

THE STANDARD *Bearer* A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XXI

MAY 15, 1945

NUMBER 16

MEDITATION

God Speaking Through His Son

Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. Heb. 1:3, 4.

Marvellous speech of God!

Word of God whereby Christ, having purged our sins, now sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high!

For this, according to the epistle to the Hebrews, is the heart of the whole matter, the essence of the excellency of the new dispensation, its superiority over the old, that "in these last days" God hath "spoken unto us by his Son."

In the old dispensation He spoke through the prophets, "in these last days," in the fulness of time, He spoke through His Son. And this is the cause of the difference between the two dispensations, that before, and that which followed "these last days." The fact that God spoke through the prophets in the old dispensation made that entire period one of shadows, when He spoke through His Son reality came. As long as He spoke through the prophets, salvation was a mere promise; when He spoke by His Son the promise was fulfilled. His Word through the prophets was, indeed, revelatory, informative, shedding light in the darkness, filling the hearts of the heirs of the promise with hope, because it assured them of the salvation He would accomplish; His Word by His Son is powerful, accomplishing that which it expresses, an act of the Almighty Who calleth the things that are not as if they were, and Who quickeneth the dead.

Hence, in the old dispensation He spoke "at sundry times and in divers manners," for the Word was never finished, never complete, never accomplished. In these last days He hath spoken once, and the Word is finished.

The law came by Moses, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ!

Through Moses He spoke to the Church of the old dispensation, and the result was a shadow of things to come. An earthly tabernacle represented the Word of God to His people, and in it ministered a human high priest, himself a sinner, who offered the sacrifices of bulls and goats that could never purge away sin.

But when, "in these last days," He spoke by His Son, the sins of the people were blotted out for ever by the perfect sacrifice of the true High Priest, and the real and heavenly tabernacle was established, our High Priest being exalted at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Through Moses God spoke, and the people came unto the "mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire," and unto "blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more. For they could not endure that which was commanded. And if so much as a beast touch the mountain it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: And so terrible was the sight that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake."

By His Son God spoke, and now we "are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

That is the vast, the amazing difference between the old and the new dispensation!

All because then He spoke through the prophets, "in these last days," that is, in the days that lie between the incarnation of the Son of God and His exaltation at the right hand of God, He spoke by His Son.

He spoke, and the final result is that the Son received a glorious name, and is exalted at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven!

See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh!

Mighty Word of God!

By His Son!

God spoke through God!

For this Son, through Whom God spoke in these last days, is very God Himself.

The prophets, even though God spoke through them, could only speak words; but the Son is the Word!

He is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person, or rather, according to a better translation, of His substance. For He is very God, co-equal with the Father as to His substance. All the divine virtues are His. He is very God Himself, eternal, immutable, self-existent, transcendent above all that is named creature, infinite in power, in knowledge, in wisdom, the implication of all perfections, the Holy One, the mighty Lord of all. And He is such as the Son. For God is one in essence, yet three in persons. And in the divine economy the Father eternally subsists as Father, the Generator of the Son, the Speaker; the Son as Son, the Word of the Father to Himself, His effulgence, the express image of His substance, the Speech; while the Holy Spirit subsists in the infinite essence of the triune God as Spirit, the One that is breathed forth and proceeds from the Father to the Son, and through the Son to the Father, the Speaking. Eternally the Father speaks of Himself and to Himself in the Spirit and through the Son, and eternally the Son is the essential and infinite reflection of the Father, the brightness of His glory, God of God, Light of Light.

Through that Son He spoke in "these last days."

O, He had spoken through Him before!

For by Him He also made the worlds. For in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. John 1:1-3. Through the Son, the eternal Word, He spoke, and the heavens and the earth were brought forth, the things that are not were called as if they were. He spoke and there was light, and a firmament, and the waters fled, and the earth brought forth herbs and grass, and the lights were established in the heavens, and the living souls were called into being, and man was formed after the image of God. . . .

Moreover, through the same Son He continued to speak.

For it is this Son, the brightness of God's glory, the express image of His substance, that still upholds all things by the Word of His power. He is in the heavens and in the earth, transcendent above all, yet immanent in all, as the Word of God by Whom the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handiwork, day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge!

And now, in these last days, He spoke again through that same Son!

He spoke a different Word, a Word more glorious even than that by which the worlds were made, and through which they are upheld, the Word of salvation!

And while through His creative Word He became known as the One that calls the things that are not as if they were, by the Word He spoke in these last days He stands revealed as the One that quickeneth the dead!

Of that Word the heirs of the promise stood in need!

For soon after God had spoken in the beginning the light in which alone man could see the light had been extinguished. Darkness, the darkness of sin and of death, the darkness of the wrath of God and of condemnation, had spread its horrible wings over the world of man. Adam had not regarded his excellent gifts and position, had turned away from the Word of God to heed the lie of the evil, and had, according to the Word of God, sunk into the depth of death from which, as far as he was concerned, there was no escape. And into that depth of desolation he had dragged with him the entire race, even also the heirs of the promise! The covenant of friendship, life and joy and fellowship with the living God had become impossible. The light shone in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not!

There was no way out!

But the things that are impossible with man are possible with God!

He would speak again! And speaking once more, He would reveal Himself as the One that is mighty, and willing, to call the light out of darkness, righteousness out of sin, glory out of shame, life out of death!

Through the prophets He spoke, pointing them, and those that heard their word, to the time when He would once more speak to His people through His Son!

And in these last days He fulfilled His Word!

By His Son, the eternal Word, the brightness of His glory, the express image of His substance, He spoke in the fulness of time!

He spoke His mighty Word of salvation!

Wonderful Word of God!

He spoke and it was done!

And the ultimate glory that was accomplished by this speech of God through His Son is that the Son received a new name!

For, evidently, it is to His name as the Christ, as the Son of God in the flesh, as the Mediator of God and

man, that the text refers. Only this name, the name He received as Son of God in human nature, could He *inherit*, and the text speaks of a name which He obtained by inheritance. As Son of God in the divine nature He possesses all power and might and glory in Himself: to Him no name could possibly be given by inheritance. Besides, the Word of God here compares Him with the angels: he is made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. But all comparison between the Son of God in the divine nature and the angels, or any other creature, would be impossible.

The Son of God in human nature inherited an excellent name.

And the name, here as always in Scripture, is expressive of the nature and position of the bearer of that name. It denotes that which one may rightfully and properly be called.

This name of the Son of God is expressive of and consists in His excellent position. For He sits "at the right hand of the Majesty on high." God is "the Majesty," *the Greatness*, the sole and absolute Sovereign of heaven and earth. His alone is all the dominion, and the power, and the glory for ever. His is the sole prerogative to rule. And to be exalted at His right hand signifies a position at the very pinnacle of all created things, in which one is authorized to exercise lordship over all things in the name of God. This is the present position of the Son of God in the flesh. He is exalted above all principality and power, and above every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. All things are subjected under Him. In His name every knee must bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father!

A more excellent name than the angels He obtained.

A position in which even the glorious heavenly spirits must bow before Him in awe.

And in harmony with that excellent position, He was endowed with excellent power. For He was made more excellent according as He received a more excellent name than the angels. Power and wisdom and knowledge and might and honor are bestowed on Him, in order that He might be able to occupy and function in the position at the right hand of God.

Jesus is Lord!

The Son of God is the Christ!

The heir of all things!

To this He was appointed by the divine decree from before the foundation of the world. And this eternal good pleasure of the Father was realized in these last days, when God spoke His Word of salvation through the Son!

He spoke and it was done!

His mighty Word proceeded forth from His mouth, and the Wonder of all wonders is accomplished: the

Word became flesh! That same Son of God, Who is the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of His substance; that same Word, through Whom He spake in the beginning, and by the Whom the worlds were created; that same mighty Word that still upholds all things, that transcends all things, and that is in all things, now is inseparably united with the flesh and blood of the children, dwells among us, lives with us, speaks to us face to face and mouth to mouth!

God spoke and the Word became flesh and dwelled among us!

He spoke, and that Word in the flesh descended into the depth of death and hell!

For also the cross is the Word of God through His Son!

On Him He laid the iniquity of us all, even as He had ordained Him to be the Head of His own from before the foundation of the world. Him He brought into judgment for the transgressions of His people. On Him He poured all the vials of His wrath against sin, and Him He caused to bear and to taste in all its unspeakable bitterness the terrible curse of death. As He spoke through His Son, that Son in human flesh entered into all the desolation of being forsaken by God, and sustained the burden of God's wrath to the bitter end, thus bringing the perfect sacrifice that purged away sin, and obtained for us perfect and everlasting righteousness!

And the Word of God through His Son continued to speak.

For having become obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross, and having purged away all the sins of His people, the Son of God was raised from the dead. Through His Son, and unto His Son in the flesh, the Majesty on high spoke: "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee!" And it was so. And He arose from corruption into incorruption, from death into immortality, from weakness into power, from flesh and blood into the glory of His resurrection body. . . .

The Lord of life and death!

And still God spake!

He spoke: "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." And it was so. And He ascended up on high, leading captivity captive, and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high!

It is finished!

God has spoken through His Son, and His Word is accomplished!

That is the gospel! The Word that is preached among us!

The Word of salvation!

Once more He will speak through the same Son, shaking the heavens and the earth!

That His Son in the glory of His new name may appear to all!

For ever and ever!

H. H.

The Standard Bearer

Semi-Monthly, except Monthly in July and August

Published by

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

EDITOR — Rev. H. Hoeksema

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

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

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

Subscription \$2.50 per year

Entered as second class mail at Grand Rapids, Michigan

CONTENTS

MEDITATION —

- GOD SPEAKING THROUGH HIS SON357
Rev. H. Hoeksema

EDITORIALS —

- THE TEXT OF A COMPLAINT360
AN INTERESTING DISCUSSION362
EXPOSITION OF THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM363
Rev. H. Hoeksema
- SAMSON POSSESSES THE GATES OF HIS ENEMIES366
Rev. G. M. Ophoff
- EEN GEBED IN OORLOG4370
Rev. G. Vos
- THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN RUSSIA372
Rev. B. Kok
- THE DEACONATE AND CIVIC CHARITY374
Rev. C. Hanko
- THE MAN WITHOUT A WEDDING GARMENT376
Rev. J. De Jong
- OUR MISSIONARY CALLING379
Rev. W. Hofman
- CONTRIBUTION380
Mr. G. Ten Elshof

EDITORIALS

The Text of a Complaint

The question is whether there is a real or apparent contradiction involved in the truth of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility.

Let us put both truths in propositional form:

1. God is absolutely sovereign, even so that He determines the moral acts of man, both good and evil.
2. Man is responsible before God for all his moral acts.

Now, the question is not whether there is a problem here. It may well be that we cannot answer the question how God is able to determine man's deeds without destroying man's responsibility. That He is able to do so is asserted plainly by the two propositions stated above. But whether or not we can understand this operation of the sovereign God upon man is not the question. The sole question is whether the two propositions concerning God's sovereignty and man's responsibility are contradictory. This we deny. In fact, they cannot possibly be, for the simple reason that they assert something about two wholly different subjects.

They would be contradictory if the first proposition denied what is affirmed in the second. But this is not true. The first proposition asserts something about God: He is absolutely sovereign and determines the acts of man. The second proposition predicates something about man: he is responsible for his moral acts. Does the first proposition deny that man is responsible? If it does you have here a contradiction. But it does not. Those who like to discover a contradiction here, usually the enemies of the truth of God's sovereignty, simply take for granted that to assert that God is sovereign even over man's acts is to say the same as that man is not responsible. It must be pointed out, however, that this is neither expressed nor implied in the first proposition. In the two propositions responsibility is not both confirmed and denied at the same time to man.

The two propositions would, of course, also be contradictory if the second proposition denied what is affirmed in the first. In that case, sovereignty even over the acts of man would be both affirmed and denied to God. But also this is neither expressed nor implied in the two propositions, unless it can first be shown conclusively that to say that man is responsible is the same as declaring that God is not sovereign over his moral acts. And this has never been demonstrated, nor is it self evident.

If they were really contradictory they could not both be the object of the Christian's faith. We could only conclude that either the one or the other were not true.

Now, however, since they involve no contradiction, and since both are clearly revealed in Scripture, we accept both, whether or not we can combine them into one concept.

And the attempt to do so, to solve the problem, must be considered laudable.

What pastor has not confronted the necessity, in his catechism classes, to answer a question concerning this problem when he was instructing his pupils in the truth of God's immutable decrees? And what instructor was satisfied to reply to his earnestly inquiring pupil that here we face a contradiction?

To me it would seem that the solution of the problem, as far as Reformed theology is concerned, must be sought in the direction of properly defining man's responsibility. If the question is asked how a divinely determined creature can be responsible for his acts, it stands to reason that his freedom and responsibility must be defined as falling within the compass of God's decrees and sovereignty. Man's freedom is a creaturely, and, therefore, a dependent freedom. And so is his responsibility.

However this may be, and whether or not Dr. Clark's solution is acceptable, his attempt to solve the problem is laudable. And it is a very strange procedure to accuse a man of heresy because of the very fact that he attempts a solution of a different problem.

While the attempt on the part of Dr. Clark to solve this problem is labeled as rationalism, the solution he offers is characterized as *antinomism*.

We quote from the "Complaint":

"The history of doctrine tells us that the view under discussion is far from innocent. The tenet that divine sovereignty and human responsibility are logically reconcilable has been held by two schools of thought, both of which claimed to be Reformed but neither of which was recognized as Reformed by Reformed churches. One of these schools is Arminianism. It meant to uphold both divine sovereignty and human responsibility, especially the latter, but in its rationalistic attempt to harmonize the two it did great violence to the former. The other school is Antinomianism. It also meant to uphold both divine sovereignty and human responsibility, especially the former, but in its rationalistic attempt to harmonize the two it did great violence to the latter. Dr. Abraham Kuyper has described Antinomianism as a 'dreadful sin which occurs almost exclusively in the Reformed churches'. He says that what accounts for this phenomenon is a one-sided emphasis in much Reformed preaching on God's de-

cretive will at the expense of His preceptive will. He deems it essential to hold that Scripture distinguishes between the sphere of divine sovereignty and the sphere of human responsibility, and 'that this distinction is so absolute that one can never pass from the one into the other.' (Dictaten Dogmatiek, Locus de Deo, part 3, pp. 113 ff.). In the light of history we cannot but hold that his rationalism exposes Dr. Clark to the peril of Antinomianism.

"Here attention must be called to his treatment of human responsibility in the article 'Determinism and Responsibility'. Reformed theologians generally are exceedingly circumspect when they discuss the relation of the divine decree and divine providence to the sin of man. There is excellent reason for their carefulness. They are zealous to maintain God's holiness as well as His sovereignty, not to detract, after the manner of the Antinomians, from human responsibility. But Dr. Clark says boldly: 'Does the view here proposed make God the Author of sin? Why the learned divines who formulated the various creeds so uniformly permitted such a metaphorical expression to becloud the issue is a puzzle. This view certainly makes God the First and Ultimate Cause of everything. But very slight reflection on the definition of responsibility and its implication of a superior authority shows that God is not responsible for sin' (p. 22). It is meaningful that Dr. Clark is not careful to say, as so many Reformed theologians are, that God is not the efficient cause of sin (e.g. Berkhof, Systematic Theology, p. 108)." p. 12.

And at the end of this part of the "Complaint" the complainants conclude that Dr. Clark's "rationalism has resulted in his departing from the historic Reformed doctrine of human responsibility. In his attempt to reconcile by human reason divine sovereignty and human responsibility he has done decided violence to the latter." p. 13.

Dr. Clark, therefore, is an antinomian rationalist, according to the complainants. His refusal to accept contradictions makes him "one-sided."

There is nothing original in this accusation.

It has become rather customary in recent years, especially since the Christian Reformed Synod of 1924, to explain all forms of heresies as rationalistic attempts to solve contradictions resulting in onesidedness. This makes it so very easy to classify one whom we seek to expose as a heretic! You can pick out almost any classification you like. Thus, e.g., undersigned has been labeled an Anabaptist, an Antinomian, an Arminian, a Barthian, etc.

The complainants adopt the same policy.

Arminianism, say they, is the result of a rationalistic attempt to reconcile God's sovereignty and human responsibility. So is Antinomianism. Both become

onesided in their attempt. So Dr. Clark tries to solve the same problem with the same result of onesidedness on the Antinomian side. Hence, he is an Antinomian.

But is all this true? Or is it merely an attempt, a purely rationalistic attempt too, on the part of the complainants to find a heretical name for Dr. Clark? Is Arminianism really the result of an attempt to "uphold both divine sovereignty and human responsibility" as the complainants claim? Was it not from the very outset an attempt to deny and disprove the doctrine of absolute predestination and of the sovereignty of God in relation to the freedom of man? And is Antinomianism to be explained as an attempt to solve the problem of God's sovereignty and human responsibility? Anyone that is at all acquainted with the facts knows better. It was concerned with the relation of justification and good works, and rejected the moral law as binding upon Christians. It is true that many of them were also strong in their emphasis on predestination, but this emphasis also was especially applied to their view of the justification of the elect. But Antinomianism cannot be called a rationalistic attempt to harmonize divine sovereignty and human responsibility. And whatever must be thought of Dr. Clark's attempt to solve this problem, it cannot be branded as Antinomian.

Besides, the indictment that Dr. Clark does violence to or denies the responsibility of man because of his onesided emphasis on the sovereignty of God, is only a conclusion which the complainants draw from some of his statements. Dr. Clark himself would never admit the truth of the conclusion. He never denies the responsibility of man, nor does he ever present God as the real Author of human acts, though he insists that He determines them. He only maintains that "determinism is consistent with responsibility," a statement which itself proves that he does not eliminate the responsibility of man in his attempt to harmonize it with God's sovereignty. It is always dangerous to draw conclusions from someone's statements in order then to attribute the conclusions to the author of the statements. Let us not forget that enemies of the truth drew conclusions from Paul's doctrine, accused him of Antinomianism (Rom. 3:8; 6:1), and of making God the author of sin and denying the responsibility of man. (Rom. 9:19).

It seems to me that this part of the "Complaint" utterly fails to prove its point.

H. H.

Jesus, the spring of joys divine,
Whence all our hopes and comforts flow,
Jesus, no other name but thine,
Can save us from eternal woe.

An Interesting Discussion

(continued)

The Rev. George W. Marston reread the statement which Mr. Hamilton had prepared and with which Dr. Clark had expressed himself in agreement, and asked the complainants to comment upon it. The Rev. Leslie W. Sloat objected that an answer had been prepared by the committee but that the committee had made no attempt to have its printed answer considered for adoption; instead, a wholly new document which no one had an opportunity to study had been introduced by one individual, and the complainants were now being asked to discuss it as representing Dr. Clark's position.

The Rev. Franklin S. Dyrness said, "We should be sane and sensible in facing this matter." He declared that the presbytery was not in session to consider the answer but to examine the complaint. The presbytery had really been indulging in a re-examination of Dr. Clark. He referred to Mr. Hamilton's allegation of fifty-seven errors in the complaint and to a previous speaker's statement that they were not in reality of central importance. "If those items were not important," he asked, "why did the complainants put them in the complaint?" He cited Dr. Clark's denial that the complaint gives a fair representation of his position, and pled for fairness and honesty.

Mr. Marston felt that, while the complaint and the answer had been widely circulated, the presbyters had never had what they really needed most—an opportunity for each one to have his own copy of the transcript of the record of Dr. Clark's theological examination, on which both the complaint and the answer had been based. "Without it," he asked, "how can we judge?"

After recessing for dinner, the presbytery voted down a motion to postpone further consideration until after mimeographing and circulating the written speeches which had been delivered by several of the complainants and by Mr. Hamilton.

Mr. Hamilton then again arose to deliver another paper on the relation between regeneration and human understanding, which again he said had received Dr. Clark's approval. Confusion was injected, however, by the interpolation of some of Mr. Hamilton's own observations which had not been approved by Dr. Clark. In the course of the speech, Mr. Hamilton declared that *notitia* (knowledge) and *assensus* (assent) could be possessed by the unregenerate man but that *fiducia* (trust) could not. These are three theological terms to designate the three elements of saving faith. Mr. Hamilton was promptly challenged for holding that the unregenerate man possesses two-thirds of the

elements of saving faith. On this position, said the complainants, the only thing wrong with the unregenerate man is that his saving faith is one-third incomplete. Moreover, since the answer terms assent the central element in faith, the unregenerate man might then, on Mr. Hamilton's position, be said to possess the central element of saving faith.

Mr. Hamilton then said that he had just been told that Dr. Clark would not agree that the unregenerate man was in possession of the first two of the three elements, but only of the first. It then became clear that this portion of Mr. Hamilton's speech was his own interpolation and had not received Dr. Clark's agreement. It seemed also that Mr. Tichenor, chairman of the committee, held to a different conception of the subject from that which had been defended by Mr. Hamilton.

The supporters of Dr. Clark's theory made valiant efforts to defend the statement of the answer that "regeneration . . . is not a change in the understanding of these words (Christ died for sinners)." Mr. Kuschke, on the other hand, defended the position of the complaint and pointed out that, when content is injected into the sentence, the unregenerate man must invariably inject the wrong content and the regenerate man the true content.

The complainants' contention that Dr. Clark apparently was reluctant to characterize the free offer of the gospel as "sincere" was discussed after Dr. Clark had left the meeting. In the course of debate Mr. Tichenor said that in his own opinion Dr. Clark would probably interpret as referring only to the elect the following two passages: "God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:3, 4) and "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezek. 33:11).

Dr. Edward J. Young of Westminster Seminary gave a detailed and carefully worked out exegesis of many of the Old Testament passages dealing with the doctrine of incomprehensibility, but lack of space forbids an inclusion of them in this report.

The question was again called for. Professor Woolly had already reminded the presbyters that they should vote for the motion to dismiss the complaint only if they were completely satisfied that Dr. Clark's theology was a proper presentation of the Reformed Faith.

A roll call vote was taken, showing a tie vote of twenty to twenty, which meant that the motion to dismiss the complaint was lost.

Since there was obviously little chance of completing the business of the presbytery at this session, the

meeting was adjourned until 11 a.m. on Thursday, March 29th.

After reading the above report, we are still of the opinion that the issues involved in the Clark controversy are matters for discussion by a theological conference rather than grounds of complaint against the licensure and ordination of a candidate for the ministry.

H. H.

The Triple Knowledge

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

Part Two.

Of Man's Redemption

Lord's Day XV

2.

Under Pontius Pilate (Cont.)

The condemnation of Jesus by the world was the judgment and condemnation of the world.

Thus the Lord had spoken a few days before he stood before the Roman governor, delivered by His people, to be tried by that representative of worldly justice: "Now is the condemnation of the world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out." John 12:31. And there can be no doubt about the fact that he spoke these words with a view to his own condemnation and death. What was historically, as men view the events of this world, the trial and condemnation of Jesus by the world, was in reality, and according to the purpose of God, the trial and judgment of the world.

This is to be understood, not as a figure of speech, but in the literal sense of the word.

The world, the whole of sinful humanity as it reveals itself and develops in the present world, the world in its ethically evil sense, with its lust of the flesh, and lust of the eyes, and pride of life, was tried, weighed in the balance of God's justice, exposed as corrupt and found wanting, and condemned, when it passed judgment upon Jesus the Christ, the Son of God in the flesh. It is true, Scripture teaches us that there will come a final day of judgment, a day when the ever righteous judgment of God shall be revealed, and when all that is implied in the judgment of the cross shall be openly and clearly manifested, but that does not alter

the fact that nineteen hundred years ago the world stood in judgment before God, and was condemned in the cross and the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

And in that hour of judgment the world was well represented.

This was necessary. For in and through those that were present at and took an active part in the trial and condemnation of Jesus, the whole world of all ages, from the beginning to the end of time, is judged and condemned by God. There may, therefore, be no room for complaint on the part of the world that it was not well represented. Its representatives must belong to the very best the world is able to produce. Not a tribe of ignorant savages, or a band of criminals from the lowest strata of society, not men whom the world itself draws into its courts to judge and condemn them, may kill the Christ of God. Not on the outskirts of the world, far from the pale of civilization may this judgment take place, and the cross of Christ be erected. Not in a period of darkness and ignorance, when human culture stands on a low level, is the Anointed of the Lord tried and condemned by the world. On the contrary, in the center of the world, in the very heart of civilization, in the fulness of time, Christ is judged, and in that very judgment the world is condemned. The center of the world, and of history, was in Jerusalem in the year thirty three of our era. There, indeed, the whole world in all its culture and civilization was present. There were the representatives, not only of culture and philosophy and human justice, but also of the world of religion, as it had been enlightened by the law and the prophets. There were the leaders of the Jews, the theologians of that day, teachers of Moses, sitting on Moses' seat, proud of their knowledge of and keeping of the law. And there was also the Roman court of justice, famous for its knowledge of what is right and true among men.

That world was tried and exposed as evil through the trial and condemnation of the Christ of God.

By that trial it was very really called before the bar of divine justice, examined, and exposed in its corruption, its hypocrisy, its worthiness of damnation. It was forced to cast off its mask of goodness and nobility, of justice and love of the truth, in order to become manifest in its inner wickedness and rottenness, its love of the darkness rather than the light, its constant suppression of the truth in unrighteousness, its enmity against the living God.

For this purpose, the world must judge the Christ, God's Son, the holy child Jesus. And in this judgment they must give an answer to the question: what think ye of the Christ? Mark you well, they must give an answer to this question not in the way of theological contemplation or as a result of philosophical thought, not in a disinterested, impersonal way, but as a revela-

tion of their ethical worth, of the intents and imaginations of their inmost heart. The question was a searching one. It was a question of life and death. It was intended to reveal whether they loved or hated the truth, whether they were in harmony with or opposed to the will of God, whether they were children of God or children of their father the devil.

Hence, it must become very plain that Christ represents the light, and that they are perfectly aware that there is no darkness in Him at all. He had gone throughout the land doing good, and revealing the Father. He represented the light in a world of darkness. And in that final hour He stood before the world without power and without defense. Freely, without fear of human might or revenge, the world could express its judgment, reveal its inmost heart, and in judging the Christ of God principally answer the question: what will ye do with God, His truth, His righteousness, and holiness, if He is represented by a weak and helpless man? And the answer they gave with one accord was: Then we will kill Him!

To that world also belonged the power of the State, the sword-power as instituted by God for the punishment of evil-doers and the praise of them that do well.

And the sword-power, the institution of the State of all ages was well represented at the time by the Roman world-power.

And the representative of that Roman sword-power in Jerusalem was Pontius Pilate.

He, too, therefore, must be confronted with the question: what wilt thou do with the Christ of God?

No, he was not the sole representative of the world that judged Christ and was itself condemned. Judas had given his answer to the question. So had the Church-institute, represented by the Sanhedrin, Annas, Caiaphas, the leaders of the Jews. So would Herod, "that fox", face and answer the question, when, by way of an intermission in the trial by the Roman governor, the Lord was sent to him. So did the soldiers, the representatives of Roman might, give an answer to the same question, when they made Him the object and victim of their ribald and cruel mockery. And so did the Church as a congregation, when they voted in favor of a murderer, and demanded that the Christ of God be crucified.

And yet, whether in the *Apostolicum* the words "under Pontius Pilate" are intended as a mere temporal qualification or not, the Confession touches the very heart of the matter in this phrase. For Pilate ultimately was the representative of the highest worldly tribunal, without whose verdict Jesus could not have been crucified.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate!

Simple words, but tremendous in their significance, when we consider that in the judgment of Pilate the

whole world is finally tried, and condemned.

One of the most remarkable and striking features of this trial, as reported to us by the gospel writers, is that the judge repeatedly and most emphatically declares that Jesus is innocent. He makes it very plain that he is perfectly convinced of Jesus' righteousness. He finds no fault in Him. When he finally renders the verdict that is to send Jesus to the death of the cross, his sentence is not the result of a misunderstanding. Nor is he finally convinced that Jesus is guilty. On the contrary, to the very last he emphasizes that the Lord is innocent. His original judgment is never changed: "I find no guilt in him at all!"

Yet, even so the way is open for the Roman judge to answer the question: what wilt thou do then with the righteous Jesus, the light in darkness, the revelation of the Father? And an answer he must give. He represented the sword-power of the world. And he is very deeply conscious of the fact that he has power to release Jesus, and power to send Him to His death. But in this particular instance he does not like his position, is not well pleased with his power. Under ordinary circumstances, he would have revealed little or no hesitancy to send the innocent to his death. And even now it was not love of truth and righteousness that caused him to waver. But he was afraid. Caring little for truth and justice as such, he was anxious about his own position. On the one hand he was afraid of Jesus. He probably had heard of Him. His calm and majestic appearance must have impressed him. And his wife's report of her dream, and her request that he would have nothing to do with this righteous man, increased his anxiety and trouble not a little. On the other hand, he was afraid of the Jews, and above all of Caesar. By all means, he must remain Caesar's friend. Tossed to and fro by these various motives and circumstances, he repeatedly seeks a way out, and tries to release Jesus. Desperately he attempts to avoid a definite answer to the question: what wilt thou do with the perfectly righteous? He places the people before the choice between Barabbas and Jesus. He tries to rid himself of the troublesome case by sending Jesus to Herod. He has Jesus scourged, and brings Him out to the people, perhaps to evoke their pity. But all these attempts fail.

Pilate must give the answer to God's question.

And the answer he finally gives: I have no regard for the righteous and for righteousness, let the blood of the Righteous be shed!

He suffered under Pontius Pilate! That means, indeed, that He was innocent and yet condemned by the worldly judge, in order that, as He voluntarily submits to this judgment, and willingly goes the way of the cross, we might have a strong assurance that He bore, not His own, but our transgressions on the tree.

But it also was the condemnation of the world, our

world, the world of men. And its blood-guiltiness and condemnation can never be removed, unless its guilty stains are washed away by the very blood that was shed on Calvary.

For them that are thus washed the judgment of the cross is removed by God's verdict in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

For He was delivered for our transgressions, and raised for our justification.

3.

The Death Of The Cross

In the Apostolic Confession the fact that Jesus died the death of the cross receives special mention. Christ "suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified". . . .

And to the meaning of this death by crucifixion the Heidelberg Catechism calls our attention in question and answer thirty-nine: "Is there anything more in his being crucified, than if he had died some other death? Yes, there is; for thereby I am assured that He took on Him the curse which lay upon me; for the death of the cross was accursed of God."

The Scriptural reference here is to Deut. 21:22, 23 as interpreted in Gal. 3:13. In the former passage we read: "And if any man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that the land be not defiled, which the Lord thy God giveth thee." The reference is, not to capital punishment by hanging, but to the hanging and public exposure of the bodies of those that had been put to death by the sword, or by stoning. Such a public hanging was considered an intensification of capital punishment. It was, therefore, the hanging itself, and not the death by hanging, that was an abomination, and that caused the hanged one to be accursed of God. And the entire passage in Galatians is as follows: "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for the just shall live by faith. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." 3:10-13.

Now, the quotation in vs. 10: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them," is from Deut. 27:26. And the context of that passage is remarkable, in as much as it shows how really "as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse." Moses gave com-

mandment to the people of Israel that when they shall have crossed over Jordan into the land of Canaan, half of the tribes shall take their position on mount Gerizim, and the other half on mount Ebal. And then the Levites shall read to them the curse and the blessing, and the people shall respond by a solemn Amen. The reading of the curse was to be as follows: "Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image, an abomination unto the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth it in a secret place. And all the people shall answer and say, Amen. Cursed be he that setteth light by his father and mother. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless and widow. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that lieth with his father's wife; because he uncovereth his father's skirt. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that lieth with any manner of beast. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that lieth with his sister, the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that lieth with his mother in law. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that smiteth his neighbour secretly. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen."

From this it is evident that all that were under the law, not only were actually under a curse, in as much as no one could keep the law of God perfectly, and the people of Israel in the course of their history had trampled the law of God under foot a thousand times; but also that they had solemnly covenanted on mount Ebal to take this curse upon them. Did all this mean, then, that the promise had been made of none effect, seeing that the law and its curse had been superimposed upon it, and that no one could fulfill the demands of the law, nor bear the curse and remove it? How is it possible that the heirs of the promise could thus be made subject to the law, and that, too, as a condition unto life? And how could the curse they assumed on mount Ebal ever have any other result than that it made the promise for ever impossible of realization?

The answer is in the thirteenth verse.

To be sure, all that are under the law are under a curse. And Israel as such, by itself, could never bear that curse and live. It could never work its way through the curse, so to speak, unto the promise, and unto the inheritance of eternal life. It would seem

to have been nothing short of sheer recklessness on their part to assume responsibility for the curse at all. But in Christ they could assume that responsibility. Christ was in their loins. And that Christ was able, and would bear the curse for them, in their behalf and in their stead, was demonstrated to them daily by their sacrifices. And in the fulness of time Christ did come. He, too, came under the law. And with the people, His own, the heirs of the promise, he also came under the curse, though by a voluntary act of His own. He, so to speak, took up His position on mount Ebal, and to Him, too, the curse of the law was read. And He, too, responded by a solemn Amen. And He was able to assume that responsibility, and to fulfill it. For He was the holy Child Jesus, the Son of God in the flesh. He could bear that curse in such a way that the demands of the law were satisfied, so that it would no longer curse the children of the promise. He could work His way through the curse to the promise, through death into life, through hell into eternal glory. And this He did. Figuratively speaking, His cross was planted on mount Ebal. And there He fulfilled, once and for ever, the curse of the law. For Christ became a curse for us, as it is written: Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.

It was principally Christ that covenanted with God on mount Ebal to assume responsibility for the curse of the law.

And it was Christ again, this time on the real mount Ebal of Calvary, that fulfilled that responsibility, and, becoming a curse, removed it for ever.

H. H.

Samson Possesses the Gates of His Enemies

Attention was directed to the reactions of the Philistines to Samson's exploits among them. First they chose to regard Samson's attacks on them as the evil work of a Hebrew stung by personal insults and injuries, thus as a private quarrel between himself and a few Philistines, and therefore took no notice of his doings. But when, as a result of Samson's slaying them with a great slaughter, it became plain that he had designs upon them all and that his real grievance was their oppression of his people, they bestirred themselves. They were decided to get Samson in their power. The menace has to be removed at all costs. So did they, in their unbelief, continue to fight God. They would not discern that in Samson they had to do with Israel's mighty God, Samson, so they reason-

ed, could be overpowered and rendered harmless in bonds. There must be a limit to his power. And they wanted him not dead but alive and helpless. As was said, it would be soothing to their wounded pride, compensate them for the deep humiliation that they had suffered at his hands, could they deride him, shout their curses in his ears, with him alive and in bonds, helpless at their feet, and under their heel, utterly powerless to avenge himself. So they suddenly appeared on the soil of Judah with an army. They had come, they said, to bind Samson. The men of Judah, hearing this, were relieved. For they had concluded that the Philistines had come with warlike purposes against them. To save themselves from the wrath of the Philistines, they agreed to cooperate with the adversary for the capture of Samson, their deliverer. Three thousand of their number now hastened to the rock of Etam to bind Samson. For their sakes he delivered himself into their hands. And they bound him with new cords and brought him up from the rocks." Judah did not recoil from delivering his deliverer into the hands of the enemy of God and His people. The Philistines, who must have been doubtful of the success of that perilous expedition, were awaiting their coming at Lehi. Seeing the Hebrews with Samson among them in bonds, they were jubilant. Yet, they were not without their misgivings, premonition of evil. They must have doubted whether the Hebrews could be trusted. Where was the evidence that a struggle had taken place. There was none. The three thousand Hebrews had returned none the worse for their undertaking. And not one of their number was missing. True, Samson was in bonds, if their eyes were not deceiving them. But did those cords on his hands mean that he had been overpowered? And were those cords a hindrance to him? Doubtless, the Philistines were sceptical. And their scepticism tempered their vile glee. They would put the matter to a test. Keeping themselves at a safe distance, they shouted against him. That was a challenge for him to break assunder his cords, if he could. It was a challenge for God to deliver his servant. And He did so. "The Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon Samson. . . ." His heart boiled with indignation. His strength kindled, and he was ready for resistless deeds. The "cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands." He was free; and the enemy was before him. Onward! To battle! Any weapon would do. The jaw-bone of an ass recently fallen was at hand. One instant, and he was among them, dealing out deadly blows. When he came to rest, the dead lay about him in heaps. A thousand of the enemy had fallen.

The ensuing slaughter and victory were extraordinary. A great miracle again had been performed. There must have been many more Philistines on hand

than the thousand that had been slain. And all must have been armed. How could a lone warrior slay a thousand armed men and put to flight perhaps several times that number? There is but one explanation. The Lord had fought for Samson in this way. When the Philistines saw that he was free, their souls must have been seized by a paralyzing fear and their will to resist was broken. Throwing away their weapons, they took recourse to flight with the terror of God in their hearts and with Samson in hot pursuit dealing out his deadly blows. What an amazing spectacle! A whole army routed and destroyed by a lone warrior armed with nothing more formidable than the jaw-bone of an ass. That, plainly, was the Lord's doing. But the Philistines would not be instructed. As we shall see, in their unbelief they continued to oppress God's people and to plot Samson's downfall.

The men of Judah must have been spectators of that battle. Though they had not participated in the conflict in order not to be held responsible by the Philistines, it is not likely that they had taken themselves off. Thus it must have been his own brethren, to which he had returned after the conflict, that he was addressing when, pointing to the jaw-bone that he still grasped, he said, "With the jaw-bone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jaw-bone of an ass have I slain a thousand men." This was meant as a rebuke of the treachery and cowardice of their unbelief. Had they gotten their way, he would have been a prisoner. Could they go on denying that the Lord was with him? He had slain a thousand men. Would they not decry their unbelief and receive him as their deliverer? "And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking, that he cast away the jaw-bone out of his hand and called that place "the lifting up of the jaw-bone." Such is the meaning of the name "Ramath-Lehi". So did he give a name commemorative of the victory of his faith. It was too great to allow the historical recollection of it to perish.

The exertion of the day and the burning sun overhead had combined to exhaust the strength of the strong man. He was sore athirst, "and called on the Lord, and said, Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant: and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised? But God clave a hollow place that was in the jaw (this should be translated, that was in Lehi), and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived: wherefore he called the name thereof Enhakkore (meaning, the well of him that calleth), which is in Lehi unto this day."

Samson's giving names to commemorate his achievement on the battlefield of Lehi and God's answer to his prayer, the prayer as such, the sentiments expressed therein, confirm the view of the man that we thus far have sought to develop. The prayer lays bare his

spiritual life; it forms the index to his mode of thought and volition and to the mainspring of his conduct in the hours of spiritual elevation of soul. He confessed that the source of his strength was the Lord. He gave God the glory for his achievements. He discerned that the victory that overcometh the world is faith. His great grief was the desecration of God's name by the uncircumcised in the oppression of his people; and the ends that he pursued were the liberation of Israel that God might be feared. In the heart of his disposition he hated the world, understanding, as he did, that the friendship of the world is enmity of God. To the warfare that he waged he knew himself called of God. And the love of God constrained him. Therefore he was not discouraged by the treachery and the cowardice of the carnal Israel. He represented God's believing people for whom he cherished the fondest affection. For them he fought and jeopardized his life. For upon such, he knew, are the mercies of God everlastingly. And the token thereof was his victories. Therefore he could not fall into the hands of the uncircumcised. For the Lord had given this great deliverance into his hand. What he dreaded is not death for thirst but the enemy's shouts of triumph over the faith of Israel and over Israel's God on account of his death. What would the enemy say should they next see him a lifeless corpse. Thus he did not pray for the prolonging of his life but for the prospering of the cause of his God through the prolonging of his life. He was the sole champion of this cause, the only representative of the true Israel at this time. Should he fall, the last bulwark would be leveled.

Samson's victory at Lehi made a deep impression. His brethren received him now as their deliverer and judge; for it is in connection with the great victory at Lehi that the sacred writer reports that Samson "judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years." Now the men of Judah acknowledged his divine sending and yielded him their confidence.

The sacred writer goes on to say, "Then Samson went to Gaza. . . ." For what reason went he thither? Some maintain that the motive was unquestionably bad. But the only proof that is offered is a view of Samson's spiritual life that is purely fictitious not only but negatory of the testimony that the Scriptures give of the man. From his youth, it is said, Samson was reckless, adventurous, ever craving some new excitement good or bad. He could do anything but quietly pursue a path of duty; and in the small towns of Dan and the valleys of Judah he had little to excite and interest him. Had he been deeply interested in religion, he would have found opportunity enough for exertion. Had he been a reformer of the right kind he would have found opportunity enough for a task into which he might have thrown all his force. But Samson did not incline to any such doings. We never see

in his life one such moment as Gideon and Jephthah knew of high religious daring. Thus in default of any excitement such as he craved in the towns of his own land, he turned his eyes to the Philistine cities which presented a marked contrast. Where life was energetic and gay, there many pleasures were to be had. The strong eager man, full of animal passion, found the life he craved in Gaza. There was opportunity for enjoyment which at home he could not indulge. There in Gaza he could take his fill of sensual pleasure.

If this depiction is true to the life of Samson, to the workings of his soul, there was nothing of true godliness in him. But, as has already been pointed out, the writer to the Hebrews says of him that he was a hero of faith who lived by the promise. Samson's reason for going to Gaza was unquestionably good. After his victory at Lehi, the Philistines were leaving him severely alone. Never again did they confront him in open combat. They had learned their lesson. But their entire downfall was not yet completed and would not be until the judgeship of Samuel. Samson only began to deliver Israel (chap. 13:5). Thus Israel was still not dwelling in peace and security after the battle of Lehi. There doubtless had come some relief; but the enemy still lorded it over Israel, and thus the war between Samson and the Philistines continued. It is therefore a good conjecture to say that Samson went to Gaza in pursuance of his calling. He again sought occasion against the adversary. The fundamental goodness of Samson demands that we so interpret this move of his. It is even more than likely that he went to Gaza with the fixed plan of teaching the adversary a great lesson by taking off with the gates of their principle city. Certainly, his departure from Gaza, in the dead of the night, was deliberate; that is, his reason for leaving at that time was not that he would have been killed had he tarried until the morning. The Gazites dared not confront him at any time. But, though Samson did not go to Gaza to fraternize with the godless enemies of his people and of his God and because he craved the pleasures of sin—if this were true of him, he would have been reprobated—but in pursuance of his calling, he nevertheless again fell a victim to his sensuality there in that wicked city. He saw there a harlot and went in unto her. The Hebrew word translated "harlot" is "zonah" from the verb "zanah" to commit fornication. The word "zonah" has been given the double meaning of "female-inkeeper" and "harlot". The houses of harlots, it is said, were those that stood open to all comers, including such strangers as had no relations or acquaintance with any one in the city. On this account, the spies, also, whom Joshua sent out could quarter themselves nowhere in Jericho but in the house of such a zonah. Samson did likewise; and he, no more than the spies, was influenced by sensual impulses. He wished to remain in Gaza

overnight; and there was nothing for him but to abide with the zonah. The narrative gives no occasion to tax him with sensuality.

But this will be seen to be a doubtful reasoning when viewed in the light of the narrative. There is no ground to render "zonah" "hostess, one, who keeps a public house;" and though the notice "and he saw there a harlot" forbids the view that he came to Gaza for the purpose of forming an illicit connection with a harlot, he nevertheless did just that. What brings this clearly out is that his stay is spoken of in language that differs from that employed with respect to the abode of the spies in the house of Rahab. Of the spies it is reported, "And they came into a harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there." But of Samson it is written that, seeing there a harlot, he went in unto *her*" and, in verse three, that he "lay till midnight". The text here makes no mention of a house. Doubtless, the time that they were together was spent in the open field. It was the exigencies of the hour that drove the spies into the house of Rahab. They were in the need of a place of refuge against the king's deputies by whom they were being pursued. But Samson was driven into the arms of a disreputable woman, not certainly by fear of the Philistines but by the lust that rioted in his sinful flesh.

It was told the Gazites that Samson was come hither; and they were sorely afraid as appears from their strange conduct. They knew Samson's strength, knew that, should they attempt to lay violent hands on him, all would be dead men. So the silent and unexpressed resolve of them all was not to provoke the Hebrew by confronting him in combat, and not to interfere with his coming and going. The resolve was adhered to, though actually expressed by no one. But there was no need of this as they well knew one another's thoughts. Samson lay till midnight, when he arose and went calmly and unresisted to the city's gate. With the bands that lay in wait looking silently on and pretending to hear nothing, he took the doors of the gate and their posts, placed them on his shoulder and proceeded on his way home. It is plain that the Gazites at no time had intended to attack him. For they knew that, when he was aroused, his strength far surpassed the accumulative strength of a thousand men. The thought was too terrifying for words, and just as humiliating to their pride. He had dealt them blow upon blow, without their being able to do anything about it so far as his person was concerned. Yet, when to their great horror, he suddenly appeared in their midst once more—for what reason they knew not, but they must have feared the worst—they pretended to be brave. They acted and spoke as though it were the easiest thing for them to do him to death at any time they should choose. So they compassed him in. Bands were stationed in the gate of the city. But, strange to

say, they agreed to take no action against him until the morning. They "were quiet all night, saying, In the morning when it is day, we shall kill him". But why should they wait until the morning? Because they were afraid and had no intention to attack him at any time, either in the night or at dawn. They were relieved when he was gone. But they boiled with anger at the thought of his having taken off with the gates of their city with themselves as helpless spectators. Yet they had also marvelled once more at his power and were now more determined than ever to learn its secret, as if they did not know—know that the mighty God of Israel was his strength. But of this they were willingly ignorant. For God hardened their hearts. And therefore they persisted in fighting God through plotting the downfall of Samson whom they did not dare to meet in open combat.

The meaning and significance of Samson's achievement at Gaza must not be allowed to escape us. The gates of a city symbolized its strength. To take possession of an enemy's gates was to obtain a complete victory over him. One element in the promise made to Abraham was to the effect that "thy seed shall possess the gates of its enemies." Gen. 22:17. Rebecca was sent away with the same blessing (Gen. 24:60), "May thy seed possess the gate of those that hate it." Thus Samson's taking off with the gates of Gaza was the worst humiliation which he could inflict upon the Philistines. It betokened his supreme mastery over the enemy, his reigning in their midst; it symbolized that he was their lord into whose hand they, the whole Philistine nation and not merely these Gazites, had been given and whose footstool they had been made. How obviously true this was. Samson did not escape from Gaza. The word "escape" is not in place here. It is the prisoner who escapes when the guards on duty fail to be watchful. It can be said of a man that he escaped only if his leaving could have been prevented. But who or what could have deterred Samson? Not the accumulative strength of all the Gazites. Calmly and majestically he proceeded to the gate of the city with his enemies all about him, silent and impotent by a paralyzing fear that his sudden presence among them had inspired. No Philistine or combination of Philistines dared waylay him, not even when they saw him calmly walking off with the doors of their city. He was no prisoner there in Gaza, but the master, the lord. Gaza was his prisoner. Gaza was the spoils with which he had victoriously emerged from his warfare with them. And the spoils he carried to the city of his God and thus gave glory to Him whose was the victory. "And (he) carried them up to the top of an hill that is before Hebron."

It is this achievement of Samson that forms the climax of his whole career, which now drew rapidly to a sad but yet victorious close. In his carnality he

now played into the hands of his enemy who, having learned the secret of his power through a woman in whose hands he became as clay, succeeded finally in getting him into their power. They put out his eyes and made him grind in their mill. They buried him with curses and maledictions and gave glory for their triumph over him to their gods. But at the high point of their jubilation they were pitched headlong into hell when he pulled down over himself and them the temple of their god where they were congregated. His soul died with the Philistines but his spirit was carried to heaven; for he had fought the good fight. Thus he died as he had lived—a king. We want to say more about this in a following article.

A man must be blind if, especially in this great achievement of Samson—his taking off with the gates of Gaza—he can't see reflected the Christ of God, His warfare and victory over all the enemies of His people, His reigning in their midst with them at His feet at all times, His supreme Lordship both as the humiliated and exalted Saviour. He was never the prisoner of men. All things were in His hands always. Of His power and glory and triumphs Samson's triumphs were but a dim reflection. Samson bore all the defects of a type. He proceeded to the gates of Gaza from the embrace of a harlot. Yet fundamentally he was a man of faith. And it ought to have become plain now that his reason for going to Gaza was good. He went there on the great mission of his life. And of this he was aware.

G. M. O.

Een Gebed In Oorlog

(Psalm 83; Tweede Deel)

In het eerste opstel over dezen psalm hebben we het als onze opinie uitgesproken, dat de historische achtergrond van dit lied gevonden werd in het tijdstip toen Edom en Ismael met de kinderen van Lot en de goddeloozen tezamen spanden om Israel onder Koning Josafat te benauwen.

Toen is de Heilige Geest des Heeren gekomen op een der nazaten van Asaf om den Heere aan te loopen in den gebede. En het product van dat gebed beluisteren we in dezen psalm.

In het eerste gedeelte hoorden we het smeeken van Gods volk om redding en verlossing van de goddeloozen. Tevens zagen we, dat de goddeloozen en ontrouwe Edomieten en Moabieten Israel haatten omdat zij God haatten. Dat kunt ge toepassen op het wereldgebeuren in alle eeuwen. Josafat en Israel hebben voor Golgotha

uitgevonden hetgeen Jezus Zijn jongeren leerde: "In de wereld zult gij verdrukking hebben!" En waarom? "Zij hebben Mij gehaat: zij zullen ook u haten!"

Toen volgde er een letterlijke beschrijving met naam en toenaam van alle die vijanden. En zagen wij het verschrikkelijke ervan, om met name bij God beschuldigd te worden. Er zit een waarschuwing voor ons in. Laat af van Gods volk! Die Zijn volk aanraakt raakt Zijn oogappel aan. Hij zal het zien en zoeken.

Nu gaan we verder.

Asaf's nazaat zal uit de geschiedenis van Gods volk gebeurtenissen aanhalen en vragen of de Heere met de huidige vijanden doen zal gelijk Hij in het verleden gedaan heeft.

"Die hun als Midian, als Sisera, als Jabin aan de beek Kison!"

Ja, die geschiedenis kennen we. Ge kunt ze opslaan in het boek der Richteren, hoofdstuk 4 en 5. Jabin, de goddelooze koning van Kanaan, had zijn krijgsoverste Sisera afgezonden met een groot heir om Israel te benauwen. Doch de Geest des Heeren kwam op een godvruchtige vrouw die henenzond en Barak tot zich riep om hem van den Heere te gelasten de wapenen op te nemen tegen dit groote heir. En de uitkomst was grootsch geweest. De Heere benauwde het leger der godvergetenen en de krijgsoverste Sisera was gevallen door de hand eener vrouw, Jaël, Heber's huisvrouw. Later werd ook koning Jabin verwoest door Israel.

Dat was een roemrijke overwinning geweest en Deborah zong haar overwinningslied!

Al de vijanden werden te Endor verdelgd en werden "tot drek der aarde!" Vreeselijk oordeel Gods. Ze waren gekomen met veel machtsvertoon en het einde was drek der aarde. Ik denk hierbij aan de verschrikkelijke photo's waar we Mussolini met zijn bijzit zien in de courantenplaatjes, terneder geveld, vertrappt, opgehangen. Dat is het einde van dien snoever, met de kin uitgestoken, blaffende van af het balkon zijner paleizen. Doch dat is het ergste niet. Hij is nu gevallen in de handen van den levenden God.

Welnu, Heere! Maak onze huidige vijanden zooals Sisera met de Kanaanieten die op roof en buit belust aankwamen, doch niet wederkeerden. Met andere woorden, verdelg onze vijanden.

Nog andere voorbeelden worden uit de historie aangehaald. Bovendien wordt ook het motief der goddeloozen geschetst. "Maak hen en hunne Prinsen als Oreb en als Zeëb, en als hunne vorsten als Zebah en als Zalmuna."

Ge kunt die historie vinden in Richteren 7 en 8.

Ook deze geschiedenis is treffend. Eerst zou ik U willen wijzen op het feit, dat de Prinsen en Vorsten der vijanden Gods met name genoemd worden. Ja, het volk was óók goddeloos, doch het was zooals heden

ten dage: de grooten der aarde leiden het gewone volk, worden door hen opgehitst en zullen daarom veel meer gestraft worden dan de heirscharen die zij opriepen ten strijde. Mak hen als Oreb en Zeëb! Wat een geschiedenis! De eerste werd geslacht op den rots Oreb en de andere in de perskuip Zeëb! Waarschijnlijk waren het plaatsnamen die naar hunnen naam genoemd waren.

En de held Gods in deze geschiedenis was Gideon, die met een klein aantal den strijd Godes streden.

En gelijk Gideon gedaan had aan deze vorsten, deed hij ook aan Zebah en Zalmuna.

En wat was het motief toch dezer goddelooze vorsten?

Het antwoord vindt ge in het dertiende vers: "die zeiden: Laat ons de schoone woningen Gods voor ons in erfelijke bezitting nemen!"

Dat motief vindt ge in de harten van alle goddeloozen. Ik heb mij vaak verwonderd over het feit, dat de goddeloozen God niet met rust kunnen laten. Huns ondanks bewijzen zij steeds, dat er geen praktisch atheïsme bestaat. De sprake Gods in 't diepe hart is te duidelijk: het doet te veel pijn (Openb. 11:10; het laatste gedeelte). Zij ergeren zich aan Gods schoone woningen. Diep opgevat is dit Jezus. Daarom werd Hij zoo vreeselijk gehaat door alle goddeloozen; Pilatus ergert zich en is bang; Herodus spot; Judas verkoopt God voor dertig stuks zilver; de Joodsche kerk spuwt haar venijn uit tegen Hem; het vleesch in alle discipelen wordt geërgerd; de oude Petrus verloochent Hem: er is geen plaats voor Jezus.

De schoone woningen Gods!

Zij willen die veroveren, doch niet om naar Gods bevel met Hem te wonen. O neen! Zij willen die woningen verontreinigen, verbranden met vuur.

De schoone woningen Gods: en dat is Jezus. Welgelukzalig die in Hem bij God mag wonen. Derzulken leven is immers met Christus verborgen bij God.

Vervuld, steeds weer vervuld door de eeuwen heen. Ik denk hier aan de vreeselijke, godslasterlijke boeken die ik gelezen heb vanuit Rusland. Daar woonden de Russen in de kerken en maakten spotprenten van de Heilige Majesteit! In die boeken waren plaatjes, spotprenten van Jezus en het Kruis. Het Bloed werd als onrein uitgekreten.

Zij, o ja, zij zullen worden als Oreb en Zeëb, als Zebah en Zalmuna! God zal al die goddeloosheid zoeken.

Ik denk ook aan het vervolgen van Gods volk in Duitschland en het versnijden van Gods Woord in de goddelooze universiteiten in Amerika!

Waarom laat men God niet met rust? Waarom moest Professor Jansen den Bijbel met zijne wonderen aanvallen? 't Had veel beter geweest voor dien armen man als hij in 1918 Bibliothecaris geworden ware, dan na zijn afzetting.

En wat is het oordeel waar Asaf om bidt?

"Mijn God, maak hen als een wervel, als stoppelen voor den wind."

De geleerden vertellen mij, dat in het gebruik van het woord "wervel" Asaf gedacht heeft aan het blad, het groote blad van een plant die in Palestina gevonden wordt. Als die bladen verwelken, vallen zij af en worden door den wind als raderen over de velen gejaagd. Dit past bij de "stoppelen" waarvan het tweede gedeelte van dit vers spreekt.

Dit beeld is treffend.

Ge zingt ervan in Psalm 68:1.

Ge hebt het allen gezien voor Uwe oogen in het najaar, als de bladeren voortgejaagd worden door den stormwind. Grillig, vreemd, wild, zonder regelmaat, vliegen de bladeren daarhenen.

Zoo zullen de goddeloozen als wervels en stoppelen, door God op de hielen gezeten, verjaagd worden naar de eeuwige tochten der hel. David zong: "De Heer zal opstaan tot den strijd; Hij Zal Zijn haters wijden en zijden, verjaagd, verstrooid doen zuchten; Hoe trotsch Zijn vijand wezen moog"; hij zal voor Zijn ontzaglijk oog al sidderende vluchten. Gij zult hen, daar Ge in glans verschijnt, als rook en damp, die ras verdwijnt, verdrijven en doen dolen. 't Goddelooze volk wordt haast tot asch; 't Zal voor Uw oog vergaan als was, dat smelt voor gloende kolen!"

Het laatste gedeelte van dit psalmvers past ook op de verdere plagen die Asaf afbidt voor den goddelooze. Daar staat verder: "Gelijk het vuur en woud verbrandt, en gelijk de vlam de bergen aansteekt, vervolg ze alzoo met Uw onweder, en verschrik ze met Uwen draaiwind!"

Ik heb nooit een woudbrand gezien van nabij; verlang er ook niet naar. Doch we hebben wel een bergbrand gezien in California. Als wij dan in de vallei omhoog zagen en de vuurvlammen zagen met de wolkolommen, dan werd het bang. Het onweder en de wervelwind zijn vreeselijk hier in Iowa en Minnesota. We hebben de resultaten ervan gezien, nu al jaren geleden. De huizen werden letterlijk omgekeerd.

Doch dit alles is slechts beeld. De Heere heeft door Zijn Geest de vreeselijkste dingen afgemaald in dezen psalm. De werkelijkheid is veel erger. Denkt hier aan de vervulling van wervels, stoppelen, boschbrand en vlammen bergen, met onweder en draaiwind, doch die allen te zamen zijn maar een flauw beeld van wat het zeggen wil om met schrik en angst en wanhoop aan te komen in de put des vuurs die brandt van vuur en zwavel. En alles wat die arme menschen en duivelen zullen zien is 't vlammend Oog van God. De groote dag Zijns toorns is gekomen en wie kan bestaan?

Daar bidt Asaf om.

En 't is vervuld en zal vervuld worden,

Asaf zegt: Maak hun aangezicht vol schande, opdat zij, o Heere! Uwen naam zoeken.

O neen! hier wordt niet gesproken van het zoeken van Gods naam tot behoudenis. Dat kan niet. Het verband is er tegen. Hoe zou er dan op kunnen volgen: Laat ze beschaamd en verschrikt wezen tot in eeuwigheid, en laat ze schaamrood worden en omkomen!?

Neen, maar dit is de beteekenis van het zoeken van Gods naam der goddeloozen: als God met Zijn eindoordeelen komt, zullen alle goddeloozen luidkeels tot God roepen en Zijn naam al sidderende belijden.

Zijt ge het vergeten hoe men ons meldde, dat de goddeloozen die in de schipbreuk van de "Titanic" omkwamen luidkeels tot God geroepen hebben?

En zoo is het steeds geschied. Van vele godhaters hebben we het gehoord: bij het einde van hun leven waren ze bang om te sterven; sommigen moest men met mannekrachten op het bed houden. Ze wisten, dat Gods hand klaar stond om hen aan te grijpen. Zoowel als Gods volk een voorsmaak van den hemel op zijn sterfbed mag smaken, proefden vele goddeloozen een voorsmaak van de hel vooraleer zij stierven. De historie getuigt zulks veelmalen en op velerlei wijze.

En aan het einde van de godvergetenen zien we naar Asaf's woord: schande, schaamte en schrik. Leest het maar in de verzen 17 en 18. Hier moet ik weer onwillekeurig denken aan Mussolini. Aan het einde van zijn ellendige leven, terwijl de vingers zich knelden om de trekkers der geweren, schreeuwde hij in verwijfeling: Neen! Neen!

Schande en schaamte is als onze werken bevonden worden ijdel en goddeloos te zijn. Als God ons hart binnenste buiten keert en laat zien wie en wat wij werkelijk waren, dan wordt het aangezicht rood van schaamte. Schaamte ervaart men als men ontmaskerd wordt.

Toen Hitler zichzelf van het leven beroofde, heeft hij toen misschien gedacht aan het snoeven in het Sportpalast?

God zeide eenmaal: Tot Mij zal alle vleesch komen!

Ja, maar o! het maakt zulk een vreeselijk verschil hoe men tot God komt.

Deze menschen, waar Asaf het over heeft, zullen met schaamte en schrik naar Gods naam vragen, in de verwijfeling der wanhoop. Dat kunt ge duidelijk zien uit het laatste vers: Opdat zij weten dat Gij alleen met Uwen naam zijt de Heere, de Allerhoogste over de gansche aarde. Die wetenschap te vergaderen, terwijl het bloed van Gods volk nog aan de vingers kleeft, gelijk Kain van ouds, is bang.

Evenwel er is een ander vragen en verlangen naar den Naam.

Gods des levens, ach, wanneer, zal ik naderen voor Uw oogen in Uw Huis Uw Naam verhooggen?

O! dat vragen en zoeken, *zulk* verlangen en hunkeren is goed, is eeuwig goed.

Jezus van Nazareth zeide: Die tot Mij komt zal Ik geenszins uitwerpen!

En die in het diepe hart gegrepen werden zochten ook den Naam en zij zongen:

"Toen vluchtte ik tot Jezus! Hij heeft mij
gered;

Hij heeft mij verlost van het vonnis der
Wet;

Mijn heil, en mijn vrede, en mijn leven
werd Hij;

Ik boog me, en geloofde en mijn God sprak
mij vrij!"

G. V.

The Orthodox Church In Russia

The existence of Christianity in Russia dates back to the tenth century. It was not until the twelfth century, however, that Russia was considered as being numbered among the christian nations. It was especially under the influence of the Eastern Greek Orthodox Church that Christianity first struck root in Russia, and the first convert of note was the Empress Olga, who was baptized at Constantinople in the year 955. However, it was through the efforts of her grandson, Vladimir, that Christianity spread in Russia. History records that under his influence the inhabitants of Kiev threw their idols in the Dnieper River, and were baptized by the thousands, while Vladimir knelt on the river bank in gratitude to God.

In order to understand the Orthodox Church of Russia, we must briefly consider the history of the Eastern Greek Orthodox Church from which it sprang, and with which it is still associated. In the eleventh century the Catholic Church was divided into the Eastern and Western Churches, the former headed by the patriarch of Constantinople, and the latter by the Pope of Rome. Although the events which occasioned the final division of the Catholic Church into the Eastern and Western Churches were questions pertaining to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit (The Filioque), the real causes lay deeper. One was the difference of race. In the West the dominant race was the Latin, which had been strengthened by mixture with the Germanic, while in the East it was the Greek, influenced greatly by the Oriental. Another cause of the division of the Church was the division of the rule of the empire between East and West. There was constant rivalry between the ever-increasing claims of the bishop of Rome, and the patriarch of Constantinople. The final rupture came in 1054, from which time the Greek and Roman Churches stood apart, each claiming to be the true Catholic Church and refusing any recog-

dition to the other. The Greek, or Eastern Church comprised Greece, most of the Balkin peninsula, and Russia, with most of the Christians in Asia Minor, Syria and Palestine. The rest of Europe obeyed the Pope.

In the year 1453 there fell upon the Eastern Church the greatest disaster of its history. In that year the Turks captured Constantinople. The Eastern Empire, in the which the Church had flourished from the days of the apostles, fell into the hands of Islam. The Turks now dominated the famous patriarchates of Antioch, Jerusalem and Alexandria, as well as Constantinople. Thus the separation between the Eastern and Western Church became even greater. At the fall of Constantinople many Greek scholars fled to Western Europe, and there took part in the Revival of learning. By the departure of these scholarly and learned men the intellectual life of the Eastern Church was seriously weakened. The clergy became ignorant and preaching practically ceased, and all emphasis was placed upon the traditional. The Eastern Church was in no way affected by the Reformation of the sixteenth century. It lived in another world, and experienced nothing of the religious revolution which was sweeping the Western Church.

It was during this time that the center of influence of the Eastern Church shifted from Constantinople to Moscow, Russia. It was in 1587 that the metropolitan of Moscow was raised to the rank of patriarch. During the 17th century the Russian Church, especially under the famous patriarch, Nikon, (1659) showed some signs of new life. He persuaded the Czar to introduce into the worship the Greek Psalter, and also to call together an ecclesiastical assembly to revise the text of Scripture. It was in objection to the policies of Nikon that a large group of schismatics left the Orthodox Russian Church, which to this day are known as the "Old Believers". The Holy Synod was instituted by Peter the Great in 1718, to take the place of the Patriarchate. To a large extent, however, the Tsar ruled the Orthodox Church. He was considered the guardian of the true faith and of the welfare of the Holy Church. In the organization and administration of the Church, the Tsar held a position of authority, and he exercised it through his minister, the Ober-Procuror, who transmitted the Tsar's wishes to the Holy Synod, and thence in regular manner through the bishops to the Consistories, rural deans and priests. The Holy Synod had the right to dissent, to refuse, to petition the Tsar, but since the Tsar could change the personnel of the Synod, it eventually proved submissive. On the other hand, the Tsar was largely guided by the intentions of the Ober-Procuror, who really had the strings of Church government in his hand.

According to the statistics published in 1905, the

population of European and Asiatic Russia numbered 125,640,021; of this number 87,123,604 belonged to the Russian Orthodox Church, and 2,204,596 to various sects of this Church, including the above mentioned 'Old Believers'. We have no religious statistics of modern Russia, but we do know that there was a drop in the number of local parish churches from about 50,000 in 1917 to less than 10,000 in 1938. There are a great many villages where the priest has been exiled and the church property taken over for a granary or for some other use. The Russian News Service in London on August 22, 1941, stated that 8,338 places of worship were open in Russia, of which 4,225 were Orthodox.

In worship and ritual the Orthodox Church is much like the Roman Catholic, while the celebration of the sacrifice of the mass as it's center, with an equal and even greater neglect of the sermon, and is addressed more to the senses and imagination than to the intellect and the heart. It is strongly Oriental, unintelligibly symbolical and mystical, and excessively ritualistic. In their services they reject organs, musical instruments, and sculpture, and make less use of the fine arts in their churches than the Roman Catholics; but they have even a more complicated system of ceremonies, with gorgeous display, semibarbaric pomp, and endless changes of sacerdotal dress, crossings, gestures, prostration, washings, processions, which so absorb the attention of the senses, that there is little room left for the intellectual and spiritual worship. To many Russians worship is chiefly reverence of the icons (holy pictures of the virgin Mary and the saints) by crossing themselves, lighting candles, and prostrations. Sermons are rare. The chief saint next to the Virgin, is St. Nicholas. The rigorous fasting, for which the Russians were long famous, seems to have diminished in recent years. The worship of saints, relics, pictures (icons) and the cross is carried as far as, or even farther than, in the Roman Catholic Church; but statutes, bas-reliefs, and crucifixes are forbidden. The veneration for pictures of the Virgin Mary and saints is carried to the utmost extent, and takes the place of the Protestant veneration for the Holy Scriptures. The holy picture (icon) with the lamp burning before it is found and worshipped in the corner (the sacred place) of every room, in the street, over gateways, in offices, taverns, steamers, railway and telegraph stations, and is carried in the knapsack of every Orthodox soldier, not as a work of art, but an emblem, a means of instruction, an aid to devotion. The Orthodox Russians are very religious in outward observances and devotions, but know very little of inward piety, and personal communion of the soul with Christ.

The circulation of the Scriptures among the laity is not encouraged, but has never been prohibited. The Orthodox Church has always had a popular version of

the Bible, first in the old Slavic, and now in modern Russian. The printing and circulating of the Bible in the Russian language, and within the Orthodox Church is under the exclusive control of the Holy Synod. As far as we know the Bible is not being printed in Russia today, for all the printing presses are controlled by the Communists.

The celebration of the Lord's Supper in the Orthodox Church, though agreeing in essence with the Roman Catholic, differs very much in form. "Five loaves are laid on the altar, each stamped with the sign of the cross and the inscription, "Jesus Christ Conquers." The officiating priest selects one of them for the sacrificial lamb; and with a symbolical reference to the soldier who pierced the side of Jesus with a spear, so that blood and water flowed from the wound, he cuts the loaf, by thrusting the holy lance, a knife in the form of a lance—into it, while at the same time the deacon pours the wine and the water into the chalice. Under somber dirges the elements are then carried in a solemn procession, headed with many lighted candles and much incense-burning, through the whole church and back again to the altar, where they are deposited, like the body of Christ in the tomb. A curtain is lowered before the altar; and, unseen by the congregation, the elements are consecrated while the choir is chanting the Lord's Prayer. When the curtain is drawn, the altar represents the tomb from which Christ has arisen; and, while the choir sings a hymn of praise, the elements are presented to the communicants without any special formula of distribution. The consecrated bread is broken into the consecrated wine and both elements are given together in a spoon. The Orthodox claim that this custom (known as *intinction*) dates back to the time of Chrysostom. It never gained foothold in the Western Church, and was forbidden as unscriptural by Pope Julius I. (337-352)." D. S. Schaff.

The present head of the Orthodox Russian Church is Patriarch Sergius, patriarch of Moscow and of all Russia. A stupendous event for the Russian Orthodox Church took place when on September 5, 1943, Stalin and Molotoff gave audience to Patriarch Sergius and Bishop Nicholas, Metropolitan of Kiev, and granted their request, which had been steadfastly refused for 17 years, that the Church be permitted to call a Council to elect a Patriarch. This meeting was held on the 8th of September, at which time Metropolitan Sergius was elected as the Patriarch of Moscow and All-Russia, to which office he was enthroned on the 12th of September, 1943. As a result of this people who have been hiding their religious feelings now feel more free to express them publicly, and groups of such people, in places where the churches have all been closed, are registering as new congregations and applying for the use of church buildings, which are now in the hands

of the government. However, we fully agree with Rev. Hanko (Standard Bearer, Vol. 21, p. 352) that Russia's change of attitude is only a change in policy.

B. K.

The Deaconate and Civic Charity

In times of local or national calamity the government steps in to aid the distressed. Whether a certain community is inundated by a flood, so that homes are destroyed and crops are ruined or whether the whole nation suffers from a depression, the government is called upon to send the necessary relief. She also serves by erecting institutions for the psychopaths, sanatoriums for the disabled and hospitals for the sick. This is not only taken for granted, but commonly considered to be her duty. The government, it has often been said, owes us our living. And it is frequently regarded as a privilege to take as much advantage of the generosity of the government as possible.

While on the other hand, the deaconate in the church is considered a charitable institution that must be shunned at any cost. Only as a last extreme, when everything short of theft has failed, will a person submit to the disgrace of making a Nicodemus-call on the deacons. By far the large majority of church members would much rather receive aid from a generous friend, some social welfare organization, or even from the government than to appeal to the deacons for charity. The office of the deaconate stands in dishonor in the church, and those needy who consider it a disgrace to appeal to it are directly responsible. But no less responsible are the well-to-do who proudly assert themselves as if their own hand had prospered them, so that they can rightfully look down with disdain upon the distressed and needy. And in many cases even the deaconate itself has been responsible for such a state of affairs in so far as they parsimoniously doled out their funds as if they were reluctantly paying them out of their own pockets, so that the needy could survive with but a meagre existence. But behind all this, the fault must be laid at the door of the church which measures her spiritual growth by her outward prosperity and gratefully considers it a blessing that it cannot be said of her, "the poor ye have with you always."

The result is that the Benevolence Fund often suffers the ignominy of disuse. According to the fixed custom a collection is still regularly taken or a certain amount is duty set aside for this purpose, but the rate that this fund grows shows how little real interest the congregation has in it. In some cases the money lies unused from year to year, so that no need is felt to

create a large fund; in other cases these funds are "borrowed" to bolster a depletion of some other fund. All too frequently the deacons become a mere supplement to the consistory to take care of the financial matters of the congregation. And if, especially in the smaller congregations, a great need does suddenly arise, the deacons are unable to extend the hand of mercy because of lack of funds. And too often the consistory feels most reluctant to send an appeal for aid to the neighboring churches. With the result that the needy turn elsewhere to seek relief.

The cause of all this is a serious failure to understand the significance of the office of deacons with application to practical life. Only when we understand the calling of the deaconate as we should, will civic charity, and for that matter every other form of organized charity be relegated to its proper place.

It should be understood, first of all, that charity does not belong to man, but to God. All true charity has its source in mercy, and mercy is not a virtue of fallen man, but is an attribute of God. Mercy is rooted in love, and even as there is only One that is good, so there is also but One that is love, namely God. God is merciful within Himself, and in turn is merciful unto those He loves by delivering them from all their distresses and bestowing upon them the highest good in Christ Jesus. God is always merciful and gracious toward His people, slow to anger and plenteous in compassion. With them He does not lead according to their sins, nor will He forever chide, nor keep His anger forever. As the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him, for He has removed their transgressions endlessly far from them.

Even when He sends His people trials and sufferings during this present time, He never does it in wrath, but in that love which causes all things to work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose. We confess that He is "for the sake of Christ His Son, my God and Father, on Whom I rely so entirely, that I have no doubt, but that He will provide me with all things necessary for soul and body; and further, that He will make whatever evils He sends upon me in this valley of tears turn out to my advantage; for He is able to do it, being Almighty God, and willing, being a faithful Father." Heid. Cat. Lord's Day 9. From God we expect every good thing, for He supplies all our needs.

But it is given unto the church to be God's witness in the world. She is God's workmanship, God's husbandry, co-laborer together with God. Christ is her Head, and she is His Body. And even as the head operates through the body, so Christ works through His Church. They are united together as Head and Body, but the members are also mutually knit together as parts of the same Body. Christ, Who is the merciful Highpriest

in the sanctuary, spreads abroad the love of God in His Church. But that love they love Him and love one another in Him, but also manifest that love in Christian benevolence according to their mutual trials and sufferings. The love of God in Christ, as it fills the members of the church, causes them to bear their sufferings mutually, so that they spontaneously desire to aid the distressed, care for the destitute and feed the hungry. Spurred on by that love the members of the immediate family and the closest relatives will be the first to extend relief, but the others also will feel and assume their obligation to do all they can, according to the office of all believers. After all, in extending the helping hand to the least of Christ's brethren they are doing it to Him. Him they find hungry and feed Him; Him they find destitute and clothe Him; Him they find in prison and they visit Him.

Yet it never was God's intention to leave the work of charity only to the individuals in the church. That is evident from the institution of the office of deacons among the early Christians after Pentecost. As the Form for the ordination of elders and deacons states: "Of the origin and institution of their office we may read, Acts 6, where we find that the apostles themselves did in the beginning serve the poor, "At whose feet was brought the price of the things that were sold: and distribution was made unto every man, according as he had need." But afterwards when a murmuring arose, because the widows of the Grecians were neglected in the daily ministration: "men were chosen (by the advice of the apostles) who should make the service of the poor their peculiar business, to the end that the apostles might continually give themselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word." Even as the ministry of the Word represents Christ in His prophetic office, and the office of the elders represents the office of the merciful Highpriest, Who is now in heaven and administers His office in and through the Church. The deacons represent Him Who calls them and sends them out in His name to assist the destitute and helpless with true compassion and hearty affection. It is their privilege to visit the needy in Christ's Name, and to extend the mercy of God to them, not only in the form of necessary aid, but also with prayer and the comfort of the Word. They extend the mercy of God to those in distress, even as God has filled the hearts of His people with the eager desire to help them in their distresses. The bounties which God has bestowed upon His church, the church through her deacons gladly shares with those in need. And the needy they have always with them, if they are but sufficiently interested to search them out. It would seem a strange thing if in a world of growing sin and misery the need of the office of mercy had disappeared.

From this it should be evident that the church has

been entrusted the administration of mercy, and not to the magistrate. The magistrate also has a calling, but surely not to represent Christ in the world. To the magistrate is committed the exercise of the sword-power, and with it the dispensing of justice, not of mercy. The government is called to protect the good and punish the evil-doer. That is the extent of her calling. That does not exclude that she should make the necessary laws for decency and good order for the welfare of her citizens. Surely she is interested in preventing the spread of diseases, cleaning up the filth of the poverty-stricken slums and making other laws of sanitation, as well as relieving the streets of the lone Lazarus who lies unattended at the gate of some rich man. Special times of distress may bring special demands upon the magistrate, but that does not change the fact that charity is the task of the church, within her own sphere and as much as possible round about her. If the magistrate is forced to take over because the church fails to assume her obligation, the shame is on the church. Even organizations for social welfare should not replace the church in her work of mercy. This task rests four-square upon the church, and upon her alone.

What is lost sight of, is the fact that Christ in God's name, and not man, dispenses mercy in the world. Many would rather appeal to the good graces of their fellow men than be privileged to receive mercy from God in Christ Jesus through the office in His church. True it is, that it is more blessed to give than to receive. The greater blessing evidently lies in the privilege of being a member of the body of Christ, which has been endowed from Christ with the necessary means to be able to dispense mercy in Christ's name among the destitute. Even so, by far the most effective way of performing this work of benevolence is through the deaconate. A gift secretly dropped into the collection plate is in every way a better gift than the one that is flaunted before the eyes of men with a lot of fanfare. Surely if we give our gifts to be seen of men, we have our reward as soon as men have seen and acknowledged them with flattering words. But he who gives in secret through the deacons can be sure that his left hand will never know what his right hand is doing. He can rest assured that his gift will reach the place that has the greatest need. And he knows that his Father Who sees in secret will reward him openly. There can be no doubt about it, that it is blessed to give. Even more blessed than to receive.

But the fact remains, that in that case it must also be blessed to receive. The more so, because we receive not of men who might expect our thanks, but from our own brethren, the household of faith. And what is more, we receive from Christ, our merciful High-priest, Who is the good Shepherd that cares for His sheep and aids them in all their distresses. And above

all, we receive from God, our heavenly Father, Who is the God of all mercy. He Who cares for the sparrow has His own way of caring for us, His children, even though we be the least of Christ's brethren.

To ignore or slight this benevolence is nothing less than to despise the mercy of God. To turn to civic charity in preference to the deaconate is to choose the charity of men rather than the goodness of God. And that, too, has its reward.

Rethinking the calling of the deaconate is well worth our while. It can only mean that all must profit, not the least the deaconate itself.

C. H.

The Man Without a Wedding Garment

(Matthew 22:11-14)

Our subject deals with the concluding verses of the parable known as "The marriage of the king's son." Before proceeding to read this article you would do well to first read the entire parable as found in Matthew 22:1-14.

To understand our subject under discussion we must first of all understand the main points of the entire parable. This parable was spoken by Jesus in the Temple, on the third day of Passion week. It is very closely related to the two preceeding parables, the parable of "The two sons", and "The wicked husbandmen." The first of these two emphasizes the point that publicans and sinners enter into the kingdom of heaven in precedence to the chief priests and elders. The second parable emphasizes the thought that the kingdom would be taken away from the Jews and be given to a people bringing forth fruit. The parable of "The marriage of the king's son," clearly teaches that the Gentiles will become heirs of salvation. The picture of the parable is very clear. A king makes a marriage for his son. He sends forth his servant to call them that were bidden to the wedding. However, those bidden would not come. Again other servants are sent forth to tell them which were bidden to come for all things are ready. But those bidden make light of it, they find excuses. Finally, the remnant took the king's servants and threatened them spitefully, even slew them. The king becomes angry, saying that those who were bidden were not worthy. And summoning his armies the king destroys those murderers and burns their city. Now the servants are sent out once more, they must go into the high ways and as many as they find they must bid to the marriage. Re-

sult is that many respond to the calling and the wedding was furnished with guests.

Before we go further I like to state that we must remember as far as the picture is concerned, and also as to its spiritual application, that those who were bidden to the marriage were under the obligation to come. The bidding of the king's servants was not an invitation in the usual sense of the word, but is tantamount to a summons. Those that are bidden have no right whatever to refuse to come. Add to this that those who were bidden first had already indicated that they would come, they were waiting for the call of the king. Hence, this call when it comes is really the final notification that they must come, as they have promised, and as is their solemn obligation.

Naturally, we can not enter at present into detail so far as the spiritual meaning of all this is concerned. However, here follow the main thoughts of the parable in its spiritual application. The King is of course God Himself. The King's Son is Christ. The marriage feast is the Messianic blessings of the Kingdom of Heaven as they are also to culminate in the Supper of the Lamb in the day of Christ's coming. Those who were first bidden are the Jews. Their reaction to the calling became progressively worse: "They would not, they made light of it, they entreated the servants spitefully and slew them." Particularly the book of Acts is a vivid commentary upon these words.—Of course there were exceptions, there was also among the Jews a remnant according to election. But the majority of the Jews rejected the very Christ and the very Kingdom for which they had, according to their own words been waiting for for centuries. The result is that the city of these 'murderers' was destroyed. Jerusalem which was no longer 'the city of God' but the city of 'murderers' was utterly ruined by the Roman legions. These words of Christ were indeed prophetic as history plainly proves. The destruction of Jerusalem was the official end of the Jewish nation as the peculiar nation of the Lord. Of course the Premillennialists claim that Jerusalem will be restored again to the Jews. But the Pre's are definitely wrong in this. The Lord is finished with the Jews as a nation and God's clock will not be turned back two thousand years. But the rejection of the Jews became the riches of the Gentiles. Also that is prophetically foretold in this parable. The servants go out among the Gentiles and a great many of them heed the call, embrace the gospel of salvation, and thus the wedding is furnished with guests. God's plans are not frustrated in the least. His counsel shall stand and all the elect will be gathered in, partake of the Messianic blessings of the kingdom of God and enter into the final glory of that kingdom as it shall ultimately culminate in the Supper of the Lamb.

That is, briefly, the setting of the text we are dealing with in our subject under discussion.

According to the picture of the parable the wedding is furnished with guests. When everything is completed the king comes into the wedding chamber. He came to 'see' the guests, to greet them, welcome them. This final inspection naturally also marks the beginning of the feast proper. However, as the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment. The king said unto that man: "Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?" The original plainly implies that the man *knew* that he had no wedding garment and that he had to have one. This also explains why the man has no excuse to offer, he is speechless, according to the original "muzzled". The very fact that the man has no wedding garment implies that he despised the king, his son, the feast. Of course he had come, but he had come the way he pleased. His attitude as expressed in his action was: "I am willing to come and meet the king, but I come on my own terms and dressed the way I please." It was of course obligatory to come to the king's feast in a proper, for the occasion assigned wedding garment. Even today there are certain occasions at which special garments are to be worn, and they too are obligatory. Add to the foregoing, some claim that in the East when kings or great personages made an entertainment, they were wont to present costly dresses to the guests, and that such a custom here is tacitly assumed. In the light of all this it stands to reason that this man was of a low character. Naturally, the more honorable the person, and the more solemn the occasion, the more flagrant the offence. Here the person is a *king*, and the occasion the *marriage* of his *son*. Therefore, this man did not only violate the laws of common decency and the rules of proper etiquette, but he defied the king who had called him to come to the wedding of *His Son*. We can readily understand therefore that this man is treated as an intruder who could not possibly have come here in the legitimate way. He is like a thief who has no business to be here. In the light of this we can also understand what was done to him. We read: "Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (vs. 13). The picture is very plain and fitting, suggested by the parable itself. He is made utterly helpless, and his punishment is not merely privative, the loss of that which is good, but also the presence of evil, he is cast out. Cast out into outer darkness as contrasted with the light and feasting in the wedding chamber.

As to its spiritual significance we are at present not so much interested in the question of the 'punishment' as well as in the question: "What is the wedding garment?"

Before we explain the meaning of the wedding garment, I like to remark the following: In the first place

we must remember that we are dealing here with a parable. That is to say, in this connection, that every expression in the text can not be literally applied when it comes to the spiritual significance. It is e.g. impossible to conceive of it that there ever could be any person who would manage to get into heaven while he had no place there. Such is possible in the picture, but not in spiritual reality if we apply this parable as we should, as to its ultimate meaning, to the Supper of the Lamb in the day of Christ's coming. The picture here goes far beyond the actual, spiritual reality. Secondly, the main thought is therefore not: "How did this man come into the marriage feast?" As to the actual, spiritual, final reality he never did get in, and it's wasting time to philosophize about the question: "How did he get in?"—He didn't!—But the main point is the *indispensableness* of the wedding garment. Without the wedding garment one never will enter heaven and one will never partake of the Supper of the Lamb. In the third place we must clearly understand who this man is, what type of a man he is. As to the question: "Who is this man?" several answers have been given. Some have claimed that this man was Judas. Others claim that he is the Antichrist. Many of our fathers said that this man was the Pope. Now all these so-called explanations miss the point at stake. They are radical, one-sided, mystical, or all three combined. It is safe to state that this man represents a certain type of man, not merely one single individual. Besides, this man is definitely a church member, one who claims to have obeyed the call of the Gospel, the outward call. Historically he is among the guests. Of course he is not a true member of the Body of Christ. He is a hypocrite.

And now the question, which is really the main issue at stake: "What is the wedding garment?" Also this question has been answered in various ways. Roman Catholics seem to agree quite generally that this wedding garment is the indispensable grace *charity*. A charity that is seen, practiced, that is worn as a garment. The old fathers generally agree that the wedding garment is charity or holiness. Luther, as might be expected, makes faith the wedding garment. The simplest, most plausible and logical explanation with which we agree is, that this wedding garment is *righteousness* both "in its root of faith and in its flower of charity." Scripture speaks of being *clothed* with righteousness. In the book of Revelation we read about the wife of the Bridegroom: "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints." (Rev. 19:8). This man had not, according to the pregnant image of Paul, here peculiarly appropriate: "Put on Christ." (Romans 13:14 and Gal. 3:27). The wedding garment may be said to be the righteousness in its largest sense, the whole adornment

of the new and spiritual man, including the *faith* without which it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6), and the *holiness* without which no man shall see Him. (Heb. 12:14). The parable does not state how this wedding garment is to be obtained (which is of course by faith). But the parable does emphasize very strongly the *indispensableness* of righteousness. Only those who are clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ are adorned with the proper garments of salvation which enable them to stand before God, be His guests, enter into the fellowship and communion with Him and share in the eternal blessings of salvation.

In the day of Christ, to confine ourselves to the ultimate fulfillment of these words, this man without a wedding garment, the false friend, will be pointed out as a false friend, a hypocrite, to all, and he will be severely but justly punished. He shall be cast into hell, described in the text as a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth.

We come to the conclusion, in the first place, it is not sufficient to apparently heed the call of the King's servants. Those called must not merely come but they must come the way the King wants them to come. In the second place, all those who are clothed with the garments of the righteousness of Christ are welcome guests. If one seeks all his righteousness in Christ, appropriates Him by a true and living faith, walks in sanctification of life, one is a God-pleasing guest. Indeed, the guests are to share in the blessings of the marriage feast, but after all not *they* but the King and His Son must be pleased, for it is *the marriage* of the *King's Son*.

There are, of course, a number of details which might be brought in for discussion as well as the concluding words of the parable. However, space does not permit me to broaden out and I believe for our purpose we have sufficiently treated the subject assigned: "The man without a wedding garment."

J. D.

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.

Our Missionary Calling

Last time we discussed the missionary calling of the Church in general. Our calling as Protestant Reformed Churches is not different than, or distinct from, that calling, yet even as we have a specific place as Churches so do we have a specific calling within that general mandate. This follows from our specific calling as Protestant Reformed Churches. We believe that by God's grace, we represent the purest manifestation of the Church of Christ in our present time. We believe, therefore, that Christ operates in and through us with His Spirit and Word revealing the will and counsel of God in all its beauty, truth and fulness. Thus, we maintain to stand in the very center of the historical line of the Church throughout the ages; back through history, to the Apostles, to Christ, to God Himself Who instituted His Church. From this it follows that we, of all Churches, can only properly fulfill the missionary task of the Church, both within and without, as stipulated by Christ, the Head of His Church.

Water never rises higher than its source. This is also true of all missionary activity, which will always only be the expression of the Church executing the task. In the measure, therefore, that a Church deviates from the Word and pure preaching of it at home, it will also do so abroad. The result is that that Church does not fulfill the calling of Christ. As we believe we fulfill our calling to preach the Gospel in all its fullness so we must necessarily fulfill our calling to spread it abroad, even in order to maintain and substantiate our claim.

Thus, it is evident that our specific position as Protestant Reformed Churches lays upon us a specific calling in the sphere of mission work. It demands that, in the extension of God's Church, we *must* be busy proclaiming the full counsel of God as revealed to us. Further, that we must do so especially in opposition to, and in contrast with, the prevalent activity is concerned with "saving souls", "winning the world for Christ", etc. To accomplish this task it uses the methods of education and civilization. We maintain that the calling is to preach the Gospel, as set forth in our previous article, and the method must be the full proclamation of what God has revealed to us in His Word. For these reasons our obligations are special and specific also with respect to the missionary calling.

The command of Christ should lay upon us as an especially weighty obligation. If we believe to be the purest manifestation of His Church, certainly that must express itself in the desire and effort to proclaim that truth everywhere. We may not hide our light under a bushel but rather set it upon a candlestick that it

may shine through all the house. That precious heritage which is ours, is the rightful possession of God's people everywhere and ours is the obligation to reveal it to them.

It was also pointed out, that through the pure preaching of the Word Christ calls His own unto Himself. He has promised that He will and He does. Certainly, we need not therefore fear or hesitate to go, even to the heathen, with that full and pure preaching. It is often said that we have no evangel, no gospel to proclaim. In reality exactly the opposite is true. If salvation depends at all, in any measure, on man's willingness to receive it, that salvation is without hope or promise. Only as the Sovereign Grace of God is proclaimed is the Gospel, the Good News, brought. That message is the only one of Hope and Promise. God calls His own through that means. We must, therefore, fulfill our calling as the purest manifestation of the Church that Christ's Church may be gathered and His name glorified. We hasten to add that this does not mean that Christ will not call His own except by us, that does not *depend* upon *us*. But we must see and recognize that fact as our subjective calling and obligation, in keeping with our specific calling as the Church of Christ.

How then shall we fulfill our calling? It stands to reason that we cannot be expected to establish missions, literally everywhere; nor is this necessary to the fulfillment of our specific calling. If this were our calling, then it is undoubtedly true that we would receive both the means and qualifications to accomplish that end; through the appearance among us of men and means for that task. As it is we are small and our means are limited. This does not mean, however, that we may use this fact as an excuse or alibi to do nothing at all. For the past twenty years we have said the same thing and during that time we have grown considerably. But in the same period of time, we have made very little progress and effort to expand our missionary activity. We must certainly recognize that ideal as the end towards which we as Church must strive. With a true devotion, in full consciousness of our calling, with a great effort and true sacrifice, on the part of each member, we are able, even now, to go a long way towards that ideal; much further than our present efforts indicate. There must be, within the hearts and minds of us all, a renewed consciousness of our calling expressing itself in definite activity.

The first line of defense and activity must be the "home front". The truth, as we possess it, must be cherished, loved, guarded, and proclaimed among us unceasingly. This alone can awaken, and must awaken, desire and effort to the extension of that truth.

The burden of the responsibility for the extension of the truth lies with the Churches as they have united

in an organization. For them the absolute present minimum in fulfillment of their calling would be a program of missionary activity along the following lines: 1. Each Classis should have at least one home missionary actively laboring within its boundaries. We believe that this is both possible and feasible at present. 2. The united denomination should sponsor and support a common Radio broadcast of a definite church extensional nature. 3. The denomination should support, or contribute to the support of, a foreign mission field. 4. The individual Churches should work locally at this task through the Radio, distribution of literature and all other means at their disposal.

If this is to be accomplished we as individual members must have this calling on our hearts. We too have a specific calling. First of all, there must be, among us, prayerful consideration this work before the Throne of Grace. Through our prayers we must be strengthened to our task. At the same time our individual and congregational prayers must ascend to the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth reapers. Missionaries and ministers do not just arise. They are called by Christ in response to the prayers of His people that they desire and feel the need for His servants working in His vineyard. Consciousness of that need will result in prayer to God to raise up His servants. Secondly, the calling comes to each individual, to willing offer, sacrificially, to the support of a healthy missionary program. Perhaps, we must relearn what sacrificial offering means. Finally, each one of us must himself be a "missionary", each in his own way and station. All together and individually we must let our light shine expressing that we are of the party of the Living God in the midst of a world that lies in darkness. Principally that means that we must *live* the truth that we profess in all that we do and in whatever position God has called us to assume in this world. Our lives must be a testimony to the Sovereign Grace of God, in thought, word and deed. This, it seems, is the absolute minimum for us as individuals.

Above all, at present, we must all be awakened, roused from our lethargy, to a true zeal and devotion for the cause of God's Truth and Word, in this case if the spirit is willing the flesh cannot, and will not, be weak. The Lord of the harvest has promised: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end." W. H.

NOTICE

The Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan hereby wishes to notify the churches that Synod will meet D. V., on Wednesday, June 6, 1945. The pre-synodical sermon will be preached on the previous evening at 7:45 by the president of the Synod of 1944, Rev. A. Cammenga.

G. Stonehouse, Clerk.

Contribution

Esteemed Editor:

May I have just a bit of space to answer the questions raised by Mr. Gritter in regard to my former contribution?

In the first place it appears that Mr. Gritter does not know that the following words, among many others, are also synonyms for *adversary* and *opponent*: *adverse party*, *opposition*, *disputant* and *contestant*. I have quoted from what is generally accepted as an authority, namely, *Roget's Thesaurus*. Can it be possible that he has never heard of a debate wherein one party addresses the other as "my opponent"?

His second question stems from his failure to follow through and make an application of those virtues which we all are obliged to possess. If he does so, there should be no question in his mind but that he who possesses that faith has no need or desire to trust in the arm of flesh whether that is represented by an individual or an organization of a group of individuals banded together for one purpose.

Lastly, "sharper than any two-edged sword" should have suggested to him that wellknown passage of Scripture and in the sense in which I use it simply means that his opponent will not propose to sway him with the sophistry of the world, the reasonings or logic of a sinful heart or the philosophies of great men but rather will base his thought and logic on that Word which is sharper than any two-edged sword.

I trust that he will excuse my lack of clarity and that neither he, or anyone else, was offended by my arcadian illustrations.

Respectfully, G. T. E.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

1900 — 1945

On May 17, the Lord willing, our dear parents and grandparents,

HENRY STADT

and

SUSANNA STADT nee Smid

hope to celebrate their 45th wedding anniversary. We, their children, are indeed thankful to our heavenly Father for sparing them for each other and for us.

Mrs. Barbara Schaafsma

Mr. and Mrs. Gerrit Stadt

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Kooienga

Mr. and Mrs. Herman Beusema

Mr. and Mrs. Egbert Stadt

Grand Rapids, Michigan

six grandchildren.