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MEDITATION

Zijne Voetstappen

Want hiertoe zijt gij geroepen, dewijl ook Christus voor ons geleden heeft, ons een voorbeeld nalatende, opdat gij Zijne voetstappen zoudt navolgen.

I Petr. 2:21.

Zijne voetstappen!

O, die voetstappen van Jezus zou Petrus zijn leven lang niet weer vergeten!

Misschien is het wel mede daarom, dat hij daarover, en over ons navolgen er van, zooveel schrijft, vooral in zijn en zijn eerste zendbrief.

O, zeker, we weten het ook wel, door den Geest werd hij geleid en gedreven om te schrijven hetgeen en zooals hij schreef. Maar het is dan toch ook waar, dat hij door denzelfden Geest, en dat wel in den weg van zijne geheel bijzondere ervaring, tot een geschikt orgaan werd geformeerd juist voor het schrijven van zijn deel van de openbaring van Jezus Christus.

En die ervaring was er wel op aangelegd, om hem met bijzondere voorliefde te doen schrijven over die voetstappen van Jezus.

O, ja, die voetstappen passen ook het thema, dat hij behandelt, sluiten zich als vanzelf aan bij het eigenlijke onderwerp van zijn brief. De apostel der hope wordt Petrus niet zelden, en ook niet zonder reden, dikwijls genoemd. En over die hope schrijft hij ook hier. Uit het oogpunt van haar vreemdelingschap in de wereld beschouwt hij de gemeente van Jezus' Christus. Vreemdelingen en bijwoners zijn de geloovigen hier beneden. Ze zijn dat reeds krachtens de verkiezing naar de voorkennis Gods des Vaders. En ze zijn dat ook in den tijd, daar ze immers wedergeboren zijn tot eene levende hope door de opstanding van Jezus Christus uit de dooden. Ze zijn van boven geboren.

Ze leven uit het beginsel der opstanding. En ze vestigen hun oog verlangend op de erfenis, de onverderfelijke, onverwelkelijke, en onbevlekkelijke erfenis, die in de hemelen voor hen wordt bewaard, en waarvoor zij in deze wereld bewaard worden in de kracht Gods, door het geloof. Daarom zijn ze vreemdelingen en bijwoners.

En bij dat onderwerp nu behooren ook die voetstappen van Jezus!

Deze zijn als het ware zoovele wegwijzers, die ons mede verzekeren, dat we ons wel waarlijk op den rechten weg bevinden naar het voorwerp onzer hope, de stad, die fundamenten heeft, de eeuwige erfenis. De weg toch, waarin die voetstappen van Jezus zijn ingedrukt, is een weg van lijden, van lijden om der gerechtigheid wil. En het is dengenen, die zalig worden, immers uit genade gegeven, in de zaak van Christus, niet alleen in Hem te gelooven, maar ook met Hem te lijden. Door lijden gaat het tot heerlijkheid. We zijn immers ergenamen Gods, en medeerfgenamen met Christus, zoo we anders met Hem lijden, opdat we ook met Hem verheerlijkt worden. . . .

O, zeker, ook dat onderwerp dier zalige hope bracht den apostel er als vanzelf toe, om ook over die voetstappen van den Heiland te schrijven.

Desniettemin, het zij nogmaals gezegd, zal de apostel wel eene bijzondere voorliefde voor dat onderwerp gehad hebben.

Ach, hij herinnerde zich, ongetwijfeld wel met eene gedurige droefheid des harten, dat hij getuige geweest was van het gaan des Meesters, toen Deze Zijne voetstappen in Zijn weg des lijdens had ingedrukt, en dat hij er toen niets van had verstaan, en het ook niet alzo had gewild! Neen, ook zijne mede-apostelen hadden het niet begrepen, hoe de Heiland juist dien weg kon kiezen; maar het was toch vooral Petrus geweest, die van het oogenblik af, dat Jezus van Zijn lijdensweg begon te spreken, had geprotesteerd, dat dit geenszins zou geschieden! En het was weer vooral Petrus geweest, die zich aan dien weg des Heilands had geërgerd in dien donkeren, nooit te vergeten nacht, toen Hij alle

hulp van menschen en van engelen had afgewezen, en Zichzelfen had overgegeven in de handen van zondaren!

Toen was Petrus, en toen waren al de discipelen aan Hem geërgerd geworden!

O, die voetstappen! . . .

Hij had ze toen niet kunnen volgen!

De weg was al te vreeselijk voor het vleesch. Geef een man een zwaard, en laat hem strijden voor recht en waarheid, en hij zal gaarne zijn leven geven voor de zaak, die hij voorstaat. Zoo had Petrus het bedoeld. Hij was geen lafaard. En aan den Meester was hij verknocht. 't Was van ganscher harte gemeend, toen hij den Heiland verzekerd had, dat hij bereid was om met Hem in de gevangenis en in den dood te gaan, en dat hij nimmer aan Hem zou worden geërgerd, ook al zouden allen Hem verlaten. Doch hij had zich een geheel andere voorstelling gevormd van den weg, dien de Heiland te gaan had. Met het zwaard in de vuist wilde hij den Meester bijstaan. Zijn leven wilde hij voor Hem stellen.

Doch de Heiland had alle hulp geweigerd!

Zelfs had Hij den discipel bestraft, toen deze het zwaard had getrokken, en er op in had geslagen.

Alleen had de Heiland gestaan, van alle hulp ontbloot. En in al Zijn lijden en smaad had Hij Zijnen mond niet open gedaan. Als een lam was Hij ter slachting geleid. . . .

En Hij had het Zelf zoo gewild!

Neen, nooit had Petrus het vergeten. Destijds had hij het niet kunnen verstaan. 't Ging boven vleesch en bloed uit. Al wat in hem was, had tegen dien weg des Heilands, tegen dat gewillige, dat opzettelijke lijden gerebelleerd.

Doch thans verstond hij het alles door den Geest!

En nu hij alles in een nieuw licht mocht zien, toefde hij gaarne in bewondering en aanbidding bij die voetstappen van Jezus, en wees hij de gemeente op hen als een voorbeeld, dat Hij den geloovigen had nagelaten.

Nu verstond hij het, dat het juist genade bij God is, wanneer iemand om het geweten voor God zwaarigheid verdraagt, lijdende ten onrechte.

Thans begreep hij het, dat het lijden der geloovigen als weldoeners juist aangenaam is voor God.

En nu kon hij zelfs schrijven: hiertoe zijt gij geroepen! . . .

O, die voetstappen des Heilands!

Ons een voorbeeld nalatende!

En welk een voorbeeld! Volmaakter of schooner en sterker voorbeeld van lijden om Gods wil, om der gerechtigheid wil, laat zich niet denken.

Een voorbeeld is eene handeling, of een stuk werk van een meester, die zijn werk verstaat, die weet hoe het zijn moet, en hoe 't gedaan moet worden, die het ook doet, en al doende anderen onderwijst, en hun een

model nalaat om het te bestudeeren en na te doen. Een voorbeeld is de belichaming van het ideaal, dat bereikt moet worden, de bestudeering en navolging waarvan anderen kan onderwijzen en helpen in het streven naar en bereiken van hetzelfde ideaal.

Zulk een meesterstuk liet de Heiland den Zijnen na!

Een voorbeeld, dat ons onderwijst, hoe we onzen wandel eerlijk hebben te houden en kunnen houden in de wereld; hoe we alle menschelijke ordening onderdanig behooren te zijn om Gods wil; hoe we tegen die menschelijke ordening nimmer zullen rebelleeren, om eigen zaak te verdedigen, om eigen recht te handhaven, om macht tegenover macht, zwaard tegenover zwaard te stellen, ook al is het nog zoo waar, en zoo duidelijk als de zon aan den hemel, dat we het recht aan onze zijde hebben; hoe we, ook als we om ons weldoen, in eene rechte zaak, van de zijde, die over ons gesteld zijn, verdrukt worden, en aldus zwaarigheid moeten lijden, of vervolgd worden om der gerechtigheid wil, het zullen dragen en het genade zullen rekenen in de zaak van den Zoon Gods te mogen lijden. . . .

Daarvan liet de Heiland ons een voorbeeld na!

Dat toch is klaarlijk de bedoeling van den apostel. Hiertoe zijt gij geroepen! Met deze woorden wijst de apostel immers terug op het voorgaande vers, en dat ook in verband met de verzen, die daaraan vooraf gaan. En daar had de apostel immers geschreven: "Maar indien gij verdraagt, als gij weldoet, en daarover geslagen wordt, dat is genade bij God."

Daartoe zijt ge geroepen!

En daarvan heeft ons Christus een voorbeeld nagelaten, toen Hij Zelf Zijne voetstappen in den lijdensweg indrukte.

En welk een voorbeeld!

Een meesterstuk is het metterdaad, het toppunt van volmaaktheid!

Eenerzijds toch was Zijn weldoen volmaakt. Hij was de Zoon Gods in het vleesch, de Zondeloze! Hij kende den wil des Vaders bij en voor elken voetstap, dien Hij naliel. Nooit, in geen enkele bepaalde omstandigheid, was die wil des Vaders hem onbekend of duister. Nimmer stond Hij in twijfel aangaande den weg, die Hij had te bewandelen. Noch ook was er bij Hem ooit eenige aarzeling om dien wil te volbrengen. Des Vaders wil te doen was Zijne spijs. Niemand kon Hem overtuigen van zonde. Men kon nooit een vinger op Hem leggen. Zonder vlek of rimpel was Hij heel zijn leven op aarde. En altijd deed Hij wel. Den dooven hergaf Hij het gehoor, den blinden het gezicht, melaatschen reinigde Hij en kreupelen deed Hij wandelen, duivelen wierp Hij uit en kranken genas Hij, ja, de dooden wekte Hij op. En den armen verkondigde Hij het evangelie. Zelf had Hij geen plaats, waar Hij het hoofd kon nederleggen, en Hij was zachtmoedig en nederig van hart.

Was er ooit iemand, die zoo volmaaktelijk wel deed als Hij?

Maar anderzijds was er ook niemand, die, als Hij, zwarigheid verdroeg en leed om der gerechtigheid wil.

Hij werd veracht en gehaat, gescholden voor een vraat en wijnzuiper, een vriend van tollenaars en zondaren, voor Beelzebul's handlanger en knecht, voor een verleider, bedrieger, Godslasteraar. Hij werd belasterd en tegengesproken door zondaren, vervolgd, bespot, geslagen, bespogen, en er was niemand, die medelijden met Hem betoonde. Hij werd door de Zijnen niet aangenomen, gevangen genomen, gebonden, terecht gesteld, van alle zijden geschuldigd, veroordeeld, des doods waardig geacht. Hij werd door den wereldlijken rechter onschuldig verklaard en toch veroordeeld tot den dood, door de soldaten bespot en gehoond, gegeeseld, met den doornenkroon gekroond, met den spot-scepter geslagen. En ten slotte werd Hij naakt uitgeschud, publiekelijk ten toon gesteld als een misdadiger, als behoorende tot het uitvaagsel der wereld, aan 't schandhout genageld. . . .

Was er ooit iemand, die, als Hij, om Zijn weldoen moest lijden?

En nog eens: was er ooit een mensch, die, als Hij, het alles verdroeg?

Als Hij gescholden werd, schold Hij niet weder; als Hij leed, dreigde Hij niet; als Hij door mensche lijke ordening verdrukt werd ten onrechte, rebelleerde Hij niet, maar bleef Hij onderdanig; als men met zwaarden en stokken tegen Hem optrok, bestrafte Hij Zijn discipel, die ook het zwaard trok, en heelde Hij de wonde door hem geslagen.

En dat gewilliglijk!

In vrije gehoorzaamheid koos Hij Zelf den weg des lijdens!

't Was immers, wat Hem betrof geen kwestie van macht en geweld, maar louter van het recht Gods!

O, ware het een zaak van macht geweest, er zou geen oogenblik kwestie van zijn geweest, dat Zijner de overwinning geweest zou zijn. Zelf had Hij de macht om Zijne vijanden voor Zich in het stof te doen bukken. Twaalf legioenen waren Hem te hulp gekomen op Zijne bede. . . .

Hij had wel kunnen strijden!

Doch Hij onderwierp Zich vrijwilliglijk, het alles overgevend aan Dien, Die rechtvaardiglijk oordeelt!

Ons een voorbeeld nalatende!

Opdat wij Zijne voetstappen zouden navolgen!

Voorbeeld van uiterste volmaaktheid!

Voorbeeld, voor wie?

Want wie is tot deze dingen bekwaam?

Wie zal den Meester op Zijn lijdensweg volgen, en Zijne voetstappen drukken?

Niemand naar het vleesch!

Vleesch en bloed kunnen ons in het navolgen van deze voetstappen, in het copieëren van dit voorbeeld onderwijzen noch helpen. Naar het vleesch zoeken we altijd onszelfen, het vleesch, de wereld, nooit God en Zijne zaak en Zijn eer. Naar het vleesch meenen we altijd van eigen recht te mogen spreken, zoeken we immer ons eigen recht te handhaven en te verdedigen, stellen we altijd macht tegenover macht, grijpen we altijd naar het zwaard, het zwaard van Simon. En zelfs pogen we dit doen des vleesch, dit zoeken van eigen eer en macht en recht, nog wel te rechtvaardigen, en er den naam aan te geven van den strijd des Heeren!

Lijden ten onrechte? Lijden om der gerechtigheid wil?

Neen, laat ons niet al te gemakkelijk spreken van het navolgen van de voetstappen van Jezus!

In laatster instantie kan alleen Jezus-Zelf in Zijne eigene voetstappen wandelen, ook als Hij dit nog doet door de Zijnen, als Hij hen daartoe bekwaamt door Zijne genade, en als Hij hen daartoe onderwijst en vermaant door Zijn Woord! Hij is de Wijnstok, wij zijn de ranken. Zonder Hem vermogen we niets. Hij draagt vrucht in ons! En alleen als Hij Zelf in ons woont, en wij in Hem blijven, wordt het ons uit genade vergund in Zijne voetstappen te wandelen, en Zijn voorbeeld na te volgen.

Zoo in ons te wonen, en alzoo ons te verlossen van de macht der zonde en des vleesch, is Zijn recht!

Immers heeft Hij daartoe geleden! O, ja, Christus heeft ons in Zijn lijden een voorbeeld nagelaten, opdat wij in Zijne voetstappen zouden wandelen. Maar dat voorbeeld kon en mocht Hij alleen ons nalaten, en het recht om dat voorbeeld te mogen navolgen heeft Hij ons alleen verworven, omdat Hij immers *voor* ons heeft geleden: dewijl ook Christus *voor* ons geleden heeft! Hij leed in onze plaats. Hij droeg den toorn Gods tegen onze zonden. Hij voldeed aan Gods recht door Zijn lijden. En Hij leed ten onzen behoeve, opdat Hij voor ons het recht zou verwerven, om van de macht des vleesch en der zonde verlost te worden, uit alle geweld des duivels bevrijd te worden, en om in nieuwigheid des levens te mogen wandelen, Gods eer en recht te zoeken, en in de zake van den Zone Gods niet alleen in Hem te gelooven, maar ook met Hem te lijden.

En immers heeft Hij ons daartoe geroepen!

O, zeker, geroepen wil zeggen, dat wij nu ook onder de verplichting zijn gekomen, om Zijn voorbeeld te volgen.

Maar het wil ook, en nog veel meer zeggen, dat Hij ons uit de duisternis geroepen heeft tot Zijn wonderbaar licht!

In Zijn lijden ligt het recht, in Zijne roeping ontvangen we de kracht, om Zijne voetstappen na te volgen!

Hij in ons, en wij in Hem!

Tot roem Zijner genade!

H. H.

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Reprint from "The Presbyterian Guardian"

EDITORIALS

The Text of a Complaint

The third indictment the complainants bring against Dr. Clark is really twofold: according to them, he is a rationalist and an antinomian.

The accusation of rationalism is based on the contention that Dr. Clark tries to solve problems, paradoxes, contradictions, particularly the problem of the relation between divine sovereignty and human responsibility. Anyone who makes an attempt to solve this problem, who tries to harmonize these two, who claims that this solution is possible, and especially he who is ready to offer his solution of this problem, is, according to the complainants a rationalist.

We quote from the "Complaint."

"Dr. Clark asserts that the relationship of divine sovereignty and human responsibility to each other presents no difficulty for his thinking and that the two are easily reconcilable before the bar of human reason. He expresses surprise that so many theologians find an insuperable difficulty here." p. 10.

The complainants then make several quotations from Reformed writers to show that by theologians of good standing the problem has always been considered insoluble. It presents an apparent contradiction which we are not able to harmonize. Both must be confessed, that God is absolutely sovereign and that man is responsible. But how they are to be harmonized is beyond the understanding of the human mind. Thus they quote from Berkhof, Calvin, Vos, A. A. Hodge, and Abraham Kuyper. And then the complainants continue:

"Here then is a situation which is inadequately described as amazing. There is a problem which has baffled the greatest theologians in history. Not even Holy Scripture offers a solution. But Dr. Clark asserts unblushingly that for his thinking the problem has ceased to be a problem. Here is something phenomenal. What accounts for it? The most charitable, and no doubt the correct explanation is that Dr. Clark has come under the spell of rationalism. It is difficult indeed to escape the conclusion that by his refusal to permit the scriptural teaching of divine sovereignty and the scriptural teaching of human responsibility to stand alongside each other and by his claim that he has fully reconciled them with each other before the bar of human reason Dr. Clark has fallen into the error of rationalism. To be sure, he is not a rationalist in the sense that he substitutes human reasoning for divine revelation as such. But, to say nothing of his

finding the solution of the problem of the relation to each other of divine sovereignty and human responsibility in the teaching of pagan philosophers who were totally ignorant of the teaching of Holy Writ on either of these subjects, it is clear that Dr. Clark regards Scripture from the viewpoint of a system which to the mind of man must be harmonious in all its parts. The inevitable outcome is rationalism in the interpretation of Scripture. And that too is rationalism. Although Dr. Clark does not claim actually to possess at the present moment the solution of every scriptural paradox, yet his rationalism leaves room at best for only a temporary subjection of human reason to the divine Word. . . ." p. 12.

What shall we say about this accusation of rationalism?

First of all, we may note that it is an old one. There is nothing original in the findings of the complainants. They speak the language of the Christian Reformed leaders since about 1922-1924. From these they have, no doubt, learned to speak their theological language. Personally, we are very familiar with the accusation they now bring against Dr. Clark.

But what of the accusation itself?

The complainants speak of a "situation which is inadequately described as amazing," and of "something phenomenal." I must confess that these words express exactly my sentiment when I read this part of the complaint. There is here, indeed, something that is more than amazing, that is really unbelievable, that might almost be catalogued as another paradox: the phenomenon that theologians accuse a brother theologian of heresy because he tries to solve problems!

For, mark you well, it is exactly this that these complainants do in this part of the "Complaint." They simply accuse him of trying to find a solution, of claiming to have found a solution. Whether Dr. Clark has actually succeeded or not to discover a solution of the problem of God's sovereignty in relation to man's responsibility, is not the question at all. Whether his solution is right or wrong has nothing to do with this part of the "Complaint." The mere fact that Dr. Clark attempts to harmonize things makes him a heretic, a rationalist. Other theologians have always claimed that the problem is not capable of solution, the complainants themselves insist that in the problem of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility we face a paradox, a contradiction as far as we can see: this should have been sufficient to warn Dr. Clark against the attempt to seek a solution. That he, nevertheless, did make the attempt shows that he is a heretic, a rationalist.

That, as it appears to me, is the whole argument of the complainants.

And this is something which, to my mind, the word amazing is inadequate to describe,

But what about the accusation of rationalism?

Is it really rationalism to make the attempt to bring Scripture into harmony with itself?

The complainants maintain that it is ". . . Dr. Clark regards Scripture from the viewpoint of a system which to the mind of man must be harmonious in all its parts. The inevitable outcome is rationalism in the interpretation of Scripture. And that too is rationalism."

The language of the complainants is somewhat ambiguous here, whether the ambiguity is intentional or accidental. The words might convey the impression that Dr. Clark begins with a system of thought, not derived from the Scriptures, and that now he proceeds to explain Scripture in such a way as to support that preconceived philosophical system. And that would, indeed, be rationalism. Scripture would then be distorted to fit Dr. Clark's system. But the complainants do not openly accuse him of this. The words may also mean that, according to Dr. Clark's view there is in the revelation of the Word of God itself a harmonious system of truth, which by careful exegesis, comparing Scripture with Scripture, the theologian attempts to bring to light and to formulate. And this seems to be the truth. Thus, at least, "The Answer" interprets Dr. Clark's attempt to harmonize divine sovereignty and human responsibility. We quote:

"It is pertinent to note that Dr. Clark, instead of approaching these problems on a rationalistic basis, reaches his conclusion from an exegesis of Scripture." p. 37.

And again:

"Next, the attempt to find by a deeper study of the Scripture the solution of paradoxes — a use of exegesis that the complainants call rationalism — is in the eyes of the complainants incompatible with subjection of human reason to the divine Word. . . . In other words, a man who tries to understand what God has revealed to him cannot be subject to the revelation, and if the more he understands, the less he is subject; probably the less he understands, the more subject he is; so that the really obedient and devout man must be completely ignorant. By what right do the complainants imply that the attempt to understand Scripture is inconsistent with believing Scripture?" p. 37.

We may take it, then, that the attempt to harmonize Scripture with itself is, by the complainants, branded as rationalism.

This we absolutely deny.

Let the complainants prove their contention. They do not do this. They do not even make an attempt to prove this charge of rationalism.

"The Answer" reduces the contention of the complainants, somewhat ironically, to absurdity, by showing that ultimately it leads to the conclusion that "the

really obedient and devout man must be completely ignorant."

But if the contention of the complainants is true, it certainly follows that all theology, and especially all dogmatics is rationalistic, for it proceeds from the assumption that the truth revealed in the Bible can be formulated into a logical system.

No theologian has ever proceeded from the assumption of the complainants. Dogmatics is a system of truth elicited from Scripture. And exegesis always applied the rule of the *regula Scripturae*, which means that throughout the Bible there runs a consistent line of thought, in the light of which the darker and more difficult passages must be interpreted. The complainants virtually deny this, at least, and that, too, rather arbitrarily, with relation to the problem of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility.

Who does not know that Reformed theologians have always interpreted those passages of Scripture that at first sight seem to be in favor of the Arminian view in the light of the current teaching of Holy Writ that salvation is of the Lord, that grace is sovereign, that the atonement is particular, and that man is not free to do good? According to the contention of the complainants, this is rationalism.

The complainants simply ride a recent Christian Reformed hobby.

And as to "contradictions," I maintain that there are no such things in the revelation of God in Scripture, for the simple reason that Scripture teaches us everywhere that God is One, and that He cannot deny Himself. His revelation, too, is one, and does not contradict itself.

No, but the complainants would say, there are no real contradictions, but there are *apparent* contradictions in the Bible nevertheless, and them we must leave severely alone, without even making an attempt at solution. We must simply and humbly accept them.

I most positively deny all of this.

By *apparent* contradictions the complainants mean propositions or truth that to the human mind, and according to human logic, are contradictory. I deny that there are such propositions in the Bible. If there were they could not be the object of our faith. It is nonsense to say that we must humbly believe what is contradictory. This is simply impossible. The complainants themselves cannot believe contradictions. Contradictions are propositions that mutually exclude each other, so that the one denies the truth of the other. The principles of contradictions are: 1. That a thing cannot at the same time *be* and *not be*. 2. That a thing must either *be* or *not be*. 3. That the same property cannot be affirmed and denied at the same time of the same subject. A is A. A is not Not-A. Everything is either A or Not-A.

I challenge anyone to point out that there are propo-

sitions in the Bible that violate these fundamental principles of logic.

I challenge anyone to prove that is possible for the believer to accept such contradictions, or that it is Christian humility to claim such faith.

Perhaps, it may be worth the effort to apply these statements to the problem of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility.

But this must wait until our next issue.

H. H.

The Triple Knowledge

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

Part Two.

Of Man's Redemption

Lord's Day XV

1.

Atoning Suffering. (cont.)

This wrath of God, the Heidelberg Catechism instructs us, Christ *sustained*.

And this expression deserves special attention and emphasis, because it points to the deepest reason why the suffering and death of our Saviour could be an atonement for sin.

Atonement is the perfect satisfaction of the justice of God with respect to sin. This satisfaction must be an act, an act of perfect obedience in the love of God. Sin is an act; atonement must be an act. Sin is an act of rebellion and disobedience; atonement must be an act of self-subjection and obedience. Sin is an act of enmity against God; atonement must be an act of perfect love of God. For we must remember that the fundamental demand of the law of God upon man is expressed in the one commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." This demand is unchangeable. God never relinquishes it, not even when He subjects fallen man to His wrath, to the suffering of the curse. Man must love God even in His wrath, for God's wrath is righteous and holy, an expression and revelation of His goodness and perfection. Hence, the guilt of sin can be removed only by an act of love under the wrath of God. He that would atone for sin must willingly, motivated by the pure love of God, seek to fulfill all the justice and righteousness of God against sin. He must will to suffer all the agonies of the expression of that wrath, in death and hell, for God's sake. Only such

an act is a sacrifice. And only such a willing sacrifice is satisfaction of God's justice, and, therefore, atonement.

And thus I would like to understand that word *sustained* in the thirty-seventh answer of the Catechism. Christ not merely *suffered* the wrath of God against sin, He *sustained* it: "er hat den Zorn Gottes *getragen*." He suffered but His suffering was an act. The distinction that is often made between the active and passive obedience of Christ may be accepted provided it is rightly understood. By the former, then, must be understood that Christ without fail was obedient to the law of God in all His walk and conversation, by the latter that He was obedient also in His suffering. But it must be maintained that in all Christ's suffering He was never purely passive. He was active also in His passion and death. He *willed* to fulfill all righteousness. He was determined to satisfy the justice of God against sin. Voluntarily He assumed the obligation to suffer the wrath of God. And actively, in the love of God, He bore that wrath even unto the end. And thus His suffering was the perfect *Yes* over against the rebellious *No* of sin.

This wrath of God against sin, the Heidelberg Catechism teaches us, He sustained all the time that He lived on earth, but especially at the end of His life. It is not difficult to see that Christ's suffering extended over His entire life. This does not mean that He was subject to special diseases, or even to the common sicknesses of mankind. If we consider the life of Jesus in as far as we become acquainted with it from the gospel narratives, we can find no special suffering of pain or sorrow that distinguishes Him in any respect from other men. Although He took all our sicknesses upon Himself, not once do the gospel narratives mention that He was sick. But we must remember that He sustained the wrath of God. He, the Son of God in the flesh, the Sinless One, assumed the likeness of sinful flesh. And this means that He took upon Himself the corruptible nature, in which life is nothing but a continual death. And this death He tasted as the heavy hand of the wrath of God against sin. Moreover, in the likeness of sinful flesh, He came into a world that was sinful, and under the curse of God. The creature itself was made subject to vanity, and was subjected to the bondage of corruption. And the Person of the Son of God in the sinless human nature tasted and suffered through it all the just wrath of God. Add to this that He suffered the contradiction of sinners against Himself, that He dwelled among men that loved the darkness rather than the light, with whose enmity against God and against one another He came into daily contact, and in the corruption of whose nature He apprehended the wrath of God revealed from heaven, and we need not try to discover some special suffering, sicknesses, or calamities in the life

of Jesus on earth, in order to understand, that in the corruptible and mortal flesh, and in the midst of the world filled with enmity against God, and of a creation that bore the curse of God, Christ's life was nothing but a continual death, and that in this death He experienced the wrath of God during His entire sojourn in our world.

Not only so, but we should never forget that all His life Christ lived in the shadow of the cross, and that, with increasing consciousness He moved deliberately in the direction of that cross. He had come under the law, not only under the moral law, but under the entire Mosaic institution of ordinances and shadows. And that meant that He came under the curse, and that it was His task to remove that curse. He knew the program of His suffering, as is evident from the repeated, and rather detailed announcement of it to His disciples. He had come to lay down His life, and He was aware of it all His life. In a sense, all His life was a Gethsemane, an anticipation of the hour of the righteous judgment of God, when all the vials of God's wrath would be poured out over His head.

Nevertheless, it was especially at the end of His life that He suffered and sustained the full concentration of God's holy wrath against sin, and finished it. We need not elaborate upon this final suffering now, for we must speak of this again in connection with the succeeding questions and answers. But two elements must once more be emphasized in this connection. First of all, the truth that in all that final suffering, inflicted upon Him through the wrath and fury of evil men, His passion in the garden, before the Sanhedrin, before Pilate and Herod, and on Calvary, in all His being forsaken and denied, despised and rejected of men, beaten and buffeted and scourged and spit upon, in His condemnation and death, He tasted and suffered the wrath of God against the sin of the world. And, secondly, that He bore the wrath of God voluntarily, in the obedience of love, even unto the end. And thus His passion was the sacrifice of reconciliation, by which He obtained for us redemption from everlasting damnation, not only, but also that everlasting righteousness that makes us worthy of that higher, heavenly glory which the Scriptures denote by the term "eternal life." So infinitely precious was the death of the Son of God!

A word must be said about the statement of the Catechism that Christ sustained the wrath of God *against the sins of all mankind*, of the whole human race. This dare not be understood in the sense that He suffered and died and brought the sacrifice of atonement for every man individually, nor even that it was His intention to do so. Nor may the expression that occurs elsewhere in our Confessions (Canons II, 3) that the sacrifice of Christ is "of infinite worth and value, abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the

whole world," be understood in the sense of general atonement. Christ suffered for His elect. Them alone He represented according to the counsel of God. For His own, for the sheep His Father had given Him, He laid down His life. He did not suffer more than was necessary to redeem them. Not one drop of blood that was shed by the Saviour was shed in vain. Those for whom He suffered are surely redeemed and saved. However, also the Scriptures employ similar expressions as occur in our Confessions. John the Baptist points Him out as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." And the apostle John writes: "And he is the propitiation for our sin: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." But these expressions, as well as similar terms must be understood organically, rather than individually. They refer to the whole organism of the race, to the elect from every nation, and tongue and tribe, and not to every individual man. After all, mankind, and not a few individuals, is saved; but it is saved in the elect. The world is redeemed, but it is the world of God's love, not every individual man. And it is in that same sense that the words of the Catechism must be understood that Christ sustained the wrath of God *against the sins of all mankind*. For those, in whose stead and in whose behalf, He bore the wrath of God, are surely redeemed by His blood. Everlasting righteousness and eternal life He obtained for them. And what He obtained for them by His suffering, He surely bestows upon them by His sovereign grace.

2.

Under Pontius Pilate.

Although in the *Apostolicum* the words "under Pontius Pilate" are probably intended as a temporal modifier, the Catechism calls special attention to this phrase, and interprets it as meaning "That he, being innocent and yet condemned by a temporal judge, might thereby free us from the severe judgment of God to which we were exposed."

The question is: how must this answer of the Catechism be understood?

That our Instructor is correct in discovering a special meaning in the trial of Jesus and His condemnation to the death of the cross by Pontius Pilate cannot be a matter of doubt.

In general, it may be said, that all the phases of that final suffering of Christ, His betrayal by Judas, His agony in Gethsemane, His capture and His trial before the Sanhedrin, His being set at nought by Herod and by the Roman soldiers, have their special meaning. They all belong to the program of Jesus' passion as it

was determined upon and arranged, not by men, but by God Himself. Christ must not only suffer and die, but He must suffer exactly at the time and in the way which the Father had ordained. Hence, even in the light of this general truth, the question of the Heidelberg is quite justified and to the point: "Why did he suffer under Pontius Pilate as judge?" And that the question is not repeated with respect to the other phases of the passion of our Lord is, undoubtedly, due only to the fact that the Catechism is following the *Apostolicum* in its explanation of that suffering.

All the more reason there is for asking this question, because it was evidently through God's special direction of events that the Saviour was brought before the Roman governor at all. It is very clear from the gospel narratives that it was not the intention of the Jews to lead Jesus to His death in the way of a public and official trial. Their original intention was quite different from its final execution. For when shortly before the final Passover the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, to conspire against Jesus, they consulted "that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people." Matt. 26:4, 5. That this program was frustrated, both as to time and manner, was due to several factors over which the leaders of the Jews had no control, not the least important of which was the wholly unexpected dismissal of Judas from the upper room in the night in which Jesus was betrayed. For this dismissal forced them to take action at once. It was evident that all their secret plans were known to the Lord, and that even their employment of the traitor could not serve them to realize their purpose of taking and killing the Lord by subtilty. Thus it came about that they hired a band of soldiers that night, that the capture of Jesus, as well as His trial before the Sanhedrin that same night could not remain a secret, that it had become impossible to kill Him secretly, and that, therefore, they were virtually forced to bring the Lord to the Roman judge, and seek confirmation of the death sentence they had already pronounced. All this was, of course, also necessary because the death of the Saviour must be a public spectacle, and must assume the form of crucifixion. But He must also be condemned by the temporal judge. It was, therefore, not according to the counsels of men, but according to God's own program of Jesus' suffering, and by His special direction, that Christ appeared before Pontius Pilate to be tried and condemned by him.

But why must He be tried by the worldly judge?

And what is the particular significance of this phase of the suffering of our Lord?

The Catechism answers: "That he, being innocent, and yet condemned by the temporal judge, might

thereby free us from the severe judgment of God to which we were exposed." This answer of the Catechism may simply be understood as meaning that, while He was innocently condemned to, and suffered death, He obtained for us freedom from condemnation. In this general form the same thought is expressed by our "Form for the Administration of the Lord's Supper" in the words: "that he was innocently condemned to death, that we might be acquitted at the judgment seat of God." But is there, in the trial and condemnation of our Lord by Pontius Pilate, not a deeper, and more specific meaning?

Ursinus explains this particular answer of the Catechism as follows:

"Why must Christ suffer under a judge, and be condemned in the ordinary way?

"1. In order that we might know that He was condemned by God Himself on account of our sins, and that He, therefore, made satisfaction before the tribunal of God, in order that we might not be condemned by the severe judgment of God; even as He also sustained death for us, that we might be delivered from it. For God presides over ordinary judgments.

"2. In order that He might obtain testimony of His innocence of the very judge that condemned Him. For this reason it was necessary that Christ should not be secretly put out of the way, nor killed in an uproar; but it was the will of the Father that according to a lawful process and trial, with due examination of all the indictments against Him, He should: (1) be examined, in order that His innocence might be brought to light; (2) be condemned, in order that it might be established that He, Who had first been declared innocent, was now condemned, not because of His own, but because of our guilt, and that His unjust condemnation might take the place of our most righteous condemnation; (3) be put to death, that the prophecies might be fulfilled, and it might appear that it was by Jews and Gentiles that He was killed and nailed to the cross. This phase of Jesus' suffering, therefore, we should diligently contemplate, that we may be assured that Jesus, condemned by Pilate, is the Messiah, and that through Him we are freed from the severe judgement of God." (I, 300, 301).

If we may understand this as meaning that God, "Who presides over ordinary judgments," used the judgment of Pilate, first, to establish Christ's innocence and perfect righteousness publicly and officially; and secondly, to condemn the innocent One to the death of the cross, that He might bear the sins of His people; and that our Lord did not rebel against this, as far as man's judgment was concerned, unrighteous condemnation, but voluntarily bowed under it, in order that He might bear the wrath of God on the cross, — we can agree.

But if the Catechism here be interpreted as mean-

ing: 1. That Pilate, as the representative of the sword-power, instituted by God, expressed his judgment of condemnation upon Jesus in the name of God; 2. That, therefore, the sentence of the Roman governor, whereby he condemned our Lord to the death of the cross, was God's own sentence, and, 3. That, therefore, through Pilate's sentence God actually caused the guilt and condemnation of our iniquities to come upon the Saviour, — we must disagree.

This appears to be the opinion of Dr. A. Kuyper as expressed in *E Voto*, I, 415, 416:

However unrighteous may be the way in which this verdict is established, it is and remains a verdict pronounced in the name of the Lord. The condemned is not allowable to oppose it. And thus it is, indeed, the Lord Himself, and this must receive all the emphasis, Who in the verdict expressed by Pilate laid our condemnation upon Immanuel. He laid on him the iniquity of us all."

To be sure, Pilate represented the sword-power. And the magistrate is God's minister to execute judgment in His name, for the praise of them that do well, and the punishment of them that do evil. As Roman governor and judge he occupied the place of power and authority that was given him from above. Whether he realized this and acknowledged his authority as being derived from the Judge of heaven and earth, or whether he denied this, makes no difference as to the reality of his position.

Formally, therefore, it may be said that Pilate rendered his verdict in the name of the Lord. And the Lord Jesus acknowledged Pilate's authority, and humbly submitted to his verdict. He did not oppose it.

But materially Pilate's final sentence of condemnation could not possibly be pronounced in the name of the Most High.

For, Pilate's judgment did not concern the Mediator, but the man Jesus. And concerning that man Jesus his judgment was twofold: He is perfectly innocent, and: I sentence Him to the death of the cross.

And in this deliberate, extreme, and self-confessed perversion of judgment by the instituted worldly sword-power, must be found another, perhaps, the main reason for Jesus' trial and condemnation by the worldly judge.

H. H.

God's word shall surely stand;
His Name through every land
Shall be adored.
Lord, who shall lead our host?
Thy aid we covet most,
In Thee is all our boast,
Strong in the Lord,

Do The Reprobated Sin In Hell

The question that we are facing in this paper is: Do the reprobated sin in hell. As was said, to determine what it means that the wicked shall be destroyed is to answer the above question. That God will destroy the wicked means that He will make an end of them. But the question is: in what sense will he make an end of them. In answering this question we set out with taking notice how the wicked in this life, as dwellers on this earth, react to God, to the revelation of Himself in His moral law, in providence, in history and in the face of Christ. The wicked are ethically opposed to God. We saw that the Scriptures make it unmistakably clear that the wicked will be destroyed first in the sense that they will be humbled, brought low, not merely objectively, so that, as they lie there in the dust before God and Christ, their souls still seethe with rebellion, but also subjectively in their mind and heart. For, as was shown, the wicked are to be seized by utter fear in the presence of Christ. Rebellion in them will cease, as the will to rebel will be broken. The idolatry of the wicked will cease. All the attacks of the wicked upon God will cease, as the texts that were quoted plainly show. Should the wicked continue defiant, it could only be because God had not the power to subdue them, and in that case sin were mightier than God. This ethical dualism, antithesis, shall not continue. Attention was called to the fact that this ethical dualism must clearly be distinguished from metaphysical dualism. The latter, as was shown, is not.

The old Persians had both an ethical and metaphysical dualism.

The questions with which these old Persian philosophers busied themselves are these: How to explain the transition from the infinite God to the finite?—how to conceive the beginning of creation?—how to conceive of God as the author of the material world, so alien to His essence?—whence, if God is perfect, the imperfections of this world?—whence the destructive powers in nature?—when is moral evil, if a holy God is man's creator?—whence the great diversity existing among men.

Now these old Persian philosophers were pantheists. The Pantheist identifies God and His creation. He thus maintains that the two are essentially one, that thus creation originated not in God's creative will but is an efflux of His being. The Persians, however, did not allow matter, the physical world that we see, to emanate from the being of God for two reasons: 1) God is good, and matter, according to the conception of the Persians, is intrinsically evil. 2) God is spiritual and matter is physical. Denying, as they did, that matter originated in the creative will of God, they were shut up to the view that matter, like God, is uncreated and

thus eternal. The problem in which this theory involved them is this. If matter exists of itself, it opposes and limits God necessarily. But they had a solution. Matter, they said, is by itself dead; and what is dead cannot limit and oppose. The Persian explanation of the Spirit-world is this. The spirits emanate from the incomprehensible essence of God. They are so many divine essences and their class name is *aeon*, meaning eternity. Each of these spirits has its own name such as truth, goodness, wisdom, names of God's attributes. In fact they are divine attributes, which were all hidden in the depth of God's being. The gap between God and the physical world, the Persians bridged as follows: These spirits or divine essences evolve themselves into self-subsisting beings and are now the germs of still other evolutions of life, that is, these essences, as so many spiritual cells continue to develop and individualize themselves but in such a way that the successive grades of this evolution of life are ever sinking lower and becoming feebler the further they are removed from God, their original source. Thus the perfect is ever evolving itself into the less perfect. Out of the last step of the evolution proceeds an *aeon*, a spirit, so imperfect and defective that it cannot retain its connection with the world of *aeons* and consequently sinks down into dead matter and chaos. Thus a drop of the fulness of divine essence spills over into the bordering void. As a result, dead matter becomes alive and the foundation has been laid for a new world beyond the confines of the world of spirits.

The Persian explanation of the origin and existence of evil is as follows. The origination of evil resulted from matter acquiring life. Evil is thus not an efflux of the divine essence. It cannot be, say they, for God is good. Neither did it originate in the will of man, as the Scriptures teach. Evil, according to the Persians, originated in matter, when matter became alive. The problem in which this conception of the origin of evil evolved them is this. If evil originated in matter, independent of God's will—according to the Persian it did so—then evil necessarily limits and opposes God not only ethically but also metaphysically, which means that evil frustrates God's determinate will, so that in this conception evil is another God, as mighty as or, better said, mightier than God. To escape this conclusion, the Persians maintained that evil is purely negative, lacks reality and therefore does not exist, and what does not exist cannot oppose. Evil, however, does exist. It is actual. The Persian solution is no solution. On their basis there is none. The Scriptural teaching on this point has already been given. It is this. God sovereignly and efficaciously willed the origination of evil in the will of man (not in matter). He is therefore the sovereign Lord also of evil, of moral evil, though not the author of it. Evil therefore does not oppose,

limit, God metaphysically, does not frustrate His counsel. To the contrary, it was included in His counsel and serves His purpose.

Thus the Persians had a metaphysical dualism first and then also a ethical dualism. The Pelagians have these two dualisms; and also the exponents of a common grace. The Bible knows only of this ethical dualism, and it teaches, as has been shown that, in the appearing of Christ, also this ethical dualism will cease. As was said, to maintain that this ethical dualism is to continue, is equivalent to saying that sin is mightier than God. Thus, implicit in the philosophy of the continuation of the ethical dualism is the doctrine of the existence of the metaphysical dualism and its continuation.

But, once more, also this ethical dualism, or better said, antithesis, will cease, according to the Scriptures. It can cease because God is God and none else. It must cease because God cannot endure Edom as everlastingly defiant. All Edom's rebellion will cease; when he has done serving the ends of God's kingdom. 2) That Edom will be destroyed includes more. It includes that his present sinful reactions to God will cease altogether and that he will be brought to a state of absolute passivity or negative activity in which state he will suffer only—suffer the punishment of the doomed. It means that all his sinning against the first table of the law will cease. 3) That Edom will be destroyed implies even more. According to the Scriptures it implies the complete eradication of the sinful lusts, strivings, ambitions, aspirations, pride, and egotism peculiar to a totally depraved somatic moral-rational being on this earth. It is certain that in death the reprobated as well as the redeemed permanently lose their earthly soul, their lower nature, by which they are adapted to an earthly life on this earth. Yet, as was said, this must not be taken to mean that the lost will spend eternity in hell as disembodied spirits. But the body in which they shall come forth out of the grave will be one adapted to their utterly desolate state of existence. Hell, it must be considered, is a place of outer darkness and utter desolation. Said Paul to the heathen in Lystra, "Nevertheless he—God—left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." The doomed will not eat and drink and make merry in hell. They will not marry and be given in marriage. All the sinful pleasures of the wicked in this life, summed up in the statement, "wine, women and song" will be no more. Hell is not a modified form of our earthly mode of existence. All the means through which sin in this life attains expression will not be in hell. Hence, there can be in hell no such things as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. The envies and hatreds, the hungers and thirsts, the ambitions and aspirations,

the hopes and expectations of men on earth are not in hell. The expectations of the wicked shall perish. Their places will be taken by hopeless despair, remorse, unutterable fear, spiritual anguish, pain and distress. The dead, says the preacher, know not anything; neither have they anymore reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love and their hatred and their envy is perished, that is, the love, hatred, and envy of somatic moral-rational beings on this earth. The preacher here speaks of men in the state of death. But the same holds true of the doomed in hell, and also for that matter of the redeemed in heaven. The house of this earthly tabernacle will be completely destroyed, for both the lost and the redeemed. However, there is this difference. The redeemed have and receive a building of God not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. That "house not made with hands" is the heavenly and glorified and supremely blissful state and mode of existence of the redeemed. It includes all the blessings of Christ's heavenly kingdom. Now the reprobated will also receive a house in the room of the house of this their tabernacle that is to be broken down. The house that they will receive is the mode of existence peculiar to the reprobated in hell. In that house, they will be solely occupied with God and will taste his wrath as it will consume their being and permeate their entire existence. They will be so constituted physically and spiritually as to be wholly and exclusively adapted to the suffering of the torments of hell.

That the wicked will be destroyed implies more. It implies that the lost, in their fear and terror and remorse, will condemn themselves for their works done in the flesh, will decry the sinfulness and utter foolishness of sin, and, as so decrying, will be wholly devoted to God in the bearing of His wrath as revealed and operative in them, and in the acknowledgment of His mercy upon the redeemed in heaven. It is as the prophet says, the idols of the wicked, their idol worship, shall be destroyed. There is no idolatry in hell, no blaspheming of God's name, no kneeling down before gods other than the true God. There will be no adulteries in hell, no thieveries and robberies, no lustings of the flesh, no drunkenness and gluttony. In hell the reprobated are as completely devoted to God as are the redeemed in heaven. For the wicked shall be destroyed. That the wicked will be destroyed implies all this.

But the question is whether the destruction of the wicked implies still more, whether it implies also the removal of the ethical fountain of sin, that the Scriptures call heart. From this fountain and center of man's spiritual being are all the issues of life, so that as the heart is, so is the man. Of the elect we read, that God takes away their stony heart and gives them a heart of flesh, that thus He eradicates in them the

principle of sin and implants in them a principle of new life.

Now the question is whether the destruction of the wicked does actually include also the eradication of the principle of sin in him? Is this idea taught in the Scriptures? Not directly certainly, as far as I am aware. That is to say, I know of no statements or combination of statements, occurring in the Scriptures, that set forth this teaching or doctrine directly. But do the Scriptures, perhaps, teach the idea by implication? That is to say, does all that the Scriptures teach us about the destruction of the wicked necessarily imply the destruction of the principle of sin in the reprobate? The only way in which this can be determined is to examine the view in order to determine whether or no it is encumbered by difficulties of such a nature as to forbid its adoption. What are the difficulties in which such a view would involve us? There is, in the first place this difficulty. A reprobate, in whom the very heart of sin has been destroyed, is a sinless being; he is a being without a sinful heart. For the term "heart" taken in the ethical sense, is but another term for "principle of sin". I speak now of the sinful heart. Do the Scriptures allow us to think of the reprobated in hell as sinless beings in this sense? But the difficulty greatly increases if it cannot be allowed that God implants in the essence of the reprobate, in which the heart of sin had been destroyed, a holy principle of life. For a rational-moral being, in whom dwells neither a principle of sin nor a new principle of life is not a rational-moral being at all, as far as I can see. The animal is neither sinful nor holy; but neither is the animal a rational-moral creature. Now the punishment in hell is adapted to rational-moral creatures. So then, if the reprobated in hell are non-rational-moral beings, how can they suffer the punishment of hell? On the other hand, if we do allow that God implants in the reprobated in hell a new principle of life, after destroying in them the root of sin, we are driven to the conclusion that hell will be populated by holy beings, Satan and his angels included. But this is not according to the Scriptures. Besides, how could God actually hate the persons of sinless, positively holy, reprobated men? How could God actually be angry with such men? How could He be angry with their persons? But was God not angry with the person of Christ? Certainly not. Though Christ bore the burden of God's wrath, God loved His person. He was the obedient servant of God, obedient in love. These difficulties, it seems to me, forbid the adoption of this view.

Doubtless it is incorrect to say that God takes the stony heart out of the flesh of the lost and gives them a heart of flesh. This He does to His people only. In the lost the evil fountain of ethical corruption that the Scriptures call heart is not removed, but it is

dried up, so to say. How is this to be understood? We need here the distinction between states active and passive, productive and receptive and between actions positive and actions that are negative. These distinctions are true. To illustrate, when we speak we are active, productive. When we listen, we are passive and receptive. The former is positive action, the latter negative. The state of a man who is smitten by another and who does not resist nor rebel in his soul is passive and receptive. That man endures only. Now in the lost, the evil spring that Scripture calls heart no longer wells up. The evil fruit of the bad tree has withered and the tree no longer bears. The raging wave no longer rages and foams out its shame. In the lost in hell all positive action is ended. The lost suffer only—suffer the wrath of God as filled vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction. Their state is one of absolute passivity and receptivity. It means that the wicked are destroyed. It means that in hell the moral dualism, the antithesis, is ended. This must be maintained in opposition to those who teach that in this life the antithesis is relative and that in hell it does not end at all but even attains to an absolute degree of intensity. A recent issue of "The Banner" (March 16) contains an article that reads in part, "There is among many of our people great confusion of mind respect to the antithesis. Thank God that the antithesis is still preached among us. The majority of those who confess Christianity in this land of ours seem to be entirely ignorant of what it means, which accounts for the conformity to the world seen everywhere. The enmity which God has placed between the church and the world, dating from Paradise, is being wiped out and it spells nothing but calamity for us. Fences, both in doctrine and life, are being torn down and being left to deteriorate. Mr. World and Miss Churchmember are carrying on a courtship together and are being wed in many cases. If ever the injunction to watch and pray is in order, it is today. . . . The Antithesis, even during the best period of the church's history, is very incomplete. When in the great day of days the sheep are separated from the goats and the chaff is winnowed from the wheat, then the Antithesis shall be seen in its fullness."

Here the view is expressed that the Antithesis, which, according to this writer, is now relative, on account of the worldliness of God's people and the checking of sin in the world by common grace, will be completed in the final judgment day. According to this conception, the fierce antagonism to God and His people on the part of the reprobated wicked will not cease, but it will continue everlastingly in hell even as having attained the highest degree of intensity in the final judgment day. Thus the Antithesis will remain. The wicked will not be destroyed, as the Scriptures everywhere teach. But they will continue

Our Missionary Calling

supremely active in hell, opposing and taunting God, crying out their rebellion in His ears. If this is true, hell is not hell. If this is true, there is no hell. Here we have one of the official organs of the Christian Reformed Churches blossoming out with the teaching virtually denying the existence of hell. For consider what is properly to be understood by the antithesis or moral dualism. On the part of the wicked, the antithesis or moral dualism. On the part of the wicked, the antithesis is Satan's *ney* which Satan and the wicked oppose to God's *yea*. Now God's *yea* is truth, righteousness, holiness; it is God, for He is the truth. It is Christ, for He is the truth and the life. The *yea* is God's people, not their flesh certainly but the new creature in them. Thus the *ney* of darkness is the lie. It is contempt and defiance of God. The *ney* of darkness is the world at the cross crucifying the Christ, the Son of God, the light and the life. The *ney* of darkness is this same world killing God's people. The *ney* of darkness is the antithesis on the part of darkness. Thus, according to the writer quoted above, of the opposition of darkness to light, of truth to the lie, of unrighteousness to righteousness, of unholiness to holiness, of Satan to Christ, of the world to the church, there will be no end. The antithesis will continue eternally. Darkness will everlastingly be opposing the light ethically, and the light will everlastingly be striving with darkness in the vain attempt to overcome it. This is pagan dualism of the purest wool. Thus it is not the Scriptures. According to the Scriptures, the wicked shall be destroyed.

G. M. O.

ATTENTION — READERS!

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So much has been written and said on this subject in the past twenty years of our history that it is not likely that anything new will be found in this discussion. Nor is that, perhaps, the most important at present but rather to re-emphasize what has already been said and written, and that is important. In reviewing our missionary activity of the past twenty years one finds cycles or periods of enthusiasm and labor and lethargy and non-activity. At present, apparently, we are approaching the bottom of the latter cycle, which finds our missionary activity in a state of almost complete rest and inertia. For that reason an awakening certainly is necessary.

A brief review of that history is interesting and informative. In the early years of '24, '25 and '26 there was, naturally, a great deal of activity. This took the form of much writing, speaking and organization. Characteristic of this period was the spontaneity with which the work went forward. At this time there was more work and demand for labor than our limited means could provide or accomplish.

During the years from '26 to '30 there was a gradual decline in activity. It is true that some Churches were organized during this period but only after considerable labor, usually, and with greater effort. The enthusiasm and spontaneity of the first period were lacking.

From the years '30 to '35 a marked rise in activity is noticed. Several new Churches were organized. At this time the first definite Mission activity was organized, both by the Churches together and in an individual Church. It was in these years that the Mission Publishing Society of the Sunday School of our First Church was formed. The purpose of this organization was to spread the Truth as we have it. Every three months a pamphlet was published and sent out to a large mailing list. Among these was the very beautifully written pamphlet, by the Rev. H. Hoeksema: "Jesus Saviour and the Evil of Hawking Him", which has a very definite Mission approach. Also during this period a Mission Committee was appointed in the united Churches of our denomination. This committee was formulated with a definite missionary purpose and mandate.

During the years '35 to '37 we entered another cycle or period of decline. There were no Churches organized during this period in our denomination. We understand that the organization of new Churches in our midst is not necessarily the indication of missionary activity. It may very well be that such activity is being carried on, and properly without producing this positive fruit. However, it is also true, that it is unlikely that new congregations will be organized with-

out mission activity. Further, we merely use this rule as a guide for comparison of the various periods.

The period, from '37 to '42, was one of renewed activity and zeal. It was here, that for the first time in our history, we had a missionary in the field. These were the years of the Rev. B. Kok's labors as home-missionary. Through his efforts the Gospel was proclaimed outside the immediate vicinity of our Churches and two healthy congregations were organized. The period from '42 to the present is again marked by a decline of activity.

At present we have no official missionary activity. It is true that we still have a calling Church and Mission Committee but very little is heard from either and no apparent progress is made. We also still have our Standard Bearer and two radio programs but neither of these can be classified as official Mission activity. The Standard Bearer is not the official voice of the Churches but rather of the R. F. P. A. and its circulation is practically limited among our own constituents. Although the Radio broadcasts produce some results in the way of Mission activity, they are not, strictly speaking, to be classified as such. Both are sponsored by the Young People of the Churches and again, are not officially the voice of the Denomination. It is evident, therefore, that a "renaissance", a rebirth, an awakening is in order and necessary. The dying flame must be aroused to burn again.

All mission activity must, of course, be based upon the Word of God and follow the directives that Scripture points out to us. Scripture teaches us especially three things with reference to this great task. These are the principles from which our missionary activity must proceed. In the first place, Scripture teaches, that from the beginning of the world unto the end of the same, Christ calls unto Himself His elect, given Him by the Father from all eternity. These individuals Christ gathers to Himself as a Church; calling them in time from every nation, tribe, and tongue. The One and only True Missionary is, therefore, Christ Himself, Who gathers His own through His Word and Spirit. These He gathers as a Church which He also continues to teach and uphold; to the end that it may love and serve Him and glorify God, the Father.

In the second place, this gathering together of the elect, is accomplished by Christ through His Church on earth, of which He always remains the Head. The Church partakes of this calling through the confession of the individual members, through the preaching of the Word, and through manifesting and directing itself as an organization in the midst of the world. It is Christ, too, that calls and qualifies His servants to proclaim His Word both within and without the sphere of the organized Church. He also prepares the field for Church extension and sends His servants, through the Church, to the field thus prepared.

Finally, it is the task of the Church, through its ministers and missionaries to be witness of Christ—His death and resurrection and to proclaim the demands of faith and repentance. The Church must proclaim Christ and Him crucified. To do so means a great deal. It demands the preaching of sin, righteousness, judgment, natural depravity, total inability, of death and corruption. Positively, to proclaim the atonement of Christ, of forgiveness of sins in Him, of life and forgiving grace in Christ's perfect sacrifice. In other words, the calling is to proclaim the full and complete council of God as it is revealed in Christ. Certainly not merely—or at all—an invitation or offer of salvation, but the *command* to repentance and turning.

This must be our directive, for the purpose of mission activity is not to "win souls". Christ gathers His Church, always, we do not "save souls", that is alone accomplished by God. The purpose of all mission activity must be to glorify God in Christ through the revelation of sovereign forgiving grace in the midst of sin and death. It is through *that* preaching that God is glorified and exalted and through which, at the same time, He calls His own to repentance, judges the world and makes the wicked ripe for condemnation.

That Christ has given this task to His Church is evident from all of Scripture. It is particularly clear in those passages from the New Testament in which Christ directly commissions His apostles, to that task, and the Church through them. There are especially three passages which we should note here. They are: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Matthew 28:19, 20: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Mark 16:15-16: "Then he opened their understanding that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things." Luke 24:45-48.

From these passages we note especially the following elements. (We merely mention them here. For an enlarged discussion see article written by the Rev. P. De Boer, S. B., volume 10, number 15, pages 344-345, from which this is taken.) In the first place, these passages contain a mandate for the Church. She here receives a command from her Head. An obligation is

laid upon her; this is a *must* for the Church. This mandate is a command to *preach*. This preaching must be the proclamation of the Gospel—the “good news”, and that in all its fulness. This mandate to preach the Gospel is to extend “to all creatures”. This in the organic sense, and not head for head, as is evident from the qualifying phrase: “beginning at Jerusalem” but extending to the ends of the earth. Further, it is evident, that this is a continuous task of the Church. She must always be busy with this work, bath in her own midst and ever anew outside her ranks. To this we would like to add an element not found in the article quoted; taking up this task the Church has the promise from Christ that He will bless these labors and will gather His Church through them.

This in general, is the missionary calling of the Church. Next time, the Lord willing, we hope to point out *our* specific calling and present a positive program whereby we can fulfill *our* calling and obligation in this work.

(to be continued)

W. H.

The Sphinx (Stalin) Of Moscow

(Biography)

By the way of introduction let me say that the chief source of the material found in this article is the book “Stalin” written by Boris Souvarine a contemporary of Stalin until he was sent into exile. To know a little about the life and character of Joseph Stalin it is naturally necessary to follow the various political developments and phases of Russian history of the last several decades. Stalin cannot be separated from Russia, nor, as it is today, Russia from Stalin. Due to this two things will become evident. First, that it is well-nigh impossible to obtain even a very general conception of Stalin from one short article in the Standard Bearer. Hence two articles. Secondly that some of this material will be rather dry and uninteresting, at least to some of us. However, since Stalin and Bolshevik Russia are of such tremendous importance today and are playing such a leading role in the history of the world today, and to my mind undoubtedly already have influenced our country and will do so to a much greater extent in the future involving the church I believe I am justified in writing it in the Standard Bearer.

Joseph Stalin, his real name Joseph Vissarionovich Djugashvili (try to pronounce it), was born in 1879

at Gori, Georgia in Russia. In the organization of Bolshevism he was also known under the nicknames of Sosso and Koba. Stalin was still very young when his father died. Three other children of the family died before his birth, leaving him the only son. His mother sent him to the church school at Gori with the idea of making him a parish priest. From there he went to a seminary at Tiflis to continue his studies, from which after some time he was expelled. Stalin's parents had been serfs (a little more than slaves). His early life was therefore characterized by much poverty. During this time agricultural implements were very rudimentary and ineffective, industry was practically non-existent and the general living conditions of the people were deplorable. During this time capitalism began to penetrate into the Caucasus beginning with a few factories and consequently forming the proletariat class (wage-earners) which aggravated matters. A poverty stricken working-class grew up slowly around the earliest spinning wheels, iron works and factories, most of which were government owned and controlled. The atmosphere being saturated with hatred for the Tsarist oppression Stalin threw himself with all his heart in the revolutionary activity of the Russian Socialist Democracy an organization which later developed into Bolshevism. Qualities for membership in the party were untiring devotion to the cause, the desire to be useful, the willingness to act and surrender self. In this Stalin was in his element. The party grew in numbers of which Lenin soon became the leader. According to him speech and protest by the proletariat was not enough, action was necessary. “Give us an organization of Revolutionaries and we will turn Russia upside down.” Here we begin to see the spirit of Bolshevism which is permeated with revolutionary activities. When the first Congress of this Soc. Dem. party met in 1903 difference of opinion arose which resulted in a split — the Bolsheviks (in the majority) and the Mensheviks. However, the one program which both parties accepted was the conquest of the proletariat power which would permit them to crush all resistance on the part of the exploiting class. During this time Stalin was in prison and later sent in exile to Siberia from which he escaped in 1904. The natural results of this program were strikes *everywhere* and bitter conflicts with the police, and the army. Thousands were killed including women and children. It is remarkable that during all this time Stalin was in the background and showed very little leadership. It became evident later that he was no organizer but a usurper of power at any cost when given the opportunity. Lenin was as yet the leader with men like Trotsky and others at his side. One is amazed at Lenin's mental insight, intuition, ability of leadership, and boundless devotion to the cause of the Party. In 1905 the first revolution took

place. For the *first* political victory — shorter hours of work, higher wages and the right to form trade unions — the proletariat sacrificed 15,000 dead, 20,000 wounded and 80,000 prisoners. The Party was engaged in the most ruthless means to attain its end — bombing, murder, robbery, etc. In many of these Stalin took a part, though not a prominent one. But in many of his actions his character is displayed. Often he would formulate plans of murder and rioting, but force another to execute them. Exemplary of this is the following recording: on a certain occasion an ex-Bolshevist by the name of Mitka G..... stabbed to death a young workman, unknown to him, in the belief that he was a spy. For a long time the affair remained obscure, many being accused of the matter. At last it became evident that Stalin was the instigator. Stalin soon found himself in prison again. In 1910 he was again arrested and sentenced for another five years. In the spring of the next year he again escaped. In 1912 he was made a member of the Central Committee of the Party. In 1913 following another arrest he was deported to a place north of the Arctic Circle where he hunted foxes and wild ducks. In 1917 he was recalled for military service in the first World War but due to an infirmity in his left hand was rejected. In 1917, the same year, the great revolution of Russia began. The outcome, following many more atrocities, rebellions and murders, was the victory of the Bol. Party. It was during this time especially that the Party's ideas of communism became international, especially in the mind of Lenin. I quote him: "The definitive victory of socialism is impossible in one country alone. The French will begin it and the Germans will complete it, in conjunction with the English. Our safety lies in the pan-European revolution." Because the Bol. Party was still very small in number (having used force to obtain the reins of the government) a Civil War ensued. Another cause of this war was the catastrophic situation which Bolshevism inherited of which the outstanding factors were famine, reduction of grainfields, ruined industry and transport. In many sections of the country the armies of the opponents were marching on cities. Again Lenin showed exceptional leadership with Trotsky at his right hand and Stalin at the left. The latter two were commanded to lead their armies against the "rebels." After much bloodshed and strife they succeeded in suppressing their opponents. Due to this as well as the many hidden policies of the Party all democracy vanished. Stalin emerged from the war matured and tempered. He had won no notoriety, but under Lenin had acquired the technique of government.

The result of all this was the birth of the Society Republic, even though the Party in 1920 totalled only some 600,000 members. Ere long every thesis of Lenin

was abandoned — soviet democracy, the suppression of privileges, equality of remuneration, abolition of bureaucracy, freedom of the press, etc. — which he had so faithfully promised to put into practice. The Central Committee, composed of members from each republic, was the central ruling body. The difficulty, however, of calling urgent plenary meetings of this scattered committee gave rise to a small Central Com. composed of eleven members later called the Politbureau. This bureau later became the supreme organ of the dictatorship. In 1922 Stalin became the general secretary of the Central Com. in succession to Molotov who was relegated to the post of assistant. This advancement later proved to be Stalin's stepping stone to the dictatorship. Lenin was as yet the leader of the Party even though he refused personal dictatorship. Fact is that Lenin strongly opposed all personal dictatorship and advocated only a ruling by the Politbureau. Lenin at this time became attracted to Stalin in whom he saw firmness, a practical mind and cunningness. Later he admitted his erroneous judgments of Stalin, then knowing Stalin to be ignorant, with a very narrow political horizon and a man of moral coarseness and unscrupulousness. Now an unexpected event happened. Lenin succumbed to his toil, his mind showing signs of paralysis. Sporadic attacks of this malady followed. Lenin soon expressed that he considered Trotsky the safest of his successors and the most capable of leading the Politbureau and the people. Stalin, however, as secretary of the Com. and a member of the Politbureau, made use of his powers and proved to be more than a match for Trotsky. Lenin soon saw Stalin's ambitions and tried to forecome what proved to be inevitable. Before his death he depicted Stalin and his policies in the most plain terms. In many letters and finally in his last testament he vividly portrayed him as rude, an uncivilized rascal and a ruthless usurper of power. But Stalin made provisions that the contents of these letters and testament never came to the ears of the people or even of the Central Com. The outcome was that Stalin gradually emerged as the victor using the most intrigue, cunning, secret and devilish means. Many of his personal friends were put in office while his enemies were sent on missions far away from Moscow. Elections of officers ceased. The practise of bribery was enormous. Decisions and actions were falsified by the stroke of the pen before Pravda (official Russian newspaper; government controlled) printed them. During this time Lenin died in much despair even though the people (who knew nothing about the struggle between him and Stalin) eulogized him as their superman and god. The dictatorship of Joseph Stalin gradually took on a visible form. But in reality nothing had been accomplished since the days of Tsarism, the form of government being the

same and the standards of living still being at a very low ebb. Fact is that they were definitely lower than under the old regime. In 1928 Russian industry was far behind any other country of Europe, agriculture was still very primitive and sixty percent of the people were total illiterates, not even knowing the alphabet.

Having ascended the throne of dictatorship the Bolshevik Party gradually ceased to be a party. Playing on a gigantic chessboard Stalin could move the pieces as he wished without much hindrance. As to be expected he had many opponents, of which Trotsky was the most important, whom he had to dispose of. But no one was Stalin's equal in shrewdness, maneuvering, administrative ability or in the continuity of his drive towards power. Many of the objectors of the common people were deprived of work and were turned out of their homes. Thousands were imprisoned, accused, condemned without proof, without witnesses and without defence. Siberia was again peopled by exiles of all shades. Stalin always utilized to the utmost any weapon that came in his hands. We are told that no despot in any age or country has even enjoyed such powers of deceiving the public, or if that failed, of suppressing public opinion than Stalin. He struck right and left, often thousands of innocent people were accused and killed by the firing squad. The G. P. U. (Russian Secret Police) was no longer held in check, discovering traitors in all directions and when it could find none it invented them. Stalin saw to it that there are no records of the thousands imprisoned and deported, or killed. Fact is that no contemporary records have been able to keep up with all the mass arrests and executions, the suicides and the assassinations which took place. Whole villages and districts were depopulated and their inhabitants dispersed and decimated as happened in ancient times in Assyria (Israel and Judah). The death sentence was applied to theft, which often was executed during times of terrible famines as took place in 1932-1933. A starving individual who had gleaned a few ears of wheat or stolen a few vegetables from *his own field* would be eligible for capital punishment. Watch towers were erected over the fields from which the G. P. U. could scan the fields. An American correspondent, extremely favorable to Stalin's interests estimated that about two million had been banished or exiled (leave alone the killed) during the years 1929-1930. It was also during this time that churches were closed and all religion was vigorously suppressed, which also naturally involved a terrible persecution of God's saints. History will never be able to tell what the Church of Christ endured in Russia during the past few decades.

Trotsky, possibly due to his prestige, was not killed but sent into exile in a French province. But in general, killing was considered easier than per-

suasion of the dissatisfied. With the passing of the years it became evident to the people that their promised Utopia was not being realized. This was witnessed by all in the deplorable conditions of industry, business and agriculture. From 1930-1933 a most terrible famine again prevailed. Millions upon millions starved to death. Uprisings were as frequent under Societism as Tsarism. Regardless of all this Stalin sought his praise and demanded the people to render him such threatening them with capital punishment. His fiftieth birthday was crowned with a crescendo of adulation, artificial veneration and adoration. The word genius, applied to him, became obligatory and those who neglected to write it for any reason or without any reason rendered themselves liable to suspicion. He was painted and sculptured in Napoleonic attitudes. There already existed a Stalingrad, a Stalino, a Stalinabad, Stalinsk, and Stalin-Aoul. Lenin and his works were gradually pushed into the background. Poets and writers described him as follows: "Story tellers no longer know to whom to compare Thee, poets have not enough pearls with which to describe Thee. O Thou mighty one, chief of the peoples, Who callest man to life, Who awakest the earth to fruitfulness. O sun Who are reflected by millions of human hearts, etc." What an idolatry!!! All this was given him in spite of his unheard of brutality and inhuman methods. But, as we noticed, the people so adored him in the constant fear of death for refusal. Stalin shrinks before nothing if he can but attack, strike and crush. He loves nobody and nobody really loves him. He has no friend or confidant. His first wife is said to have committed suicide one night even though many thousands died over night in those days. Another example of all his most devilish works is the execution of some 117 men of rank for the murder of one of his "friends" while in the end it became evident that Stalin himself had committed the murder. But Stalin ruled with an iron hand and a firm grip. This explains why there were no open rebellions and insurrections. But all of the people's rebellious attitudes could not remain hidden. Hence purges took place from time to time resulting in the execution and banishment of more thousands. I could go on to quote all kinds of atrocities committed by him, but let the above suffice. The author of this biography estimates that some ten million people have either been exiled or banished by Stalin during his comparatively short regime, let alone all the massacred and executed.

Formerly he had branded the league of Nations as a League of Brigands, later he joined it without shame. The reason for this was that Hitler had refused to comply with his international socialistic ideas as Mussolini had done. He tried his utmost with Hitler, singing sweet tunes to him, but Hitler turned a cold shoulder. Hence, he turned to England and France and tried

to awaken in the people of the U.S.S.R. the consciousness of their patriotic duty of opposing the fascist idealologies.

Today Stalin really stands all alone. He has no intimate friends. The latter is due not only to his character but also his actions in respect to his friends. Not only did his enemies "disappear" but also his friends. No one must know too much of Joseph Stalin, no one must remain in office too long. And to disappear under Stalin means to perish in a cellar or some other place or to waste away slowly in an unhealthy climate. Of the original party staff (composed of many members) there are only two living today, Trotsky in Mexico and Stalin in Moscow. There have disappeared all the Chief leaders of the G.P.U., most of the former members of the Council of war, leaders and generals of the army, members of the Central Committee, the Politbureau, of the Council of Commissars, of Labor, etc. etc. Not knowing in whom to trust and seeing traitors on all sides he keeps changing his favorites (disposing of them) without changing his methods. No wonder that Stalin today is surrounded by unprecedented police precautions extending even to the minutest searches of his most "intimate" friends. Not only did he get rid of his rivals, he now also destroys all possible successors. He once said: "To choose the victim, to prepare the blow with care, to sate an implacable vengeance and then go to bed. . . . there is nothing sweeter in the world!"

This is Joseph Stalin, OUR ALLY.

A few concluding remarks.

From the reading of this book as well as other literature relative to the subject it has become plain to me that this pernicious and ungodly form of government finds its origin not in Stalin, neither in Lenin, but in Karl Marx. Lenin in turn developed Marx's theories and put them into practise which resulted in Bolshevism. Lenin cannot be separated from Bolshevism. Stalin on the other hand had nothing to do with the rise of the Party (history proving that he has never been farseeing or an organizer), nor did he develop its theories. He is a mere product of the former two. But Stalin took another step by forming a dictatorial form of government such as the world perhaps has never before witnessed. Is this beast not a type (or more) of the beast that comes up out of the sea in Rev. 13. Take notice of his attitude towards the church today! Lenin certainly did not advocate Stalin's form of government. If he was living today he too would most likely find himself in one of Stalin's prisons or be sent into exile.

In the second place one by reading this kind of material begins to understand and know the implications of Russian Bolshevism. Bolshevism is much more

than what is ordinarily called socialism or communism. It is extreme revolutionary socialism, with absolutely no respect for government or authority and stopping short of nothing to attain its end. They are rightly called the Reds.

In the third place we notice that all these things are evil forebodings. As was said in our former article if this form of communism is to be successful it must become international. And do not these revolutionary activities remind us of many things occurring in our own country today? International communism is making drastic inroads into the world today. Of late Russia has officially dropped its policy of international communism. But has it really and does this imply that it will exert no more influence? The contrary is true. Books like "Under Cover" and "Out of the Night" and others reveal what is going on today. Who knows what kind of government many of us will see? In this communistic form of government the government rules everything. It tells us what kind of god to serve, how to instruct our children, how we must live, etc. But let the church beware, be sober and watch!

J. B.

Religious Freedom In Russia

From all appearances there is a decided change in the attitude of the Soviet government toward religion, which, according to some reporters, promises to outlast the war.

Ever since the rise of the Soviet Union repeated attempts have been made to suppress, if not to wipe out religion in Russia. The first assault was launched in 1917 when Communism came into power. Priests and bishops were jailed, exiled and executed by the thousands. The church schools and press were outlawed, while property was confiscated and turned into nurseries, graneries, anti-religious museums and the like.

In 1928 other steps were taken to suppress religion. A six day week was instituted, which put away with the Sunday. Religious instruction for anyone under eighteen years of age was considered an offense against the State. Some one thousand clergymen were imprisoned. The printing of Bibles was forbidden. While a powerful League of Militant Atheists, which published a weekly journal satirizing religion, was given a government backing.

In 1937 the clergy that remained in office were forbidden the right to vote and were diligently guarded against influencing the vote of the laymen.

As late as 1943 reports from Russia stated that

religion in Russia was tolerated, but at the same time discouraged as much as possible. At that late date the churches were charged exorbitant taxes. It is said that Moscow's St. Elias Church paid \$19,000 annually "just for the privilege of keeping its doors open", in addition to other regular taxes. Priests paid a forty percent income tax. Agents were sent out from the government to take down sermons verbatim. And the training of the clergy was forbidden, so that it was impossible to replace those who died. Even today not all of these conditions are changed.

All this in spite of the fact that the Constitution of the Soviet regime favors "freedom of religion". President Roosevelt reminded the country of this in 1941 when our pact with Russia was being established. In fact, he compared it to the freedom of religion as guaranteed by our own Constitution, which at the time created quite a stir in the country. Article 124 of the Russian Constitution reads: "In the object of ensuring to the citizens freedom of conscience, the church in the U.S.S.R. is separated from the State and the school from the church. Freedom of service of religious cults and freedom of anti-religious propaganda is acknowledged for all citizens."

It may surprise us that the churches in Russia were still able to eke out an existence through all this suppression. Of the hundred thousand congregations under the Czar there were an estimated thirty thousand still active a few years ago. Particularly the Russian Baptists seem to have ridden out the storm, often without clergy to serve their churches, but with a strong determination to remain in existence. They are considered to be a group of Biblical fundamentalists, a comparatively new movement springing from German Protestantism and having no political ambitions. According to some reports they have grown to a total of four million, which is two thirds the number of Northern and Southern Baptists in the United States.

It is now commonly agreed in all reports from Russia that the Soviet government has definitely changed its attitude toward religion. Jerome Davis in "The New Republic" of March 5, 1945, writes, "Russia is not abandoning religion. All who wish to worship God are free to express their faith as their conscience dictates. This right is being exercised today and will be in the future." He adds that the church has been permitted to open a theological seminary for the training of candidates for the clergy. The government has established a council for religion under the Council of People's Commissars. It is cooperating with the religious bodies of all faiths. The Church is once more allowed to publish its own literature and run its own press. Military medals have been awarded to the clergy for their patriotic efforts in the war, particularly in Leningrad and in Moscow. The atheist society

has been disbanded. Officers now attend religious services and new churches have been opened.

Other sources say that the clergy is once more allowed to vote, the seven day week is back, and textbooks for the schools have been revised to eliminate offensive references to religion.

All of which speaks of a change of attitude on the part of the Soviet government toward religion. Freedom of religion seems to have been restored once more. And evidently under the same constitution under which it has been suppressed for so long. This is quite significant.

The change of attitude must be considered a change of policy rather than a change of principle. The Soviet government has not changed its principles one iota, but is just as communistic as it ever was.

This is evident from a leading article on education in the Russian paper "Komsomolskaya Pravda", taken over in the "New Republic" of March 5, 1945. This article states, "There is no use concealing the fact that among teachers there are people—a small number, it is true—who have begun to show great tolerance toward religion.

"Cases of observance of religious ceremonies by teachers have been increased somewhat. Our party's attitude toward religion is well known and has not changed. Our party fights against religious prejudices because it stands for science, while religious prejudices go against science, since all religion is contrary to science.

"By what means does our party fight religion? Kalmin gave a good answer in his talk to front-line agitators in 1943: "We don't persecute anyone for religion. We regard it as an error and fight it with enlightenment." In conformity with the requirements of our party, care must be taken to avoid any offence to the feelings of believers, which can lead only to the strengthening of religious fanaticism. It is regrettable that some of our educators have shown themselves to be prisoners of religious errors. This is naturally due to slack work in political education by the teachers."

The main question is, why this change of policy on the part of the Soviet government in granting freedom of religion where it was formerly suppressed?

Especially two reasons have been suggested which are worthy of our consideration.

This change is partly due, no doubt, to the change of attitude by the church itself toward the Soviet government. The churches of Russia are said to have favored the Czar and opposed Communism. Prominent leaders in the church, especially in the Russian Orthodox Church, put forth every effort to overthrow the Soviet regime. But in later years the churches either hushed their opposition or gave the Soviet government their support. The war seems to have influenced the churches to no small extent to rally their

support to the Communistic government. This at least in part accounts for the change of attitude of the Soviet government toward religion. And possibly also accounts for the fact that the Russian Baptists, who never burdened themselves with political matters, are far better off under the present government than they ever were under the Czar.

But Russia's change of policy is evidently also a political move. Walter Graebner, Time and Life correspondent in Russia, writes in his "Round Trip to Russia" in 1943: "It may be that, as the Soviet Union grows older, it is taking a less stern attitude toward religion. This is certainly what the government would like the world to think. Many, however, feel that the changed attitude is more a wartime expediency than the real things. Most foreign observers believe that Kremlin is basically just as anti-religious as it ever was. But no one knows for sure."

In his "Report on the Russians", William L. White writes: "The Bolshevik Party now feels strong enough to tolerate, even to recognize, the Church. The patriarchs have loyally supported the war. The principal reason for the Party's original opposition lay in the fact that the Church had in previous generations preached unquestioning obedience to the Czars. The Party has not overlooked the fact that a patriotic, nationalistic Church can be as useful to their regime as it was to the Romanoff dynasty."

"Although the Church is now recognized and tolerated, it is not officially encouraged. The Party realizes that the new policy is popular abroad, and strengthens in America and England their own position and that of their friends in those countries. Consequently, they encourage all new stories and picture layouts coming out of Russia portraying the new state of affairs."

"... Marx called religion 'The Opium of the People.' The private attitude of the Party would be, 'If the people still want opium, why not give them a little? We are strong now, and today the Church is patriotic.'"

Summing up these various reports, we can only conclude that Russia's change of attitude is only a change in policy. The motive seems to be to establish a united home-front to aid her in her war, and at the same time to gain the good-will of her allies who are fighting a common cause with her. The Soviet Union may also have learned that military power and suppression may subdue a people, but will never succeed in winning them for the cause. They seem to have chosen to don the sheep's garment as far more becoming and much more influential in gaining their end. Russian Communism is taking on the appearance of the Beast of Revelation 13.

While the churches in Russia, at least for the most part, seem to realize that their modernistic principles are not so different after all from the aims of the

Communists. They are evidently quite willing to accept the embrace of the Russian Bear.

It begins to look very much as if the devil will return to find his house garnished and clean, ready to be inhabited by seven other demons, all more powerful than the first. That sort of freedom of religion forebodes only oppression for the true Church of Jesus Christ in the world. At least, we do well to be forewarned and watch developments.

C. H.

An Interesting Discussion

Both because the discussion is interesting in itself, and because we are discussing the case of Dr. Clark in our paper, our readers may be interested in the following report, which we reprint from "The Presbyterian Guardian" of April 10, 1945:

The Presbytery of Philadelphia of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church held its regular spring meeting on March 19th in Mediator Church, Philadelphia. The principal item of business was the consideration of the proposed answer to the complaint against the actions of the presbytery relative to the licensure and ordination of the Rev. Gordon H. Clark, Ph. D. Discussion of the Clark case lasted for ten hours without reaching any final conclusion of the matter, and presbytery adjourned at midnight to reconvene ten days later.

The devotional hour was led by the Rev. Glenn R. Coie, pastor of Knox Church, Silver Spring, Md., and the subject of his meditation was "Holy Boldness."

The presbytery was called to order at 11:30 and constituted with prayer by the Rev. Edward L. Kellogg, moderator. Following the reading of communications, and after lengthy discussion of the docket, the presbytery placed only two matters ahead of consideration of the Clark case. A pastoral call from Faith Church, Lincoln, Nebr., which had been referred from the Presbytery of the Dakotas, was placed in the hands of licentiate Delbert Schowalter, and an Auditing Committee was appointed. After disposal of these two matters, the presbytery recessed for lunch.

Corresponding members who were seated by the presbytery included Mr. Mark Fakkema, general secretary of the National Union of Christian Schools and an elder of the Christian Reformed Church, and all ministers and elders of other presbyteries of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, of whom there were a great many in attendance.

Ruling Elder Alan Tichenor, chairman of the committee elected to answer the complaint, gave a brief

report of the committee's work. The answer was not presented for action but was filed with the clerk. It was merely stated that the committee had prepared an answer, printed two hundred copies, and distributed one hundred twenty-five, leaving seventy-five still available. Thus the report which takes the form of a reply of the presbytery, and is introduced as an answer proposed to the presbytery by the committee, was not actually proposed to the presbytery as presbytery's answer to the complaint. Immediately after this brief report, Dr. Robert Strong of Willow Grove moved that the complaint be dismissed.

Dr. Ned B. Stonehouse of Westminster Seminary then delivered a lengthy address designed to show that the evidence which the complainants had presented to the presbytery in the complaint established their claim that various views of Dr. Clark were contrary to Scripture and the subordinate standards of the church and that therefore presbytery should make amends by granting the pleas of the complaint. He also attempted to prove that the proposed answer to the complaint, rather than setting aside the contentions of the complaint, actually went far in confirming its substantial validity.

Dr. Stonehouse accused the proposed answer of failing to set forth accurately the theology of the complaint and asserted that many of the charges of misrepresentations of Dr. Clark's views "would also fall to the ground upon a more careful reading of the complaint". The answer, moreover, "leaves no doubt that there is a real difference between the theology of the complaint and the theology of Dr. Clark." He denied that the issue revolves about Dr. Clark's declaration that he "accepts the Westminster Confession of Faith." To say that is to make subscription to our standards a mere formality." He also denied that the issue was one of apologetics or that the complainants were insisting on subscription to a particular apologetic. "Rather," he said, "we are insisting that theology shall be truly Scriptural, and that there shall be no compromise with rationalism at any point."

Dr. Stonehouse then discussed in considerable detail the doctrine of the knowledge of God. As there are two levels of being, the Creator level and the creature level, so there are two levels of knowledge. and man's knowledge must necessarily always be analogical to God's knowledge. "Truth is one. And man may and does know the same truth that is in the divine mind because of his likeness to God and because of the fact of divine revelation." But God is also incomprehensible, even when truly known, since His revelation of Himself is always a revelation to a finite creature and is therefore a condescension to man's finite capacities.

Dr. Stonehouse then discussed the concept of analogy, and stated that, since Dr. Clark "repudiates the

doctrine that man's knowledge of a particular proposition necessarily is on a lower level than God's knowledge of the same proposition, and insists that knowledge of propositions must be identical for God and man, it is clear that he holds a view of this doctrine sharply at variance with the Reformed doctrine.' ' He cited quotations from Dr. William Brenton Greene, to whom the answer had made strong appeal in support of its concept of divine incomprehensibility, to prove that Dr. Greene actually held to the view of the complainants.

The proposed answer strongly emphasizes that Dr. Clark holds that " 'the manner of God's knowing, an eternal intuition, is impossible for man.' " Dr. Stonehouse acknowledged this and agreed with it, but declared that "a mere distinction as to how knowledge is possessed does not demand the conclusion that the content of knowledge differs." He also held to be inadequate Dr. Clark's contention that God's knowledge differs from man's because God knows all the implications of any proposition, for it is a fact that even the human mind cannot know it as a bare proposition, apart from an actual understanding of implications. The revelation of it to man brings knowledge of it, but the divine knowledge of it necessarily stands on a different level. . . . The distinction drawn between propositions and their implications does not as such establish a qualitative difference between the knowledge which God possesses and that which is possible to man."

Dr. Stonehouse attacked as inadequate Dr. Clark's introduction of "infinity" into his formulation of this doctrine. For Dr. Clark, he said, it is only the infinite number of propositions which God knows which stands between man and the possibility of an exhaustive knowledge of the content of the divine mind.

Dr. Stonehouse concluded his address with a detailed consideration of the answer's treatment of a large number of Scripture passages dealing with the doctrine under scrutiny. He maintained that the interpretation and exegesis of the answer were faulty and inadequate, and attempted to prove that these passages of Scripture, far from supporting Dr. Clark's position, really supported the position of the complaint. In numerous instances he appealed to commentators in support of his contentions.

Dr. Stonehouse was followed immediately by the Rev. Floyd E. Hamilton, who, throughout the debate, appeared to be the best informed protagonist of the theology of Dr. Clark. "There is still misunderstanding," he declared, "in the minds of the complainants regarding Dr. Clark's position." To try to clear up that misunderstanding, he read the following statement, prepared by him and approved by Dr. Clark as being in agreement with his position:

The position of the complainants regarding the

incomprehensibility of God seems to be that incomprehensibility is an incommunicable and unchangeable attribute of God that existed before the creation of men or angels, and is not in any way affected by revelation to man or by man's understanding that revelation. No matter how much man may come to know about God throughout eternity God will be just as incomprehensible and His knowledge will be just as incomprehensible to man after aeons in eternity as it is today. God's knowledge and His incomprehensibility are on a different plane from man's knowledge and are not in any way affected by the knowledge which man may come to enjoy of God's revelation. They therefore hold that it is an error to speak of God's being "incomprehensible except as He reveals truths concerning His nature." In using the word "except," it is claimed that we are impinging on the majesty of God and bringing Him down to the level of the creature.

It would seem that in using the term incomprehensible in this way the complainants are really confusing incomprehensible with God's omniscience and knowledge, and adding the content of these terms to the meaning of incomprehensibility. It is perfectly true that God's omniscience and knowledge do not change in any way through the process of revelation, and all the knowledge that man may come to enjoy about God throughout eternity would not change God's omniscience in any way. Man could not become omniscient without becoming God. God was omniscient before creation, and His attribute of omniscience is not affected by revelation or by the increase in man's knowledge. But that is an entirely different thing from saying that God is incomprehensible. The moment this word is used it has a double reference, namely, toward man as well as toward God. Its principal reference, however, is toward man and has to do with what man knows about God.

Now there are two meanings of the word comprehend. It means first, to apprehend, or to understand, and to say that God is incomprehensible in this sense is to say that man cannot understand Him. He becomes comprehensible to man, in proportion as man understands the revelations which God gives to man about His nature or knowledge. It is in this sense that the answer declares that God's nature is incomprehensible to man except as God reveals truths to man concerning His own nature.

The other meaning of the word comprehend is to have complete and exhaustive knowledge of an object and to place a limit around that which is comprehended, so that everything about it is included in that limit. To say that God's knowledge is incomprehensible in this sense of course is to say that man can never place limits around the knowledge of God and can never have a complete and exhaustive knowledge of

any phase of His knowledge, for in order to have such knowledge man would have to know as God knows, with the same mode of knowing, as well as to know the knowledge God has in all its relationships and implications. It would be correct to say that God's knowledge of any truth is always incomprehensible to man in this sense, for if it were comprehensible in that sense, man would have to know it as God knows it, and to know all that God knows about it, that is, to know all its implications and relationships to other truth. It would also be true to say that God's knowledge of a truth is a unitary thing, so that the mode of His knowing, the implications and relationships to other truth all color His knowledge of the meaning of any individual truth. To say that, however, is really to confuse the implications, relationships and mode of knowing with the specific meaning of the truth itself.

Now Dr. Clark's position is that if man comprehends, or understands the meaning of any truth, truly, the meaning is the same for both God and man. That meaning is not incomprehensible for man in one sense for man understands the meaning God places on the truth revealed to man. That meaning is the same for God and man. In the other sense, however, God's knowledge of the truth is incomprehensible to man even when the meaning is the same for God and man, for God's knowledge of the truth is God's mode of knowing the truth in all its relationships and implications.

It seems quite evident that there are two confusions in the minds of the complainants regarding these matters: (1) In the first place they assert of incomprehensibility what is true of omniscience when they say that God was incomprehensible before His works of creation. (2) At the same time they confuse the two meanings of incomprehensible, so that when the answer uses the term in one sense they, i.e., the complainants deny that position while they really have in mind the other meaning of the word incomprehensible. For example, God's knowledge of the Trinity is incomprehensible to man, in the sense that man can never understand it in all its implications and relationships and cannot enter into the self-consciousness of God. That knowledge will always be incomprehensible to man in these senses. However, at the same time man can comprehend, i.e., understand, any revelations God may choose to give man about the Trinity, and those revelations have the same meaning for both God and man.

Now there are two levels of knowledge, one for God and the other for man but there are not two levels of truth. The complaint teaches that there are two levels of truth, when they assert that the meaning of a proposition is different for man and for God and that these meanings do not coincide at any point.

Dr. Clark's position is that while God's knowledge is always incomprehensible to man on God's level of knowing, man's knowledge of a truth, if it is correct, is true for both God and man. In other words, man's level of knowledge is always accessible to God for God is the creator and preserver and controller of man, but God's level of knowledge is inaccessible and therefore incomprehensible to man. God however has revealed facts about His knowledge to man, and when they are revealed and understood by man, they are true for both God and man and have the same meaning for both God and man. God has brought the revelation of His truth down to man's level so that man can know it, without bringing His, i.e., God's knowledge of the truth down to man's level.

Mr. Hamilton asserted that the complaint talks about "analogical truth," not about "knowing truth analogically." This statement was challenged by the complainants, and proven contrary to the facts. Mr. Hamilton then declared that he had isolated fifty-seven separate misrepresentations of Dr. Clark's position in the text of the complaint. Since some of these were called to the complainants' attention by Dr. Clark at the November meeting of presbytery, Mr. Hamilton contended that the complainants should not have printed nor circulated the complaint until after an attempt had been made in conference with Dr. Clark to clear up those points.

Mr. Hamilton then enumerated some of the fifty-seven alleged errors. He insisted that Dr. Clark does not hold that all truth in the divine mind is always propositional; that Dr. Clark does not hold that the divine knowledge consists of an infinite number of propositions, but rather that God can adduce an infinite number of propositions from His knowledge. He said that the complaint was "almost libelous" when it averred that "his (Dr. Clark's) approach. . . is to a large extent rationalistic." He also charged the complaint with being "insulting" when it declared that, at his July examination in theology, Dr. Clark "studiously avoided answering" a question as to whether there was any faculty in God which is neither intellectual nor volitional and which underlies or accompanies volitional activity. It was later pointed out by the Rev. Arthur W. Kuschke that the complainants did not feel that Dr. Clark was deceptively trying to avoid answering the question, or that he was afraid to answer it, but only that he preferred not to answer it either because he believed it irrelevant or that it would divert attention from what he considered the main matter. No insult was intended or implied.

Dr. William E. Welmers clarified the complainants' position on the matter of analogy and emphatically denied that the complaint taught a doctrine of two levels of truth.

Dr. Stonehouse pointed out that the complaint did

not ask for endorsement of the entire contents of the document, but only for action on certain pleas, whereas the answer was framed with a view to becoming in its entirety the answer of the presbytery. The presbytery, he said, has not yet faced the question of what it will do with that answer, nor had Mr. Hamilton really joined issue with the formulation of Dr. Clark's position as given in Dr. Stonehouse's opening address of the debate.

Mr. Hamilton made brief reply to Dr. Stonehouse, after which Mr. Kuschke discussed at considerable length the twin problems of emotions in God and the primacy of the intellect in man. The complaint, he said, denied that God had emotions in the sense of agitations, but again Mr. Kuschke asked the question whether there was any faculty in God, distinct from the intellectual and the volitional, which gives rise to volition. When Scripture says that "God so loved the world. . . ." does the word "loved" mean only something volitional, a matter of mere unemotional choice? Or does God really love men in the sense of having real feelings of compassion and pity for them? "When Dr. Clark says God's love is a volition," declared Mr. Kuschke, "and then speaks of God's faculties as comprising intellect and will, it is to be feared that he falls far short of the meaning of God's love. The complainants are extremely anxious that Dr. Clark should not detract from the love of God. They don't care what name he gives to God's love, but they are concerned that the compassion and tender mercy of God be not denied."

The complainants believe, said Mr. Kuschke, that God does have feelings which are analogous to ours. He quoted I John 4:7-10. "Each instance of the word 'love' in this quotation, with respect to God's love and man's, is of the same Greek words. Surely at this place in His Word God means to ascribe to Himself true feelings and true love which are analogous to feelings and love in us. This we fear Dr. Clark denies."

Dr. Clark defines the apex of religious activity, declared Mr. Kuschke, in terms of intellectual contemplation of God. In contrast, the complainants hold that glorifying God is the total response of man's whole being to God's manifestation of His perfections. "Obedience and love to God," said Mr. Kuschke, "are not less important than intellectual contemplation; they are not on a lower plane." Moreover, according to Mr. Kuschke, "Dr. Clark regards man's intellect as occupying such high rank that the understanding of the natural man can grasp the meaning of the words 'Christ died for sinners' 'with the same ease' as the born-again man. If that is the case, the understanding does not need to undergo renewal like the rest of the human personality." Mr. Kuschke quoted and discussed at length the statement of the proposed answer

that "regeneration, in spite of the theory of the Complaint, is not a change in the understanding of these words (Christ died for sinners)." He pointed out that the Bible teaches that all of man's faculties are corrupted by sin, and that every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil continually. "If regeneration did not change our understanding of the words 'Christ died for sinners,'" he declared, "then we would never be saved!" He concluded his address in these words: "Thus Dr. Clark's doctrine of man, both as to the faculties of the soul and as to the pervasive corruption of original sin, is wrong, because contrary to the Bible and our standards. For the fallen human intellect is corrupt and blind; without the new birth the intellect is unable to understand the things of God. And the Christian ideal even for the hereafter, is not intellectual contemplation, but rather the total response of man's entire being to God's revelation of His glory."

Dr. Clark then spoke for the first time and denied that he held to "identity of man's and God's knowledge." As for the quotation from Dr. Greene, adduced by Dr. Stonehouse to show that Dr. Greene did not support the answer's view of incomprehensibility, Dr. Clark said that he agreed with the quotation. On the subject of emotions, he said, "If you take the trouble to find out what I mean by emotions, God certainly has none."

Dr. Cornelius Van Til of Westminster Seminary then made a plea for a serious consideration of the complaint, despite Mr. Hamilton's alleged fifty-seven varieties of error. He made a masterful exposition of the meaning of analogy and its inherent proof of incomprehensibility. He added further light on the issue of the primacy of the intellect, declaring that it was no mere matter of a difference in terminology.

After Dr. Van Til's speech, Dr. Clark moved the previous question, which, if it had passed, would have forced an immediate vote on the motion to dismiss the complaint. Dr. Clark's motion was lost. He followed with a declaration that Dr. Van Til had tried to equate his position on the matter under discussion with that of Plato. Dr. Clark repudiated vigorously the position Dr. Van Til had outlined, said that he had time and again denied it, and that not one shred of evidence had been adduced to prove that Dr. Van Til was right in his allegations.

Professor Woolley then briefly discussed the question of the legality of the July 7th meeting, and followed this with a discussion of the effect upon the witness of the church that would result from any attempt to carry through the Clarkian emphasis on the primacy of the intellect to its logical conclusion. He cited the history of the development of the New England theology as proof of the devastation that would follow an insistence upon making logical consistency the final

test of doctrine, and said that now was the time for this tendency to be nipped in the bud.

Professor R. B. Kuiper discussed Dr. Clark's attempt to solve the paradoxes of divine sovereignty and human responsibility and the decree of reprobation and the universal sincere offer of the gospel. He said that Dr. Clark does not recognize that there are paradoxes which are intrinsically paradoxical to man because of his very finiteness. A doctrine, said Professor Kuiper, may be revealed in Scripture and yet the human mind be incapable of fully comprehending it. This is a far cry from the notion that God is incomprehensible except as He reveals truths concerning His own nature and that when the Scriptures teach that God is unsearchable, they mean merely that God is unsearchable in so far as man by his own unaided efforts cannot search out His understanding.

Dr. Clark made brief and violent reply in which he designated the attack on his position as "a matter of persistent misrepresentation. The answer is printed," he said, "and I have nothing further to say."

A substitute motion, that the answer of the committee be made the answer of the presbytery, was defeated as a substitute. The previous question was again moved and again failed to carry by the needed two-thirds vote, so that debate was continued.

(To be continued)

NOTICE

Young men desiring to prepare for the ministry of the Word in our Churches, and therefore seeking admittance into our Theological School are requested to appear at the next meeting of the Theological School Committee to be held in the parlors of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, on the evening of May 22. Applicants must present a certificate of membership and a recommendation from their respective consistories and a certificate of health from a reputed physician.

The Theological School Committee.

As the heavens are high above us,
Great His love to us has proved;
Far as east from west is distant,
He has all our sins removed.
As a father loves his children,
Feeling pity for their woes,
So the Lord to those who fear Him
Mercy and compassion shows.