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MEDITATION

Onze Zonden Gedragen

Die zelf onze zonden in Zijn lichaam gedragen heeft op het hout, opdat wij, de zonden afgestorven zijnde, der gerechtigheid leven zouden; door Wiens striemen gij genezen zijt.

I Pet 2:24.

Onze zonden gedragen!

Hij Zelf! In Zijn lichaam! Immanuel, God met ons!

Van Hem, de "zondenvernieler," en dat met zijn dichtersoog centraal op het hout gericht, waarop Hij onze zonden droeg, zong Da Costa:

"Ik zag hem, ik gaf mij, de hel is geweken;
De hemel ging op uit Uw Woord in mijn ziel!
Ik zag hem, beloofd aan den balling van Eden,
Als 't vlekkeloos zaad der vernederde vrouw;
Die 't dwangjuk der zonde te pletter zou treden,

Den kop van den Heldraak verbrijzelen zou!
Ik zag Hem, voorzeggd in den stam der Hebreuwen

Den Spruit, die volbloeid in de rijpheid der eeuwen,

Den scheidsmuur der heidnen ineen storten doet!

Ik zag hem, geschaduwd op Sion's altaren,
In offer en wetboek van Horeb's verbond!
Ik zag hem, den Godmensch, die 't al moest verklaren,

Door Israels zieners aan 't aardrijk verkond!
Ik zag hem, den wortel van David's geslachte,
Zijn heer en zijn koning en tevens zijn zoon!
Den God van hemel, d'op aarde Verachte,
Geheiligd, verheerlijkt, door lijden en hoon,

Mensch met ons geworden voor menschen-behoefte,

Voor mijn overtreding tot zonde gemaakt,
Geslagen, gesmaad door dolzinning geboefte,
Aan 't vloekhout doorboord, door God zelven verzaakt!

Mijn redder, Mijn Goël, mijn zondenvernieler,
Mijn meester, mijn Heiland, mijn Heer en mijn God!

Mijn onheilverwinster, mijn levenbezieler!
Gezegend, geheiligd, beslist is mijn lot!
Voor U wil ik strijden, voor U wil ik lijden,
Voor U wil ik d' aarde doorgalmen van lof!
Aan U wil ik adem en levenskracht wijden,
Tot de Engel des levens mijn slake uit dit stof!

En zoo zingt het volk van God, zijn blik door het geloof op dat altijd wonderlijke kruis van zijn Heer gevestigd, het hem na.

Hij Zelf heeft onze zonden gedragen!

Daarin ligt heel het mysterie van de verlossing, de vergeving der zonden, besloten!

O, ja! Hij liet ons in Zijn lijden ook een voorbeeld na, opdat we Zijne voetstappen zouden navolgen. Daarvan toch had de apostel in het verband gesproken.

Maar hoe ijdel zou zulk een voorbeeld zijn voor ons, die immers dood zijn door de zonden en misdaden, die noch de macht, noch ook het recht hebben, om in die voetstappen te wandelen, indien dat lijden van onzen Heer ook niet geweest ware de vernietiging der zonde, een dragen onzer zonden, in onze plaats, ten einde toe, op het hout!

Maar nu is ook dat voorbeeld en zijne navolging mogelijk geworden!

Onze zonden zijn eens en voor altijd gedragen, weggedragen!

Want Hij Zelf was het, Die ze droeg!
God uit God in het vleesch, Immanuel!

De zondenvernieler!

Wonderlijke mysterie!

Menschelijke onmogelijkheid; mogelijk alleen bij God!

Mysterie, het bepeinsende in aanbidding waarvan de door Zijn vloekhout geredde zondaar nimmer moe wordt!

Wat toch wil het zeggen: de zonden dragen? En hoe is het mogelijk dat een ander onze zonden draagt? Of ook: hoe kan één de zonden van en voor velen dragen? En hoe kan de zonde, die tegen de eeuwige en oneindige majesteit Gods bedreven werd, worden weggedragen in één tijdsmoment?

Zonde wordt gedragen in het torschen van den vloek, van den last des toorns Gods.

Want zonde is schuld, en schuld maakt ons voorwerp van den toorn Gods, doemwaardig. Zonde is ongerechtigheid. Ze is overtreding der wet. En de wet is, dat wij den Heere onzen God zullen liefhebben met geheel ons hart, met geheel ons verstand, met geheel onze ziel, en met al onze krachten. Onophoudelijk, elk moment van ons bestaan zijn wij gehouden onszelf Gode op te offeren, en dat met alle dingen en in verband met alle schepselen. En zonde is overtreding van die wet. Daarom is ze schuld, schuld, die wij nimmer kunnen afdoen, die ons tot in alle eeuwigheid doemwaardig maakt. Want de zondaar is in zijne schuld gebonden, is een slaaf der ongerechtigheid. Hij kan zijne schuld niet betalen, noch ook wil hij het, noch ook kan hij het willen. Als hij zijne eigene zonden dragen, moet, kan hij slechts vergaan door den toorn van den vlekkeloos heiligen en rechtvaardigen God.

Maar Hij Zelf droeg onze zonden!

Naar Zijn eeuwigen raad, waarin God Hem aan de spitse Zijner uitverkorene Kerk gesteld had, deed de Allerhoogste alle onze zonden op Hem aanloopen, werd Hij voor haar verantwoordelijk gesteld, werd de schuld van die zonden op Hem geladen, Hem toegerekend, alsof Hij de Zondaar aller zondaren, de Schuldige aller schuldigen ware, en laadde de Rechter van hemel en aarde de last van den toorn en van den vloek, die ons had moeten treffen en doen vergaan, in de ure des oordeels, op Zijne schouderen. En naar dienzelfden raad nam Hij, de Zoon in het vleesch, gewilliglijk die plaats aan het hoofd der Zijnen in, nam Hij in volkomene gehoorzaamheid der liefde den last des toorns op Zich, en droeg Hij onze zonden op het hout. En door Zijn dragen onzer zonden op het hout delgde Hij de schuld onzer overtredingen uit, droeg Hij onze zonden voor eeuwig weg.

Ze zijn niet meer!

En niet alleen zijn onze overtredingen weggevaagd, zoo zeker en zoo volkomen, alsof ze nimmer geweest waren, alsof wij nimmer eenige zonde hadden gehad of gedaan, maar door Zijn dragen der zonden op het hout heeft Hij voor ons verworven eene eeuwige gerechtigheid, eene gerechtigheid, die onverliesbaar is, en die ons

het eeuwige, volle, rijke leven in Gods hemelschen tabernakel waardig maakt.

Immers heeft Hij onze zonden *gedragen!*

En dragen is nog iets anders dan ondergaan. Het laatste is lijdelijk, het eerste is dadelijk. Het laatste wil zeggen, dat we er niet aan kunnen ontkomen, dat de last des toorns Gods op ons drukt, en dat er geen uitweg is, zoodat we onder den druk van dien last vergaan; het eerste wil zeggen, dat Hij door een wilsdaad dien last des toorns op Zich nam, dat Hij ook onder dien vreeselijken last, tot in de diepte der hel toe, aan de wet der liefde tot Zijnen God volkomenlijk gehoorzaam was, dat Hij Zijn leven aflegde op het altaar van Gods liefde, dat Hij Zijne ziel uitstortte in den dood door eene geheel vrijwillige daad, en dat Hij alzoo aan alle gerechtigheid Gods tegenover de zonde genoeg deed, en de offerande der verzoening bracht, die eens en voor altijd aan Gods recht voldeed, en de schuld der zonde wegnam. Het laatste wil zeggen, dat wij in den dood ondergaan, en vergaan; het eerste, dat Hij onder den zwaren last des toorns niet bezweek, maar tot het einde toe staande bleef en overwon, de zonde vernielde, den dood verslond!

Doordat Hij onze zonden droeg, daarom droeg Hij ze weg!

En omdat Hij het was, Hij Zelf, Die onze zonden droeg, daarom heeft Zijn dragen der zonden voor ons eeuwige gerechtigheid en leven verworven!

Het staat er immers met nadruk, en alle nadruk dient hierop ook gelegd te worden, dat Hij Zelf onze zonden gedragen heeft op het hout.

Op het hout, ja, want dat hout was niet alleen symbool van den vloek, maar voor Hem ook drager van het vloekende Woord Gods. Zoo toch had God Zelf gesproken: "Vervloekt is een iegelijk, die aan het hout hangt." Zoo sprak Hij door dat hout ook op Golgotha. En Zoo hoorde en verstond de Gekruisigde het Woord Gods, en liet Hij dat Woord des kruises door heel Zijn bestaan dringen, om in ziel en lichaam dien vloek te dragen ten einde toe.

Maar de nadruk valt toch hierop, dat Hij het was, Hij Zelf, die alzoo op het hout onze zonden droeg.

Daarin ligt het mysterie des kruises, maar daarin ligt ook het antwoord op de vraag naar de mogelijkheid van dat dragen onzer zonden, in onze plaats, en ter onzer rechtvaardigmaking en volkomene verlossing; en daarin ligt tevens de reden van de zekerheid, dat we door Zijn dragen onzer zonden eene eeuwige gerechtigheid en het eeuwige leven ontvangen!

Vraagt ge, hoe het toch voor God bestaan kan, dat een ander onzer zonden droeg? Het antwoord is: Hij was geen ander! Hij Zelf, de eeuwige Zoon, God uit God, één met den Vader en den Geest, de Rechter van hemel en aarde, Die alleen soeverein richt en beschikt, nam onze plaats in! Wie zal Hem het recht betwisten om Zijne groote liefde en oneindige genade in den weg

van het eeuwige en volmaakte recht te openbaren, en Zelf de zonden der Zijnen in Zijn lichaam te dragen op het hout? Hij Zelf! Dat is, Hij, Die van eeuwigheid werd verordineerd, om aan de spitse der Zijnen te staan, zoodat Hij hunne plaats kon innemen in de ure des oordeels, droeg onze zonden en droeg ze weg!

Hij Zelf!

En omdat Hij het was, de eeuwige Zoon in het vleesch, daarom ging Hij niet onder in den dood, maar verslond hem; daarom bezweek Hij niet onder den last des toorns, maar torschte dien last ten einde toe; daarom kon Hij in één tijdsmoment aan het recht Gods voldoen!

Hij Zelf!

God Zelf! De Zoon! O zeker, de Zoon in het vleesch. Maar dan toch de Zoon Gods. In Zijn lichaam droeg Hij onze zonden op het hout, maar het bleef toch de Persoon des Zoons, Die ze droeg, en Die den dood smaken kon, zooals niemand anders hem kon smaken.

Daarom verwierf die kostbare dood des eeuwigen Zoons in het vleesch eeuwige gerechtigheid!

En het eeuwige leven! Hemelsche heerlijkheid!
Mysterie des kruises!

Mijn Redder!

Mijn Goël! Mijn zondenvernieler!

Want niet alleen heeft Hij door onze zonden te dragen onze schuld weggenomen, door Zijn lijden heeft Hij ons verlost van de overheersching der zonde en de macht des doods!

Door Zijne striemen is ons genezing geworden!

Genezing! En ach, leidt uit dit woord toch niet af, dat onze toestand van nature, onze geestelijke ellende en verdorvenheid, eigenlijk niets anders is dan eene tijdelijke ziekte, waarvoor nog wel genezing is, zoodat de natuurlijke mensch wel ellendig is, maar toch nog leeft, en hij er met wat goeden wil wel doorworstelen zal, mits Gods genade hem bijstaat. Want door dit woord, dat de apostel ontleent aan Jesaja's profetie, wijst hij op die geestelijke krankheden, die allen slechts openbaringen zijn van de werkingen des doods, in het midden waarvan we liggen, en aan de overheersching waarvan we onderworpen zijn.

Onze geestelijke blindheid, waardoor we duisternis liever hebben dan het licht; onze doofheid, waardoor we het Woord Gods "hoorende hooren" 'en niet verstaan; onze melaatschheid van hart en genegenheden; onze lamheid en geraaktheid en dwaasheid en van-denduivel-bezetenheid, — algader openbaringen van de werkingen des doods!

Genezing!

Door Zijne striemen!

Want immers: "op den bodem aller vragen ligt der menschen zondeschuld!"

De bezoldiging der zonde is de dood!

Het Woord Gods blijft eeuwig staan: "ten dage, dat

gij daarvan eet zult gij den dood sterven!" In dien dood liggen wij krachtens het oordeel Gods over ons. En dat oordeel Gods is gegrond in onze schuld. Neem de schuld weg, voldoe aan Gods recht, en de dood is verslonden!

Daarom: door Zijne striemen!

Alle onze krankheden nam Hij op zich. Hij heeft die krankheden geleden, gedragen, tot in den vollen dood toe, door Zijne striemen; striemen, ja, door menschen Hem aangedaan, maar waarin Hij aldoor smaakte den toorn Gods tegen de zonden, die Hij op het hout droeg!

Daarom heeft Hij de grond van Gods oordeel tegen ons weggenomen, en met den grond het oordeel zelf!

Het recht verwierf Hij om ons te genezen van al onze krankheden, van den dood ons te verlossen, en ons het leven te schenken!

En als de opgestane en verheerlijkte Heiland werkelijk Hij dat recht in ons!

Hij geneest ons door Zijne genade!

Aanbiddelijke Verlosser!

Heerlijk doel!

Gods doel, en door Zijne genade ook ons doel!

Wij mogen en kunnen en willen nu weer, in waarachtige vrijheid, den levenden God dienen, der gerechtigheid leven!

Immers, genezen door Zijne striemen, zijn wij de zonden afgestorven!

Neen, vergis u niet: de zonde is in ons niet gestorven, en wij zijn nog niet volmaakt. Wie in die inbeelding zou leven, zou zich wel deerlijk vergissen, en zich diepe teleurstelling bereiden. Niet de zonde is gestorven: ze werkt veeler met verdubbelde kracht in onze leden, om ons ten onder te brengen. Maar wij zijn aan haar gestorven. Er kwam een radikale omkeer in onze verhouding tot de zonde. Vroeger heerschte zij; thans is ze ontroond. Vroeger had ze recht om onder hare wet ons te brengen; thans is ze van alle recht beroofd om over ons heerschappij te voeren. Vroeger dienden we haar als gewillige slaven; thans haten we, en bestrijden we haar. Het oude is voorbij gegaan; ziet, het is alles nieuw geworden!

En we leven der gerechtigheid!

In beginsel, ja; maar dan toch wel waarlijk in *beginsel*!

We mogen en kunnen en willen God weer liefhebben met ons gansche bestaan!

Straks in eeuwige volmaaktheid!

Altegader door Zijne striemen!

Mijn Heer, en mijn God!

H. H.

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EDITORIALS

The Text of a Complaint

Superficial, too, is the way in which the "Complaint" makes use of quotations from Calvin to prove that the great reformer supports its contention that God earnestly seeks the salvation of all men, reprobate as well as elect.

The complainants quote Calvin on the well-known text in Ezekiel 18:23, and their quotation appears to justify their contention only when you read it very superficially, and especially when you permit it to stand out of its proper context. Yet, even the quotation does not teach that "God sincerely offers salvation 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," as the complainants contend. When Calvin writes "that God wills not the death of a sinner, because he meets him on his own accord, and is not only prepared to receive all who fly to his pity, but he calls them to him with a loud voice, when he sees how they are alienated from all hope of safety," he does not teach that God is ready to receive the reprobate, since they do not belong to those "*who fly to his pity*." But this becomes much clearer in what Calvin continues to write in explanation of the same text. We quote:

"God is said *not to wish the death of a sinner*. How so? since he wishes all to be converted. Now we must see how God wishes all to be converted; for repentance is surely his peculiar gift: as it is his office to create men, so it is his province to renew them, and restore his image within them. For this reason we are said to be his workmanship, that is, his fashioning. (Eph. 2:10). Since, therefore, repentance is a kind of second creation, it follows that it is not in man's power; and if it is equally in God's power to convert men as well as to create them, it follows that the reprobate are not converted, because God does not wish their conversion; for if he wished it, he could do it: and hence it appears that he does not wish it. But again they argue foolishly, since God does not wish all to be converted, he is himself deceptive, and nothing can be certainly stated concerning his paternal benevolence. But this knot is easily untied; for he does not leave us in suspense when he says that he wishes all to be saved. Why so? for if no one repents without finding God propitious, then his sentence is filled up. But we must remark that he puts on a twofold character: for he here wishes to be taken at his word. As I have already said, the Prophet does not here dispute with subtlety about his incomprehen-

sible plans, but wishes to keep our attention close to God's word. Now, what are the contents of this word? The law, the prophets, and the gospel. Now all are called to repentance, and the hope of salvation is promised them when they repent: this is true since God rejects no returning sinner: he pardons all without exception; meanwhile, this will of God which he sets forth in his word does not prevent him from decreeing before the world was created what he would do with every individual: and as I have now said, the Prophet only shows here, that when we have been converted we need not doubt that God immediately meets us and shows himself propitious."

Now, the complainants would, most probably, accuse Calvin of rationalism since he here unties a knot, the very knot which they claim cannot be untied. He explains in what sense God can invite all men to salvation though He does not wish all men to be saved. His answer is that in this passage from Ezekiel He promises salvation only to those that are converted and repent, and that, since the work of conversion and repentance is His creation, He, therefore, really promises salvation only to the elect. And thus it is evident that Calvin, in this passage from his Commentaries, never taught the doctrine of the complainants, that God sincerely desires reprobate as well as elect to be saved.

That this is, indeed, the interpretation of this text as Calvin would give it is still more clearly evident from what we find in "Calvin's Calvinism," pp. 99, 100. We quote:

"All this Pighius loudly denies, adducing that passage of the apostle (I Tim. 2:4): 'Who will have all men to be saved': and referring to Ezek. 18:23, he argues thus: 'That God willeth not the death of a sinner may be taken upon his oath, where he says by that prophet: As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked that dieth, but rather that he should return from his ways and live.' Now we reply, that as the language of the prophet here is an exhortation to repentance, it is not at all marvelous in him to declare that he willeth all men to be saved. For the mutual relation between threats and promises shows that such forms of speaking are *conditional*. In this same manner God declared to the Ninevites, and to the kings of Gerar and Egypt, that He would do that which in reality He did not intend to do, for their repentance averted the punishment which He had threatened to inflict upon them. Whence it is evident that the punishment was announced on condition of their remaining obstinate and impenitent. And yet, the denunciation of punishment was positive, as if it had been an irrevocable decree. But after God had terrified them with the apprehension of His wrath, and had fully humbled them as not being utterly desperate, He encouraged them with the hope of pardon, that they might feel that there was yet left open a space for

remedy. Just so it is with the *conditional promises* of God which invite all men to salvation. They do not positively prove that which God has decreed in His counsel, but declare only that which God is ready to do to all those that are brought to faith and repentance.

"But men untaught of God, not understanding these things, allege that we here attribute to God a twofold or double will. Whereas God is so far from being variable, that no shadow of such variableness appertains to Him, even in the most remote degree. Hence, Pighius, ignorant of the divine nature of these things, thus argues: 'What else is this but making of God the mocker of men, if God is represented as really not willing that which He professes to will, and as not having pleasure in that in which in reality He has pleasure?' But if these two members of the sentence be read in conjunction, as they ought to be—'*I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked*'; and: '*But that the wicked turn from his way and live*'—read these two propositions in connection with each other, and the calumny is washed off at once. God requires of us this conversion or 'turning away from our iniquity,' and in whomsoever He finds it He disappoints not such a one of the promised reward of eternal life. Wherefore, God is as much said to have pleasure in, and to will, this eternal life, as to have pleasure in the repentance; and He has pleasure in the repentance, because He invites all men to it by His Word. Now all this is in perfect harmony with His secret and eternal counsel, by which He decreed to convert none but His own elect. None but God's elect, therefore, ever turn from their wickedness. And yet, the adorable God is not, on these accounts, to be considered variable or capable of change, because as a Lawgiver He enlightens all men with the external doctrine of *conditional life*. In this primary sense He calls or invites *all men* to eternal life. But in the latter case, He brings to eternal life those whom He willed according to His eternal purpose, regenerating by His Spirit, as an eternal Father, His own children only."

Now, let the complainants admit that, if Dr. Clark had written the above, they would immediately characterize it as a bit of rationalism. For Calvin here harmonizes Ezekiel 18:23 with God's eternal counsel of election and reprobation, and that, too, in such a way that he explains the former in the light of the latter. When he explains that in such passages as Ezekiel 18:23 with God's eternal counsel of election and reprobation, and that, too, in such a way that he explains the former in the light of the latter. When he explains that in such passages as Ezekiel 18:23 God promises *conditional life* to all, he evidently means that through the gospel God declares that He will give life to all that repent. And since it is God who must give repentance, in reality He promises life only to the elect, and to none other.

And surely, the complainants will have to admit

that this differs radically from their view, that God sincerely seeks the salvation of all men, the reprobate as well as the elect.

What the reformer here teaches is that although the preaching of the gospel by men is general and promiscuous, the content is always particular. God saves those that fly to Him for pity and redemption, that come to Him, that forsake their wicked ways, repent and believe.

And this "condition" of salvation not one man is able to fulfill of himself. God fulfills His own condition. He gives grace to repent, to believe, to come to Him.

That is Reformed. To say that God sincerely seeks the salvation of all that hear the gospel, as the complainants would have the preacher of the gospel proclaim, is Arminian pure and simple.

And if they quote Calvin, they should quote him fully, lest they ascribe to that reformer teachings which he always abhorred.

We have more to say on this subject, but this must wait till our next issue, the Lord willing.

H. H.

The Protesting First Christian Reformed Church of Kalamazoo

As far as I know the above is still the name of the congregation of which the Rev. H. Danhof is pastor.

Recently, however, there are all kinds of rumors afloat to the effect that efforts are being made to remove the word "protesting" from that name, to lead that church back into the fellowship of the Christian Reformed Churches, and thus to make it virtually, if not literally, confess that their stand in 1924 was an error, and that the "Three Points" adopted by the Synod of Kalamazoo are after all true doctrine.

There are also rumors that the attempt to rejoin the Christian Reformed Churches has, for the time being at least, failed, but that the Rev. Danhof expects to retire from the ministry in the near future.

I have not written a word about this situation heretofore, partly because I had no direct, official information about the whole matter; partly, too, because I did not consider it ethical to put my nose into what is after all the business of that local congregation.

And although to us it would be a sad spectacle to see that congregation, after they had gone through so serious a history as they have, after they have once taken a stand for the truth and have been despised and persecuted for it, return to the communion of those

that cast them out, and forsake the truth,—yet, even now we will refrain from further discussing the matter.

I feel constrained, however, in virtue of certain information I recently received, clearly to express myself on one or two points.

First of all, I here declare once more that I must refuse all blame for the fact that in 1926 the church of Kalamazoo separated itself from us, and refused to organize with us as Protestant Reformed Churches. For this statement abundant proof can be furnished if necessary. For the present, let it be sufficient to merely make the statement.

And secondly, I wish to declare openly to the brethren in Kalamazoo that still love the Protestant Reformed truth that I will rejoice in the day when they return to us in the proper way. And such a way should not be difficult to find for those that are of the same faith.

I make both these statements simply because from a reliable source I received the information that I am blamed by members of that congregation for the split between them and us, and that I do not desire their return to us.

Both these statements are false.

And because I do not wish to carry the least responsibility for the return of Kalamazoo's congregation to the Christian Reformed Churches, I like to remove this misunderstanding, and here repeat that they will be welcome in our fellowship if they desire to return to us in the proper way.

Perhaps, the brethren will try this out.

H. H.

The Triple Knowledge

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

Part Two.

Of Man's Redemption

Lord's Day XVI.

2.

The Death Of Believers. (cont.)

Moreover, it is only in the body of this death that believers are able to fulfill their calling in this world, according to God's good pleasure over them. For they must, for a time, represent the cause of the Son of God in antithesis to the world of sin. They must be to the

glory of the grace of Him that called them in all their walk and conversation, fight the good fight of faith, and that, too, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation. And in this cause they are called to suffer with Christ, and so fulfill the measure of His suffering. Hence, their regeneration and glorification cannot be simultaneous. It is only in their present body, in which they are "by nature" one with the world, and have all things in common with natural man, that they can serve this high purpose of God, and be faithful even unto death. Believers, therefore, must also die, even though Christ died for them. For it is given them of grace, in the cause of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer with Him. Phil. 1:29.

And, finally, that economy of things to which their ultimate and complete redemption belongs is not yet come. They shall be glorified body and soul, and inherit the kingdom of God, the incorruptible, and undefilable inheritance, that fadeth not away. But this kingdom of God is heavenly, and to inherit it also the body of believers must be made to bear the image of the heavenly. The heavenly kingdom and the redemption of their body belong together. The one must wait for the other. Hence, the body of believers cannot be glorified until the consumation of all things, the moment of the resurrection, when God shall make all things new, and create new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness shall dwell, and the tabernacle of God shall be with men. Until that moment, the second advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, the body of believers must rest in the grave and await the resurrection of the dead.

But the Catechism considers the question why believers must also die only from the viewpoint of its juridical ground. Death is the punishment of sin. It is an enemy. It is the expression of the just wrath of God against sin. But Christ died! He died instead of His own. And His death, the death of the Son of God, is the complete satisfaction for sin. He overcame death. He removed the ground of our condemnation. Would it not follow, then, that, the ground of death being removed, death itself must already be swallowed up in victory, and there can be no more death for believers? Why then is it that believers also die?

This question the Catechism answers in a two fold way, negatively and positively.

The sting of death is gone: death is, for believers, no satisfaction for their sins.

And the enemy of death has been changed into a servant: it is become a passage into eternal life for them that are in Christ.

This is a most glorious confession which, if we apprehend it by faith, makes us more than victors through Him that loved us.

The death of believers is no satisfaction for their sins. Satisfaction it could never be, of course. Only

the death of the Son of God could blot out the guilt of sin. If the just wrath of God must fall upon us, we can only perish everlastingly. For ever we must suffer death. But the Catechism means that the death of believers is no longer to be considered a manifestation of the wrath of God, an execution of justice, a punishment for sin. It is changed into something else for them that are in Christ. And this must be understood in its full sense. It must be applied, not only to the final moment of dying, to our descent into the grave, but equally to all that is implied in death, to all the suffering of this present time. For we lie in the midst of death in this world. Dying we die. All the suffering and agony, all the sorrow and grief of this present time are very really the operation of death. When, therefore, we confess by faith that our death is not meant as a satisfaction for sin, it also implies that all our present sufferings of soul and body are no longer to be considered as punishment for sin and expressions of the righteous judgment of God.

For believers, the sufferings of this present time have lost their real sting.

They are no longer experienced as righteous retribution. Even those sufferings that appear to be the direct result of certain concrete, personal sins, dare no longer to be considered as punishment for sin. If a man is regenerated and called to the light of life in later life, and if in his unconverted state he should have lived a life of dissipation, of drunkenness and adultery, the effects of this former life of sin are not removed by his regeneration. He must suffer them. Yet, even that suffering is no longer punishment for sin, and may not be regarded as such. For Christ died for all our sins. He died all our death. His death is a complete satisfaction for all our iniquities. The debt has been paid in full. And God in His justice will not exact payment twice.

It is very important that believers apprehend this glorious truth by faith, fully and clearly.

They often fail to lay hold of this comfort. In the midst of suffering, they will often express themselves in a way that clearly reveals their failure to consider their misery and death in the light of the cross and of the perfect satisfaction of Christ for all their sins. They feel that they have "deserved" it all, and that they suffer exactly because they are worthy of death. They declare that God is righteous in visiting their sins upon their head, and that they have made themselves worthy of His wrath. They often seek a connection between their specific suffering and certain sins in their past life, and feel that the former is the expression of God's just wrath upon the latter. They must still make satisfaction for their sins!

And thus they err, because they fail by faith to lay hold on the perfect satisfaction and atonement of Christ.

Let us not misunderstand this.

The error in this attitude is not that they apprehend in their suffering the displeasure of God against sin. God is, indeed, displeased with sin, also with the sins of His children. It is, therefore, very well that we humble ourselves before the face of God in our suffering and misery, and confess that, if God should deal with us according to our transgressions, we would not be able to stand before Him, but would have to perish in eternal desolation. But the error is that in our suffering, and in our apprehension of the righteous judgment of God, we do not lay hold upon Christ by faith, and lack the joyous assurance that all our sins are blotted out, so that our death is no longer to be considered a punishment for sin. As soon as, and in the measure that we do take all our sins and sufferings to the cross, we do, indeed, confess:

"Lord, if Thou shouldst mark transgressions,
In Thy presence who shall stand?"

But we also triumphantly shout:

"But with Thee there is forgiveness,
That Thy name may fear command."

God does, indeed, chastise His children, and there is an element of chastisement in all their suffering in this present world.

But there is a great difference between punishment and chastisement. The former is the expression of God's just and condemning wrath, the latter is an operation of His paternal love. "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is there whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye are without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." Heb. 12:6-8. If we are punished for our sins, there is no hope. For punishment means to be just retribution. And the just retribution for our sins, eternal death. But if we are chastised, we may rejoice in the chastisement, for it is meant for our good, and it tends unto life. Punishment for sin the suffering of this present time is for the reprobate wicked; chastisement is the same suffering for God's elect children. Punishment is that suffering as it is mixed with God's fierce and holy anger; chastisement is the same suffering mixed with saving grace. Punishment ends in destruction; chastisement is for our good, for our correction and sanctification. For thus the Scriptures teach us: "Furthermore we have had the fathers of our flesh which corrected us and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the

present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Heb. 12:9-11.

And all things work together for good for them that love God, that are the called according to His purpose. Rom. 8:28.

Although, therefore, also believers still lie in the midst of death, and taste death in all the sufferings of this present time, yet, for them it is no punishment, no satisfaction for sin. Christ died and rose again. He fully satisfied for all their iniquities. And the sufferings they endure must be their servant and tend unto their eternal good.

And thus it is with respect to their final, physical death and the grave.

The catechism teaches us that the death of believers is: 1. no satisfaction for sin; 8. an abolishing of sin; 3. a passage into eternal life.

Those that are in Christ die in faith. And even though judging from outward appearances their death appears the same as that of unbelievers, even though they pass through the same struggle, and suffer the same agony in departing from this present world, their death is essentially different. For as in that hour of death they cling by faith to their crucified Lord, they know that it is not the retributive wrath of God that is upon them in all the agonies of death, but His elective love, delivering them from death into life, and beckoning them home to the house of many mansions. By faith they may truly die in peace.

For them death is, indeed, an abolishing of sin. The death of believers in Christ is not simply a separation of soul and body. It is much more. It is the final deliverance of the "inward man" from the bondage of the "outward man" and from all that pertains to it. Thus the apostle Paul teaches us in II Cor. 4:16: "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." When the believer dies his outward man perishes completely. To that outward man belong many things. The earthly house of this tabernacle it is called in II Cor. 5:1. His body and all his earthly life, his earthly experiences, his joys and sorrows, his earthly relationships, his name and position in this world, belong to the "outward" man." But to it also belongs the old nature, in which the motions of sin are still active, in which operates the "law of sin," that wars against the "law of his mind" and brings him into captivity to the law of sin that is in his members. In death, this outward man perishes. It is completely and finally destroyed. And even though it is true that death is suffering, and that the believer as well as the unbeliever, as long as he is in this earthly house, does not want to be "unclothed" but "clothed upon," so that he too dreads and hates the dissolution of his earthly

house from a merely earthly viewpoint, yet by faith he may rejoice in the very suffering of death. For, all his life he had to fight against the motions of sin in his members, and frequently he seemed to suffer defeat. The sin that is within him was a cause of profound sorrow and misery to him. And now, as he finally lays his weary head upon death's pillow, he may rejoice in the prospect of final deliverance from the body of this death, and of the enjoyment of the perfect liberty of the children of God.

And so, the death of the believer is a passage into eternal life. The inward man does not perish. It is the new principle of life, of the life of Christ in him. And that cannot die. It is resurrection-life. Death has no dominion over it. With regard to the believer from the viewpoint of that inward man our Lord said to Martha: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whatsoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." John 11:25, 26. According to his inward man, the believer is firmly rooted in Christ, the resurrection. He passes through death, but himself cannot die.

This is not the place to speak about eternal life, and of the passage into heavenly glory of the believer immediately after death. For of this the Catechism speaks in Lord's Day twenty-two, in connection with the article of the Apostolic Confession on life everlasting.

All that need be emphasized here is that the character of death, in case of the believer, has radically changed through the power of the death of our Lord, the Son of God.

It is no longer satisfaction for sin, it is a means to deliver us from the power of sin.

No longer is death a terrorizing lord: he is become a servant, opening for us the gates into the glory of eternal life.

And the grave, that dreadful tyrant that swallowed us up into everlasting desolation, has become a passage into the glory of the resurrection.

We are conquerors, yea, more than conquerors, through Him that loved us. For death has no longer dominion over us. Our very enemies have become subservient to our salvation.

Nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!

3.

Dead To Sin.

In question and answer forty-three the Catechism calls our attention to a present, spiritual fruit of the death of the Son of God: the crucifixion, death, and burial of our old man, so that the corrupt inclinations

of the flesh may no more reign in us, but we may now offer ourselves a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the living God.

Already we remarked that the better translation is: "*That by His power* (instead of: "That in virtue thereof") our old man is crucified, dead, and buried with him." The translation as it is in our Psalter might leave the impression that the Catechism favors the moral theory of the power of Christ's death. It is not in virtue of the death of Christ merely that our old man is crucified, but by the power of the very Lord that died for us and rose again.

Nevertheless, this crucifixion, death, and burial of our old man, which is accomplished by the power of His grace in us, is somehow the result, the fruit of the death of Christ, a spiritual benefit that was merited by Him in His death. Centrally, the death of Christ is the death of the old man of all the elect. When He died, they all died as to their old man; when He arose, they all arose in newness of life. And it is the application of this power and value of Christ's death to the individual elect in this world, that causes the old man to die in him, so that the inclinations of the flesh no longer reign in him, and he may offer himself a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God. We, therefore, confront two questions. First of all, we must ask in what sense the death of Christ is the death of the old man. And, secondly, how does the application of this death of Christ to the elect reveal itself in their life in this world? In what sense is their old man even now crucified, dead, and buried with Christ?

The teaching of the Catechism in this forty-third answer is directly based on Scripture. The instructor refers us to Romans 6. The apostle introduces this chapter with a question that might be raised by those that would oppose the doctrine he had presented in the preceding chapters, that of justification by faith alone, without the works of the law: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" The conclusion from the doctrine of free grace and justification by faith that is implied in this question would seem to be inferred quite logically. The death of Christ is the satisfaction for all our sins. When we are ingrafted into Him by a true faith, and accept all His benefits, we lay hold upon this satisfaction, and, so to speak, by faith have a general indulgence, the forgiveness of all sin, the sin we ever committed, still commit, or shall commit in the future. In Christ we are perfectly righteous, and that, too, without any work of righteousness which we have performed or might perform. No amount of good works can possibly increase our righteousness, or make us more perfectly righteous before God than we are by faith in Christ; no sin on our part can possibly deprive us of the perfection of the righteousness we have in Him. Now, then, what would appear to be more

logical than the conclusion that we had better continue in sin, seeing that there is no condemnation for them that are in Christ anyhow? Yea, to continue in sin would yield the benefit that thereby the power of Christ's satisfaction and of the grace of God would shine forth more gloriously. Let us sin that grace may abound!

H. H.

Samson's End

The Philistines succeeded finally in getting Samson into their power. They took him, bored out his eyes, brought him down to Gaza, bound him in fetters of brass made him grind in the prison house, and gave glory to their god. In the midst of their jubilation, he pulled down over himself and them the temple of their god where they were congregated and his soul died with the Philistines. The liberal interpreters pass a harsh judgment on this last doing of Samson. "The last scene of Samson's history awaits us," writes one of their number,—*"the gigantic effort, the awful revenge in which the Hebrew champion ended his days. . . . We have no sense of vindicated principle when we see that temple fall in terrible ruin, but a thrill of disappointment and keen sorrow that a servant of Jehovah should have done this in His name. The lords of the Philistines, all the serens or chiefs of the many cities are gathered in the ample porch of the building. True, they are assembled at an idolatrous feast; but this idolatry is their religion which they cannot choose but exercise for they know no better, nor has Samson ever done one deed or spoken one word that could convince them of error. True, they are met to rejoice over their enemy and they call for him in cruel vainglory to make them sport. Yet this is the man who for his sport and in his revenge once burned the standing corn of a whole valley and more than once went on slaying Philistines till he was weary. True, Samson as a patriotic Israelite views these people as enemies. Yet, it was among them that he first sought a wife and afterwards pleasure. And now, if he decided to die that he may kill a thousand at once, is the self-chosen death less an act of suicide? If this was truly a fine act of self-sacrifice what good came of it? We do not find that this dreadful deed reconciled the Philistines to Israel or moved them to belief in Jehovah. On the contrary these Philistines show more deadly antagonism. . . ."*

This appraisal of the doing that ended Samson's career on earth is wrong. It proceeds from an unwillingness to let the Scriptures speak. Let us set forth this final scene of Samson's history in its true light.

If this scene is to be understood, regard must be had firstly to the doing of the Philistines, to the great sin that their treatment of Samson involved them. The Philistines were no innocent offenders. Samson was the servant of God, raised up for the deliverance of Israel. Such was the speech that rose from his great strength and triumphs over the Philistines. This speech God had also put in their hearts so that they knew Samson to be the outstretched arm of Jehovah; thus knew that in fighting Samson, they were fighting God. In their moral opposition to Israel's God, the Philistines were no innocent offenders. They knew God already through that general revelation to which Paul has reference when he says, *"Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them; for the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse. . . ."* Rom. 1:19, 20. The Philistines especially were without excuse as were all the nations that dwelt on Israel's borders. For that which may be known of God through Israel, through Israel's glorious history, Israel's laws and institutions, was also manifested in them, namely, God's power and Godhead to be sure, but also His righteousness and holiness, His abhorance of sin and love of the righteous and righteousness. What might be known of God through Samson, through his prodigious strength and achievements on the field of battle was manifest in them. The Philistines knew God, knew that the Jehovah of the Hebrews was *the* God of all the earth. But though they knew God, they glorified Him not as God but they changed His glory into an image made like to corruptible creature—their god Dagon. And *"the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand. And when the people say him, they praised their god: for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us."* Now we can say with the liberal interpreter, quoted above, that this *"idolatry is their religion which they cannot choose but exercise for they know no better,"* but to say this is to contend that the Philistines were excusable, is thus to set aside the testimony of God, who alone knows the human heart,—the testimony to the effect that they were *without excuse* in that they knew God. Also the motive of their vile doing is set before us in the Scriptures. They did not like to retain God in their knowledge (Rom. 1:28), the reason being that they hated God. This is Scripture's answer to the question of the motive of all idolatry. The Philistines hated God consciously and with fierce determination, the reason being that He had revealed His wrath against their ungodliness and

unrighteousness in particular through the agency of His servant Samson. There was no denying that the blows that he had dealt them were the strokes of Israel's God. The evidence was too plain. But they repented not but were angry with God. Could they have gotten *Him* in their power, they would have bored out His eyes and made Him grind in their prison house. What they would do to God, they did to Samson, yet also to God for Samson was God's servant. Then, with Samson eyeless, fettered with iron, and turning a mill in their prison, they celebrated a great feast and gave glory to their idol. The celebration was attended by all their tribes and princes. Their impudence reached its acme when they brought in Samson that he might make sport for them. It was on this feast of thanksgiving and sacrifice that they filled their measure of iniquity. It was on this feast that their defiance of God attained complete and full expression. Thus they were ripe for judgment and God destroyed them through the agency of Samson.

But there is this question: Did Samson do well? Assuredly he did well. His slaying the Philistines on this occasion was a good work. The Lord had commanded him. This command was implicit in his calling according to which he must begin to deliver God's people through making war against the Philistines. From the moment of his sending, through all the years of his judgeship, he had sought occasion. It was of the Lord that he did so. And what he had sought, he found over and over. The Philistines offended, trespassed against him repeatedly, as we have seen. The treatment they now had afforded him was atrocious. They bored out his two eyes. They bound him with fetters of brass. They made him grind in their prison. And on their great feast they heaped upon him their mockeries and maledictions. If ever they had given him occasion, it was now. His duty was clear. It was clear to him. The foe must be assailed be it at the cost of his own life. It was in that conviction that he prayed, "Lord, O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes." He knew that his prayer was being answered for even as he prayed he took hold of the two pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left. He must now die. God so willed. This he knew. And he was willing and ready. "Let my soul die with the Philistines." These were his last words. And the Philistines heard, as they had also heard him cry unto his God. That was a meaningful cry. It set forth God as the source of his strength. It set forth his faith in God. How earnestly he cried. How unworthy and ill-deserving he felt himself to be. "Lord God only this once, O God." Plainly, he had endured the chastening of the Lord, had humbled himself under the mighty

hand of God. He was also now exalted. The Lord did remember him and gave him strength. "And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life." It was a good work that Samson here performed. For it was a work that was done in obedience to God's command, under the impulse of faith and to God's glory. His praying for strength in order that he might be avenged at once of his two eyes does not militate against the above appraisal of this work. The deceased saints in heaven pray an identical prayer. "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth." Rev. 6:10.

G. M. O.

The Doctrine of the Early Church

The Holy Scriptures and the Canon.

The word *Canon* in this connection denotes the infallibly inspired writings in distinction from the productions of the church teachers and from the numerous apocryphal works—gospels, Acts, and epistles—that were composed in the first four centuries. The apocrypha were fictitious stories designed either to fill the gaps of the history of Jesus and the apostles or to glorify Christianity. From among all these spurious writings the church had to draw its New Testament Canon. For this task the church was qualified by Christ Spirit.

The Old Testament Canon. This Canon came to the Christian church from the church of the Old Dispensation as sanctioned by Christ Himself and His apostles.

The New Testament Canon. This was formed gradually during the first four centuries. Traces of it appear already in the second epistle of Peter (3:15), where reference is made to a collection of Paul's epistles. The passage reads, "Even as our beloved Paul. . . hath written you, as also in his epistles speaking of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures." Here Paul's epistles are placed alongside of "other scriptures". By circa 350 the church must have become unanimous as to the number of canonical books. On the council of Laodicea 363 the Eastern church named all the books of our New Testament with the exception of the Apocalypse. Of two African synods, held in 393 at Hippo, and 397 at Carthage, the Western church declared these same books, including

the Apocalypse to be the Holy Scriptures and the New Testament canon was closed.

In exegeting the scriptures the fathers had no scientific method, observed no formal set of rules. Such a theory of exegesis still had to be worked out. Much of the interpretation was allegorical and mystical fanciful and vague, ungrammatical and unhistorical. Origin discovered in the Scriptures a three-fold sense; literal or historical, moral and spiritual. This he laid down as a formal theory of interpretation. As a result of this lack of scientific method, interpretations differed. But this difference pertains to details. When it came to the most important articles of faith the Scriptures spoke but one language to all. These articles formed *their* rule of faith, analogia fidei; and they used it as a working principle in their interpretation of the Scriptures.

"The rule of faith" of the fathers. It was the common faith of the church. It had not been derived by exegetical labor directly from the scriptures. It had come to the fathers from Christ and His apostles as orally handed down in the unbroken succession of bishops, and as living in the original apostolic churches, such as those of Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, and Rome. It is with this tradition that the fathers would encounter the heretics. It is a fact that at first the church lived by this tradition rather than by the Scriptures. But there could be objection to this. For this tradition must have been derived from the preaching of the apostles and thus was in substantial agreement with the Scriptures. As the Acts and the epistles indicate the apostles were much engaged in the exposition of the truth contained in their writings. The substance of this exposition was handed down by the church from one generation to the other as a compend of her faith, and it became a symbolum, that is, the badge of Christianity in distinction from unbelief and heresy. It means that the prophets and the apostles, taken now collectively, gave to the church not only the Scriptures but beside them also the substance of her creed, of her formulas of faith in which she expresses what she believes to be the truth of God's Word.

Now the key-note of this apostolic tradition is the Confession of Peter and the baptismal formula furnished its trinitarian framework. The confession of Peter reads, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Matt. 16:16. The baptismal formula reads, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Matt. 28:19. This apostolic tradition is known as the "Apostles Creed".

The apostolic Creed. This creed in its present form is not of the apostles. It is post-apostolic. But its substance is of the apostles. In its present shape it is the expression of the faith of the Anti-Nicene church. The order of the truth which it sets forth is the order

in which these truths were revealed in history. It begins with creation and ends with the resurrection and life everlasting. The heart of it is the articles of faith in Christ. It sets forth only fundamental truths and is characterized by brevity, simplicity and comprehensiveness. The apostolic creed underwent a gradual growth. This is indicated by the variations of the apostle's creed. There were in existence several such creeds; and they differ not in substance but as to the form of their words. It is the Roman symbol of the third or fourth century that bears the honored name of the *Apostolic Creed*.

God and the Creation. Almost all the creeds of the first centuries begin with a confession of faith of God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, visible and invisible. The church maintained the unity of God and opposed this doctrine to the polytheism of the heathen. The fathers rejected the pagan and gnostic view according to which matter as God is uncreated and eternal. They taught that God created the world including matter by His almighty word.

Man and the Fall. It was the faith of the primitive church that God created man in His own image, in true knowledge, righteousness and holiness, and that man fell by his own fault as tempted by satan. But the depth of man's sin and misery, the nature of sin and the consequences of the fall were not deeply thought into before the Pelagian controversy.

The Doctrine of the Origin of the Soul. There was the "Traducianism" of Tertullian according to which soul and body comes from the parents. The Eastern fathers held to the theory of "creationism". According to this theory, the body only is derived from the parents by process of generation; the soul comes from God directly, and is corrupted by its contact with the body. There was also a third theory taught by Origin and bearing the name pre-existence. It teaches that God created the soul of every human being in the beginning.

The Will of Man. The Eastern fathers taught that fallen man is morally free and can thus will to do the good as well as he can will to do the evil. They thought that only on the ground of this conception could it be maintained that man is accountable. Man's volitional power to will the good was weakened by the fall but not destroyed. This view formed a very essential element in the doctrinal system of Origin. The fathers did not distinguish between moral, psychological, and metaphysical freedom of the will of man. On the other hand, they also upheld the Pauline doctrine of the imputation of Adam's guilt unto all mankind and the propagation of his spiritual death unto all by generation.

The Divinity of Christ. From the very beginning the Christian church stood unshakably firm in her belief that Christ is all that the Scriptures claim Him

to be, to wit both very God and real righteous man in one person, the true Messiah and the Saviour of His people through His atonement. Upon this doctrine of Christ the minds and hearts of God's people of the anti-Nicene period were concentrated. This doctrine was asserted by the fathers in their controversy with heresy; it attained expression in the worship of the church, in her prayers, doxologies and hymns of praise. But it took the church three centuries to produce a logical exposition and formulary of this doctrine and of the doctrines related to it. In the attempt of sanctified reason of the church to know these great mysteries conceptionally mistakes were made. The modes of thought were often inaccurate and crude. But this was to be expected. In their discourses on the divinity and humanity of Christ, the apostolic fathers held themselves to Biblical statements. The first church father to make a serious attempt at development of the Christology of the Scriptures was Justin Martyr. This development received its first great impetus, was greatly accelerated by the heretical mode of conception of the heretic Arius. The true doctrine triumphed in the Council of Nicaea and (325) was confirmed in the council of Constantinople, 381.

In the Christological doctrine there are involved three elements of truth: 1) the divine nature of Christ; 2) the human nature of Christ; 3) the personality in Christ and its relation to the two natures.

The Essential Divinity of Christ. It had to be asserted against the Monarchians and the Ebionists who saw in Christ only a second Moses and against the gnostics who placed Christ in a class with the aeons of their ideal world. At the beginning of the third century—circa 200—there were three Christologies contesting in Rome: 1) The Monalistic Monarchian also known as Patripassian and Cebellianism; 2) The Dynamic Monarchian; 3) The logos Christology. It was the last-named that triumphed in the council of Nicaea, 325. The Modalistic and Dynamic Monarchians had this in common. Both asserted that God is only, that He is God and none else, that beside Him there is no other God, but they stressed this to the exclusion of the tripersonality in the Godhead. Both refused to distinguish in the one and indivisible essence of God three hypostases or persons. They could not see in the trinitarian conception ought else but an assertion of tritheism. Thus their assertion that God is one and only amounted to an affirmation to the effect that He is numerically one in essence but also in personality. They were therefore given the name of "Monarchians", one principle. But there was also a difference between the two classes of Monarchians. The Dynamic Monarchians denied the essential divinity of Christ. The Modalistic Monarchians asserted the essential divinity of Christ.

G. M. O.

Welgelukzalige Woning

(Psalm 84; Tweede Deel)

We waren gekomen tot aan het zesde vers in onze vorige bespreking aangaande dezen psalm. Daar staat: "Welgelukzalig is de mensch wiens sterkte in U is, in welker hart de gebaande wegen zijn."

Een vers zooals dit doet ons hart van vreugde opspringen. Wat luidt dat anders dan het geschreeuw der kerk van vandaag! Let er op: al onze sterkte is in God. En zulk een mensch wordt welgelukzalig geheeten. In zulke harten zijn de gebaande (opgaande) wegen. Ja, al onze sterkte is in God. Ook voor het natuurlijke leven. Gisteravond las ik de tirade van Channing (een Unitarische leider van naam) tegen het Calvinisme. Hij ergerde zich, zeide hij, aan de Calvinistische leer, welke alles wil terugleiden tot een almachtige God die letterlijk alles besloten heeft van den beginne, zoodat er niets over gebleven is voor ons menschen om voor onszelf te besluiten. Zoo, zegt hij, blijft er geen verantwoordelijkheid over voor het schepsel. Doch, zegt hij, men kan het overal zien en hooren, dat de Calvinisten zich gaan schamen voor hun leer. Overal worden de lijnen verzacht en de schrille kleuren verdoezeld. Het schrikkelijke en afzichtelijke van het Calvinisme zit niet in de menschen, doch in een doode leerstelling, die met grooten spoed aan 't verdwijnen is. En, denkt er aan, dit schreef hij in de vorige eeuw. Die man had op de Kalamazooische Synode moeten zijn. Wat zou hij gelachen hebben!

Dwars tegen dien man, die Synode en alle mensche-lijke geknoei staat de mooie tekst: Welgelukzalig is de mensch wiens sterkte in U is. Het bedoelt zeker eerst, dat de kracht om naar Sion te verlangen en naar Sion te treden in God is. En terecht. Het klopt met de rest van de Heilige Schrift die altijd, overal en in verband met alles er nadruk op legt, dat God het is die alleen Sion bouwt. Als Sion straks geopenbaard zal worden in al zijn schoonheid, dan zal men het zien, dat het denken, het willen en het streven om Sion te maken wat het is compleet Gods werk was.

Evenwel moeten we wel verstaan, dat ge de tekst ook nog verder moogt toepassen. Niet alleen de kracht om Sion te lieven en te bouwen is uit God: alle doen en streven, op allerlei gebied is uit God. En Channing gevoelt het diep vernederende van dit leerstuk voor den in de zonde gevallen mensch. Het grieft de Engelen Gods niet om te weten, dat de Almachtige en alomtegenwoordige God hen onderhoudt, bestuurt en onveranderlijk leidt naar Zijn eeuwig raadsplan. Daar hebben die Engelen schik van. Als een klein kindje door Moeder onder de armen genomen wordt en zachtkens geleid, dan kraait het van genot. Als Paulus het ons toeroept, dat wij in God zijn en door Hem gedragen

worden, zoodat wij ons in God bewegen, dan trilt zijn ziel van ongekende blijdschap. Doch, ja, als men God haat, dan is zulk een leer verschrikkelijk. Wie wil door zijn hater omarmd? Doch die God liefheeft zegt: Het is mij goed nabij God te wezen. Nader, steeds nader! Zoo werkt de liefde.

De tweede clausule verklaart de eerste. Al onze sterkte is in God, want Hij heeft ons de gebaande wegen in het hart gegeven. Het hart is de mensch in zijn diepste wezen. Zooals Uw hart is zoo zijt gij. Want vanuit het hart zijn de uitgangen van ons leven. De eerste roerselen van gedachte en motief komen op uit het hart. Welnu, in dat hart geeft God de gebaande wegen. Eigenlijk staat er: de opgaande trappen! Historisch ziet dat op de opgangen naar de tempel, of zelfs op de opgangen van den berg Sions. Als men vanuit de landpalen van Israel naar Sion wilde gaan, dan moest men bergopwaarts. Sion was gebouwd op de glooiingen van den berg naar dien naam genoemd.

En die gebaande weg naar Sion, die bergbeklimming van den Sioniet is in onze harten. Wat schoone gedachte!

Denkt er eerst aan, dat er, voorzoover het den mensch aangaat, geen opgang naar de hoogte is, doch een neergang naar de hel. In het hart van den onwedergeborene is de neergang naar de buitenste duisternis. Men heeft de hel nu al in 't hart. Daarom is de natuurlijke mensch dan ook zoo diep ongelukkig. Zelfs in zijn lachen zal hij smart hebben, zegt Salomo.

Denkt er, tweedens, aan, dat Jezus de gebaande weg naar boven is. Hij heeft een weg, *de* weg naar het hart van God gebaad door Zijn nederige geboorte, bitter lijden, kruisdood, begrafenis en opstanding met de opgangen naar de hoogte vanaf den berg der Olijven! Daarom zeide Hij: Ik ben de Weg. . . .

Derdens, die Jezus wordt U geschonken in het diepe hart, met Uw persoon vereend in de mystieke unie van het verbondsleven. Zoo wonderlijk intiem zijn Uw hart en onze Heere Jezus Christus, dat Paulus zegt: Ik leef, doch niet meer ik, Christus Jezus leeft in mij.

En dat is nu de beteekenis van die woorden in mijn psalm: in wiens hart de gebaande wegen zijn. En zoo verstaat ge het ook, dat al zijn kracht in God is. Al zijn kracht om naar God toe te gaan, vanuit de hel tot in den hemel is in God. Dat heeft God bewezen toen Hij Jezus uit de dooden opwekte.

Verstaan we het nu, waarom dien mensch welgelukzalig geheeten wordt? Ben ik niet duizendmaal zalig als Jezus in mij woont? Ja, zeker, want dan moet ik naar den boezem des Vaders. Daarnaar hijgt mijn hart.

Voorts gaat het goed met zulk een mensch.

Somtijds loopt het pad naar den hemel door het dal der moerbeziënboomen. In de Engelsche Bijbel staat er "the valley of Baca". Sommigen denken, dat

dit Baca van Bochim afgeleid is: een vallei der tranen. Hoe het ook zij, dit dal heeft een funeste beteekenis. Dit zagen ook de psalmberijmers. Die spreken, of liever, die zingen van het steken der middagzon in 't moerbijdal.

De gedachte is, dat zelfs al moet de Sioniet door het dal der schaduwe des doods, dan zal hij nog geen kwaad vreezen. Want hij stelt zijn God daar tot een fontein. Ook zal de regen hen gansch rijkelijk overdekken. Dat dit zoo is leiden wij af van de grondgedachte van het dal. De berg is de idee van den hemel; de vallei is de idee van de hel. Op den berg schijnt de eeuwige zon; in het dal zijn de bange schaduwen. De schaduwen des eeuwigen doods.

Zoo gaat het leger van God voort van kracht tot kracht. Dit beteekent hetzelfde als wanneer Paulus zegt, dat zijn Evangelie een reuke is des levens ten leven. Het ziet op den groei van Gods volk. Vergelijk Uw leven als kind van God zooals ge tien, twintig jaren verleden tegen de dingen aanzag en nu. En ge zult het meezingen: Ze gaan van kracht tot kracht steeds voort.

En het einde is de hemel daarboven bij God. Elk hunner zal verschijnen voor God in Sion.

En dat is de hemel.

Zalig zijn de reinen van hart want zij zullen God *zien*. Daar hebt ge het bewijs. God te mogen aanschouwen, niet meer in en door die duistere spiegel zooals nu, doch aangezicht tot aangezicht, dat is de hemel der hemelen.

In die gestalte wil de Sioniet voor God staan. Luistert, hij bidt: Heere, God der heirscharen, hoor mijn gebed; neem ter oore, God Jakobs. Sela. O God, ons schuld, zie en aanschouw het aangezicht Uws Gezalfden!

Wat een schoon bidden!

Zooeven sprak ik van Jezus. Dat moet gedurig: hier ook. O ja, David was historisch de gezalfde des Heeren. Doch slechts als een zwakke schaduw. Jezus Christus is de Gezalfde bij uitnemendheid. En dan niet zóó bedoeld, dat onder alle gezalfden des Heeren Hij de eerste, de voornaamste is. O neen. Hij is de Eenige Gezalfde. Er is geen gezalfde dan Hij alleen. Als gij andere zalving ziet en menschenkinderen die gezalfden heeten, dan moet ge er aan denken, dat zij *Zijn* zalving deelachting zijn.

Zoo ook hier. (Het is Jezus die in dezen profeet van Psalm 84 bidt. En in de volheid des tijds zal Jezus vaak dezen psalm gebeden hebben. Het past zoo op Hem. Vooral toen Hij op het einde kwam van Zijn bitter lijden. Toen het moerbeziëndal al donkerder en donkerder werd en de schaduwen al langer werden tot de eeuwigheid toe. Toen heeft Hij gebeen: O God! zie toch en aanschouw het Aangezicht van Uw Gezalfde! Want Ik bemerk dat Gij Mij aan het verlaten zijt.

En een klein, O zoo klein gevoelen wij ook bij tijden

en oogenblikken. En dan smeecken we God om Zijn nabijheid. En Hij hoort altoos.

Ook is er nooit iemand geweest die zóó geheel en al de volgende verzen kon bidden als Jezus dat deed. Eén dag in Uw voorhoven is beter dan duizend! Wat kracht van begeeren naar Sion's top, naar Gods woning, naar Gods hart! Liever dorpelwachter, dan gewend aan d' ijdele vreugd in 's boozen tent! Als er ooit iemand geweest is die gaarne naar de kerk ging, dan was het Jezus. Zelfs toen men in Nazareth ellendige slappe kost op den kansel had, was het de gewoonte van Jezus om op den Sabbat naar de synagoge te gaan. Hoeveel ijdele woorden heeft Hij daar moeten hooren! En toch was Hij liever een dorpelwachter in Zijns Vaders Huis, dan te wonen onder de spotters.

Iets ervan woont in U, mijn broeder. Daarom noemen we U welgelukzalig!

En Jezus wil gaarne bij God in Sion wonen, omdat God een zoon en schild is, omdat Hij genade en eere zal geven en het goede niet zal onthouden hem die in oprechtheid wandelt.

God is een zoon. Wel, de sprake van de zoon is duidelijk. Er zijn menschen die verdrietig worden als ze de zoon voor een paar dagen niet zien. Daar zit symboliek in. De zoon verwarmt, koestert, bestraalt met haar licht, maakt vruchtbaar, rijpt, doet zwellen van rijkdom der vruchten.

En zoo doet God met U, mijn zuster!

Hij is ook schild, uw schild. Als de duivel zijn vurige pijlen op U wil afschieten dan is God het schild van Zijn volk. Die pijlen kunnen ons nimmer dooden. En dat is vanwege de kracht Gods die door en in ons werkt tot de zaligheid. En die kracht Godes is het geloof.

Hij zal U allen die God vreest genade en eere geven. Genade is liefelijke schoonheid. Sion is schoon, zeiden we. Welnu, de Sioniet wordt schoon als Sion.

Ik heb hooren zingen van 't zilverwit en 't goud, dat op haar vederen zit bij 't licht der zonnestralen.

Dat schitteren en stralen van Uw verhemelscht aangezicht is de glimlach Gods, die als een Zon zijn kind belonkt. Dat is de hemel.

G. V.

OFFICIAL NOTICE

The Ministers' Conference of Classis East will meet on Tuesday, July 10, at 9:30 A. M., in Fuller Ave. Protestant Reformed Church, the Lord willing.

PROGRAM:—

"Supra and Infra in Bavinck and Kuyper" — Rev. Geo. Lubbers.

"The Old and New Covenant" — Rev. G. M. Ophoff.

Our Sixth Synod

Our Synod of 1945 is a matter of the past again. The details of its decisions are recorded in the minutes, and presently when the Acts are published our people will be able to read about the work which Synod performed. This article is merely meant as a brief report mentioning some of the most important decisions. I have not in my possession the minutes, hence, will be unable to quote decisions or enter into a number of details. On the other hand I do believe that our reading public is not first of all interested in a host of details but prefers a brief survey of what took place. Let the kind reader keep in mind that this report is somewhat subjective in coloring.

The customary pre-synodical service was held in the First Protestant Reformed Church on the evening of June 5. Rev. A. Cammenga, president of the previous Synod, based his sermon on I Cor. 3:9: "For we are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." Indeed a fitting text for the occasion and a sermon which struck the key-note for our synodical deliberations. This sermon will be published in the Acts and if you procure a copy you will be able to read it in its entirety.

On Wednesday morning, June 6, Rev. A. Cammenga called the meeting of the Synod to order and opened with prayer and the reading of Scripture. The "address" spoken of in article 7 of our synodical rules of order was omitted. The president pro-tem presided over the acceptance of the credentials and the election of officers. As president of Synod was elected Rev. R. Veldman. After the election of officers the members of Synod rose and listened to the reading of the Public Declaration by the newly elected president. Synod now could formally start to function.

The first thing done at this time is to appoint a committee for Advisory Committees. This committee later reported and as a result three committees of pre-advice were appointed. In this connection I would like to suggest that in the future the work of these committees be a little more equally divided. It is quite out of proportion if one committee is finished by three o'clock in the afternoon while another committee has to work till eleven o'clock at night. This may be partly due to the constituencies of the committees but this can not very well be the sole cause.

By Thursday morning these committees of pre-advice were all ready with their work and could report to Synod and give their advice. It is not at all my intention to report on every detail. Due to the nature of the meeting there are always a number of reports which are handed in by standing committees, such as Mission Committee, Theological School Committee etc., and these committees hand in their reports to the com-

mittee of pre-advice which in turn brings these matters before the gathering of Synod. Most of these routine reports we will not bring in discussion in this article. The method of working with committees of pre-advice is of course a systematic and, usually, time-saving way of doing things.

One of the most important matters before Synod was our relation to the Reformed Church of U. S. At various occasions we have heard and read of these brethren, most of them living in South Dakota. Last year a conference was held between some of our men and a number of officebearers of the above mentioned church. We have all read about this in the Standard Bearer and in Concordia. However, at our Synod there were two of these brethren, Rev. W. Krieger and Rev. W. Korn, which honored us with their presence. There also was a communication from the Reformed Church of U. S. proposing closer contact and fellowship with our churches. In this connection the Synodical Committee also advised Synod to seek closer fellowship with the above mentioned churches. After some deliberation, and after we had also heard a brief address by Rev. Krieger and after some light was shed on their communication by Rev. Korn, our Synod decided to appoint a committee whose task it is to study the confessional standards of the Reformed Church of U. S. in order to come to a closer ecclesiastical intercourse. From both sides it was felt that we should first be better acquainted with each other before we can make further commitments which would have as its immediate goal to recognize each other as sister churches.—What will be the outcome of all this we do not know, but we have at least taken a first step to come a little closer together. In the Holland we say: "Onbekend maakt onbemind." Let's hope that: "Goed bekend maakt bemind."—In this connection I might also mention that at the request of the Reformed Church of U. S. and upon the advice of our Theological School Committee, Synod decided to admit their students to our Theological School provided such applicants furnish a testimonial of their consistory as to their life and walk. We hope to meet these brethren again and we would not be surprised that one or two of their young men will start their studies at our School beginning the next semester.

Synod also dealt with a lengthy report of the committee for Psalter revision. This committee has done good work thus far but is not yet finished. Synod decided to continue the committee and gave them a word of encouragement as to the work thus far accomplished. At some future Synod we expect to have a complete report, and after the material has been examined and scrutinized and adopted in its final form we will be ready to reprint a revised and improved Psalter. This committee has quite a task on its hands but after their work is finished they will have accomplished something

that is indeed worthwhile. Let's give them time, and if you can, you may find an opportunity to help them along with your suggestions. Of course you'll have to wait until you have examined their work thus far accomplished. I understand that their report will be published, most likely in the Standard Bearer. Here is a great field for preachers, poets, musicians.

Another important matter was discussed by Synod in connection with the compilation of our Protestant Reformed Church Order and all related material. We are greatly in need of a handy booklet which contains the church order proper, various decisions in connection with particular articles, by-laws, constitutions, forms, etc. As it is, much of this material is concealed in minute books and various Acts of Synod. The committee for this task of compilation had spent considerable time in preparing the above material for publication, but was not finished with its work. Some translations must still be made, references for various decisions have to be found, and different forms have to be scrutinized and if need be changed to be made Protestant Reformed and fit the need of our churches. Contrary to custom another committee was appointed to finish this work and report at next Synod. The brethren who have to tackle this problem still have quite a task on hand and must work themselves into the material from A to Z. However, the matter is in competent hands. Let's hope that by next year, after Synod will have examined and if need be revised all the compiled material, the much needed booklet can be published. That our churches are sorely in need of such a booklet can not be denied.

The report of our Mission Committee was not very encouraging or optimistic. Our churches still do not have a man in the field, and the opinion seemed to be quite general that in the line of missions, the expressed mandate of the church, we are not doing what could be done and what should be done. Synod instructed its mission committee to survey the matter of missions and report next year. Of course in the meantime the mission committee has a mandate as circumscribed by its constitution and need not wait with any definite action in the line of mission work till next year.

Synod also decided that the History of the Protestant Reformed Churches be reprinted and brought up to date. Naturally, this task was assigned to Rev. Hoeksema the author of the book. Rev. Hoeksema expressed willingness to also edit the added material. We believe this was a wise decision. The history of our church should not be lost to the coming generation, and it is also time to bring our history up to date.

We might mention that a committee was appointed for correspondence with the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands. What the specific mandate of this committee is and how they must go about their work, we do not know. Perhaps they will have to pick up

this historical line as it was interrupted by the war in 1940. At that time a committee for correspondence was appointed but of course they could not do any work due to the international conditions.

Subsidies for needy churches was granted as per request and as recommended by the Classes. What we need very much is an up to date form for requesting subsidy. In the second place I do believe that as a rule subsidies should be granted as recommended by the Classes but the Classis should diligently inquire about the needs of such needy churches as are in its territory. I do not dispute facts and figures as they were given but I am a little afraid that Classis 'recommends' with the idea in mind 'Synod has the final say', and that Synod 'decides' because Classis so 'recommends'. At any rate there is room here for improvement of method without embarrassing anyone or becoming penny-tight.

And this just about finishes my report which has become more lengthy than I anticipated.

During all our Synodical sessions a spirit of brotherly love and cooperation existed. The brethren did not make the task of the president a difficult one. And the president in turn presided over the meetings in a pleasant manner. Our competent secretary, Rev. C. Hanko, with his able assistant, Rev. M. Schipper, did a fine job in recording the minutes. And I understand the way they have planned the publication of the Acts there will be a definite improvement over the past, especially in arranging the material together under its proper heading instead of scattering it all through the book.

Next year D. V. Synod meets in Hull, Iowa. We would suggest that in the future the calling church when notifying the churches of the meeting of Synod always give the address of a lodging committee to which the delegates can send a card requesting lodging. We are taking too much for granted if we assume that everybody has lodging arranged before coming to Synod.

By Friday afternoon, about three o'clock, Synod was finished with its task. We enjoyed the fellowship of one another, both at Synod and at our home. We felt the tie that binds. And in spite of a shortage of 'points' in these days, the catering committees did an excellent job of feeding the hungry delegates.

And thus our Synod is history again. May the King of the Church bless the labor of Synod in as far as the work accomplished carried way His divine approval.

Rev. H. Hoeksema closed the final session of Synod with prayer and thanksgiving.

J. D. J.

20th ANNUAL FIELD DAY
July 4 — Ideal Park

Death In Its Various Phases

John Milton, in his "Paradise Lost", gives a vivid and terrifying description of Death and its origin. According to the poem Satan is searching his way out of hell to seek out the created world in order to tempt man. He makes his way to the "gates of Hell" and there he finds:

"On either side a formidable Shape;
The one seemed woman to the waist, and fair,
But ended foul in many a scaly fold,
Voluminous and vast, a serpent armed
With mortal sting: about her middle round
A cry of hell-hounds never ceasing barked
With wide Cerberean mouths full loud, and
rung
A hideous peal: yet, when they list, would
creep,
If aught disturbed their noise, into her womb,
And kennel there, yet there still barked and
howled
Within unseen. . . .

. . . .The other shape,
If shape it might be called, that shape had
none
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb,
Or substance might be called that shadow
seemed,
For each seemed either; black it stood as
night,
Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell,
And shook a dreadful dart; what seemed his
head
The likeness of a kingly crown had on."

When Satan and this last described "ghastly Terror" are about to fight, the first described figure steps between them and calls Satan her father and the other her son. She, "the protress of hell-gate", goes on to explain her statement. Satan is her father for she sprang from his head and is named Sin. She is also the mother of the other beast, by Satan. When she gave birth to this horrible creatures, she relates:

. . . . "I fled, and cried out 'Death';
Hell trembled at the hideous name, and sighed
From all her caves, and back resounded
'Death'!"

At the hearing of Satan's plan to tempt the human race:

. . . . "both seemed highly pleased, and death
Grinned horrible a ghastly smile, to hear
His famine should be filled," . . .

This imaginative and lurid description of death has, perhaps, never been excelled for utter horribleness. It epitomizes the terror of death that has bound men in fear of it since its entrance into this world. It personifies death as a beast, practically beyond description.

In Scripture too, we find that death is often personified as a terrifying figure. John sees in a vision: "And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him." Rev. 6:8. And again in Rev. 20:14: "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire." The thought of death, and death itself, has always excited man's worst fears. Mortals have ever endeavored to banish the thought of death from mind. The ancient Greeks considered death to be a twin brother of sleep and diligently tried to exclude all that is revolting from the idea of death. Throughout the ages the attempt has been made to overcome this fear of death. Today, too, death is beautified and adorned in an effort to forget its essential nature.

Scripture, the Book of Life, speaks of death throughout. It addresses itself to those who are in themselves dead, lying in the midst of death and travelling to death. It begins with death in Paradise. From then on we read, time and again on its pages: "and he died"; for it is appointed for man once to die. It closes with death: "the lake of fire", where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. Well may he, therefore, whose name is not written in "The Lamb's Book of Life" tremble at the thought and certainty of death.

Death is described with various terms and under many figures in Scripture. It is spoken of as a return to the earth, a regression to the dust: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return", Gen. 3:19, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it", Eccl. 12:7. According to other passages it is the withdrawing, or removal from us, of the breath of life: "Thou hidest thy face, They are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust", Ps. 104:29. In many passages death is figuratively pictured as a removal from the body; a being absent; a departure. In these descriptions the body of life is compared to a tent which death destroys: "Mine age is departed and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent: I have cut off like a weaver my life: he will cut me off with pining sickness: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me", Isa. 38:12; "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens", II Cor. 5:1; "Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing

that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me", II Pet. 1:13, 14. Then again death is compared to a tent: "These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep", John 11:11, 12, 13. Finally, it is said to be a departure, a going away: "Before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death;" Job 10:21; ". . . because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets", Eccl. 12:5.

The Scriptures also clearly indicate three phases of death: physical death, spiritual death, and eternal or second death. With physical death we are all acquainted and, therefore, need not quote many passages to confirm it. Ecclesiastes 9:10 gives us a rather striking and comprehensive characterization of physical death. We read there: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, wither thou goest."

Spiritual death is revealed to us most clearly in the New Testament and is definitely implied in the following passages: "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you", John 6:53; "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace", Rom. 8:6; "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins", Eph. 2:1; "But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth", I Tim. 5:6; "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death", James 1:15; "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren, He that loveth not his brother abideth in death", I John 3:14; "And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead", Rev. 3:1.

So, too, eternal or the second death, is also revealed to us in Holy Writ. "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting corruption", Dan. 12:2; "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell", Matt. 10:28; "Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels", Matt. 25:41; "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power", II Thess. 1:9; "These are wells without

water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever", II Pet. 2:17; "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death", Rev. 20:14; "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death", Rev. 21:8.

From these many quoted passages it would seem that the essential element in death is separation from God, the source of Life and all Good, while still in this life; therefore, a living death. Eternal or the second death, incorporates both the elements of physical and spiritual death, and is separation in the ultimate and eternal sense. Next time, the Lord willing, we hope to develop this thought a bit and will make an attempt to synthesize some of the passages here quoted.

W. H.

The Term "Soul" in The Old Testament

Very fitting it is for the Christian that occasionally his attention is called to terms found in the Scriptures which are more or less difficult for him to define and understand. Undoubtedly the term "soul" as it appears in Holy Writ is one which frequently causes some difficulty.

To determine the meaning of the term "soul" as it is found in the New Testament, we turn to the original Greek, and find that there the word *psuech* is generally employed to express what in English is called "soul". The word means "to breathe, blow", and refers in some instances to the "breath of life". (cf. Acts 20:10). Generally, the Greek word for soul is not translated by "life", but by "soul". The context must determine which of the two should be used.

The next question we must answer is: What does the term soul in the New Testament refer to according to different contexts wherein the term is employed?

It may refer to the life of man. So in Luke 12:19 the Rich Fool addresses his soul to eat, drink, and be merry. Then again the term may refer to the seat of the life and emotions of the rational-moral creature. So Jesus, in Matt. 10:28 warns against fearing those who are unable to kill the soul, but emphasizes one should fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Again, the term may refer to both the soul and the body. An interesting and note-worthy fact of the use of this meaning of the term is that Scripture then al-

ways employs a numeral with the term. So, for instance, in Acts 2:14 we read that three thousand souls were added to the church; that with Paul on the ship were two hundred seventy six souls; and that in the ark, few, that is eight souls were saved by water.

Generally, it may be said however that the term "Soul" in the New Testament refers to the inner seat of the life of the rational-moral creature. That reference to the soul which identifies it as a spiritual, invisible, mortal substance, gifted with volition and understanding. The soul is closely connected with what is called "the spirit" (*neuma*) and usually exists in connection with the body.

What, now, can we say of that soul? We defined it as a *substance*. This is true from what we said about the soul that it possessed understanding and volition. The soul can love and hate, may be glad and rejoice, but may also be cast down with grief. The basis for this conjecture is found in Matt. 26:39, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Mary says in Luke 1:46: "My soul doth magnify the Lord." There we notice too that the spirit is closely connected with the soul, since Mary adds, "My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."

That the soul is a substance we may conclude secondly, from the fact that after separation of soul and body, the soul either rejoices in heaven or is cast down in the despair of hell.

There are those who maintain that man has more than one soul. Fact is however, that upon the basis of Scripture (of Matt. 16:26, and I Cor. 6:20), man has but one soul, and that one soul being in the one body, determines the life of that body: (Acts 20:10; James 2:26). Were it true that man had more than one soul, we would necessarily have to maintain that also Christ, who became like unto us in all things except sin, had more than one soul also.

Now this *one* soul, given to our *individual* bodies, was created, or given existence by God. We notice from the account of God placing the breath of life in Adam, that where Adam as to His human frame was created out of *the dust of the earth*, God gave him his soul by *breathing the breath of life into him*. Immediately God formed Adam's soul.

It is not necessary here to discuss the origin of the individual soul of men at length. Let it suffice that we mention the spirit in a new-born babe comes not from the parents, but from God, to Whom it shall also again return.

In our discussion of the soul, especially as it is found in the New Testament, we must needs touch upon the question if or not the soul is immortal.

The question of the immortality of the soul is one frequently discussed and often answered incorrectly. We maintain that the soul is not *immortal*, but very *mortal* indeed. We are aware of the fact that the

spirit, or soul does return to God who made it, after physical death. Also it is true that Christ through the Holy Spirit went to preach the fact of His resurrection to the spirits in prison (I Pet. 3:19). But, this does not imply that the soul is immortal in so far as it continues to live on. Do not the Scriptures teach that to live apart from God is death? Is not death separation from God? Does not Christ warn us to fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell? Indeed, the soul does continue to exist, even in hell; but is that soul, and that presently "spiritual" body of the wicked not in hell under the touch of the wrath and condemnation of the Living God who is a consuming fire? That is death, death also for the soul of the wicked. Thus, we firmly maintain, rightly understood, the soul is mortal.

So much in general about the soul. Our subject, however, calls for a more particular explanation of the term "soul" in the *New Testament*.

We gather from the Old Testament, but also in an ever increasing measure from the New, that the soul is subject to dangers, subject to fear; (Acts 2:43) that the soul must be preserved (I Thess. 5:23), that it experiences opposition and is engaged in warfare and combat (I Pet. 2:11), that the soul is subject to destruction and can and must be saved (Heb. 10:39), since the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

The difference then, between the idea of the soul proper, in the Old and in the New Testament is this: The Old Testament saint, in consideration of his soul that it was subject to death, looked forward to the realization of the promise, that God would not leave his soul in hell, nor suffer His Holy One to see corruption. He looked forward to the Christ, who is centrally the subject of this confession of victory over hell and the grave. The New Testament Scriptures, however, glance backward, and with greater and fuller joy glory in Christ Jesus of whom Luke testifies in Acts 2:31 that His soul was not left in hell (Hades), neither did His flesh see corruption. Fulfilled was the promise of victory in the resurrection of Jesus.

But Jesus was not the victor over the grave as an individual. We know that when Jesus arose, we were raised with Him. We are not of them that shrink back unto perdition; but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul. Through Him we have the victory as to our soul and body.

Thus, our saved soul may have hope, may fight the good fight of faith, and we may rejoice in God our Saviour as did Mary of old. This is the beauty of the Scriptures, for while the Old Testament always pointed forward, by its types and shadows looking for better things to come; the New Testament assures us of the realization of all the promises of God. All things center around the Christ, Who is the Son of God and the first-born of every creature.

Since then, we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, having the whole of the revelation of God in the Scriptures, and the Spirit of the risen Lord within our hearts, let us believe too, that our sorry souls are saved from death and destruction in and through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ!

S. T. C.

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the Creston Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, hereby wishes to express its sympathy to our fellow elder, Mr. S. Kuiper, in the loss of his father,

JAMES KUIPERS

who passed away on May 28, 1945.

May the Lord comfort the bereaved family and grant them the assurance that he has entered into the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

The Consistory:

John De Jong, Pres.

P. Vanden Engel, Clerk.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 9, 1945 our beloved parents,

MR. ALBERT VAN TUINEN

and

Mrs. A. VAN TUNINEN (nee Bomers)

celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary.

Psalms 40:5—Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be remembered.

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Van Tuinen

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Van Tuinen

Bernice

Grand Rapids, Mich:

Raymond

20th ANNUAL FIELD DAY

Ideal Park — July 4

SPEAKERS - MUSIC - REFRESHMENTS

Games and Races for Children — Prizes.

Ballgames between single and married men.

Meet Old Friends — Make New Friends.

Come and enjoy one another's fellowship!
