was, therefore, still possible that some classis, or group of classes, would reject the proposal, and protest against the action taken by the General Synod.

As far as I can gather from the official documents, however, no such action was taken even by one classis.

On June 26, 1934, a joint session was held, in Cleveland, Ohio, of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States and the Evangelical Synod of North America. To this session report was render-



ed by the two respective commissions on Church Union representing the two denominations. The commission of the Reformed Church reported as follows:

"Dear Fathers and Brethren:

"The Evangelical Synod of North America and the General Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States having assembled in joint session in order to receive official and final report of the action of each Church on the Plan of Union, according to the provisions of Article XII, I beg leave to report for the Commission on Closer Relations and Church Union that the Reformed Church in the United States has regularly adopted the Plan of Union and the delegates of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States are prepared to declare by joint resolution that the union of the two Churches is duly effected."

"Respectfully submitted,  
George W. Richards, Chairman."

The above is from the "Acts and Proceedings of the General Synod of The Evangelical and the Reformed Church, 1934," as quoted in "An Examination and Criticism," p. 90.

The commission representing the Evangelical Church presented a similar report.

After these reports were adopted, a joint resolution was presented and adopted as follows:

"Whereas the Reformed Church in the United States and the Evangelical Synod of North America by regular action of the Districts and the General Conference of the Evangelical Synod of North America and of the General Synod and the Classes of the Reformed Church in the United States, have adopted the Plan of Union submitted to these bodies by the Commissions on Church Union,

"Be it resolved, first, that the General Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States and the General Conference of the Evangelical Synod of North America, in joint session assembled this day, June 26, 7 P.M., 1934, in the city of Cleveland, Ohio, hereby declare that the Plan of Union has been legally adopted;

"Second, that the union of the Reformed Church in the United States and the Evangelical Synod of North America is now effected under the name of "The Evangelical and Reformed Church";

"Third, that the consummation of the union be formally pronounced by the President of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States and the President of the Evangelical Synod of North America, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;

"Fourth, that, pending the devotional services, this Joint Session be declared adjourned." (idem, pp. 90, 91).

If this means anything, it implies that all the

classes of the Reformed Church in the United States had adopted the Plan of Union, that they all declared that they were convinced that the two denominations involved were in agreement on essential doctrines, and that they all adopted the confessional standards of the Evangelical Synod of North America as the doctrinal basis of union.

I failed to find, in the official documents, a single protest by a single classis, or consistory, or office-bearer, against this proposed Plan of Union.

H. H.

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## The Triple Knowledge

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### An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

#### PART TWO OF MAN'S REDEMPTION

#### Lord's Day XII

#### 9.

#### Our Eternal King. (cont.)

Now, as we discuss the kingship of Christ in connection with the twelfth Lord's Day of our Heidelberg Catechism, we must needs limit ourselves to a consideration of this function of our Saviour as an aspect of His office in general. If we fail to do this, we will be tempted also to treat of Christ's exaltation at the right hand of God, whereby He is raised to the glory of His present dominion over all things. The two are, of course, closely connected. Yet, of the latter we must not speak here, for of this the Catechism speaks in the nineteenth Lord's Day, in connection with the sixth article of the *Apostolicum*. Here, therefore, we must consider the kingship of our Lord in connection with His name *Christ, Messiah*, the Anointed of God. He is the Servant of Jehovah, God's officebearer, "ordained of God the Father, and anointed with the Holy Ghost." And this office, threefold though it be, is one. In a sense, it may be said to culminate in His kingship. For the Servant of Jehovah, Who as prophet reveals and glorifies the Father, as Priest consecrates Himself to God and fulfills all righteousness, is as such also king, authorized to be over the whole house of God, and to have dominion over all the works of God in His Name. Christ is priest after the order of Melchisedec, and, hence, He is priest-king.

Also in His royal office, let it be remembered, He is

our Mediator, Who takes our place, Who redeems man as the fallen king, and delivering him from the power and dominion of the devil, restores him to his office as priest-king, at the same time raising him in that office to the highest possible level of royalty and glory. In general, we already referred to all this in the first chapter under this twelfth Lord's Day. We must now draw the line somewhat more definitely with respect to the royal office of Christ.

Also of this royal office of Christ, then, there was a reflection in Adam in the state of rectitude in Paradise. For the first man, too, was king under God, expressly ordained by God to that position in the earthly creation. For God gave him dominion over the beasts of the field, over the fowls of the air, and over the fish of the sea. It must be emphasized, however, that man's original dominion was limited to the earthly creation. We dare not say without qualification that he was king of the world, over all creation. Adam was of the earth earthy. He was not the Lord from heaven. All things, in heaven and on earth, were not, and could not possibly be, united in him, and did not belong to his dominion. It was, indeed, God's counsel and eternal purpose to raise man to that exalted position in which all things would be subjected under his feet. That this is true is evident from a comparison of Psalm 8 with Heb. 2. The psalmist exclaims in wonderment: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." 4-6. It is true that the psalmist, evidently, still considers man in his original position, and in his dominion over the earthly creation: sheep and oxen, the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea. But in the epistle to the Hebrews the Holy Spirit interprets this dominion as having reference to all things. There the psalm is interpreted as meaning that originally man was, indeed, made a little lower than the angels, that his original dominion was limited to earthly things, but that he was destined to reign over all the works of God's hands: "But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all things in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him." Heb. 2:6-8.

But this highest form of universal dominion was not destined to be realized in the first Adam. He was, indeed, an image of Him that was to come. And of the kingship of the latter there was a reflection in that

of the former. But himself was not king over all the works of God's hands. He was made a little lower than the angels, though destined, in the last Adam, to rule even over them. His dominion was limited to the earthly creation. But even so, he was king. He was king, as servant of God. As the friend of God in His covenant, it was his calling to acknowledge the Most High as his Lord, to love and to serve Him with all his heart, and mind, and soul, and strength and thus, as friend-servant of the Lord, he was to rule over all the earthly creation.

The first servant of the Lord, however, rebelled against his sovereign Lord, rejected His Word, preferred the lie of the devil, and became the latter's servant. And with his dominion he is made subject to God's curse and to the power of death. There are, indeed, remnants of his original royal power and dominion. And these are plainly visible in the mighty works he still accomplishes, and in all his attempts to subject all things under him. Man constantly struggles, even in the present world, burdened by the curse, to regain and maintain his royal dominion, and though in the attempt he is often overcome, he despises death in the struggle to attain to the end he has in view. He makes the world about him the object of his scientific investigation. He discovers God's ordinances in creation, and arranges his own life accordingly. He brings to light the hidden powers and wonders of the world, and presses them into his service. He understands the laws of the seasons, of winds and rains, of seeds and of the soil, and he makes the earth produce the best possible crop. He studies the laws of gravity and gravitation, of steam and electricity, of light waves and sound waves, and he invents many wonderful things: telephone and telegraph, radio and television. He plows through the depth of the sea, and flies through space. He studies the structure and laws of the human body, fights disease and death, alleviates human suffering and prolongs human life. And he surrounds himself with means to enhance and enrich his life in the world. It is true, that all this is but a faint afterglow of man's original glory. It is also true that in reality he accomplishes nothing, for the creature is made subject to vanity; and that in the ultimate sense he is always defeated, for he dies like the beasts that perish. But this does not alter the fact, that there is a certain remnant of man's original kingship. And it is exactly because of this remnant that there is a *kingdom* of darkness. For in the spiritual-ethical sense of the word, man became an enemy of God, and a slave of the devil. And thus there develops in this world a kingdom of the devil, that will culminate in the world-power of the Antichrist, in which all the powers of creation shall have been exploited and pressed into the service of man, but in which, at the same time the measure of iniquity shall be filled, and the root-sin of the first

man Adam shall have become completely revealed in the fully ripened fruit of iniquity.

All this, however, stands strictly in the service of God, and of His eternal good pleasure. For He had provided some better thing for us. And before the foundation of the world, He had ordained His Servant to be King over all the works of God's hands. Even though it remains true that the first man plunged himself and all his posterity into the abyss of misery and death by an act of willful disobedience, and that for this he is responsible to his Lord; nevertheless, also his fall is no accident from God's viewpoint, but must serve to prepare the way for God's bringing "the first-begotten into the world." Heb. 1:6. For God is the Lord. He is in the heavens and performs all His good pleasure. His counsel was never frustrated; His purpose was never thwarted. Always He accomplished all His good pleasure, even through the devil's temptation, and through the fall of man. There never was a power on earth, in heaven, or in the abyss of darkness that really opposed Him, or that forced Him to change His plan. Though the powers of darkness, as far as their own intention is concerned, set themselves against Him, and vainly take counsel to dethrone the Almighty, and though in this attempt and purpose they become guilty and worthy of damnation, the fact remains that they can only serve the realization of God's eternal purpose, and that God, without deviation from the straight line of His counsel, attains to His purpose.

This truth must be established.

Nor need we fear to emphasize this truth, especially in our age with its mighty emphasis on man.

God is God!

And always He is the Lord!

His counsel shall stand, and He shall do all His good pleasure.

Salvation is no repair work, by which God mends His handiwork marred and destroyed by the devil and the powers of darkness. It is the realization of His eternal purpose in a straight line. And all things, all creatures, also the devil, also the fall of man, must be subservient to the accomplishment of His purpose.

Hence, although through willful disobedience, the first man, the king of the earthly creation, falls according to the determinate counsel of the Most High, and in order that this counsel may stand. He fell, in order that He whom God had ordained from before the foundation of the world to be king over all, His Servant *par excellence*, the firstborn of every creature, and the firstbegotten of the dead, the Head of the Church, might come into the world, and might be revealed in all the glory of His righteousness, truth and grace.

For that was God's eternal purpose. Not to perfect things in the first man Adam, the earthly king, but to unite them all under the kingship of the last man,

the last Adam, the Lord from heaven was the end of God's counsel. His own Son, the only Begotten, had been ordained, is eternally ordained to be the Firstborn of every creature, King over all things, in order that as the Lord of His elect brethren, and with them, He might forever reign over all the work of God's hands.

Unto this end He comes in the flesh.

And in the flesh He fights the battle against the powers of darkness in the way of obedience, and He enters into the strongholds of the devil, sin, and death, fighting His way as the King of His Church even into the depth of hell, "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all there lifetime subject to bondage." Heb. 2:14, 15. And He is victorious. Perfect and everlasting righteousness He establishes as the foundation of His kingdom. Through the darkness of death He breaks into the glory of His resurrection. And He is exalted into highest glory, in order that, at the right hand of the Father, clothed with all power in heaven and on earth, He may reign over all things even in the present dispensation, until all God's counsel is fulfilled, His Church shall have been gathered, His kingdom shall be perfected, and He shall subject Himself with His kingdom, as the eternal Servant-King, to the Father, that God may be all in all.

This mighty King is Lord of lords, and King of kings.

By grace He reigns over His Church. The Catechism instructs us that "he governs us by his word and Spirit." He is King of His Church, but then as the Head of the body. Surely, He alone has all legislative, judicial, and executive power in the Church. He reigns over believers individually, and over the Church as a whole, organically and institutionally. His will is the only law. And to that will all are subject, also those that are ordained to be office-bearers in the Church on earth. But He rules by His word and Spirit, and, therefore, by grace. Not only by the Word, but by the Spirit, His own Spirit, and the Word he reigns. For even as He fought the battle for them, and in their behalf, even unto death, so He also delivers them from all the power and dominion of the devil. By His Spirit He enters into their hearts, dethrones the powers of darkness in that heart, enthrones Himself by the power of His grace, and from the heart He reigns over them. He makes them His willing subjects by His Spirit and Word. He calls them out of darkness into His marvelous light. He writes His law in their inmost hearts, so that it becomes their delight to do His will. And by His Spirit He remains in them; and abides with them forever. The result of that spiritual reign of Christ over His own is that they repent of sin, and hearing



His Word follow Him whithersoever He leads. And they fight the good fight, even unto death, that no one take their crown.

But as the King of His Church, He also defends and preserves His own in the redemption and salvation He obtained for us.

For the present, the Church, though redeemed and victorious in her Lord, is in the midst of a hostile world, and is surrounded by enemies that always aim at her destruction. And though she has life, eternal life, in her King, she still lies in the midst of death. The final victory, eternal glory in the tabernacle of God and in the new creation, has not yet been reached. And, therefore, the battle must still be fought by the Church of Christ in the world. She has her battle, not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and power, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places, Eph. 6:12. Besides, believers are not yet delivered from the body of this death. Sin and the motions of sin are still in their flesh. And always that enemy within the gates seeks an alliance with the powers of darkness in the world. In the midst of, and over against all these powers of darkness the Church as a whole, and believers individually, must be preserved and defended, and through them all they must be led on to eternal glory and victory. Yea, they must be more than victors, for even their enemies must, in spite of themselves, cooperate unto their salvation, and the very devil may only serve the purpose being the watchdog of the Good Shepherd.

And also this work of defending and preserving His Church in the midst of and through a hostile world, belongs to the office of Christ as King. In themselves, in their own power, they are nothing. They could never stand and remain faithful to the end. They would be quite helpless in the midst of the powers of darkness. But Christ preserves them. And this, too, He does, as far as their spiritual preservation is concerned, through His Spirit and Word. Never He leaves them. Always He abides with them, and in them. And never can they finally fall away. No one can possibly pluck them out of His hand. Even as He is at the right hand of God, and intercedes for them, so He constantly blesses them with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, and preserves them in the salvation He obtained for them. He strengthens them in the battle. He keeps them in temptation. When they stumble He raises them up. And He fills them with the hope of eternal joy in the midst of the suffering of this present time.

But he also defends them by His power, and causes all things in this present world to work together unto their salvation. For He is King, not only by grace over His Church, but also by His mighty power over

all things, even over principalities and powers, over the rulers of this world, over all the forces of darkness, and all things are subjected under His feet even now. For although the word of the eighth psalm is not yet completely realized, and although "now we see not yet all things put under him," we do "see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor." Heb. 2:8, 9. And even now God has set Him "at His own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." Of this we must speak further in connection with the nineteenth Lord's Day of the Catechism. But even now it must be pointed out that Christ uses this mighty power, that has been given Him as the Anointed of the Father for the benefit of His Church, to defend and preserve her against all enemies, to cause all things to work together for her salvation, and to lead her own to final glory.

And thus Christ will reign forever.

For when all things shall have been accomplished, the last of the elect shall have been called, the measure of iniquity shall be filled, He will come again in great power and glory, establish His eternal Kingdom in the new creation, that He may reign everlastingly over His Church, and with all His people as the royal priesthood over all the works of God's hands. For Christ is an eternal King. His dominion is an everlasting dominion. And although it is true that He, as the perfect Servant of the Lord, will also subject Himself to the Father, this does not mean that He will ever abdicate and cease to be King. On the contrary, He is King forever, even as He is an eternal Priest after the order of Melchisedec. And in the eternal kingdom of glory, all things shall serve Christ and His people, that they may serve their God, and He may be all and in all forever!

H. H.

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#### IN MEMORIAM

The Men's Society of the Fourth Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sincere sympathy to one of its members, Mr. Howard Vander Laan, in the loss of his mother,

MRS. J. VANDER LAAN

May the Lord comfort the bereaved according to their need and to His glory.

Rev. R. Veldman, Pres.  
Mr. C. Doezeema, Sec'y.

## The Pride Of Ephraim

The war with the Ammonites had been won. God had given victory. The adversary had been subdued before the children of Israel. Jephthah was again in his house in Mizpah. He had done with his daughter according to his vow. At least two months must have gone by when the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together and, marching northward, came to Jephthah in a body. It was apparent that they were in an evil mood. They demanded to know why Jephthah had fought that war with Ammon without them, seeing that the Gileadites were but fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites and among the Manassites. Without even waiting for a reply, for they were violently angry, they shouted in Jephthah's ears that they would burn his house upon him with fire. It was clear that they were not trifling. Jephthah remonstrated with them. These were his words, "I and my people were in great strife with the children of Ammon; and when I called you, ye delivered me not out of their hands. And when I saw that ye delivered me not, I put my life in my hands, and passed over against the children of Ammon and the Lord delivered them into my hand; wherefore then are ye come up against me this day, to fight against me?" The step that Jephthah now took — through his aids, he gathered together all the men of Gilead for war — indicates that the Ephraimites, instead of admitting their folly and returning to their homes like sensible men, persisted in menacing Jephthah. They even may have set fire to his house as they had threatened. This much is certain. Their behaviour continued alarming. It called for drastic action. A fire had been kindled by these proud and unreasonable men, that had to be extinguished without delay, if half the nation was not to be plunged in civil war. So Jephthah lost no time in calling the men of Gilead to arms. It may be imagined that before the outbreak of the conflict the men of Ephraim were again told to desist from their madness and disperse. But instead of allowing themselves to be dissuaded, these quarrelsome men, bent on trouble, railed at the Gileadites as they had done at Jephthah, repeating the monstrous charge. "Ye Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites and among the Manassites." These were hateful and contemptuous words, calculated to cut to the quick and to pierce the soul. That it was also in a spasm of rage that the Gileadites now fell upon the Ephraimites and drove them away as smoke, is evident from the notice, "And the men of Gilead smote Ephraim because they said, Ye Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites and among the Manassites." The Ephraimites, as totally defeated, entered upon a calamitous flight. But the enraged Gileadites were

thirsting after the blood of their fleeing brethren and therefore cut off their only way of escape by taking before them the passes of Jordan. There they slew them like enemies and gave them no quarters. They would not suffer one Ephraimite to cross the river alive; hence they required of everyone who wished to pass over to say *Shibboleth*, which no Ephraimite could do, for he could only say *Sibboleth*. "And the Gileadites took the passages of the Jordan before the Ephraimites; and it was so, that when the Ephraimites which were escaped said, Let me pass over; that the men of Gilead said to him, Art thou an Ephraimite? If he said, Nay; then said they unto him, Say now Shibboleth: and he said Sibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce it right. Then they took him and slew him at the passages of the Jordan; and there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand." The Gileadites were not content to defeat their brethren in war; they wanted them killed to the last man. For their anger was fierce.

Yet the calamity that overtook the arrogant, heartless, and hypocritical Ephraimites was deserved. For their sin was great. They were actually more culpable than Ammon. They had crossed the Jordan to wage civil war. Their conduct was a disgrace. It could only spring from ungodliness. Their sin, when it threatened to burn Jephthah's house, was aggravated by the fact that it struck at the deliverer of Israel and the restorer of God's law. It was national treason. Yet the men of Ephraim had not allowed their action to stand out in their own minds as treason. They had not admitted to themselves and to one another that they were in a sinful way. If they had, they would not have set out on their mad venture. Thus what they had done is to persuade themselves by fallacious reasonings that their grievance was real and that it justified the kind of action that they had taken. Their competency as deceivers of self and of one another indicates how that they had allowed their understanding to be darkened by passion and carnal pride and their judgment to be warped by an imaginary grievance. This was their first great sin. They were not intellectually blind. In their hearts they knew that they were sinners before the Lord exceedingly. But they were spiritually perverse. Seeing, they did not perceive. The Ephraimites must be taken as an example of what sinful pride and arrogancy does to a man, how that they distort his vision, pervert his judgment and send him headlong to his fall. For these were the sins of Ephraim, namely pride and arrogancy.

These sins found expression first of all in the voiced grievance of the men of Ephraim. As was said, they felt themselves aggrieved because, as they said, Jephthah had fought that war with Ammon without them. But the sins of the men of Ephraim also found expression in that vile taunt of theirs, "Ye Gileadites

are fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites and among the Manassites." Let us notice that they call the Gileadites "fugitives of Ephraim". To grasp the point to this taunt we should have before our mind the following historical facts. 1) The Gileadites, being as they were the offspring of Michar, the grandson of Manasseh belonged to the tribe of Manasseh. 2) Ephraim and Manasseh were the sons of Joseph. In the house of Joseph, Ephraim had the first voice by virtue of the fact that in the blessing of Jacob Ephraim was preferred before Manasseh. Let us recall how that Joseph "took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Jacob's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Jacob's right hand, and brought them to him. But Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the first-born". With his hands in this position Jacob blessed the two sons. 3) As a result of Jacob's action, the tribe of Ephraim took the stand that the tribe of Manasseh, including the Gileadites, was completely under its jurisdiction and therefore had not the right of independent action. 4) At the beginning of the conquest of Canaan, the tribe of Manasseh was divided and one-half the tribe received its possession east of the Jordan where it formed an independent tribe, empowered to take independent action, if need be. And this power that particular branch of the tribe of Manasseh — the branch that went by the name of Gileadites — had now exercised by initiating, under the leadership of Jephthah, that war with the Ammonites. It was this action on the part of the Gileadites that had infuriated the tribe of Ephraim. Their accusation was that the Gileadites, through that doing, had wantonly escaped, outrun, their jurisdiction, openly flouted their authority. Hence, they tauntingly accepted them as fugitives of the Ephraimites, i.e. of Ephraim's authority. This was equivalent to accosting them as fugitives of justice, law and order, right rule and making them out for insurgents, for men who in their wickedness, had risen in opposition to a duly established authority. And to sharpen their taunt they added, "*among the Ephraimites and among the Manassites are ye Gileadites fugitives,*" i.e. ye, who despise our authority, nevertheless have your possessions among us," i.e. 'ye eat of our good land and enjoy all the benefits that accrue from dwelling among a strong, capable, and well-ordered tribe, but ye refuse even to counsel with that tribe to say nothing of submitting yourself to its voice — ye contemptible outlaws.' This, in effect, is what they said to Jephthah. And this, in effect is what they said to the Gileadites. But what they said was not true. The Gileadites did not dwell among the Ephraimites. As was said, they had their possessions east of the Jordan where they formed, together with the tribe of Manasseh to which

they belonged, an independent tribe, with its own tribal rights. But according to the men of Ephraim, Gilead was nothing by itself, had no tribal rights; it belonged to Ephraim. Yet there was an element of truth in this. According to Num. 26:30 ff, some of the descendants of Gilead lived west of the Jordan and had their possessions in Ephraim. But fugitives, outlaws, they were not.

Jephthah did not dispute with the men of Ephraim about the jurisdiction of this tribe over the Gileadites in particular and over the tribe of Manasseh in general. He waived this point. Judging from his reply, he well knew and all along had taken cognizance of the fact that Ephraim and Manasseh had from of old a certain unity of their own and that of the two Ephraim had the chief voice. In his reply he makes the startling revelation that, during the Ammonite oppression, he had accordingly also appealed to the tribe of Ephraim for help but that the appeal had fallen on deaf ears. Ephraim had not lifted a hand, and had thus indicated that the plight of Jephthah and his brethren was of no concern to them. Such were the facts. "I and my people," said Jephthah to them, "were at great strife with the children of Ammon; and when I called you, ye delivered me not out of their hands." "When I called you . . ." The text in the original reads, "in my pain and distress I cried unto you, and ye delivered me not . . ." Jephthah here speaks for himself and his people. He continued "And when I saw ye delivered me not," "when I perceived that I and my brethren could expect nothing from you in the way of help," "I put my life in my own hands," "I hazarded my own life and the life of my people," "and passed over against the children of Ammon and the Lord delivered them unto my hand." Jephthah's answer was not defiant. He only wanted them to understand that he had no intention of flouting their authority, that he would gladly have yielded the precedence to them, if responding to his cry, they had only taken up arms against the enemy. He wanted them to understand that, through their unwillingness, they had compelled him and his brethren to take independent action. If he had done wrong they had no one but themselves to blame. His concluding question to them was, "Wherefore then are ye come up against me this day to fight against me," "to burn my house upon me with fire and to lash me and my people with thy tongue"? One would think that, at the hearing of this, the men of Ephraim as consumed by shame and remorse, would have admitted their madness and humbly sought Jephthah's pardon. But they didn't. For they were proud and wicked men. Just what they had to say in reply to Jephthah's defense, is not stated. The sacred narrator does not reveal details. It is probable that, in defense of themselves, they denied that they had ever received a petition for help, as if they had to wait until they were

asked. It is certain that they persisted in threatening Jephthah and in reviling the Gileadites in general. Otherwise Jephthah would not have called his brethren to arms. In the light of Jephthah's revelation the hypocrisy of the men of Ephraim amazes. Apparently they loved the brethren and in that love had so wanted to help poor brethren in distress that they started a civil war because Joshua had fought his war without their assistance. But, as Jephthah revealed, the plight of brethren in distress was the least of their worries. It could not be otherwise. Love does not fight against brethren who war God's warfare. Love does not threaten to burn down houses of Israel's deliverers. But injured carnal pride does. And likewise envy and jealousy.

There is finally this question. What did Jephthah have to do with the slaying of the fugitive Ephraimites at the passes of the Jordan. There are four possibilities. 1) He ordered it. 2) He did not order it but condoned it. 3) He neither ordered nor condoned but forbade it. 4) It took place without his knowledge. Which of these possibilities contains the facts cannot be determined from the text of the sacred narrative but must be made out on general principles of Israel's law. As was said, the sin of the Ephraimites was great. It was national treason and therefore must be placed in the category with the sins for which the offender, according to Israel's law, had to be put to death. Under the impulse of injured carnal pride, the Ephraimites had crossed the Jordan to slay God's people and a god-fearing judge and deliverer of Israel. They were thus avowed enemies of God and His people, as were the surrounding heathen. As such they also had to be dealt with. If Jephthah did not expressly order that slaying at the fords of the Jordan, he must have at least permitted it and rightfully so. Yet in slaying those fugitive Ephraimites the Gileadites must be charged with murder, if they were driven by carnal anger. And that they were, as is evident from the notice, "And the men of Gilead smote Ephraim, because they said, Ye are fugitives of Ephraim . . ."

The sacred writer concludes the history of Jephthah with the statement, "And Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then died Jephthah the Gileadite, and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead." Jephthah's lot was extraordinary. He was despised and rejected, and had to spend nearly his whole life in exile. Finally he was raised up to deliver the very brethren who had cast him from their midst. Though he gave up everything for his people, the envy of his countrymen threaten to burn his house — a house, which for their sake he had made desolate. He was a great hero of faith who died as he had lived — solitary.

Now follows brief notices concerning three judges. The first of these is Ibzan of Bethlehem who judged Israel seven years, died, and was buried in Bethlehem.

He was succeeded by Elon, a Zebulonite, who judged Israel ten years. The third judge was Abdon the son of Hillel whose judgeship lasted eight years. Ibzan had thirty daughters, whom he gave in marriage, and thirty daughters-in-law. Abdon, likewise, had forty sons and thirty prosperous grandsons. These judges did not wage war with the enemies of Israel and thus had no victories. Their respective careers were thus uneventful.

"And the children of Israel did evil again (continued to do evil) in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years." The same history repeats itself everywhere. Not one single tribe is exempted from it. The history of Israel under the judges is a history of sin, repeating itself over and over, and of divine grace, constantly devising new means of deliverance. "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and served Baalim. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel and he delivered them into the hands of the spoilers that spoiled them. . . . Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hands of the spoilers. . . . And it came to pass when the judge was dead that they returned and corrupted themselves more than their fathers . . ." Such was the ever re-occurring round of events in the time of the judges and through all the ages of the Old Dispensation and through the centuries of the new. The whole history of the church is included in those four sentences. The anger of the Lord waxed hot against His people not to consume them in His wrath but to purge them in His mercy. Withersoever they turned, they would collide with God's hand as against them for evil. Then in their extremity they would cry unto God. And He would send deliverance, so that Israel would again see His works. There would again be peace in the land. But another generation would rise that knew not the Lord neither the work that he had wrought through His servant, the judge, and the nation again served baal. Apostacy would be followed by subjection, whether it was inflicted by eastern or western neighbor-tribes. Chapter III of the book of the Judges includes the "five princes of the Philistines" among those through whom Israel was to become acquainted with distress and war. The book began with the oppression of the Mesopotamian king in the east, from which Othniel, the hero of Judah, liberated the people. After tracing a circular course through the east and north-east it ends in the west; and the tribes of Judah, with which the narrative began, is again brought forward at the close. As far back as chapter 7 we read that God "gave up Israel into the hands of the Philistines and the sons of Ammon". "The achievement of Jephthah against Ammon is first reported. The judges named immediately afterwards belong to northern tribes, two to Zebulon, one to Ephraim. "Now the writer comes

to speak of the great conflicts which Israel had to wage with the five Philistine cities on the coast and which continued to the time of David. The tribes especially concerned in these conflicts were Dan, the western part of Judah, and Simeon encircled by Judah. Once the men of Judah had won even the great cities on the sea coast. Afterwards they were not only unable to maintain possession of them but through their own apostacy from God became themselves dependent on them. Dan had already long been unable to hold his ground anywhere except in the mountains. Now the Philistines were powerful and free in all the Danite cities. Chapter 10:15 tells of the earnest repentance of Israel before God. But such a statement is not made here, although the history of a new Judge — Samson — is introduced. Everywhere else the narrative, before it relates the history of the Judge, premises that Israel had cried unto God, and that consequently God had taken pity on them. Now it is remarkable that the narrative of Samson's history is not preceded by a similar remark. It is a point worthy of special notice. For since the history of Israel's apostacy is repeated, that of its repentance would likewise have to be repeated. That which he does not relate, the narrator must have believed had no existence. And in fact, no such repentance could have taken place at this time in Dan and Judah, as we read of in Gilead. The history of Samson proves this. If, then, such a man nevertheless arose, the compassion which God thereby manifested, was called forth by a few believers scattered here and there. The power which shows itself in the history of Samson is likewise of an individual character. It is only disconnected deliverances which Israel receives through him. It is no entire national renovation, such as were brought about by former judges. Hence the history of Samson differs entirely from the history of the preceding judges."

G. M. O.

#### IN MEMORIAM

After a few weeks of illness, our Lord in His wisdom took from our midst our beloved wife, mother, and grandmother

MRS. ANNA VANDER LAAN

at the age of 57 years.

I Thessalonians 4:13, 14.

Mr. James Vander Laan  
Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Elzinga  
Mr. and Mrs. Howard Vander Laan  
Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Boomstra  
Frieda Vander Laan  
and nine grandchildren.

## De Les Der Historie

(Psalm 78; Slot)

Tot vermoeinis toe lezen we van de zonde van Israel. Niet alleen in dezen psalm, maar doorgaans in de stukken van Gods Woord waar de historie van Gods volk ons beschreven wordt. De vorige maal trachtten we om eenigzins te verklaren hoe bijna in één vers geschreven wordt van Gods toorn over Zijn volk en tegelijkertijd van Zijn groote barmhartigheid. De sleutel ter verklaring ligt in het feit, dat Israel een organisch volk is, bestaande uit verkorenen en verworpenen: het is niet alles Israel wat van Israel is.

De diep beschamende geschiedenis zet zich voort in dezen psalm. Mochten we er van leeren om den Heere te vreezen en te dienen en schuwen alle kwade paan en ijverig op Zijn wegen gaan.

Vers 38 zingt van Gods wondere barmhartigheid. Vooral het volgende vers (39) is ontroerend schoon als het gewaagt hoe God "gedacht dat zij vleesch waren, een wind die henegaat en niet wederkeert!" Op een andere plaats singen we er van: "Hij weet, wat van Zijn maaksel zij te wachten, hoe zwak van moed, hoe klein wij zijn van krachten, en dat wij stof, van jongsaaf, zijn geweest!" Onbegrijpelijke liefde Gods!

Hoe dikwijls verbitterden zij Hem in de woestijn, deden Hem smart aan in de wildernis! Ziedaar, een waardschatting van ons leven in de wereld voor God. Ziedaar, een beschrijving van ons zondige leven. Alle zonde die wij bedrijven smarten God aan Zijn hart. Want God heeft een afschuw van de zonde.

Voorts luisteren we naar een getuigenis van een opstapelen van de zonde: zij kwamen alweder en verzochten God, en stelden den Heilige Israels een perk! God een perk stellen is het roepen, het ongeloovig roepen: Zou God ons kunnen verzadigen in de wildernis? Zou Hij ons waterstroomen kunnen toezenden in een barre zandwoestijn? Dat doet Gods volk, omdat zij vergeten "Zijn hand, aan den dag toen Hij ze van den wederpartijder verlostte." Zekerlijk, God kan waterstroomen zenden in de wildernis en brood in de woestijn. Hij geeft ons immers Jezus Christus? Zijn hand is Almachtig en er is geen einde aan de sterkte Gods.

En dan luisteren we naar de groote daden Gods die Hij voor Israel deed in Egypte en in de landpalen van Zoan.

Hij stelde teekenen en wonderheden. Dat zal waar zijn. De vloed van den Nijl werd veranderd in bloed, er kwam vermenging van ongedierte tot verteering en vorschen tot verderving, kruidworm die het gewas opvraten en de sprinkhaan die al het groene opaten. De wijnstok van den onderdrukker werd gedood door hagel en den wilden vijgeboom door vurige hagelsteeenen. Het vee van den Egyptenaar kromde zich onder



de hagel en hunne vette beesten verbrandde onder vurige kolen. De hittigheid van den toorn Gods, mitsgaders Zijn verbolgenheid en verstoordheid en benauwdheid waren tezamen de boden van veel kwaads voor het goddelooze rot. Alle die openbaringen waren tezamen een pad waarlangs Zijn groote toorn brandde tegen de vijanden van Israel. De ziel van dat booze volk en hun gedierte, onttrok de God Israels niet van den dood. Want de eerstgeborenen werden allen gedood voor de oogen van Zijn kinderen die Hij liefhad met een eeuwige liefde.

Daarentegen had Hij Zijn volk geleid en geleid als schapen Zijner weide. En terwijl ze door God geleid werden, behoefden zij niet om te zien in vreeze en benauwdheid, want God had het beste van de heirscharen der Egyptenaren verdorven en verzwolgen in het roode meer. Ze konden gerust voorwaarts gaan naar het Kanaan der belofte. Onderweg kwamen zij aan bij den Berg Gods, den heiligen berg waar zij de stem van God hoorde, die uit groote donkerheid en vuurvlammen hen toeriep: Ik ben God, Ik ben Uw God die U uit het Egypteland verlos! En zoo zijn ze door Hem geleid in de woestijn, veertig jaren. En toen de Heidenen kwamen, zooals Amelek, toen heeft Hij aan Zijn knecht Mozes, kracht gegeven om zijn handen omhoog te heffen, opdat Amelek gekrenkt mocht worden onder de slagen van de dappere mannen Israels, aangevoerd door Jozua, den held Gods.

En zoo kwamen ze voor de poorten van het land der belofte. In dat land woonden de heidenen, doch ze werden eenvoudig door God verdreven. De mate hunner ongerechtigheid was vol geworden en Zijn volk rijp om den typischen hemel te ontvangen en binnen te treden. Men wierp het lot voor de erfenis die hen van God gewerd.

Dat alles heeft God gedaan aan Israel, het volk dat Hij verkoren had, opdat Zijn naam in hun midden mocht wonen.

Doch zij verbitterden God den Allerhoogste door Hem wederom te verzoeken, zij hielden Zijn wetten niet die Hij hun gegeven had om als een pad daarop te wandelen. Die wetten zijn als een glanzend pad, als een verlichte weg die naar den hemel leidde. In plaats van naar den Heere toe te wandelen, keerden zij terug en handelden trouwelooslijk gelijk hunne vaders die voor hen geweest waren. In plaats van te zoeken naar de aanspraakplaats Zijner heiligheid, bouwden zij hoogten om de afgoden te rooken en te knielen voor gesnedene beelden.

Dat alles zag God en Hij hoorde getier van groote goddeloosheid onder de kinderen die Zijn naam droegen. Een groote verbolgenheid werd geopenbaard, want Hij verliet Zijn volk te Silo waar Hij gezorgd had voor een plaats waar God gezocht en gediend werd. Wie denkt hier niet aan Eli, den koude en het goddelooze tweetal zijner zoonen?

En in de tijden der richters gaf God Zijn volk over als in een smeltkroes der ellende. De vijanden kwamen door God gestuurd om Zijn volk te benauwen. Dan riepen zij tot God en Hij verlostte ze; doch spoedig waren zij vergeten den rotsteen huns heils. De sterkste jongelingen vielen door het zwaard van Filistijn en Ammonniet, de jonge dochteren werden niet geprezen in die dagen. De Priesters Gods werden verslagen en de weduwen weenden niet. Een ieder deed wat goed was in zijn oogen. En het Woord Gods was dierbaar in die dagen en er was geen open gezicht. En niemand wist hoelang!

Toen ontwaakte God en sloeg den goddelooze, want Hij gedacht aan Abraham Zijn knecht. O, we weten het, het is omdat in die organische ontwikkeling van Israel een volk schuilt, dat Hij liefgehad heeft met een eeuwige liefde. Toen heeft Hij Zijn arm ontbloot voor al de heidenen. En hoewel Hij die zelfde heidenen gebruikt had als een gehuurd scheermes om Zijn volk te kastijden, heeft Hij nooit vergeten, dat dit zelfde heidenvolk uit louter goddeloosheid Zijn volk benauwd had. Daarom "sloeg Hij hen aan het achterste en Hij deed hun een eeuwige smaadheid aan." Dat deed Hij, alhoewel de tent van Jozef en den stam Efraims verworpen werd. Hier zien we, dat alles niet Israel is wat van Israel is. Er is een eeuwige voorverordineering bij God.

Daarom staat er verder, dat Hij den stam van Juda verloor, den berg Sion, dien Hij liefhad. Sion is een berg, waarop tempel en koningshuis gebouwd is. Sion is een symbool en type van het volk, dat met Hem wonen mag en Hem dienen in liefde. Zij zijn het volk wiens zonden vergeven zijn en dat Hij bouwt tot een Huis om in te wonen.

Dat volk, dat uitverkoren en beminde volk word gebouwd op de hoogten. Het toont ons dat de eerste aarde is niet de gedachte Gods waarin Hij rusten wil tot in eeuwigheid. De aarde en den hemel worden verhoogd tot in eeuwigheid, doch niet in den eersten Adam.

Zoo kunnen we het verstaan, dat er voorts gesproken wordt van het verkiezen van David, genomen van de schaapskooien. O, zeker, dat beteekent historisch eerst, dat David een Koning was voor Israel in het welbehagen Gods. Doch David is type van een betere David, van Jezus Christus den Heere. Hij is de Beminde van eeuwigheid, die Zijn schapen zal weiden en brengen in de eeuwige schaapskooi daar boven bij God. Jakob moet geweid en Israel, Zijn erfenis moet gebracht vanuit de hel tot den hemel.

Alleen zoo bezien kunt ge ten volle zingen het slot van den heerlijken psalm:

"Dus heeft die Vorst geheerscht met roem  
en zegen,

Gods volk oprecht en met verstand ge-  
weid,  
En 't rijk beschermd door dapper krijgs-  
beleid!"

Dat kan ten volle alleen van Jezus zoo gezongen.  
Want David was slechts een mensch van gelijke be-  
weging als wij zijn.

En ofschoon hij een man was naar Gods hart, heeft  
ook hij zwaar en diep en menigmaal overtreden.

Doch Jezus Christus is de Herder bij uitnemend-  
heid. Hij heeft met verstand Jakob geweid en geleid  
tot de eeuwige waterstroomen om te drinken, te drin-  
ken.

Hij heeft dapperlijk gestreden! O hoe dapper.  
Hij heeft Satan en zijn gansche heir vertreden; Hij  
heeft den eeuwigen toorn Gods weggedragen; Hij  
heeft een eeuwige waardijk bij Zijn leiden gevoegd om  
Israel ganschelijk te verlossen; Hij heeft den Heiligen  
Geest verworven om Zijn Israel te verlossen van in-  
wonend verderf; Hij heeft door dienzelfden Geest  
Zijn aanvankelijk Rijk gesticht en vermeerdert het en  
voltooid het door de eeuwen heen. En door dienzelfden  
Geest zal Hij het ten volle voltooien en openbaren in  
Zijn dag.

"Dan zal na zooveel gunstbewijzen,  
't Gezegend heidendom  
't Geluk van dezen Koning prijzen,  
Die David's troon beklom!"

In dien dag zal Jakob gewied worden gelijk nooit te  
voren. Ze zullen drinken uit de beken der wellusten en  
verzadigd worden van de kracht van den boom des  
levens. In dien dag zullen ze niet meer klagen: O God,  
vergeef toch mijne schuld en mijne ongerechtigheid,  
want ze is groot! Want dat volk zal vergeving van  
ongerechtigheid hebben. Ze staan dan aan het eind  
der historie en aan het begin van de eeuwige geneug-  
ten die genoten worden voor het aangezicht van God.

Hebt ge de les der historie gehoord?

Zijt ge onderwezen door den Heiligen Geest die in  
dezen psalm spreekt?

Dan kan het niet anders of Uwe nieren verlangen  
zeer in Uwen schoot.

Daar zingt men verlangend: "Wanneer zal ik in-  
gaan en voor Uw aangezicht verschijnen?"

G. V.

God will our strength and refuge prove,  
In all distress a present aid,  
And though the trembling earth remove,  
We will not fear nor be dismayed.

## Communism and the Social Life

*The Social Life of the First Church at Jerusalem.*

The Book of Acts gives us a beautiful picture of the  
social life of the believers at Jerusalem after the out-  
pouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. It  
cannot be said with certainty how long this ideal con-  
dition lasted but we do read that "the multitude of  
them that believed were of one heart and of one soul:  
neither said any of them that ought of the things  
which he possessed was his own; but they had all  
things common". And further "Neither was there any  
among them that lacked: for as many as were posses-  
sors of land or houses sold them, and brought the  
prices of the things that were sold, and laid them  
down at the apostle's feet: and distribution was made  
unto every man according as he had need". (Acts 4:32-  
35) This same condition is described more briefly in  
the second chapter where we read "And all that be-  
lieved were together, and had all things common".

In these verses we have a beautiful description of  
two facts, namely, the communion of saints, and Chris-  
tian stewardship. These two are related as cause and  
effect. The very fact that "the multitude of them that  
believed were of one heart and of one soul" was the  
spiritual cause of their remarkable unselfishness that  
'Not even one said that anything he possessed was his  
own'. Out of spiritual relationship to Christ came a  
social relationship to one another. In this so-called  
'community of goods' we find a genuine Christian  
socialism as the result of individual unity, a socialism  
which was the spontaneous expression of the love of  
God in their hearts.

However, these words of Scripture, describing the  
social life of the saints at Jerusalem, do not teach us,  
as some have erroneously concluded, that the right of  
possession of private property was abolished, and that  
the Christian Church at Jerusalem was a communistic  
society. Some have even concluded from the fact that  
'as many as were possessors of land or houses sold  
them' and that the believers were 'all accustomed to be  
together', that they all dwelt together as one family  
under one roof, and all shared alike from a common  
fund. This conception has led some sects to form  
'Christian' communistic communities or families.  
Nothing could be further from the truth. They con-  
tinued to own their houses and maintain their own  
households, for we read "and breaking bread from  
house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and  
singleness of heart". Hence they did not all sell their  
houses and land, but only whenever there was need  
then those that had in abundance in land or houses  
would sell them, and lay the price of the things that  
were sold at the apostle's feet. If it was the universal

rule that all disposed of all their property, then why should Luke especially record the example of Barnabas selling a field for this purpose. Neither do we read of Annanias and Sapphira that they sold their *possessions*, but that they sold a possession. The very statement "Not one of them said that ought of the *things which he possessed* was his own;" clearly implies that the right of possession was not abolished, but that the possessor looked upon his property as a trust from God to be used for the welfare of all. They possessed ~~as~~ not possessing, and felt that they were but stewards over the things entrusted unto their care. The common feeling of brotherhood was stronger than the self centered regard which looks on possessions as to be used for self.

This selling of property and laying the price of the things that were sold at the apostle's feet was not compulsory, but entirely voluntary, as is evident from the words of the Apostle Peter to Annanias, "While it remained, did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power?" It must also be noted that the sin of Annanias and his wife lay not in their withholding a certain amount of the money from the community for their private use but in their false testimony concerning this act. They sought to leave the impression that they laid all of the price at the Apostles' feet, while in reality they kept back part of it. Hence the judgment of God came upon them because of the sin of hypocrisy, and of lying. "Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit . . ." "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God" (Acts 5:3, 4). It has been well stated that "Annanias was a pioneer in the founding of Annanias clubs, not of communistic societies'."

It must also be observed that the distribution of these funds was not determined by the rule of equality, but by the 'need' of the recipients, as we read in Acts 4:35 "and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need". Hence the result was not at all, as some sects would have us believe, that all had share and shared alike, but rather that, "there was not one among them that lacked". Hence, the 'community of goods' of the first Church was not an equitable sharing of wealth, but it was the exercising of Christian stewardship.

#### *Communism.*

Communism as an economic system seeks the absolute abolition of all private property, and that all the means of producing and distributing of wealth be controlled by the proletariat or working class. It is opposed to the profit system of enterprise, and maintains that all the accumulation of wealth and goods must be shared collectively by all. It means the socialization of land and industry, of trade, transportation and bank-

ing, of homes and families, of stores and restaurants, of food and clothing. Communism ascribes all the misery of mankind, it's jealousies, hatreds, enmity, murder, stealing, war, famine, pestilence, to one cause, and that one cause is the possession of private property. Abolish it, and the Communist believes that poverty would disappear. Then the source of all evil passions and crime would be removed. Jealousy, selfishness, egoism would be meaningless, and whole social and economic world would be unified. The whole of humanity would form one happy family, and there would be only one government, and that by the people.

Hence Communism is thoroughly materialistic. Man's highest good is the equal enjoyment of this world's goods and his greatest misery is the possession of private property. It seeks to apply this materialistic philosophy not only to the economic life of man, but to all human institutions and to human nature itself. It penetrates the very institutions of God, marriage, the family, the home, the relation of parents and children, the Church, the school. It is positively Anti-Christian. It mocks with the very thought of God; it's God is it's belly. It ridicules the faith and hope of those that seek the things which are above. It regards the Christian faith as an anti-social force, a device of capitalism to subjugate the masses, and therefore as an opiate of the people. Hence it systematically seeks to stamp out all Christianity, and will not tolerate any faith in the God of the Scriptures.

Having abolished all belief in God, communism has no place for the moral law of the Ten Commandments. The sins of mankind and its subsequent misery are not caused by a transgression of the law of God, but by the denial of Communism, and the possession of private property. The sole cause of crime and evil is Capitalism. Hence not the individual criminal is to blame for his crime, but rather the capitalistic environment in which he lives. He that would be a saviour of mankind must redeem it from Capitalism, and from the right to possess private property. Hence Communism is not merely an economic system, but it is a world and life view. It is a philosophy of life. It is in itself a religion. The religion of man. Believe in Communism, and humanity will be redeemed.

#### *A Comparison.*

From the foregoing it must have become evident that there is nothing common between the Communism of today and the social life of the first Church at Jerusalem. Yea, the one is the direct opposite of the other. The one is this worldly, carnal, and materialistic. The other is other-worldly, spiritual, and heavenly. The one is rooted in love to God, and in love to the neighbor, and therefore exercises the communion of saints, and practices Christian stewardship. The other

is rooted in enmity against God, and fosters the class-struggle. The one inspires the poor with enmity over against the rich, while the other fills the rich with love for the poor. The one is as Esau who sold his birth-right for a mess of pottage, while the other is as Moses who would rather suffer the reproach of Christ than to enjoy the treasures of Egypt. The one seeks the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, while the other seeks the world and the things of the world. The one seeks salvation by forsaking the world, denial of self, and faith in God, while the other seeks salvation by seeking the world and its lusts.

But even though it is true that "there is nothing of modern Communism in the social life of the first church at Jerusalem, there is, however, a lesson to the Church of today as to the obligations of wealth and the claims of brotherhood, which is all but universally disregarded. The spectre of Communism is troubling every nation, and it will become more and more formidable, as the Christian Church loses its sense of stewardship. Not the abolition of private property is the cure for the hideous facts which drive men to shriek "Property is theft", but a return to the sense of Christian stewardship, as it was practiced in the first Church at Jerusalem.

B. K.

## Denying the Lord that Bought Them

The entire verse of this second chapter of II Peter reads as follows: "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."

The problem of the particular phrase which is the topic of this article is not that these false teachers denied the Lord. That of course is rather characteristic of false teachers. But the point is we are told by the apostle Peter that these false teachers denied the Lord *that bought them*. Understanding this, several questions arise immediately for the Reformed believer. Naturally they who believe in a universal atonement have no problem here whatever. They will reason as follows: "Christ atoned for every man, woman and child under the sun, but whether this atonement is to be effective in the case of every person depends upon the individual himself. He must believe, he must accept Christ and His salvation." It stands to reason if that is true it is rather simple and also quite common that people deny the Lord that bought them.

Again, there is no difficulty here for those who deny the perseverance of the saints. The Arminian who teaches: "That the true believers and regenerate not

only can fall from justifying faith and likewise from grace and salvation wholly and to the end, but indeed often do fall from this and are lost forever," has no problem here at all. This seems to be exactly a text which proves his point.

However, there is in this phrase, especially at first glance, a great difficulty for the Reformed believer. For the Reformed believer denies universal atonement. He confesses limited atonement. "It was the will of God that Christ by the blood of the cross, whereby He confirmed the new covenant should effectually redeem out of all people, tribe, nation and language, all those, and those only, who were from eternity chosen to salvation, and given to Him by the Father." (Canons, Second Head of Doctrine, article 8).

Furthermore the Reformed believer confesses the perseverance of the saints: "But God who is rich in mercy, according to His unchangeable purpose of election, does not wholly withdraw the Holy Spirit from His own people, even in their melancholy falls; nor suffers them to proceed so far as to lose the grace of adoption, and forfeit the state of justification, or to commit the sin unto death; nor does He permit them to be totally deserted, and to plunge themselves into everlasting destruction." (Canons, Fifth Head of Doctrine, article 6).

And both these two points of doctrine, limited atonement and perseverance of the saints, the Reformed believer bases upon and proves from Scripture. If we were writing about these two doctrinal subjects we would give textual proof, now this is not necessary; besides, our space is limited. Our purpose was first of all to clearly state the apparently insurmountable difficulty of our text for the Reformed believer. The text speaks of "Denying the Lord that bought them." A Reformed man says: "That is impossible, that is contrary to all of Scripture." On the other hand the text teaches it. How can we explain this, what is the solution?

We have already eliminated the Pelagian-Arminian solution. Their so-called solution sounds very simple, but they come to it after first denying some very fundamental doctrines of Scripture.

Of course for the Reformed exegete there is a temptation that he tries to explain the text in the light of his dogmatics and by a convenient twisting of words make the text say something altogether different than what it actually expresses. I came across a rather clumsy explanation of this kind in an old Standard-Bearer, Vol. 4, page 334. Some well-meaning, good Protestant Reformed brethren, would explain the phrase as follows "These false teachers denied that the Lord, Christ, bought *them*, namely His people." Now, that may sound like an easy way out but this is definitely no solution. The word *them* does not refer to the Church as such, but very definitely to the false teachers.

Hence this method of trying to solve the problem the editor of the Standard-Bearer called at that time, and correctly so "inlegkunde."

The following explanation has also been given as a possible solution. "The clause 'that bought them,' refers to the fact, that these false teachers formerly belonged to the Church, were of the people of God to all appearances, in the external sense. They are described according to their former confession as those whom the Lord bought." (St. Bearer Vol. 12, page 320). However, also this proposed solution will not do. Both the text and the context definitely give the impression that these false teachers must be conceived of as still belonging to the Church. They are "among you," verse 1. They labor in the midst of the church, they are influential persons, they are teachers. "Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings, *while they feast with you.*" (verse 13). Hence, we are convinced that the above suggested solution does not solve the problem.

Several years ago one of the members of the Holland Men's Society of our Fuller Avenue Church went with the following question to the Standard-Bearer: "Hoe moeten we II Pet. 2:1 verstaan? - The editor answered, among other things, as follows: "Ik wil op twee dingen wijzen. In de eerste plaats op het feit, dat er in het oorspronkelijke feitelijk letterlijk staat: verloochenende den hen gekocht hebbenden Heere. Dit wijst zeker op den inhoud hunner loochening. Hun loochening bestond daarin, dat ze ontkenden, dat Jezus hen gekocht had. Ze vertraden het zoenbloed van Christus. Ze tasten de kruisverdienste van Christus aan en loochenden, dat deze verdienste voldoende kracht had. In de tweede plaats, dat deze mensen zeker wel voor een tijd met de gemeente meeleefden. Ze behoorden bij de zichtbare Kerk. Ze stonden dus voor het oog der mensen aangeschreven als behorende bij de gemeente, die Christus gekocht heeft met zijn dierbaar bloed. Organisch genomen behoorden ze bij de gekochten. Het is er mee als met de rank, die wel in den wijnstok is, maar geen vrucht draagt. Ze worden dan ook als gekochten behandeld, met de gemeente, en in den tekst als gekochten genoemd. Welnu, dien Heere, die hen als leden der gemeente gekocht heeft, verloochenen zij; en zij verloochenen Hem juist in zijn dierbaar bloed." . . . (St. Bearer Vol. 4, page 284). — A few years later the editor of the Standard Bearer reiterated his opinion that the above is the only and correct explanation. Wrote he: "Ze (the former explanation) is deze, dat de apostel in de woorden: *den Heere, Die hen gekocht heeft, verloochenende*, aanduidt *wie en wat* deze valsche leeraars verloochenen. Zij verloochenen in hun valsche leer, dat de Heere hen gekocht heeft, m.a.w. het zoenbloed van Christus verloochenen ze." (Standard Bearer Vol. 7, page 120). In the Standard-Bearer, Vol. 12, page 320, we meet once more with this text, and there

the editor, after first giving a possible interpretation, which we quoted already, continues: "There is, however, according to my opinion a better interpretation, which also explains why these words should be used at all. The apostle, then, describes them from the viewpoint of what they denied: *that the Lord bought them.* They were false teachers. And denying the atonement, they denied the Lord that bought them. They might still profess to believe in Jesus, just as the moderns do, but they really deny Him, seeing that they deny the cross."

We are now confronted with the question: "Is the above explanation the correct one, is that what Peter teaches here? Does the text teach that these false teachers denied that Christ bought them, did they deny the atonement by the blood of Christ?" Perhaps you say 'that is exactly the point the text emphasizes.' This is true, but the question is still: "How, in what way and what manner did they deny the Lord that bought them?" Did they do so by stating: "Christ did not buy you, Church, did not buy us, His blood did not save us?" In that case their teaching could very well be compared with the teachings of the modernist. The modernist can speak highly of the Lord as an example, a humanitarian, the ideal man which we must follow, copy, imitate, etc. Is that what these particular false teachers in the text taught? After careful study of this text we have come to the conclusion that this is just exactly *not* what they taught. There is still another way wherein, another means and method whereby they could deny the Lord that bought them. Let me explain.

First of all it is of course correctly stated when it is said that we must look upon these false teachers as organically belonging to the Church of Christ. As to their individual person the Lord never bought them. If that were so the text would deny the perseverance of the saints. No, but organically speaking the Lord bought them, they were members of the Church, branches of the Vine, called by the name 'Israel.' The Church held them for such, and they themselves confessed to be such. They said concerning themselves: "The Lord bought us." In fact I think they emphasized that. I think they understood clearly the meaning of the doctrine of atonement and they said: "We agree with that, we believe it, we teach it, — the Lord bought us."

Let us ask the question and briefly answer it: "What does it mean that Christ bought us, what is implied in it and what follows from this?" That Christ bought us implies first of all that He paid for our sins, that He justifies us, that He saves us to the uttermost. He delivered us from the *curse* of sin. Secondly, it implies that He delivered us from the *power* of sin. Meaning: He delivered us to be new creatures in Him, to live to His honor and glory, to walk in sanctification. He



bought us that we might be His peculiar people, hating sin, crucifying the old man and walk in newness of life. — And these two: justification and sanctification, always go hand in hand. And here is where the picture of the false teachers fits in. They said: We are of Christ, He bought us, we are justified, we are His own. But while saying this they walked in ways of sin, corruption, evil. They brought into practice: "Let us sin that grace may abound, let the flesh have its sway." And in that sense they denied the Lord. Not actually in words whereby they contradicted the doctrine of atonement, but by their very deeds, their walk of life. Their ungodly life manifested that they were children of the devil in spite of the fact that they loudly proclaimed to be children of God. The Lord who bought His people demands that His children walk in newness of life. For He is their Lord, their absolute sovereign. The original emphasizes this by using not the usual word for Lord but a word which is transliterated 'despot'. The Lord is the despot, the absolute sovereign, who has absolute sway and who redeemed us for the very purpose that we walk in His ways, keep His precepts. Now, if a man walks contrary to the precepts of Christ, walks according to the flesh and not according to the Spirit, he lies when he says: "The Lord bought me." His very walk of life is a denial of that Lord. Scripture says: "Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (Titus 2:14). And again: "But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." (I Pet. 1:15). These false teachers confessed Christ with their mouth but refused to subject themselves to Christ's sovereignty, His precepts, the law of the Kingdom. In other words by denying Him as the sovereign of their life they denied Him as the Lord that bought them. "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." (I John 1:6). And again: "And hereby do we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in Him." (I John 2:3-5). And again: "In this the children of God are manifested, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." (I John 3:10). And, finally: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." (Hebrews 12:14).

We are convinced that the above, last given explanation, is the only possible and therefore correct explanation. These false teachers are not the modernist type, but they are the type of the extreme anabaptists and anti-nominianists. The proof? They teach a per-

nicious way of life which is contrary to the teachings of Scripture. If they merely denied by word of mouth that the Lord had bought them the world would pay no attention to them. But just because they teach pernicious ways, ways of flesh, carnal lusts, using the christian liberty as an occasion for the flesh, they become the cause that *'the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.'*

They are covetous men, carnal men whose only desire is to enrich themselves with the possessions of others, in order that their carnal lusts and covetousness may be satisfied. Hence, with feigned, fabricated, delusive and deceptive words they 'make merchandise of you.' (vs. 3).

*Privily*, stealthily they bring in damnable heresies in the Church (vs. 1). Not by saying 'Christ did not die for you,' but by saying 'Christ having died for you, you are free, can do as you please.' Of course they were smooth, deceptive, but that nevertheless was the essence of their teaching. (vss. 1-3). "Peter intimated that the heresies of which he speaks were to be introduced under the color of true doctrine, in the dark, as it were, and by little and little; so that the people would not discern their real nature."

Finally, we would offer as proof of our explanation the description which Peter gives of these false teachers in the sequence of this second chapter of II Peter. (See particularly vss. 10, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19). This chapter makes it overwhelmingly clear that these false teachers denied the Lord that bought them, not by means of denying the atonement by the blood of Christ as such, but by denying Christ as the Lord of their life and using the christian liberty as an occasion for the flesh, to satisfy their covetousness and carnal desires. And by denying Christ as the sovereign of their life, by word and practice, they denied Him as the Lord that bought them. "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in him." J. D.

#### IN MEMORIAM

In the afternoon of October 28, the Lord took out of our midst our dearly beloved mother and grandmother

JESSIE DE YOUNG, nee Keuning

at the aged of 74 years.

Her expressed longing and desire was to be with her Savior Jesus Christ and in the fulfillment of her desire is our comfort.

The Children:

Mr. and Mrs. S. Veltman

Mr. and Mrs. H. Huizema

Mr. and Mrs. S. De Young

9 grandchildren and

2 great-grandchildren

## Calvinism According to Kuyper's Stone Lectures — A Critique

### III

#### His Dualistic-Synthetic Conception of History

To attempt a comprehensive criticism of Kuyper's Stone-Lectures, with some regard to details in an article of five typewritten pages would be preposterous. These lectures cover every subject in the encyclopedia of human knowledge. And what is more the author's conception of Christian Encyclopedia is presupposed throughout. To understand these lectures one must bear in mind that they were written in maturer years of Kuyper's life and that they give in abbreviated form his entire Life-and-World-View.

Should we voice our objections against the various elements with which we take issue in these lectures, without attempting to point out what to our mind is the basis error of the author, we would run a twofold risk. The first is of a formal nature. Because of the limitation of space allotted us. We could at best offer mere catalogization of our criticisms. The second is more serious. We would fail to see the real issue because we had lost ourself in the variety of issues. This is our criticism of a great many of the criticisms that have been given of these lectures.

In consideration of the foregoing we will limit our criticism to what we consider the underlying, unbiblical error in Kuyper's conception; which in this case is tantamount to the basic error of the "common grace" hypothesis.

This basic error of the author in the interpretation of the history, the world and of mankind is, that it is: *dualistic-synthetic*.

Indeed this is a serious accusation, which places a twofold duty upon our shoulders in this writing. 1. To carefully define our terms, lest we perhaps misrepresent the late Dr. Kuyper's views, or that we be not mistakingly understood as doing such. 2. To show, in as far as this is possible within the allotted space that this is indeed the error of the author.

We said that Kuyper's view of history was dualistic. What do we imply with this? We do not refer in thus judging of Kuyper's conception to the Mythological dualism held by the Persian philosophers, who maintained the existence of a good principle and an evil principle, and who thus explained the mixed state of the things of this present world, such things as, sickness and health, poverty and riches, want and abundance, evil and virtue. This was the philosophy revived by Gnosticism in the early church and was also the error of Manichianism against which Augustine mili-

tated. To represent Kuyper as having advocated this dualism would be unfactual.

There is another dualistic conception to which Kuyper's view approaches. This is the dualistic conception which holds that the world came into being and is preserved by the concurrence of two principles equally necessary, independent and eternal. We said that Kuyper's view approaches this. Yet there are some very important modifications to notice. His dualistic view does not postulate two philosophic and abstractly conceived concurrent principles which are *eternal*. This is evident from the fact that according to *eternal* principles there is no Creation in the Scriptural sense neither is there a possibility of Providence. The only thing there can possibly be is Pantheism. Even though as we shall presently point out, Kuyper's view is dualistic and has the appearance of this dualism it differs in these following respects:

1. The author of the Stone-lectures holds to the confession that the origin of the world is out of the one Creative will of God.

2. It is his conviction that the world's preservation (Providence) is also by the one will of Almighty God. All Pantheistic dualism denies these two fundamental points of confession.

3. Kuyper further believes that all things were created good, both creaturely and ethically.

4. Sin according to Kuyper entered into the world by the disobedience of *one* man.

We believe that these four factors distinguish the view of Kuyper from heathenistic and modernistic Pantheism.

Kuyper's dualism begins historically after the good world has fallen through the sin and disobedience of Adam in Paradise. He postulates *two concurrent principles* in the history of a fallen world: the history of *fallen mankind*. The two concurrent principles are "common grace" and "saving grace". And the fruit of these two kinds of grace, thus Kuyper, is a twofold *positive development* in the history of the world. The one proceeding from saving grace is the one in the church which ends in the final glory of the sons of adoption. The other proceeding from common grace guarantees a positive good *development of mankind* as such. Thus there is a dualism of principle in the world—both working positive good. The one is stronger and more enduring than the other, to be sure, being regenerative, but the other is positively good being restraitive of the same evil which in regeneration is completely overcome.

It is also well to take notice of the fact that common grace, according to Kuyper is strictly speaking, not the same as Providence, the preservation of what God has once creatively called into existence. According to him common grace is the restraitive influence in the element of "government" in Providence. And this

government of Providence does not touch the whole of created things, but only the rational beings. Thus he teaches in his *Dictaten Dogmatiek*, *Locus De Providentia*, p. 94. The same presentation may be found in his "*Gemeene Gratie*", pp. 380, 596, 600, 601. Instructive on this score is also what one reads in "*Van Zonde En Genade*" pp. 106, 107, by H. Danhof and H. Hoeksema.

In the Stone-lectures it is especially the element of the positively-good development of mankind as such that is placed on the foreground. This the reader can assure himself of once more by reading our first article in the Nov. 1 issue of the *Standard Bearer*. In fact Kuyper tells us: "The chief purpose of my lecturing in this country was, to eradicate the wrong idea, that Calvinism represented an exclusively dogmatical and ecclesiastical movement." p. 231. Calvinism is also ecclesiastical, it also follows the line of saving grace, but that is not the whole story. There is *besides this* also another aspect of Calvinism and that is the positively good development in the world as world of mankind.

This dualism is reflected in all of Kuyper's later works. It is the ever-recurring theme in his *Dictaten Dogmatiek*. One finds it in the following Loci: *De Providentia*, *De Peccato* (concerning sin) *De Foedere* (concerning the Covenant) *De Magistratu* (concerning the magistrates). In a word in all the subjects treated both in "*Calvinism*" and in his "*Dictaten Dogmatiek*". And this dualism is reflected finally in his *Locus De Consummatione Saeculi*. Also here Kuyper speaks of the two lines in history. The one is "*Creatio, de Anthropologie and de Harmartologie* (doctrine of sin) *met haar gevolgen in de "miseria et mors"* (misery and death) *en op de lijn der gratie ligt de locus de Christo, De Salute* (applied salvation) *de Ecclesia*." We said this dualism is reflected here, although it should be obvious that it is not directly taught.

What is most obvious is that Kuyper fails to bring this dualism to a unity of Conception. This is as clear as the day when one asks the question: Is there really a *Consummation* of this high development of mankind as mankind? Where is the *ripened fruit*? What happens to all the high development of mankind? For according to Kuyper it is *positive* development of the human race.

As for the "Future" of Common Grace Calvinism, Kuyper is pessimistic. It has stopped at the western banks of this American continent. "The one world-stream, broad and fresh" where does it empty its final content? Kuyper does not tell us. Why not? He cannot. Mankind as such has not Consummation! The purely "secularized world" God will destroy.

But we are anticipating. Let us return to our subject.

Kuyper is not afraid to draw this dualistic line all

the way. This means that in the fundamental and primordial threefold relationship of God, fellowman and creation there is in both lines a *positive* good. Not merely in the realm of God's special grace of the regenerated man; the renewed man who stands in the proper relationship to God, his neighbor and his possessions. Not at all! In the world of unregenerated man, there is a positive good in all these fundamental relationships!

1. In the restrained sinner's relationship *to God*. Hence as a religious being there is something good. There is in fallen man still the "*semen religionis*" (seed of religion) and the *sensus divinus* (the sense of God). For there is the light of the Logos in every man! To quote Kuyper: "To be sure there is a concentration of religious light and life in the church, but then in the walls of this church, there are wide open windows, and the light of the eternal has to radiate over the whole world. Here is a city (common grace, G.L.) which every man can see from afar. Here is the holy salt that penetrates in every direction (common grace, G.L.) checking all corruption." p. 63, "*Calvinism*".

2. Also in man's relationship to his fellowman. Not merely the reborn child of God. But the man who is under the operation of the restraint of sin. Of him it can be said as put by Bancroft: "The fanatic for Calvinism was a fanatic for liberty, for in the moral warfare for freedom, his creed was a part of his army, and his most faithful ally in the battle." Hence it follows that here also mankind is in a stage of positive development.

3. Finally in the unregenerate man's relationship to the world, that is, in Science and art. This is the stand of Kuyper in Lectures IV and V.

What must we say of this? The language here is most confusing, but when read in the broad context of all the lectures it is clear that we here have a basis of common activity for believers and none-believers alike. In Politics, religion, science and art! And thus this dualism of two concurrent graces we have a perfect synthesis between the world and the church, between "*Jerusalem*" and "*Athens*"!

What our reaction toward this is and our evaluation in the light of the Scriptural and Calvinistically Confessional doctrine of the total depravity of man? If this language must of the twofold graces with its resultant conception must be taken seriously all it can mean is that the writer has taken the stand of Pelagianism! This world of mankind as such is then not wholly evil! And as far as the dualistic conception is concerned it is nothing else but the conclusion of Roman Catholicism in its doctrine of the *Superadditum* and that of fallen man "*in puris naturalibus*". Certainly, the way in which Kuyper and Rome arrive at this conclusion differs. But the final result is the same.

And this also we cannot but observe. The positive

good world of Kuyper in its development of religion, politics, science and art and that of the humanistic cannot possibly differ. Both speak of the upward development of mankind. No humanist has any objection to this Calvinism of Kuyper. One may object and say Kuyper wanted it all to God's glory, and that the humanist objects to. I answer that this latter remains but an empty phrase somewhat lamely appended, for it does not follow from his conception!

The following from Lecture IV: "Calvinism and Science" is from Kuyper's pen: "It was perceived, on the contrary, that for God's sake, our attention may not be withdrawn from the life of nature and creation; the study of the body regained its place of honor beside the study of the soul; and the social organization of mankind on earth was again looked upon as being as well worthy an object of human science as the congregation of the perfect saints in heaven. This also explains the close relationship existing between Calvinism (the Common Grace brand, G. L.) and Humanism. In as far as humanism endeavored to substitute life in this world for the eternal, every Calvinist opposed the Humanist. But in as much as the Humanist contented himself with a plea for a proper acknowledgment of secular life, the Calvinist was his proper ally."

Now Kuyper *separated* life in the world from the principle of regeneration. He did not *substitute* it. In actual fact both Humanism and Common Grace Calvinism are the same. Only this Calvinism is far more dangerous than the outright humanism for it carries a misleading title!

Instead of this dualistic-Synthetic conception we would advocate the organic unity of the human race. Take the position that every creature of God is good. And that in this good world (Creation-creaturehood) both the unbeliever and the believer live from two antithetically different principles. Thus the battle of all ages is in this world. And the regenerated new man looks in hope for the time when what he now claims in faith, may be shown to be his in very deed. This is the difficult way of faith, but it is the way of God.

This is not the position of Anabaptistic Manichean dualism (see above) neither the Kuperean concurrency of two good principles, but all things indeed for the King. Whether we eat or drink do it unto the Lord. For every *creature* of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected when taken with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer!

G. L.

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#### CLASSIS EAST

will meet in regular session Wednesday, January 10, at 9:00 P.M., at the Fuller Ave. Prot. Ref. Church.

D. Jonker, S. C.

## The Concept "Servant of Jehovah" In Isaiah

With the heart-consoling words "Comfort ye, Comfort ye My people", the Divine author of this prophecy given through Isaiah begins the fortieth chapter of this book of prophecy. Herewith He begins the final section of this book, a section which speaks of the salvation of God's people and of the glory that awaits them in the New Jerusalem.

In this section of the prophecy of Isaiah there appears this concept of the servant of Jehovah which we shall briefly consider in this essay. The concept is first mentioned in chapter 41:8, 9 where we read, "But thou, Israel art My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend. Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away." The next passage which speaks directly of this servant of Jehovah is found in chapter 42:1-4. In these verses we find these thoughts expressed, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench; he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law."

These two passages show one of the characteristics of all the passages that speak of this servant of Jehovah. You will have noticed that in the first passage quoted this servant is presented as being the nation of Israel while the second makes one think immediately of Christ as this servant of Jehovah of whom Isaiah speaks. In fact Jesus Himself quotes the verses which follow immediately upon those we quoted above in chapter 42 when He was in Nazareth and told the Jews that He was the fulfillment of this prophecy, so that there can be no doubt that in chapter 42 this servant of Jehovah is Christ. This change of viewpoint will be found throughout the various passages that speak of this servant of Jehovah. Some speak very definitely of Israel as a nation. In others it cannot be denied that Christ is meant by this servant. Passages which speak of this servant as the nation Israel are: 43:10; 44:21, 22; 45:4; 48:20. Additional passages that speak plainly of Christ are: 49:5, 6; 52:13 and the entire 53rd chapter which the Ethiopian eunuch was reading and which Philip explains to him as having reference to Christ.

In chapter 49 we find a very remarkable use of the

expression. The first six verses in brief declare this, “. . . . the Lord hath called me . . . . and said unto me, Thou art My servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. Then said I, I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain: Yes surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God. And now saith the Lord that formed me . . . . to be His servant, to bring Jacob again to Him . . . .”

This passage is remarkable in that it speaks of both Israel and Christ as that servant in one breath. Note verse 3, “Thou art My servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.” Immediately following this the servant answers Jehovah and says, “I have labored in vain. I have spent my strength for nought.” Now if we read the next verse we see wherein that labor consisted. We read, “Now saith the Lord that formed me . . . . to bring Jacob again to Him . . . .” While the 6th verse has this expression “. . . . though Israel be not gathered . . . .” These passages plainly speak of Christ in His work of reconciling God’s people unto Him. Thus in the one passage we have a twofold use of this expression, “Servant of Jehovah”. Still more the expression here also applies to Isaiah as the servant of Jehovah. It is Isaiah that complains that he has labored in vain. This he does as prophet, anointed by God’s Spirit to represent Christ and lead His people to repentance. When Isaiah says this, he does so therefore as prophetic of the *apparent* hopelessness and unfruitfulness of Christ’s work amongst Israel.

Not only do we feel at once that the term “Servant of Jehovah” should be applied first to Christ and then to Israel because of Israel’s relation to Him, but a consideration of these passages mentioned above will lead us to the same conclusion. Consider once that frequently in these passages Israel, who is called the *servant* of Jehovah, is also presented as not serving Him and being guilty before Him. This is stated both directly and indirectly. Look up chapter 43:23-25. Israel is accused by Jehovah of not sacrificing burnt offerings to Him, and indirectly God alludes to her failure to serve Him when He declares in verse 25, “I am He that blotteth out thy transgressions”. Transgressions surely are not service. In the passages which speak of Christ, however, He is extolled for His perfect service to Jehovah. Chapter 53 is a beautiful declaration of His obedience in humility and love to Jehovah and to His people. He is THE servant of Jehovah Who has fulfilled the Law of God for us. He has served Jehovah in our stead and performed the past service we did not perform and owe unto Jehovah. He is THE servant of Jehovah, and through His service He has made Israel to become the servant of Jehovah. Listen to chapter 53:11, “He shall see the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied, by His knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquity”. Note that He is called the *righteous*

servant and it is implied in what follows that Israel was guilty and that He justified Israel by His righteousness. Unto Israel He imputed His righteousness and Israel in God’s eyes also becomes the servant of the Lord. Even as Christ is *the* Israel, that is *the* Prince of God and the Nation of Israel becomes the prince of God because He stands at her head, so Christ is *the* Servant of Jehovah, and Israel becomes the Servant of Jehovah because He stands at her head as Christ, the Anointed of God to be Prophet, Priest and King. The idea of the “Servant of Jehovah”, as Delitzsch suggests, figuratively speaking assumes the form of a pyramid the base of which is Israel as a nation, the central section being Israel according to election, the True Israel, Spiritual Israel, and the Apex of this pyramid being Christ, the Second Adam, the Head of God’s Covenant people Who has fulfilled the Covenant obligation for us in His work of serving Jehovah as our head and thereby redeeming us from the slavery of the devil. In the first place then Christ is that “Servant of Jehovah” in that He serves Jehovah perfectly as the head of God’s covenant people. In the second place Israel according to the remnant of election is that “Servant of Jehovah” because in Christ her head all the service God demanded is performed and Jehovah’s judgment upon her because He sees her in Christ is that she has served Him.

However these passages teach us something more than this objective holiness and righteousness which the elect have in Christ and according to which God declares them to be His servants. Israel—the true church in the Old Dispensation and in this New Dispensation—also is the “Servant of Jehovah” in deed and not merely in name and according to God’s judgment. Here are some of the things these passages mention as the service Israel performs before Jehovah: a. Contrasting 41:8 with the preceeding verses and 44:1-8, 21-28 with the verses 9-20 which appear between, we see that Israel as Jehovah’s servant does not serve idols as the heathen nations about her. b. Positively we read in 43:10 and in 44:8 that she is God’s witness which according to the context means that she confesses that Jehovah is her God and Redeemer. c. In 43:21 God Himself declares that He has formed Israel to show forth His praises. d. In 49:3 the work that Israel performs as the “Servant of Jehovah” is that of glorifying Him. These are not merely works which God demands of His servant but they are works which she also performs. Chapter 41:8-10 speaks of this “Servant of Jehovah” being chosen and called by God but also that He will help, strengthen and uphold her with the right hand of His righteousness. This does not merely mean to defend her from the physical enemy but it means that He will help, strengthen and uphold her with the right hand of His righteousness—which is Christ, THE Servant of Jehovah—to perform right-



eousness and to serve Him. Because the grace of God, The Spirit of Christ and the life of Christ are given to Israel, she is enabled to be the "Servant of Jehovah" in more than name. She is the servant of Jehovah in thought, word and deed. Thus the term "Servant of Jehovah" as applied to Israel also means "Servant Jehovah has made". The emphasis in all the passages which refer to Israel directly is upon the fact that God chose and called her. The same thing may be said in regard to those passages that speak of Christ as the "Servant of Jehovah". They all teach us that Christ is sent by God and is not our product at all.

There are many other details in this concept which could be noted, but space does permit more than a few suggestions as to the richness of this concept. a. The Covenant idea is placed emphatically before us in the very 1st passage that speaks of this Servant of Jehovah. Chapter 41:8, 9 speaks of this servant as being the seed of Abraham, God's "friend", with whom He established this Covenant. b. This same passage therefore teaches us by implication and literally that Jehovah's Servant is a friend-servant. c. The names Israel and Jacob which are repeatedly used indicate the glory of this servitude. Israel means, "Prince of God." Jacob means, "The Supplanter". Let no one think that this servitude is slavery and dishonorable. Let no one be ashamed to be called a servant of Jehovah. These servants are princes of God, His friends shall inherit the earth and all the future glory, for they shall supplant the wicked who now possess it. d. To this Israel which is Jehovah's servant belongs the church of today, Gentiles as well as Jews according to 42:1, 6; 49:6. e. This service of Israel as the servant of Jehovah had a typical realization when Israel returned from captivity to return to Canaan where she again built Jerusalem, the City of God, and His temple and served Him there. See chapter 48:20. f. God uses the heathen nations and unbelievers for the welfare of His servant. See 45:1-4 and compare it with Ezra 1:1-3. In connection with this, 41:8, 9 also teaches us that no one can stand in the way of God's work of bringing His people to Canaan to serve Him. He called them from "the ends of the earth"—called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees and Israel out of Egypt—and from "the chief men thereof"—from under Pharaoh's cruel yoke—He brought Israel out to Canaan and through Moses He said to Pharaoh, "Let My son go that he may serve Me", Exodus 4:23; 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13 etc.

Summing up all the material, we have here placed before us in this concept God's Covenant people as Servant. That "Servant of Jehovah" is the entire body of the elect with Christ at the head. Christ is the "Servant of Jehovah" in Himself which His work of perfect obedience and love manifests. The body of the elect, consisting in both Jews and Gentiles, becomes

that "Servant of Jehovah" because of Christ's obedience and the engrafting of these elect into Him by faith. Israel as a nation is called that "Servant of Jehovah" because in the Old Dispensation God's Covenant people were to be found exclusively among Israel with only a few exceptions.

When this body of the elect is called the "Servant of Jehovah", God views these elect not from the viewpoint of what they are in themselves but as they are judicially in Christ their head and as they become ethically through the work of His Spirit in their hearts. In other words the elect are presented from the viewpoint of the completion of God's work of salvation, that is, from the law of sin and death and the slavery of the devil, now to keep its part of the Covenant obligation by serving God through His grace. Of this, Israel's redemption from the yoke of Pharaoh in Egypt and her return out of Babylon were types, and this latter redemption becomes the occasion here for Jehovah to teach Israel and us of that spiritual redemption which we have in His Servant, Jesus Christ our Lord, through Whom we can and do become His Covenant children and friend-servants.

J. A. H.

#### IN MEMORIAM

It has pleased the Lord in His infinite wisdom to take unto Himself our beloved son, brother and friend,

P.F.C. BEN WEESIES

He died November 5 in a German Prison Camp of wounds he received in action somewhere in France.

We are filled with sorrow and our hearts bleed for him. But we have the blessed comfort that he is with his Lord and Savior in glory Whom he served so faithfully, and we can say with David: We shall go to him, but he shall not return to us.

The sorrowing family:

Mrs. Jennie Weesies (mother)  
Mr. and Mrs. Evert Weesies  
Mr. and Mrs. John Hamminga  
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Weesies  
Mr. and Mrs. Ebel Mulder  
Mr. and Mrs. Peter Weesies  
Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Weesies  
Mr. and Mrs. John Weesies  
Mr. and Mrs. Albert Weesies  
Miss Jennie Weesies  
Miss Gertrude Hoppenbrouwer

Kalamazoo, Michigan.