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MEDITATION

Door Den Geest Geleid

Want zoovelen als er door den Geest Gods geleid worden, die zijn kinderen Gods.

Rom. 8:14.

Pinksterfeest!

Feest der afsluiting, en toch ook van het begin!

Der afsluiting, ja, ook van het oude, want op den dag van Pinksteren is het oude voorbij gegaan, ziet, het is alles nieuw geworden!

Voorbij gegaan zijn de schaduwen, de aardsche tempel, het aardsche altaar, het bloed van stieren en bokken, de aardsche bedeeïng van het aardsche en nationale Israel. De bijl, die reeds in de dagen van Johannes den Dooper aan den wortel des booms gelegd was, heeft den boom omgehakt. We staan niet meer bij den tastelijken berg, en het brandende vuur, en de donkerheid en duisternis, en in het onweder, en onder het geklank der bazuin, en de stem des Woords, dat niemand vermocht te hooren; maar we zijn gekomen tot den berg Sion, en de stad des levenden Gods, tot het hemelsche Jeruzalem, en de vele duizenden der engelen; tot de algemeene vergadering en de gemeente der eerstgeborenen, die in de hemelen opgeschreven zijn, en tot God den Rechter over allen, en de geesten der volmaakte rechtvaardigen; en tot den Middelaar des nieuwen testaments, Jezus, en het bloed der besprenging, dat betere dingen spreekt dan Abel. . . .

Afsluiting en begin!

Afsluiting ook van die geheel eenige, die wonderlijke periode der openbaring, die begon met de komst van den Zoon Gods in het vleesch.

Want als de volheid des tijds gekomen is, heeft God Zijnen Zoon gezonden, geworden uit eene vrouw, geworden onder de wet, opdat Hij degenen, die onder de wet zijn, verlossen zou. En Hij, de Zoon, kwam in de

gelijkheid des zondigen vleesch. En Hij heeft onder ons getabernakeld, en sprak tot ons de woorden des eeuwigen levens. En Hij heeft onze ongerechtigheden gedragen, en den last des toorns Gods tegen de zonde voor ons gedragen ten einde toe, ja, tot in de diepte des doods en der hel, opdat Hij de kinderen Gods zou rechtvaardigen en in de vrijheid huns kindschaps zou doen ingaan. En God heeft Hem uit de dooden opgewekt, en Hem heerlijkheid en eer gegeven aan Zijne rechterhand in de hemelen, en Hem de belofte des Heiligen Geestes gegeven, opdat Hij dien Geest zou uitstorten in de gemeente, Hem van den Vader gegeven, en door dien Geest eeuwiglijk zou wonen in de harten Zijner broederen. En overmits wij kinderen zijn, heeft God den Geest Zijns Zoons uitgezonden in onze harten, die roept: Abba, Vader!

Van die geheel eenige periode is Pinksteren de afsluiting, het einde, de vervulling.

Want de Zoon, Die in het vleesch kwam, moest de levendmakende Geest worden, om Zich alzoo aan de Zijnen mede te deelen in al den rijkdom des heils.

En toch ook weer het begin, nog slechts een begin, is datzelfde Pinksterfeest, het feest der eerstelingen, het begin van den nieuwen dag, van den Dag des Heeren, die zijne afsluiting zal vinden in de wederkomst op de wolken van den Zaligmaker, het begin van den vollen oogst, die dan zal worden binnen gehaald in de opstanding der dooden.

Op Pinksterfeest mag de gemeente zingen, of liever, beginnen te zingen, om het heel de nieuwe bedeeïng door uit te jubelen:

Dit is de dag, de roem der dagen,
Dien Israel's God geheilgd heeft;
Laat ons verheugd, van zorg ontslagen,
Hem roemen, die ons blijdschap geeft.
Och Heer, geef thans uw zegeningen;
Och Heer, geef heil op dezen dag;
Och, dat men op deez' eerstelingen
Een rijken oogst van voorspoed zag.

Dag der vervulling, die ons naar de vervulling doet verlangen!

Dag van blijdschap, die ons toch in onszelfen doet zuchten!

Dag der eerstelingen, die ons doet uitzien naar den vollen oogst!

Naar de eindelijke aanneming tot kinderen!

Wonderlijke Pinksterdag!

Geleid door den Geest!

Dat is het kenmerkende der kinderen Gods.

Want zooveel als er door den Gods geleid worden, die zijn kinderen Gods.

Van dezen Geest heeft het achtste hoofdstuk van den brief aan de Romeinen veel te zeggen. Het is door de wet des Geestes des levens, dat wij zijn vrijgemaakt van de wet der zonde en des doods. Het is naar den Geest, dat de aldus vrijgemaakten wandelen. En die naar den Geest zijn bedenken, dat des Geestes is, en dat bedenken is het leven en vrede. Die Geest is de Geest van God, maar ook de Geest van Christus. Want Hij is de derde Persoon in de aanbiddelijke Drievuldigheid, de Geest des Vaders en de Geest des Zoons, Die van den Vader uitgaat tot den Zoon, om door den Zoon, als Geest des Zoons, van den Zoon uit te gaan tot den Vader. In dien Geest zegt de Vader eeuwiglijk tot den Zoon: "Gij zijt Mijn Zoon." En in dienzelfden Geest roept de Zoon in eeuwige en oneindige volmaakt-hed tot den Vader: Abba, Vader! En het is deze Geest van God, Die bij Zijne verhooging ook aan den Christus is gegeven, als Hoofd der gemeente, en Die door Christus op dien eersten doorluchtigen Pinksterdag in de gemeente werd uitgestort.

Zoo toch verkondigt het de apostel aan de schare, die zich over het Pinksterwonder ontzetten: "Dezen Jezus heeft God opgewekt, waarvan wij allen getuigen zijn. Hij dan, aan de rechterhand Gods verhoogd zijnde, en de belofte des Heiligen Geestes ontvangen hebbende van den Vader, heeft dit uitgestort, dat gij nu ziet en hoort."

De Geest Gods is de Geest van Christus, wonende in de gemeente.

En door dien Geest worden alle kinderen Gods geleid. Deze leiding is dus *geestelijk, en dat wil zeggen, dat ze plaats heeft in de sfeer der waarachtige vrijheid*. Want waar de Geest des Heeren is, aldaar is vrijheid.

Leiding toch houdt altijd in, dat iemand richting geeft aan den gang van een ander, hem langs eenen bepaalden weg, in eene zekere richting, naar eene bepaalde bestemming voert. Doch zulke eene leiding kan een verschillend karakter dragen. De ambtenaar leidt den veroordeelde naar de gevangenis. De ziende leidt den blinde. De gids leidt den reiziger in het dezen onbekende bergland. Vrijheid is er in deze leidingen niet. De veroordeelde wordt geleid tegen zijnen wil. De blinde volgt zijnen leidsman lijdelijk. De reiziger volgt den gids, zonder zelf den weg te kennen.

Maar de leiding des Geestes is geestelijk, en daarom eene leiding, die geheel en al gekenmerkt is door waarachtige vrijheid.

Neen, versta dit niet verkeerd, deze leiding is niet vrij in dien valschen zin des woords, waarin de Pelagiaan spreekt van de vrijheid van des menschen wil, alsof het van de keuze des zondaar zou afhangen of hij al of niet door den Geest zou worden geleid. Dan toch ware er geen leiding des Geestes. Dan is het eigenlijk de zondaar, die zelf bepaalt of en hoe hij zal worden geleid.

En dat is geen ware vrijheid, maar eigenwil.

Maar wel is deze leiding des Geestes vrij in den zin, dat Hij ons niet dwingt, doch beweegt, om in den weg van Gods geboden als vrije kinderen Gods te wandelen.

Hij ook leidt ons in eene bepaalde richting, en naar eene bepaalde bestemming, doch Zijne leiding is niet van buiten af, maar van binnen uit. In de richting van Gods geboden leidt Hij ons naar de eeuwige heerlijkheid. Van nature wandelen wij naar het vleesch, en zoeken de dingen der wereld, de begeerlijkheid des vleesch-es en der oogen, en de grootheid des levens. In vijandschap tegenover God staan we met geheel ons bestaan. Want het bedenken des vleesch-es is vijandschap tegen God, want het onderwerpt zich der wet Gods niet, want het kan ook niet. Geheel ons leven, ons denken en willen en begeeren, onze neigingen en hartstochten en de diepste roerselen onzer ziel,—alles beweegt zich in verkeerde richting, wordt bewogen door het beginsel der vijandschap tegen God. En in die richting bewegen we ons naar de eeuwige verwoesting. Maar de leiding des Geestes voert ons in tegenovergestelde richting. De Geest Gods leidt ons naar God in Christus. Hij verlicht ons verstand, zoodat we bedenken de dingen des Geestes; Hij verandert onzen wil, zoodat we ons afkeeren van de zonde, en Gods gerechtigheid zoeken; Hij reinigt al onze neigingen en begeerten, zoodat we behagen hebben in Gods geboden, Hem welbehagelijk zoeken te zijn, en zoeken de dingen, die boven zijn, waar Christus is aan de rechterhand Gods. In den weg van boete en berouw leidt Hij ons naar Christus den Gekruisigde; in den weg der gerechtigheid voert Hij ons naar de eeuwige heerlijkheid. Hij geeft ons de pelgrimsstaf in de hand, en leidt ons door het midden der wereld, als vreemdelingen en bijwoners, naar stad, die fundamenten heeft, welker kunstenaar en bouwmeester God is!

Hij leidt van binnen uit.

In het hart, waaruit de uitgangen des levens zijn, neemt Hij Zijn intrek. Daar vestigt Hij Zijn troon. En vandaar uit beheerscht Hij geheel het leven der kinderen Gods.

Onwederstandelijk is Zijne leiding.

Met souvereine vrijmacht maakt Hij Zijne woning in ons hart, verbreekt Hij de macht en de heerschappij des Satans en der zonde, en brengt ons onder de macht

van de wet des Geestes des levens.

En toch is Zijne leiding zoo, dat we Hem gewilliglijk volgen.

Wonderlijke leiding des Geestes!

Geleid door den Geest!

Door den Geest Gods, Die ook de Geest van Christus is.

Maar Wiens leiding juist daarom zich altijd bindt aan het Woord Gods in Christus Jezus, geopenbaard in de Heilige Schrift.

Evenals er buiten den Christus geen Geest der aanneming tot kinderen is, die ons leidt, zoo is er buiten en los van het Woord geen leiding des Geestes.

Deze leiding is daarom nimmer zoo, dat we daar door de Schrift zouden minachten, of zouden meenen, dat we het voorts zonder die Schrift wel kunnen stellen. Daar zijn er, die in dezer voege van de leiding des Geestes spreken. Ze hebben direkt, onmiddelijk contact met den Geest. Naar de influisteringen des Geestes luisteren ze. Ze leven en wandelen bij het innerlijk licht, dat de Geest in hun hart onmiddelijk ontsteekt. De Geest getuigt, niet alleen met, maar ook onmiddelijk tot hunnen geest, en openbaart hun de dingen van Gods koninkrijk, den wille Gods, en den weg, dien ze hebben te bewandelen. Aan de Schrift hebben ze daarom geen behoefte. Deze is hun eene doode letter, en zich aan haar te onderwerpen is ten slotte niets dan letterknechterij. Op de leiding des Geestes alleen komt het aan. En in plaats van te luisteren naar de prediking des Woords uit de Schrift, wachte men liever, ook in de vergadering der geloovigen, tot de Geest in ons begint te spreken, om in stilheid naar Zijne sprake te luisteren, en straks daarvan te getuigen.

Doch meer dan ijdele inbeelding is dit niet.

Een hoovaardige waan is het, waardoor men zich blootstelt aan het gevaar om de inspraak van eigen zondig hart, straks ook van den Booze zelf, te houden voor de stem des Geestes; en waardoor men, inplaats van den goeden en volmaakten en welbehagelijken wil Gods te leeren kennen, en in Zijne wegen te wandelen, op allerlei doolpaden wordt afgevoerd, en in de strikken van den vorst der duisternis verward raakt.

Altijd leidt de Geest van Christus Gods kinderen door het Woord.

Hij spreekt van Zichzelfen niet.

Immers is Hij de Geest der waarheid, Die in alle waarheid ons leidt, en van Wien de Heiland Zelf getuigde: "Hij zal van Zichzelfen niet spreken, maar zoo wat Hij zal gehoord hebben, zal Hij spreken, en de toekomstige dingen zal Hij u verkondigen. Die zal Mij verheerlijken; want Hij zal het uit het Mijne nemen, en zal het u verkondigen." Joh. 16:13, 14. En wederom: "Maar de Trooster, de Heilige Geest, Welken de Vader zenden zal in Mijnen naam, Die zal u alles

leeren, en zal u indachtig maken alles, wat Ik u gezegd heb." Joh. 14:26. En nogmaals: "Maar wanneer de Trooster zal gekomen zijn, Dien Ik u zenden zal van den Vader, namelijk de Geest der waarheid, Die van den Vader uitgaat, Die zal van Mij getuigen. En gij zult ook getuigen, want gij zijt van den beginne met Mij geweest." Joh. 15:26.

En die Geest heeft getuigd.

Hij heeft het uit den Christus genomen, en Hij heeft het den apostelen, die van den beginne met Hem geweest waren, verkondigd.

En ook de apostelen hebben getuigd.

Ze getuigden door den Geest van het Woord van Christus. En dat Woord heeft Christus Zijne gemeente gelaten, eens en voor altijd, tot aan het einde der wereld, in de Heilige Schriften.

En nog altijd getuigt de Geest van Christus.

Nog altijd leidt Hij in al de waarheid. En evenmin als het Woord der Schrift een machtwoord tot zaligheid is zonder den Geest, evenmin heeft het getuigenis des Geestes inhoud zonder dat Woord.

Het is door dat Woord, dat Hij de Kerk in de wereld bewaart, onderwijst, bevestigt, doet opwassen in de genade en kennis van den Christus.

Het is door datzelfde Woord, dat Hij de kinderen Gods, in gemeenschap ook met de Kerk, in dewelke Hij immers woont, leidt op den eeuwigen weg.

Leidt, in weerwil van Satan, wereld, en vleesch, in het pad van Gods geboden.

Tot ze straks aankomen in Sion, dat boven is.

Om te zien aangezicht tot aangezicht.

Heerlijke gave des Geestes!

Kinderen Gods!

Zij alleen worden aldus geleid.

Daarom is het zeker waar, dat zooveel als er aldus door dien Geest Gods geleid worden, kinderen Gods zijn.

God heeft de Zijnen tot Zijne kinderen aangenomen.

Voor de grondlegging der wereld heeft Hij, in Zijn vrijmachtig voornemen, hen tot Zijne kinderen gesteld, en hun alle kinderrechten geschonken. En door het kruis en de volkomene gehoorzaamheid van onzen Heer heeft Hij die aanneming tot kinderen verwerkelijkt, het recht op hun kindschap Zelf voor hen verworven, hunne zonden hun niet toerekenende, en hen bekleedend met eene eeuwige gerechtigheid, het recht hun schenkend om in Zijn Huis te wonen en de eeuwige zaligheid te beërven. En door de opstanding van Jezus Christus uit de dooden heeft Hij die aanneming tot kinderen voor eeuwig verzegeld.

En door den Geest der aanneming maakt Hij Zijne aangenomene kinderen tot levende kinderen Gods!

Hen, en hen alleen leidt Hij door dien Geest!

In die leiding hebben ze een zeker onderpand, en ook kenmerk van hun kindschap.

Door loutere genade!

H. H.

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EDITORIALS

The Text of a Complaint

The last point of the "Complaint" concerns the so-called sincere offer of salvation on the part of God to all men, particularly to the reprobate.

Here the "Complaint" descends from the stratosphere of philosophical contemplation and theological debate to the lower spheres of plain, even superficial reasoning, where even common mortals that may have been present at the examination of Dr. Clark, and at the subsequent debate about the questions involved, must have felt that they were able to participate in the discussion.

Here, too, the "Complaint" reveals, more clearly than anywhere else, its distinctly Christian Reformed tendency, particularly its sympathy with the three well-known decrees of the Synod of Kalamazoo, 1924.

And because it is especially on this point that the controversy of the presbytery of Philadelphia, which, as it now appears, is to be continued in the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, is identical with our own controversy with the Christian Reformed Church in 1924, and it may not be superfluous to refresh our memory in this respect, we will try to analyze the argument of the "Complaint" somewhat in detail.

If the standpoint of Dr. Clark with respect to the paradox of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility was described as more than amazing, his view *in re* the "well-meaning offer" is characterized as "surpassing strange." p. 13.

The complainants put it this way: "In the course of Dr. Clark's examination by Presbytery it became abundantly clear that his rationalism keeps him from doing justice to the precious teaching of Scripture that in the gospel God sincerely offers salvation in Christ to all who hear, reprobate as well as elect, and that he has no pleasure in any one's rejecting this offer but, contrariwise, would have all who hear accept it and be saved." p. 13.

Let us try to define the difference between the complainants and Dr. Clark as sharply as we can.

The difference is not that the complainants insist that the gospel must be preached to all men promiscuously, while Dr. Clark claims that it must be preached only to the elect. This would be quite impossible, seeing that no preacher is able to single out the elect and separate them from the reprobate in this world. They are agreed that the gospel must be preached to all men.

Nor is the difference that the complainants openly deny the doctrine of reprobation, while Dr. Clark professes to believe this truth. We read in the "Complaint": "He believes—as do we all—the doctrine of reprobation." p. 13.

Again, the difference does not consist in this that the complainants characterize the gospel as an "offer" of Christ or as salvation, while Dr. Clark objects to that term. If the term "offer" is understood in the sense in which it occurs in the confessions, and in which also Calvin uses it (*offere, from obfero*, meaning to present), there can be no objection to that term, though, to prevent misunderstanding, it would be better to employ the words *to present*, and *presentation*.

Again, even though Dr. Clark objects to the word "sincere" in the sense in which the complainants use that term, afraid to leave the impression that he preaches Arminianism, even this does not touch the real point of difference between them. That God is sincere in the preaching of the gospel no one would dare to deny. As the complainants rightly ask: "Would it not be blasphemy to deny this?" p. 13.

But the difference between them does concern *the contents* of the gospel that must be preached promiscuously to all men.

It is really not a question *to whom* one must preach, or *how* he must preach, but *what* he must preach.

According to the complainants the preacher is called to proclaim to all his hearers *that God sincerely seeks the salvation of them all*. If this is not their meaning when they write: "in the gospel God sincerely offers salvation in Christ to all who hear, reprobate as well as elect," their words have no meaning at all.

According to Dr. Clark, however, the preacher proclaims to all his hearers promiscuously *that God sincerely seeks the salvation of all the elect*. The elect may be variously named in the preaching: those who repent, they that believe in Christ, that hunger for the bread of life, that thirst for the water of life, that seek, knock, ask, that come to Christ, etc. etc. But they are always the elect.

We may define the issue still more sharply, and limit it to God's intention and attitude in the preaching of the gospel *with regard to the reprobate*.

For it is more especially about the reprobate and their salvation that the complainants are concerned. Strange though it may seem, paradoxical though it may sound, they want to leave room in the preaching for *the salvation of the reprobate*. For the sake of clarity, therefore, we can safely leave the elect out of our discussion. That God sincerely seeks their salvation is not a matter of controversy. To drag them into the discussion of this question simply confuses things. The question very really concerns the attitude of God with respect to the reprobate. We may limit the controversy to this question: *what must the preacher of*

the gospel say of God's intention with respect to the reprobate? And these, too, may be called by different names, such as: the impenitent, the wicked, the unbelievers, etc. etc.

The answer to this question defines the difference between Dr. Clark and the complainants sharply and precisely.

The complainants answer: the preacher must say that God sincerely seeks the salvation of the reprobate through the preaching of the gospel.

Dr. Clark answers: that is not true, the preacher may never say that in the name of God.

And, in the light of Scripture, he should say: God seeks His own glory and justification in preparing the reprobate for their just damnation even through the preaching of the gospel.

That, in thus formulating the difference, I am not doing an injustice to the complainants is very plain from their own words. They say that in the preaching of the gospel God sincerely offers salvation in Christ to the reprobate, that He has no pleasure in their rejection of the offer, that He would have them, the reprobate, accept the gospel, and that He would have them be saved. Besides, it is in this sense that they interpret Ezek. 33:11: God has no pleasure in the death of the reprobate, He would have them live; and II Pet. 3:9: God does not will that the reprobate should perish, but that they all come to repentance; and Matt. 23:37: Christ would have gathered the reprobate under His wings; and I Tim. 2:3, 4: God our Saviour will have all the reprobate to be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth. pp. 13, 14. And it is with the doctrine of universal salvation in mind that they write: "The supreme importance for evangelism of maintaining the Reformed doctrine of the gospel as a universal and sincere offer is self-evident." p. 14.

Now, you might object, as also Dr. Clark does, that this involves a direct contradiction: God sincerely seeks the salvation of those whom He has from eternity determined not to save. Or: God would have that sinner live whom He does not quicken. Or: God would have the sinner, whom He does not give the faith, to accept the gospel. Or: God would have that sinner come to Christ whom He does not draw and who cannot come.

You might object that this is not rational.

But this objection would be of no avail to persuade the complainants of their error. They admit that this is irrational. But they do not want to be rational on this point. In fact, if you should insist on being rational in this respect, they would call you a "rationalist", and at once proceed to seek your expulsion from the church as a dangerous heretic. The whole "Complaint" against Dr. Clark is really concentrated in and based on this one alleged error of his that he claims that the Word of God and the Christian faith are not irrational. According to the complainants, to be

reasonable is to be a rationalist. They write that the trouble with Dr. Clark is that "his rationalism does not permit him to let the two stand unreconciled alongside each other. Rather than do that he would modify the gospel in the interest of reprobation. (This you understand, is a slanderous remark, H.H.). Otherwise expressed, he makes the same error as does the Arminian, although he moves in the opposite direction. The Arminian cannot harmonize divine reprobation with the sincere divine offer of salvation to all who hear; hence, he rejects the former. Neither can Dr. Clark harmonize the two, and so he detracts from the latter. Rationalism accounts for both errors." p. 13.

To accuse the complainants of irrationalism is, therefore, of no avail as far as they are concerned. They openly admit, they are even boasting of, their irrational position. To be irrational is, according to them, the glory of a humble, Christian faith.

We shall, therefore, have to prove to them that, in their claim that God sincerely seeks the salvation of the reprobate in the preaching of the gospel, they not only contradict themselves, but they directly contradict Scripture.

And this we hope to do, not because Dr. Clark is in need of our defense, but because we are interested in the pure Reformed truth, and cannot allow it to be camouflaged and corrupted by some self-confessed irrationalists.

But before we proceed to do so, we must prove two things: 1. That the position of the complainants is not irrational as they claim, but involves an Arminian conception of reprobation. 2. That their argumentation on this point in the "Complaint" is very superficial, and characterized by many errors.

In this issue, we will have room only to elucidate point 1.

After all, even though the complainants themselves insist on being irrational, we will have to deal with them according to the rules of logic. If they refuse to be treated rationally, they really forfeit the right to present a complaint to any assembly of normal Christians. And treating them as rational human beings, we must insist that they do not, and cannot possibly accept the proposition: God sincerely seeks the salvation of those whom He has sovereignly from eternity determined to be damned.

In other words: I know that they claim to believe this, but I deny their claim; I do not accept it.

Hence, I must try to rationalize their position for them. How can any man, with a show of rationality, insist that God sincerely seeks the salvation of the reprobate? Only when they define reprobation as that eternal act of God according to which He determined to damn all those whom He eternally foresaw as rejecting the gospel.

In other words, I insist that the position of the

complainants, as soon as you reject their claim to irrationalism, is purely Arminian.

And their irrationalism is only an attempt to camouflage their real position.

H. H.

The Triple Knowledge

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

Part Two.

Of Man's Redemption

Lord's Day XV

3.

The Death Of The Cross (cont.)

Such is the meaning of the cross.

No other death than that by crucifixion might the Lamb of God, that must take away the sin of the world, die.

For Him it would not have been proper had He died suddenly of heart failure, or of some common disease, or of the weakness of old age.

Nor might the enemy stone Him to death, as they sometimes sought to do even before His hour had come; or cast Him down the precipice, as they meant to do at Nazareth; or, with the help of the traitor, sneak upon Him unawares, and secretly put Him out of the way, as must have been their intention when they covenanted with Judas for thirty pieces of silver. All these attempts were frustrated. The counsels of the enemies were brought to nought, and by God's special direction the events of His "hour" were so arranged that the ultimate outcome was the death of the cross.

For Christ had to bear God's curse against the sinner. And the death of the cross was accursed of God. Thus it was written: "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."

This is not to be understood as if this is the only meaning of the cross, and as if it were the only reason why our Lord must die the death by crucifixion.

There are several other reasons.

For one thing, as has already been demonstrated, the Saviour must be brought to His death in the way of legal procedure and of a public trial, and that, too, not only by the Jewish authorities, but also by the tribunal of the world, represented by Pontius Pilate.

Furthermore, Jesus' death must be a sacrifice for sin.

This implied, first of all, the shedding of His blood. In Christ the priest and the sacrificial victim were one. He was both. He must, therefore, shed His own blood, and Himself carry it in the inner sanctuary, as did the high priest among Israel on the Day of Atonement. For "Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? Heb. 9:11-14. And again: "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood: and without shedding of blood there is no remission." If the death of Christ were to be an atoning sacrifice, His blood must be shed. And this was one of the reasons why He might not die some other death, but must suffer the death of the cross.

That the death of our Lord must be a sacrifice for sin implied, secondly, that He must lay down His life voluntarily, in willing and loving obedience to the Father. His death must be an act of the High Priest. He must offer Himself. As He said while He tabernacled among us: "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. . . . As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. . . . Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment I received of my Father." John 10:11, 15, 17, 18. But if He were to lay down His life, if He were to shed His own blood, the very form of His death must be such that it offered Him an opportunity to do so. To this end the death of the cross was eminently adapted.

In the case of the Old Testament sacrifices the priest and the sacrificial victim were two different beings. All that was required, therefore, was that the priest should stab the victim as quickly as possible, and sprinkle the blood upon the horns of the altar, and upon the mercy seat, to realize the idea of a sacrificial offering. Precisely because the priest and the offering were not identical this was sufficient. The victim did not have to be slowly tortured to death, in order to make its death a voluntary offering, for it was the priest, not the victim itself, that brought the sacrifice.

But with our Saviour this was different.

He was the priest, but also the offering. He had to

shed His own blood. Hence, the very form of His death must be such that it gave Him the opportunity to pour out His life in a voluntary sacrifice, to carry His own blood into the heavenly sanctuary, sprinkle it upon the horns of the altar, and on the mercy seat by an act of conscious obedience. Had our Lord been stabbed to death, so that He had died instantaneously, this act of voluntary and loving obedience could not have been performed. But now it was different. He died the death of the cross. And this meant, not that the enemies killed Him instantaneously, but that they merely opened His body, broke it, that He might shed His blood.

For six long hours Christ poured out His life unto death!

This was a completely voluntary act on His part. At any moment during those six hours He might have refused to remain suspended on the accursed tree, and have taken up the challenge of the enemy to come down from the cross. But He remained on the tree, and continued to pour out His life. In every drop of blood that slowly trickled from His hands and feet there was an expression of perfect obedience, of the love of God, and the love of His own. Through the death of the cross, He the High Priest, poured out His own blood, sacrificed Himself as the Lamb of God without spot, and carried the blood of atonement into the sanctuary of God.

And, finally, through the death of the cross our Lord could *taste* death, could experience the fulness of horror there is in the reality of death as punishment for sin. This, too, was necessary in order to make of His death a sacrifice for sin. He must not merely die, as quickly as possible, but He must pass through the full experience of the agony of death. Every bitter drop of death in all its misery He must taste as He drinks His cup. And the death of the cross was eminently adapted to this purpose.

And thus the death of the cross was the means through which Christ took upon Himself and suffered the curse of God that is upon the sinner.

God's curse is the expression of His holy wrath against the workers of iniquity. It is the opposite of His blessing. Both, blessing and cursing, are Words of God. The former is the Word of His favor, His grace and loving-kindness, drawing us into His fellowship and causing us to taste that the Lord is good. The latter is the Word of His wrath and hot anger, expelling us from His house, causing us to experience Him as a consuming fire, casting us away from Him, forsaking us in utter terror of darkness and desolation, making us unspeakably wretched.

This curse of God was upon Christ as He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

And somehow, He experienced this awful curse through the cross.

The question may be asked: what did the cross have to do with Christ's tasting the horror of the curse of God against the sinner? Was it merely a symbol, expressive of the curse? Or did it serve as a means through which the bitter experience of God's wrath in the curse was conveyed to the consciousness of the Sufferer on Calvary?

The answer must be that it was both.

To us the cross of Christ is a symbol, a sign, expressive of the fact that He bore the curse of God that was upon us. For the victim of crucifixion was a castaway. There was no room for him in all God's wide creation. Suspended between heaven and earth, he was the embodiment of the judgment that there was no place for him on the earth among men, and no room for him in heaven with God. Men did not want him; God did not receive Him. This is the symbolism of the cross of Christ. Suspended on the accursed tree, He has no name left unto Him. He empties Himself completely. By the symbol of the cross, conceived not merely as man's, but as God's cross, we are assured that Christ bore the curse that was upon us.

But for Christ it was also a means through which He actually tasted the horror of God's curse upon the sinner. For let us not forget that the cross was a Word of God. It was not man, but God Himself that had spoken the word: "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." That the hanged one was accursed, therefore, was not due to an act or interpretation of man: it was God Himself Who by His own Word placed Him in the category of the accursed. The category, I say for the word of God in Deuteronomy emphatically speaks of *every one* that hangeth on a tree. There was no exception to this rule. In that category, therefore, also belonged the cross of Christ, and that, too, by the Word of God. On Calvary, through the means of the tree, God spoke His Word of wrath to the crucified One: "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree; cursed art Thou, even as Thou standest in the place of sinners!"

And Christ heard that Word of God, and trembled, and became unspeakably miserable!

The Word of God's anger was in His cross, and He felt it!

He felt the oppressing hand of God's wrath in an increasing measure, as the slow moments of His dying hours were measured by the equally slow trickle of His blood from hands and feet.

More heavily laden with the wrath and the curse of God became every succeeding moment. And to every moment of God's fierce anger the Saviour responded, so to speak, by every drop of blood, sprinkled with fervent love and perfect obedience upon the mercy seat before the face of God. Accentuated was the

Word of the curse by the darkness that spread its horrible wings over the scene of that judgment of God on Calvary, and the Saviour became completely occupied with the tremendous task of tasting the horror of God's cursing wrath, and of responding to it in the obedience of love through His dripping blood. Before the darkness descended He could still direct His attention to others, even while bearing the curse. But in the three hours of darkness He is silent. His own suffering, His own work of obedience, the bringing of the perfect sacrifice, the laying down of His life in perfect obedience, the amazing experience of the fierce wrath of God against sin, and the equally amazing calling of meeting this expression of God's anger without rebellion, without complaint, without drawing back, in love of God,—these require all His attention, every ounce of strength that is in Him.

And thus He descends into the deepest depths of woe! And thus it is somewhat understandable that, at the moment when God's cursing wrath is most oppressive at the same time that His love and obedience are most perfect, the question of amazement should be wrung from His sorely vexed soul: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

This is the meaning of the cross!

And thus I know, through the *logos* of the cross, that my Saviour took upon Himself, completely bore, and removed for ever, the curse that was upon me!

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us!

Lord's Day XVI.

Q. 40. Why was it necessary for Christ to humble himself even unto death?

A. Because with respect to the justice and truth of God, satisfaction for our sin could be made no otherwise, than by the death of the Son of God.

Q. 41. Why was it he also buried?

A. Thereby to prove that he was really dead.

Q. 42. Since then Christ died for us, why must we also die?

A. Our death is not a satisfaction for our sins, but only an abolishing of sin, and a passage into eternal life.

Q. 43. What further benefit do we receive from the sacrifice and death of Christ on the cross?

A. That by virtue thereof, our old man is crucified, dead and buried with him; that so the corrupt inclinations of the flesh may no more reign in us; but that we may offer ourselves unto him a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

S. 44. Why is there added, "he descended into hell?"

A. That in my greatest temptations, I may be as-

sured and wholly comfort myself in this, that my Lord Jesus Christ, by his inexpressible anguish, pains, terrors and hellish agonies, in which he was plunged during all his sufferings, but especially on the cross, hath delivered me from the anguish and torments of hell.

1.

The Death Of The Son Of God.

The text of our translation of this sixteenth Lord's Day is substantially correct. However, in the answer to the forty-third question, the words "that by virtue thereof," should be changed into "that by his power" (dass durch seine Kraft). And in the forty-fourth answer, instead of the words "wherein he was plunged during all his sufferings, but especially on the cross," we should read "which he suffered also in his soul on the cross and before" (die er auch an seiner Seele am Kreuz und zuvor erlitten).

This Lord's Day is intended as an exposition of the words of the Apostolic Confession: "dead and buried, descended into hell." And while treating the subjects of the death, burial, and ascension into hell of the Saviour, the Catechism inserts a question and answer concerning the necessity and reason of our physical death in the light of the fact that Christ suffered death for us; and another question and answer concerning the present, spiritual fruits for us of the death of Christ.

In the *Apostolicum* the words "dead and buried" belong together. And what is more, they belong to the series: "suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried." This should not be overlooked in our discussion of the necessity and significance of the death of Christ. For this means that the Apostolic Confession mentions the various elements of the passion of our Lord in their chronological, historical order: He suffered, was crucified, died, was buried. And again, this implies that in the Confession the word *dead*, strictly speaking, refers to the fact that Christ *died*, to the moment when He gave up the ghost and laid down His earthly life.

We are apt to overlook this in our dogmatical interpretation of the death of Christ.

The Catechism considers the death of Christ from the viewpoint of its necessity as a sacrifice for sin and satisfaction of the justice of God: "Why was it necessary for Christ to humble himself even unto death?" And the answer is: "Because with respect to the justice and truth of God, satisfaction for our sins could be made no otherwise, than by the death of the Son of God." And as we explain this answer, and try somewhat to demonstrate this necessity and significance of the death of Christ, we are inclined to omit the physical and temporal death of Christ altogether,

or, at least, hastily pass over it, in order to elaborate at once upon the broader and deeper aspect of death in general and of the death of Christ in particular. After all, physical death, the death of the body, thus we are liable to reason, is not the real, the only penalty for sin. The separation of soul and body, the state of *sjeool* or *hades* is only temporal. The essence of death is the wrath of God, the curse, separation of our whole being from the favor of God's presence, to be forsaken of Him. If, therefore, we are to speak of the death of the Son of God as a satisfaction for sin, we must not call attention to the moment when Christ gave up the ghost. Then His suffering and death were finished. It is true that He was buried, and that His body remained until the third day in the place of corruption. But His soul was in Paradise even then, and the suffering of the wrath of God had all been born to the end. It is, therefore, to the deeper meaning of His death as the expression of the wrath of God, to His suffering of the punishment of death before "He died," that our attention must be called, when we explain that death as a satisfaction of the justice of God for our sins.

And this is true.

It is perfectly correct to say that the essence of death is not to be found in the separation of soul and body, but in that everlasting desolation in hell that consists in the being forsaken of God. Physical death is, as separation of soul and body, only temporal. There is also a resurrection of the wicked, a reunion of soul and body unto damnation. And it is, therefore, also true that, if we would speak of the death of Christ as a satisfaction for sin, as a bearing of the full punishment for our sins, we must speak of its deeper meaning. The mere *dying* and *burial* of Christ, His being in *hades*, apart from the rest of His suffering, especially on the cross, cannot be the satisfaction for our iniquities.

And yet, it should be evident that in this connection we must speak particularly of that aspect of Christ's death that consisted in the departure of His spirit from His earthly house, and that was, as far as the body was concerned, finished in the burial.

This is plainly the denotation of the word "dead" in the series: "suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried."

This is also evident from the connection between the fortieth question and answer of the Catechism with what precedes it. That Christ sustained the wrath of God against sin, and that thus He offered the only propitiatory sacrifice whereby we are redeemed from everlasting damnation, was stated in the answer to question thirty-seven, as an explanation of the words "He suffered." That by His suffering as the innocent One, He delivered us from the severe judgment of God to which we were exposed, was explained in the answer to question thirty-eight. And that His suffering

of the death of the cross signifies that He took upon Himself and bore the curse in our stead, was mentioned in question and answer thirty-nine. It is evident, therefore, that in question and answer forty, the Catechism, even as the *Apostolicum*, refers to the fact that Christ *died*, that He laid down His earthly life, and that He entered into the state of sjeool.

H. H.

Samson and Delilah

Samson had possessed the gates of his enemies. As was said, this achievement of our hero forms the climax to his whole career, which now drew rapidly to a sad yet victorious close. In his carnality, he now played into the hands of his enemies, who finally succeeded in getting him into their power through the treachery of a woman. The sacred writer goes on to say, "And it came to pass afterwards, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah from the Hebrew *"dalah"* meaning "to be weakened or enfeebled". The name is thus expressive of the injury done by the woman to Samson. She debilitated his strength. Who was the woman? Some interpreters assume that she was an Israelite, a disreputable woman from Samson's own tribe. This is not a suggestion unworthy of consideration. It would explain how he was caught in her snare. He could not imagine that a woman of Israel would betray him. It would also explain why the Philistine lords had to buy her services with a price. Not being one of them, the woman was lacking in patriotism. Yet, in the light of the narrative, it is better to proceed on the assumption that she was a Philistine woman. This will become plain as we proceed.

The woman lived in Sorek. Of the position of this place nothing is known. That it was Philistine territory is probable. As was pointed out, never again did the Philistines confront Samson in open combat after the great victory at Lehi. But their downfall was not yet completed and would not be until the judgeship of Samuel. Samson only began to deliver Israel (chap. 13:5). Thus the war between Samson and the Philistines continued. He thus persisted in throwing himself in their company for the purpose of finding occasion against them. So, on a day, he was again on his way to some Philistine city in pursuance of his calling. Passing through the valley of Sorek, he again fell a victim to his sensuality, though he had not meant it so. He saw there that woman—Delilah—and, in the language of the sacred narrator, he loved her, a daughter of the Philistines. That he sought honorable mar-

riage is not stated. Besides, honorable marriage between a Hebrew and a woman of her nationality, background and character was not well possible. He could not break away from the woman, for his heart clave unto her. So there he remained, in the valley of Sorek, in the house of that pagan woman for a long time, perhaps for weeks, a slave of his lusts. His stay with that woman was soon noised about. When the Philistine lords heard of it, they became thoughtful. The weakness of the dreaded Hebrew, his extravagant passion for that woman, must be put to use; it must be taken advantage of for drawing out of him the secret of his great strength and its limit. But the only one to do that was the woman. Their problem was how to get her to betray her lover. They must proceed with great caution. Having learned Samson's strength, they dared not threaten the woman, as they had threatened the wife of Samson's youth, in the matter of the riddle, and with what success we know. This woman could be counted on to seek Samson's protection; and then they all would be dead men. So they came not with threats but with a bribe. "And the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and said unto her, Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lieth, and by what means we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him (or humble); and we will give thee every one of us eleven hundred pieces of silver." According to Judges 3:3, the number of princes may be set down as five. Since each of the princes pledged 1100 shekels of silver, the sum promised amounted to 5500 shekels. Thus it was an enormous bribe that was offered her, and with reason. For all that these Philistine lords knew, her attachment for Samson might have been as strong as his attachment for her. If so, she would resent their suggesting to her that she betray her lover and complain about them to him; he would then have a new occasion for another assault. But she being a poor weaver-woman, they knew how to deal with her. In the expectation that her love of money would prove stronger than whatever love she might bear the Hebrew, they came to her and told her that they would make her rich, would she turn against her lover and cooperate with them in getting him into their power. The woman agreed without a moment's hesitation, it seems. The prospect of coming into possession of that much wealth was too good, and Samson became to her but another man. So, on a day in a playful moment, she said to him, "Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth and wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict thee." Samson should have answered the woman truthfully. She might know the truth about him—know that he was a Nazarite unto his God from his mother's womb and that the badge of his consecration was his unshaven locks of hair. He should have said this to the woman; he should have told her that the secret of his power was not his unshaven locks of

hair as such but his Nazarite holiness and his keeping faith with the Lord through his not defiling himself or his allowing himself to be defiled through the sheering of his locks. He should have acquainted the woman with the fact that God was his strength and salvation with him steadfastly walking in the way of the precepts of his vow as the altar of God, as the sign of the things of His kingdom. In a word, Samson should have divulged the truth about himself and spoken of the hope that was in him, and as so witnessing and confessing, broken with that woman as his lover in order to avoid being destroyed by her. For the woman, being wicked, was not to be trusted. She was an enemy of the truth and of God's people. And of this Samson was well aware; he knew that she might want to destroy him as the walking altar of God. That he mistrusted his paramour is indicated by his evasive answers. Thus his duty was clear. He must witness for the truth, confess the name of Jehovah and crown that confession with fruits worthy of repentance consisting in his crucifying his sensuality and forsaking the world as he, at that specific moment, encountered it in that woman. But this he did not. He would not give the woman up. So, in order to enjoy the pleasures of sin without being destroyed by sin, which of course was impossible, in order to remain safely under one yoke with the world without perishing at the hands of the world, he kept silence about the truth and placed in the room of the truth the lie. His saying to that woman "that, if they binded him with seven green withs, that were never dried, he would be weak, and be as another man,—was a plain lie. By this falsehood he thought to put the woman off, in order that he might continue in the possession of her as his lover. Though he knew that her questionings proceeded from doubtful motives, he tried hard to put his mind at ease by ascribing her inquiries to feminine curiosity, which, he hoped, had now been satisfied by the falsehood he had told her. But he was deceiving himself. It was not curiosity that was driving the woman; what was driving her was love of riches, and fundamentally, hatred of Israel's God and of His servant.

So the woman put the answer to a test. She immediately contacted the lords of the Philistines and communicated to them what he had told her in a jest. And the Philistines "brought up to her seven green withes which had not been dried," and then, all unknown to Samson, they lied in wait, concealed themselves in one of the compartments of the woman's house and anxiously awaited the outcome of the test to which his words were now to be subjected. So, in a playful mood, it must be, she suggests that he allow her to put the chords on him. She even coaxed him and he saw no harm in yielding. So there he stood before her, according to his words, impotent in bonds. But how was she and "the men lying in wait" to know that he

was not pretending. His words must be put to a test. Accordingly, she suddenly cried out, in feigned consternation, "the Philistines be upon thee Samson." At the hearing of this cry, he became alert instantly. The withs on his hands snapped "as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire." He was ready for action. Feeling secure in his strength, he knew no fear. But where were the Philistines, of which she spake. He saw none. But they were there nevertheless, concealed in the woman's chamber. Frightened and disappointed by the outcome of the trial they made their escape, in a convenient moment, to report to their lords that his strength was not known.

Samson could not help being strangely impressed by the doing of the woman. It occurred to him, doubtless, that she might have designs upon his life. But he persisted in refusing to give credence to his mental uneasiness. He loved her. She to him was all that a man of his strong passions could desire in a woman; affectionate, responsive and generous. Certainly, she could have meant no harm. She was merely being playful with him. Cause for alarm there was not. Besides, he felt secure in his strength which he now employed to secure himself against a godless female, thus employed in the service of his lusts. Such must have been the witness of his conscience. But he had a ready answer. He was again seeking occasion against the adversary. Had the Philistines actually attacked him, it would have given him a new opportunity for another heroic feat.

Samson, in his folly, had provided his charmer with a new weapon of attack, with a new device for ensnaring her victim. She could now with impressive vehemence tax him with falsehood and thus, through feigning a righteous indignation, pose as a truth-loving person to whom he could safely reveal the truth about herself. So, with a great show of moral integrity and as pretending that her feelings had been severely injured and her person humiliated by his lies, and as suggesting that the only way he could make amends was by telling her the truth about himself, she, with treason in her heart, said to him, "Behold, thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: now tell me, I pray thee, wherewith thou mightest me bound." Samson may have been impressed. A woman of such moral sensitiveness must be harmless. Thus she succeeded in drawing her snares one stitch closer. And though he still withheld from her the truth, yet she has made an advance towards her end, that end being her gaining his confidence. As yet, however, he was still suspecting. For he said to her, "If they bind me fast with new ropes, wherewith work has never been done, then shall I be weak, and be as another man." So he lied to her again, as she also half suspected. His words did not ring true. Also this reply of his must be put to a test. Again Samson allowed himself to be bound

with "the men" once more lying in wait in the chamber. Again the woman cries, "The Philistines be upon thee Samson." And the Philistines might again report that his strength was not known. For he broke also those chords from his arms like thread.

But Delilah, though disappointed, was not discouraged. For she was sure of her prey and with reason. Though he had lied to her twice, his continuing to abide with her against his better judgment indicated only too plainly that he was in her power, and that therefore she would succeed in drawing out of him the truth. She was patient therefore and as persistent as she was patient. The old complaint was repeated, "Hitherto thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound." Once more and for the last time he lied to her, "If thou weavest the seven locks of my head with the web." Indeed, he conceals the truth; but also yields a step. The untruth diminishes. Formerly he thought only of ropes, even of "new chords which had never done service." That already gave a reflection of the truth about himself. For a principle embedded in Israel's law was that strength and consecration was characteristic of the things not defiled by the uses of life. There was the requirement that the red heifer of purification should be one upon whom yoke never came (Numbers 19:2). But he now spoke of the locks of his hair and of their number as being seven. It was the sacred number of the covenant of God with His people. Slowly but certainly he was being driven onward into the snares of the traitress, thus driven on to destruction, and this under the impulse of his lusts. The Philistine spies must for the third time depart disappointed and gloomy. For also this answer was put to a test and found false. This time the snare was laid while he was asleep. Perhaps he had twice been bound while asleep, though the sacred text makes no mention of this. In the house of the woman stood a weaver's loom, at which she worked. At her request, it must be, he had layed himself down near the loom and there had fallen asleep. Then she must have worked his hair into her web as woof and struck in the pin. For awakening out of his sleep he "went away with the pin of the beam, and with the web."

Delilah now took recourse to a new approach. She pretended that she was heart-broken on account of his apparent lack of love of her. "How canst thou say, I love thee," she said to him, "when thine heart is not with me? Thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength lieth." Her complaint was significant. It was laden with meaning. There was this in it. "Our union is not complete. What is lacking is the spiritual bond. And the fault is all thine. Thou withholdest from me thy heart; for its secrets are not with me. It is more than I can endure, for I love thee. Give me thy heart, I

pray! Let me possess thee, body and soul! The love that I bear thee can be satisfied with nothing less. Then yield to me thy confidence; show that thou dost trust me. Shouldest thou have ought to conceal from her who lovest thee as her own soul?" But Samson continued reticent still. But Delilah persevered. "She pressed him daily with her words and urged him, so that his soul was vexed unto death." And there was reason. The Philistines had become dubious of her ability to deal with Samson. No mention is made this third time of a spy awaiting the outcome of the trial. Even the second time it is not stated that the chords were supplied by the Philistines. Thus the woman saw herself losing her large gains. She therefore now brought everything to bear to break down his resistance, all her arts. And she could not again be put off with a lie. But as soon as he told her the truth or let her know that he was determined not to tell her, he must part with her. But he could not separate himself from her and therefore must come to grief, which he did. For she persisted in her efforts until he yielded. "He told her all his heart, and said to her, There hath not come a razor upon my head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak and be like any man."

A normal conduct would consist in his now leaving her. Instead he remained. How is this doing of his to be rationalized? The sacred writer reports that his soul had been vexed unto death by her teasing. This explains his telling her; but it does not explain why he chose to endure her teasing; and it does not explain why he placed his life in her hands thereafter, which he did literally when he went to sleep on her knees with her knowing all. He was aware, certainly, that she could be counted on to test the truth also of what he had lastly told her. It must be that his crave for her flesh was that overpowering and inconsequence thereof her hold on him that strong, that he chose to perish at her hands rather than forsake her. But it must not be supposed that his choice was deliberate and conscious. In his conscious soul, he must have succeeded in persuading himself that the woman was incapable of treacherous dealing—had she not been shocked and grieved by his falsehoods?—and that she actually loved him and that therefore he had nothing to fear, despite all the evidence to the contrary. That evidence he brushed aside; he would not allow it to speak. It means that the woman, by her reproaches, complaints, and reproofs, by her declarations and demonstrations of love, and by her crocodile tears had sufficiently won his confidence. And this had not proved too difficult. For what she had tried to make him believe, he also wished to believe.

The woman had perceived that this time he had told her the truth. His words had rung true. She was

jubilant. The large gains were in her grasp; besides she hated the Hebrew, despised him in her heart. She lost no time in contacting the Philistine lords. "Come up this once," such was her message to them," for he hath showed me all his heart." And the lords of the Philistines came; and their money was in their hands. With the spies once more concealed in her chamber, she betrayed the confidence that she had won. He betrayed himself, and fell. The woman's proceedings were now satanical. She could have waited until he was asleep on his bed, and then called for the spy to shave off the seven locks of his head. But she had another plan for working his ruin—a plan that, in its execution, would afford her lust of revenge the greatest measure of satisfaction and allow her to give the fullest expression of her hatred of him. She would have the spy shave off the locks of his head with him asleep on her very knees. That would be ideal. It would allow her easily to take a hand in the work, which she must have, as it stated that "she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him". Besides, how it would shock him to learn that it had been done with him asleep in her arms on her knees. At the sight of his grief and amazement, she would laugh him to scorn. That would be for him the cruelest awakening. He would know that all the while she had feigned love. So, when the hour for the betrayal was at hand, she made him sleep upon her knees. She intoxicated his soul not by strong drink but by soft words and tender looks and the close embrace of a feigned affection. And his last memory of her, before he dropped off to sleep, was her smiling eyes looking down into his. He was fast asleep now; there was a hard glint in her eye as she beckoned the man in waiting, "and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him and his strength went from him." But the trial of the truth of his words was still to be made. But she nor the spies doubted the issue, for they were confident that he had told her all that was in his heart. In this confidence she repeated in his ears the old cry, "The Philistines be upon thee Samson." "And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. But he wist not that the Lord was departed from him." But it required but an instant for him to make the discovery. His strength was gone. His courage was gone. For the first time he was afraid of the Philistine. And for the first time the Philistines were not afraid of him. He was like any man now. And they knew and he knew. They therefore drew near and took him and he resisted them not. Thus was the Lord departed from him.

G. M. O.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

1920 — 1945

On June 16, the Lord willing, our dear parents,

GEORGE SPRUYT

and

ANN M. SPRUYT nee Bylsma

hope to celebrate their 25th Wedding Anniversary. We their children, are indeed grateful to our heavenly Father for sparing them for each other and for us.

Mr. and Mrs. Morris Campbell

Gwendolyn

Jacquelyn Ann

Grand Rapids, Michigan

Open House afternoon and evening at 1340 Fuller Ave., S. E. on this date.

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, hereby wishes to express its heartfelt sympathy to our brother-deacon, Mr. Sidney Newhof in the loss of his mother,

MRS. CELIA NEWHOF

May the Lord comfort the brother in his bereavement by the assurance that she has gone to the house of many mansions, there to be with her Lord and Saviour.

First Protestant Reformed Church.

The Consistory of the

H. Hoeksema, Pres.

G. Stonehouse, Clerk.

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the Protestant Reformed Church of Kalamazoo, Michigan hereby expresses heartfelt sympathy with deacon C. Baas in the death of his brother,

TYS BAAS

May the Lord give grace to believe that He does all things well and that His grace is sufficient unto those who trust in Him:

The Consistory,

H. Veldman, Pres.

D. Langeland, Clerk.

The Time and Content of Bereshith in Genesis 1:1

Without a doubt the title of this essay assigned to us requires a word of explanation before we begin to discuss the ideas expressed in it. Many of our readers would like to know, and properly so, what this essay is all about before they begin to read it.

From past experience undersigned can well imagine that some of our readers will say to themselves, "Well, now what does that Latin or Greek word 'bereshith' mean anyway?" Many of our younger generation are apt to ask what this Dutch word means. All who ask these questions are wrong. The word is neither Latin, Greek or Dutch. It is a Hebrew word, in fact it is the first word in the Hebrew Bible. It means, "In the beginning," and is pronounced as though it were written beh-ray-sheeth with a short "e" on the first syllable and with the accent on the second syllable. This essay then has to do with the beginning mentioned in Genesis 1:1.

As far as the time element is concerned, this expression cannot be considered as referring to the beginning of all things in as far as God is concerned. Although God guided Moses in writing about this beginning of all things, the viewpoint in the expression is not God's. This could never be, for God is infinite and eternal knowing no beginning nor end. Not only is His divine essence eternal and infinite, but His thoughts and will likewise are eternal and infinite. We ought also to bear in mind that eternity is not endless time. In eternity there is absolutely no time element at all. This is hard for us to grasp and understand because we are finite creatures of time. In fact, when we speak of eternity, we must use words that do have the time element in them. Yet eternity has no time element in it, and eternal is not the same as everlasting, although we do use these words interchangeably at times when we are not careful. The time element in everlasting is very plain. Everlasting simply means "lasting for all time". It implies a beginning to that thing or reality that we call everlasting even though it denies an ending. Eternity however knows neither beginning nor end. For example, we can call the life which we receive from Christ as everlasting life, for it does not have an end. Yet there very definitely is a beginning to that life as far as we are concerned. There is a time when we do not have it, and then there is the moment of regeneration when it is first experienced by us. When we speak of God's life, however, we must speak of an eternal life, and then we do not merely mean a life that has neither beginning nor end. There still is the idea of time in such a life, and this presentation does not do justice to the

richness of the life of God. By God's eternal life we mean that in Him there is a ceaseless conscious experiencing of all His thoughts, desires and works. (Note that, being creatures of time, we still must resort to such time-expressive words as "ceaseless" when speaking of the eternity of God which is devoid of all idea of time.)

We know many things, but we cannot bring them all before our consciousness at one time; nor can we experience them all at one moment. We know many passages from Scripture by heart, yet we cannot recall them to remembrance all at one time. We are so bound by time that we can recall them one by one and that is all. Similarly there is a time when we are babes and a time when we are grown men or women. The experiences of a child are not those of an adult, and the adult experiences things a child can never experience. So bound to time are we that we can experience the one or the other but never both at the same time. With God this is very different. He lives His whole life consciously, uninterruptedly without any phase of His life having beginning or end. All that He knows He knows at once and without ceasing. All that He wills He wills at one time and wills unendingly. All that He does He does at once—as far as His life is concerned—and without ceasing to perform it.

When we read then in Gen. 1:1: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth", this beginning refers to nothing in God's life. Eternally He determined this beginning. Eternally He willed it. Eternally He made it. Strictly speaking we ought to use the continuous present tense and say, eternally God is willing, is determining and making all things. Understand that we are speaking of God's life. As far as we are concerned, there is a very definite moment when God begins to do things and when He ceases, when He began to create and when He ceased creating. As far as God's life is concerned, He said eternally, "Let there be light" and unto all eternity He will still say, "Let there be light". Let us state it thus: Creation with all that it contained at the end of the sixth day was just as real to God before this moment here called bereshith as it was on the seventh day. A house is much more real to us when it is all built than when it is still an idea in our mind or a blueprint and when the house is burnt to the ground, its reality is gone for us. This is not so with God. His life did not become richer after this moment of bereshith nor after the work of creation was all finished. He experienced nothing after bereshith that He had not eternally experienced. It all was just as real before His consciousness before creation as it was afterward. He indeed is the Unchangeable One, the Infinite and Eternal One.

As far as God's life is concerned then this beginning is an eternal reality, for He had it eternally with Himself in His counsel. If we may so state it, this begin-

ning has neither beginning nor end in the mind and experience of God. He experienced it eternally both as to planning it, willing it and creating it. The time element in this expression is to be applied to man's life. Looking at creation from man's viewpoint there is a moment which we can call "The Beginning". It is that split second when God created both time and space. This first verse of Genesis is expressive of the fact that God created time and space here in the twinkling of an eye. There was nothing before this, no space, but also no time. God existed by Himself as the Triune God. Then according to His good pleasure He created time and space.

There is as you perhaps know a dualistic theory which distorts Gen. 1:1, 2 to read, "In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was without form and void, and darkness covered the face of the deep". This heresy conceives of a pre-existent world which is not God's creation, but upon which He begins to work in the beginning, and from which He makes all the good creatures that appear. Hebrews 11:3 is sufficient to prove the unbelief in this presentation. There we read, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear". Rather should we conceive of it thus that bereshith refers to that indivisible moment when time and space were both created.

Thus the beginning was not a period of longer or shorter duration wherein this formless void world existed. The expression itself of course does allow the idea of such a period of longer or shorter duration. A beginning can sometimes last for years. Speaking, for example, of the history of our Protestant Reformed denomination, we can say, "In the beginning of our movement we had only one Classis and later on as we grew we decided to divide our church into Classis East and Classis West". That period here designated as the beginning of our movement did then cover a period of quite a few years. This is not the case with the bereshith of Gen. 1:1. It is the briefest part of a moment when time was created, for time too is a creature of God's handiwork.

Let us not overlook the fact that in this bereshith is not merely contained the idea of the beginning of this earth, but that heaven also received its beginning here. Before this bereshith there was no heaven, there were no angels anymore than there was an earth. In the beginning God created *heaven* and earth. Heaven is a place and has a history of its own and in it there is also time. The angels, for example, cannot be in more than one place at one time anymore than we can, for they too are creatures and are not divine although they have spiritual bodies.

Bereshith then marks the beginning of the history of heaven and earth. It marks the beginning of the

first century, the first decade and the first year. It marks the beginning of the first month, the first week and the first day. It marks the beginning of the first hour, the first minute and the first second. In fact it is the beginning of all things (that is, all things had their beginning there in bereshith. We do not mean that the deeds performed today were already begun to be performed in this beginning, in this split second when time and space began. We mean that these deeds performed today and all that God shall do unto all eternity in the new heaven and earth had their beginning here in the sense that without this beginning these could never take place. The acorn is the beginning of the Oak tree. It is not the tree as yet, and still the tree is in that acorn.

Yea, then the coming of Christ also is included in this beginning. In John 1:1 we read of this same beginning. There it is stated that, "In the beginning was the Word". This does not mean merely that the Word was there before this bereshith. It does not state that he was there before all things. It is definitely declared that He was *in* the beginning. The implication certainly is that He was there before as the Son of God Who is infinite and eternal. But it also means that He was in principle and according to God's counsel here already as the Christ, the Son of God in our flesh. His coming was not yet for some four thousands years. But in principle He was in the beginning. Just turn to Colossians 1:15, there we read of Christ that He is the first-born of every creature. Now, fact is, that as far as our viewpoint is concerned and the time element in all the history of this world, that this is not so. Many thousands, yea, millions were born before Christ. In fact if Seth had not been born first and Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David and Mary likewise, Christ would not have been born. But here again the viewpoint is God's, and in His counsel Christ is the first-born. He has the primary place in the counsel of God. He is first and all others stand in relation to Him. Thus when God created time and space simultaneously here in Bereshith, it was the beginning of the coming of Christ into our flesh, and for this reason all the time that follows after this initial moment of time serves the purpose of the Son of God.

Thus also the end of this present world is in bereshith. Bereshith is the first movement that progresses toward the last moment of this world. It is the Alpha but it points to the Omega, and the Omega is then contained in the Alpha of the bereshith. Time is movement and is not a stationary reality, so that the beginning of any point of time anticipates its end, and the end is contained in the beginning. Every division of time has its end toward which the beginning pushes it. The minute hand and the second hand on the clock returns back to the place where it began, and thereby it has reached its end. So too in this bereshith. It is

the beginning of the history of the heavens and the earth and is the start to the end of all present things. Bereshith anticipates all that has ever happened in this world and all that will happen until the day of Christ, and again, since He is in the beginning, Bereshith is also the beginning of His return in glory upon the clouds of heaven to bring this present world to its telos, its end.

J. A. H.

Matthew 22:31, 32 as Proof of the Bodily Resurrection

In Matt. 22:31, 32 we read: "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead but of the living." This word of Jesus also appears in the twelfth chapter of Mark. And in the gospel according to Luke, who also records this incident, we read in chapter 20:37, 38: "Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For He is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto Him." These words of Jesus, appearing in all the above-named gospels, are a quotation from the Old Testament, Ex. 3:6, where we read: "Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God."

We need not doubt the fact that the words of Jesus which constitute the subject of this essay are a proof of the bodily resurrection. Our Saviour speaks these words to refute the unbelieving Sadducees who denied the resurrection of the dead. Besides, in the immediate context of these words (and this is true of all three gospels), Christ speaks of the resurrection of the dead. In fact, the words of Ex. 3:6 are actually quoted as a proof of our bodily resurrection. We read in Luke 20:37: "Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush." It is therefore an established fact that Matt. 22:31, 32 is a proof of the bodily resurrection.

The context of Matt. 22:31, 32, verses 23-33 is well known. We read of the coming of the Sadducees to Jesus. They quote from Moses to prove the absurdity of the resurrection. Concerning the Sadducees we, because of the nature of the subject of this essay, must be brief. They were the "moderns" of Jesus' day. They denied the resurrection of the dead. And in Acts

23 we read that they also rejected the existence of angels and of the spirits. Their attempt in Matt. 22 to establish the absurdity of the resurrection is well known. We need not quote it in detail. It is evident that their reasoning is wholly carnal, earthly, and that they consider not the power of God. They conceive of the life of the hereafter as being identical with the life of the present. And they know not the power of God Who will change and transform all things so that we, in the hereafter, shall be as the angels of God in heaven. Of course, we shall be as the angels of God in the sense that, because of the heavenly life, we shall neither marry nor be given in marriage. Thereupon our Lord quotes to these unbelieving Sadducees from that very Scripture, the book of Moses, to which also they had referred, declaring unto them that the word of Ex. 3:6 is a conclusive proof of the bodily resurrection.

At first glance this reference of Christ to Ex. 3:6 in Matt. 22 might appear strange. One might almost be led to ask the question whether this is the strongest proof which could be quoted from the Old Testament in support of the bodily resurrection. We merely read in Ex. 3:6 that the Lord speaks of Himself as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. The words in Matt. 22:32, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living", are not a quotation from the Old Testament, but Christ's own exegesis of this quotation from the second book of Moses. The quotation proper merely declares that the Lord is the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. One might perhaps call attention to the distinction between the Old and the New Dispensations, that the light of the resurrection did not shine as clearly then as it does now, and that therefore the proof of Ex. 3:6 may be considered the best proof under the circumstances. It is, of course, true that the light of revelation shines more clearly now than in the Old Testament. It is a fact that, historically, the resurrection of the dead into heavenly glory did not become a fact until the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord. We should bear in mind, however, that the multitude, according to Matt. 22:33 was astonished at Christ's doctrine. Jesus' selection of Ex. 3:6 must therefore undoubtedly be regarded as a choice selection by the preeminent Exegete of all time, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Chief Prophet.

Some would merely interpret this passage from Ex. 3 in a figurative sense of the word. The Lord would then merely declare unto Moses, His servant, that He is the same God that He was to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. As the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, He will reveal Himself unto Moses and unto Israel in the same manner that He revealed Himself unto the three patriarchs. God was merciful, faithful, and mighty in His dealings with them. Moses may be assured of the same faithfulness now. This is, of

course, in itself true. However, if this be the sole interpretation of Ex. 3:6, one may well ask himself the question, "But how, then, does this passage prove the resurrection of the dead?" If Moses receives from the Lord the assurance that He will deal with him and with Israel as He did with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, why can he be hopeful with respect to the future? Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are dead. And they died as strangers, without having received the promise! Why then, should this be particularly assuring? We must certainly have something more here than merely a figurative expression.

Others would lay the emphasis upon the little word "am" in the expression: "I *am* the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." The very fact that He is their God must imply that they exist. God cannot be the God of someone that is not. If it be, therefore, true at the burning bush that the Lord is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the wholly warranted conclusion must be that they are alive. Besides, is it not true that Jesus' own interpretation of these words leads us into this direction? His exegesis of the passage is that God is not a God of the dead but of the living. Hence, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob must be alive. According to this interpretation of the text, then, all emphasis must be laid upon the little word "am". How could the Lord at this moment be their God were it not for the fact that they were living. However, how can this text, when understood in this light, serve as a proof of their and our *bodily* resurrection? We grant that they are not dead but alive. Yet, this does not altar the fact that their bodies are in the grave. They are alive, therefore, only in principle. Does this passage merely refer to this? But our Lord quotes these words to prove that the dead shall be raised. We read in Luke 20:38, do we not, "Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, etc."? Why is Exodus 3:6 a proof of our bodily resurrection?

Exodus 3:6 is a proof of our bodily resurrection, not because of the emphasis upon the word "am", but because of the fact that the Lord is our God, and therefore because of the relationship wherein God's people stand to the Lord. Jesus does not say that God is the God of *the* living, but that He is the God, not of dead but of living. Let us look at this text again in the light of its historical context. The Lord is about to call Moses to lead His people, Israel, out of the Egyptian bondage into the Canaan which He had promised them. He introduces Himself to Moses as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob must be regarded here as also representing the Israel of all ages, so that the promise given them is meant for all the people of God. They are called in this passage the father (the singular "father") of Moses, and stand therefore at the head of all the people

of God. The fact that God is their God, our God, does not merely prove their present existence at the time of the burning bush, but also their ultimate entrance into Canaan, not the earthly Canaan (for Abraham sought a heavenly country), but the heavenly Canaan, the city that has foundations.

Jehovah, the unchangeable and living God, is the God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, yea, of all His people—therein lies the certainty of their hope of the resurrection into everlasting life. The relationship between God and His people necessarily demands this resurrection into eternal glory. That God is our God surely means that we are His people, that we are of Him. And even as there is affinity between a child and his father, so also there is an affinity between Israel and the God of their salvation. This same thought is beautifully expressed by the prophet, Habakkuk, in Hab. 1:12: "Art Thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die, O Lord, Thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, Thou hast established them for correction." God Himself is the living God. As such He knows Himself and has fellowship with Himself from everlasting to everlasting. At His right hand are pleasures even forevermore. He knows and fathoms and loves His own infinite being as the Triune God and exercises the most blessed fellowship with Himself eternally. This must also determine the relationship wherein God's people stand to the living God. Even as the Lord eternally knows and loves Himself so He also has known and loved a people, who eternally will live unto Him and the glory of His name. To be His people signifies that we are of Him, born of Him, receive life of His life, have been willed and created and received by Him that we may share and taste the blessedness of His fellowship even forever. His love and His promises and his life are eternal even as He Himself is eternal. The very essence of the living God, our Maker, requires therefore that the people of His choice and grace shall receive eternal glory and be raised out of this death into the unspeakably blessed life of His eternal covenant.

This receives further emphasis in the passage from Exodus 3 if we bear in mind that it is the Lord, Jehovah, Who reveals Himself to Moses as the God of Abraham, Isaac and of Jacob. This God, Who proclaims Himself to be our God, Who has formed us to be His people that we may live to the praise of His Name, is Jehovah, the I AM that I Am, the unchangeable, faithful God of His covenant. With Him is no change or shadow of turning. If He therefore proclaims Himself to be our God He is everlastingly our God. If He loves us He loves us with an everlasting love. His promises are eternal and therefore sure. He can therefore proclaim unto Moses that He is still the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that they live

even now, and that they shall live and receive the inheritance which the Lord Jehovah promised them.

In this light we also understand the terrible character of the Sadducees's denial of the resurrection, and the reason why the Saviour, quoting this passage as proof of the bodily resurrection, silences them by exposing their wickedness. To deny the resurrection of the dead is equivalent to a denial of the living God. Denying the resurrection we deny His promises, the eternal character of His love and grace, the fact that He has a people who will live to the eternal praise of His name. It is the denial of the living God Himself. Then surely the Lord would be ashamed to be called their God, if in this life we are the most miserable and without the hope of the resurrection. Our relation to God is a living relation, a relation of eternal life. He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, inasmuch as He Himself is the living God. And they shall live forevermore.

H. V.

Friends Of Mammon and Eternal Habitations

The title of this article is taken from the parable, that is most commonly known, as the parable of the Unjust Steward. To be exact it is found in Luke 16:9.

There are some passages in Holy Writ which are difficult to interpret. For instance, such a passage as Galatians 3:20 is purported to have around four hundred interpretations. The parable recorded in Luke 16:1-13 is also considered very difficult to interpret. It is in verse 9, in the very passage in which Jesus applies the parable to the life of the church, that the difficulty arises. The passage reads in full as follows: "And I say unto you, make yourselves *friends of the Mammon* of unrighteousness; that, when *ye fail*, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." (A.V.). This translation follows the reading that has the second person plural. The Revised Version translates "And I say unto you, make to yourselves *friends by means of the Mammon* of unrighteousness; that, when *it shall fail*, they may receive you into eternal tabernacles." The Staten Vertaling follows more closely to the rendering of the Revised Version. It reads as follows: "En Ik zeg ulieden: Maakt u zelven vrienden *uit den* onrechtvaardigen Mammon, opdat, wanneer u ontbreken zal, zij u mogen ontvangen in de eeuwige tabernakelen."

Out of these various renderings we learn two matters. In the first place, that it makes some difference

in the idea which rendering one chooses to follow in his interpretation of this passage. Secondly we learn, that there is quite a likelihood, that the title of this article is confusing. It is confusing as the rendering of the King James Version, which to my mind is more *interpretation* than *translation*. The Holland translation "*vrienden uit den Mammon*" is an exact rendering of the Greek, and therefore helps us to ascertain the sense of the text. We therefore will follow the rendering as given in the Revised Version, which translation is the better rendering of the original into English.

If this matter of translation were the only difficulty in the text, we might consider our task as herewith finished.

However, such is not at all the case. The difficulty of this text is only reflected in the various translations, and particularly in that of the King James' Version, which we characterized as "interpretation".

The study of this parable, we believe, involves two matters. In the first place it necessitates an understanding of the proper relationship between the things of this present world, in its sinful aspect, and the future world in its perfected state, the eternal tabernacles. This is evident from the text itself (vs. 9), as well as from the sequence. Notice the contrast throughout between the "present" and the "future". Secondly, and this is a very important point in the parable, attention must be called to the moral agency of man in this present world with a view to his place and position in the world to come, that is, in the eternal tabernacles.

Thus stated, the difficulty of interpreting the parable is not so much a question of grammar, sequence of clauses, but it is rather of a conceptual nature. As far as the relationship is concerned of the present things, "Mammon", "the lesser", "that which is of another", to the future world it is a problem of a dogmatic nature; while the question of the value and moral agency of the christian is a matter of Ethics, the law of God.

To come to a clear understanding of this passage and of the teaching of Jesus in this parable, we must first of all understand the idea of Mammon in the Scriptures. That the crux of the question lies in the correct understanding of the term "Mammon" is clear. Firstly, because in the parable itself, an unscrupulous man is introduced who wastes his master's goods, and who is an exemplification of the Mammon-worshippers. Secondly, this is clear from the predominant place that this concept has in Christ's interpretation and application of the parable itself.

Let us investigate what the Scriptures teach us concerning Mammon.

Although the etymology of this term does not teach us a great deal, it is nonetheless not without profit for our discussion to take notice of it. According to

Thayer E. Robinson, the term "mammon" is derived in the Greek from the Chaldean "Mamona" which in turn is a derivative of the Hebrew "man", meaning: to put trust in. Compare our "Amen". Interesting is the observation by Thayer in his Lexicon that the Hebrew "Amunah" a kindred form from the root "amen", in Is. 33:6 is translated in the Septuagint by "treasures" and in Ps. 37 by "riches". From this we learn that "Mammon" is etymologically associated with treasures and riches and that in which men place their confidence.

Turning to the New Testament we find that only Jesus employs the term. It is used in the passage under consideration, and in Matt. 6:24.

Concerning the term "Mammon" as employed by Jesus we wish to make the following observations:

First of all, that the term "Mammon" as employed by Christ always refers to treasures, riches, material resources of the earth. It belongs to the sphere of the present, where we are in need of clothing and shelter, food and drink. Thus it is employed in Matt. 6:24, 25. And that it has the same denotation in our passage is quite evident.

However, and this is our second observation, the term Mammon refers to the riches of the earth only from a certain viewpoint. It should not escape our attention that the treasures of the earth, the cattle upon a thousand hills are not *as such* Mammon. As creatures, pure and simple, they are the good creatures of God. This is the clear teaching of Scripture. Compare Genesis 1:31; I Tim. 4:4, 5; James 1:17. As such they are not Mammon, but they are the creatures that must be received with thanksgiving and which is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer. But, from what viewpoint are these creatures Mammon? They are indeed Mammon, the direct antithesis of God, when they are employed by the "sons of this age", who, thinking to be wise and not willing to keep God in remembrance, divorce this good creature from the worship and service of the Creator, Who is most blessed forever! When the creature ordained by God to serve as a means to worship and trust Him, is made an *end in itself*, this apostate world, the Steward in the parable is a most fittingly described example.

Having established the foregoing, we are in a position to explain some of the features of the parable that have given rise to certain difficulties.

In passing, let it be observed, that Jesus does not say: Make Mammon your friend; befriend Mammon. This would militate against the axiom: "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon". vs. 13. Neither does Jesus say: "Make yourselves friends out of the *good creature* of God."

But what does He say? He instructs His disciples, and that most emphatically, "Make yourselves friends *out of the Mammon* of unrighteousness."

And again we ask: Why out of "Mammon" and not out of "the good creature"?

We are of the opinion that two reasons should be cited.

The first is, that Jesus, in this particular passage is contrasting the disciples, calling them "sons of light", with the world, whom He calls the "sons of this age". This is quite significant. When Christ calls the unbelievers "sons of this age" he does not merely describe them as belonging to the *present* time, the emphasis does not fall on the time element only; by so describing these worshippers of Mammon He refers to the spiritual-ethical character of the life of these sons. This is evident from the fact that they are contrasted with the church, the sons of light. These sons of this "age" are therefore those whose life is characterized by the darkness of sin and of hatred for God and their neighbor. Indeed in their generation, in their sinful works they show a certain prudence, know how to gain their end, but in all this it is evident that the light that is in them is darkness. Matt. 6:22, 23. Yet, withal this, they are sons of this age. They have certain self-claimed and self-maintained rights. They enjoy a name, position, power and control in the world. They set the pace, determine the standards, Eph. 2:2, but, by the very nature of their life and endeavors, the world that they thus create is an evil one. Gal. 1:4. Everything is by them monopolized in the service of man and Mammon. Estranged from the life of God their vision is limited to the earthly, and their prudence must be characterized as being natural, earthly, devilish.

But this is not all. They so have control of all things that God's children come in contact with the "good creature of God" as it is in the service of Mammon. God's child is himself only liberated from this Mammon-life in principle. Hence he has a light-life, but this light-life he must live in this "world" created by the "sons of this age"! God's sons do not receive these gifts of God "as such" but they receive them concretely in this present, Mammon-stamped world; not abstractly from the business world of today, apart from the sinful world-standards and practices, but as God's good creature is pressed into the service of a world of greed and covetousness, in an "age" that is sold under sin! Oh, indeed, the gifts of God are good in themselves, but the children of light having all things in common with the sons of this "age" except light and grace, cannot receive them, except in the present world, where the black horse of Revelation 6:5, 6 races, upon which the rider is seated with the balance in his hand, and where the order of the day is: "A measure of wheat for a shilling, and three measures of barley for a shilling; and the oil and the wine hurt not."

Thus the Saviour places the disciples in the world

yet so that they are not of her. And in this world the disciples exercise the wisdom which is "from above". They employ the earth's treasures, disengage it from the trammels of Mammon, and place it in the service of God, visiting the poor and the widows in their affliction, working with their hands that they may have to give to those who lack. And thus they "makes to themselves friends out of the Mammon of unrighteousness."

But the reader will ask: what about the "eternal habitations" of which the text speaks. Concerning this we would briefly call attention to three matters:

In the first place, that the phrase "when it shall fail" must refer to the hour of death in which all ties with the earthly are severed.

Secondly that the "eternal tabernacles" are the own and fitting dwelling places for the sons of light, who had the heavenly wisdom to make "friends out of Mammon".

Thirdly, that there is not uniformity among interpreters as to who must be understood by "they" in the purpose clause, "that *they* may receive you into eternal tabernacles". There is first of all the interpretation which would have "they" refer to the poor and needed children of God that were befriended in this world. These are then thought of, at least in part, as having preceded in death, and consequently when their benefactors die to receive them in heaven, welcoming them home. It may be argued in favor of this interpretation that formally it adheres most closely to the correlate situation in the parable. But while this is granted, we feel that it is equally true that the redeemed will not be able to assume that position in the eternal tabernacles. See Matt. 7:23. The second interpretation refers these "they" to the angel world. This interpretation rests upon the consideration of such scriptures as Luke 15:10; Matt. 18:10; 24:31; 25:31. It can hardly be denied that this has more in its favor. However, we feel that the element of Matt. 7:23 must not be excluded. If the angels welcome us home, carry us home, they do it upon God's bidding and that of the Lamb.

This makes the matter of being "received into eternal tabernacles" more than a question of more or less welcome, it becomes a question of entering of not entering!

There is one more important matter to which we must call attention. It is the factor which we have designated as the *moral agency*. The following seems to be the clear and implicit teaching of Christ in this parable:

Firstly, that there is a reward connected with the befriending of the poor out of the Mammon of the sons of this age. And it is quite evident that this reward is not something plus a place in the eternal tabernacles, But that is consists of our own fit dwelling place and glory in the eternal city. We take this position in re-

gard to this matter, because it is the point emphasized by Christ to His disciples, and follows from the analogy of the prudence displayed by the unjust Steward. And lastly, but not least, from what Jesus teaches concerning what will be entrusted to those who are faithful.

Secondly, we wish to observe that the foregoing contains these elements: 1. That a place in heaven is the *reward of faithfulness*. 2. That the *present world* is the proving ground of the saints, God placing them here in the tension of the Antithesis between Himself and Mammon. That the *moral agency* of man standing thus between these two worlds is very really the *deciding factor*.

Just a remark about the last of these three elements. This does not at all mean to imply that salvation is by works, and that Jesus would place His disciples under the rule: he that doeth these things shall live by them. Gal. 3:12. When we bear in mind that Jesus is addressing His disciples, the sons of light, and that he wished to bestir in them the conscious desire to live out this light-life it will be very evident that He does not teach salvation by works.

What does He teach. He teaches that in God's kingdom of grace, where works of grace are performed, the moral life is not at all trammled. We perform good works by grace and receive the reward of grace, yet so, that the moral-spiritual battle is real, and the entering into the eternal habitations is the goal of our entire life's endeavors! Yea, even so that much of Christ's teaching is aimed at making this moral life acute!

G. L.

Fairy Tales in Childrens' Readers

I suppose that the reader will say: has it come to this now that the Standard Bearer busies itself with such things as fairies and fairy tales? If the Standard Bearer loses some of its prestige, I beg to be held excusable. We are obedient sons of the good brother who has the dictatorial powers of assigning articles for the year, and we write about anything that is commanded us, even about fairy tales, and even when we happen to know very little about it. I had hoped that my library would yield me something on this mysterious subject but I was sadly disappointed. This may however develop to my advantage since maybe we will have to be original. Considering that the Standard Bearer likes original material, perhaps, by force of necessity, the prestige of this paper can still be preserved and I get this article out.

If you have children going to school you have per-

haps had occasion to look through their reading books. You may have found fairy tales in them. If your children go to a public school, very likely you will find a reader with several fairy tales in them. I have seen them too in books which our Christian schools use. You may have discovered that the children read them with a peculiar delight. The question may have arisen with you as parents whether such fairy tales make good reading for our boys and girls. That is the question which I am attempting to answer in this article.

Reading, we may say, is the art of absorbing anything written.

The primary purpose in teaching our children to read is above all that we may absorb the written Word of God. The very fact that God has revealed Himself to us in writing places upon us the necessity of reading and learning to read. God has limited us to and confined us to reading and hearing what is read, for God has expressed Himself in writing. There is nothing expressed in the Holy Scriptures. How important reading is one can gather from Paul's letter to Timothy, I Tim. 4:13, where he says to him: "Till I come, give attendance to reading. . . ." Apart from the question whether Paul means to exhort him to reading for himself or practise intelligent reading from the pulpit (I think it is the latter) it is evident that reading is very important. Hence our children must learn to read intelligently and efficiently. If our instruction in reading fails to equip our children to read Scripture, reading has certainly failed of its high purpose. Together with the reading of the Divine Thought revealed in Scripture, they should be able also to read other spiritual literature which may help them to understand Scripture better. I do not mean to infer that a course in reading can enable anyone to understand the Sacred Word, for without the Spirit even the wisest cannot comprehend the things of God, and if you give them the Book they shall have to say: give it to someone else, I cannot read it. But reading does surely help the man of God to become thoroughly furnished.

Besides that, reading serves to educate us in many other things which it is well and necessary to know. All manner of thoughts are communicated to us by reading. It helps to educate us, keep us well informed concerning the things of this life which are necessary to know, helps us to attain a well-orbed world and life view, etc. Reading serves also as a pleasure, an enjoyment and a pastime, etc.

This primary purpose reading must serve.

In view of that leading purpose we may speak of reading as having a content-value and a training-value. That is, in the reading courses in our schools the only or first question is not necessarily: what do they read, but: are they learning to read. Some stories in the reading books may be of content value, that is, the

story or subject may intend to convey some important thought or teach some worthwhile lesson. Some other reading lesson may have little content value, it merely presents some interesting event, fact or fiction, the purpose of which is to acquaint the youths with some new words, longer sentences, plot development, etc. It teaches them to read and acquire efficiency in reading.

Looked at from that viewpoint, the fact, namely, that we must learn to read, we believe that there is room for reading which has training value even though it have little content value. We all recall stories we read when we were children, which were indeed no more than stories, but their very interest and fancy urged us to get the thought, and thus we learned to read. When we grow up we leave behind the childish things, but we carry with us into life the ability to read. And what is the important thing. Human nature being what it is and the child's mind developing as it does, we can see where a certain amount of stories, tales, etc. in our reading books serves a worthwhile educative purpose.

As the child grows up, the home first, but also the school, must teach the child to make good use of his reading ability. There are many young men and women who seem to have learned to read, only to be able to absorb the trash which the modern news-stand has to offer. In this branch, as in every other in our curricula, we have man's sinfulness and total depravity with which to reckon, to crucify the desire for lust and learn to desire that which is wholesome, also in our reading habits.

Do not misunderstand me now to have said that the end justifies the means. I certainly do not mean to say that we can give our children anything to read, as long as it helps them to acquire reading ability. The Scripture exhorts us: ye that love the Lord, hate evil. That antithesis must be maintained also in the matter of reading.

And on the basis of that fact I believe that the fairy-tale stands condemned as something which is evil and should not therefore have a place in our schools' reading books. A fairy tale is not quite the same as tales, anecdotes, fiction etc. A fairy-tale is more than that. I will try to make this plain.

Fairies, according to the best authority I can get on this matter, "are imaginary creatures, coming from another world, who come out and play with delighted children". They are, "always found assisting good people and no one who is cruel and cross need look for any help from them". Farther, we are informed concerning fairies that they "reward the good and punish the evil." All kinds of supernatural powers are ascribed to them. If the housewife's cream turned suddenly sour, if butter would not come, if the apples fell

prematurely from the trees, it was likely the work of offended fairies, taking vengeance.

From these few, scattered notices it is evident that the fairy-tale is really a type of religion which mixes into itself superstition and cursed idolatry. Heathens looked upon their gods as beings who controlled men's destinies, blessed or cursed at will, smiled upon you or took vengeance quite as the circumstances might demand. This is idolatry. But the fairy-tale presents us that same idolatry, only it is written to amuse children. The fairies are virtually the gods, at least the messengers of the gods. Fairy-tales play with spiritualism, with dualism and end in superstition.

Therefore I would condemn the fairy tale. It distorts the truth that "in Him we live and move and have our being" and "that He is not far from each of us". God rules and controls the world, not by fairies, but by the Spoken Word of His power. The fairy-tale teaches a religion, but one that is false. It ascribes to beings the power, will and justice which may be ascribed only to God.

Besides that, as we said before, it creates in children a certain brand of superstition. "Every flower-cup may be a fairies' bed-room, every mushroom a fairies' dining table" etc. Sheer superstition. God is finally eliminated from His creation, and instead of seeing the Name of God written across the works of creation we see fairies and a mixture of gnomes, trolls and nixies. We confess (in Belg. Conf.) saying that we know God, first by the creation, preservation and government of the universe, which is before our eyes as a most elegant book, in which all creatures, great and small are as so many characters, leading us to contemplate the invisible things of God, namely, His power and divinity. The fairy-tale reduces the great God to nothing and puts the control of the world, punishments and judgments, etc. in the hands of imaginary creatures. And if we would talk about agencies which execute the will of God in this world, then let us speak scripturally and speak of angels. Not the fairies, but the angels are the messengers sent of God to labor in behalf of the heirs of salvation.

One might interrupt and say that when the children grow up they will put away also these childish things. But, if you see how full of superstition the worldly people are, you feel that idolatry is not so easily put away. And besides, it would be tempting God to nourish our children on things that in themselves are wrong, thinking that any good could come out of it.

For all these reasons our children in their training to read, ought not to use means which are harmful to the truth. Instead of that, we must bring them up in the nurture of the Lord, also when we train them to read.

M. G.

The Basic Problem of the Church's Multiformity

In one of our recent Ministerial Conferences a paper was given on the "Biblical Conception of the Multiformity of the Church" and in the discussion of the paper that followed it became apparent that the greatest difficulty of the problem lay in factors of a naturally multiform race in a growing and developing dispensation, and the following is an attempt to enlarge somewhat on this phase of the problem.

The so-called Multiformity question is not a question of merely academic interest but is a question of tremendous importance because it concerns the will and the command of Christ to His Church, that they shall be one as He and the Father are one.

This command of the Saviour may undoubtedly be regarded as aiming at a twofold purpose, namely, first, the calling of Christians to seek the closest bond of fellowship for the purpose of mutual edification and submission to one another's exhortation and discipline, and secondly, in order that the world may see in the midst of a race torn by hatred and strife in its various sphere of life, a people of every calling and social station bound together by the tremendous power of the invisible life of the Son in the Flesh who is the mystery of godliness, and thus seeing, the world may acknowledge His mission from the Father.

Now as obstacles to that unity we saw in the paper above mentioned several other impediments, such as sinful self-will, ancestry and antecedents, geography, language and culture.

And yet more basic and apparently insurmountable than all these there appears to be that of racial multiformity and development.

The question arises whether we dare in the face of these stubborn factors persist and take the absolute standpoint that it is the will of God that the Church shall become externally, institutionally one in this sinful dispensation? And it would seem that unless we can adopt and maintain an absolute standpoint here we are given over to a hopeless relativism all along the line.

In answer to this we may begin with a rather parenthetical observation that even if we could not theoretically set an absolute standard that this would not at all deliver us to relativism along the line as our sinful hearts might secretly hope, for certainly the standards which the Christian Church as a whole has adopted is much more absolute than our ecclesiastically superficial age would suggest. Unquestionably we have hardly begun to approximate those standards, if indeed we have even begun them seriously. A serious confession of, for example, the Reformed and Pres-

byterian standards by all the subscribers would be a tremendous step toward the realization of that prayer of Christ.

But apart from this parenthetical observation, it must secondly be quite obvious that a certain variety of confessions arising out of the psychological and intellectual multiformity of the race does not at all imply a contradiction or conflict between the various expressions. Let us note that all these races have one and the same word of revelation, which has one central message; that all have one and the same life of Christ in them through regeneration which seeks the same thing; that all are led by the same Spirit Who guides into all the truth. Because of this oneness of prescription and oneness of impulse the truth that develops in the ages of the Church is *one*.

And let us notice that the Holy Spirit has a way of vindicating through the course of history this oneness. The various shades unite more and more into a harmony and the departures become more and more revealed as heresies by their gradual reduction to inconsistency and absurdity, and their practical fruitfulness. So, e.g., the Arian theory of Christ's person is not a variation of the Athanasian formulation, but is a denial of the latter; the question of the single or double procession (*filioque*) of the Holy Spirit is not a matter of Oriental and Occidental emphasis, but a question of truth and error. And so further the Supper and the Mass, Arminianism and Calvinism, Pre- and A-millennialism, Common or Particular grace are all a matter not of emphasis but of truth and error.

But there is another strong point that we must make, namely, that the confessions of the various peoples are not necessarily nearly as divergent as the champions of doctrinal independence would like to suppose. In the first place the thoughts and expressions of peoples are usually guided, moulded and articulated by men of cosmopolitan, universal thought and vision which far transcend their day and their racial bounds. A great man belongs to every race and nation and his thoughts and expressions are those of every nation, especially when he thinks and speaks, as guided of course by the spirit of Christ, concerning the things of God's revelation. This principle we see operating at the great Synods of the early Church and again at the Synod of Dordt where five or six different nationalities were engaged in the formulation of doctrines, and on the other hand the differences were those *within* the household of the Dutch churches.

But now with reference to the other main point we may also observe that a stable point of reference for a criterion need not at all be as absolutistic as it might at first appear necessary. There is indeed room for growth and for supplementation, and the growth that is characteristic of the age of imperfection does not at all imply that an earlier is imperfect in the sense

that it is erroneous and condemnable. There is a great difference between an immatured and a faulty confession. The Abrahamic revelation and confession is not out-moded, relegated, and contradicted by the Mosaic, nor the Mosaic by the Prophetic, nor, again the Prophetic, by the Incarnated, nor again the latter by the Apostolic, and yet there is throughout a constant growth and enrichment. Just as one person cannot alone express the fulness of the life of Christ, so can no one generation or race express the fulness of the Divine revelation and grace.

But this principle of supplementation is also implicit in our own Reformed confessional standards. The three supplementing one another are of greatly differing emphasis and background. The one was written by a Frenchman in the solitude of imprisonment and facing death, the other by two German professors in the academic atmosphere of the university, the third by a variagated assembly of theologians in the tense atmosphere of heresy trial, where life and death, honor and disgrace hung in the balance. The Presbyterians have their great Westm. Conf. built phrase by phrase by a great and learned assembly, but also a Catechism, the "Larger" form for the congregational preaching, and the "Shorter" for the children, each written by one man. Now no one would maintain that by discarding one of these we would gain in doctrinal richness and purity, but all readily see that the one supplements and enriches the whole confession of the Christian hope and rule of life. And even by using the standards, be it as secondary, of the presbyterians, whose racial but cultural background is other than ours, we do not thereby impoverish the beauty and purity of our faith but positively enrich and purify it.

A musical chorus does not impoverish itself by adding more voices of various quality, if only they are true to the music. And no individual will contend that all must perform as he himself does to make the rendition of the theme successful.

That same multiformity of race and age and talent and character will be found in the heavenly perfected Jerusalem and through it all the glorious life of the Son of God as the Mediator of the glory of the Triune shall be refracted into a manifold splendor. One revelation and one life yet a multitude of creaturely reflection.

And so also in this dispensation we may set as our God-appointed goal of one Church in the unity of faith and knowledge and manifestation, that is wholly in accord with and fully honors the glorious multiformity of nature also in the human race, in which God spreads forth and reveals His divine virtues and grace.

A beautiful idealism, you say. And yet, if it is God's will then it continues to confront us as calling indeed, but also as a lasting rebuke, A. P.

Contribution

RESPONSIBILITY

The word—Responsibility—since 1924 has become one of the three words today used, also in our religious vocabulary. It fits neatly in our language, vividly expressing ideas and thoughts pertaining to our activities in life. As was said, the word is especially used denoting religious ideas and sentiment, depicting a kind of religious exaltation, exhibiting some kind of pious satisfaction. In this capacity it is much used in connection with the Sovereignty of God, in combination with the by God declared Total Depravity of men.

The word applied in this sense, is theologically used to convey the idea and to uphold the thought, that a mere human being accomplishing a pious considered act, is able to establish a God approved harmony and attitude between the Sovereign God and Totally Depraved man.

The word also means to place man over against man, the church over against the world. Cain over against Abel. It intends to arrange a spiritual life over against carnal life, morality over against immorality, etc.

As we planned to describe briefly the use of the word Responsibility as applied to its religious use, we will pass by the other uses of the word and center our thoughts and remarks upon the line of its religious reasoning. Regarding the sovereignty of God and man's total depravity, we find that laymen as well as ecclesiastics use the word—responsibility—as a CRUTCH, synodically delivered as a means to lean on upon the troubled journey through Mesech toward New Jerusalem.

That, of course, conveys the hidden thought and the imagined idiom, that man, although unable, depraved, is still capable, more or less, to accomplish something, somewhat and somewhere to his own salvation.

Surely, we know that this hidden thought and idiom is openly denied when confronted with the bold and bald question: Is man able to do something toward his own salvation? Yet and notwithstanding, that deftly denial does not remove the crutch, nor does it dissolve the hidden thought, the imagined idiom, and neither does it rescind the doctrinal declaration of the Three Points of Synod of 1924, which openly announce and confess the ableness of even the unregenerate to please God in civic life boldly ignorin gand annulling Rom. 3.

The word, Responsibility, bids us to look into the past. It brings us in Eden. We find that God commanded Adam and Eve in Paradise to abstain from eating of a certain tree. Our parents did not listen to the commandment of God, but paid close attention to the lie of Lucifer. They did eat of that tree and fell into sin, being disobedient. Adam, as the representa-

tive of the human race fell into death, being consequently totally depraved.

The fall of Adam did not stop his, nor our responsibility as they would say. But, we rather would say: The fall of Adam did not stop his nor our calling and our duty. He, and we must yet obey God's commandments. Adam could not nor would he, and we neither can nor will obey the commandments of God.

When Christ, from eternity knew that Adam could not nor ever would obey the law of God, then, in due season He appeared upon the scene, saying: Lo, I come, in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will o my God; yea Thy law is written in my heart. Psalm 40:7, 8.

Christ Jesus, coming in the place of Adam, obeyed God, and in Him as Mediator and Saviour, the elect alone find reasons a plenty to glorify God, for in Christ are they enabled to obey God in principle, comprehending their calling and their duty, performing both, so to speak, in a measure. Those without Christ cannot in the least attain in doing their duty and fulfilling their calling to obey and love God and their neighbors.

It seems that the theologians, for reasons perhaps known or unknown to them, did away with the Biblical terms of calling and duty, instituting for these plain words the more elegant and higher sounding phraseological term of Responsibility.

But, is it not always true that the sweet speech of philosophical inventions of mere men, as exhibited in some synodical declarations rather obscure the Word of God instead of spreading light upon it?

This simple truth is literal and spiritual shown in the theological terms of Responsibility, Common Grace and Invitation, today honorably used in our religious vocabulary. The words, responsibility and common grace are not used in the Holy Scriptures, and the word invitation is found three times in the Word of God, but never meaning what theology accords to it. These 3 words belong to our present pulpit oracle oration. Yet, and after all, and notwithstanding these three words or terms, seem to be the foundation upon which our present Christian Reformed Theology is erected.

Why not use the plain Biblical words?

J. H. Hoekstra
South Holland, Ill.

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,