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MEDITATION

Volkomen Zekerheid

De God nu aller genade, Die ons geroepen heeft tot Zijne eeuwige heerlijkheid, nadat wij een weinig tijds zullen geleden hebben, Dezelve volmake, bevestig, versterk en fondeere ulieden.

I Petr. 5:10.

Zekerheid ten einde toe!

Volkomen zekerheid, gegrond in Gods vaste en eeuwig zekere beloften, die den uitverkorene vreemdelingen vergezellen op geheel hunne pelgrimstocht naar Sion, dat boven is!

Hij *kan*, en *wil*, en *zal*, in nood,
Zelfs bij het naad'ren van den dood,
Volkomen uitkomst geven.

Dat is, in 't algemeen, de gedachte van dit slotwoord van den eersten brief van Petrus. En om ons daarvan te verzekeren, daarom komt dit Woord Gods tot ons. Opdat we ons er op zouden verlaten, en geheel en al er op vertrouwend den weg van Gods verbond zouden houden in en door het midden dezer tegenwoordige wereld, daarom eindigt deze rijke brief, gericht aan de "uitverkorene vreemdelingen," met deze alomvattende belofte.

Want eene belofte bedoelen deze woorden te zijn.

En als eene belofte van den God aller genade wil dit Woord Gods worden gehoord.

Niet slechts als een vrome wensch van Petrus.

Want immers, in de eerste plaats, ook al zou de vorm, waarin deze woorden in onze vertaling worden weergegeven, de juiste zijn, en we dus zouden moeten lezen: "De God aller genade *volmake, bevestig, versterk en fondeere* ulieden," zoodat we hier naar den vorm het met een wensch van den apostel zouden te

doen hebben, dan ware dit nog niet hetzelfde, als wanneer wij onze brieven besluiten met het bekende: "*Met heilbede.*" Ook dan immers hebben we hier nog altijd het Woord Gods, eene heilbede, niet van Petrus, maar van den Heiligen Geest; eene bede, die zekerlijk verhooring zal vinden. Maar bovendien is eene andere lezing van deze woorden verkieselijk, de lezing, namelijk, volgens dewelke ze den vorm van eene verzekering, van eene onwankelbare belofte hebben. Dan lezen we: "De God aller genade. . . *zal* u volmaken, *zal* u bevestigen, *zal* u versterken, *zal* u fondeeren.

En zoo verstaan, als zekere belofte, ons gegeven door den God aller genade, is dit woord een treffend en passend slot.

Passend slot bij dit laatste hoofdstuk, want daarin had de apostel geheel de gemeente nog eens vermaand om te wandelen waardiglijk der roeping Gods, die van boven is. Den ouderlingen had hij met allen ernst op het hart gedrukt, om de gemeente Gods te weiden, opzicht over Gods kudde hebbende, niet uit bedwang, maar gewilliglijk; noch om vuil gewin, maar met een volvaardig gemoed; noch als heerschappij hebbende over des Heeren erfdeel, maar als voorbeelden der kudde. Den jongen had hij tot onderdanigheid aange- maand, ja, tot onderdanigheid en ootmoedigheid tegenover elkander had hij geheel de gemeente aangespoord, daar God immers de hoovaardigen wederstaat, maar den nederigen genade geeft. En alzo wandelend mochten ze alle hunne bekommernissen op hunnen God werpen, vertrouwend, dat Hij voor hen zorgt, en "alle kwaad van hen weren of ten hunnen beste keeren" zou. Maar daarbij had hij hen herinnerd aan den altijd rondsluipenden vijand, den duivel, die rondgaat als een brieschenden leeuw, zoekende wien hij zou mogen brieschende leeuw, zoekende wien hij zou mogen te zijn, den vijand te wederstaan, en aan het lijden, dat ze in dezen strijd, met geheel hunne broederschap in de wereld, zouden hebben te volbrengen.

Welnu, hoe schoon, hoe gepast is bij dit alles dit slotwoord, deze belofte van den God aller genade: Hij zal u volmaken!

Passend ook is deze belofte, wanneer we haar beschouwen als het slotwoord van heel den brief. Want daarin toch had de apostel met grooten nadruk aan de "uitverkoren vreemdelingen" geschreven over de heerlijke, de onwankelbare hope, waartoe ze waren wedergeboren door de opstanding van Jezus Christus uit de dooden; maar ook over de met deze hope in onlosmakelijk verband staande roeping om hunnen wandel eerlijk te houden onder de heidenen. En ook, ja, vooral ook, had hij daarbij steeds weer nadruk gelegd op het feit, dat ze, alzoo wandelende, zouden moeten verwachten, dat ze zouden hebben te lijden om Christus' wil. Van eene zeer hittige verdrukking had hij gewaagd, die ophanden was. . . .

En keer op keer had hij hen vermaand, om toch vooral niet te lijden als kwaaddoeners, maar om het genade te rekenen, dat ze als weldoeners lijden mochten.

O, hoeveel behoefte hadden dan toch deze vreemdelingen en bijwoners, optrekkend naar Sions top, strijdend en worstelend, lijdend en verdrukt wordend, ja, nauwelijks zalig wordend; daarbij zelf zwak zich gevoelend, tot hinken en zinken altijd gereed, aan deze verzekering van den God aller genade: Hij zal u volmaken!

Als belofte wil dit Woord gehoord worden!

Als Gods deel in 't verbond!

Als Gods Ja en Amen, waarop we ons geheel en al mogen verlaten, dat we mee mogen nemen in de worsteling als onzen eenigen troost.

Als onwankelbare eed van Hem, Die nimmer liegt, om ons zekerheid te geven op den worstelweg naar Sion.

Zekerheid ten einde toe!

Hij zal u volmaken!

In dit eerste woord der reeks, waarin de inhoud dezer belofte ligt uitgedrukt, mogen we zeker wel de hoofdgedachte zien.

Want weliswaar worden hier vier verschillende termen aaneen geregen: volmaken, bevestigen, versterken, fondeeren; maar hiermede is nog niet gezegd, dat ze ook op gelijke waarde moeten worden geschat, dat ze op één lijn staan, dat er tusschen deze verschillende getachten niet een zeker verband moet worden ontdekt. Veeleer is de gedachte: Hij zal u volmaken *door* u te bevestigen, te versterken, te fondeeren.

Het woord, dat hier door *volmakers* is vertaald, wil eigenlijk zeggen: pasklaar maken, bereiden, toebereiden, toerusten. 't Is hetzelfde woord, dat voorkomt in het antwoord van den Heiland aan de Joodsche leiders, toen dezen met nijdigheid vervuld werden door het roepen der kinderkens in den tempel: "Ja; hebt gij nooit gelezen: Uit den mond der jonge kinderen en der zoogelingen hebt Gij U lof toebereid?" Matt. 21:16. Zoo ook in Hebreë 10:5: "Daarom, komende in de

wereld, zegt Hij: Slachtoffer en offerande Hebt Gij niet gewild, maar Gij hebt Mij het lichaam toebereid." En in het derde vers van het elfde hoofdstuk van dezen brief komt het woord nogmaals voor: "Door het geloof verstaan wij, dat de wereld door het woord Gods is toebereid." En ook in den brief aan de Romeinen wordt hetzelfde woord gebezigd, waar gesproken wordt van de vaten des toorns, die tot het verderf worden toebereid. Rom. 9:22.

Hij zal u volmaken!

Het woord ziet dus op een zekere taak, die volbracht moet worden, op een zekere positie, die we moeten innemen, op een zeker doel, dat we moeten bereiken. En de vraag is: welke taak, welk einde, welk doel?

Het uiteindelijke antwoord op deze vraag ligt in deze belofte zelve. Immers spreekt zij er van, dat de God aller genade ons geroepen heeft tot Zijne eeuwige heerlijkheid. Het ligt dus voor de hand, om deze belofte, dat God ons zal volmaken allereerst zoo te verstaan, dat Hij ons zal toebereiden, pasklaar maken, voor de eeuwige heerlijkheid. En die eeuwige heerlijkheid werd eerder in dezen brief beschreven als de onverderfelijke en onbevlekkelijke en onverwelkelijke erfenis, die in de hemelen voor ons bewaard wordt. Ze is de zaligheid, die bereid is om geopenbaard te worden in den laatsten tijd. Daartoe moeten we worden toebereid, in het algemeen reeds, omdat zonder de heiligmaking niemand den Heere zien zal, en omdat vleesch en bloed het koninkrijk Gods niet beërven kunnen; maar ook in zeer bijzonderen zin, omdat Jeruzalem, dat boven is, en dat straks uit den hemel van God afdalen zal, een schoon en harmonisch geheel is, waarin ieder der gezaligden op zijne eigene plaats den lof des Heeren zal verkondigen, en den rijkdom der genade in Christus Jezus zal doen uitstralen. Voor die eeuwige heerlijkheid in het algemeen, en voor onze eigene plaats in 't blij Jeruzalem zal de God aller genade ons pasklaar maken, toebereiden.

Dat is de belofte!

Niet alsof dit volmaken daarom niet meer zou inhouden. Immers is de weg niet van de eindbestemming, zijn de middelen niet van het doel, is de strijd niet van de overwinning los te maken.

En ook voor het bewandelen van dien weg, ook voor de worsteling en den strijd, ook voor het dragen van den last des lijdens, zal de God aller genade ons volmaken, toerusten, voorbereiden. Dag bij dag, van stap tot stap vergezelt deze belofte ons op weg naar Sion.

Immers herinnert deze belofte ons er nogmaals aan: "nadat wij een weinig (tijds) zullen geleden hebben." Dat is de weg. Het is een weg van worsteling, van waken en nuchteren zijn, van tegenstand bieden aan den duivel, die rondgaat als een brieschende leeuw, en daarom van lijden. En nu is dat lijden, hoe zwaar het ook op zichzelf beschouwd zijn mag, wel licht. Het is maar een weinig lijden (het wordeke tijds is er tus-

schen gevoegd door de vertalers). In vergelijking met de eeuwige heerlijkheid beteekent het eigenlijk niets. Het is niet te waardeeren tegen de heerlijkheid, die aan ons zal geopenbaard worden. Maar het is toch lijden, en uit het oogpunt van ons vleesch en van dezen tegenwoordigen tijd ook dikwijls moeilijk en zwaar, zoodat de rechtvaardige nauwelijks zalig wordt!

De poort is eng!

De weg is smal!

Het gaat ten slotte door de diepte naar boven, door lijden tot heerlijkheid, door den bangen dood tot in het eeuwige, heerlijke leven!

En nu vergezelt ons altijd en overal deze belofte!

Ook tot het gaan door de diepte zal Hij u volmaken! Ook tot het dragen van den last des lijdens zal Hij u bereiden! Ook voor den laatsten gang door de vallei der schaduw des doods zal Hij u toerusten!

Volmaken ten einde toe!

Hij zal dat doen door u te versterken, te bevestigen, te fondeeren!

Immers hebben we behoefte aan kracht, aan meer dan natuurlijke, aan meer dan gewoon menschelijke, aan geestelijke, aan Goddelijke kracht. Want wel worden we in en door Gods kracht bewaard tot de onverderfelijke en onbevlekkelijke en onverwelkelijke erfenis, tot de eindelijke zaligheid; maar toch is deze bewaring niet zoo, dat ze buiten ons omgaat, en dat we slapende naar den hemel gedragen worden. Neen, de weg is een weg van strijd, dien we moeten strijden, en waarin we niet mogen onderliggen; de weg is steil en moeilijk begaanbaar: hij gaat over scherpe rotsblokken en langs diepe ravijnen. En nu gaat Gods bewarende kracht dwars door ons heen. Hij bewaart ons, ja, maar dan zoo, dat wij al strijdend volharden ten einde toe!

Hij volmaakt ons, en rust ons toe voor den strijd, en voor de overwinning!

En daartoe zal Hij ons versterken, bevestigen, fundeeren!

Eigenlijk doen al deze termen denken aan onze betrekking tot Christus, die ons kracht geeft.

Hij toch is ons fundament, de grond van ons vertrouwen, de bron van al onze kracht. Zonder Hem zijn we niets, kunnen we niets doen. Staan we in eigen kracht, we gaan zekerlijk ten onder. Maar in Hem is al onze sterkte. Gefundeerd worden wil dan ook niets minder zeggen, dan dat we hoe langer zoo meer van onszelf leren afzien, hoe langer zoo minder van onszelf verwachten; om nu alleen op Christus te zien, op Hem alleen ons te verlaten, te bouwen en te vertrouwen, aan Hem alleen ons vast te klemmen in allen nood en dood. . . .

Hij zal dat doen!

En Hij doet dat door ons te bevestigen op dat fundament, hetwelk is Christus. Er is in ons geen stand-

geslinderd, als de baren der zee. Alleen in Christus is onze standvastigheid. Maar dan moeten ook op dat fundament bevestigd worden. In eigen kracht vermogen ook niet ons aan Christus vast te klemmen. Door het cement des geloofs moeten we op Christus worden bevestigd. Of, om een ander beeld te gebruiken, door den wortel des geloofs moeten we vast in Christus geplant zijn.

Hij zal ook dat doen!

En alzo zal Hij u versterken! Bevestigd op het fundament, hetwelk is Christus, de wortelen des geloofs diep en stevig in Hem geslagen, trekt ge uit Hem uwe kracht, om te staan en te strijden en te lijden en te volharden en te overwinnen. . . .

Hij doet ook dat. Want Hij zal u volmaken!

Ten einde toe!

Onwankelaar zekere belofte!

Hoort haar als belofte Gods. Verlaat u op haar in allen nood!

Hij *kan* en *wil* en *zal*!

Hij *kan*, want Hij is de God aller genade! En och, ge verstaat nu wel, dat dit niet wil zeggen, dat Hij de God is van gemeene en particuliere genade, maar in één woord, dat Hij de God der volkomene zaligheid is voor Zijn volk! De God aller genade. . . . dat houdt opeens alles in: de Bron is Hij en de Bewerker en de Gever van allen rijkdom der genade, van verlossing en verzoening, van vergeving en aanneming tot kinderen, van rechtvaardigmaking en geloof en liefde en hope en heiligmaking en reinigmaking en bewaring en volharding, van kennis en wijsheid en kracht. . . .

Hij *kan*!

En Hij *wil*!

Want immers, Hij is Dezelfde, Die u reeds geroepen heeft tot Zijne eeuwige heerlijkheid! Ook dat deed Hij door Zijn Geest en Woord! En daarin betoonde Hij u immers, dat Hij u heeft liefgehad van voor de grondlegging der wereld, en dat het Zijn eeuwige, onveranderlijke wil om u tot Zijne eeuwige heerlijkheid te leiden. En let daar nu nog even op: het is *Zijne* heerlijkheid, waartoe Hij u geroepen heeft. Dat wil zeggen, dat Hij u heeft verkoren om in Zijne heerlijkheid te deelen, Zijne eigene heerlijkheid, om die heerlijkheid van den aanbiddelijk heerlijken God tot in alle eeuwigheid te weerkaatsen en te loven en uit te jubelen. . . .

En aan die heerlijkheid mag straks, mag nimmer iets ontbreken!

Hij *wil*, want het gaat om Zijne heerlijkheid!

En Hij *zal*!

Want Hij heeft het beloofd!

Hij, Die niet liegen kan, bezweert ons hier als Zijn deel in 't verbond, dat Hij ons zal volmaken, bevestigen, versterken, fondeeren!

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EDITORIALS

The Liberated Churches In The Netherlands

As far as the doctrinal issue is concerned, the difference between the synodical churches (nicknamed "synodocratic" by the leaders of the secession) and the liberated churches centers around a question related to the historical realization of God's covenant, in connection with the closely related question as to the meaning of the sacraments, particularly that of baptism.

It does not concern the problem of the covenant as such. As we said before, this was never made an issue.

The controversy is concerned with the question: who are in the covenant as it is realized, and reveals itself in this world?

Or, stated more specifically, it revolves around the question concerning the relation of infants, children of believers, that are baptized, to the covenant of grace.

And this question is discussed in connection with a certain aspect of the meaning of the sacraments, especially that of baptism as it is administered to infants.

Is the covenant established with Abraham and all his seed, with believers and all their children, or is it established only with the elect? If the former, in what sense are all baptized children really in the covenant? If the latter, on what basis can baptism be administered to all the children of believers promiscuously? Do the sacraments presuppose and seal actually present grace in those to whom they are administered, or do they obsignate and seal the promise of God? If the former, the question arises again: how can the sacrament of baptism be administered to little children? If the latter, the question must be answered: if the promise is for all, how is it to be explained that it is not realized in all, and that many fall away when they come to years of discretion?

These are some of the questions that were in debate before the Synod of 1939-1942, which that Synod sought to answer by official decrees, because of which official declarations (made binding for all) the liberated churches separated, and that are now more widely and hotly discussed than before 1939.

Let us try to understand the difference between the two groups of churches.

We shall, for the sake of clear distinction, indicate the two groups by the names "synodical churches" and "liberated churches". We must remember, how-

ever, that this is not their official name. Both groups call themselves Reformed (Gereformeerde) Churches. For a while the group that seceded added in parentheses "liberated according to Art. 31 D. K. O." But at their first synod (Enschedé, Oct. 8, 1945) they decided to drop this addition, so that their official name is simply "Gereformeerde Kerken." However, in our discussion, we must somehow distinguish them, and, therefore, we shall denote them by the terms "synodical" and "liberated" churches.

Now, the synodical decisions of 1942 follow, in the main, the view of Dr. A. Kuyper, Sr. with respect to the baptism of infants.

This theologian, who in his day exerted a deep and widespread influence upon the life and doctrine of the Reformed churches in the Netherlands, approached the question concerning the validity and meaning of the baptism of infants from the aspect of the question concerning the sacraments. Sacraments, he argued, are signs and seals instituted by God in His Church for the strengthening of the faith of those to whom they are administered. They are means of grace, means whereby it pleases God to impart grace to His people through the Holy Spirit. It follows, then, that they presuppose faith in those that receive and partake of them. Unless, at the moment when the sacraments are administered, there is an operation of the Holy Spirit, through the sacraments, to strengthen the faith of the partaker, there is no sacrament; and unless there is faith in him that receives the sacrament, there is nothing to be strengthened; hence, seeing that sacraments seal and strengthen faith, actually existing, present grace, they can be administered only where this faith, or internal grace is present. Now, if the question is asked: how, then, can infant baptism ever be a real sacrament, seeing that the little children cannot as yet perform the act of faith? Dr. Kuyper answers that, even though they cannot perform the conscious act of faith, the *power* or *faculty* of faith, given with regeneration, may be in the smallest infant as well as in the adult. Now, if infants as well as adults are comprehended in the covenant of grace, as we believe, we may conclude that God regenerates them in their infancy, and as such, as regenerated children, "sanctified in Christ", they receive the sacrament of baptism, and the Holy Spirit applies it to them unto the sealing and strengthening of the work of grace already begun in them. In fact, according to Kuyper, through baptism little infants receive a very special kind of grace, which, it would seem, they cannot receive in any other way, although in just what this "baptismal grace" consists he does not succeed to make clear. Well, then, in this way it becomes very clear that infants as well as adults have a right to baptism, and that, when they are baptized, there is a very real administration of a very real sacrament. Infants are

baptized on the ground of their "supposed regeneration."

Now, the Synod of 1942 did not adopt this view in so many words, but they plainly favored it, and virtually made it official.

It is in this light that their declaration must be understood that "the seed of the covenant must be considered regenerated and sanctified in Christ until, as they grow up, the opposite appears." This *supposition* they read into the Baptism Form. When parents that present their children for baptism are asked, whether they acknowledge "that although our children are conceived in sin, and therefore are subject to all miseries, yea, to condemnation itself; yet that they are sanctified in Christ, and, therefore, as members of his Church ought to be baptized?" they understand by "sanctified in Christ" true, inward, spiritual holiness, regeneration, but apply this to *all* the children of believers as a *supposition*. The parents, answering this question, really declare that they *suppose* that their children, *all* the children of the Church are sanctified in Christ and members of the Church, and that on this *supposition* they present them for baptism. When the Church declares in the thanksgiving after baptism: "Almighty God and merciful Father, we thank and praise thee, that Thou hast forgiven us, and our children, all our sins, through the blood of thy beloved Son Jesus Christ, and received us through thy Holy Spirit as members of thine only begotten Son, and adopted us to be thy children, and sealed and confirmed the same unto us by holy baptism," they take these words in their real, spiritual sense, apply them to *all* the children of believers, but again base this entire thanksgiving on a *supposition*. We suppose that the children are sanctified in Christ, on this *supposition* we give thanks to God for their salvation as actually having been accomplished.

The covenant, they hold, is established only with the elect; but in baptism we suppose that all the children of believers are elect and regenerated.

Although the Synod of 1942 did not literally declare all this, we may safely say that this is, in the main, the view of the synodical churches.

This is corroborated by many statements in the "Prae-advies" and in the "Toelichting," as well as by arguments presented later in defense of the synodical declarations.

Moreover, the same view underlies the declaration of point 4: "The church must conceive and deal with the members that are admitted to the Lord's table, according to the same judgment of love," i. e. on the same *supposition*, that they are regenerated and sanctified in Christ.

And it is with this in mind that the Synod declared in its first point: "that the covenant of grace is of such fundamental significance for the life of faith that it

preaching as well as all other work of the Church must proceed from it"; i.e. preaching and all other work must proceed from the *supposition* that all the members of the church visible are regenerated and sanctified in Christ.

Now what, in opposition to this synodical view, do the liberated churches teach with regard to these matters?

They, too, just as their synodical opponents, want to declare something with respect to *all* the children of believers. This they have in common. Both are dealing with the question as to the state and position in the covenant of *all* baptized children. And also the liberated churches want to assert something concerning the salvation of *them all*. Only, they do not want to speak of *suppositions*. To this they are strongly opposed. Again and again, they object that by speaking of suppositions the very basis of assurance is removed upon which the children of the covenant may claim that God has indeed established His covenant with them, that He is their God, and that all the blessings of salvation are really theirs. Hence, they seek something positive, something objective, something that may be said about and to all the children of the covenant that is more than a supposition, that is, in fact, indubitably certain.

This positive, objectively certain ground they find in the promise of God.

The idea, the very essence of the covenant they find in the promise: "I will be your God." Notice that this is the Heynsian covenant theology.

That infants as well as adults are comprehended in the covenant of grace, therefore, means that theirs is the promise of the covenant. This promise is for *all* the children of believers. God, in His part of the covenant, promises to *all* that He establishes His eternal covenant of grace with them, adopts them as His children and heirs, incorporates them into Christ, gives them forgiveness of sins and eternal righteousness and life, that through His Holy Spirit He will dwell in them, apply unto them all they have in Christ, sanctify and preserve them, until they "shall finally be presented without spot or wrinkle among the assembly of the elect in life eternal."

Here is something objective, something everlastingly sure: the promise of God!

On the basis of this promise, all the children of believers that are baptized are *really* in the covenant. One does not deal in suppositions here but in certainties. It is on the basis of this certainty, that the promise is for all the children of believers, that they are baptized. Sacraments do not obsignate and seal internally present grace, but the promise of God. The sacrament of baptism is administered to infants, not on the ground of supposed regeneration, but upon the

command of God, and because theirs is the promise as well as for the adults.

But this promise dare never be separated from its condition or demand! *Gabe* and *Aufgabe* may not be divorced!

H. H.

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

Part Two.

Of Man's Redemption

LORD'S DAY XVII

3

The Power Of Christ's Resurrection (Cont.)

This the Catechism means when it speaks of "that righteousness which he had purchased for us by his death."

He paid the price for our righteousness, the price that was demanded by God's unchangeable justice applied to the guilty. That price was death. And the price must be *paid*, righteousness must be *purchased*. The suffering of death must be a voluntary act of love, just as sin is wanton rebellion and disobedience. And such an act of perfect obedience was the death of Christ. Hence, He purchased righteousness for us by His death. And the resurrection of our Lord is God's declaration that the price was paid in full, that He did, indeed, obtain righteousness for all His people.

And He arose in order that He might make us partakers of that righteousness.

The living Lord effects that change in us, whereby we lay hold upon the righteousness He obtained for us, and ourselves become righteous before God.

As we are, by nature, we *are not partakers* of the righteousness of Christ, and because we *are not*, we never could and never would lay hold upon that righteousness if Christ Himself did not fundamentally change us. We are dead in sin, perverse of heart, darkened in our understanding, rebellious of will, polluted and defiled in all our desires and inclinations. In that state we care not for righteousness, not even if it is freely offered us, if we can obtain it by just appropriating it unto ourselves. We do not want righteousness, we have no desire for it in our hearts, we do not seek it. Unrighteousness we love, and the way of unrighteousness we will pursue even though we are

quite well aware of the fact that it leads us to destruction, that the wages of sin is death. And even though the gospel of a free righteousness were preached to us by men all our life, and though a thousand preachers would warn us of our peril, and urge us to accept righteousness before it is too late, we would only despise and reject it. Christ, indeed, purchased righteousness for us, but there is no connection between that righteousness and us, nor is there any possibility that we, on our part, can establish such connection.

This situation, in all its seriousness, must be clearly understood and fully acknowledged in order to grasp the true implication of the language of the Catechism here: "he has overcome death, that he might make us partakers of that righteousness which he had purchased for us by his death."

None less than a living Lord, one that has overcome death, Who is the resurrection and the life, is able to make us partakers of His righteousness, to establish the living link between that righteousness and our soul, so to change us that, instead of hating and despising and rejecting righteousness, we seek it, desire it, and are able to lay hold upon it, and to appropriate it when it is bestowed upon us as a free gift.

And this change is effected in us by that marvellous gift of grace which the Holy Scriptures call faith, of which we treated more fully in connection with the twentieth question and answer of the Catechism.

Faith is the living bond between our soul and the Christ of the Scriptures, between the righteousness He purchased for us and our inmost heart. Faith is the spiritual power whereby our whole soul, with mind and will and all our desires, yearns for Christ and His righteousness, seeks Him, hungers and thirsts after His righteousness, cleaves to Him, knows Him as no faithless soul is able to know Him, wants Him as above all things precious, and appropriates Him and all His benefits. By the accomplishment of that change in us, by the bestowal of that spiritual gift of faith upon us, we become partakers of the righteousness which He purchased for us.

We are justified in Christ out of faith!

And this faith is the gift of the living Lord, Who overcame death.

He works it in us by His Spirit and by His own effectual calling through the preaching of the gospel.

This is not the proper place to elaborate upon this marvellous work of our living Lord. All we need to emphasize in this connection is that it is Christ, the living Lord, Who overcame death, that bestows this gift of grace upon us, and thus makes us partakers of the righteousness which He purchased for us by His death.

Partakers of His righteousness we are only by faith.

And faith presupposes a living Lord.

For, mark you well, we are not to look upon this faith as a gift that is once bestowed upon us, and that, ever after its first bestowal, we possess in ourselves, apart from Christ. On the contrary, it is a continuous gift, the fruit in us of the constant operation of the living Christ in us. It is the union of our soul with the living Lord.

Does the little electric bulb that sheds its light upon my typewriter and sheet of paper have light in itself? Will it retain its light if I cut the wire through which the living current of electricity flows into it? Do the branches of the vine have life, and can they bear fruit apart from the vine? No more do we have faith and righteousness, even for one moment, apart from the living Lord. Suppose that it were possible (which it is not) that, after we received the gift of faith by which we are made partakers of righteousness, the bond between Christ and our soul were cut, what would happen? That moment we would be dead in sin, in complete darkness, without righteousness before God. A constant current of faith-power flows into our soul from the living Christ, and thus He makes us partakers of His righteousness.

And thus we already entered upon a discussion of the second "profit" of the resurrection of Christ mentioned by the Heidelberg Catechism, namely, that "we are also by his power raised up to a new life."

That we should do so was inevitable.

We may distinguish the benefits of Christ's resurrection, we may enumerate them in a certain order, but they can never be separated. For fact is that by faith we become partakers of Christ Himself, and, therefore, of all His benefits. In reality, we do not receive the benefits of the resurrection of Christ piecemeal, in a certain consecutive order, so that we first become partakers of His righteousness, next of His life, and, finally, of His resurrection. On the contrary, we become partakers of Christ first, of the full Christ, of the living Lord in all His riches of salvation. With Him we are united by faith, with Him we become one plant, Him we appropriate. And having Him we have all. He is our redemption, our righteousness, our life, our deliverance, our sanctification, our eternal glory. Small wonder, then, that we cannot speak of any particular benefit we receive through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, without reminding ourselves that we are partaker of that individual blessing only because we possess the whole living Christ!

Yet, we may distinguish the blessings of salvation, both as they are objectively related, and as, subjectively, we receive them by the act of conscious faith.

And, considering the benefits of Christ's resurrection in this light, the Catechism presents them in the proper order when it mentions righteousness first

then the power of a new life, and, finally, our own glorious resurrection.

For, as stated before, righteousness, imputed righteousness, is first, and is basic for all the other blessings of salvation. Only on the basis of the former the latter can be bestowed, according to the justice of God.

But thus it is also before the consciousness of our faith. Fact is, of course, that actually we become partakers of the life of Christ first of all. When faith is bestowed upon us our soul is united with the living Lord. Faith is only the expression of our union with Him. And how could we be united with Him, without partaking of His resurrection life? And yet, paradoxical though it may seem, when thus we live, and faith becomes active in us, we find ourselves in the midst of death. It is when we begin to live in Christ that, before the consciousness of our faith, we die. And, what is more, when we thus begin to live by faith in Christ, we see and acknowledge that we have no right to life, that we are worthy of eternal condemnation and death. It is by faith that we come to the spiritual discovery that we have no righteousness, and that, therefore, we have no right to live. And thus, by that same faith, we are drawn to Christ as our only hope, we cast ourselves upon Him in our sin and death, and we receive and lay hold upon His righteousness.

And in the consciousness of that righteousness of Christ by faith, we have the unspeakably joyous assurance that we have the adoption unto children of God, and the right to eternal life.

Thus, objectively, as the basis of the right to live; and, subjectively, as to the order in which we receive the blessings of Christ's resurrection, righteousness is first.

But having understood and acknowledged that in ourselves we lie in the midst of death, and that through the righteousness we have in Christ by faith alone we are made worthy of eternal life, we also actually receive that life, i.e., we begin to live a new life, the life of Christ, before the consciousness of our faith. We are raised up to a new life by the power of the risen Lord.

The Scriptures frequently speak of this spiritual resurrection in fellowship with Christ. Our Lord spoke of this when He tabernacled among us in the days of His flesh: "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death into life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." John 5:21, 24, 25. The apostle Paul writes: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus

Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." Rom. 6:3-5. And in Eph. 2:4-6: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace are ye saved); And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." And he admonishes the Church: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

Unto this life we are raised by the power of the risen Lord.

And again, let us beware of presenting this matter as if Christ, in the moment of regeneration, bestows this life on us, raises us from our spiritual death, and that now we possess that life apart from Him. Not for one moment do we have life in separation from the living Lord. We live only because He lives. It is He that lives in us. We are raised in fellowship with Him only. It is in virtue of our fellowship with Him that we do live. By His Spirit and through His Word He calls us out of death into life; and by His Spirit and through His Word He continues to dwell in us, and to make us partakers of His resurrection life. For "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Gal. 2:20. That is the confession of him that is raised by the power of the risen Lord.

Hence, this life unto which we are raised in fellowship with the living Lord is resurrection life. It is life from the dead.

This means, to be sure, that it is the true life, the essence of which is the fellowship of friendship with the living God. It is life eternal. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." To know the living God, to enter into His secret fellowship, to be righteous as He is righteous, to be holy as He is holy, to taste the goodness and lovingkindness of the Lord, to love Him and be loved of Him, and in that most intimate communion to serve the living God, and have our delight in that service,—that is life. And to be called out of our natural death, darkness, corruption, enmity against God, in which we are children of wrath, neither worthy nor capable of dwelling in His house, into that life of most intimate fellowship with the God of our

salvation,—that is resurrection from the dead through Jesus Christ our living Lord.

But this means, too, that in no sense death has any more dominion over us. Christ is raised from the dead. Death has no more dominion over Him. He is beyond the very reach of death. And so are we in Him. This eternal life is intrinsically everlasting, exactly because it is the life of the Son of God, Who died and was raised again. Adam was created, to be sure, a living soul: he was, in the state of righteousness, not in the power of death; but he stood within death's reach. But the life unto which we are raised by the power of the risen Lord is everlasting: death cannot reach out for it. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life," John 3:36. "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." John 11:25, 26. To be translated out of the darkness of this mortal life, in which we are beset by death on every side, and in which the fear of death pursues us through all our living (Heb. 2:14), into the freedom from the fear of death, the glorious state of immortality,—that is resurrection from the dead. And unto this we are raised, even now, by the power of the living Lord.

It means, finally, that by this power of the risen Lord we are set in heavenly places with Christ, in principle. For the life unto which we are raised by the risen Lord is not of this earth earthy: it is from the Lord of heaven. It is heavenly. It is that knowledge of God which is obtained, not by looking into a glass, not by beholding a reflection of the adorable Lord of heaven and earth, but by seeing Him face to face, and by knowing Him, even as we are known. To be called into that likeness of our heavenly Lord, in virtue of which we put off the image of the earthy, and partake of the image of the heavenly,—that is resurrection from the dead. And, in principle, it is unto that resurrection life that we are raised by the power of the living Lord.

But for this very reason, this life unto which we are raised looks forward to the final resurrection. And the Catechism teaches us that "lastly, the resurrection of Christ is a sure pledge of our blessed resurrection."

This is not the place to explain this "blessed resurrection" in detail. This must wait until we discuss the article of the *Apostolicum* that speaks of the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting, explained in the twenty second Lord's Day. Now it is sufficient to call attention to the fact that the resurrection of Christ is a "sure pledge of our glorious resurrection." It is the ground and fountain of our hope.

For we are saved by hope. Being raised with the risen Lord, and having within us the beginning of the resurrection life, we are, nevertheless, still in

the flesh. And in the flesh we lie in the midst of death. We live, and we cannot die; yet we are encompassed by death on every side, and we must die. And, therefore, we do groan with all the groaning and suffering creation, waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of our body. And we groan, not without hope, but exactly in hope. And this hope is sure and well founded. It has its source within us in the fact that, even now, we are raised unto a new life by the risen Lord: we live because He lives, we cannot die, because death hath no more dominion over Him. And it has its objective ground in the fact of His resurrection: He was raised in glory, as to the body; we shall be raised in glory with Him in the last day. For: "blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." I Pet. 1:3. And also: "if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

For it was Christ, not a mere individual, but the Head of the body, the Church, that is raised.

Therefore, He is raised as the firstfruits. The harvest is sure to follow.

Just as the firstfruits are the beginning of the harvest that is begun, so the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the beginning of *the* resurrection, and, therefore, its sure pledge.

Already the resurrection has begun!

And its beginning is also its principle!

It can never stop, until all the elect have followed Christ into His blessed resurrection; yea, until all things have been renewed so as to be the proper habitation of this risen Lord, and His resurrected Church!

That is the power of the resurrection of Christ!

H. H.

IN MEMORIAM

On October 20, 1945, it pleased the Lord to take unto Himself, after a brief illness of 2 weeks, our dear mother, grandmother and sister,

MRS. RENA ZUIDEMA (age 67 years)

Although we mourn our loss we rejoice in the assurance that she is now in glory enjoying the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

Mr. and Mrs. Albert Zuidema
three grandchildren

Mr. and Mrs. Simon De Vries

Grand Rapids, Michigan.

THROUGH THE AGES

Pope Gregory, or The Great

The dates of the pontificate of this Gregory are 590-604. Thus a hundred and fourteen years intervened between the death of Leo The Great and the commencement of Gregory's career as Pontiff. In these intervening years, the successors of Leo in the papal chair were more or less unimportant persons. Some of them were not alone mediocre but carnal as well. Men they were whose administrations are among the darkest in the annals of the papacy. As we saw, Leo The Great laid claim to a universal jurisdiction over the whole church. Few of his successors in this century had either the courage or the energy of will to reassert this claim, and by none of them was the power of the papacy advanced. The few who tried to rule upon the principles of Leo were Hilary, Leo's immediate successor; Felix II; Gelasius I; and Agapetus. Hilary asserted the authority of the primacy of Peter in Gaul (the modern France). Felix II continued the war against the Monophysites in the East, thus in the domain of bishop Acacius of Constantinople. He ventured even the excommunication of Acacius but only to his own hurt however. For Acacius, as supported by the Eastern Bishops, replied with a counter anathema and thereby broke off all relations with Rome. This rupture between the two churches lasted some thirty years. Gelasius I (492-496) set forth the principle that the priestly power is above the lay ruler in the state, and that from the chair of the Roman bishop there is no appeal. Agapetus (535-536) fearlessly resisted the state-church despotism of the emperor at Constantinople, on whom the popes had fallen into a perilous and disgraceful dependence. What is more, by protest he prevented the elevation of the Eutychian Anthimus to the patriarchal see of Constantinople. But, as was said, by none of the popes of this century was the papal power advanced. By the doings of Pelagius I (554-560) Papal power and influence was greatly diminished even, not only in the East but in Italy as well. By his approval of the fifth ecumenical council, which had made a concession to the heretical Christology of Eutychius and had brought the council of Chalcedon under a cloud, he induced many Western Bishops, even in Italy, to sever their connection with Rome. And it was only by military force that their subjection could be secured.

But with Gregory I a remarkable change set in. The consensus of opinion among historians seems to

be that next to Leo I he was the greatest of the ancient bishops, that "among all the popes of the sixth and following centuries, he shines as a star of the first magnitude." It is also said of him that he came with more modest claims than Leo, but this is only apparently true. As well as Leo, he laid claim to universal jurisdiction over the whole church. He, too, was convinced that "to all who know the gospel it is apparent that by the Lord's voice the care of the whole church was committed to the holy Apostle and prince of all the apostles, Peter" and that this function had been transferred solely to the bishop of Rome. For, in one of his letters he asks, "With respect to the church of Constantinople, who doubts that it is subject to the apostolic see". And in another letter, "I know not what bishop is not subject to it, if fault is found in him." In a word, every bishop, according to this statement from Gregory's pen, is subject to it, that is to the see of the popes or bishops of Rome, for that is the "apostolic see". Gregory, in a word, claimed and exercised, as far as he was able, the authority and oversight over the whole Christian church, East and West. Yet, he would not apply to himself the title of universal pope or bishop, and opposed in strongest terms its assumption by the Eastern patriarchs. Such presumption he characterized as a blasphemous and diabolical usurpation and declared that "whosoever calls himself a universal priest, or desires to be so called, was the forerunner of the Antichrist." He even threatened to break off communion with the patriarch of Constantinople, should the latter refuse to disclaim the title. But it is hard to believe that in these declamations he was moved by true humility and righteous indignation and not by carnal lust of power and jealousy; for, though he, too, rejected the title, he claimed the thing—claimed it for himself only—and used every opportunity to make it real in his own pontificate. In making good his claims, he was as bold as Leo. He appointed, censured, and deposed bishops, and sent the pallium (from the Latin word for cloak) to some archbishops in token of their being confirmed in their office by the pope, and forbade the clergy to accept fees for their services.

Gregory is one of the doctors or fathers of the church. But it is folly to rank him, as some do, with Augustine. For he was a teacher of little originality and in his theology he was a semi-pelagian. In his conception, fore-knowledge is the basis of predestination; fallen nature is sick only, not dead; and good works have meritorious virtue. He held firmly to the doctrine of purgatorial fire, and he was an ardent exponent of the masses for the benefit of the souls in purgatory. This was the system of theology that he represented, and as its exponent his influence was far-reaching. For his literary labours were considerable. And he corresponded with kings in the West and with

emperors and patriarchs in the East. But his real strength lay in his administrative ability. His claim to fame rests chiefly on his accomplishments as manager of the real estate of the papacy, of its buildings and numerous large farms in Sicily, Italy, and in southern France and Northern Africa. Under his lordship their revenues increased. And he used this huge income with liberality in good works of all kinds, while he himself lived the austere life of a monk. He was accustomed to this kind of life, for he was a monk before he was elected pope. Early in life he had broken with the world in his father's palace, where he was born from a wealthy senatorial family of Rome. Through all these doings, he commanded the highest respect. He was considered a great character with great plans. In his station he was suited to the temper of his times. Men said of him that he was wise and good, kind and mild of heart but never weak, righteous and inflexibly just, though lenient to the repentant, a warm friend to his friends, yet holding righteousness and the weal of the church higher than friendship, unbounded in his charities to the poor, and continually interposing in favor of injured widows and orphans.

But despite Gregory's vaunted greatness and nobility of character and the arguments that were being advanced in support of the papal claims to universal dominion over the whole church, the failure of Gregory to fasten his authority on Eastern Christianity was as conspicuous as that of Leo the Great of the preceding century. The argument of the primacy of Peter and of the apostolic see made no impression on the East. The other patriarchs ranked their patriarchates likewise sees of Peter. And they were as little induced to acknowledge papal authority by the old glory of Rome, by its name and prestige as the erstwhile political center of the world. After the erasure of Jerusalem and Antioch from the ecclesiastical map of the world, the Eastern church sought its center of unity in Constantinople, in the patriarch who reigned there—Constantinople, constituted, in 330, by Constantine The Great, its builder and founder, the new capital of the Roman empire. Failing to make good its claim in the East, the papacy henceforth addressed itself to the task of extending its jurisdiction over the Christianized barbarian races of western and northern Europe, brought into the fold of the church from the sixth to the tenth century. It was a wholesale conversion of nations under the compulsion of their rulers, carried on not only by spiritual means but by military means as well. These races, as converted, did not demur when brought under papal jurisdiction. For they had been prepared for its reception by Roman missionaries, who had laboured among them in the interest of the papacy. In the gospel that

tentions. Their conversion was not to the pure Christianity of inspired apostles, as laid down in the Scriptures, but to the Christianity of ecclesiastical tradition, as taught by the fathers, monks, and popes. It is not to the credit of the papacy that, after having failed to make good its claims in the Eastern church, among a people formed of Christians versed in the doctrine of the Scriptures, it fastened itself upon half converted and grossly ignorant heathen—ignorant with respect to the truth of God's word—and this by means fair and foul. The preceding instruction amounted to nothing. Even the baptismal formula was not understood, as it was recited in Latin. Already then Rome was taking away from men the Bible. This is characteristic of Rome, for she thrives on the ignorance of her devotees. As has already been observed, the papacy, as representative of the Roman hierarchy, is an unscriptural institution. This being true, it is inherently evil, and it bears fruit after its kind and this fruit is evil. The way of the papacy with those teutonic savage races—our forefathers—races by which the Roman empire was, at that time being whelmed,—is evil fruit. With the history of this way before our mind, and as aware of the corruption that has characterized the papacy through the ages of the past, and as aware also of the state of affairs among the Roman Clergy and monks at the dawn of the Reformation, we perceive that Christ could have been addressing the papacy when he said to the scribes and to the Pharisees, "Woe unto you scribes and pharisees, hypocrites; for ye compass land and sea to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." But so God, according to His determinate will and in His inscrutable wisdom, wanted it. And like all things evil, the papacy, too, in all its corruption, worked for good to God's people. From those heathen races, made to pass under the jurisdiction of the papacy by the pope's lieutenants on the mission field, and who are now the nations of modern Europe, God has been gathering His church through the ages of the past to the present.

From the death of Gregory I or The Great in 604 to the commencement of the reign of pope Gregory II in 715 is one hundred and eleven years. In this century the incumbents of the papal chair—there were twenty five of them—were with perhaps three exceptions obscure men, whose average reign lasted less than four years. Of the few exceptions there was but one—pope Martin I (649-655)—who attracts attention on account of heroism of faith. Martin endured persecution in behalf of a pure doctrine—that of the two wills of Christ. But Honorius (625-638) was a Monothelite heretic and condemned as such by an ecumenical council. Sabanius (604) was hard and avaricious. But all loved power and followed the in-

and Northern Europe progressed, papal jurisdiction progressed with it until, by the tenth century, it reached the limit of its expansion in Europe. By this time the papacy was exercising legal jurisdiction over the churches in Spain, Italy, France, Germany, Scandinavia, the Netherlands, and the British Isles.

We must now direct our attention to a new state of things of vast importance. Leo I and his successors down to pope Zacharias (741-752) had limited their ambition to the extension of *key power* over the whole Christian church. Key power, as was said, is the right and duty to administer the word and the sacraments and to excommunicate out of the Christian church. The error of Leo was not that he laid claim to key power. Being the pastor of a flock of God, he had this power to exercise, however, in conjunction with the other pastors, only in his own congregation in Rome. Leo's error was that he laid claim to a universal key power over all the churches in Christendom. In what measure the papacy was able to realize this power, we have just seen. The matter to which we must now have regard is, that, in the person of pope Zacharias, the ambitions of the papacy became unbounded. He was the first pope to appropriate also magisterial power. According to Scripture, magisterial power is the right and duty to govern by laws and policies, punish crime and protect them that do well. Magisterial power, therefore, includes sword power. This power was given to the civil magistrate. It does not belong to the office of the ruling and teaching ministry in the church. To this ministry was given the key power. Yet, in the person of pope Zacharias the papacy began to exercise also magisterial power not only in its own states, "the States of the Church," but in the world at large as well, as the sovereign lord of every worldly kingdom, vested with the power to appoint and depose its kings at will. It came about in this way. If the papacy was about to reach out for the sword power, the emperor, who sat in Constantinople, had appropriated the key power and extended it over the popes of Rome, and thus made them his spiritual as well as his political subjects. Zacharias could therefore choose between obeying his edicts even in spiritual matters or being deposed and exiled. Such was the state of affairs in that age. As was observed in a previous article, church and state were conceived of as forming two sides to the spiritual kingdom of Christ on earth. The pope laid claim to the supreme seat of judicial power in this kingdom, to a lordship over all that be surveyed; all power on earth was his, both the key and the magisterial power. So he imagined. The emperor laid claim to identical prerogatives. Each regarded the other as his legal inferior and dependent in this kingdom. And each strove to set the other in his place. Hence, the two were always at war with each other. The Church history of the

Middle ages is largely a record of this war.

Pope Zacharias was being hardpressed by still another foe. Aistulf (749-756), the king of the Lombards, a half Christianized barbarian race, was threatening the capture of Rome. Zacharias was in a quandary. He would not appeal for protection to the emperor, who sat in Constantinople, for he had concluded, and rightly so, that if the papacy, as he conceived of it, was to survive, it must free itself from that tyrannical power. Relief came to him from France. The Franks were friendly to Rome. The churches in France had already been brought under Rome's jurisdiction. The king of France was Childeric III, the last of the Merovingian dynasty. Pepin The Short, a gallant warrior and able statesman, and the father of Charles The Great, wanted to be king, and determined upon a revolution to realize his ambition. Doubtful whether the people would approve his tactic, he besought the pope to sanction the change. The pope promptly granted his approval. The spiritual father of the church sanctioning a political revolution! Pepin was elected king by the declamation of the people and, like the kings of Israel, was anointed with holy oil by some bishop representing the pope. So did the pope place his moral sanction upon the contemplated rebellion of a usurper, virtually depose one king and appoint in his room another. This is the meaning of the transaction. Still historians, Protestant and Catholic alike, insist that, in the middle ages especially, the papacy was an indispensable institution. The pope had acted as if it was within his power to give and withhold kingdoms, and to enthrone and dethrone its kings, even as their sovereign lord. It is upon this idea of papal power that the popes now began to rule. But Gregory VII and Innocent III were the only popes who were able to carry out the idea with any measure of success.

Zacharias besought Pepin to return the favor he had granted him by protecting the pope against the Lombards. But Pepin took no action. Two years later Stephen III, who succeeded Zacharias, paid Pepin a personal visit, anointed him again, and even promised to perpetuate his dynasty by the power of the interdict and excommunication. This proved a sufficient inducement. Pepin marched into Italy and defeated the Lombards, but they soon recovered and renewed the war. The pope wrote letter upon letter to Pepin, imploring him to save Rome. But in order to get action, he had to come with new inducements. He promised Pepin long life and the most glorious places in heaven, if he quickly came, as if it was within the power of the pope to dispense not only worldly kingdoms and crowns but temporal life as well and even eternal salvation. Such blasphemy! Pepin once more took action. Crossing the Alps, he defeated the Lombards (755) and gave all the conquered territory to the pope. The pope was already in the possession of enormous tracts

of land in Italy, France, and North Africa, but by this gift, known in history as "The donation of Pepin" he became the absolute sovereign, the independent ruler, of a large part of Italy, known in history as the "states of the Church". Though the pope was now a territorial ruler, his lust for power was far from satisfied, judged from the forgery known as the "Donation of Constantine." This is a document in the form of a charter, the authorship of which is unknown, that orders all the dignitaries in the church to be in subjection to pope Sylvester and his successors and bequeaths upon them all the city of Rome and the whole of Italy with all its provinces and cities. The "Donation" was shown to be a fraud in 1433 but at the time of its appearance it was generally believed.

As can be expected, these gifts to the pope thoroughly corrupted the church and the papacy. They involved it in all the political interests, intrigues, and wars of Europe. For the papal chair was now not only the seat of spiritual power of the church but the seat of temporal power of a large worldly kingdom as well. It therefore became the coveted prize of wicked men and the plaything of political faction. The "Donation of Pipen" is perhaps the most significant event of the Middle Ages. The papacy continued in the possession of its "States of the Church" for several centuries, until 1870 in fact. In this year, Victor Emanuel gained possession of Rome as the first king of a united Italy, freed from the lordship of the pope. It meant that the temporal power of the pope was ended.

G. M. O.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

Canonical Significance Of The Book Of Judges

Having brought to completion our treatment of the content of the book of the Judges, there remains to us the task of setting forth the canonical significance of this book. The book of the Judges relates the earliest history of Israel in Canaan. The death of Joshua has deprived the people of their second and last national leader, so that the administration of the affairs of the theocracy now rests solely on the judges, which according to the command of Moses (Deut. 6:18), the people were to make them in all their gates which the Lord their God would give them. This is indicated by the

very name which the book bears: Shophetim, Judges, and further by its opening verse: "Now it came to pass after the death of Joshua, that the children of Israel asked the Lord" Compare with this the first verse of the Book of Joshua, "And after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Joshua." These judges formed under Jehovah, Israel's invisible king, the highest civil authority, who watched over the observance of the law. The book of the Judges, accordingly, narrates the history of the times in which the governing authority of Israel was exercised by the judges.

But what is the design of our book? What is the lesson, its instruction? The book of the Judges is the beginning of the fulfillment of a prophecy first uttered by Moses and repeated by Joshua in his parting discourses, the prophecy to the effect that forsaking and denying the Lord their God and serving the devils of the heathen, the people, by the curse of their God, will fall into discord, want, bondage, and oppression. The first two chapters are an introduction to the book as a whole. They explain why the events about to be related took place. It was in what the tribes did after the death of Joshua that the foundation of their troubles was laid.

The book has still another design which already has been fully explained in a preceding article.

At Acts 13:20 we read, "And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet." According to this Scripture passage, from the commencement of the reign of the first judge—Othniel—to the beginning of the judgeship of Samuel is 450 years. In this writing, we do not attempt to harmonize that count with the Scripture at I Kings 6:50, according to which the stretch of time from the Exodus to the building of the temple formed a period of 480 years duration, as that would involve us in a reasoning too complex perhaps to hold attention. Both statements must be accepted as true, though the solution may remain beyond our reach, due to a lack of sufficient Scripture data wherewith to work in the search of a solution. In that period of 450 years, there occurred six foreign wars and three civil wars. Though the United States of America has existed 168 years, it has had five foreign wars and one great civil war. This number does not include its minor wars. What these figures tell us is that, in comparison, the age of the judges was not nearly as lawless, bloody, and warlike as rationalism, in the interests of its theories, make it out to be. Yet, that the peace of the Israelitish commonwealth should have been disturbed in that period even by that many conflicts, is to its great shame. For Israel was the church. And these conflicts were wars of deliverances from oppressions worked by God in punishment of the nation's spiritual wickedness. That Israel's . . .

multiplied in this period, that the nation was not utterly consumed, can only be ascribed to the Lord's mercy. For the period was lawless throughout, there being no king in Israel, every one did that which was right in his own eyes, and thus not what was right in the eyes of God.

The aim of our Book, which already has been set forth, is of great importance for establishing the time of its composition. The remark of the sacred writer, "there was no king in Israel," in explanation of the events as are related in the final five chapters of our Book—the erection of that spurious sanctuary, the migration of Dan, and the civil war between Benjamin and the rest of the tribes—this remark must be taken as a certain indication that the book was written in a time when the people of Israel were still expecting political unity to result from the kingly office. Such confidence in the typical kingly office was strange to the nation after the division of Israel and the institution of Jeroboam's political idolatry. At least it finds no expression in the discourses of the prophets of the eighth century and the centuries thereafter. After the conflicts narrated in the book of the Kings, the civil war between Israel and Benjamin could not have been ascribed to the lack of a king. On the other hand, the remark, "there was no king in Israel," also points to a time of composition that was characterized by a want of confidence in the judgeship. There is but one period in Israel's history when these conditions meet, namely when the people petition Samuel for a king, and he anoints Saul, and the victories of the latter result in peace.

Samuel is judge and prophet. Though no offspring of Aaron, he also performs priestly functions. This had never happened before. Samuel mediates the transition from the judgeship to the kingship. The extreme points of time between which our Book was written may be indicated. They are: the commencement of the reign of David on the one hand and the beginning of Saul's reign on the other.

Reference was just made to the rationalists and their theory, which is that the period of the judges was excessively lawless, warlike and bloody, the reason being, as they say, that the nation was still without the law of Moses in all the fulness of its instruction. There is just as much sense in ascribing the lawlessness of this modern age to absence of objective law. The law is here, but it is not written on the table of men's hearts nor enforced on the lawless. This is the explanation of the lawlessness characteristic of the age of the Judges. There was no king in Israel to enforce the law, and the people of Israel were not one by a common faith in the Lord. Hence, sin abounded just because the law had entered in.

G. M. O.

SION'S ZANGEN

Groote Verlatenheid

(Psalm 88; Tweede Deel)

We wezen er de vorige maal op, hoe moeilijk het is om over dezen psalm iets te schrijven. En we voegen er nu aan toe, dat het van stap tot stap moeilijker wordt. Het lijden, dat hier bezongen wordt is zoo diep, zoo aangrijpend, zoo *kompleet*! Er worden uitdrukkingen gebezigd, die zoo moeilijk zijn om te verstaan. Bij het bestudeeren van de bronnen, merkten we hoe bekwame Schrift-verklaarders worstelen om zich een voorstelling te vormen van de toestanden van Heman in al zijn verdriet. Denkt, b.v., aan een uitdrukking, zooals we die vinden in vers 6: "afgezonderd onder de dooden". Wat is dat voor een toestand? Eerder schreef ik over den bangen toestand, die "doodbraken" genoemd wordt. Het lijden is ontzettend geweest.

En toch viel het mij op, dat hier een lijden geteekend wordt, waaraan niemand van Gods volk geheel vreemd is. Daarom trekken die psalmen ons zoo aan, die spreken van lijden en smart. Wie onder Gods volk bemint niet den onvergetelijken twee-en-veertiger-Neen, geheel vreemd is dezen psalm niet voor ons. Een ieder van het arme volk kan tot op zekere hoogte in het verdriet van Heman komen en zachtkens hem mazingen.

Maar Jezus heeft ook deze profetie vervuld in Gethsemane, op Golgotha en gedurende al Zijn leven. Hij kon zeggen zooals Jeremia deed: Is er een smart gelijk Mijne smart, waarmede de Heere Mij bezocht heeft ten dage der hittigheid Zijns toorns? En dan zwijgt de Kerk. In aanbidding. In het gewillig dragen van al die smart heeft Messias ons het heil verworven. O ja, wij zien Jezus hier in groote verlatenheid.

Hij schreeuwt het uit: "Ik ben gerekend met degenen, die in den kuil nederdalen, ik ben geworden als een man die krachteloos is: afgezonderd onder de dooden, gelijk verslagenen die in het graf liggen, die Gij niet meer gedenkt, en zijn afgesneden van Uwe hand. Gij hebt mij in den ondersten kuil gelegd, in duisternissen, in diepten."

Let er weer op, dat Heman alles verbindt aan God. God heeft hem al die smart gegeven. Al zijn tranen zijn in God's flesschen. En die klank beluisteren we in den geheelen psalm. Reden te meer om in dezen psalm het Messiaansche karakter te zien. Dat is het juist wat we in het Nieuwe Testament bij Jezus vinden. Voor en na Zijn kruisiging is het altijd God die Hem in het "moeten lijden" brengt. En als allen Hem verlaten, dan klaagt Hij er over, dat God Hem verliet.

Ge hebt in de verzen die we afschrijven een goede beschrijving van de werking des doods. Woorden zooals: in den kuil, krachteloos, afgezonderd, niet meer gedenken en afgesneden zijn altemaal woorden, waarin we een beschrijving hebben van den dood, of van de werking des doods.

De dood is conflict, strijd, tegenwerking tusschen God en mensch. Het leven is de actie, waarin de mensch in verband met alle dingen al dichter en dichter tot God nadert. Daarom is het eeuwige leven, dat men God kent en Jezus Christus dien Hij Zond. Nu wil Heman naar God heen en moet hij ervaren, dat God hem wegdrukt, verlaat, doet zuchten in eenzaamheid. En dan moet men lijden.

De wegdrukking waarmede God Heman wegdrukte was zoo erg, dat men hem rekende met degenen die in den kuil nederdalen. En dat is erg. We willen meetellen, meedoen met de menschen en onder de menschen. Wij zijn *sociaal* aangelegd. Eerst tegenover onzen medemensch en de schepping rondom ons; en dan met hen en met alles tegenover God. We weten natuurlijk niet hoe dit alles in zijn werk gegaan is, behalve dan die uitdrukking waar Heman zegt, dat hij krachteloos werd. En, ja, als we van alle kracht beroofd zijn, dan ziet het er treurig uit. Dan worden we onszelf en anderen tot last. Wie denkt hier niet aan dien vuilen, afzichtelijken Lazarus? Men smeet hem neer in den vroegen morgen bij de poort des rijken en 't avonds haalde men hem weer. Het was een heele opluchting toen hij stierf. Er staat niet eens, dat hij begraven werd. Men groef eenvoudig een gat in den grond en smeet hem er in. Wie wil nu omgaan met hen die bedekt zijn met etterende zweren? Hoe het precies was weten we niet, maar er staat genoeg om te zien, dat men Heman eenvoudig niet meer meetelde. Hij werd een voudig gelijk geschakeld met hen die allang dood waren. Men zag hem met den nek aan, liep hem zonder te groeten voorbij en liet hem geheel alleen. En dat is smartelijk. Job klaagde er ook van.

We hebben op dezelfde zaak gewezen, toen we stilstonden bij psalm 22. Ook daar vinden we den heilige Gods verlaten van menschen of bespot door zijn bekenden. Doch dan komt er achter aan: Maar Gij, Heere, wees niet verre! Zoo ook hier. Achter de schampere behandeling zijner bekenden en vroegere vrienden ziet hij God, die Zich van hem keert. En dat is zijn grootste smart. Hij klaagt: Ik ben afgezonderd onder de dooden, gelijk de verslagenen die in het graf liggen en *die God niet meer gedenkt!* Dat is het ergste. Want hij is niet alleen, krachtens zijn schepping, op God aangelegd, doch hij is een uitverkoren vat, dat door God herboren is en daarom God moet hebben om gelukkig te zijn. Hij wil hebben, dat God gedurig aan hem denkt. "Denkt aan mij toch in gena: om Uw goedheid eer te geven"! Doch inplaats van op de hoogten te jubelen in groote verlichting, komt hij in den ondersten

kuil, in duisternis en in diepten. Dat zijn altemaal beschrijvingen van den dood, van de Godsverlating. De kuil, de diepte en de duisternis zijn woorden die de Heilige Schrift bezigt voor den eeuwigen dood. Het zijn de knellingen, de benauwdheden des doods die Heman ervaart.

Overstelpend wordt het, waar hij van de nederdrukking en de grimmigheid Gods spreekt. Er zijn vele baren die over zijn arme hoofd gaan. En als we het mogen verbinden aan wat er onmiddellijk op volgt, dan kunnen we er ons iets van voorstellen. Zijn bekenden zijn verre, zij wenden het aangezicht van hem af, want men oordeelde, dat hij een gruwel was. Zoo komt hij in een enge plaats, waar hij niet uit kan komen. Iets daarvan ervaren wij allen. Wiens hart heeft nooit geschreid vanwege de onheusche behandeling der bekenden? O, als het nu maar een vreemdeling was, doch de liefhebbers onzer zielen doet het soms,—en dat doet zeer.

Dat alles doet zijn oog treuren. De verdrukking Gods, die hem door menschen overkwam, doet hem tot God gaan in het gebed. Onophoudelijk strekt hij zijn handen tot God uit; bij dag en bij nacht weerklinkt zijn klagende schreiende stem.

Hij zal ook met God argumenteeren. Hij zal den Heere vragen of het zóó moet ten einde toe. Hij zal het zijn Vader vragen of hij in zulk een toestand beantwoorden kan aan zijn roeping. Hij zal het God vertellen, dat Heman zóó niet prijzen en loven kan. Als hij zoo geprangd wordt kan hij Gods goedertierenheid niet prijzen, noch ook roemen van Gods getrouwheid. Er zijn verklaarders die smalend spreken van Heman's duistere blik in het graf. Die menschen denken, dat Heman niets wist van den hemel. Ach neen, dat is het niet. We moeten blijven bedenken, dat Heman zijn toestand beschrijft als die der dooden. Hij wil met al die teksten van het 11de tot het 13de vers zeggen: Heere, waar ik in den toestand van den dooden verkeer, kan ik U niet loven. Heman wil eenvoudig tot God zeggen: Heere, als er geen verandering komt, dan verga ik van verdriet. En in dat proces van duisternis, hetwelk over mijn ziel komt en is, in dat proces vind ik geen tijd of gelegenheid om psalmen te zingen van lof en prijs.

Wanneer we deze verzen in Jezus vervuld zien, wordt het nog duidelijker. Jezus Christus wist, dat Hij moest komen te staan aan het hoofd van een groote schare menschen en engelen om den Heere tot in eeuwigheid te prijzen. De Messias wist, dat er straks een eeuwigheid moest komen van zingen aangaande het volle deugdenbeeld van God. Hij zou Zijn broederen vertellen van het centrale Wonder, van de opstanding uit de dooden en het ontvangen van het Eeuwige Leven, van Gods goedheid en getrouwheid, van de wonderen der genade en de eeuwige gerechtigheid. Dat wist Jezus. Doch we kunnen het ons levendig voorstellen

hoe het Christus te moede geweest is te midden van den fellen brand die over Hem kwam in Gethsemane en op Golgotha. Als we het hooren hoe de Heere alle violen van Zijn toorn over Jezus uitstort en als we bedenken, dat Hij de gemeenschap van God missen moest en ervaren wat het zeggen wil om tot in alle eeuwigheid van God verlaten te worden, dat dan de angstige roepstem weerklinkt: Heere, hier in de angsten die Ik lij, zoo fel geslagen, hier in den ondersten kuil, kan ik niet zingen van groote, hemelsche, goddelijke blijdschap! Hier verga Ik, o Mijn God! Waarom, o waarom hebt GIJ MIJ verlaten? Let er toch op, dat de Heilige Geest ons geleerd heeft, dat Jezus met "gebeden en smeekingen. . . met sterke roeping en tranen geofferd heeft. . ."! En ik ben er van verzekerd, dat al dat bidden, smeeken, tranen en roepen van Jezus zijn inhoud vindt in vele psalmen, vooral in dezen psalm. Het groote voorbeeld van psalm 22 ligt er. Smarten van Jezus! Ondoorgroondelijke diepten!

En die smarten van Jezus zijn juist zoo groot geweest, omdat Hij niet ophield om God te beminnen. Hij heeft nooit opgehouden om tot God te gaan en te blijven smeeken. Let er maar op in dezen psalm: Maar Ik, Heere, roep tot U, en mijn gebed komt U voor in den morgenstond. Ja, zoo is het geweest bij Jezus. Ik kan maar niet vergeten hoe Jezus op zekeren keer, heel vroeg opstond toen het nog donker was. En schreiend, klagend, biddend, koos Hij zijn weg uit het dorp naar het woeste, naar de wildernis. Het objectieve beeld van woestheid kwam eenigzins overeen met Zijn klagende ziel, die van droefheid verkwijnende. Ik heb wel eens tot mijn catechisanten gezegd: De ervaring der verdoemden van wat het zeggen wil om tot in alle eeuwigheid van God verstooten te zijn moet Jezus geproefd hebben! We noemen dat wanhoop! Een eeuwige wegzinking in grondelooze diepten heeft Messias moeten lijden in korten tijd. Ach, hou maar op. Onwillekeurig gaan we aan 't bazelen als we van Messias' lijden spreken. Een eeuwige lijden in korten tijd? De afstanden bij Golgotha zijn zoo vreeselijk ver. De diepten in Gethsemane zijn zoo ontzettend: we kunnen niet peilen. Onze dieplooden zijn te kort. Ons oor hoort klanken: we zeggen het de domme menschen na: Hij riep tot God! Maar wij beseffen de volheid van deze openbaring niet.

Wie kan het Jezus nazeggen: mijn gebed komt U voor in den morgenstond? Was Hij vroeger op dan God? Het wil hetzelfde zeggen als toen we iets voorlezen uit Hebreëen. Want daar staat ook, dat hij "alle de dagen Zijns vleesch" gebeden heeft. Hij kwam God voor in den morgenstond, omdat hij nooit ophield te bidden in den avond en den langen, bangen nacht. Tot in de diepste diepte van den eeuwigen dood heeft Jezus steeds doorgebeden en gesmeekt tot Hem die Hem verhoord heeft.

Een heel klein beetje weten wij er van. Wij allen

ervaren het soms dat de Heere Zijn aangezicht verbergt. Doch, och arme, wat is dat, vergeleken bij Uw Heiland? Hij werd verstooten en de Heere verborg Zijn aanschijn voor Hem. Dat bange Kruis!

We hebben het geleerd, om alle Woord Gods der profetie eerst goed te zien in het licht der bloote, nuchtere historie. En daarom gelooven we, dat Heman een treurige jeugd achter den rug had. Hij is een eenling geweest; dat is wel duidelijk.

Maar nu, in den hemel weet Heman, waarom hem zulk een lot beschoren was. Hij moest een flauwe schaduw vooruit werpen van Jezus. Want alleen in Jezus is deze Schrift vervuld. Eilieve, in wie anders dan in Jezus is het vreeselijke 18de vers vervuld: "Den ganschen dag omringen zij mij als water, te zamen omgeven zij mij?" Hier is sprake van de hittige toornigheden en verschrikkingen van God. Ja, Heman heeft het ervaren, dat de schrik Gods om en in hem was. Doch Jezus heeft den toorn Gods gedragen en weggedragen! Ik kan er niet bij! Ik ben blij, dat deze bange psalm ten einde spoedt. Hij overstelpt mij, als ik worstel om er eenigzins in te komen, wat het zeggen wil om zó bang te lijden, dat de verschrikkingen en hittigheden van God iemand omringen als het water den verdronkene omringt.

Het laatste vers tekent ons Heman, neen, veel dieper is het Jezus, die ons geteekend wordt in de Verlating. Zijn vriend en metgezel zijn verre van Hem. Petrus loochent Hem en Judas verraaft Hem. De anderen zijn weggevloden. Petrus is zeer ver: hij vervloekt zich. En Judas is duisternis geworden.

En dat is het einde.

Het einde van dezen psalm.

We zien Jezus hier in de hel. Niet de plaatselijke, niet de lokale hel, maar de reële hel desniettemin.

Het is omtrent de negende ure bij het Kruis.

We kunnen het niet zien, want het is duisternis op de aarde, van de derde tot de negende ure toe.

Neen, we kunnen niets zien. Maar we weten toch, dat Hij zoo direkt zal gaan schreeuwen. Schreeuwen zoo als Jezus gaat doen, kan men niet zonder eerst te zuchten. Welnu, de zucht die voorafgaat hebben we gehoord. En het wordt een angstig wachten op Golgotha.

Daar kwam het.

En voor ons werd het weer licht.

Maar Jezus boog het hoofd. Hij kon het niet meer houden.

Dat buigen van Zijn moede Hoofd is de put die gezet is bij het einde van den klaaglijksten psalm in den bundel.

O, dat ik Hem mocht kennen. . . en de gemeenschap Zijns lijden!

Anders kom ik nooit tot de kracht Zijner opstanding.

Slaan we dan dezen psalm nooit over in den bundel van de liederen Sion's!

G. V.

IN HIS FEAR

In The Way He Should Go

What the all-important concept "The fear of the Lord" implies has become clear. Resting on that most basic of all truths that God is GOD, "fear" is all that acknowledges Him as such. It is loving reverence, holy dread, all that and much more. It is all that the creature experiences when he is deeply and properly conscious of the presence of his God. The fear of the Lord implies that we know our God as He is and reveals Himself in all the works of His hands as well as His written Word. It means that we never weary of seeking to learn more and more about Him, since we have no other calling in last analysis than to know and glorify our Maker, now and forever. It includes that, knowing and reverencing God as GOD, we also live for Him alone and love Him with all our hearts and souls and mind and strength. Whatever our station in life, our gifts and talents, our profession or trade or job if we fear the Lord we seek Him, serve Him alone, scrupulously consecrate our entire lives to Him, depart from evil, keep our tongue from sin, do good, seek peace, keep His judgments, do His commandments, devote all we are and have to His glory and thus fulfil "the whole duty of man". Such is "the fear of the Lord". Having it we possess wisdom and true knowledge; without it is nothing but folly and consummate ignorance. With that fear of God in their souls the most uneducated and illiterate are wise unto everlasting life; without it the greatest genius and most sophisticated college professor is nothing but a damned fool. In His fear we and our children begin to fulfil our calling before God, for the fear of the Lord is "the whole duty of man"; without it every man, whatever the heights to which he may attain, the treasures he may manage to gather on earth, the acclaim his fellowmen may heap upon him for his scientific accomplishments and tremendous success in life, is naught but a wretched failure, one who does not even begin to fulfil his purpose in life.

To instruct the child "in His fear", for that is the thrust of this rubric, implies at least three things.

It means that this fear of the Lord is our sole *purpose* in the bringing up of our children; that is, it is our desire and aim that our children shall fear their Lord. Theoretically and practically, in doctrine and life, they must come to the acknowledgement that God is GOD. They must reverence Him, seek Him alone, stand in awe of Him, be God-conscious, fear to disobey His will, love Him and manifest this in all their lives, consecrate their whole lives to Him alone.

Rejecting all that is contrary to their God they must seek only that which is to His praise and glory. In that way our children must walk, now and all their lives, presently in their homes which they shall establish, in all their associations with their fellowmen, in the church of Christ and not the least in whatever vocation they may choose to pursue. Whatever they do, wherever they work, always they must walk in the fear of the Lord. That is our deepest desire with respect to them. That is the purpose of all the instruction we give them. Then we bring them up in His fear.

To instruct the child "in His fear" implies, secondly, that this fear is the sole *content* of all the instruction it receives. In the home and school and church we must instruct them in that fear as such. They must be taught that reverence and awe of the Almighty One directly. What it means to break His precepts, on the one hand, and to keep them, on the other, must be drilled into them. Moreover, this fear of the Lord must be the basic content of *all* that is taught our children. They must see their God, His hand, His work, His purpose, His counsel, His beauty and wisdom and power and greatness in all the works of His hands. Everything in the fear of the Lord; history in the fear of the Lord; geography in the fear of the Lord; science in the fear of the Lord; civics in the fear of the Lord; hygiene in the fear of the Lord; physiology in the fear of the Lord; good language and habits in the fear of the Lord; this is the ideal for which we should strive. And all this in order that our children should learn, not history and science and civics as such, but the fear of the Lord, to walk therein with all their hearts to the glory of their covenant God in the midst of the world.

Thirdly, to instruct the child "in His fear" means, that this fear of God is the sole sphere wherein our seed is instructed. The whole instruction in the world, in the home and in school, is in the sphere of darkness, rebellion, sin. Our children must be educated in the sphere of the fear of the Lord. To this belongs so very much, the entire conduct, walk and talk, life and example of those who must do the instructing; the entire atmosphere of home and school. All must be made to speak to the child of the fear of the Lord, of reverence and awe of Him, of His precepts and judgments, His honor and praise. That the child must see and hear, wherever it turns. In the home and the school and the church, everywhere and always the child must breathe in the fear of the Lord. That is the thing we call atmosphere. That makes for a Christian home and school. That is education "in His fear".

In very close connection with the preceding Scripture speaks also of "the way he should go." In that classic passage quoted so often in connection with the

subject of education, we read, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." In connection with our subject this Scripture is paramount.

Often the Word of God compares the life of man to a "way", and how appropriate a figure it is. As a way, a road, always suggests progress, so there is continuous advancement, progress on the way of life. Never do we or can we stand still. Oh yes, we may pause a moment in our flight through life to reflect a moment on the way we have come or still must go, but even at such times we continue to speed onward. As a way or road always implies definite direction, so we proceed in a definite spiritual direction on life's pathway. Either we walk in the way of light or that of darkness, the way of God's covenant and truth or that of the world and sin. As a way or road implies a specific destination, so man is progressing toward a definite end. Either we travel the way of righteousness to heaven or the road of sin to eternal perdition. The metaphor is most appropriate, therefore. Before our children, from the moment they are born, lies a way on which they are and in which they must walk in a certain direction to a specific goal.

Now we are mandated to bring up, educate, instruct, train our children in *the way they should go*. Also this cannot mean that the way wherein our children walk and shall walk is in reality or in any way determined by us. It isn't. That would mean that their very salvation depends on us. It is God who places them on the good way, according to His good pleasure, when He in sovereign grace regenerates them and pours into their hearts the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thereby He Himself places them, principally, on the way of life and righteousness. Without that operation of His grace all our instruction could not possibly bear any positive fruit. However, it is our calling to nurture our children, to educate and train them to the utmost of our power in the way in which the grace of God places them and which is pleasing to our covenant God, and it is the solemn obligation of our covenant children to walk in that way.

This way "they should go" is, generally speaking, the way of life and salvation, the way of righteousness and truth, the way of the Word of God and the glory of His name, the way of the *fear of the Lord*. It is the way of sound doctrine, to be sure. Now and in the future our children must know and love and be able to defend the truth. It is the way in which we clearly discern all the fundamental truths of Scripture concerning God and His counsel, election and reprobation, the law of God and the fallen sinner, Christ and His work, the church and the world, etc. To us, of course, it is the way of the Reformed truth, of Protestant Reformed doctrine. That is the way our children should go according to the talents and understanding

the Highest has given us. It is the way also of sound practice; true, Christian ethics. It is the way wherein we know what is acceptable to God and to His glory; wherein we assume the proper attitude toward all things and conduct ourselves accordingly. It is the way wherein we walk in the path of obedience with respect to the church, the preaching of the Word, the sacraments, catechism; with respect to the world, its unions and associations and all the problems with which it confronts the Christian. It is the way wherein our language and appearance and entire manifestation of life is in harmony with the requirements of God's law. "The way they should go" is the way God wants them to walk always.

In that way we must bring up, educate, train our children. That is the will of God concerning us. This implies the same three things mentioned above in connection with the fear of the Lord. It means that this "way" must be the one and only *purpose* in all education. Now as little children, then as growing and fun-loving boys and girls, thereafter as young men and women, finally in whatever station or position or vocation in life they may find themselves, we desire that they shall walk in the way of the Lord. Throughout life they must not depart from the path of pure doctrine and sound Scriptural ethics. Secondly, instruction in "the way they should go" implies that this way is itself the *content*, in last analysis, of all their education. Always we must hold before them that way, the Reformed way, the Protestant Reformed way, from infancy on, in home and church and school, in all we teach them, whether that teaching be doctrinal in character or of a more academic nature. Everything must be taught them in connection with and with a view to the way they should go. Finally, this way must be the very *sphere* in which they are nurtured. All our children see at home, in school, in church, in catechism, of their parents and instructors, everywhere, anywhere, must speak to them of the way they should go. We must create for them that atmosphere. That is *Christian* education. In all this lies our calling with respect to our covenant seed. From that principle we proceed and may not depart. And understanding that task and calling, we do not stand in the way of its execution by raising all kinds of practical and sentimental objections. We *do our duty*, to the utmost of our power.

This mandate is all-important, for many reasons. First, it is the will of God and the way of His providence, that we shall learn to know and love that way by a process of Christian training. There is a difference between being on that way principally and walking in that way consciously and unswervingly. A child may possess the principle of the new life, but that life comes to conscious manifestation in the way of training. The seed may be there, but it comes to

fruition in the reasonable way of Christian instruction. Thus it is in the world. A young man may have all the makings of a good soldier, but to actually *be* one he must receive training. Thus it is spiritually. Secondly, there is also in this world a way wherein our children should not go. There is the way of false doctrine and equally false practice, wherein men apostatize from the truth, corrupt the Word of God, blaspheme His holy name, make common cause with the world, amalgamate themselves with the children of darkness, think and speak and act in enmity against God. Therefore, adequate training of our covenant seed will likewise include, that we also hold before them the way they should *not* go and never cease admonishing them against walking in the unholy path that leads to eternal perdition. Finally, there is in all our children, by nature, that evil inclination to choose for themselves this latter way instead of the way of His fear. That way they love and in that way we and they walk by nature. Therefore the proper, Christian training is a matter of constant application and of stern discipline as well as positive instruction. Living as we do in a sinful world and dealing with sinful children we shall always face the question: what measures must be taken, what punishments applied in those numerous and various cases where our children depart from the way they should go and their education "In His Fear" requires also the application of the rod.

R. V.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Eph. 1:4—"According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love."

The connection between this verse and the preceding is expressed by the words "according as". The apostle purposes to develop the keynote of verse 3. He will describe that glorious salvation, our spiritual blessings in heavenly places, which is our's in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Unto that end he, in verses 4 and 5, refers us to the quiet of eternity, the eternal beginning of our salvation, at the same time revealing unto us the preeminent place which God's people occupy in God's counsel of salvation. "According as" is an expression which implies, in the first place, that God has blessed us with all spiritual and heavenly blessings in Christ according to the standard of our election. God has elected us in Christ Jesus. Accord-

ing to that eternal election, agreeing thereto, He has blessed us in Christ Jesus. Therefore this expression refers us, secondly, to the only origin and ground of our salvation. We were elected in Him before the foundation of the world. Therefore we could be blessed centrally in Him, He could suffer and die for us, and become the fulness of our salvation when He was exalted at the right hand of power.

"He hath chosen us in Him," we read. The word "election", which means literally "to choose out of" (the Dutch translation reads 'uitverkiezing'), apparently supports the infralapsarian view. Infralapsarianism places election (also reprobation) after the fall of man in the counsel of God, so that, in God's counsel, the Lord elected out of a fallen human race. Reprobation, according to this view, signifies that the Lord decreed that others should be left in their sin. This conception is, first of all, very unsatisfactory. It begins with the reality of sin and makes no attempt to account for its presence in this world. Must this night of sin and misery, already six thousand years old, be divorced and separated from the alone living and sovereign God? Secondly, infralapsarianism can never be maintained in the light of Scripture. Did God not hate Esau and love Jacob before they did evil or good, *that His good pleasure might stand*, and did the Lord not harden Pharaoh's heart, yea, raise him up for that very purpose? How can anyone separate the existence of anything from the living God, Who alone ruleth over all? We agree that the word "election" sounds infralapsarian. Notice two things, however. Firstly, the Scriptures view God's decree historically, from the viewpoint of time. Looking at the entire human race, we read, then, that God, out of many, has elected some. This does not imply at all that election occurred in that manner in the Lord's eternal thoughts. Secondly, the word "election" does not emphasize the manner of God's decree but its fruit. If we, e.g., say that we elected him president we mean that his becoming president was the fruit of our election of him. When the Scriptures say that God elected, chose out of the whole human race, the implication is that the fruit of this election of God is their separation from the rest of mankind. God's election of His people and His reprobation of others are strictly Divinely sovereign. Sin does not precede God's election; it must serve it.

God hath chosen "us in Him". This expression must be regarded in its entirety as the object of election. "Him", of course, refers to Christ. To be in Christ means that He is the sphere of our life. We are in Jesus, judicially and organically. To this thought I have already called attention in connection with verse 3. It is this body, whereof Christ is the Head and we are the members, which constitutes the object of our election. That God elected us in Christ does not merely mean that He elected us because we were in Christ

This would be inconceivable. Fact is, to be in Christ is our salvation. But God sovereignly willed a people who would be the body of Jesus Christ. God willed to glorify Himself in Jesus, Who would be the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Unto that end He willed a people who would be the body of that Christ, in whom the fulness of Jesus would come to manifestation. Unto that end He elected millions of elect, each of whom would occupy his own place in God's eternal temple and all together shewing forth the fulness of the glory of God in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Such was God's decree of election.

He hath chosen us in Him "before the foundation of the world". The common interpretation of these words is well-known. The "foundation of the world" refers, then, to the creation of the world, the moment when the world was founded. That God elected us before the foundation of the world simply means that God chose us before the world's founding, sometime in eternity. This interpretation emphasizes, we understand, the element of time. Our election is older than six thousand years. This interpretation purposed to emphasize, of course, the Divinely sovereign character of our election. Zion was already elected before anything had been called into existence. This fact, that we were chosen before our birth, yea before the beginning of the world, would therefore exclude any merit or activity on our part.

This, however, cannot exhaust the meaning of the apostle. In the first place, we must be on our guard against any conception of time. To be elected from the foundation of the world would imply, then, that sometime before the world's founding we were elected. However, such a moment never existed. God's counsel is as eternal as God is eternal. Eternity knows no moments; time is not a part of eternity. It cannot be true, therefore, that sometime before the creation of the world the Lord elected His own. Secondly, we should bear in mind that God is the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth. That God has not only elected Zion but He has also willed the world and all the things therein. The elect but also the reprobates, heaven but also hell, this present world or, if you will, this present organical existence with all its joy and sorrow, song and weeping, peace and war, sickness and misery and death, owe their existence only to the alone living God Who has willed all things and performs all His good pleasure.

That God has elected us before the foundation of the world must be understood as occurring thus in God's own eternal counsel. In His eternal decree our election preceded God's eternal purpose with respect to the creation of the world. We must understand that the order in God's counsel must not be regarded as an order of time. The time element must be completely disregarded. There are from the viewpoint of time no

first or lasts in the counsel of God. Known unto God, eternally, are *all* His works. There is in Jehovah's thoughts no succession of moments. However, all things do not have the same significance in the Lord's decrees. There is an order, therefore, as far as their importance is concerned. We must not speak of a time order in God's counsel but we can speak of a logical order. Scripture certainly teaches this truth. We read in 1 Cor. 3:21-23: "For all things are your's; Whether Paul, or Appollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present or things to come; all are your's; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." That God has elected us before the foundation of the world means therefore that, in the counsel of God, God's people are first and the world with all that is therein is subordinate to them and must serve them. The highest in the counsel of God is, of course the glory of God's eternal name. This Name the Lord willed to glorify in the Lord Jesus Christ, Who, according to the human nature, would be the fulness of the Godhead bodily, of Whom we read in Col. 1:17-18: "And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church: Who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence." In that logical order God gave unto the Lord Jesus Christ a people, who would reveal the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ in heavenly glory, and manifest the glorious power of God's marvellous grace. Unto that end the Lord willed the foundation of the world, with all the things therein, its joy and sorrow, darkness and light, sin and grace, pain and misery, in order that the world and the development of all things might serve the elect of God, unto the glory of God's alone praise-worthy Name. The elect of God have therein the counsel of the Lord the preeminent place; whatever takes place in the history of the world must serve them and be instrumental toward bringing them into the eternal glory which God has prepared for them.

God hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, "that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." These words express the purpose and result of God's election. God surely elected us in order that we should be holy and without blame. Separation from sin and dedication to God, the praise of His Name, is the purpose of our salvation. However, these words also express the result of our election. We must notice that God did not elect us because of our holiness. Such is the arminian view which advocates an election of God upon foreseen, faith. God, then elected us because we were holy and blameless. To the contrary, our holiness is the result of our election. For God executes His own counsel and fulfils His own will. Having elected us in Jesus Christ, our Lord, unto holiness and blamelessness. Jehovah also realizes His counsel of election and calls us unto

Himself through the power of His irresistible Spirit.

God elected us "holy and without blame before Him". The relation between holiness and blamelessness is self-evident. Holiness emphasizes the idea of positive purity. To be without blame refers to the negative aspect of our being separated from sin and pollution. According to some these expressions must be understood in the judicial sense of the word. To be holy then would, signify a judicial holiness, in the sense of justification, and to be blameless would imply that we are free of all guilt. This, however, is not the meaning of the apostle. In the first place, these words, then, would merely convey a negative thought. Secondly, to be holy means spiritual and ethical purity throughout the Scriptures. To be holy and without blame expresses therefore the thought that we are separated from all evil and spiritually dedicated to the Lord.

We must be holy and without blame "before" "Him" refers to God. To be holy and without blame before God implies a holiness which is such, not according to the judgment of a mere man, but in the sight of God, the Sole Judge of heaven and earth.

This holiness is possible only in the sphere of love. We read: "That we should be holy and without blame before Him *in love*". Some would connect the expression "in love" with verse 5. However, in the first place, the predestination of verse 5 is already modified by the good pleasure of God's will. And, secondly, love is the proper sphere wherein our holiness and blamelessness are alone possible. For love is the bond of perfection. Love unites us with the living God. And only in the sphere of love are we devoted to God and separated from evil.

Eph. 1:5:—"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will."

The most intimate connection exists between verse 5 and the preceding verse. Fact is, verses 3-12 constitute one single sentence. Paul, having begun in verse 3 to sing of the marvelous, eternal, and sovereign grace of God, experiences difficulty in coming to a halt. His heart and soul are filled to overflowing. He does not pause until he has come to the end of verse 12. The same unbroken line of thought also characterizes verses 4 and 5. In verse 4 the apostle had declared that God had elected us before the foundation of the world in order that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. The grammatical form of the expression "having predestinated", which is a correct translation of the original, clearly indicates the intimate connection between this verse and the preceding text. God elected us in Christ Jesus before the

foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ. According to some this predestination unto adoption is the ground of the election of verse 4, We must remember, of course, that Paul here is speaking of matters which occurred in God's eternal counsel. God, then, elected us because He predestinated us unto adoption of children. Without this adoption our election would not have been possible. This view, however, is not supported by this Scriptural passage. Notice, first of all, that our election occurred before the foundation of the world. This "foundation of the world" refers to the world and all things therein and includes this night of sin and death. Consequently, sin and death, and, therefore, also our adoption unto children, do not precede our election but must serve it. Secondly, according to verse 4 we were elected unto holiness. We were not elected because of our holiness (and hence not because of our adoption unto children), but that we should be holy. According to others, and this is the correct presentation, our predestination unto adoption of children must be regarded as the means, God's way, whereby He sovereignly realizes our election in Christ Jesus. We must ever bear in mind that all this applies to God's eternal counsel. The time element must be wholly disregarded. All things in this immediate context are eternal. However, there are degrees of importance in God's eternal thoughts. Sovereignly God willed a people in Christ Jesus unto the glory of His name. Sovereignly He also decreed the way whereby that glory would be realized: the way of sin and death and our adoption unto children by Jesus Christ, our Lord.

"Having predestinated us." This word means literally "to limit, as by means of a boundary. to determine, to order or decree." God's *predestination* refers to this decree of God which precedes the thing, not merely in a temporal sense, but in a creative sense. God's good pleasure always precedes things, is their eternal creative source. The word "election" also, of course, refers to God's eternal decree. Election, however, usually emphasizes God's decree as it concerns persons. Predestination on the other hand, and evidently thus in this text, concerns things. We have been predestinated unto adoption of children.

The text speaks of our adoption unto children by Jesus Christ. We all understand the natural figure of an adopted child. An adopted child is a child that *becomes* the child of certain parents. He is not their child. But he becomes such. Adoption implies a two-fold process. First of all, a child is adopted through the instrumentality of the law. Parents obtain legal possession of a certain child, and the child receives legal right to all the privileges of that particular home. But adoption also implies that it actually enters

new home and partakes of its life and all its privileges.

God's children are children of adoption. By nature we are not children of God but of wrath. This is, first of all, a spiritual fact. The glorious life of God we do not know. Spiritual fellowship with the Lord is far from us. We know not the love and life of God, but, to the contrary, are filled with darkness and the lie and enmity against God and His Name. But we are also children of wrath in a judicial sense. We have been banished from the presence and fellowship of the Lord, have no right to God's communion, and are, according to the righteous judgment of God, worthy of eternal hell. Besides, we cannot be received again into the favour of the Lord until His justice be perfectly satisfied. Spiritually and judicially, therefore, we are objects of wrath and children of the devil.

We become children of God by adoption. First of all, judicially. In natural life legal adoption signifies that the law attaches a certain child to certain parents, so that, legally, that child is entitled to all the privileges of a particular home. To become an adopted child of the living God, legally, likewise signifies that we legally belong to God. The law, God's own law, has attached us to the Lord. We are legally entitled, according to that law of God, to the life of God's covenant. Our *state* of estrangement has become a *state* of communion. Formerly the law of God demanded our banishment; now that law of God entitles us to God's fellowship. God's adoption of His people is, first of all, this judicial step, assuring us, upon the basis of Divine justice, of our engrafting into God's covenant life. From this must follow our spiritual adoption, whereby we are actually inducted into God's blessed covenant. The Lord bestows upon us His grace and life, grants us a place at His table, cause us to experience and taste His love, and enables us to love and serve Him. We are translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the blessed covenant life of the living God.

This adoption unto children is our's, we read, "by or through Jesus Christ". Our Lord is Jesus because He is the Personal revelation of Jehovah as the God of our salvation, Who, continuing true and eternal God, became like unto us in all things, sin excepted, to save us through the deep way of the cross and resurrection. He is Jesus Christ because, as that Saviour, He is the Anointed Servant of the Lord, to do all the things required of Him in the House of God, and acquit Himself of this task as our chief Prophet, only High Priest, and eternal King. We are children of adoption, by or through Jesus Christ, because this adoption is effected, realized by Him. Inasmuch as our adoption required the satisfying of the justice of God and our spiritual translation out of darkness into light, it must be self-evident that we could not bring it to pass. This we owe to Jesus Christ alone. He

realizes our adoption, first of all, upon the cross of Calvary. Due to the fact that He is God's Anointed Head of Zion He stands in our guilty relation to the law, assumes our guilt before the bar of God's justice, and voluntarily descends for us into the depths of the wrath of God. This Jesus Christ satisfies completely the law of God, pays our debt and blots out all our guilt, and merits for us eternal life and the blessed communion with the Lord in heavenly glory. Our legal adoption is established through this meritorious and vicarious work of Jesus Christ, our Lord. But Jesus does more. He rises from the dead and is exalted at the right hand of Divine power. He receives the Spirit without measure and establishes Himself in the hearts of His elect people. He unites us to Himself, grants us the assurance of our legal adoption, and causes us spiritually to taste the blessedness of the grace and life of God. Jesus also realizes our own personal adoption, now in principle, and soon in eternal perfection.

And now we read that we have been "predestinated unto or into the adoption of children by Jesus Christ". Our adoption by Jesus Christ is, therefore, the direct result of this predestination. This implies, first of all, of course, that our adoption by Jesus Christ, as we have discussed its historical realization, is an eternal fact. In the counsel of God all this appears, all this is accomplished. History is merely the unfolding of God's eternal plan. This also implies, however, that this adoption unto children by Jesus Christ, with all that it implies, has been eternally willed by God. God, therefore, not only decreed our eternal glory, but also the way unto that glory. He also predestinated our adoption unto children which implies the way of sin and death and our redemption through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

"To Himself". We read literally "into Him". "Him", we understand, refers to God. The expression "into Him" directs unto the blessed fruit of this adoption. Even as a child is adopted into a certain family, so we, too, have been adopted into God. It is true that the people of God will inherit the life of the eternal Jerusalem. But the heart of that Jerusalem is God. Into God we are adopted. This does not mean that we become God. We cannot and do not desire to become God. But it does mean that we are adopted into the very life of God, become partakers of His Divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4) according to the measure of the creature, as creatures to live and taste the life of God, to love and will and desire what He loves and wills and desires. The life of God, which is God's eternal Self-love, is imparted unto us, whereby we love and seek Him even as He loves and seeks Himself. And this life we receive, never to lose it again but to enjoy it forevermore.

"According to the good pleasure of His will". The

will of God, in this text, signifies the eternal reality of all things, as the Lord has conceived of them, together with the Divine decree to reflect these Divine thoughts in all the works of His hands. We cannot enter into this thought in detail in this brief article. Moreover, Paul speaks of the "good pleasure" of His will. The apostle does not speak of the will of His good pleasure, which would signify that the will of God is characterized by the Lord's good pleasure, which in itself is certainly true. He speaks of the good pleasure of His will. The will of God is characterized, according to Holy Writ, by various virtues. The Word of God describes the Lord's will as external, wise, all-comprehensive, good, and holy. In this text the apostle names the virtue of God's good pleasure. This word refers literally to that which was pleasing to the Lord. God does as it pleases Him. It is this thought, the thought of God's sovereignty, which receives the emphasis here. The "good pleasure of His will" refers to the will of God particularly from the aspect of its sovereignty.

"According to the good pleasure of His will". According to this sovereign will the Lord has predestinated us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ. In this work of salvation the Lord was therefore determined, not by man, but solely by Himself. He elected those whom He sovereignly would. He determined to save them, in the way of sin and death through Jesus Christ, only because such was His good pleasure. That no flesh may boast, but he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord.

H. V.

PERISCOPE

RETROGRESSION! !

The following notice appeared in *The Banner* of November 9, 1945:

"Classis Kalamazoo takes great pleasure in announcing to the various churches of our denomination the union that has been effected between the Protestant First Christian Reformed Church and the Christian Reformed Church on the evening of November 1, 1945. We are deeply grateful to God that He has led this congregation to unite with us, in the bonds of Christian love and fellowship and on the basis of the Holy Scripture, our common confessional standards, and our church order. It is our sincere prayer that the union may redound to the honor and glory of God's holy name, and to our mutual benefit. We feel that the union will be a blessing to all concerned."

the Church will continue to bless this congregation and that He may speedily send them the man of His choice to shepherd them in the green pastures of His holy Word.

Permission has been granted the consistory to call a minister and the Rev. J. O. Bouwsma has been designated counselor. The church is located on Park St. in Kalamazoo, Mich., and consists of approximately 180 families."

PROGRESS

The Mission Committee of our Churches received a mandate from our last held Synod which read as follows: "to investigate the possibility of establishing an outlet for Foreign Mission endeavor in the way of supporting some reputable Mission now, and, in case this proves to be impossible, that a fund be established for this work in order that when the opportunity presents itself, either to support some reputable mission or to establish our own Foreign Mission, we will be prepared to make use of it".

Since that time the Mission Committee has been working to fulfill this rather large order of Synod. Investigations have been made of several existing Foreign Mission endeavors and the whole question has been discussed at great length both pro and con. At the last meeting of the Mission Committee, several important decisions were taken which we feel will be of interest to our readers. The following preliminary recommendations were approved by the committee: 1. That the Mission Committee goes on record as favoring the establishment of a fund with a view to seeking and establishing our own Foreign Mission endeavor. 2. That the Mission Committee feels that the minimum amount necessary for the establishment of this work is \$10,000 and suggests that this is the initial amount to be raised. 3. That the Mission Committee advises that this fund, after its establishment, may be used to support some reputable existing Mission endeavor in case it becomes impossible to establish our own Foreign Mission activity.

There are, of course, many questions and difficulties still remaining. The questions of a field, missionaries and many other details remain. The Committee is continuing to work in this direction and is at present gathering information on China as a possible field. It is understood, of course, that all of this is but preliminary and has no binding value whatever. Even before Synod can act the Committee must refer its report and findings to the various Consistories of our Churches in order that they can study it. We believe, however, that it is at least a step in the right direction and should be encouraged. We hope our people will take genuine interest in whatever develops for we

ANNIVERSARY CONGRATULATIONS ! !

On Sunday, December 3, 1945 the Reformed Witness Hour will observe its 150th broadcast over the air. The program formerly known as the Protestant Reformed Hour, is the fruition of an idea born in the minds of a group of young men during a discussion of the decisions of the Synod and Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches in regard to Radio work. At that time, the new radio station, WLAV in Grand Rapids, had just begun to operate and agreed to carry a program for the Young Men's Society of the First Church in Grand Rapids, who decided to sponsor the program. The first Protestant Reformed Hour was broadcast on Sunday, October 12, 1941, featuring the Rev. H. Hoeksema as speaker and the Protestant Reformed Radio Choir furnishing the music. The details and direction of the program were handled by a committee of the Society.

Since that time the program has continued under the sponsorship of the Young Men's Society of Fuller Ave. through its Radio Committee. The program soon grew and is at present heard each Sunday over stations in Muskegon and Grand Rapids, Michigan; Chicago, Illinois and Los Angeles, California. The budget for the first year of broadcasting called for the expenditure of about \$1,200 while present expenses are about \$1,100 a month. Throughout its history the Rev. H. Hoeksema has been the featured speaker while the Choir has presented the bulk of the musical portion of the programs. The program originates from the Fuller Ave. Church auditorium.

A public celebration will commemorate the event of the 150th broadcast. On December 13, the present committee, is sponsoring a hostess supper which is open to anyone interested in the radio work. In view of the large crowd expected to attend, the Franklin Community House (in the park across from the First Church building) has been reserved to accomodate the gathering. Following the supper a public program will be presented in the Fuller Ave. auditorium. Special speakers have been secured and the Radio Choir will sing. Anyone interested in attending the supper is asked to contact the Radio Committee. No reservations are necessary for the program.

We congratulate the Young Men's Society of Fuller Ave., the Radio Committee, and all who are or have been responsible for the success of this undertaking. Special mention should be made of the speaker, the Rev. H. Hoeksema, whose splendid Radio lectures have been published in Book form as a lasting Testimony and Reformed Witness.

SADDENINGLY INTERESTING

The following is an excerpt from a little paper called *The Choir Leader* and is a frank indication of

what is called "Church" in our day. "I relate just a few of the activities of my own church—one of scores having the same sort of program. They always have overflow crowds and people who are eager to attend and contribute to their efforts.

The church is a down-town church in a bad neighborhood. A free picture show is given the underprivileged "juvenile delinquent" children each Saturday night in the Playhouse. Each Monday night the director of religious education keeps them busy building airplanes—because they do break windows.

A modern Playhouse has been built in the church. An expert member directs four plays each year. The cast is entirely different for each play and they run for a week to s.r.o. Artists from the church paint the scenery and build the sets. They publish their own paper called *Back Stage*. The editor is a member, as is the entire staff of the paper.

The ushers are changed every month. The Wacs, Waves, etc. do the job, as do the members of Congress and the Kiwanis Club, etc. And by the way, do not sell your member of Congress short. This group has always been No. 1 on the list for perfect attendance.

There is every type of recreation commonly found in all churches, but one should have special mention: The church rents an entire bowling alley each Saturday night and the minister bowls with the boys and girls and feels that it is as much his duty to be with them on Saturday night as it is to be in the pulpit on Sunday morning. He bowls a mean game too.

Each Wednesday is Church Night. Supper at six for 55c. Good too. Devotionals at seven, and departmental meetings at eight. Tables are always all filled.

Each Sunday night the young people eat at six. Service men free, others 15c. Seven o'clock their devotionals, and eight o'clock their church service. The young people have dances and parties nearly every night in the week. There are some two hundred meetings at the church in the course of a month." Etc. etc.

Disgusting, isn't it? Yet, we wonder how far we are removed from just that when we begin to talk of recreation halls, youth centers and amusements for the young people?

W. H.

ATTENTION!

According to synodical decision the "History of Our Churches" will soon be reprinted. Those desiring that pictures of property or consistories appear in this next edition are requested to send cuts or pictures to Rev. B. Kok, Hudsonville, Mich., or Rev. R. Veldman, 1436 Kalamazoo Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids, Mich., as soon as possible.

The Mission Comm.