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MEDITATION

A Safe Refuge

*Yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make
my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.*

Psalms 75:1b.

Excelsior!

Out of the depths of trouble and fear to the heights of praise and glorying in the God of our salvation.

And that, too, on the wings of prayer!

This ascent characterizes the contents of many of the Old Testament Psalms. Many of them are occasioned by trouble and distress, are pressed from the heart of the poet by fear and anguish of soul because of the enemy that oppresses him, that surrounds him on every side, that makes it humanly impossible for him to survive. And out of those depths he struggles, clinging by faith to Him that is invisible, embracing His immutable promises, ascending on the wings of prayer to the glorious heights of victorious confidence on which he is able to break forth in joyous praise and glory to Jehovah his refuge and strength.

Thus it is also in this psalm.

He is in deep affliction.

His soul is among lions, surrounded by the sons of men, "whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword." vs. 4. They have prepared a net for his steps; his soul is bowed down; they have digged a pit before him. vs. 6. Deeply he feels the reproach of him that would swallow him up. vs. 3. Calamities threaten to overwhelm him.

Yet, although his soul is bowed down, and he sees no way out, his faith is not crushed, and by that faith he struggles upward to the mountain peaks of confidence in the Lord his God. He implores God's mercy over him, and cries unto the Lord, the God of his sal-

vation that performs all things for him. vss. 1, 2. He determines to take his refuge in the shadow of God's wings, until "these calamities be overpast." vs. 1. He grows confident that Jehovah shall send forth his mercy and his truth. vs. 3. And his heart is fixed: he will sing and give praise unto the Lord among the nations, and will declare that His mercy is great unto the heavens, and His truth unto the clouds. vss. 7-10.

Out of the depths to the heights of faith!

And is not this characteristic of the life of each child of God in the world?

Is he not always in the depths?

And does he not always, as long as he is in this world, and in the body of this death, cry unto the God of his salvation out of the depths?

And is it not true that on the mighty wings of prayer he ascends unto the heights of joy, and peace, and victory over the world?

The victory of faith!

These calamities. . . .

In the shadow of thy wings will I take my refuge, until *these* calamities be overpast.

The psalmist refers to the calamities of the moment, to certain special and very concrete calamities that were threatening his destruction at that particular time.

The superscription in the original informs us that the psalm refers to a time when David was in the cave. Whether this means the cave of Adullam, I Sam. 22:1, or the cave of Engedi, I Sam. 24:3, we know not. Nor does it matter as far as the meaning of "these calamities" is concerned. It is evident that the psalmist at this time was bitterly persecuted by Saul and his men, and that they threatened his life. Of this he speaks when he complains that his soul is among lions, in the midst of cruel enemies that set a snare for his feet, and that would swallow him up. And he declares that he will make his refuge in the shadow of Jehovah's wings until those particular calamities are overpast.

And in that particular, concrete sense, we, too, may

well apply these words as we are mindful of entering upon a new year.

These calamities!

O, yes, there is a special meaning in this phrase also for us, as we stand at the entrance of another year, this year of our Lord 1945.

Dark clouds of evil are lowering overhead!

How miserably superficial and wicked appear now the revelry and shouting, the boasting and bragging, the banqueting and drunkenness whereby the men of this world, whose god is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, and who seek and mind earthly things, hail the new year, as if there were any reason to expect a better world, a world of peace and happiness, in either the immediate or remote future. . . .

It sounds like the drunken prattle of those whose life's slogan is: "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."

How vain it seems for men to meet one another on this morning of the first day of 1945, and wish for the blessing of a happy new year!

Is not the world full of misery and corruption as never before? Has there, then, ever been a time, when all the idle and proud boasts of mere men were so utterly put to shame as on this very first day of another year? Is not even now the magnificent structure of Man's culture and civilization shaking and tottering on its very foundations? Where is now man's wisdom, man's ingenuity, man's good will and purpose to build a better world, to create lasting peace on earth among the nations? Was there, then, ever a war so tremendous in scope, so dreadful in its intensity, so bent upon destruction, as the world-conflict in the throes of which we find ourselves at the present time?

Must not the words choke in our throat and die upon our lips, when we try to wish one another a happy new year, and at the same time squarely face reality and the dark foreboding of the future?

Are not our hearts heavy?

Were not our sons torn from our hearths and hearts to shed their blood on the far flung battlefields of the world? And is happiness quite possible when we consider their empty places in our homes, at our tables, and contemplate the possible suffering and fear and agony they may have to endure at this very moment? Do not our anxious hearts, in anticipation, a thousand times pass through the agony of the moment when the messenger of evil shall bring us the tidings that our loved ones left their lives on the blood-soaked battlefield in the far away land? . . .

These calamities!

O, indeed, there is plenty of reason for us, on this first day of the year 1945, to speak of the calamities of the moment in a very special sense of the word.

In the depths we are.

What then? Shall, while our soul is bowed down

with grief and anxiety, our faith despair, and our spirits be crushed, and shall we remain in the depths?

Or shall we assume the devil-may-care attitude of ungodly men, and in drunken revelry close our eyes to stark reality, and speak of a "Happy New Year" anyway?

Or shall we put our trust in the vain words of men, of the mighty and great of this world, that speak of chariots and of horses, of the power of Man, when they assure us that soon the calamities will be overpast, and that the dawn of a better day is already within the range of their vision?

We shall do nothing of the kind.

Vain is the help of man. And the expectation of the wicked must surely perish.

No, we shall not remain in the depths to be crushed by grief and oppression. We shall not drunkenly and foolishly close our eyes to reality, and speak of happiness where there is none. We shall not put our trust in princes and in the great of this world, in the might and wisdom of men. But we shall cling to the mighty God of our salvation, as seeing the invisible, and out of the depths we shall cry unto Him!

We shall trust in His mercy which is unto the heavens, and in His truth which is unto the clouds.

And we shall make our refuge under the shadow of His wings.

Until these calamities be overpast!

Till they be overpast!

But will they, then, ever come to an end?

O, to be sure, *these* calamities may be considered a specially dark cloud, that will soon be overpast.

Not always will David's soul be among these lions that now threaten him with death and destruction. His stay in the cave, surrounded by Saul and his men who seek his life, will not be for ever.

And the same is true of our present calamities.

All men somehow look forward to the time when they shall be overpast, when the glad news shall reach us that the war is over, that the armistice has been declared, that the peace treaty is signed, that the nations are about to lay down their arms, and that our boys may return home. They long for that time, and they earnestly scan the sky of events to discover whether this dark and lowering cloud of evil is almost overpast, and the sunshine of peace and earthly happiness may presently be expected to pierce the darkness and to gladden our hearts.

And, no doubt, there is good reason for this expectation.

These calamities will overpass, sooner or later.

But what then?

Or is it of any real avail that the present calamities, the troubles and fears and sufferings of the moment, shall have come to an end? Is it not true, then, that ca-

lamities like the present are very common in the world. that in recent years they have swept down upon us with increasing frequency in spite of the avowed intentions of men to prevent them, that they have grown in intensity, so that the periods of relative peace and prosperity seem like patches of pale sunshine between ever fiercer and more destructive storms?

And, in general, are not the present calamities but an emphatic manifestation and reminder of the one great, universal calamity of sin and death, and of the wrath of God under which we pine and die? And is it, then, of any avail that we make our refuge under the shadow of Jehovah's wings until *these* calamities are overpast, unless we include in *these* calamities *all* our misery of sin and death, and look forward to the time when the great cloud of universal calamity shall have overpast, and the light of the eternal day shall shine upon us from the face of God in Christ?

In the ultimate sense this is the implication of David's prayer and confession.

For David is the anointed of the Lord, ordained by Jehovah to sit on the throne of Israel. As such he suffers. Because of this the enemies set themselves against him, and take counsel together to destroy him. For, though the royal seed runs in the line of Judah, the present incumbent of the throne is from the tribe of Benjamin, and he is determined to maintain his position, and to kill the anointed of the Lord. Yet, according to the promise of the Lord, David could not perish at the hand of Saul. He will be exalted out of his present calamities to Israel's throne. Hence, until all these calamities will be overpast, he makes his refuge in the shadow of Jehovah's wings, trusting that He will deliver him.

Yet, in all this David is but the type.

And his sufferings are but the type of the unspeakable sufferings of Him that was to come, upon Whose head the dark cloud of all the calamities of sin and death, of all the enmity of the powers of darkness that would set themselves against him, and of the fierce wrath of God against the iniquity of His people, would break and burst, and would pour out its untold agony of hell. . . .

On Him were the promises!

He was to be exalted to the throne of the kingdom of heaven for ever!

And in all His sufferings He truly said: "I will make my refuge in the shadow of thy wings, until these calamities be overpast!"

And He was not put to shame.

For it was God that justified Him! And in His resurrection the lowering cloud of His calamities, and of all our calamities, was dispelled for ever!

That resurrection is our only hope!

It is the light of the eternal day piercing the darkness of our present death.

The end of all our calamities!

Finding a safe retreat!

Under His wings!

In the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge!

As the little chicks run to the protection of their mother-hen's wings in the time of danger, so I will seek a safe refuge in the care and protection of Jehovah!

And this refuge we need.

For, although the enemy is overcome, sin is atoned and blotted out, the world is overcome, and death is swallowed up in the cross and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ; although, therefore, centrally, in Him, and in His exaltation at the right hand of God, the dark cloud of these calamities, and of *all* calamities, is overpast, yet, in our flesh we are still under the cloud, and the perfect day cannot dawn until the final resurrection and the perfect revelation of God's tabernacle with men in the everlasting kingdom of heaven.

And under that cloud, in the body of this death, we still suffer many things: pain and sorrow, persecution and tribulation, reproach and scorn, destruction and war, sin and death. . . .

And we need the comfort of the conscious assurance that we are under the wings of the God of our salvation, His power and grace, His protection and care, His truth and faithfulness, His unfathomable love, and His everlasting and abundant mercy, always forgiving, always saving, always preserving, always delivering us from death and leading us unto everlasting life and glory!

That retreat is safe!

For He is the almighty Lord, sovereign also over all our calamities, and using them unto our salvation!

And to make our refuge by faith in the shadow of His wings is rest and strong consolation.

Peace that passeth understanding!

H. H.

LIEFDE AAN HET KRUIS

*Liefde aan het kruis met spijkers geklonken,
Liefde, doornageld, doorstoken, bebloed,
Liefde, in de diepte der helle gezonken. . . .
Dit is de steun van mijn onvast gemoed.*

*Dit is de grond, die nimmer zal wijken,
Dit is de liefde, die nimmer vergaat,
Hemel en aarde, zij mogen bezwijken:
Dit is de rotssteen, die eeuwig bestaat.*

—H.W.L.

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EDITORIALS

The Evangelical and The Reformed Church

I hope that the importance of the fact which I am trying to accentuate and bring to the foreground, namely, that not a single voice of protest was heard at the General Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States against the merger as proposed in the Plan of Union, is clearly understood.

For this point is, indeed, of cardinal significance.

Unless those brethren in the Evangelical and Reformed Church, formerly of the Reformed Church in the United States, that are dissatisfied with the doctrinal principles and church political setup of the united church, do not go back to that Plan of Union to attack it, they virtually have no right to voice their protest now against the basis of agreement that is reached in harmony with the principles expressed in the Plan of Union.

Such voices are, indeed, heard.

Though at the General Synod of 1934 there were no protests against, or expressions of disagreement with the proposed Plan of Union, there were some overtures that voiced certain doubts and fears as to what would become of the Reformed Church, and the principles of Reformed truth in the merger.

There were overtures "from Synod of the North West and Sheboygan Classis requesting the General Synod to attend to it that in the Evangelical and Reformed Church the Heidelberg Catechism be retained for the former Reformed congregations as heretofore." And there were "identical overtures from Minnesota, Ursinus and Eureka Classes, asking certain permissions with reference to ministers, missionaries, the Mission House and the Presbyterian form of government." All these overtures were referred to the "Committee on Constitution." (An Examination and Criticism, p. 94).

Several voices of protest were raised against the Constitution that was to be proposed as soon as it became known what the "Committee on Constitution" was planning to propose. Much of this disagreement concerns changes in the form of government, with the details of which we shall not weary the attention of our readers. More to the point is the protest raised against the proposed Constitution from a doctrinal viewpoint.

Dr. K. J. Stuebbe protested against the subordinate

place assigned to the Heidelberg Catechism in the proposed Constitution. Indignantly he writes: "Where have we come to? That confession which always was the pride of the Reformed Church, and for which many willingly gave their goods and their blood, must now be satisfied with a very modest mention in a footnote! No, friends, we do not want the Heidelberg Catechism mentioned only in a footnote, but we do want it placed into the Constitution itself as our standard, expressing the truths taught in the Scriptures. We are not satisfied with only a 'reflection' or something to show the 'historical background,' but we want a foundation for our faith to rest upon! At the time of our ordination we solemnly vowed that we would faithfully teach and defend the doctrines contained in the Heidelberg Catechism, and we expect to be faithful to that vow. We demand that our Confession be preserved for us. Why are we so insistent? Simply because we are convinced that this precious heritage has been taken from Scripture and that it leads into the truth as revealed in Scripture. Such a Confession must be known, understood, believed, cherished and protected in order to abide in the paths of righteousness, and to walk in the fear of the Lord. Our Catechism does not limit, constrain or narrow revealed truth, but it acts as a barrier for all members of the Church. A theologian pledged to such a standard is prevented from breaking down all the fences, and from running unconstrainedly into the fields of wanton philosophy. The teachers of religion, as well as all members of the church, are by such a standard compelled to confine their activity of thought, reason and research to the only source of true theology and knowledge—the Word of God—and thus they are prevented from confounding revealed truth with doctrines of the flesh." (An Examination and Criticism, pp. 30, 31).

Let it be clearly understood that we are not criticizing brother Stuebbe, whom we met at our conference, and there learned to know as a brother that is seriously concerned about the condition of his Church, for these words as such. On the contrary, we appreciate that he insists on a sound doctrinal basis for the Church in the world, and on maintaining our Reformed heritage.

But we do insist that there is no room for this criticism, unless the brother first repudiates the Plan of Union on the basis of which the merger was accomplished in 1934.

Yet, this is apparently not the intention.

In the same booklet from which we quoted the above, the Rev. E. Buehrer writes: "When the merger of the two Churches was effected, it was on the basis of the Plan of Union and in this plan the merged Church was guaranteed certain rights and privileges. It was expected that the new constitution would recognize these guarantees and would be framed accordingly, but to our sad disappointment, the Committee on Constitu-

tion did not abide by this Plan of Union. For this reason the clergy and the members of the Church are very much alarmed." p. 6.

It is evident, then, that the attack is not directed against the Plan of Union, with which, besides, all had already expressed agreement in 1934.

Also Dr. Stuebbe wants to keep his stand on the basis of this Plan of Union and from that standpoint direct his attack against the new Constitution.

But is this possible, as far as the doctrinal standard is concerned?

Does not also Dr. Stuebbe, as long as he does not repudiate the whole Plan of Union, agree that the Reformed Church in the United States and the Evangelical Synod of North America, as they existed before the merger, are in agreement "on the essential doctrines of the Christian faith and on the ideals of the Christian life as contained in the Old and New Testaments and as defined in their respective standards of doctrine"? Does not also he, on the basis of this Plan of Union "accept the historical confessions of the two Churches as the doctrinal basis of union"? And does this not imply that not only the Heidelberg Catechism, but also the Augsburg Confession, and Luther's Catechism, are accepted by him as the doctrinal basis of the merged Church? How, then, could it be expected on such a basis that the Heidelberg Catechism would occupy any other than a subordinate position as a basis of communion in the merged Church?

On p. 31 Dr. Stuebbe writes: "The passage which in fact overthrows all Reformed doctrine, and makes all of item 3 void, is the last sentence of the second paragraph. There we are told: 'In these statements of faith, ministers and members are allowed liberty of conscience whose final norm is the Word of God.' But was this not already the basis of the Evangelical Synod before the merger? In regard to those points of doctrine in which the Heidelberg Catechism, the Augsburg Confession, and Luther's Catechism do not agree, the Evangelical Synod adhered "strictly to the passages of Holy Writ bearing on the subject, and avails itself of the liberty of conscience prevailing in the Evangelical Church." (Evangelical Catechism, p. 69).

Now, the proposed Constitution, no doubt, opened this door of the liberty of conscience much wider.

But principally this makes no difference. As long as Dr. Stuebbe does not completely disavow the Plan of Union, he agrees that liberty of conscience may be allowed with respect to the points of difference between the Reformed faith and Lutheranism.

And this makes it impossible to protest and effectually take action against the merger as it was finally concluded.

Hence, the brethren that are not agreed with the union, and that want to maintain a definite, Reformed basis of fellowship, are obliged to admit that they

erred when they agreed to the Plan of Union, must radically break with its pernicious declarations, repudiate its stand, protest against it, even at this late date, and break away from the merger to organize again on a separate, Reformed basis.

—H. H.

A Letter to our Service-men

Dear Friends:—

I cannot refrain from addressing a few lines to you personally. I am well aware, of course, that the *Beacon Lights* reaches you all, and is largely devoted to your interests. It is doing a good work, and it is doing it well. Nor do I mean to encroach upon its field of activity, compete with its work, or try to improve upon it.

But I want you to feel that also the *Standard Bearer* has your interests at heart, and is constantly mindful of you. And I hope that the reading material it offers you may be of some benefit to you, to your instruction and comfort.

You are scattered all over the globe.

Many of you have been and still are in the thick of the present conflict. Others are still in the training camps of our country, always with the prospect before you, however, that you will be sent out.

Things still look dark. Your hearts, even as ours, must often be filled with anxiety about the immediate future.

While we have been in the war three years, in a sense, we have just begun. Those optimists who, deceived by the reports we get in the homeland, and which usually picture the situation in colors far too bright, feel that the end of the war and victory is just around the corner, are daily more and more disillusioned. The fighting grows more intense all the time. Fact is, that unless God puts an end to this terrible world-struggle in a way no one is able to foresee at present, the war may last for years to come.

Our hearts are heavy.

When we look at things, and at men, there is neither confidence nor hope.

But these are times in which we must turn our anxious eyes away from men and things, in which we should not speak of chariots and of horses, but mention the name of Jehovah our God, and lift up our hearts to Him, Who sitteth above the circle of the earth, and Who has exalted our Lord Jesus Christ at His right hand, the God of our salvation.

He reigns.

And He doeth all things well. He also controls all your way. Even in the midst of battle, He so absolutely controls all things that not a hair can fall from our head against His will. If we put our trust in Him, we have nothing to fear. For He loves us. And nothing can separate us from His love in Christ Jesus our Lord!

Let us, therefore, make our refuge in the shadow of His wings, until all these calamities be overpast!

There we are safe!

Yours in our Lord,

H. Hoeksema.

The Triple Knowledge

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART TWO

OF MAN'S REDEMPTION

Lord's Day XII

10.

Partakers of His Anointing.

To the exposition of the name Christ and the offices of the Saviour, the Catechism appends a discussion of the name Christian, and that, too, with personal application to the confessing believer who throughout the Heidelberg is the respondent to the questions. "But why are thou called a Christian? Because I am a member of Christ by faith, and thus am partaker of his anointing; that so I may confess his name, and present myself a living sacrifice of thankfulness to him: and also that with a free and good conscience I may fight against sin and Satan in this life: and afterwards reign with him eternally, over all creatures."

It must be evident from the outset that the question *Why are thou called a Christian?* cannot be taken in the same significance as the preceding questions concerning the names of Christ: "Why is the Son of God called Jesus, that is a Savior?" and "Why is he called Christ, that is anointed?" For the latter two questions are concerned with names that are directly from God, which cannot be said of the name *Christian* at all. The Son of God is called Jesus, not by man's invention, not even by His human parents, but in God's counsel, and by direct revelation. And He is called the Christ because He is the promised Messiah, the One that was

ordained from eternity, and anointed with the Holy Ghost to be the Servant of Jehovah over His whole house, and, therefore, again by divine appointment. But this is not the case with the name Christian. In Scripture believers are never addressed as Christians, even though once they are referred to by that name. Their common designations are "believers," "saints," "brethren," "elect of God," "the faithful," "servants" of God or of Christ, "beloved," "children of God." It is plain, then that the question *Why are thou called a Christian?* cannot be placed on a par with the questions that precede it about the names of the Saviour.

Scripture informs us that believers were called Christians first in Antioch. We read in Acts 11:26: "And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." It is evident, therefore, that the name did not originate with believers themselves. They did not of their own accord call themselves and one another Christians, as, for instance, the Society of Jesus call themselves Jesuits. On the contrary, the name was invented by the people in Antioch. They called the disciples Christians. It must also be evident that it was not the Jewish element of the population of Antioch that thought of applying this name to the followers of Jesus. They would rather designate them by the term of contempt *Nazarenes*, or the sect of the Nazarenes. It was the heathen element of the people there that invented the name. And in their parlance, the name denoted simply an adherent of Christ, Whom the apostles preached, and Whom the disciples followed and confessed as their Lord. In popular slang the name was intended to denote members of a certain party or sect. In this sense, it is, no doubt, also employed by king Agrippa, and that, perhaps, with a touch of sarcasm, in the well-known words: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Acts 26:28. There was, therefore, from the beginning a certain reproach attached to the name. And, perhaps, there is a reference to this reproach in the use of the name by the apostle in I Pet. 4:16: "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf." For to suffer as a Christian meant to "be reproached for the name of Christ." I Pet. 4:14.

Before long, however, the name was adopted and appropriated by believers themselves. If this had not been the case, the thirty-second question of the Catechism could never have been asked, or, at least, if it had been given a place in the Instructor, the answer would have been entirely different from the one here given. And for this adoption of a name, which had its origin in the heathen world, there must have been a good reason. Believers must have considered that it was in God's providence that they should be called

Christians by the world. And as they contemplated the meaning of the name, they also discovered that it was not at all improper as an appellative of the disciples of Christ, that, in fact, as a name by which they might be known in the midst of the world, and in distinction from unbelievers, it was very fitting. The name Nazarenes they could not adopt, not only because it was too expressive of the hatred and contempt on the part of their enemies against them and against their Lord, but also because it had no sense. As disciples of Christ, they could not call themselves after the name Jesus, for that name is altogether too unique and belongs exclusively to the Savior. He alone is Jehovah-salvation, and in the work which He accomplished under that name they could not possibly share in any sense. That the well-known Romish Society call themselves Jesuits is nothing less than presumption. But with the name Christ this was different. Christ meant Anointed, and by His grace they, too, that believed on His name, became anointed ones. It signified that He was God's Servant *par excellence*, and through His name they, too, were servants of the Lord. And so they soon adopted the name, that was at first imposed on them by popular slang, as their own. They called themselves Christian, their religion became known as the Christian religion, and their faith as the Christian faith.

And so there is a special meaning to the pointed, personal question of the Heidelberg in this connection.

Fact is, of course, that the reason why believers of today are called Christians is that even in the days of the apostles the heathen population of Antioch applied that appellative to them, and, soon after, they themselves adopted it. Hence, one is called a Christian because he is born in the Church visible in the world, or incorporated into this gathering of professing believers and their children. It follows that one need not necessarily *be* a Christian, that the meaning of the name Christian does not have to be applicable to one, in order to be *called* by that name. Fact is, that there are thousands upon thousands that are Christians only nominally, without having a personal part in the spiritual reality denoted by the name. In the light of all this, the question of the Catechism receives a new significance: why are *thou* called a Christian?

Are you called a Christian merely because you happen to belong to that group of people that years ago were called by that name, and ever since were known by it, in distinction from the heathen? Or does the name, in its true spiritual significance, apply to you personally? Do you know the meaning of that name, and knowing it, can you claim the right to bear it?

The heart of the answer to this question which our Instructor places on the lips of the professing believer is contained in the words: "Because I am a member of Christ by faith, and thus am partaker of his anointing."

All that follows in the answer is implied in this.

I am a Christian when I share in His anointing, and that, too, in utter dependence upon Him, by faith, and through His grace. Also this dependency is implied in the name. For I am not another Christ, but a Christian. He is the Head, I am member of His body, and as the member is nothing apart from the Head, or as the branch is nothing apart from the vine, so I am nothing apart from Christ. The anointing is always His, and I partake of it. To be a Christian, therefore, I must abide in Him. "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." John 15:4-7. And again: "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. . . . But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." I John 2:20, 27.

The spiritual reality, therefore, of our partaking of Christ's anointing is the fruit of Christ's imparting Himself to us through His Spirit, and of our partaking of Him, and appropriating Him by faith, of our drawing out of Him "even grace for grace." Christ, the Anointed of God, Who was obedient unto death, and merited for us an eternal righteousness, Who was raised on the third day in glory, Who ascended up on high, leading captivity captive, and is exalted at the right hand of the Father, received the promise of the Holy Spirit, and in that Spirit returned unto His own, that He might impart Himself to them, and fill us with His blessings. And thus we receive His anointing, through the means of faith, which He works in us, and whereby we are united with Him and appropriate Him.

But just what is the specific implication of this participation by faith in Christ's anointing?

We recall that Christ's anointing signifies that He was ordained from eternity by God the Father, and qualified by the Holy Ghost to be God's officebearer, the Servant of Jehovah, representing His cause in the world, that He might reveal unto us the full counsel of God concerning our salvation, fight the battle against sin and death, and having overcome all the powers of darkness, might occupy His place as the Firstborn of every creature in all the universe. That exalted position, according to which He has a name above all names, and is King over all, He now occupies. He is made Christ and Lord.

Of His anointing we partake.

This means, therefore, that through Him believers, too, are ordained and qualified by His Spirit to be officebearers, servants of the living God. It means that in Christ they have the privilege and the calling, the will and the power to be and to function in this world, and forever, as God's friend-servants. By nature, they have none of this. The *must* is, indeed, upon them, for God will not relinquish His demand upon man, that he love Him with all his heart, and mind, and soul, and strength. But by his wilful disobedience, man has lost the right and the privilege, as well as the will and power, and all the qualifications to be the servant of God. Christ, however, as the Servant of God *par excellence*, and that, too, as the Head of those whom the Father gave Him, by His perfect obedience even unto the death of the cross, blotted out all their sins, obtained for them perfect righteousness, and thus He merited for them the right to be received again in God's service. To partake of Christ's anointing, therefore, means that in Him we have once more the right to stand as servants in the house of our God. In Him is our ordination as God's officebearers, as representatives of His cause. But, in the second place, that we by faith partake of Christ's anointing also implies that in and through Him we are qualified to function as servants of the Most High. The *will* and the *power* to fulfill our calling as Jehovah's servants we also receive from Him, by His Spirit, and through the activity of saving faith. Christ not only took our place as the Servant of Jehovah, fulfilling all in our stead, but He also delivers us from the slavery of sin and the devil, and renews us unto willing servants of God.

And as the office of our Lord is threefold, that of prophet, priest, and king, so through our partaking of His anointing we also become servants of God in that threefold sense. Christ is our chief Prophet, and as such He is the fulness of all the knowledge and wisdom of God. At the head of His people He glorifies the Father, and declares His righteousness in the great congregation. But as such He also changes us into true prophets of God. For He revealed the Father unto us, He instructs us by His Spirit and Word, He delivers us from the darkness of our understanding and the perversion of our mind, and by His grace we are called out of darkness into the marvelous light of God, so that we have the true knowledge of God. Here this knowledge is still in part, for we see as in a glass darkly, but presently it will be perfected, and then appear on a plane of heavenly glory, unspeakably higher than that of the knowledge of God Adam possessed in the state of rectitude in the first paradise. For then we shall see face to face, and know even as we are known, and walk in the light of God's countenance forever.

Christ is our only High Priest. And as such He represented us in His humiliation, and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for our sins. As such He still represents us with the Father, and intercedes for us. But as our High Priest He also makes us partaker of His anointing, and forms His Church into a holy priesthood. He makes us priests of God. He removes the enmity against God that is the motivating power of our flesh, and instills into our hearts the love of God, dwelling in us by His Spirit, and cleansing us from the defilement of sin, so that we may become living sanctuaries of God, consecrated to Him in true holiness. Also this is as yet true only in principle. But in the perfection of God's tabernacle this shall be perfected on the plane of heavenly glory. In the New Jerusalem there is no special temple, for the simple reason that the entire glorified Church is become a perfect sanctuary of God.

And so He is our eternal King. And as such He fought and finished the battle for us in our behalf, against all the powers of darkness, the devil, sin, and death. He crushed the head of the serpent, and is seated at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. And He reigns over us, and leads us on the everlasting glory. But also as King He causes us to partake of His anointing, so that by His grace we also become kings with Him under God, and are formed into a *royal priesthood*. He delivers us from all unrighteousness and perversion of our will, according to which we desire to do the will of our father the devil, and instills into us a new righteousness, according to which it is our delight to do the will of God. He gives us the right to reign over all things, enables us to fight the battle of faith, and makes us partakers, even in the midst of battle, of His own victory. And especially with a view to our royal office as believers, it is evident that our partaking of Christ's anointing is still imperfect, and that we have but a small beginning of the new obedience, the firstfruits of the Spirit. For not only have we not as yet entered into the glory of our royal dominion with Christ, and not only are we engaged in a daily struggle against sin and Satan, but outwardly we suffer defeat, and in the world we have tribulation. Yet, we may be of good cheer, for we are more than victors. And when Christ shall be revealed, and we shall be manifested with Him in glory, it shall appear that we always had the victory, and we shall reign with and through Christ, as servant-kings of God, over all the works of His hands in the new creation.

This threefold aspect of our partaking of the anointing of Christ is plainly indicated in the answer of our Heidelberger to the question: "But why are thou called a Christian?" For it points to a threefold calling of believers in this world, which follows from their partaking of Christ's anointing.

First of all, their calling is to confess His name. This

is their calling and privilege in virtue of their prophetic office. They are made prophets, in order that they may confess the name of Christ as the revelation of the God of their salvation. They are to the praise of the glory of His grace in the beloved. They must show forth the praises and marvelous virtues of Him that called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. And they must do this in the midst of the world, antithetically, holding forth the word of life over against the lie of sin, and in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation.

Secondly, the Catechism describes the calling of believers as consisting in this, that they present themselves a living sacrifice of thankfulness to Him. This evidently refers to their priestly office. To consecrate themselves, with soul and body, with all their heart, and mind, and soul, and strength; with all things, and in every department of life, in home, and school, and shop, and office, to the living God, — such is their calling as priests of the Most High, and that, too, in opposition to a world that devotes itself to the service of the devil and unrighteousness.

And so, finally, the Catechism refers to the royal office of believers in the words: "and also that with a free and good conscience I may fight against sin and Satan in this life: and afterwards reign with him eternally over all creatures." O, indeed, in this battle, and in this warfare alone, one may fight with a "free and good conscience," for fighting they have the assurance that they represent the cause of the Son of God in the world, and that they are more than victors through Him that loved them. And although in this world this cause must often appear as suffering defeat, they have the blessed assurance that in the day of Christ their God will vindicate their cause, and cause them to enter into the glorious victory of their Lord!

H. H.

IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies Aid Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church mourns the loss of one of its faithful members

MRS. J. VANDER LAAN

The Society extends it's heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved family and relatives. May the Lord comfort them in the knowledge that He doeth all things well.

Mrs. H. Hoeksema, Pres.

Mrs. A. Van Tuinen, Sec'y.

Samson, the Nazarite Judge

The last of the three judges raised up after Jephthah had died. Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord and was delivered into the hands of the Philistines forty years. Judging from the silence of the narrative, the people repented not during all this time. It means that the deliverance that the Lord now prepared in the person of Samson was unasked and, judging from the reactions to this judge's deeds of valor in after years, also unwanted. But the perversity of Israel did not deter God. In Zorah, of the family of the Danites, dwelt Manoah and his wife who was barren, and bare not. It must be assumed that they were of the true Israel, of the seven thousand, all the knees of which had not bowed unto Baal, thus of that number, hidden in the bosom of the nation, who awaited, in those days of darkness and confusion, the Lord, His consolation in deliverance. For the angel of the Lord came to the woman and subsequently to her husband. He came and communicated to her this glad tidings, "Behold now thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive and bear a son; and no razor shall come upon his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines."

Let us consider the law of the Nazarite and in connection herewith bring out the significance of Samson, the Nazarite judge, for the history of the development of revelation. The name Nazarite is from the Hebrew root *nazar* meaning to separate. Accordingly, the Nazarite was one who vowed to separate himself unto the Lord, Num. 6:1. The law of the Nazarite in his separation was prohibitive of the following. He who had placed himself under the restrictions of the Nazarite vow, might drink no wine nor strong drink, no vinegar of wine, no vinegar of strong drink, nor any liquor of grapes. Even the eating of grapes, moist or dried, was forbidden him. All the days of his separation he might eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husks. Second, all the days of the vow of his separation there might no razor come upon his head: until the days of his vow be fulfilled, he must be holy, and had to let the locks of the hair of his head grow. Finally, "All the days that he separated himself unto the Lord he shall come at no dead body. He shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother, for his brother or for sister, when they die: because the consecration of God is upon his head." Let us consider these restrictions. We must, of course, allow the Scriptures to explain its own symbols; and it is with symbols that we here deal. Wine is a good creature of God and extolled as such in the Scriptures. "That he may bring forth food out of the earth; and wine that maketh glad the heart

of man . . ." (105:15). Being what it is, a stimulant, wine symbolizes the grace of Christ. But wine, as immoderately used, stupifies and benumbs the faculties. Even its more moderate use disposes the heart to carnal ease and pleasurable excitement. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Prov. 30:1). He that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich" (Prov. 21:17). Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contention? Who has babbling? Who has wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine" (Prov. 23:30). Herein, doubtless, was grounded the prohibition to drink wine. As separated from wine, the Nazir was mentally qualified for the spiritual employment to which he was obligated. The Nazir was forbidden to contact a dead body. The corpse is lifeless flesh in a state of decomposition. It is material corruption grounded in sin. The Nazir had to be free from every taint of it. The idea of the prohibition to allow no razor to come upon his head comes out in a similar restriction regarding the altar. "When thou makest an altar of stone," says Moses, "thou shalt not build it of hewn stone; for if thou lift up thy chisel (or iron) upon it, thou shalt defile it" (Ex. 20:25). Accordingly, Joshua built an altar of stone "over which no man had lifted up an iron" (Josh. 8:3). So, too, was the Nazir polluted if he allow a razor to come upon his head. This is plain from the statement, "until the days be fulfilled in which he separated himself unto the Lord, he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of his hair grow." Cutting the locks of hair, applying to his head a razor, the Nazir defiled himself and was no longer holy. The view that the reason for this prohibition was that iron (and iron tools) was the symbol of evil or moral corruption and therefore desecrated (symbolically) the things to which it was applied, is doubtless incorrect. The Nazir was not defiled if he contacted the razor, but only if the locks of the hair of his head were cut. So, too, the altar, what desecrated it was the hewing of its stones. The Nazir was a walking altar of God. This being true, he might lift no tool upon him. The reason for this is perhaps suggested by the stone, cut out of the mountains without hands, of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The stone is plainly Christ. The truth symbolized is that He is of our race not however by the will of man but solely by the wonder-working power of God. So, too, the Nazir, who typified Christ. No hand of man worked on him with a tool giving shape to the locks of his hair.

The Nazarite vow was a symbolical-typical institution as was the sacrifice. In his separation from wine and all strong drink, thus in his mental fitness for the service of God; secondly, in his bodily cleanliness as regards the contagion of the corpse; and, finally, in the untrimmed or uncut locks of his hair, he was a type of

Christ and thus a symbol of true and perfect sainthood, of the spiritual man created in Christ Jesus. The true Nazir was Christ. He possessed the true goodness symbolized by the Nazarite law. Hence, the restrictions imposed upon the Nazir of the Old Dispensation did not apply to Him. For He was the reality signified. Quick was he of understanding in the fear of the Lord for He was the pure of heart. Righteousness was the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins. Doing the will of God was His meat and drink. For His people sanctified Himself. And He was God's own gift, the stone cut out of the rock without hands and as such the spotless Lamb of God that took away the sin of the world. Thus the Nazir symbolized also the true child of God, the spiritual man, his creation by the power of God, his spiritual aptitude and power of discernment and of minding the things which are of the Spirit of God, the true goodness of his heart, his faith and love under the impulse of which he mortifies his members which are upon the earth, is separated from sin and is consecrated unto God in spirit and in truth. The Nazirs of the Old Dispensation were themselves believers, doubtless without exception. Thus they symbolized their own faith and love and the true consecration to God. Their separation was not from men but only from the things specified in the law of the Nazarite. They dwelt among their brethren to whom they were living and walking signs of true godliness. Samuel dwelt among his people and likewise Samson. Singlehanded he warred their warfare. The law of the Nazarite did not require of them that they live in monastic seclusion. Their calling was to symbolize and exemplify true faith before the eyes of their brethren. Hence, they had to be seen and heard. The visible badge of their calling was the uncut locks of their hair, their sobriety, and consecration to the service of God. The law of the Nazarites indicates only the negative element in their calling, to-wit, the separation from the things specified. There was also a positive element. In what outward, visible, doing it consisted, is not stated. It could not consist in the performance of the duties that belonged to the priestly office, unless the Nazir were a priest. Yet Samuel functioned also as priest, though he was no Levite. If the Nazir were a judge, the positive element in his calling would consist in the performance of the duties that belonged to the office of judgeship. Samson made war on the Philistines.

The Nazir was not an ascetic. His separation from wine, certainly, was not grounded in the pagan notion that matter, being the principle of evil in the world, must be abandoned. Nor can it be that the law forbade the Nazarite to drink wine, because, being a sinful and weak man, he could only use this gift of God to his own hurt. The fallacy of this view comes out in the light that the law itself sheds upon the restriction

respecting the use of the razor. As was shown, the prohibition, "there shall come no razor upon his head," means, "He, the Nazir, shall not desecrate himself through cutting the locks of his hair. The law did not dispossess him of the razor, because, being a sinful man, he might use it to his hurt, but simply forbade him to apply it to his head. He might still use it for other purposes. The fallacy of the view under consideration comes out also in the restriction respecting the corpse. Certainly the corpse could not injure the man; but it did defile him, if he touched it,—defile not his soul but his body. The contact thus rendered the Nazir symbolically unclean. Thus the sole purpose of these restrictions was to bring into being a symbol and type—a type of Christ and a symbol of true priesthood in Christ.

The unshorn hair of the Nazarite has been variously explained. One view, taking I Cor. 11 as its lead, sees in this element in the vow a symbol of the subjection of the Nazir to the authority of God. The law does not indicate that the unshorn hair in men had this meaning nor were the Israelites wont to associate long hair in men with subjection to authority. There is perhaps more in the view that explained the long hair as being the symbol of strength and vitality. Yet, as the law plainly suggests, it was the objective appearance of the Nazir who was holy, and therefore had not been touched by the knife.

The law of the Nazarite reposes on the great principles of truth contained in Israel's calling. Said God to Israel, "ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Ex. 19:6). Israel was a Nazir, a people that God had formed Him for a possession out of all the nation and consecrated to himself. Thus verse 5 is preceded by the words, "Ye shall be a possession unto me out of all nations for all the earth is mine." The law revealed that Israel's blessed prerogative was grounded in the blood of the atonement by its giving expression to the worship through which Israel could exhibit itself as holy and consecrated. Then there was also the Nazir within the nation, the priesthood of Aaron through whom the people drew nigh unto God in sacrifice and prayer. This priesthood with respect to its service also had a law. It differed from the law of the Nazarite only in one respect; it imposed but two restrictions. The command to Aaron was, that the priests, when they went into the tabernacle, were not to drink wine nor strong drink. They were also prohibited to touch a corpse. The priest was the official Nazir in Israel. He was made by the law. His consecration was inseparable from his office of priesthood. But the devout in Israel would at times feel the need for some special means for giving expression to their faith, gratitude and religious ardor. Provision was made for such. And this provision was the Nazarite vow with its restrictions. Any Israelite, no matter what

his tribe, might take this vow, which he did when in a condition of special spiritual exaltation. He was the common Nazir in Israel. He was not made by the law, as were the official Nazirs in Israel but was raised up by God's Spirit.

We now come to the Nazariteship of Samson. This Nazariteship was unique and had never repeated itself. It was unique first in this respect that the birth of Samson was announced by the Angel of the Lord appearing into the mother. Secondly, mention is made of the fact that she was "barren and bear not." Thus his conception and birth partake of the character of a miracle. Born was he by the wonder working power of God. Then, during the time of her pregnancy, the mother had to observe the Nazarite rules in her own person. The child in her womb could thus be born symbolically holy. His Nazariteship began from his mother's womb. When come to years, he wrought in a time that was characterized by exceptional spiritual barrenness. Judah and Dan were oppressed, but they repented not. They turned not their hearts to the Lord. They besought Him not to send salvation. Samson was a deliverer unasked for. He came unto his people and they received him not. They binded him and delivered him into the hands of the Philistines to keep the peace with them. Being endowed with prodigious natural strength, this hero fought God's warfare singlehanded. Marvelous were his feats of strength. In all this he stands before us as a remarkable pre-indication of Christ.

What was the secret of his power? Not his long hair as such but his Nazarite holiness and thus his keeping faith with the Lord through his not defiling himself or allowing himself to be defiled through the shearing of his locks. This is plain from his own words to the woman that betrayed him. Telling her all his heart, he said to her, "There hath not come a razor upon my head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak and be like other men." "If I be shaven . . .," that is, 'if I be defiled, then I shall become weak.' God was his strength and salvation. But God worked through him only as long as he through faith steadfastly walked in the way of the precepts of his vow. Thus the victory that overcame the world with which he had to do was the obedience of his faith, his not allowing himself to be destroyed as a walking altar of God, as a sign of the heavenly things of God's kingdom. And that is what he did not do. Through yielding to the wiles of the woman, by allowing himself to be ensnared by his own sinful flesh, he destroyed himself as a sign of the things heavenly. In shaving off the locks of his hair, the woman slew in the person of her victim the very word of God. And his strength departed from him; for it could be his only as a reward of his faith and as the

token of his consecration.

Samson in his career reflects the people to which he belonged. Fraternizing with the enemies of Jehovah,—this was the sin of Israel, too, the Nazir of God among the nations. Then Israel was defiled and Jehovah his strength departed from him, and he became an easy prey for the adversary. When keeping God's covenant, Israel, as Samson, was the mighty hero and the terror of the heathen, for then God was for him. The significance of Samson for the Israel of his day is apparent. His career exhibits so strikingly the connection between holiness expressing itself in covenant fidelity and power to war God's warfare. For God is the strength of His people in the way of their obedience to Him, an obedience that is also His. Samson, despite his folly was a true believer. In penitance and prayer he lived out his life in the enemy prison, where he toiled, and died with his faith the great victor.

But herewith has not been brought out fully the significance of Samson. There is still another element of truth that enters in here. At this juncture in sacred history all things combined to set forth the basic truth and fact that salvation is of God alone and that what is impossible with man is possible with God. At this juncture all things again unite to proclaim this truth and fact—the character of the times, the spiritual barrenness of Israel, the unfruitfulness of the woman from whom Samson was born, his Nazariteship, his great strength as a warrior of God, his doing battle with the adversary as a lone individual, and the miraculous achievements of his faith. The truth of this statement will become increasingly clear as we proceed with the treatment of our narrative. Let us then return to it.

Having communicated his message to the woman, the angel of the Lord departed. The woman hastened to tell her husband. A man of God had come to her, she said, and his countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible: but she had asked him not whence he was, neither had he told her his name. But he had told her that she should conceive, and bare a son; further, that she should drink no wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean thing, in that the child was to be a Nazarite. Visibly the woman had been deeply effected. A mingled feeling of heavenly elation and dread had taken possession of her soul—elation because of the prospect of the removal of her reproach—she who was barren and bore not, would conceive and bear a son not only but a child who was to be a Nazarite unto the Lord and who would begin to deliver His people—dread because her womanly intuition had told her that the messenger was no ordinary prophet of God of whom there doubtless were several in the land even in those spiritually barren times—men of God who untiringly admonished the people—thus dread because she had perceived that she,

a sinful woman, had been standing in the presence of heavenly royalty. Was not his countenance like the countenance of an angel of God? That she told her husband was natural because her secret was too good and great to be kept—thus natural because she needed someone in whom to confide. And to whom should she turn, if not to her own husband? Besides, the message concerned him as well, as he was to be the father of the child. A good woman was this unnamed wife of Manoah, a true Israelitess, whose sorrow was her own unfruitfulness and the barrenness and bondage of her people and who therefore was most susceptible to the message that had been brought her by the angel. She had refrained from asking him whence he came, doubtless because she felt too certain that his abode was not among men. And his failure to divulge his name—which was “wonderful”—only strengthened her in this conviction. For she made mention of it to her husband spontaneously, without his first having touched on this point. It seems to indicate that in her mind the reticence of the messenger regarding his name was to be expected, and that also her own reserve in not inquiring about his place of residence among her people was proper.

We learn from the reactions of Manoah to what his wife told him that he, too, was of those in Israel who truly feared God. Had he been an unbeliever, he would have made light of her words; he would have given her to understand that, in his candid opinion, she had been deceived by a hoax, or that the man she had seen and the revelation she claimed to have received, were deceptive imaginings affected by her own wandering mind. The idea that she, an unfruitful woman, should bare a child, would have excited his mirth. He would have wanted to know why the messenger of such good news had gone his way without first contacting him. But Manoah did not mock. He was deeply interested and concerned, believing and hopeful. For he turned to the Lord in prayer and said, “O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born.” Thus he had accepted the report of his wife as true. The child *shall* be born. His wife *shall* bear. He *shall* be a Nazarite unto the Lord, as she had spoken. All will come to pass. His sole concern was, how the child was to be treated. But this the messenger already had specified, indirectly but on this account none the less distinctly, in his communication to the woman. He was to be a Nazarite unto the Lord, the messenger had said. Hence, the restrictions imposed upon her were also valid for the child. Thus, from the aspect of the completeness of the communication, the prayer that the Lord further instruct them was unnecessary. This also comes out in the reply of the messenger, who once again appeared in response to the prayer. Said he to Manoah, “Of all

that I said unto the woman, let her beware,” and then the messenger went on simply to repeat the instruction already given to her. It indicates that the prayer of Manoah had proceeded not from the need of more instruction as to how the child was to be treated but from the need of the confirmation of his faith through the re appearance of the messenger. Manoah believed and wanted to believe. He wanted his soul cleansed from every vestige of doubt. But he failed to make mention of his doubt which perhaps he would not even admit to himself. If only the messenger would also appear to him. He had need of asking the man to reveal his name. Yet all he actually prayed for is instruction. The prayer was therefore really superfluous. Yet it was answered. The man of God—Manoah knew not that the man who had appeared unto the woman was the angel of the Lord—came again and worked a sign that was plainly indicative of his true identity. He did so because the Lord always stands ready to bring to full fruition the faith of such who by His mercy *want* to believe.

G. M. O.

The Downfall of Heathenism in the Roman Empire

As we saw, in the first three centuries of our Christian era, the Christians were intermittently persecuted. But in 323 Constantine the great, the first Christian occupant of the throne of the ceasars, became the sole ruler of the Roman world, and the church was everywhere free from its enemies. The church again had survived another baptism of fire. Thus was confirmed anew the speech that rose from the burning bush in whose flame of fire the angel of the Lord appeared to Moses—this speech, namely, that the church is indestructible, because of the indwelling Christ, increasing in her by His Spirit a faith that cannot cease. Constantine, so we saw further, favored the church in many ways. The result was that the church grew by leaps and bounds and became fabulously rich. A great many civilized pagans of the Graeca-Roman world adopted the religion of their sovereign, Constantine, and of the court. But many others of the heathen cultured classes held themselves aloof and clave to their gods. When Constantine died his vast empire was apportioned among his three sons, Constantine II, Constantians, and Constantius. Three years later, the brothers engaged in a bloody war for supremacy and the result was that Constantius became the sole ruler and reigned until his death (361).

Like his father, Constantius befriended the church and was even fanatically intollerant of pagan religion and violently suppressed it. As a result of this policy of suppression, the heathen, in great numbers, came over to Christianity. Yet pagan religion continued to flourish in the Roman empire. It retained an important influence through literature and the schools of pagan philosophy; and under the new emperor—Julian, surnamed the apostate—it once more strove, under his patronage, to rehabilitate itself in the Roman empire. Julian was a nephew of Constantine the great, at whose court he had received a Christian training under the supervision of an Arian bishop and was baptized. He prayed, fasted, and read the Scriptures and went to church like a good Christian, but in his heart he hated everything that his tutors presented, and was filled with love for the culture of paganism. In 361 he was raised to the dignity of augustus in the east by his soldiers; and at the death of Constantius, in this same year, he became sole ruler in the empire. Having already thrown off his mask, he now began to fulfill what he considered to be the great mission of his life, namely, the restoration of the worship of the pagan gods and the reduction of the religion of Christ to a sect. But he had learned that this could not be accomplished by persecution. Besides, the Christians by this time had become numerous and influential. Laying violent hands on them, might result in civil war. Julian therefore adopted other methods. He reinstated the worship of the gods and contributed to its support from the treasury of the state. He tried, further, to renovate paganism by blending it with Christian morals. He held out to every Christian, who would apostatize, a splendid reward. He openly affected compassion for the poor, blind Galileans—followers of Christ—who could be so foolish as to forsake the worship of the immortal gods for the worship of a dead Jew, meaning Christ. He set himself up as highpriest of the pagan religion. In his zeal, he would offer a hundred bulls in a single day. But his efforts were fruitless. They met with no response even among his own party. Only a small number of Christians apostatized.

Julian's reign lasted but three years. He has set out to conquer Persia. In an unimportant nightly skirmish in June, 363, he received from a hostile arrow, a mortal wound and died soon after. Had he returned from war a victor, he, in all likelihood, would have resorted to persecution; for he had become increasingly bitter toward the Christians. In some parts of the empire, he already had begun to persecute them. When Julian died, paganism, as a legalized religion and worship lost its influence. The Heathen philosophers and soothsayers, who had basked in Julian's favor, again went into obscurity.

After Julian, with whose death the Constantine family became extinct, the succession of Christian

emperors continued unbroken. The next emperor was Jovian, who had been a general in Julian's army. Jovian restored to the church all her privileges of which she had been deprived by Julian. Valentinian I and his brother Valens, who reigned in the east, favored the Christian church and opposed pagan worship. Both prohibited sacrifices to heathen gods at Rome and at Constantinople. The heathen soothsayers were burned alive or beaten to death. It was during the reign of these two emperors that heathenism for the first time was called paganism. During the reign of Theodocius the great 600 patrician families of Rome went over to Christianity. Paganism was weakening fast. In 389 it could no longer maintain its seven vestals at Rome. Theodocius was an adherent of the Nicene Orthodoxy. He procured for it the victory at the second general council in Constantinople. Besides, he, too, was most intollerant of paganism. He forbade its sacrificial rites and its worship in heathen temples. These temples he confiscated and withdrew the public contributions to the support of idolatry. This policy was continued by his successors. The final downfall of heathenism in the East took place in the year 450. Theodocius II ordered the heathen temples destroyed or turned into Christian churches. Justinian I prohibited heathenism as a form of worship in the empire on pain of death. He also closed the last intellectual seminary of heathenism, the philosophical school at Athens which had stood for 900 years. In the West, heathenism continued until 550 as a private religious conviction among the cultured and aristocratic families at Rome, and in some remote parts of the empire in the form of public worship. Finally, it was literally buried under the ruins of the Western empire, which sank under the storm of great migrations of the barbarian tribes from the north of Europe and from Asia.

First to overrun the Western empire were the Germanic tribes. They came from a region that stretched from the Rhine to the upper Danube and from Scandinavia. These regions were occupied by the Germanic or Teuton tribes. The descendents of these early Teutons are the Germans, the Dutch, the English, the Danes, the Swedes, the Norwegians, and a great number of Spanish and Italians. The early Teutonic race was divided into many independent tribes, among whom were the Goths, who occupied the valley of the lower Danube and the northern shore of the Black Sea. The Goths divided into two branches known as the West Goths and East Goths. In the year 410, a great leader arose among the West Goths, whose name was Aleric. Under his leadership the tribes left their eastern abode and swarmed into Italy, marched upon Rome and took the city after vainly attempting to come to terms with the Roman emperor Honorius. Never before had the proud city yielded to a foreign invader except once. Aleric was no barbarian but an Arian Christian, who

had spent many years in the Roman empire. His followers were not all west-Goths. Many of them were discontented Romans. Having made himself master of Rome, he spared the Christian churches but plundered the palaces of the ceasars and of the rich. In 455 the Vandals, who had set up the kingdom of the Vandals in North Africa after having been expelled by the west-Goths from Spain, brought far greater disaster to Rome than Aleric had done in 410. They sacked the city and departed with their ships laden with its treasures. Rome had thus reached a pitiable condition. Twice within a century it had been captured and plundered by barbarian invaders. Then, in 476, Odoacer, a leader of a Teutonic tribe, deposed the last emperor of the Roman empire in the west, Romulus Augustulus, a mere child in the emperial throne. This date—476—is taken as the date of the fall of Rome and the termination of the Roman empire in the west. With Rome fell also the civilized paganism in the west.

G. M. O.

The Idea of Cooperation as an Element of Divine Providence

Divine Providence

When speaking of "divine providence", we do so in the accepted sense of the term. The word itself, as far as its literal meaning is concerned, is not applicable to God. "Pro-video" the Latin verb from which the word is derived, means "to see in advance". It must be evident that we cannot say of God that He sees things in advance, since to do so would immediately suggest a dualism and would mean that there were a power that worked of itself, apart from God, and over against which God, seeing in advance what would be done by this power, would be forced to take certain precautions whereby He would be able to meet any emergency that would arise. It is in this sense that man *provides*, according to his limited capacity. The mother, because she sees in advance that the winter is coming, begins long before winter comes to lay in store for her family the food and clothing which will be necessary to meet the needs. However, we cannot in this sense speak of divine providence. God does not simply see in advance the things that will be; God causes all things to be as He has, from before the beginning of the world, determined them in His counsel. And this is true of all things without exception.

The Heidelberg Catechism explains the providence of God as, "The almighty and everywhere present power of God; whereby, as it were by his hand, he upholds

and governs heaven, earth, and all creatures; so that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, yea, and all things come, not by chance, but by his fatherly hand." It is evident that the Catechism does not conceive of God's providence as a "seeing in advance" but as the first cause of all things. It is the omni-present power of God whereby He causes all things to be as they are. All things are so absolutely dependent upon God that they cannot exist or come to pass without His will and power. By divine providence therefore, we understand that power of God whereby He upholds all creatures and so governs them that they are made to serve the purpose which God has in mind with a view to them, with the result that God performs all his counsel to the end that He shall be eternally glorified.

Cooperation

Divine providence is usually distinguished as, preservation, cooperation and government.

By *preservation* we understand the imminent power of God whereby He upholds all things and they continue to exist. By *cooperation* we understand the operation of God's power whereby He accomplishes His purpose through the acts of His moral creatures. And by *government* we mean the power of God whereby He controls and directs all things to His own determinate end.

Now, it must be evident that, as elements in the providence of God, cooperation and government are not coordinate. Although we may distinguish between the two, actually the former is subordinate to the latter. Cooperation is a part of government. God's providence goes over all things, so that He not merely upholds all that which He has created, gives life and being to all His creatures, but also sovereignly rules over all of them, so that they are made to serve in connection with all other things for the realization of His purpose as He has ordained. And since nothing is to be excluded from this control and dominion of God which we call government, it must be evident that God does not merely control the existence and movement of His irrational creatures but His rational creatures as well. God guides the sun in his circuit and makes night and day; He gathers the clouds together and brings the storm, the rain and snow; He makes the seed to sprout and to produce abundantly or He dries it up so that it does not produce and there is want and famine; He guides the bird in his flight through the air, the fish in the sea and the wild beasts in the forests; yes, God does all these things. But God does also more. He controls and guides all the acts of His rational creatures also. That means that all man's thinking and willing as well as all his desires and the imagination of his heart are under the control of the

Almighty God and He so directs them that they are made to serve the end which God has determined.

According To Scripture

There can be no doubt but what Scripture establishes this fact of cooperation in divine providence and also shows us the extent of its operation. It is highly essential that we let Scripture speak here, especially because of the objections which are raised against this doctrine and the many questions which arise with a view to its operation. Even so, it will not be possible, even in the light of Scripture, to answer every question which may arise. We may however expect to find some definitely established truths which may also serve to guide us in our thinking and discussion of this subject.

Now when we consult Scripture we find that this cooperation of God operates in both a mediate and immediate way. When we speak of a mediate cooperation we mean that God accomplishes His purpose through the acts of His moral creatures in such a way that, whereas they propose something entirely different and are motivated by some sinful desire, the result is that in the execution of their sinful desire, the purpose which God has in mind is accomplished. That this is the case is evident from the fact that, although Joseph's brothers were motivated simply by the sinful desire to get rid of him and acted in accordance with that desire when they sold him as a slave into Egypt, God nevertheless had a very definite reason for wanting Joseph in Egypt and accomplished His purpose through the sinful act of Joseph's brothers. Therefore Joseph also tells them, "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." Gen. 50:20. The same thing is true when God sends the king of Assyria to destroy Jerusalem. Although he is actually nothing more than the means through which God executes His wrath, the axe in the hand of God, he himself does not intend to be, nor does he think that he is, the avenging agent of God. The Lord says of him in Isa. 10:7, "Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few". And when he boasts in his own strength and relates his mighty deeds, God says, "Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it?" etc., Isa. 10:15. The same thing holds true with a view to the crucifixion of Christ. The Apostle Peter testifies in Acts 2:23, "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." And when Peter and John are released by the Jews, the Church testifies, "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and

the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." Acts 4:27, 28.

However, cooperation goes even farther. Not only is there a mediate cooperation whereby God accomplishes His purpose in an indirect way, but there is also an immediate cooperation whereby God directly controls the thoughts of man's heart and works in him to the end that God's purpose is realized. This is evident, for example, from the history of the sons of Eli, of whom it is said in I Sam. 2:17, "notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the Lord would slay them." Here it is evident that God so controlled them in their sinful way that they refused to heed the warning of their father in order that they might perish as God had proposed. Proverbs 21:1 tells us that, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will." And this is evident, in the first place, in the case of Pharaoh, of whom we read that God hardened his heart, as the Lord had predicted in advance to Moses. Ex. 4:21. This is again plain when we read in II Sam. 24:1, "And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah." And finally, what is true of all the sinful acts of men is also true with a view to their good works; they also are performed through the cooperation of divine providence. Thus we read in Phil. 2:12, '3, "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure".

Conclusions

There is indeed an operation of God's power in His moral creatures whereby He so controls and directs their thoughts, desires and purposes, that His counsel is realized and His purpose is accomplished through them.

In this cooperation, God is Sovereign and man is dependent. This follows from both preservation and government as elements of divine providence. Man is a creature and therefore is and always remains wholly dependent on God for all things. And God is always the Sovereign and Almighty God, "whose counsel shall stand, Who does all His good-pleasure." See Isa. 46:10. Hence, this cooperation cannot be explained upon the basis of a relation of equality between the human and divine, so that man of himself determines his own acts and God accommodates Himself in such a way that He can cooperate for the purpose of accomplishing his end. Nor can we explain this cooperation, as a matter of permission, as though God would permit man to do certain things. In either case, man would be acting independently of God. From the Scriptures quoted above, it is evident that God exerts a positive control of

man's mind and will according to which man acts either for good or bad.

Finally, this cooperation of God is of such a nature that it does not destroy man's moral nature. Man remains the conscious, willing author of all his own acts and is therefore held responsible to God. And therefore, even though God is certainly the first cause of all that man does, He never becomes the Author of man's moral acts. Man is a person and therefore the subject of his own acts and responsible for them. He wills and proposes and works and he does so freely as far as his own mind is concerned. However, in that all he is dependent on God. And therefore, although he acts freely as far as his consciousness is concerned and does not feel himself compelled of God either one way or the other, the fact is that God so controls and directs him that His end is accomplished through man's moral acts.

—H. D. W.

Liberty in Relation to Law

It is especially this subject that is the concern of every Christian who has first awakened to the glorious liberty that we have in Christ Jesus and who at the same time reads the perfect law of God. And it is this subject that was the main reason for establishing first of all, in a former article, the meaning of the term "law" as the apostle Paul used it in his epistle to the Galatians. In that article I sought to explain that in that epistle Paul did not use the term "law" in any instance with a reference to the ceremonial law only. Rather was his reference to the entire law of God. I made two main distinctions, however, in the reference of Paul to the law. Essentially though they are the same, they are nevertheless to be clearly discerned in the epistle. The first use was a reference to the concept law as such. The second was the use of the term with the definite article "the" and referring to the revelation of that same law of God upon Mount Sinai. Instead of treating this subject from the general aspect of the teaching of the entire Bible, let us again limit ourselves to a consideration of the explanation of Paul in his epistle to the Galatians. Our task would, of course, be much easier if we had explained that the apostle Paul referred in the main to the ceremonial law. Our simple conclusion would have been that the apostle teaches that since the fullness of time, the coming of Christ, we are no longer bound by the ceremonial ordinances of the old dispensation; we are free from them though not from the moral law of the ten commandments. Since it is my conception that the

reference is not to a particular part of the Mosaic legislation but to the law of Moses, and therefore of God, in its entirety, my burden of proof is more difficult. I must make clear our liberty as Christians to the entire law of God.

As to the question what is our relation to the law there are different answers. At one extreme is the position of the Antinomian who maintains that we are free from the law in the sense that it is useless for us; we have the liberty even to transgress it. Very evidently this position is not the position of the Bible and of Paul to Galatians. It is not worthy of our further consideration. On the other hand there is the extreme position of those who are similar to the Judaizers and who teach the law as a code of ethics which can be fulfilled by us in this life. Perfectionism plainly argues from this position. It is also the position of many who though they deny perfectionism, nevertheless teach salvation by works of the law. It is the error of Roman Catholicism and all Protestantism which has left the original position of the Reformers. This position is clearly condemned by the apostle Paul who reaches the point where he wishes that they were cut off from the Church of Christ who teach such heresy; who in his epistle to the Philippians speaks of such teachers as "dogs" and those of "the concision".

This teaching of the Judaizers must not be dismissed with a mere statement that it is not the position of the Bible. It is too powerful in its temptation and attraction to the natural man to be so quickly dismissed. The apostle discerned the attraction of this position and the grave danger for the Gentile churches and the truth of the Gospel that he devoted this entire epistle to explain and expound our Christian liberty. We must therefore be positive and carefully interpret the position of Paul in Galatians. So too, overagainst the Roman Catholic, and all those who teach salvation by works, we must understand the position of the Reformers.

Interesting it is to read the views of the reformers, Calvin and Luther, on this subject. Before I summarize the teaching of the apostle Paul as it is in Galatians allow me to quote from these two men to show their conception.

First of all the position of Martin Luther. I wish to quote from Luther's commentary on the Galatians as it is found in the abridged translation by Theodore Graebner, page 84. It is Luther's explanation of verse 19 of chapter two.

"Paul does not refer to the Ceremonial Law, but to the whole law. We are not to think that the Law is wiped out. It stays. It continues to operate in the wicked. But a Christian is dead to the Law. For example, Christ by His resurrection became free from the grave, and yet the grave remains. Peter was delivered from prison, yet the prison remains. The Law

is abolished as far as I am concerned, when it has driven me into the arms of Christ. Yet the law continues to exist and to function. But it no longer exists for me.

"I have nothing to do with the Law", cries Paul. He could not have uttered anything more devastating to the prestige of the Law. He declares that he does not care for the Law, that he does not intend ever to be justified by the Law.

"To be dead to the Law means to be free of the Law. What right, then, has the Law to accuse me, or to hold anything against me? When you see a person squirming in the clutches of the Law, say to him: "Brother, get things straight. You let the Law talk to your conscience. Make it talk to your flesh. Wake up, and believe in Jesus Christ, the Conqueror of the Law and sin. Faith in Christ will lift you high above the Law into the heaven of grace. Though Law and sin remain, they no longer concern you, because you are dead to the Law and dead to sin." "

Calvin's idea may be obtained somewhat from his Institutes, Vol. II, chapter IX, on the subject of Christian Liberty. Calvin writes: "Christian liberty, according to my judgment, consists of three parts. The first is, that the consciences of believers, when seeking an assurance of their justification before God, should raise themselves above the law, and forget all the righteousness of the law." (page 77) "The second part of Christian liberty, which is dependent on the first, is, that their consciences do not observe the law, as being under any legal obligation; but that, being liberated from the yoke of the law, they yield a voluntary obedience to the will of God." (page 79) "The third part of Christian liberty teaches us, that we are bound by no obligation before God respecting external things, which in themselves are indifferent; but that we may indifferently sometimes use, and at other times omit them." (page 81) Concerning his elucidation of the first part Calvin writes the following: "Nor will this authorize any one to conclude, that the law is of no use to believers, whom it still continues to instruct and exhort, and stimulate to duty, although it has no place in their consciences before the tribunal of God." (page 77) Furthermore Calvin writes about this: "On this point turns almost the whole argument of the Epistle to the Galatians. For that they are erroneous expositors, who maintain, that Paul there contends only for liberty from ceremonies, may be proved from the topics of his reasoning. Such as these: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." (Gal. 3:13) Again: "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. Every man that is circumcised is a debtor to do the whole law.

Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." (Gal. v 1-6) These passages certainly comprehend something more exalted than a freedom from ceremonies. I confess, indeed, that Paul is there treating of ceremonies, because he is contending with the false apostles, who attempted to introduce again into the Christian Church the ancient shadows of the law, which had been abolished by the advent of Christ. But for the decision of this question it was necessary to discuss some higher topics, in which the whole controversy lay." (page 78).

There is something fundamentally alike in the views of these two Reformers in their conception of the Christian's relation to the law. Both Calvin and Luther condemned Roman Catholicism on the one hand and Anabaptism and Pieism on the other. However, as Bavinck points out there is a difference between these two points of view, the Lutheran and the Calvinistic. Whether the criticism of Luther made by Bavinck is entirely correct, is a matter which I doubt, but which I cannot at this time determine because I have not read enough of their works. Bavinck says in Vol. II, p. 525 that Luther looked upon freedom from the law as freedom from the curse of the law, and that he only had a place for the law in the abnormal life of sin. Whereas Calvin explained the law also as for faith, a norm for the moral life, derived from the will of God and serving as an incentive to good works.

Having indicated the Reformed conception of this relation of the Christian to the law, I would like to direct your attention now to the teaching of the apostle Paul in his epistle to the Galatians.

To see the Christian's liberty in relation to the law let us ask ourselves what the apostle tells us is the purpose of the revelation of the law of God at Mount Sinai. Immediately we can state definitely that the law was not given to show in itself the way of life for the Israelite. The law as such was weak. It could not show the way to salvation for them who could not keep it. It only showed them their sins. Galatians 3:11 "For that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, the just shall live by faith." Galatians 3:18 tells us that it was added to bring out transgressions. We read: "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made." It is the same as the teaching of Paul in Romans 3:20 "for by the law is the knowledge of sin." The way of life was shown before the revelation of the law of God at Mount Sinai. That was promised to Abraham four hundred and thirty years before the giving of the law. And the law could not change that promise of God. Life was to be given by the covenant Jehovah through His promise and that covenant could never be altered, not even by the unchangeable law of

God at Mt. Sinai.

Though the promise was given first and the revelation of the law in the form of the entire Mosaic legislation was given afterwards, and although the law in itself as it comes to sinful man only serves to make him more miserable, the ultimate purpose of God in the giving of the promise and in the giving of the law was always the same, the salvation of His covenant people. Jehovah did not give the law to terrify His people from Mount Sinai in such a way so as to cause them to lose faith in Him and His eternal promises. Though Jehovah gave the law to bring out the sins of the people it was to serve antithetically to bring them to Christ. Paul says of the law, "it was a schoolmaster to bring us (drive us) unto Christ." Gal. 3:24. It was to show them salvation in the only way, that is by faith. Abraham knew and it was made plain to him, Israel was shown through the law, that the just shall live by faith and not by the works of the law. "Before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed," says Paul in Galatians 3:23. That means, before the faith in the revelation of the Christ, which was reserved for the Church of the New Testament, God kept his people, saved them through the law. Yet do not mistake this. They too were saved by faith. They too were children of faithful Abraham. Their faith was worked through the law and the promise of the Christ to come. Therefore, when the Christ has come, faith in Him who is revealed is called the faith which was to come also. Apparently only the giving of the law seemed to be against the giving of the promise of life to Abraham and his seed. But if we would ask whether that were actually so the apostle would tell us, Galatians 3:21: "God forbid." That is his answer to the question he put himself, "Is the law then against the promises of God?"

In this connection we might seriously question how Jehovah could reveal His law with the serious intention of having Israel know that He desired that they keep the law; and at the same time seriously intend them to know that though their sins were as scarlet He would keep His promise to them given to their fathers.

Jehovah showed that he intended that His law should be taken seriously, in the way He revealed it to Israel. We ought to remember the description of the giving of the law as given in the books of Moses in this connection. Nevertheless, the important interpretation of the Holy Spirit in this epistle is that the law was ordained through angels, Galatians 3:19. This shows at least that God gave to Israel the clear revelation that only they who live as perfectly as do the angels in heaven may be His people standing before His face. The Israelite answered the question, "who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand

in his holy place?" by the answer, "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul to vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." Psalm 24:3, 4. God showed that He demanded that His will be done on earth as it is in heaven, for God is holy.

At the same time Paul explains that God provided that His people would receive the revelation of His law together with His promise of its fulfillment. After saying in Galatians 3:19 that it was ordained by angels he further adds, "in the hand of a mediator." That mediator is Christ, who had His living type in Moses.

Now, if we see this purpose of the giving of the law, we shall see too that it did not take away the liberty of the Jew. The Jew was free from the law. He did not have to keep the law himself, he had the promise from God, as a child of Abraham, that God would keep the law for him in Christ. Essentially, the Old and New Testament enjoyed the same liberty. Very strongly Paul reminds Peter of that glorious principle that one enjoys as a true Jew. Galatians 2:19 "For I through law am dead to law, that I might live unto God." And this follows the reminder to Peter, already given in verse 15 and 16, "We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ. . . ." With this concept of liberty to the law for all Jews he speaks to the Gentiles that they too are free; though not as Gentiles, but as believers, as children of Abraham, as spiritual Jews. Galatians 3:29: "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." The Jews are the first ones of the nations who enjoyed liberty! And God never took away their liberty. Even when he reminded them of their bondage to sin by giving them the law, which was a reminder of bondage to sinful people, He carefully introduced them first of all to His great deliverance from Egypt, type of bondage, and introduced the giving of the law to the Jew, whom He loved, with the words, "I am the Lord thy God which hath brought thee out of the land of Egypt."

In the epistle to the Galatians, the apostle Paul must not be interpreted to say or intend to say that the Jew did not have liberty in relation to the law whereas the Gentile Christian did. He explains on the contrary that the Jews were free, but that their freedom was overshadowed by the New Testament fulfillment in Christ. So he begins chapter four with the word "now" in order to explain that idea, the difference between the Old and the New. It is briefly: the difference between the heir as a child and a full grown son.

Having shown that both the Jew of the Old Testament and the Christian of the New Testament enjoy the liberty of God in relation to the law, and that the difference is only one of degree of enjoyment and experience, of shadow and fulfillment, let us take up the questions, what is the real meaning of liberty in rela-

tion to law; and, what is the purpose of the decalogue for the Christian?

Paul's expressions which will make clear our liberty as children of God are found in Galatians 2:19 "For I through the law am *dead* to the law."; Galatians 4:5, "To redeem them that were *under the law*,"; and verse 21, "Tell me, ye that desire to be *under the law*." (I have italicized)

These expressions are clear in themselves but the connection is difficult to see unless we interpret that Paul is referring to the children of God as sinners under the law. According to election we are the free children of God. But here the apostle is thinking of himself and all the elect of God as they are born in time under the law, sinners before the bar of God's righteous law. This is evident from the expression "under the law", and from the development of the idea of redemption in the context. To be under the law is the bondage in which we are all by nature. It is the bondage of the elements. These are the fundamental laws of God according to creation, which now curse us all as we are born because we are sinners. The ten commandments are the expressions of these elements. And Paul tells us that God sent His Son also under these elements. He was born of a woman, made under the law. He was subject to the curses of creation as they were directed against all those born of women. He hungered and thirsted, felt sorrow and pain. And all the curse of God against His people was concentrated upon Him as He was under the elements; that he might redeem them that were under them.

Such is the glorious liberty of the sons of God. We are delivered from the curse of the law, death. As sinners we died in Christ to the law and that even according to the law. "I through law and dead to law" is the word of Christian liberty. I as a sinner do not have to fulfill the law any more. I am free from that. Who desires now to return under the law and work out his own salvation? If you do, listen to the law. The law demands perfection and curses everyone who does not abide in all that is written in the book of the law to do them; and, it also is no respecter of persons; for, it also cast out the bond-woman who was under the law, and her son. But we are children of the free woman, perfectly delivered from the law, as criminals.

But does that mean, that I as a sinner delivered from the obligation to fulfill the law myself, when delivered will return to a condition without law, to a lawless state again. Not at all. Paul says, it is all "that we might live unto God". To live implies righteousness to God's law. That we have now also in principle by the Spirit of Christ which is given us to know of our deliverance and to also walk in the way of salvation. Liberty in relation to law then means, free from the obligation to pay myself, in order to live forevermore according to law perfectly from the heart.

God promised that. The time came when He wrote His law not upon tables of stone, but upon our hearts.

In the Old Testament dispensation God spoke of liberty by giving the decalogue on stone with the ways of sanctification in the ceremonies, exercises for faith. And all the law was object of delight and daily meditation for the believer! In the New Testament we have the perfect law of God given to us through the only interpreter and Redeemer, Jesus Christ. It is the "law of Christ" now as Paul speaks of it. It is essentially the same as the ten commandments. Christ never discarded that record, but always built upon it. But He gave the real spiritual thrust to it, love God above all and thy neighbor as thyself. Galatians 5:14.

Perfect liberty in relation to law shall be fulfilled, however, when we are redeemed according to our body also. Now we have that perfect liberty only in our conscience by faith. And we and all creation groan for the redemption of our bodies. Then we can discard the decalogue as a written record. It shall forevermore be a living law in and through our whole existence.

However, in this world we must have the decalogue and the work of Christ, the law and the gospel. We must not think that we now know perfectly, instinctively, how to live in our body. That is flesh, the life of the old nature. Therefore Paul comes with that clear warning after having expounded the subject of Christian liberty "for brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. But crucify the old man of sin; for, that cannot be reformed into the life of the law; it must be mortified in the light of the guide to good works, the law of God.

L. D.

IN MEMORIAM

The Men's Society of the Manhattan Protestant Reformed Church herewith wishes to extend their sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. J. Oostema, in the loss of their child,

CAROLINE

May the Lord comfort them in the knowledge that He doeth all things well.

The Men's Society

H. P. Van Dyken, Sec'y.

Debate

RESOLVED: — THAT HEIDELBERG CATECHISM PREACHING IS MINISTRY OF THE WORD

Affirmative.

Three hundred years ago our Reformed fathers, in synodical session at Dordrecht, ordained that once each Sunday the sermon material should be based on a Lord's Day of our Heidelberg Catechism instead of on the Word of God directly. Did they err in so decreeing? Was it wisdom on their part, to lead the church of many ages in this direction? Does the preaching of the Catechism provide the church of Christ with what she needs to have light on her way and to grow in the grace and knowledge of her Lord and Saviour? Or does it deprive her of her spiritual food and is the word of man being substituted for the living Word of God? Have our Reformed churches, for three hundred long years, been receiving stones for bread; human conclusions for divine wisdom?

It is obvious why this question should be considered debatable at all. The Catechism as such is not Scripture, divinely inspired and infallible. It is the work of man. Man ordered it to be written; man composed it; man exalted it to the rank of confession; and man decreed that it should be preached each Lord's Day. It might be reasoned, that in this the Reformed churches erred and thus the manifestation of the body of Christ on earth is being robbed of what she needs for her salvation: the ministry of the Word of God. The negative has the burden of proving that this is indeed the case. The affirmative will attempt to show that this reasoning is fallacious and that the preaching of the Heidelberg Catechism is very really ministry of the Word.

What is ministry of the Word?

Ministry of the Word is the official proclamation of the full counsel of God as revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures. It is that task whereby the ambassador of Christ testifies of God and His counsel to the living church, called out of the world to the saving knowledge of God in Jesus Christ—

The Word is the revelation of the entire will of God concerning our salvation in Christ. In the wider sense it is the expression to His Church of God's eternal thoughts concerning Himself. That Word Jehovah spoke from the beginning in human language; in signs and words which man could understand. That Word the Lord has preserved for us in Holy Writ. God inspired His servants, not only to speak that Word, but also to write it. Thus we have the Word of God in the Scriptures, *only* in the Scriptures, which in that sense are very really God's Word, from cover to cover.

Ministry of the Word is the preaching, the interpre-

tation, the proclamation of that Word of God, contained in the Scriptures, by her who is divinely authorized to do so, the church. It was the will of the Lord that this Word should be expounded, preached to His people. To that end He entrusted it, not to any individual or group of individuals, but to His church, in order that she might preserve, study, propagate, copy, translate, interpret and proclaim it. Therefore He instituted the offices in the church, especially that of the ministry, that the church through these offices might preach that Word, at home and abroad. Wherefore ministry of the Word is the official exposition and administration of the Scriptures. Therein the preacher brings the Word to the church as an ambassador of Christ with the authority, not merely of Scripture itself, but of Him Who sends the preacher, namely, Christ. It is the proclamation of the Word *only*, for Christ will speak to the hearts of His own only through the Scriptures, never through the word of mere man. It is the exposition of the *entire* Bible. Ministry of the Word is not the preaching of certain isolated passages, of a few truths which may appeal to man, but of the whole counsel of God as revealed to us in the Scriptures. Only thus can the preaching minister to all the spiritual needs of the church, open and shut the kingdom of heaven for all who hear, feed the elect kernel in Christ, instruct, admonish, confirm in the faith, quicken in the hope, build up in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ and enrich God's church in all that pertains to the way of salvation.

What is Heidelberg Catechism preaching? It is the official proclamation of the Word of God as expressed, expounded in this Reformed creed by the church herself.

The Catechism is the church's answer of faith to the divine injunction to study, preserve, expound, propagate and interpret the truth of His Word. It is one of our Reformed symbols. A symbol is a declaration by a church or group of churches, wherein she declares what she believes to be the truth of the Word of God or the true doctrine of salvation. Such symbols are the spiritual children of the faith of the living and divinely guided church in the Word of God. In them the church as a whole expresses her faith. By means of them the church preserves the truth, systematically arranged and elicited from Scripture through years of diligent and difficult labor, for future generations. They are authoritative statements by that church, which has the promise of the Spirit that He will guide her into all the truth. All this applies to the Catechism also. Hence, the Catechism *itself* is a preaching by the church, the fruit of the church through her divinely ordained offices, and therefore ministry of the Word. In that Catechism the Reformed churches express what they believe to be the truth of the Word of God. And note especially, it is an official statement concerning, not the mere doctrine of Scripture, not some controversies

issues, but the entire way of salvation as revealed in the written Word of God. Therefore the catechism is so very much in place on the pulpit. It is practical, subjective, thoroughly spiritual in character and viewpoint. It is direct and personal. Following the line of misery, redemption and gratitude, it expounds the way of salvation as revealed to us in the Scriptures, substantiating all it says with many references to Scripture itself, in order that it may be entirely clear to the church, that all it contains is directly and unmistakably from the Word of God.

And What is Catechism preaching? It is the interpretation, exposition of the Word of God as expressed by the church, officially, in her confession. It too, is preaching by the church herself, through the divinely ordained offices, and hence in the name of and with authority of Christ Himself. It is the proclamation of Christ Himself as He is the center of all revelation. Because of its varied and deeply spiritual, practical, subjective contents, it certainly ministers to the needs of the church, opens and shuts the kingdom of heaven, feeds the elect kernel with Christ, instructs and builds up in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. Acknowledging that no symbol as such is comparable to Scripture it always makes the Scriptures themselves its criterion, basis, source. Catechism preaching is a preaching that lets Scripture speak, that does not exegete a Lord's Day as one would a text from the Bible, but always aims to point out the relation between the two. Therefore texts are sought and quoted by the preacher that incontrovertibly substantiate the contents of a given Lord's Day, and these texts in particular and all of Scripture in general are made to dominate the entire preaching.

Thus preaching of the Heidelberg Catechism is undeniably ministry of the Word. Scripture alone remains the basis and contents of the preaching. But, you say, whatever is of man may be in error and a corruption, distortion of the Word of God. Man is never infallible. True enough. However, it is far less likely that the church of Christ should err in her exposition of Scripture than that a single preacher should do so in his exegesis and interpretation of the Word of God, and every sermon, too, is after all the product of mere man. Besides, we are speaking about the Heidelberg Catechism and all who are Reformed are firmly convinced, that it expresses the truth of the Scriptures throughout. To be sure, the negative, to prove his point, that Heidelberg Catechism preaching is not ministry of the Word, has the unhappy task of showing that the contents of this symbol are not based squarely and entirely on the Word of God. Unless he can prove the latter he cannot possibly disprove the former—

Catechism preaching is ministry of the *entire* Word. It is this in the sense that every truth discussed is

based, not on a single passage, but on the current teaching of the whole Bible. It tells us, not what a certain phrase, but what all Scripture reveals about a specific truth. Besides, so many different doctrines are treated in the Catechism, so many phases of the truth as it pertains to our salvation in Christ. For this reason regular Catechism preaching is so exceedingly edifying to the church of God. It compels the preacher to discuss every phase of the truth regularly. It brings to the attention of the church doctrines which ordinarily would never or seldom be expounded. Without Catechism preaching the true doctrine would gradually disappear out of the consciousness of the church. It is a marvelous guarantee that the church will continue to be fed with the pure and unadulterated doctrine of salvation, as long as any good at all is left in the preaching. How invaluable Catechism preaching is can be ascertained from mere observation. What becomes of churches that discard it? Examine churches that have departed from the pure truth, note the preaching in such churches, and do you not find that in as far as it is based on the Catechism the preaching is still comparatively sound, much more so than the exposition of free texts? Not only is Catechism preaching ministry of the Word, but it *preserves* the latter for the church. It can be abused, certainly, when it is exegeted like Scripture and exalted to a place on a par with the Word of God. However, this cannot serve as an argument against its use. Commentaries can be abused. Every good thing can be abused. What suffers more abuse than Scripture itself? Cold dogmatics and confessions, the word of man, can also dominate the exegesis when a passage directly from Scripture is preached. The Heidelberg Catechism is in a unique sense the preaching of the church of many ages and that means more to me than what a single preacher may have to say about a single text. Our Catechism is a confession that has stood the test and withstood the onslaughts of more than three long centuries.

If the preaching of the Catechism is not ministry of the Word, neither is the sermon of any minister. When a sermon is preached, is the church receiving the Word of God directly? Of course not! What she is getting is the exegesis, the exposition, the interpretation of the preacher himself, whether these be his own, or those of one commentator or another. From this point of view a sermon, too, is the work of man. Yet, in as far as that work and word is indeed according to the Scriptures, it is the ministry of the Word of God, and Christ, through His church, through the preacher, preaches and blesses His Word to the heart. This applies with equal force to the preaching of the Catechism.

If the preaching of the Catechism is not ministry of the Word, neither is Catechetical instruction. We

believe that the latter is ministry of the Word to the seed of the covenant. However, it isn't if the standpoint of the negative is to be maintained, for catechetical work is carried on by means of catechism books, which, too, are the work of mere man. Yet we know that it is ministry of the Word and that Christ will bless it to our covenant children. Likewise will He bless the faithful preaching of our Heidelberg Catechism, that blessed ministry of the divine Word for which our Reformed churches should be so deeply grateful.

R. V.

Negative.

It will be understood that in undertaking the negative arguments in this debate it is only with great reluctance that I contribute my side. The work that we shall discuss has so endeared itself to the hearts of thousands upon thousands of God's people; the throb of life resounding in it is so correspondent to the life that throbs in the life of the Christian; the true church of God, in what we hold to be its purest historical manifestation has, so consistently used it and so strongly defended it against the impugnments of the enemies; and we as Protestant Reformed Christians find this treasure of the age of our fathers so valuable that one hesitates to give even the impression that we as Christians are not united in its use and on its value.

Yet I believe the resolution, as stated above must in some measure, be consciously considered by us all in order to maintain the only safeguard against dead orthodoxy and blind adulation and worship of confessions.

And these considerations which I shall bring forward may well be taken as ground to question whether preaching of the Heidelberg Catechism is truly Ministry of the Word.

For what is ministry of the Word of God? We may define it as the proclamation of the Gospel of our salvation, as the Bible sets it forth in all its various phases and in its one mighty emphasis, for the deliverance of God's people progressively from the dominion of Satan and this present evil world and its resultant physical desolation, and the hardening and condemnation of the wicked, unto the glory of the Triune Covenant God. And this implies the proclamation in such a way that this full revelation, this "whole counsel of God" is brought to bear upon our personal lives and times.

Secondly, what is preaching of the Heidelberg Catechism? To be honest we will have to define this as the exposition of the words of a given Lord's Day without anticipation or retrospection, and that as words of unqualified and infallible authority.

It will be evident that so taken these two cannot be taken as equivalent, that Heidelberg Catechism cannot be preaching of the Word of God. Let me first of all state some very strong presumptions against such an equivalence.

In the first place the Heidelberg Catechism is principally the work of one man. Let us not lose sight of this. A careful reading of the history leaves no doubt that regardless of the persons, the faculty, the district superintendents, and councilors that are mentioned as advisors the work grew from the heart and mind of one man—Ursinus. Even the possible retort that it was approved by the annual Synod of 1863, in the face of much criticism bears no weight when we reflect that much of the criticism was politically motivated, other was directed against the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, and against some of the marginal proof-texts. The criticism did not result in any revision or recasting of note. It remains the work of—Ursinus.

Even the very acclaim with which it was received on the great Synod of Dordt strongly detracts from the probability of a careful study of the work as a whole on that occasion, and the few points that were specifically named for consideration were rather suppressed than discussed. How this would come about may easily be understood by comparing it with the method so often observed and complained of today in the larger church bodies. A committee is appointed to give advice regarding doctrine or conduct. One member of the committee takes the initiative and composes a document, the other members listen to the reading of the document and "see no reason for dissent"; thereupon the broader ecclesiastical body hears it read, and for want of time, enthusiasm or courage easily gives a half-hearted approval, perhaps with mental reservations, perhaps with few feebly stated objections. And even when the approval is loud it is with a vengeance, not having in mind the work as a whole but a certain favorite portion or even a favored person or small group. The loud acclaim (*Lautesten Beifall*) there accorded our Catechism stands strongly in that light.

I consider that hereby the one-man authorship of the work remains sustained. And on this characteristic rests that first damaging presumption that what one man with his personal bias, his own peculiar spiritual experiences and his own peculiar bent of mind, has produced cannot be a balanced and full reproduction of the Gospel.

A second strong presumption against accepting it as an authoritative text for the proclamation of the Gospel is that it was written at a time when the doctrine of the Reformation was only in the beginning of thorough consideration and formulation. How can we maintain the Catechism as a perfect reflection of the mind of the church when we see the few short years in which it

rooted; namely, 1517 (a terminus by which we give the affirmative an gratuitously overflowing measure, of course) to 1563, as compared with the 375 years of doctrinal development, since its composition.

But there is a third damaging presumption, somewhat related to the immediately preceding. I mean the fact that also from the viewpoint of its practical application it was written with a view to 16th century life conditions and problems. And do not retort that this is true as well of the Scriptures. For though the Scriptures bear the characteristics of their times, yet they rise far above them all by the principles they set forth so effectively precisely in, against and through those divinely chosen backgrounds. That which in Scripture is framed by the selective operation eternal, divine wisdom for its most effective presentation is in the Catechism framed by one man's mind which was necessarily limited in its perceptions finite perspectives and temporal horizons.

So much for these very annoying presumptions against the unqualified trustworthiness of the Catechism.

And I hasten to adduce a class of arguments that are still more damaging to such a trustworthiness. I mean the demonstrable weaknesses and errors as such in the work, weaknesses that always necessitate a passing apology, circumvention, or rectification.

We may begin immediately with the weakness of Lord's Day I. It is well known that the viewpoint of this section is Anthropocentric (man-centered) instead of Theocentric. This cannot be neutralized by gleanings and adducing expressions from other parts of the work or from the author's Commentary. For Lord's Day I is meant to stand as an epitome or summary of the Christian's only comfort, and is to characterize the spirit of the whole. It is very weighty by position, it is normative by design, and when honestly used, will necessarily have to give a tone and view-point in harmony with the purported theocentricity of the material proper.

A similar defect is found in Qu. 41: Why was He also buried? A. Thereby to prove that He was really dead. In the light of the Scriptures we know that the actuality of the death was established by quite other proofs and that the idea of burial carried quite another thought and symbolism. Even the most charitable commentators consider this a very poor and somewhat naive instruction.

I must also point to the faultiness of Q. 44: He descended into hell. The descent into Hades, the abode of the dead, as Scripture teaches it was by the Apostolicum conceived as a descent into the abode of the lost (ad inferna, ad inferos) and the Catechism continues and adds to the confusion by retaining the order of the Apostolicum, by saying, Why is there added (Waarom volgt er?) He descended, etc., and then

developes that which should have been treated previously under "he suffered" and "Why. . . crucified" in Q. 37, 39.

Of a somewhat different nature is the defect that we may call a lack of due proportion. To demonstrate this we may signalize on the one hand the extensive, cumbersome, repetitious discussion of the sacraments, and compare it with the lack of any systematic treatment of the doctrine of election, which has been well called the Heart of the Church. This means that the gospel on these two specific points will simply receive a distorted presentation as to their relation and relative values. It is not evident that the man who wrote our Catechism was not able to lift his gaze above his own time and that what he conceived to be of almost superlative importance is in the light of further Scripture study and a more objective and dispassionate study clarified and reduced to its proper proportion. And on the other hand it is equally evident that the "Heart of the Church" was practically neglected whether through personal lack of evaluation, or through political and ecclesiastical considerations.

The final result is an untrue picture of the whole, a gospel that is not above the weakness and limitations of the creature but that is limited by the mind and the perspectives and horizons of limited man.

These many arguments will, I trust, elicit from all those competent to judge, the verdict that notwithstanding the unsurpassed beauty, the almost prophetic spirit, power and discernment that mark our Catechism, yet Heidelberg Catechism preaching is not preaching of the Word of God.

A. P.

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

D. Jonker, S. C.