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MEDITATION

Bethlehem's Hidden Revelation

Let us go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

Luke 2:15.

How near!

Let us see this thing, this Word that is come to pass!

How close He is to us, there in Bethlehem, in the manger, in the swaddling clothes, in the flesh and blood of that little babe. . . .

Let us go now, and see this thing, this Word, Him, the God of our salvation! Let us behold Him; and, yes, let us touch Him if we may: for now He is as close to us as possible! Let us go now, and see this thing that has come to pass, for He is there of which the apostle later declared: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life". . . .

The God of our salvation!

Naturally, it is through Luke that this invitation to go to Bethlehem, and see this thing, comes to us. With him we find the narrative of the incarnation from its human aspect, the story of that which might be seen and heard and touched of it. In Matthew the gospel is particularly concerned with the genesis of Jesus that is called the Christ, the son of Abraham, the Son of David, the Messiah. There He is presented as the fulfillment of the prophecy that a virgin should be with child, and should bear a son, and that His name should be called Immanuel. In Mark the gospel proceeds at once to picture Him as the mighty King, marvellous in power. On the wings of the profound

revelation of John we are invited to soar into the mysterious heights of eternity, the "beginning" when the Word was with God and was God. But the gospel as Luke viewed it brings Him very close to us, as the Son of man, like unto His brethren in all things. . . .

His incarnation narrative centers around the simple words of 2:7, marvellous in their simplicity, amazing in their inexhaustible depth: "And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn."

O, yes, marvellous things are told us as the narrative continues. Angels appear to shepherds in the hollow of the night. They preach and sing, they rejoice and give glory to the Most High. Yet, it all concentrates around that little Babe in the manger. Of Him they speak, to Him they point, toward Him they direct the way of the angels when they declare unto them: "And this shall be a sign unto you: ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."

The sign!

"That which may be seen and handled of the Son of God become flesh!

Let us go now, and see! Thus spoke the shepherds! And they went and saw!

Let us, too, go, and let us behold the thing that has come to pass.

Yes, and let us follow the shepherds, that we may behold what they saw. To the first witnesses of the fulfillment of the promise they belong, and through their eyes, by faith, we would behold the Word that is come to pass. Yet, as today we turn to Bethlehem, let us not be satisfied with the company of the shepherds, to follow them alone. Other witnesses have come, and seen, and heard, and handled. They heard and testified that He has the words of eternal life; that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God; that He is the One that is in the bosom of the Father, the Word become flesh, the Way, the Truth, the Life and the Resurrection. They heard Him speak, they saw His mighty

works, they witnessed His awful death, they beheld the reality and the glory of His resurrection, and they looked up into heaven as He was received into the heavenly glory. . . .

Let us go now unto Bethlehem, but not as if we had no more than the beginning of this revelation of the God of our salvation, but with all these witnesses, that in the light of their light we may see, and by their testimony we may believingly contemplate this thing that has come to pass!

Then we know: that Child is the God of our salvation!

The Wonder of wonders: God come near, extremely near us!

Yes, even in that Christmas night, Mary knew: through her own amazing experience as interrupted by the words of the angel beforehand: That holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God!

Joseph knew, for in a dream it had been revealed to him that Mary was with child of the Holy Ghost, that her child should be called Immanuel, and Jesus, for He would save His people from their sins.

And the shepherds knew, for the angels in the fields of Ephratah had preached the gospel unto them.

Yet, as they went and saw, they could not behold Him, as we do by faith, in the light of His terrible death and glorious resurrection!

Let us go, then, and see! No, indeed, not to fathom the mystery of the Babe in the manger; not to comprehend the Wonder of all wonders; for the oftener we go and see, and the more earnestly we contemplate this thing that has come to pass, the more profound and amazing the Mystery becomes. Yet, as we now go to Bethlehem, and look upon that Babe in the manger, in the light of His own Word which He spoke concerning Himself, in the light of His deep humiliation and glorious exaltation at the right hand of God, in the light, too, of the Spirit He has given us,—we know and understand the riches of the gospel that there, in the manger, in that frail little Baby, is very God come down to us!

How near He is!

Near He is, not in the providential sense, according to which in Him we live and move and have our being. For, mark you well, we must go to Bethlehem, to a manger, to swaddling clothes, to a little Child, this time, to behold our God. No, this time the message is not: "Lift up your eyes on high, and see Who hath made all these things; your mighty God calleth them all by name!" Your attention is not now called to the fact that "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." On the contrary, you must now, for the moment at least, turn your eyes away from these witnesses of God's eternal power and Godhead, and you must look for your God close by, very near, where you may even touch Him; to Bethle-

hem you must direct your steps, into a stable you must enter, and there the sign and symbol of your God shall be a Babe, a manger, swaddling clothes!

How near, how dreadfully near!

Yet, though you approach with fear and trembling because of this nearness of your God, how blessed is this proximity! For He is become like unto us! He tabernacles with us! Uniting Himself with us in personal union He has fellowship with us!

There in the manger of Bethlehem is the central realization of the tabernacle of God with men, the eternal covenant of God's friendship in its highest possible fulfillment!

In the first Paradise God, too, was near to man. Yet, Adam's knowledge of the living God, and his fellowship with Him, were always mediate: though near God was always far.

But in the manger we see the thing come to pass that God is become man!

He that is eternally in the form of God, even while we behold that Babe in the manger, assumed the likeness of man, the likeness of sinful flesh!

The eternal One has come within the limitation of time; the infinitely Immense lies wrapped in swaddling clothes!

God lives our life, thinks our thoughts, is moved by our desires, is come into our sin-cursed world!

In this Child the fellowship of God with man is immediate!

How amazingly near!

Yet, how far away!

This, too, must be confessed, as we go to Bethlehem, to see the thing that has come to pass!

For, as we stand there at the manger, and contemplate this amazing revelation of the living God, we cannot but be struck by the astounding fact that now He is completely hid!

In His highest revelation it is wholly concealed!

In His closest approach to us He has wholly receded from within the range of our vision!

O, indeed, always there is an element of concealment in the revelation of God. Does not the revelation of the Eternal necessarily imply that He speaks to us in time? When the Infinite makes Himself known to us, does He not come down to the level of the infinite? When His Word goes forth to the understanding of man, does it not assume the form of human speech? And is there, then, in that limitation of time no concealment of the Eternal? Does not always the measure of the finite hide the Infinite? And is not human speech incapable of representing completely the fulness of the divine Word? And would it not lead us to idolatry if we should forget this element of concealment and anthropomorphism, and identify the glory of the sun and of the moon, and of all the starry heavens and

all the wide creation, with the glory of the Creator Himself?

Yet, in the works of creation the glory of God shines through!

The heavens do declare the glory of God, and the firmament does show His handiwork. Day unto day does utter speech concerning God; and night unto night does shew knowledge of Him. In and through the things that are made, the invisible things of Him are clearly seen, even His eternal power and divinity. For even the concealment is revelation! We know Him as the One that calleth the things that are not as if they were! Though He reveals Himself in time, recognizing clearly the element of concealment, we know that He is eternal; though His revelation takes place within the limits of the finite, we know that He is the Infinite. . . .

But as we go to Bethlehem, to see this thing that is come to pass, what do we see?

A Babe!

A Child like unto our children!

A manger! Swaddling clothes!

And as you enter, you quickly shut the door of the stable, lest the chill of the night strike that frail little body; and you are careful not to remove those swaddling clothes. The little Child might get a chill, It might get sick, It might even . . . die! For you see Him there in the likeness of sinful flesh, weak, mortal, subject to death. . . .

No, He will not die until His hour is come, we know! He has power to lay down His life and to take it again. He is the life and the resurrection, the mighty God!

But in Bethlehem you cannot see this: it is completely hid!

Where now is the glory of the Eternal? It is concealed in the temporal, and the eternal glory is not even suggested here in Bethlehem. Where is the incomprehensible glory of the Infinite? It is wholly hid in the finite, wrapped up in human flesh and blood, in swaddling clothes! Where is the majesty of the Lord of heaven and earth? O, it still shines in the heavens; but here in Bethlehem, the central and highest revelation of the God of our salvation, it is quite covered by the form of a servant!

If in Bethlehem we must behold our God, where is His omnipotence? It has assumed the form of a frail human body, mortal flesh!

Where is the I AM, the Immutable, the Self-existent, the Independent, the Creator? He is wrapped up in the swaddling clothes of a weak, changeable, dependent creature!

And how far away is our God in Bethlehem, though He is so near!

For, indeed, He is the Word that is God, the effulgence of the Father's glory, the express image of His substance; yet now, here in Bethlehem, the Word cannot speak. He must learn our language.

If you worship Him there, and kneel down at the manger, He will pay no attention to your devotion. . . .

If you pray, He will not answer. . . .

In His central revelation God is lost in concealment; in His closest approach to us He is far away!

O, how far!

Marvellous beginning!

The paradox of the incarnation!

The union of God and man, of the Creator and the creature, of the Eternal and the temporal, God revealed completely hid, very near yet far away!

The living God in the midst of death!

But we must not be lost in the paradox of Bethlehem. We dare not forget, as we stand by the manger, and contemplate that Babe, and marvel at the mystery of godliness, and worship and give glory to God in the highest, that here we behold only the beginning of the revelation of Jesus Christ, of the Anointed of God, Who came to save His people from their sin. In the greater, the clear light of His complete revelation, through the faithful and inspired testimony of those that heard and saw and handled the Word of life and declared Him unto us, we know that this beginning of God revealing Himself in the likeness of sinful flesh was, indeed necessary unto our salvation.

His glory must be hid before it can shine forth in greater glory.

Nay, it must be hid in order that it may be revealed in all its riches and beauty of divine power and virtue.

Yes, as this Child grows up, increases in stature and understanding as any other child, the Wonder of the incarnation, of His being Immanuel, God with us, will become known to those that believe. For He will speak with authority, words of grace as no man ever spoke, words of eternal life; and He will perform mighty works, such as no mere man ever did: He will heal the sick, open the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf, cast out devils, bid the tempest be still, and raise the dead.

Yet, His glory must be eclipsed still more completely than it is in that Babe in the manger: it must be contradicted in death!

Then, when He, the God of our salvation, Who took all our sins upon Himself, has descended into deepest death, when His glory seems hopelessly swallowed up of death, yea, of the death of the cross, then He will mightily break forth through the darkness into the glorious light of the resurrection, and ascend into the glory of the Father. . . .

And then He will reveal Himself, through His Spirit and Word, as being God with us, very near with His blessed fellowship.

He will draw us unto Himself, that we may be with Him.

For evermore!

H H

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EDITORIALS

Correction, Please!

In *The Banner* of Nov. 30, 1945, there occurs a statement by the editor, the Rev. H. J. Kuiper, which is wholly untrue, and which, therefore, I must ask the editor to correct, or rather to retract. I will quote the entire paragraph in which the statement occurs:

“Presumptive regeneration does not mean, says Utrecht (1905), that the presumption of the new birth is *the ground* for infant baptism. That ground is *the promise of God* to the seed of believers: ‘I will be your God.’ The leaders of the ‘liberated’ churches say again and again—and even Rev. H. Hoeksema repeats it in the aforementioned issue of *The Standard Bearer*—that Utrecht makes the presumption of regeneration *the ground* of infant baptism. And this in spite of the emphatic declaration to the contrary in those Conclusions (see above)!”

Now, it would have been no more than right on the part of the editor to quote me literally rather than simply ascribe to me a statement in his own words. As it is now, the editor made it necessary for me to search through two issues of *The Standard Bearer* to reassure myself that such an opinion as the Rev. Kuiper ascribes to me was never expressed by me at all. For even though I never entertained the idea expressed in the words that “Utrecht makes the presumption of regeneration *the ground* of infant baptism,” yet, especially when one usually has to compose in a hurry, it is but human to make a slip. And *nil humanum alicuius est mihi*. So I perused the issue of *The Standard Bearer*, Nov. 1, to which the editor of *The Banner* refers, and discovered that in that issue I did not even write on the particular question of pre-supposed or presumptive regeneration. Naturally, I turned to my editorial in *The Standard Bearer* of Nov. 15, which does, indeed, deal with the question, but in which I failed to discover a statement that might give the editor of *The Banner* any ground for what he writes in the above quotation from his pen. *

I must, therefore, leave it to the Rev. Kuiper either to find the statement which he ascribes to me or to retract his own.

May I, besides, call the attention of the Rev. Kuiper to the fact that the paragraph which I quoted above is ambiguous, and that he should write more carefully, in order to do justice to the parties in the Netherlands

that are involved in this matter, as well as to me? Note the following:

1. Twice the editor, in the above quotation, mentions Utrecht. Once he definitely speaks of Utrecht 1905; the second time he simply speaks of Utrecht. Now, there are two "Utrechts" involved in the controversy, those of 1905 and of 1942. Does the editor refer to Utrecht 1905 both times? Or does he, the second time, refer to Utrecht 1942?

2. The editor dare not say that it is self-evident what he means. For in the light of his last sentence (of the paragraph quoted) he refers to the Conclusions of Utrecht 1905. Yet, according to the preceding statement "that the leaders of the 'liberated' churches say again and again that Utrecht makes the presumption of regeneration *the ground* of infant baptism" he cannot refer to Utrecht 1905, for then the statement is not true. The leaders of the 'liberated' churches exactly do not say that Utrecht 1905 made presupposed regeneration as a ground for baptism a church doctrine; but they do maintain that this was raised to a doctrine by Utrecht 1942.

3. The editor writes that there is an "emphatic declaration to the contrary in those Conclusions," contrary, that is, to the doctrine of presupposed or presumptive regeneration as a ground for baptism. Also this is not quite true. In fact, it may be considered extremely improbable that, if this theory of Dr. A. Kuyper had been so emphatically condemned by Utrecht 1905, the Conclusions could have been subscribed to by all at the time. Fact is that, instead of an "emphatic statement" there is a very weak and ambiguous statement in the Conclusions of Utrecht concerning this theory. The statement is: "that it is less correct to say that baptism is administered to the children of believers on the ground of their supposed regeneration." Now, to say that anything is *less correct* certainly cannot be called an emphatic declaration. And, secondly, it is ambiguous. Does it mean "incorrect"? Or does it mean "correct but not entirely"? Would you give a man who, in an examination, made a statement that is "less correct" zero? Or would you give him ninety five? At the Synod of Sneek-Utrecht the late Dr. H. H. Kuyper (and he ought to know, seeing that he had a good deal to do with the formulation of the "Conclusions" of 1905) insisted that it meant "correct". Perhaps, if you could ask Prof. Lindeboom, he would say "incorrect". And how could you expect emphatic declarations in such a compromise agreement as the Conclusions of Utrecht 1905?

4. Nor dare the editor of *The Banner*, in regard to the ambiguity which I mentioned under 1, say that it is all the same whether he writes about Utrecht 1905 or about Utrecht 1942. It is true that his entire article on the controversy in *The Banner* of Nov. 20 is based on this assumption. But this is neither true

nor fair. If he desires to inform his readers on the controversy in The Netherlands, he must do so fairly and objectively. I realize that this is not an easy task for him, seeing that Dr. Schilder is one of the main leaders of the "liberated" churches, whom he condemned before he knew anything about the whole matter; and seeing, moreover, that he, the editor, is ecclesiastically prepossessed. Nevertheless, he is in duty bound to present the matter fairly. If he does, he will have to admit that the Conclusions of Utrecht 1905 and those of Utrecht 1942 are not the same. For instance, the "emphatic declaration" of which the Rev. Kuiper speaks does not occur in the decisions of 1942. Nor did the Synod of Utrecht 1942 adopt the following statement from the Conclusions of 1905: "Meanwhile Synod feels that the position that every elect child therefore is actually regenerated before baptism is not to be proved either on the ground of Scripture or on the ground of the Confession, since God in His sovereignty fulfills his promise at his own time, whether before or after baptism." Now, what becomes of the theory of "presumptive regeneration" which Kuiper maintains is clearly taught in the Conclusions of Utrecht 1905? It is denied, is it not? If a child may be regenerated after baptism, he may be regenerated when he is ten, twenty, or fifty years old. The last statement of the Conclusions of Utrecht (it was by Lindeboom, just as the first was by Kuyper) contradicts the first. But Utrecht 1942 did not adopt it. How then can the Rev. Kuiper repeat the misrepresentation of Dr. Aalders by writing: "The blame of the separation must lie with the group that refused to submit to the decisions of their Synod, which merely maintained the position which had once been taken?"

5. However, whether in the above quoted paragraph the editor referred to Utrecht 1905 in both instances or not, I kindly ask him to prove that, and to point out where, I made the statement "that Utrecht makes the presumption of regeneration *the ground* of infant baptism." * If he cannot do so, I must ask him kindly to remove the wrong impression he made.

H. H.

* We did write that the Synod of 1942 reveals a tendency toward the Kuyperian theory.

MINISTERS' CONFERENCE

Official Notice: — The Ministers' Conference of Classis East will meet on Tuesday, January 8, 1946, at 9:30 A. M. in the Fuller Avenue Church.

Program: — "The Man of Sin"—by the Rev. M. Gritters. "The Netherlands Decisions on Common Grace"—by the Rev. J. D. De Jong.

W. Hofman, Sec'y

The Liberated Churches In The Netherlands

The promise of God is for *all* the children of believers, according to the view of the liberated churches.

Moreover, this promise is not to be identified with a mere "offer of grace" such as comes to all that hear the gospel, according to them. It is much more. It is a *bequest* (schenking) on the part of God to all that are baptized. God *bequeathes* upon all the children of believers all the blessings of salvation. He gives them the *right by testament* to the riches of grace. And He solemnly seals this bequest, this testament, this objective right to the forgiveness of sins and eternal life, to them all by baptism.

But with this promise the command is inseparately connected: "walk before me, and be upright."

The promise is *conditional*.

And the condition connected with the promise is *faith and repentance*.

All have the promise. On the part of God the bequest is made to *all* by promise. God swears to *all* in baptism that their names are written in His testament. But the blessings promised are applied *only to those that accept the promise by faith*.

This is pure *Heynsianism*.

It is the conception of the covenant that, for many years, has been inculcated in the prospective ministers of the Christian Reformed Church, and that, perhaps, is still most widely taught and preached in those churches. And it is quite similar to, and in line with the theory of the "well-meaning, general offer of grace," also strongly emphasized by Prof. Heyns, and officially adopted by the Synod of Kalamazoo, 1924.

This view of the covenant is emphatically rejected by the synodical churches, as is evident from all their writings.

And for those that teach it, there is no place in their fellowship. They are deposed from office. This also can be abundantly proved.

I underscore these statements especially in order that they may catch the eye of the Rev. H. J. Kuiper, the editor of *The Banner*. I sincerely hope that he will take note of this.

The editor consistently instructs his readers that the liberated churches are all wrong, that they are to blame for the separation, that it is inconceivable that the Christian Reformed Churches, when the question as to "sister churches" and correspondence must be decided, should choose for the liberated churches.

But I still insist that this is not honest.

By refusing to establish official correspondence with the liberated churches the Christian Reformed Churches would repudiate Heyns!

Let the editor of *The Banner* refute this, if he can. But let him not hide the true situation from his readers, and leave the impression as if 1942 simply adopted the Conclusion of Utrecht 1905.

For I consider this very important.

For the sake of possible repercussions, in the Christian Reformed Churches, of the controversy in The Netherlands, the issue must not be covered up or camouflaged.

I write this all the more confidently, because neither the editor of *The Banner* nor anyone else can accuse me of wrong motives. I have openly declared, written to Dr. Schilder personally, and repeat it here, that I do not agree at all with the Heynsian conception of the covenant.

That the Heynsian conception is that of the liberated churches is evident from the fact that they appeal to him, and quote from his "Gereformeerde Geloofsleer" repeatedly, in support of their view.

For instance, the Rev. R. H. Bremmer writes in *De Reformatie*, Vol. 20, No. 51 (I translate):

"What follows from this for the practical life of faith, may easily be surmised. To make this clear, we will not now appeal to men like Woelderink and Van Dijk, but to the American professor Heyns. He is, we believe, not as yet suspected of being 'remonstrant.'" Dr. H. Bouwman wrote a preface for his 'Gereformeerde Geloofsleer' in which he says: 'Prof. Heyns gave us, in this Reformed Confession of Faith, a book which is not only thoroughly Reformed, but which, because of its consecrated style and lucidity of presentation, makes pleasant reading, and is easily understood.'

"Now, this Prof. Heyns writes on page 206: 'Then, when all support for our faith threatens to collapse, the Form (of Baptism) means to say, the support of our baptism is still left us as an undoubted testimony. Thus the Form can speak only by ascribing to baptism an objective significance, valid for all, for never could baptism be such an 'undoubted testimony' for one that is fallen into sin, if it were a real baptism and if it really sealed those benefits only for the elect or for the regenerated. One fallen into sin, who is in danger of despairing of God's mercy, will doubt, first of all, his election or his being regenerated, and thus he would find no support at all for his faith in his baptism.'

"A little further the professor writes: 'Baptism seals unto us the BEQUEST (SCHENKING) as being a matter of fact, not the IMPARTATION (DEELACHTIGMAKING) as having taken place; it seals the benefits as BEQUEATHED (GESCHONKENE) not as SUBJECTIVELY IMPARTED (ONDERWERPELIJK DEELACHTIG gemaakte). That this is the meaning of the Form for Baptism is, among other things, evident from the expression: 'applying unto us that which we have in Christ.' That which baptism

seals unto us as being in our possession is the objective 'having in Christ' in virtue of the bequest. But this can only acquire a saving character through the application of the Holy Spirit, and, in reference to this the Holy Spirit again seals unto all equally, not that He has done this or shall do this, but that He WILL do this.' "

Thus far the quotation from Heyns' "Gereformeerde Geloofsleer." And to this the Rev. Bremmer adds:

"Sound Reformed language, says Prof. Bouwman. But he is an American, the Rev. Luiks will object. Yes, but at all events a soundly Reformed American. He would be amazed if he were in the sister-church of the Netherlands, with which the Christian Reformed Church of America keeps correspondence. With his doctrine he would not be tolerated any more in the pulpits of the sister-church."

It is clear, then, that in their covenant conception the liberated churches admittedly agree with Heyns. Objectively, all the blessings of the covenant are for all that are baptized. To all they are bequeathed. Their bequest is sealed to all in baptism. But whether this bequest is to be realized unto them, whether they shall actually enter upon the possession of the solemnly promised inheritance, depends on their "part" of the covenant. Only in the way of faith are the blessings that are promised to be obtained.

Now, naturally, when one reads about this view of the liberated churches, one feels immediately inclined to accuse them of Arminianism. And repeatedly they have been accused of this by the leaders of the synodical churches. But they emphatically repudiate this accusation. They insist that one can believe and fulfill the covenant condition only through grace, and God works this grace only in the elect. How they harmonize this with their insistence upon the view that, on His part, God promises the blessings of salvation to all, I have not been able to understand.

Heyns, whom in the Netherlands the leaders of the liberated churches now call thoroughly Reformed, has a solution of this problem. He makes little Pelagians of all the baptized children, for, according to him, all receive sufficient grace to accept or to reject God's covenant! I wonder if the brethren of the liberated churches are aware of this, and whether they will follow him also in this. That this is, indeed, the view of the late Prof. Heyns, there can be no doubt. Let me quote him literally (I translate):

"If we examine Scripture, we find, in reference to this matter, remarkable expressions, that have received far too little attention. Thus, e.g. the question of Isa. 5:4: 'What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?' This refers to what the Lord did to

Israel as *Covenant-people*, to those that are wanton idolaters, and in clear words He declares that, in giving to these idolaters the benefit of His Covenant, *He did all that was necessary to bring forth good fruit*, so that He had the fullest right, not merely to demand, but to *expect* such fruit. Would He, Who is the True One, thus ask, would He *be able* thus to ask, if what He had done consisted only in external bestowal of labor through the means of grace, and not also in the giving of an inner receptivity for this? The covenant-member (bondeling) is presented in Ezech. 16:6 as one to whom the Lord said: Live; in Luk. 13:6-9 as a fig-tree, not as a thorn or thistle, but as a fig-tree, planted in a vineyard. In John 15:2 he is presented as a branch *in* Christ: 'Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away.' The phrase 'in me' could have been omitted; the sense would then have been complete; it is, therefore, intentionally inserted, and must receive emphasis. This is necessary to bring out the more strongly the heavy responsibility of not bearing fruit, the justice of being cast into the fire and burned. Hence, one dare not overlook this phrase or explain it away. And the undoubted commentary on this phrase 'in Me' we have in Rom. 11:17, where the covenant member (bondeling) is presented as a branch partaking 'of the root and fatness of the olive tree.' Add to this questions as: 'Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?' Jer. 8:22; 'Why would ye die, O house of Israel?' Ezech. 33:11. Whether one like it or not, to do justice to such expressions, one must come to the conclusion that Scripture teaches *the giving of a subjective grace to each covenant member, i.e. to each child of believers, sufficient to bring forth good fruit*. (Italics are mine, H.H.). To each covenant child, and not only to the elect, for it is abundantly clear, that what is meant is not a grace that cannot be lost, that proceeds from election. For what is said in Isa. 5 and Ezech. 16 refers to those that make themselves guilty of the most wanton sins, and even offer their children to Molech; in Luke 13 to a fig-tree that is barren; in John 15 and Rom. 11 to vines and branches for the which the being taken away or broken off, the being cast out and burned is not excluded, but that are being warned against this.

"Hence, a subjective grace which a) is sufficient, in connection with spiritual labor bestowed through the means of grace, to bring forth good fruit of faith and obedience, so that God judges that He has the most perfect right to expect these; b) does not exclude the possibility to bring forth wild grapes, when, in spite of the most excellent labor bestowed upon him, the covenant child (bondeling) remains unfruitful; and, therefore, does not consist in saving grace; c) not in conflict with the confession that the deepest ground of our salvation lies in election, and that salvation

shall be the work of God entirely. The outcome will not be the same in all, and the difference will be according to the counsel of God: 'the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.' Rom. 11:7. How God, in the ethical sphere, executes His counsel, without violating man's moral freedom and responsibility, remains for us a profound riddle; d) but makes the covenant member all the more responsible for his remaining unfruitful and bringing forth of wild grapes, and threatens him with a more severe judgment. Scripture teaches, accordingly, that the covenant-child (bondeling) that enjoyed the influence of the work of the gospel, is left wholly without excuse." Catechietiek, 143, 145.

According to Heyns, therefore:

1. The promise of the covenant is objectively for all that are baptized. All are given the right to the blessings of salvation.

2. The realization of this promise depends on the attitude of the covenant children: they must accept the promise, and walk in faith.

3. All receive sufficient grace to comply with the condition, yet so that they can also refuse and be lost.

If this is not Pelagianism applied to the covenant, I never knew what this ancient heresy implied.

Will the liberated churches adopt this solution?

H. H.

The Standard Bearer As A Witness

On the above subject the undersigned made a few remarks at the last annual meeting of the Reformed Free Publishing Association. At the request of the Board of that Association I here reproduce it as nearly as I may from memory, for even the notes on which I based my remarks I destroyed.

Being asked to speak on this annual meeting of the Reformed Free Publishing Association, I thought it but proper to make a few remarks on the subject:

The Standard Bearer As A Witness.

Well I remember, and, perhaps, some of you with me, the gathering that was held, now more than twenty years ago, that resulted in the organization of your association. The purpose that convoked the brethren was to provide ways and means for the publication of the writings of the Revs. H. Danhof and H. Hoeksema. It was a time of controversy in the churches. The debate centered chiefly in the question concerning "common grace." Already the two pastors mentioned, who The official organs of the churches were closed to them, so that they could not use them as an avenue

had earnestly endeavored to shed the light of the Word of God on this problem, and who insisted that God's grace is upon His people only, were attacked from every side, and threatened with ecclesiastical discipline. through which to present their ideas to the people. Hence, some brethren, deeply interested in the truth of Scripture and of our Reformed faith, conceived of the idea of creating an organization that would sponsor the publication of whatever the two pastors might write in the interest of the development and maintenance of the truth that was dear unto us all. The Reformed Free Publishing Association was the result. Whatever was written in the form of pamphlets and books by the Revs. H. Danhof and H. Hoeksema this society proposed to publish. And it was, in part, due to their efforts that also a regularly appearing publication was started in the form of our Standard Bearer.

Now, when I call your attention for a few moments to the Standard Bearer as a Witness, I may well connect my remarks with the name of your association. It is called the Reformed Free Publishing Association, and in this name I find expressed the character and purpose, not only of your association, but also of the periodical whose publication you are sponsoring. It is *Reformed*, that is, it is devoted to the development and defense of the Reformed faith. It is *free*, that is, it is non-ecclesiastical in the institutional sense of that word. It is a *publication*, that is, it intends to reach the public and to witness for the Reformed truth. And, therefore, it is supported by an *association*, it is not sponsored by the Synod, but by the free association of brethren that are interested in the truth and its propagation.

The Standard Bearer means to be a free witness of the Reformed truth.

But what do we mean when, in this connection, we speak of the Reformed truth and of witnessing for it through the Standard Bearer? To be sure, by Reformed truth we mean the truth of Scripture as it is briefly and officially expressed in the Reformed Standards, particularly in the Three Forms of Unity: the Netherland Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dordrecht. The Standard Bearer intends to be confessionally Reformed. However, this is not to be understood in the sense of a dead orthodoxy, that is perfectly satisfied with what our fathers developed and expressed of the truth, and proceeds from the assumption that they have said the last word about it. Such an attitude would be the expression of a conservatism without life and love of the truth, such as our Reformed fathers certainly would have condemned. No, we do not intend merely to repeat, and rise in defense of, what has been officially laid down in our Standards. But taking our stand on the basis of those Confessions, we make it our aim to continue in the direction plainly indicated by them, to criticize much that is offered as

Reformed truth, and is not, and, always endeavoring to maintain the very heart of the Reformed faith as our starting point, to advance to a purer and richer development and expression of the truth as such, and its application to every phase of the life of the believer in this present world.

The Standard Bearer wants to send forth a trumpet blast of no uncertain sound.

It purposes to send forth a testimony that is very specifically Reformed.

With regard to this specifically Reformed truth, we may assert that its very heart is found in the idea of the covenant of God. It is true that, in order to give a truly Reformed testimony, this truth concerning the covenant of God dare not be divorced from the doctrine of sovereign predestination. Election has rightly been called the *cor ecclesiae*, the heart of the Church. And yet, fundamental though this truth may be, and though its heart-beat must be discernible in every part of the doctrine proclaimed by one that lays claim to being Reformed, it is not the most peculiar, not the most distinctive of Reformed principles. There are other denominations, besides those of the Reformed persuasion, that adhere to the truth of God's sovereign predestination. But the doctrine of the covenant of God is a distinctively Reformed heritage. The reason for this fact, that it was in Calvinistic circles alone that the truth concerning God's covenant was developed and given a central place in the system of doctrine, is that in those circles more than in any other strong emphasis was placed on the glory of God as the sole purpose of all the works of God, both in creation and in re-creation, and that this glory is realized in the highest possible degree in the revelation of God's covenant. Especially is this true if the very essence of that covenant is found, not in the idea of a pact or agreement, or in a way of salvation, but in the fellowship of God's friendship, the highest revelation of the covenant-life of the Triune Himself. When, therefore, we say that it is the purpose of the Standard Bearer to send forth a specifically Reformed testimony, we mean especially that it purposes to witness concerning the covenant of God, as He Himself realizes it through Jesus Christ our Lord, according to His sovereign good pleasure, in the way of sin and grace, and along the antithetical lines of election and reprobation; and that, too, in connection with the organic development of all things.

Of this truth the Standard Bearer means to be a *witness*. I use this term to distinguish the nature of its testimony from the official preaching of the Word of God through the instituted Church, whether in the ministry of the Word within the Church, or in its missionary work to the ends of the earth. Our publication has sometimes been called a missionary. Strictly speaking, however, this is not correct. Christ has committed the task of preaching the gospel, not to

individuals, nor to an association or to a Bible Institute, but very definitely to His chosen and called apostles, and in them to the Church. And for this purpose He also gave unto His Church in the world pastors and teachers, that through them the Church might fulfill its calling and mission to preach the Word. But the Standard Bearer, and the association that sponsors its publication, are not a part of the Church as an institute; they belong to the Church as an organism, and they function in virtue, not of the specially instituted offices, but in virtue of the office of believers. It is with this distinction in mind that we speak of our publication as a *Witness*.

It is also with this distinction before our consciousness that we say that the Standard Bearer is *free*, and that the society that sponsors it calls itself the Reformed *Free* Publishing Association. The freedom we thus denote is not akin to doctrinal licentiousness. We do not intend to separate ourselves from the institute of the Church. The very fact that we adopted the name *Reformed* Free Publishing Association, and that, therefore, we place ourselves on the basis of the Reformed Confessions, indicates the very opposite. But free we are in the same sense in which our Christian Schools are free schools. The Standard Bearer is not an official church organ. It is not sponsored by the church as institute. And this freedom implies that we are not hampered by purely institutional bonds, and are not motivated by mere, formal, institutional considerations or prepossessions. In 1923 the institute of the Christian Reformed Church meant to silence our testimony. They closed the official organs to us. They tried to put the yoke of the Three Points upon us. They cast us out of their fellowship. Much of this action was motivated by personal opposition, and the desire to maintain so-called "rest" in the churches, the rest of corruption and death. But the Standard Bearer remained free. No institution controlled it. Its voice could not be silenced. And free it should remain. Unhampered by considerations that are foreign to the love of Reformed truth, our publication purposes to continue to maintain and develop the truth as our God delivered it to us!

This also implies that the Standard Bearer is *yours*. It is not an organ of any consistory, classis, or synod. Nor is it under the sovereign control of the editors that fill its pages. It is *yours*. Even as our free Christian Schools are not ultimately controlled by the teachers, but by the parents; so the Standard Bearer, though its contents are the care of its editors, is *your* paper, it is a means through which *you* have the opportunity to sound forth the testimony in behalf of the Reformed truth, within our own circles and without. To have such a paper, to be able to let this testimony be heard as far as possible, is *your* privilege. To render this testimony as effective as lies within our power

is *your* responsibility; and I do not mean only you who are present here, but all the members of the Reformed Free Publishing Association, and, in fact, all Protestant Reformed *men*; yes, and why not include our women also? You who are present here ought to make it your task to impress this truth, this privilege and this responsibility, upon those that are absent. Tell them that the Standard Bearer is *theirs*, that they ought to consider it a privilege that, in virtue of their office of believers, they may work for the sending forth of this testimony far and wide; and that they ought to assume their responsibility in this respect. In the Standard Bearer God has given us a work to do. Let us do it with all our might!

Has it been worth while? When we pass in review the more than twenty years during which our paper was published, may we say that it has been faithful to its original purpose? And has its testimony been effective? Has it born fruit?

No one knows better than I that there is abundant room for criticism here. And many a time the Standard Bearer was criticized during these years. Its contents were too limited. Its articles were too long. The material it offered was too deep. I am well aware of it. Our powers are limited, and with the limited powers God gave us we must work. Then, too, in as far as the criticism was not destructive, but had a positive purpose, was offered, not by those that refuse to put on their thinking-cap and put forth effort to read and understand, but by those that read and are interested in rendering our publication as effective as possible, it was gladly received, and did not go unheeded.

Yet, first of all, I may confidently assert that anyone who will peruse the volumes of the Standard Bearer thus far published, will have to come to the conclusion that, in the main, it was faithful to its purpose, and strove to serve the defense and development of the Reformed truth.

Secondly, the very fact itself, that through all these years the testimony of the Standard Bearer as a free witness might be heard, and that still its voice has not been silenced, is a cause of deep gratitude to our God, Who provided and still provides this medium of expression for us.

And thirdly, we do not say too much when, with thanks to God, we acknowledge the fact that our organ was a blessing, an instrument of edification and instruction, to many in our own circle, as well as a mighty influence outside of our Protestant Reformed Churches, both here and in the Netherlands. Hundreds outside of our own group have read it. Ministers have used its material for sermonizing. As soon as the war was over we received letters from Old Holland asking for it. Before the war it was an exchange with some thirty papers and periodicals in the Nether-

lands. Its volumes are carefully preserved in the library of the Free University. Some of the most important volumes written by Reformed men in the old country were sent to the Standard Bearer for review. Its voice was respected as often as it expressed an opinion with respect to points of controversy over there. And many a paper reviewed the material of the Standard Bearer, when in book form it was sent to the leaders of the Reformed Churches in the land whence we came.

Do I recount all this to boast? Yes, indeed; but not in self. Rather let us marvel with a grateful heart that our God gave to so small an organ of so small a group as we are such a wide place!

And considering what God has done for us in the past, let us not grow weary, but continue, advance, and work while it is day, ere the night cometh in which no man can work! The privilege is YOURS!

H. H.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

Elimelech and Naomi Go To The Country of Moab

According to verse 1 the events related in our book took place in the days when the "judges judged". Considering that Boaz, who married Ruth, became the grandfather of king David, the occurrences related must have come to pass during the pontificate of the highpriest Eli. Thus the migration of Elimelech and his family to the land of Moab, with a view to a temporary residence, on account of there being a famine in the land of Canaan, also is ascribable to the fact that there was in Israel no king in those days so that every one did that which was right in his own eyes. Discipline was lacking. Each did what he would and helped himself in whatever way he thought best. That Elimelech was a person of some prominence in Bethlehem is indicated by the name he bears—it means "God is my king"—and by the fact of his being a landowner. He did not belong to the class of the poor and the insignificant. All names compounded with "melech" king, known to us from the Scriptures, were borne by distinguished persons. The name of the man's wife was Naomi, "the gracious one." There were two sons Mahlon and Chilion. The derivation of these names is uncertain. Mahlon may be obtained from *machile*, circle-dance, and Chilion may be traced to *celal*, to crown, which would give the meanings "joy" and "crown" respectively, and contrast them with the doleful outcome of the migration. Another derivation

makes them signify "sickly" and "pining" in consideration of their untimely death. But this is erroneous. For the parents, by whom these sons were named at birth, did not know the future. It is stated that they were "Ephrathites of Bethlehem Judah". Thus they were not natives of Ephraim, also called Ephrathites. And the full name "Bethlehem Judah" is used to avoid confusion with Bethlehem in Zebulun. According to Gen. 35:19, Bethlehem, "house of bread," was called Ephrath or Ephratah in ancient times.

"There was a famine in the land." And Elimelech took his family and removed to the land of Moab. This was sinful of him. He might not do that. This is plain in the light of the following consideration. When the people of Israel kept covenant fidelity, the Lord would send them material prosperity. When they forsook him and served the idols, He would visit upon them divers plagues such as famine and war in punishment of their apostacy, and this according to the threatenings of the law as recorded in the Book of Deuteronomy. Should they serve the Lord, then all these blessings would come upon them. Blessed would they be in the city and in the field. Blessed would be the fruit of their body, and the fruit of their ground, and the fruit of their cattle, the increase of their kine, and the flocks of their sheep. The Lord, in a word, would make them plenteous in goods. He would open to them His good treasure, the heavens to give rain to the land in his season. On the other hand, would they not hearken to the voice of the Lord, to observe all His commandments, then would they be cursed in the city and in the field. Then pestilence would cleave unto them and they would be smitten with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew. And the heaven that was over them would be brass, and the earth that was over them would be iron, Deut. 28. Such were the cursings and threatenings of the law. For Israel was the church and it was the dispensation of shadows. That material prosperity was therefore the type of the spiritual blessings of the heavenly kingdom of Christ. It was bestowed in the way of covenant fidelity on the part of the nation; and it was the typical expression of God's love of the true Israel.

The plagues of the law were a type of the desolation of hell and of the miseries of the doomed in hell. They were inflicted upon the nation in the way of covenant infidelity on its part; and they were the typical expression of the wrath of God's hatred of the carnal Israel. As the dispensation of the shadows has ended, material prosperity and adversity do not have any more that significance for the church. In this day and age, the Lord does not prosper His church materially in the way of covenant fidelity on her part; nor does He visit her with material adversity if she departs from His

law and apostatizes. Hence, the conclusion that the church is spiritual just because she is rich in worldly goods is false. Though at the dawn of the Reformation, the Roman hierarchy was rotten to the core, it was, in a material sense, the rightest institution on earth and wallowed in material abundance. The church of the Laodiceans was rich and increased with goods, but at the same time she was wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, Rev. 3:15-17. The church in Philadelphia had little strength; she was poor in worldly goods, and yet her spiritual life was flourishing. How could the cursings and the blessings of the law still be valid in this material sense, if the church is now spread over the whole earth and if, on this account, it goes well or ill with her in a natural sense according as it goes well or ill with the nations of the earth among whom she dwells and of whom she is part and parcel politically and economically? If the cursings and blessings of the law are no longer valid in a material sense for the church in her corporate capacity, neither are they valid for the individual Christian. A man is not blessed materially because he fears the Lord; neither is his poverty an indication that he is unspiritual. Usually, great riches is the portion of the man, who, contrary to the command of Christ, works for the bread that perishes.

The statement was just made that, in this day and age, it goes well or ill with the people of God, in a material sense, as it goes well or ill with the world, the nations of the world. Hence, when the church is carnal and in her carnality has her affections set upon the things below, she invariably invents a gospel for the world—the Scriptures have no gospel for the reprobated world—in the attempt to induce all men to forsake their iniquity and go back to God, in order that the world may be freed of its plagues—of its wars, famines, and economic depressions—and be blessed with material abundance. Such a doing on the part of the apostate church finds its explanation in her lust of the earthly and in the consideration that, if the church and the individual Christian is to prosper materially, the world must prosper. But according to the determinate counsel of God, as revealed in the Scriptures, the world is not going to repent. It neither can nor may. It has neither the power nor the right. The wrath of God will continue to be revealed from heaven over all unrighteousness of men as long as the earth endureth. The sufferings of this present time will continue to the end of time. From it God's people will be delivered by Christ, when He comes. Thus suffering, as it effects also the true believers, does not indicate that they have forsaken the Lord. Yet, since they have but a small beginning of true obedience, they do not complain that it is not deserved, but they confess that whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth. Such being their confession, they are spiritually profited

by it. As to the world, though it would repent, it would not, on this account, receive from the hand of God sunshine and rain in its season; for the dispensation of shadows has ended. But this is not denying that the fear of God, as operative in the hearts and lives of the wicked, *would be* the solution of the world's problems. One more thing. From the Genesis narrative we learn that the land of Canaan was being visited periodically by famines already in ancient times, long before the people of Israel took possession of that land. We read of the occurrence of three famines during the joint residence of the three great patriarchs in Canaan. But these famines do not belong in the category of the famines and plagues in general that God visited upon the people of Israel in times of national apostasy. As has already been observed, the famines that ravaged outside of Israel in the world at large and that riot in the world of this day and age, are one of several kinds of plagues that God through the ages visits upon the world that lies in darkness in punishment of its sin to prepare it, through its sinful reactions to these plagues and to the good gifts of God as well, for everlasting desolation and to deprive it of every excuse in the day of judgment. The plagues and blessings of the law were visited upon the Old Testament church and belong to the dispensation of shadows. The plagues were sent in order that the true Israel might repent, which it did by God's mercy while the others were hardened through their sinful reactions to both the plagues and the blessings. Both the plagues and the blessings of the law belonged in the category of miracles. Finally, as was said, the plagues of God as visited upon Israel were undoubted indications that Israel again had departed from the Lord, but not so the plagues that God visits on the world. For there are no departures and returns on the part of the world with respect to God. The world departed from God once and for all, when, in Adam, it disobeyed the command of God.

In the light of the above observations, we perceive the sinfulness of Elimelech's doing. The Lord's hand was upon His people in that it again had forsaken Him. That was the undoubted testimony of the rioting of that famine in Canaan. There were two ways out of Israel's present troubles—the way of repentance or the way of removal to Moab or to some other heathen land where the plague did not riot. The way of removal to Moab was the forbidden way, not solely by reason of the fact that the Moabites were heathen but because Israel must repent and must will to be freed from the plague only in the way of repentance. And God's dealing with His people in the ages of the past testified that relief from his plagues always did come in the way of repentance on the part of Israel, and that the Lord therefore could be counted on to send rain in its season now, too, if Israel sought after God. Yet Elimelech

went the way of removal to Moab. That was his great sin. It is not difficult to imagine how he, to his own satisfaction, justified his doing. That he and his wife were Godfearing Israelites is certain. They did not, from diffidence to the Moabites, serve Moab's idols, during their residence in the country of Moab. How would Ruth have been gained for Christ, if not by their witnessing for Jehovah? So Elimelech may have reasoned by himself that, whereas he had not apostatized. The Lord's strokes were not meant for him personally, and that therefore he need not endure the affliction. But that was a carnal reasoning. Though his guilt may not have been as great as that of the others, dare he say that he was altogether guiltless? What had he done to stem the tide of unbelief? How often had he perhaps kept silence when he should have spoken? According to Israel's law, idolatry was a capital crime to be punished by the death of the offenders. Had his zeal been that burning that he had insisted that the rulers in Israel resort to this extreme measure? If not he was guilty, so guilty that, if he had been spiritual, he would have repaired to the sanctuary to bewail his sins and the sins of his people before the face of God instead of setting out for Moab in search of bread? Had he been spiritual, his great concern would have been not where his next meal was to come from but the plight of the church. For verily, the curse of God again stalked the land. And unless Israel repent, it would be consumed. But that seemed not to disturb him. He was too occupied in his thoughts with his life, what he should eat, and what he should drink, and what he should wear. Rather than remain under the rod of God in contrition of heart, as confessing that he, too, deserved God's strokes, and as urging his brethren to repent in order that God might be feared and the plague be lifted, he chose to eat his bread to the full with the cursed heathen. He may also have reasoned by himself that God could be found and served there in the land of Moab as well as in Canaan. But therein he was mistaken. For in that day—it was the dispensation of shadows—God could be found only in the Holiest Place of the earthy tabernacle that stood in Shiloh. There atonement was made for sin by the minister of Jehovah, the priest. There at God's altar that stood in the outer court of the tabernacle the people of Israel fellowshipped with Jehovah. The law forbade the duplication of this service in any other place and especially in heathen lands. From this service Elimelech separated himself. And as this service might not be duplicated in Moab, he lacked the instrument for the expression of his faith in that country. He could not institute public worship of Jehovah in that land. What he did is equivalent to the doing of a Christian who, in order to improve his condition of life, removes to a community so far removed from any church that it is impossible for him to attend pub-

lic worship and partake of the Lord's Supper. But if this family group thought that they had done well, they were soon made to realize that they had deceived themselves. The Lord laid His hand upon them also there in Moab. First Elimelech died, and Naomi was left with her two sons. But they failed to discern the significance of that stroke. So the Lord again spoke, and the two sons died, after having taken them wives of the women of Moab after a prolonged residence of ten years in that land. Naomi was now alone without offspring. But she had Ruth. G. M. O.

THROUGH THE AGES

The Papacy and Charles the Great

As we saw, 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. But in the person of Pope Zacharias, the papacy made a beginning of appropriating the magisterial power as well. We saw how it got its start in this. The Lombards were threatening Rome. By sanctioning his contemplated usurpation and by fantastic promises, the pope induced Pepin of France to come to his aid. Pepin marched into Italy, defeated the Lombards, and gave all the conquered territory to the pope who by this gift was now also a temporal ruler of a large part of Italy. Besides, the pope, as we saw, anointed Pepin king, and thereby exercised magisterial power—sceptre and sword power—in the world at large, as the sovereign lord of every worldly kingdom, vested with the right to appoint and depose its kings. The anointing of Pepin by the pope took place in 752 and again in 754.

Zacharias had set a precedent. His act served as an example to authorize and justify subsequent acts of the same kind as done by his successors. The Lombards, though twice defeated by Pepin, were again in rebellion. Pope Hadrian (772-795), following the example of his predecessors in the papal throne (Zacharias and Stephen III), appealed for aid to the monarch of France, Charles, surnamed The Great, the son and successor of Pepin. Charles, too, allowed himself to be entreated. Crossing the Alps, he subdued the whole of Italy, both Northern and Southern. Northern Italy—the immediate territory of the Lombards—he annexed to his crown, while the papal dominions in Southern Italy, already donated by Pepin, he restored to the pope. Seven years later, 781, Charles was in Rome with his son Pepin. On that visit, the pope anointed the latter “King of Italy” under Charles. Nineteen years thereafter, Charles again was in Rome,

celebrating Christmas in St. Peter's. While he knelt in prayer before the altar, the pope, Leo III (795-816) placed a golden crown upon his head, and the Roman populace, as the witness of the scene, shouted, “To Charles Augustus, crowned by God, the great emperor of the Romans, life and victory.” Henceforth Charles was called emperor and Augustus. And with reason. As a result of his fifty three military campaigns—he was a warrior of great ability—the kingdom of France by this time had expanded into a great empire, including France, Germany, Hungary, the greater part of Italy and Spain. Charles was now the ruler of a domain, which extended from the Baltic to the Elbe in the North to the Ebro, in the South and from the British Channel to Rome. But Charles must understand that the kingdoms of the earth were not his for the mere taking. So the pope crowned him. Thus the papacy, now in the person of Leo III, again declared, not of course by the spoken or written word, but by that act of crowning, that it lay within its power to give and withhold kingdoms and to appoint and depose its kings and that, such being its power, it now took away from the Eastern emperor, who sat in Constantinople, the crown and bestowed it on Charles. But what the pope, when he crowned Charles, actually did was to declare his independence against the Eastern emperor to whom he was subject, sanction Charles' conquests, and pass, with the papal dominions, under his jurisdiction and protection. So Charles interpreted the act. Actually the pope now was a subject and the vassal of the mighty Charles; but in his own mind he stood out as Charles temporal Lord, as the magisterial head over all things in Charles' empire and thus not only as the legal superior of the king in the capacity of his pastor. Rightly considered, even the latter was not true. For, though Charles belonged to the Christian Church, he was not a member of the local congregation in Rome. What is more, in his own mind Charles stood out as the temporal Lord of the pope—this indeed he was—and besides as the spiritual head over all things in the church. Thus both Charles and the pope laid claim to supreme headship over the church and over the state. Each claimed for himself the key and the magisterial power. What constantly must be borne in mind is, that church and state were conceived of as forming two sides to a Christian commonwealth—the commonwealth of Christ on earth. The pope laid claim to key and magisterial power in this commonwealth or kingdom and Charles did likewise. But at this time it was not the pope but the emperor who managed to make good his claims; for Charles was a mighty man and a great benefactor of the pope. The pope knew better than to interfere with Charles' doings and to challenge his claims. As unresisted by the pope, Charles made himself master of the church. He summoned the synods of his empire without con-

sulting the pope, and appointed bishops and abbots. He took action against those who attempted to depose the pope, acting as sole judge in their case and condemning them to death for treason. He presided in the Council of Frankfort (794) and in his name all its canons and statutes were issued. He assigned to missionaries their fields of labor among the conquered barbarian races, using Christianity merely as a means for subjecting them to the Frankish yoke. He restored free church election — election of the bishops by the communities and the clergy instead of by the lay princes — but reserved for himself the right of confirmation. By a council of Noyance in 813 he was called in an official document "the pious ruler of the holy church". Only twice did the pope cross him. Charles was an opponent of image worship. He presented his refutation of its exponents to the pope, who let him know that he did not agree with him on the subject. Had he wanted, the spiritual father of the church could have been most severe with this sheep. For there was much to criticize in Charles. For one thing, he lived in total disregard of the sanctity of the marriage vow. Like a Mohammedan Caliph, he married wives—several of them—and divorced them as convenience dictated. He put away his first wife, an obscure person, and married a daughter of the king of the Lombards. Pope Stephen III, it is true, raised his voice in violent protest, not against the divorce but from opposition to a marriage with the daughter of a race of men—the Lombards—whom the pope, in his great carnal wrath, had consigned to the everlasting fires of hell. The Lombards, as was said, were perpetually threatening the "Estates of the Church". That second marriage, too, was of short duration. The union for some unknown reason was disannulled at the end of a year, and Charles married Hildegard of Swabian origin, who bore him three sons and five daughters. His third wife died by him as did also his fourth wife, Fastrade, a woman of German origin. After the death of the latter, he had three concubines, one of whom bore him two daughters. He forbade his daughters, who were very handsome women, to marry any men, for he wanted no son-in-laws to partition among them his empire after his decease. Rather than have his daughters contract honorable marriages, he encouraged them in immoral habits. So determined was he that his vast empire should go to his own sons. The Eastern Empress Irene, aspiring to the throne as occupied by her son, Constantine VI, put out his eyes, inflicting wounds so severe that he died; but this did not deter Charles from proposing to unite the two empires—Eastern and Western—by marrying her. As a warrior, he was as fierce and conscienceless as he was able. He had a consuming passion for conquest and sacrificed thousands of human beings to that ambition. For thirty years he waged war against the

Saxons, relentlessly. With their fair fields devastated by fire and sword, and their independence crushed; with five thousand of their number beheaded in cold blood in one day; the proud savages surrendered, only to see 10,000 of their families removed from their homes on the Elbe to different sections of Germany and France to prevent a future revolt. Moreover, they could choose between being baptized and being put to death. So were the Saxons converted by the force of arms.

But Charles was one of the world's great. Many glorious things have been said of him; for the world knows how to boast in its heroes. He has been eulogized as "the link between the old and the new," who "revived the empire of the West, with a degree of glory that it had only enjoyed in its prime," and with whom "the modern history of every continental nation was made to begin." He is praised "as one of Germany's most illustrious sons;" as the "noblest king of France; Italy's chosen emperor; and the most prodigal benefactor and worthy saint of the church." Set before us is he as the one to whose hand "all the institutions of the Middle Ages—political, literary, scientific, and ecclesiastical — delighted to trace their traditionary origin, and who was considered the source of the peerage, the inspirer of chivalry, the founder of universities, and the endower of churches; and the genius of romance, kindling its fantastic torches at the flame of his deeds, lighted up a new and marvelous world about him, filled with wonderful adventures and heroic forms." Let it so be. But, though Charles was canonized a saint, and despite his religiosity, he was far from being a saint. But he was religious, very. He worshipped in the church with unbroken regularity, "going morning and evening, even after nightfall, besides attending mass." But he was not a firm believer in Christianity, if by this statement is meant that he was a true christian. The kind of private life that he led, the impulses under which he acted, the ambition that stirred in his bosom, and the indifference to the means which his ambition prescribed, are inconsistent with grace. And no evidence can be produced to show that he ever repented. If the tree is known by its fruit, and it is, then Charles belongs in the category of the great but violent men of the earth and of history, such as Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus of ancient days, and, coming closer to our Christian era, of Alexander the Great. But Charles was no pagan, as were they. The setting of his life was Christian. He was born and reared in the church, and all his words and deeds were colored by its teaching and took on a Christian dress. He did not truly love the church, as he did not truly love Christ. To him the Roman hierarchy with its extensive missionary program and sympathy for intellectual excellence was a great christianizing and civilizing institution, that he thought he could use to

advance his aims and attain his purposes. Like most any worldly and unprincipled man, he hated barbarians and the uncouthness and ignorance that characterizes savage races of men, loved learning and culture, cultured society, good breeding and courtly manners. Hence, his zeal for education; his gathering around him divines, scholars, poets, and historians; his founding schools and his visiting them in person; his attempt to learn the art of writing even at an advanced age. But his heart was in God's hands as are the hearts of all kings. He was a servant of the Lord in the sense that Cyrus and Alexander were servants of the Lord, and in all his doing he was included in God's counsel. This cannot be emphasized too often. Him, too, God gave a charge to subdue and tame by fire and sword those savage Teutonic races on the continent and to unite them under his temporal sceptre in close union with the church. For God had much people among those savage men in their generations, who must be saved through the gospel. However, Charles meant it not so, that is, in subduing those races, he was not constrained by the love of God to do his will—judging now the tree by the fruit—but it was in his heart to build by fire and sword a mighty empire as a monument to his genius that he might be feared and praised, to found a great kingdom of peace and earthy prosperity, formed of men living together in peace and law abiding in fear of his sword and of the thunderings of the pope, but preferably as rendered submissive and harmless by the influences of the religion of Christ. But Charles was against Christ. He belongs to that power—that anti-christian power—always operative in the world and that, at the end of time, will become flesh and blood in that “man of sin”—the anti-Christ.

As to the pope, though aware certainly of Charles' public and private gross sins, he kept silence as a matter of papal policy. This can be explained. Charles loved the pope. When the pope died, Charles shed copious tears, for he felt that he had lost his greatest and best friend. And so he had, seeing that the pope had obligingly crowned him augustus and thereby immeasurably increased his influence and prestige. The subjects in his vast domain, as a result of that act of crowning, stood in awe of him, thinking him to be the Lord's anointed, like David, king of Israel and thus stood in awe also of his achievements on the battlefield in his wars with the heathen. Men said that he had fought a holy warfare and they praised Charles' zeal. As to the pope, he prized Charles' love of him. He concluded that he must not, by censuring Charles' wickedness, dampen the ardour of that love. That might prove costly. For Charles' love of the pope paid large dividends. Charles had restored to the pope the “states of the church”. Charles was a shield of defense to the pope against the Lombards. By mili-

tary force, Charles compelled the half converted heathen to accept the pope as their spiritual prince. Charles lavished upon the pope great and costly gifts and filled the treasury of his church—the church of St. Peter in Rome—with gold and silver and precious stones. And so the pope loved Charles too. He was wise not to censure Charles—wise with a wisdom that, in the words of James, “descendeth not from above, but is earthly, natural, devilish. That was a precious friendship between Charles and the pope; but it partook of the character of the friendship between Pilate and Herod. It was the friendship of the world and therefore at bottom enmity against the Christ of God.

G. M. O.

SION'S ZANGEN

De Verbondspalm

(Psalm 89)

Hier hebben we een van de lievelingspsalmen van Gods volk. Wie zal zeggen hoevele stervenden van dat volk hem gezongen hebben, ook wanneer hun oogen braken en hun het doodsweet uitbrak? Velen, zeer velen, hebben bij het sterven gevraagd, met bevende lippen, Och, zing mij den negen-en-tachtiger!

Wie de dichter is kan niet met zekerheid gekonstateerd. Hij is Ethan den Ezrahiet. Doch welke Ethan? Er zijn er meer dan een. Als de smart die bezongen wordt in de verzen 39-46 de smart is geweest van den inval van Sisak, Koning van Egypte, dan is het een van die bijzonder wijze mannen geweest waarvan I Kon. 4:31 melding maakt.

Evenwel, wie hem dichtte is niet van het grootste belang. Noch ook bij welke gelegenheid. Vele van die bijzonderheden heeft de Heere voor ons verborgen. We weten zelfs niet wie sommige Bijbelboeken geschreven heeft.

Van grooter belang is de inhoud van den psalm. Het is een boodschap aan de Kerk aller eeuwen. In den psalm wordt bezongen de groote bondstrouw van Jehovah.

'k Zal eeuwig zingen van Gods goedertierenheer!

Wat een verheven inzet!

En ook het einde is grootsch, verheven, wonderbaarlijk. Want hoewel uit den psalm blijkt, dat hij gedicht is ten tijde van een groote ramp, zoo is het einde en het begin van den psalm de lof des Heeren. Vanuit een zeker oogpunt bezien, staat Gods volk in de eeuwigheid te zingen, als is het dan ook, dat zij in groote benauwdheid zijn. Vanuit dat zekere oogpunt is het waar wat de Heilige Geest ons op de lippen legt: In de grootste smarten blijven onze harten in den

Heer gerust! Onverklaarbaar voor het vleesch, de aarde, den mensch der zonde. De wereld zal nooit begrijpen hoe Paulus in een donker kerkerhol psalmen kan zingen. Ook niet, hoe een stervend mensch met breekende stem zingen kan: 'k Zal eeuwig zingen van Gods goedertierenheeden!

Deze eerste galm van het lied beteekent niet, dat wij dit lied zullen beginnen in de eeuwigheid. Neen, maar we beginnen dat lied der eeuwen eeuwigheid hier op aarde. O ja, we stemmen het toe, onze stem breekt vaak onder 't zingen, maar we zingen toch. We stemmen U ook toe, dat er veel hapert aan de maat, de rhytmus, de klanken en accoorden. Er komt wel eens een valsche klank doorheen. Doch we beginnen het nieuwe lied hier. Als we straks boven zijn, zullen we het elkander zeggen, neen, toezingen: Alle deze klanken en melodiën klinken mij bekend in de ooren. Geen wonder, want ge hebt ze alle op aarde gezongen.

Wat een grootsch, overweldigend thema! Zingen gaan we en doen we nu al, van de goedertierenheden des Heeren.

De goedertierenheid des Heeren is die goedheid Gods, waardoor alles in Hem dringt, stuwt, en zucht om Zijn volk te zegenen, om hem het alleen goede te geven. Een flauw beeld ervan vindt ge op aarde. Als ge iemand heel veel liefhebt, wilt ge alles aan hem of haar kwijt. Dan heerscht er een hartstocht ten goede voor het voorwerp Uwer liefde in Uw hart. Het oorspronkelijke van die trek is in God, zooals in alle deugd. God's hart is vol van hartstocht ten goede voor Zijn volk. Dat heeft Hij bewezen. Hij heeft zelfs Zijn eeniggeboren Zoon niet gespaard, doch heeft Hem voor ons allen overgegeven. Wilt ge een kommentaar op dezen eersten klank, dan moet ge vlak voor het kruis gaan staan. Daar hebt ge de openbaring van de goedertierenheid Gods. 'k Zal eeuwig zingen, zegt ge. Het is wel. Doch dat eeuwig gezang wordt aan Uwen keel ontlokt, omdat ge daar in het midden van den troon een klein lam ziet staan, staande als geslacht. Als dat geslachte Lam getoond wordt, dan werpen die ouderlingen hunne kronen voor God neer. Ze hebben gezien, dat in dat Lam God Zijn Eigen hart gaf. Zei ik zoeven niet, dat de goedertierenheid de deugd is, waardoor ge alles aan het voorwerp wilt schenken?

Als Gods volk daaraan denkt, aan die goedertierenheid, dan hooren we hen zachtken zingen: O God! Stel Uw vriendelijk hart eeuwig voor ons open!

Ik zal Uwen waarheid met mijnen mond bekend maken van geslacht tot geslacht. Dat is de tweede stanza.

De waarheid is eigenlijk hetzelfde hier als de goedertierenheid. Het is de goedertierenheid Gods uit een zeker oogpunt. Het woord, dat hier vertaald wordt door *waarheid* beteekent in zijn wortel: ondersteunen, ondersteunen, zooals, b.v., een mensch zijn kind in de armen draagt, of ook, zooals een gebouw onderstut

wordt. Daarom zijn er vormen van dit woord, dewelke *archtect* en *pilaar* beteekenen.

Zoo zal het duidelijk zijn, dat de dichter nog steeds denkt aan Gods groote goedertierenheid. Hij ziet de deugd Gods, waarin Hij Zijn volk van eeuwigheid tot in eeuwigheid in Zijn armen draagt. "Veilig in Jezus' armen" zingen we; en terecht. Dat versje moogt ge laten steunen op deze clause. Dat is dan ook de reden, dat de Engelsche vertalers hier het woord "getrouwheid" schreven. Dát is dan ook een betere vertaling dan in onze Hollandsche Bijbel. Ik denk, dat ge het zult zien, als ge luistert naar het volgende vers. "Want ik heb gezegd: Uwe goedertierenheid zal eeuwiglijk gebouwd worden; in de hemelen zelve hebt Gij Uwe waarheid bevestigd!" Ziet ge niet, dat de idee die in het woord ligt, zooals boven aangegeven, hier verder uitgewerkt wordt? Gods waarheid is hier, Zijn eeuwig trouw ten overstaan van Zijn Gezalfde en in Hem, Zijn volk. Mooi hebt ge dat in den berijmden psalm: Ik weet, hoe 't vast gebouw van Uwe gunstbewijzen, naar Uw gemaakt bestek, in eeuwigheid zal rijzen! Zoo min de hemel ooit uit zijnen stand zal wijken, zoo min zal Uwe trouw ooit wankelen of bezwijken! De hoofd-idee is de trouw Gods.

En wat zullen we daar van zeggen?

Doch het behoeft niet. God zal Zelf spreken.

Luistert maar: "Ik heb een verbond gemaakt met Mijnen Uitverkorene, Ik heb Mijnen Knecht David gezworen: Ik zal Uw zaad tot in eeuwigheid bevestigen, en Uwen troon opbouwen van geslacht tot geslacht. Sela."

In deze woorden Gods hebt ge Zijn goedertierenheid en eeuwig trouw.

Let eerst op het enkelvoud. Het gaat allereerst om Gods uitverkorene. Dat is enkelvoud. Het gaat om "David", Gods knecht. En tweedens, om Zijn zaad. En dat zijt gij, lezer.

Wie is echter die uitverkorene, die David?

Historisch in den psalm is het koning David die eenige jaren geregeerd als koning over Israel. Daartoe was hij uitverkoren, ook uit het volk verhoogd. En zijn naam is David, dat is, Geliefde!

Die David heeft Gods goedertierenheid en trouw rijkelijks ervaren. Hij was de man naar Gods hart. God hield zeer veel van hem. Hij onderwierp al zijn vijanden onder zijne voeten en voor veertig jaren mocht hij over Gods bondsvolk regeeren. Zijn troon werd bestendigd en zijn koninkrijk werd bevestigd. Zijn zaad zou tot in eeuwigheid op den troon zitten, door God bestendigd zijnde.

En hier komen we in moeilijkheid. Dat zal later ook in den psalm blijken, d.w.z., van vers 39-46.

Het bloote, historische feit is, dat Davids zaad niet op den troon bevestigd is geworden. Waar is het joodsche volk nu? En zelfs vlak na den dood van David en David's zoon Salomo, zien we een scheuring

in het rijk. Later zien we zijn zonen naar Babel gaan. En eenige honderden jaren later zijn er nog een arme timmerman en een arme maagd. En Herodus, dat beest, zit op den troon, terwijl Romeinen spotten en razen in het land van Israel.

Om de moeilijkheid op te lossen, moeten we weer terug naar den naam. David is de Geliefde, de uitverkorene. Welnu, dat is Jezus. Dat is de Zoon Gods. Dat is de uitverkorene Gods. Hij is de Eerstgeborene aller creaturen. Hij is degene die onder en temidden van alle schepselen de voorrang heeft. Hoe meer ik Gods Woord bestudeer, hoe meer ik zie, dat het alles om Jezus Christus gaat. Ook in het verbond.

Ziet ge, God wil Zich tot in alle eeuwigheid verheerlijken. Ook in schepping en herschepping, in menschen en engelen, in aarde en hemel, in het gansche heelal. Hij wil, dat tot in alle eeuwigheid een groote massa volk voor Zijn troon zal staan om het Hem eeuwig toe te zingen, dat Hij goed en lieflijk, heerlijk en trouw is. God weet, dat Hij dat alles is, doch Hij wil, dat wij dat weten. En om te weten te komen, dat Hij zoo goed, zoo lieflijk is, heeft Hij bij Zichzelven voorgenomen, om die schare uit de onderste kuil op te halen, vanuit den eeuwigen dood tot in het eeuwige leven. Dan zullen ze straks Hem lofzingen en zeggen met Paulus, doch dan zingende: Die ons uit zoo grooten dood verlost heeft!

Vanuit een wanhopige, vanuit een tot vertwijfeling brengende ellende des eeuwigen doods komt Gods David. en dat is Zijn volk, tot in een heerlijkheid die geen oog gezien heeft. Ze zullen het nooit vergeten om Hem hun helper te heeten.

En nu moet het goed blijken, dat God dat alles doet. Vervloekt zij den pelagiaan.

Daarom heeft Hij dat ongekunde heil beschoren bij een Held Gods. En die held is Jezus. David vindt dan ook zijn vervulling in Jezus.

Als straks dat door God geschapen volk in Adam van Hem afvalt en den duivel toevalt en waardig wordt om tot in alle eeuwigheid verworpen te worden, dan komt Gods waarheid, ondersteunende en ondersteunende trouw tot openbaring. Dan gaan we in den tijd zien, dat God zoo lieflijk is, zoo wonderlijk goedertieren, dat Hij alle onze zonde en schuld en vloek en verdoemenis en dood op dezen David laadt.

Ziet ge het nu?

David, dat is, Jezus van Nazareth, de Uitverkorene Gods, als het Lam Gods met de zonde van Zijn wereld beladen, ligt in den ondersten kuil, in groote vervaarmissen. Een korst van ijskoude en verstollende vorst heeft zich gesloten boven Zijn arme hoofd. En wij met Hem. Weet gij niet, dat zooveel gij in Christus gedoopt zijt, gij in Zijn dood gedoopt zijt?

Doch wij zingen psalm 89.

God is goedertieren en waar en wonderlijk getrouw.

God roept en vanuit den kuil komt Jezus, de Eerst-

geborene uit de dooden. Van uit dien kuil hebben we Hem hooren schreeuwen, brullen, klagen. En God hoorde. En God trok Hem op.

En, o eeuwig wonder! Achter Hem aan komen allen die van Jezus Christus zijn. Ik zag welhaast een groote schaar. Ze verdringen zich om 't offer altaar. En ze begonnen vroolijk te zijn.

Ga nu naar den psalm terug.

"Ik zal Uw zaad tot in eeuwigheid bevestigen, en Uwen troon opbouwen van geslacht tot geslacht!" Zet er gerust Sela achter. "Hier wordt de rust geschonken!"

Wie zou niet juichen bij het hooren van zulk een heil?

Wel, de hemelen doen het.

"De hemel looft, o Heer, Uw wonderen dag en nacht!"

Ik denk, dat de hemel hier de Engelen Gods beduidt. Ja, die Engelen juichen om het heil, dat geopenbaard is in David, Gods teeder beminden Zoon. Indien de morgensterren juichten bij het zien van Gods wondere werken in den vroegen morgen van de geschiedenis der aarde, hoe zullen ze dan juichen bij het zien van de vollere, heerlijker openbaring van Zijn goedertierenheid Jezus!

We zijn het niet vergeten, dat de Engelen afgebeeld werden op dien korst van vreeselijke verstijving des eeuwigen doods. Er waren beelden van Engelen op de arke des Verbonds. En zij staarden op het Bloed, het Bloed! Ook herinneren wij ons hoe vanaf onze prilste jeugd wij gehoord hebben van het hemelsche gezang der Engelen Gods in Efratha's velden. De hemel looft, o Heer. . . . O ja, de hemel loofde toen Jezus geboren werd. En de van lof zingende hemel is naar de aarde gekomen om het den menschen te toone te doen beluisteren. En er waren herders in het veld, de wacht houdende bij de schapen. En er omscheen hen een hemelsch licht en zij zijn zeer bevreesd geworden. En toen zagen zij in het midden van al dat hemelsch licht een gestalte, een schoone gestalte van een hemelsche Engel Gods. En zij hebben geluisterd, o, zij hebben geluisterd. Ze hebben den tongval des hemels beluisterd. En toen hebben zij vele Engelen Gods gezien in de lucht rondom hen. De hemel looft, o Heer, Uw wonderen dag en nacht! Wel, het was nacht in en rondom Bethlehem. En de hemel loofde het centrale Wonder op aarde. En de herders hebben het gehoord. En wij hebben er van vernomen. Ik mag zelfs zeggen, dat een klein beetje van dien hemelschen lof in onze harten woont.

Daar Uw geheiligd volk van Uwe trouw mag zingen!

De gemeente der heiligen is vol van de getrouwheid Gods.

Daarom is het begin, het midden en het einde de lof des heeren. Tartend roepen wij het den duivel, de

wereld en het vleesch toe: Wie is, wie mag in hen hemel tegen den Heere geschat worden?

De echo's herhalen het tot in alle eeuwigheid.

En de duivelen hebben geen antwoord.

Satan is verwrongen in eeuwige smarten, want hij zette zich tegen David, den Geliefde Gods.

En de wereld heeft geen echo. De wereld zal stom zijn tot in eeuwigheid.

En mijn zonde heeft geen antwoord meer. O mijn God, ge hebt alle die zonden weggeworpen, ze zijn achter gebleven, daar onder dien vreeselijken korst en verstolling des eeuwigen doods van Jezus! De roode zonde werd wit als wol. De karmozijn als sneeuw.

Geen antwoord? Geen echo's?

Ja, de vier dieren en de vier-en-twintig ouderlingen jubelen hun amen, amen, na!

Hoe goed, hoe lieflijk zijt Ge, alom! o Heere!

G. V.

FROM HOLY WRIT

2 Tim. 2:19:—"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

The future appeared dark for the church of God at the time of the writing of this last epistle of the apostle, Paul. Paul is nearing the end of his life—see 2 Tim. 2:12, 4:6, 7. He is in prison at Rome. As a veteran soldier who knows the reality of life he is concerned about Timothy, the first and youthful minister of the church at Ephesus. Clouds of persecution, the lie, apostasy are gathering overhead. And Paul warns Timothy against these evils—see 2 Tim. 3. However, "the foundation of God standeth sure."

The same thought also occurs in the immediate context of our text which we chose for this article. We read of apostasy, of increase unto more ungodliness. Hymenaeus and Philetus are mentioned. They taught heresies. Their word, we read, will eat as doth a canker, and they overthrow the faith of some. However, Timothy must continue to speak and preach the truth. Whatever they may teach and whatever may be the result of their teaching, one thing is certain: the foundation of God standeth sure. The work of man must collapse. God's work shall stand. Upon this foundation we must build. Unto that end the apostle, in order that we may recognize it, also calls our attention in this text to its seal.

A foundation presupposes a building. It is important, unto a correct understanding of the text, that we understand the building implied here. According to some, the building presupposed refers to the church

of God, the elect body of Christ. Aware of the distinction which exists between a building and its foundation, they opine that the building refers to the church of God as glorified in heaven and that the foundation in this text refers to the church of God upon earth. This conception, it is alleged, is supported by the context. Hymenaeus and Philetus, we read, overthrow the faith of some. Nevertheless, according to the apostle, faith is overthrown, departed from us because they never were of us; God's church stands forever. This presentation, however, is erroneous. Firstly, we are not aware of any passage in Holy Writ where the word "foundation" ever refers to believers—see Matt. 7:24-27, Eph. 2:20-22, 1 Cor. 3:11-12. Secondly, this conception is also in error as far as its reference to the building is concerned. The church on earth and the church in heaven are not two but one. And this entire church of God is built upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Besides, a foundation and its building are never identical—they are rendered identical in this presentation.

The building implied by the apostle in this text does refer to the church of God. First of all, the general teaching of Holy Writ demands this explanation. The church is often compared to a building—see 1 Cor. 6:19, Eph. 2:20-22, 1 Peter 2:5-9. Moreover, also the text that follows, verse 20, speaks of a great house. One can therefore not escape the conclusion that the implied building in verse 19 must refer to the church of God. However, it is also evident from the context that this building cannot refer to the believers and their seed. Fact is, the great house of verse 20 contains various vessels. And it is evident from verse 21 that these vessels must not be confused with the house. They are the members of the church and live in that house. Consequently, the building presupposed in this text cannot refer to the body of Christ, but must refer to the house, the sphere wherein and through which the body of Christ reveals itself—the church of God from the viewpoint of its visible form. Paul refers to the sphere through which the church reveals itself, is built up and identified, strengthened, separates itself from the world, dwells alone in the midst of the world. The church of God reveals itself as institute and organism in the midst of the world. The organism of the church refers to our confession of faith, our life of love and faith and hope, our struggle in the world, our suffering for the sake of Christ, etc. The institute of the church refers to the church as she reveals herself through her offices. This institute includes the preaching of the Word, catechetical instruction, administration of the sacraments, exercise of Christian discipline. The house implied in the text refers, therefore, to the visible manifestation of the church of God as she reveals herself through her organism and institute.

One need not doubt the meaning of the foundation in this text. It does not refer to God's counsel of election. Election is one of the seals mentioned in this verse. But Paul mentions also another seal. And these seals must not be identified with the foundation. This foundation mentioned here and often in Holy Writ, is the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, whereof Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone.

It is interesting to understand the idea of a foundation. A foundation must not only support the building. It also determines the building. One would not erect a square building upon a round foundation. The lines of a building, its form, and its beauty were considered when the foundation was laid, so that the building itself is determined by the foundation. This is certainly spiritually true. The organism and institute of a church are surely determined by the foundation upon which it rests. The preaching, catechetical instruction, confession, sacraments, discipline, growth, strength, conscious power to fight are all determined by the foundation upon which any church of God stands. An arminian foundation will have for its result an arminian "house". A church that stands upon the foundation of the lie will be characterized by that lie in all her walk and confession.

This foundation is the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. The apostles are the foundation, not physically but apostolically. They were inspired by God to lay the foundation of the church, namely, the truth. Of this truth, Holy Writ, Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone, the pivot, around which all things revolve. All the lines of Holy Writ run into and out of the Christ.

God's foundation standeth sure. Human work must perish. Paul speaks of God's foundation. The opposite of a foundation of God is a foundation of man. A foundation of man is that laid by man. It is man's work. It arises within the brain of man. We must bear in mind that there are but two kinds of foundation, of God or of man. All heresy, every distortion of the truth is the product of man and revolves about man. Modernism, arminianism, pelagianism, "Three Points" are all human inventions, human in origin and human in purpose and scope. And, as we have already stated, a church's foundation determines its confession and walk.

Such human foundations must perish. Man's work can never endure. This is generally true of anything which man does. The perishable character of the work of man reveals itself everywhere. Everything is subject to change and decay. This is also true with respect to every distortion of the truth. Already in this life the Church of God, throughout the ages, has condemned arminianism, pelagianism, etc. And eternity will forever silence every deviation from the Word of God. God is God alone and His Word will surely

stand forever. The lie shall be forever revealed as the lie and woe unto him who has built upon it.

God's foundation standeth sure. We read of the foundation of God because God is the Author, the Builder of it. God is the Builder already in His eternal counsel. He is the heavenly Architect. Eternally the Lord willed the foundation whereof Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone. Eternally He willed to save His own, in the way of sin and death, through faith in Christ, unto the eternal praise of His adorable Name. And the Lord is also the exclusive Builder of this foundation in time. He laid it, centrally, in Jesus Christ. For Christ is, first of all, God Himself in the likeness of sinful flesh. Besides, it was God Who nailed Christ to the accursed tree, sustained Him in all the fearful depths of His amazing agony. It was God Who raised Christ from the dead and glorified Him at His own right hand of Divine power. And God also laid this foundation because He inspired holy men and moved them to write His own word. Eternally the Lord willed the Scriptures as a glorious whole, willed the writers of the Scriptures, prepared them for their task, and finally inspired them so that they wrote the perfect and complete will of God with respect to our salvation.

This foundation, because it is of God, standeth sure. It stands firm throughout the ages. Many heretics have attempted to destroy the truth of God. They have only destroyed themselves. The truth of God has withstood every attack. And eternity shall reveal the firmness of this foundation. The truth of the Word of God shall forever be revealed as the truth and shall stand forever.

It is of the utmost importance that we ask ourselves the question: in which house do we dwell? It is not true that all visible manifestations which bear the name of Church are built upon this one and only foundation. This question is a serious question. We need the one, only true bread. God's Word alone can satisfy me. Human philosophy or a mixture of the Divine and the human must weaken and ultimately, as far as the organical development of the church is concerned, destroy all spiritual life. My spiritual life is indeed dependent upon the food I eat. I must therefore live in that "house" which is built upon the one and only foundation. And I am able to recognize the "house" that is built upon the one and only foundation. And I am able to recognize the "house" that is built upon that foundation. For the text tells us that this foundation has a two-fold seal. This two-fold seal of the foundation will reveal itself in the building. If the foundation determines the building I can recognize the foundation from the building. Hence, I must dwell in that "house" where this word is preached: "The Lord knoweth them that are His; let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity".

"The Lord knoweth His own." This is election, sovereign election. God does not know as we do. We know the things only after they exist. But God's knowledge is creative, precedes the existence of things. The Lord therefore knoweth His own with an everlasting knowledge of love. He knew us not because we were His, but we are His because He knew us. This sovereign election of the Lord is one of the seals. God grant that this seal may ever characterize our churches. From it we must never depart.

"Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." This is the second seal. To name the name of Christ means that we name Him, that our soul names Him in all His grace and salvation. To name His Name implies that we personally confess Him. Every one that names this Name must depart from iniquity. We must notice that the apostle here does not speak of two seals, a Divine and a human seal. We read: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having (not these seals) this seal". Paul speaks here of one seal. But this one seal has two sides. And these two aspects of the one seal are inseparably connected. When the Lord knoweth His own with an everlasting love, from before the foundation of the world, He calls them out of darkness into His marvellous light. The two are inseparable. And the implication of the apostle is indeed that we must conduct ourselves as the party of the living God and that we, as that party of the living God, are anchored in that eternal God Himself. This is the seal of the true foundation of God. Upon this truth we must stand and build. If upon this foundation we stand we shall never be ashamed.

H. V.

IN HIS FEAR

Education - Instruction - Training

Training the child "In His Fear" implies three things: that the fear of the Lord is the purpose, object of all the instruction of our covenant seed; furthermore, that this fear of the Lord is the actual content of all their education, directly or indirectly; finally, that the fear of the Lord is the sphere, the atmosphere wherein our covenant offspring are reared.

In this final article before my successor takes over I should like to discuss with you the verb or verbs presupposed by the heading that appears above this rubric. "In His fear" is only an isolated phrase and leaves the thought quite incomplete. What must be in the fear of Jehovah?

Especially three words come to our minds as most prominent in this connection: education, instruction

and training. All three are used frequently, and quite interchangeably, in connection with the bringing up of the coming generation, both in the world and in the church. The important and interesting distinctions between them are not always stressed. This is true particularly of the first two: education and instruction. Yet, each one of these terms has its own peculiar connotation and between them is a distinction that is indeed worthy of note and most enlightening. All three may be said to be included in the most general concept of all: to bring up.

To *educate*, in its most literal sense, means: to lead out, to lead forth, to bring out. Commonly this verb is given a very broad meaning and application. The definitions offered of this concept are numerous. It is understood to refer to the whole training of man, the entire development of his physical, mental and moral powers, throughout life, whether by a complete system of study and discipline or by the actual experiences of life itself. It is defined as being synonymous with such concepts as: instruction, breeding, training, culture, and cultivation. It is declared to include all that serves as means "to prepare man for complete living." According to Webster "education" comprehends all we assimilate from the beginning to the end of our lives in the development of the powers and faculties bestowed upon us at birth, and includes not only systematic schooling, but also that enlightenment and sense which an individual obtains through experience." It is to prepare or fit for any calling or business by systematic instruction. "Basic to all definitions", says one authority, "is the conception that education denotes an attempt on the part of the adult members of a human society to shape the development of the coming generation in accordance with its own ideals of life." Such education, say the world's learned, is *good* only when it meets a three-fold requirement: 1. It must aim at the right kind of product. We agree, of course, only we will differ on the interpretation of the phrase "right kind of product". For the world this will denote a man who is able in every respect to successfully take his place in the world. For us "the right kind of product" is the man of God, he who stands and walks in the fear of the Lord. 2. The means and methods adopted must be well adapted to secure the intended result. That may stand as it is. A good education certainly has to do with the means employed for the construction, as it were, of this "right kind of product." 3. These means must be applied intelligently, consistently and persistently.

All this, however, does not mean that we should forget the basic meaning of the concept, which is: to lead out. It is derived from the Latin *educere*,—*e*(out) plus *ducere*(to lead). In distinction, therefore, from related and synonymous concepts it means: to lead or bring out what is in. From this same Latin

verb we also derive the English verb "educate", meaning: to bring into manifestation (a form, quality, law or anything that is conceived as present in a latent or undeveloped form), to elicit, evolve. Thus it has been said, "Education means to *educate* and cultivate what is best and noblest in man." All of which makes obvious what is the basic significance of this concept "education." It is to bring out, lead out, develop, cultivate, expand, discipline, strengthen what is principally and potentially already there. It embraces all that aims at and is adapted to realize the physical, mental and spiritual development of that which the subject is and possesses in the way of God-determined and God-given endowments.

Education, it follows, can never accomplish anything beyond the limits set by the capacity of the one who receives the education, nor does it aim to accomplish more. It is bound for its positive attainments, for its actual fruit, to the powers and faculties, the gifts and talents, the physical and mental and spiritual capacity of its subject. Education may seek to bring out,—in last analysis it can never bring into. It may purpose to develop, cultivate, expand and strengthen, but it can never bestow that which is to be developed. That this point, so basic to our general subject, is seen and acknowledged in the world as well becomes evident when its educators explain that "education comprehends all we assimilate from the beginning to the end of our lives in the development of the powers and faculties *bestowed upon us at birth.*"

The powers and faculties themselves, therefore, the gifts and talents as such, our personal proclivities and capacities, are *not developed*, but *bestowed*. This is true physically. Much may be done in the way of physical education and strict discipline to develop, cultivate what man possesses physically, to bring out the possibilities. Nevertheless, every physical educator, coach or trainer, knows only too well that he is limited to the material at hand, that he cannot give the strength and agility which is not there potentially, that he cannot expand a physique and strengthen muscles beyond the limits set by the Creator Himself. Thus it is mentally. In the way of systematic education a great deal is done to bring out and develop what the student possesses already at birth. However, every educator knows that also here he is limited to the material at hand and that he cannot instill a brilliance which simply is not there. And spiritually it is no different. Education in the home and school and church is God's own way to bring to manifestation that which He Himself has given in the way of spiritual life and the fear of the Lord. It means everything for the cultivation, expansion, growth of the new-born child of God. Even as we cannot grow physically without food, even so spiritual development is impossible without education. Nevertheless, every Christian

parent and teacher knows that he, too, is limited to the material at hand, that he cannot give the life, that he cannot make a child of God where there is none, that he is, to "the spiritual powers and faculties bestowed upon the child at his *re-birth.*"

Understanding all this it should be obvious, furthermore, that there can be no real education in the world; that the unregenerated sinner, strictly speaking, cannot be educated. What is not there cannot be brought out. That does not mean that there is in the world not a highly technical and finely developed system of schooling, whereby the physical and mental powers and faculties of man are cultivated to an amazing degree and whereby man is fitted according to the standards of the world for his place in this life. But, that is not the education of which Scripture speaks. Before God, all this culture and learning still leaves man a blind, ignorant fool. For the beginning and principle of both knowledge and wisdom is the fear of the Lord. It is that fear of God, reverence, love, consecration that must be brought out (*educere*), and for this that fear of the Lord must be present to begin with. In that same fear, with a view to it, permeated by it, all that is in man, physically and mentally, must be brought out, in order that the product may be a man of God, consecrated with all his heart and soul and mind and strength to the living God. That, according to Scripture, is the aim and task of all education. That *is* education. This fear of the Lord is not in the world, and consequently cannot be brought out. God is not in all their thoughts. On the contrary, there is only spiritual darkness, rebellion against God, enmity and corruption. In all the education of the world it is these that are brought out, cultivated. This ethical darkness (however they may work with their remnants of natural light) gives direction to their entire lives, permeates and corrupts the whole development of all their powers and faculties, physical and mental. If you have this in mind, if you mean that in the world *only* the principle of sin is brought out, developed, cultivated, and that in connection with all the instruction given, you may certainly speak of education in the world. Thus all that can be produced, without grace, is a man of the world, who stands in opposition to the living God, and who is consecrated with heart and soul and mind and strength to the service of sin and Satan. And such a man, void of the fear of the Lord and hence of all true knowledge, whatever be his intellectual capacity and attainments, is not an educated man, but a perfect fool. True education is possible only in the realm of the covenant, in the Christian home and church and school, where God has instilled His fear into the hearts of His own. That fear is then brought out, cultivated, in connection with all things natural and spiritual, and so you come to the educated man.

About the related concepts "instruction" and "train-

ing" much need not be said. In its common usage "instruction" covers the same ground as does "education." The viewpoint, however, is different. *To instruct*, in its most literal sense, means: to build into. It is derived from the Latin *instruere*,—in (in, on) plus *struere* (to build). In distinction from the term education it commonly stresses the imparting of the facts, the giving of the information. Actually, however, the difference between education and instruction is this, that whereas the former means to bring out that which is inside, the latter means to bring, build into, from without. Hence, to instruct is to build up, to construct. Of course, this does not deny all that has already been affirmed with respect to actually bestowing that which is not there. Also "instruction" presupposes a foundation on which, a principle into which we build. In the case of the natural man this foundation is the old, corrupt, spiritually dead nature, the man of sin. There is nothing else to build on and into. The result is, that the world through its education also constructs, indeed, but it constructs a man of the world, a man of sin, whose god is his belly and who seeks only the things below. Working with unchanged sinners to begin with and building into the only principle that is there, all that the education of the word can accomplish is: that the sinner becomes an ever greater sinner in the sight of God. Nothing does more to accomplish this than education. Thus the latter is precisely the means for the realization of the anti-christian world power, the Anti-christ. Build up a sinner and all you get is a built-up sinner. Therefore, too, there is no grace in all the education of the world, and the instruction of the world, from Scripture's point of view, is no instruction at all. Also herein the curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked and in the end all his education will prove to be to his eternal condemnation.

True instruction is possible only in the sphere of the kingdom of God. There we build upon and into the principle of the fear of the Lord, the new life from God, with the result that by grace the man of God is constructed, furnished unto every good work, whose God is Jehovah and who seeks the things above, and who is prepared according to the will of God to take his God-appointed place, now in this present world, and eternally in the perfected kingdom of the Father.

The concept "training" stresses the idea of constant application, drill, repetition. When an intelligent dog is trained for anything it is compelled, disciplined to do the right thing so often, so consistently, that the thing desired of it is finally performed automatically. When the soldier is trained for combat, he is made to perform his particular task so often, it is drilled into him so carefully, that he finally does that very thing from mere force of habit, because he is literally incapable of doing anything else. The fruit of training

must be that the proper thing becomes part and parcel of the subject's nature. Thus our children, too, must be "trained" in the fear of the Lord in the way of unceasing application and discipline.

"And when he shall become old" says the wisest of them all, "he will not depart from it." R. V.

PERISCOPE

A Sign Of The Times

"It is becoming clear that public opinion is moving closer toward the next step in international relations, usually described as "world government".

The atomic bomb is responsible for this shift of opinion. The shift is discernible in expressions by political leaders who were pioneers for a United Nations Organization, by scientists who helped create the bomb, by organizations which were set up to promote the United Nations Organization.

Public opinion is moving with the times, WHICH ARE MOVING AWFULLY FAST.

World government means, in essence, a single government of all the nations of the world, just as the United States is one government of 48 States. Each nation would have to yield up sovereignty, just as our states did when the constitution was drafted.

Anyone who suggested this when the 54 nations gathered at San Francisco last April was scornfully derided as a starry-eyed idealist by the practical diplomats and politicians there, who were still 'practical' though most of them came from nations laid waste by the war.

But that was before the atomic bomb dropped to end lots of illusions about statecraft and international politics.

This changed atmosphere is perhaps the most important single thing that has happened in political thinking, since Woodrow Wilson came forward boldly, 25 years ago, after the First World War, with his League of Nations proposal.

It is the most important single fact in the world today, and the politicians and diplomats are beginning to take notice."

This quotation is from the news interpreter Thomas L. Stokes in the Nov. 21 issue of the Des Moines Tribune. Although the article from which I quoted the above was published in many newspapers and articles I believe it of sufficient importance to bring also to the attention of our Protestant Reformed reading public. The article referred to certainly is clearcut and to the point and it will be apparent to our readers why we took it over in our magazine, with the cap-

tion above it: "A sign of the times". That it is becoming clear that public opinion is moving closer toward the next step in international relations, usually described as "worldly government", is more and more being attested to by the leading writers and thinkers of our day. Well known commentators of the news of today such as Walter Lippman, Dorothy Thompson, and many others, are all dwelling on the idea of such a "world government". Also the leading editorials of our newspapers and magazines are making the peoples of the world conscious of such a "world government". No, it is not yet become a reality. But just within the last few months, since the most destructive weapon of modern warfare has made its appearance, the people of the world have become frightened by the atomic bomb and this fright seems to be hastening the desire for a government that will rule not but one nation, but literally ALL THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD. And if there would be any nation who would not wish to join such a world government, that nation would automatically be stigmatized as an aggressor nation, and one that must become the automatic enemy of all other nations.

In a speech before the Foreign Relations Forum a well-known writer said: "Even without the atomic bomb, the logic of total war leads to elimination of (individual) nations. This war reduced the world to only a few power unities. Serious tensions can arise. Only between these, and all issues between these, become issues of life or death. Thus with the atomic bomb, the struggle for power becomes inevitably a struggle for world mastery. The existence of a few great powers, each sovereign, can only precipitate further tests—and eliminations. Only one authority, with world control, ultimately can have the atomic bomb, BECAUSE ONLY A WORLD OF ONE AUTHORITY CAN ABANDON ITS USE. If this is not recognized we shall have an atomic war—this time a war genuinely to end war, by the establishment of the world mastery of the victor. The question is of course, how much would be left of the one world created as the outcome of another war. Must we fight that war to establish world unity by domination of the victor? Or shall we now establish world unity by a cooperation and pooling and delegation of power to one single world authority". And then this author finishes by saying: "WORLD PEACE DEMANDS ONE WORLD". Nearly all modern writers and thinkers are today speaking the same language and thinking in terms of one "world government", even though they may differ as to various details of its administration, and even though underneath it all is a terrible suspicion that Russia is not and never was a true ally of the allies during the war just ended. But "world government" is the aim and goal of the nations of the world today, even including Soviet

is for a "world Soviet State".

Upon this whole concept of "world government" we wish to comment in this article. In the first place we see nothing new, or surprising, in this whole idea or trend to unite all the nations of the world into one government, for it is very plainly the fulfillment of prophecy. This "United Nations" has not been created by man, nor has it been invented by human beings. God Himself gives to us in Scripture this concept of world government, and predicts that it will be the striving of the Anti-christian, and therefore godless, world, especially near the end of time. So that we may see in this striving at "world government" a sign that we are certainly nearing the end of time.

In Revelation 13, God reveals to us that two beasts shall arise, one out of the sea and the other out of the earth. Together they represent the Anti-christian world of the last days. But the beast that arises out of the sea is the one we are interested in at the present time. For that beast, coming out of the sea, represents the anti-christian world, from the viewpoint of its political world-power. We read of that beast that it has the general appearance of a leopard, though having the feet of a bear and the mouth of a lion. It has seven heads and ten horns, and on its horns are ten crowns. Also we read that it receives its power and authority from the devil himself, and the whole world admires the beast. In harmony with the rich symbolism of the book of Revelation, there is deep meaning in the fact that the beast comes up out of the sea. For is not the sea in Scripture always the symbol of the masses of peoples as those peoples become restless and seeth and foam as the windswept seas? "The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes and nations and tongues". See Rev. 17:15. And in Daniel 7:2 the sea of people are again mentioned as they are stormswept and rough,—undoubtedly referring to the masses of the peoples as they are also stormswept by the tides of human emotion and by wars and afflictions and pestilences, including all the horrors following in the wake of wars. Also it is plain that the beast in Scripture is representative of political world-power. This too is amply made plain to us when you read further in Daniel 7 that the beasts represent kings, with the domain over which they rule. So that the Scriptures clearly picture to us that the final and last manifestation of the anti-christ will be as a great world government, with power to enforce its commands even to the ends of the world. A confederation of all the nations, wherein a voluntary agreement is reached to unite under the devil himself. Certainly it shall be a voluntary agreement, entered into by all the kingdoms of the world, for we read that the kings "have one mind and shall give their power and strength unto the beast". And that this "world government" will

ten horns of which we read, are ten kings. And ten is the figure of fulness, even as the ten commandments represent the full expression of the Divine will. So that the ten kings refer to the kings of all the earth, both those of so-called and nominal Christendom as well as those of the pagan and heathen nations. Surely out of the turbulent sea, from out of the peoples of the earth, swept by the awful wrath and judgments of God, the beast arises. The political anti-christian world-power will unite for a short time into ONE government of all the nations of the earth. Even the nations on the four corners of the earth, such as Japan and China and Russia and India and Africa, will temporarily give their power to the beast, together with the nations within the center of earth's history such as the European countries and Great Britain as well as America. But we must remember that they all have their power and strength and authority from the DRAGON, i.e., the Devil. O, let us not be deceived by the deceiving promises of peace and prosperity and love unto all men, in that "world government". Do not be deceived when the church prays for such organizations and its success. Do not be deceived when the church world follows after that beast and extols the "United Nations" and admires it and exhorts you and I to seek for its success, in order to prevent a future destruction of all civilization, as it is stated. As though such a "world government" is the way out of the world's troubles. It is not.

We should remember that attempts have been made before this, to unite all the peoples under one government. It was tried already in the valley of Shinar not long after the flood of waters swept over the land as God's judgments against the wicked world of that day. Also then the people strove for unity under the mighty dictator Nimrod. Also then it was *not pious* to be one people and one language. God condemned it and scattered the peoples far and wide in order to prevent at that time a consummation of the anti-christian world power. He gave with the confusion of tongues, a deadly wound unto the Beast. But we read in Rev. 13 that the deadly wound was to be healed. The division of the peoples of that day would in the end of time be healed and the peoples would be allowed to unite into a universal "world government". God will then permit, what He allowed not to happen 4000 years ago. And since that first failure, many attempts have been made. If one but carefully reads history, it is plain that the Assyrian and Babylonian and Persian and Grecian and Roman kingdoms sought after worldwide domination. In our own days we have seen the attempt repeated by Hitler and undoubtedly we today see it attempted by that sphinx of Moscow, Joseph Stalin of Russia. The peculiar thing about it all is that such striving after worldwide unity and authority, as practiced by Hitler under the banner of Nazism and practiced now by

Stalin under the banner of Communism, is attempted by the very people who denounce it. America and Britain, who condemned the unity of Europe and the world under Nazism, now attempt the unity of the world under democracy, even to the extent of forcing democracy(?) down the throats of the conquered nations. This democratic unity of all the nations of the world was helped along tremendously by the invention of the atomic bomb. That bomb frightened all peoples, even its own inventors, to seek union of all peoples and nations, into the so-called "world government".

ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE THIS ATTEMPT WILL SUCCEED FOR A SHORT TIME. But instead of seeing good in it and instead of praying for its success, we will certainly have to condemn it, also on the basis of Scripture. That "world government" is the manifestation of the Beast, which in turn is the revelation of the Anti-christ. For that "world government" has upon its heads the name of blasphemy. Yes, let us hear God's evaluation of that world government. "And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue 42 months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints and to overcome them; and power was given him over all kindreds and tongue and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

And therefore, people of God, let us not be deceived with the vain boasts of those whose kingdoms and desires are but of this world. God is fulfilling prophecy and unfolding unto us the things that must shortly come to pass. And let us be patient, with the faith of the saints, looking for the kingdom of the glorious Son of God, Whose kingdom is not of this world. And though in the anti-christian world kingdom you shall have tribulation, and blasphemy will be heaped upon you for the sake of your Christ, nevertheless be of good courage, for also THAT "world government" is overcome by our Lord Jesus Christ. And ours is the victory, through Him.

L. V.

IN MEMORIAM

The consistory of the Protestant Reformed Church of Bellflower, California hereby wishes to express sympathy to our brother-deacon, Mr. Peter Vander Meulen in the loss of his wife,

MRS. PETER VANDER MEULEN

May the Lord comfort the brother with the assurance that all things work together for good to them that love God.

The Consistory, L. Doezeema, Pres.

J. Bekendam, Clerk.