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MEDITATION

Lijdzzaamheids-Vreugde

Acht het voor groote vreugde, mijne broeders! wanneer gij in velerlei verzoekingenv valt; Wetende, dat de beproeving uws geloofs lijdzaamheid werkt. Doch de lijdzaamheid hebbe een volmaakt werk, opdat gij moogt volmaakt zijn en geheel oprecht, in geen ding gebrekkelijk.

Jak. 1:2, 4.

Hooge woorden!

Acht het voor groote vreugde. . . .

Louter vreugde, niets dan vreugde is het, wanneer gij in velerlei verzoekingenv valt!

We kunnen daar zoo maar ineens niet bij. Jakobus zweeft ons in al te hooge sfeeren. En hij valt ons ook ietwat al te plotseling op t' lijf. Dit woord, ja, vooral dit woord, had wel behoefte gehad aan eene inleiding, waardoor we misschien langzamerhand in de heilighdommen Gods zouden kunnen ingaan, waardoor we zachtens en geleidelijk zouden worden opgevoerd naar de geweldige hoogten, vanwaar dit woord ons tegenklinkt.

Misschien had dit woord beter aan 't einde van den brief kunnen staan.

Wij willen immers, ook in betrekking tot die dingen, die we overigens wel weten en toestemmen, gaarne pedagogisch worden behandeld! En nu valt Jakobus zoo ineens met de deur in huis: "Jakobus, een dienstknecht van God en van den Heere Jezus Christus; aan de twaalf stammen, die in de verstrooiing zijn: zaligheid. Acht het voor groote vreugde, mijne broeders! wanneer gij in velerlei verzoekingenv valt." . . .

Korter kon het zeker niet.

Onverwachter kon deze vermaning moeilijk zijn.

Ach! weet Jakobus dan niet, dat wij niet op de

hoogten verkeerenv, dat wij nog wonenv in de vallei dezer wereld, des vleeschenv, der aardse dingen, der dingen, die gezien worden? Vergeet hij het dan geheel en al, dat wij, o, ja, wel een klein beginsel der nieuwe gehoorzaamheid hebben, maar dat we zoo gewoonweg, zoo in den dagelijkschen gang van het leven, veel meer en veel dichter bij de aardse dan bij de hemelsche dingen, bij de natuurlijke dan bij de geestelijke dingen leven, dat hij ons zoo plotseling uit de hoogte toeroept? Hier, in de vallei der aardse en vleeschelijke dingen, spreken we immers doorgaans andere taal. Hier zeggen we: "het leven is toch dierbaar"; of: "wat hebben we 'thier nog goed"; en: "gezondheid is een groote schat;" en we vragen: "wat zullen we eten, of wat zullen we drinken, of waarmee zullen we ons kleeden."

Och, ja, we weten het ook wel: we behooren eerst het koninkrijk Gods te zoeken en Zijne gerechtigheid.

Maar, we moeten toch ook met de werkelijkheid van het leven rekenen. En die werkelijkheid is dan toch maar, dat we moeten leven, dat er, niet alleen vandaag, maar ook morgen, en overmorgen, en de volgende week, en maand, en het volgende jaar, en zoover als we zien kunnen, eten en drinken en kleeding en nog zooveel meer moet komen. En we moeten een huis hebben om in te wonen, en brandstof om het te verwarmen, en geld om het alles te kunnen betalen, en eene positie in de wereld om het noodige geld te kunnen verdienen. En daarom is de werkelijkheid van het leven hier in de vallei, waar wij wonen, dat we ons bezorgd maken tegen den dag van morgen, daar we immers zoeken de dingen die op de aarde, niet de dingen, die in den hemel zijn, waar Christus is, zittende aan de rechterhand Gods. . . .

Weet Jakobus dit alles niet, dat hij zoomaar, zoo heel onpedagogisch, zoo zonder inleiding of voorbereiding, bij ons aanklopt met een woord, dat lijnrecht tegen ons vleesch indruischt, dat ons veel te hoog is? Vreugde in verzoekingenv?

Ons verblijden, omdat we midden in de verzoekingenv vallen?

Verzoekingenv? Maar beteekent dit woord niet, dat

juist alles wat ons hier op aarde dierbaar is, ons ontvalt? Wil het niet zeggen, dat we op ons krankbed gekluisterd liggen; dat we onze positie verliezen, en geen andere kunnen vinden; dat er oorlog in 't land is, en onze zonen uit onze woningen worden weggerukt, om straks misschien op 't slagveld een wreeden dood te sterven? Wil het niet zeggen, dat we om Christus' wil moeten lijden; dat we dagelijks voor de keuze komen te staan om Hem te verloochenen of ons leven, onze positie, onze betrekking, onzen naam, onze eer bij de menschen, onze vrijheid, alles te verliezen? Velerlei verzoeken? Wil dat eigenlijk niet zeggen: hoe meer hoe beter? En om het ten slotte zoo sterk mogelijk te maken, zegt Jakobus niet, dat we ons moeten verblijden, als we er midden in vallen, zoodat we van alle zijden er door omringd zijn, en nergens een uitweg zien?

't Is ons te hoog!

Bij 't hooren (en toch niet *hooren*) van dit woord rijzen er aanstonds allerlei bezwaren, bedenkingen, bezwaren uit ons vleesch in ons op!

't Is gemakkelijk praten, maar Jakobus moest er ook maar eens zoo voor zitten als wij. We moeten toch ook leven! We zijn dan toch maar in deze wereld, en we moeten er ook door! En wie verblijdt zich nu in lijden? Wie zingt nu, als alles hem tegenloopt? Als we ziek zijn, mogen we dan niet om herstelling bidden? Als er oorlog is, bidden we dan niet om vrede? Als er geen werk is, houden we dan geen biddagen om welvaart?

En nu, zoo maar ineens: Louter vreugde, mijne broeders!

Houdt het er voor!

Bezie! al die verzoeken als oorzaken van enkel blijdschap!

Hemelhooge woorden!

Wetende. . . .

Ja, zoo staat het er: *wetende!*

Dat wil dus zeggen, dat deze vermaning van Gods Woord door den dienstknecht van God en van den Heere Jezus Christus, toch niet in de lucht hangt, zich toch aansluit bij iets, dat we wel weten.

Het wil zeggen, dat we ook wel vele andere dingen weten, de dingen der ervaring, de dingen van ons dagelijksch leven; dat er ook wel in ons eene wetenschap is, waardoor we streven naar de dingen, die beneden, die op de aarde zijn; dat, indien er geen andere wetenschap in ons is, deze vermaning tot vreugde in en om de verzoeken zeker boven ons uitgaat en ons te hoog moet blijven, ja, ons dwaasheid zal zijn; dat we, weliswaar, met ons natuurlijke wetenschap en onze natuurlijke begeerten tegen deze woorden van den dienstknecht des Heeren zullen rebelleeren met al, wat in ons is; maar dat er, door Gods genade, in ons nog een andere wetenschap is, eene hoogere, geestelijke wetenschap, waardoor we niet aanmerken (en let wel: *niet*

aanmerken) de dingen, die gezien worden, maar de dingen, die niet gezien worden; en dat deze hoogere wetenschap niet maar naast, op ééne lijn, of ook zelfs maar dualistisch tegenover die andere, natuurlijke wetenschap in ons staat, maar deze overheerscht, overwint, het zwijgen oplegt. . . .

En dan, in het licht van die wetenschap, spreken we eene andere taal.

Dan krijgen we houvast aan dit woord van den dienstknecht van God en van onzen Heere Jezus Christus.

Dan kunnen we *hooren* het doorlopende woord der Schrift: "Zalig zijt gij, als u de menschen smaden en vervolgen, en liegende allerlei kwaad tegen u spreken. Verblijdt en verheugt u, want uw loon is groot in de hemelen, want alzoo hebben zij vervolgd de profeten, die voor u geweest zijn." En ook: "En niet alleen dit, maar wij roemen ook in de verdrukkingen." En ook: "Het is u uit genade gegeven, in de zaak van Christus, niet alleen in Hem te gelooven, maar ook voor Hem te lijden." En ook: "Want onze zeer lichte verdrukking, werkt ons een gansch zeer uitnemend eeuwig gewicht der heerlijkheid." En ook: "Wie zijn leven zal willen behouden, die zal het verliezen, maar zoo wie zijn leven zal willen verliezen om Mijnentwil, die zal het behouden."

Wetende. . . .

Och neen, niet maar met eene zekere verstandelijke kennis, waardoor ge 't wel weet, maar er toch geen houvast aan hebt, geen moed toe hebt, geen licht in ziet; maar met de kennis des Geestes, des geloofs, waardoor ge de verhouding van de natuurlijke tot de geestelijke, van de aardsche tot de hemelsche dingen in een nieuw licht ziet, ze anders waardeert; waardoor de dingen van Gods Verbond u 't hoogst en dierbaarst zijn; waardoor Gods gunst u meer is dan de uitgezochtste spijzen, en Zijne goedertierenheid u beter is dan 't leven; waardoor ge de belofte gelooft, omhelst, er naar grijpt, streeft, met al wat in u is, er op vertrouwt met uw gansche hart, de stad zoekt, die fundamenten heeft, en belijdt, dat ge gasten en vreemdelingen op de aarde zijt. . . .

Dan, ja dan, begint ge deze vermaning te hooren: Acht het voor groote vreugde!

Op die lijn van het zoeken der dingen, die boven zijn, van het omhelzen der belofte, van de rechte waardeering der eeuwige en hemelsche en geestelijke dingen, ligt immers ook hetgeen Jakobus hier noemt als voorwerp dezer wetenschap: "dat de beproeving uws geloofs lijdzzaamheid werkt."

Eigenlijk moest hier vertaald zijn: "uw beproefde geloof."

De bedoeling is: die verzoeken, van welken aard ze ook zijn, door welke de vijand, de wereld, uw vleesch, de duivel, u bedoelt ten val te brengen, en die uit dat oogpunt dus *verzoeken* zijn, staan onder de hooge

souvereiniteit uws Gods en van den Heere Jezus Christus, en hebben daarom eene andere bedoeling dan die des vijands: ze moeten uw geloof beproeven. Ze zijn bedoeld om Gods genadewerk te toetsen, de kracht er van te doen uitkomen, de heerlijkheid, de onoverwinnelijkheid, de eeuwigheid, de vastheid er van te doen uitkomen, tot lof en prijs en heerlijkheid in de openbaring van Jezus Christus.

Het gaat eigenlijk in den grond der zaak om uw God, om uw Heer!

En als God u nu zoo in het midden van den smeltkroes der beproevingen werpt, dan is Hij bij u met Zijne genade; dan ondersteunt Hij u, en dan versterkt Hij in u, naar de mate van de zwaarte der beproevingen, Zijn eigen genadewerk; dan wordt ge gelouterd, gereinigd, geheiligd, verrijkt. En dan ontvangt alzoo uw geloof een beproefd karakter: Christus heeft meer gestalte in u gekregen, ge zijt meer en vaster in Hem geworteld, Hij is meer alles voor u geworden, ge smaakt meer de liefde Gods, die in uw hart is uitgestort, ge zijt rijker geworden in de genade en kennis van onzen Heere Jezus Christus.

En dat beproefde karakter van uw geloof werkt nu lijdzaamheid.

Dat wil zeggen: ge zijt overwinnaar in den strijd geworden, zoodat ge nu verder den vijand zonder vrees kunt ontmoeten.

Lijdzaamheid toch is die genadekracht, waardoor ge het lijden om Christus' wil kunt verdragen, en dat wel met het oog op het loon, op de stad, die fundamenten heeft.

Ge ligt niet onder. Ge zijt overwinnaar, meer dan overwinnaar.

Ge ziet alle dingen, ook de verzoeken, ook al het lijden dezes tegenwoordigen tijds, in het licht der belofte, der eeuwigheid, van Gods eeuwig vriendschapsverbond. Ge zijt u bewust van de levende hope door de opstanding van Jezus Christus uit de dooden. Ge omhelst de belofte met een vast geloof en blijmoedige hope.

En ge hebt het leeren verstaan: "Het lijden dezes tegenwoordigen tijds is niet te waardeeren tegen de heerlijkheid, die aan ons zal geopenbaard worden."

[Het lijden mag voorts zwaar zijn, maar voor uw beproefd geloof is het licht: "de zeer lichte verdrukking, die welhaast voorbijgaat!"]

Ge zijt door middel van de velerlei verzoeken, naar Gods bestel en doel, verrijkt met eene groote schat van geestelijk heil!

En ge verheugt en verblijdt u!

Wetende. . . .

En ach, nu zijn we hier, in het lichaam dezes doods, in de vallei van de aardse dingen, zoo licht geneigd om naar die andere, die aardse en vleeschelijke wetenschap te leven en te handelen, zoodat we daarnaar leven,

En als dan de verzoeken toch komen, is er in ons geen kracht en geen moed om ze te dragen ten einde toe.

En daarom moet ons van uit de geweldige hoogte der geestelijke werkelijkheid altijd weer worden toegeroepen: Mijne broeders! leeft uit het beginsel dier andere wetenschap, die van boven is!

Acht het voor groote vreugde!

Uw geloof wordt beproefd!

Lijdzaamheid wordt uw deel!

Ge overwint!

Ten einde toe!

Er mag van een halverwege op den weg neerzinken, of teruggaan, of afwijken geen sprake zijn.

Dan toch behaalt ge de overwinning niet. Dan plukt ge de vrucht niet. Dan smaakt ge deze vreugde nimmer.

De lijdzaamheid hebbe een volmaakt werk!

Dat wil zeggen, ge moet den strijd strijden, de beproevingen verdragen, het lijden verduren, ten einde toe, niet alleen uit het oogpunt van den tijdsduur der beproevingen en verzoeken, maar ook ten opzichte van hare diepte en zwaarte, en van de offers, die zij van u vergen.

De weg kan soms lang zijn.

En hij kan al banger worden.

En dan kunt ge aan het begin soms meenen, dat daar reeds de overwinning lag. Job werd zwaar verzocht. Alles werd hem ontnomen. En op één dag stond hij bij de lijkkasten van zijne tien lievelingen. Doch ziet, hij was lijdzaam. Hij aanbad. Hij had de overwinning. Satan had het verloren. De knecht des Heeren riep uit, terwijl hij bij de ruïnen van al zijn bezittingen stond, en zich boog over de tien graven zijner zonen en dochteren: "De Heere heeft gegeven, de Heere heeft genomen, de naam des Heeren zij geloofd!" 't Was de overwinning. Edoch, 't was nog pas het begin der verzoeken. De weg werd al donkerder. En 't duurde lang. En 't scheen, dat Job toch op den weg zou bezwijken. . . .

De lijdzaamheid hebbe een volmaakt werk!

Temidden der verzoeken moet ge geheel oprecht en volmaakt zijn, in geen ding gebrekkelijk.

Er moet niets aan ontbreken.

Ook als de beproevingsweg lang wordt, al langer, en er geen eind aan schijnt te komen. Ook als de verzoeken op dien langen weg steeds meerder en steeds zwaarder worden, het vuur in den smeltkroes al maar heeter wordt. Ge begint met gesmaad te worden om Christus' wil. Straks verliest ge uw positie. Eerlang gaat het om uw vrijheid, uw leven. . . .

Zijt getrouw tot den dood!

Immers ligt daar voor u, tot in den dood, de belofte Gods: de kroon des levens!

Groote vreugde!

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EDITOR — Rev. H. Hoeksema

Contributing Editors:—Rev. G. M. Ophoff, Rev. G. Vos, Rev. R. Veldman, Rev. H. Veldman, Rev. H. De Wolf, Rev. B. Kok, Rev. J. D. De Jong, Rev. A. Petter, Rev. C. Hanko, Rev. L. Vermeer, Rev. G. Lubbers, Rev. M. Gritters, Rev. J. A. Heys, Rev. W. Lofman.

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

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EDITORIALS

The Conclusions and The A-Group

One who can re-call, from experience, the tension that existed between the A- and B-group of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands just before 1905, is not in need of documentary evidence to convince him that the Conclusions of Utrecht were not adopted *contrary to the former*. He knows that, in that case, a large number of A-men would have made the union of 1892 undone.

The opposition against the views of Dr. A. Kuyper came from them.

It was they who brought their objections to these views to the Synod of 1905.

Had they been put in the wrong by the Conclusions of Utrecht 1905, they would have separated. And this would have been all the easier in those days because the synodical union of 1892 was, locally, far from accomplished. That they were called A and B was not simply reminiscent of the past. It meant that in many places the churches of the two groups did not have fellowship together, stood sharply opposed to each other. In the city of Groningen, where undersigned lived till 1904, the Reformed Churches A and B congregated on the sabbath in four different meeting places. Normally, according to the system in vogue in the Netherlands, the entire group would have been one congregation. The different ministers would, alternately, have preached in all the churches. However, the actual situation was that the one B-minister never preached in the A-churches, and the ministers of the A-churches never appeared in the pulpit of the B-church. Nor was this situation due merely to ministerial antagonism. The people themselves were deeply interested. They listened closely to the preaching to detect any trace of deviation from the truth as they saw it. And they often had lively discussions about *supra* and *infra*, mediate and immediate regeneration, presupposed regeneration, and related doctrines. This was especially true of the A-group. Moreover, the school question was acute, and the relation between Kampen and Amsterdam was tense. Already there had been an attempt to abolish Kampen in favor of Amsterdam, and the A-group deeply resented this.

I was at that time member of the A-Church, but attended and was member of what was virtually a B-Young Mens' Society. And it is not at all difficult for me to recall the tenseness of the situation on those days.

But for one who never lived in that situation, book-

lets like "In Den Chaos," "Rondom 1905," and especially "De Wachter over 1905" are very enlightening and informative.

They remind us of the tension before 1905 between the A- and B-groups. They show how deeply serious the A-group was about the controversy in regard to the question of presupposed regeneration. The A-men strongly insisted that "Holy Baptism does not signify and seal *what is present in the child to be baptized*, or what is *presupposed* to be present, but the promises of the covenant, revealed in the gospel." And they explained that: "It is therefore in conflict with our Confessions to teach that, not the promise of the covenant, but internal regeneration, the being regenerated of the child that is baptized, is sealed." "De Wachter over 1905," p. 6. In the beginning of 1905 the professors L. Lindeboom and M. Noordtzijs, published a brochure, which was signed by forty church-members, in which they threw light on the controversial points, and which was particularly addressed to all the consistories and members of the Reformed Churches. Cf. *Rondom 1905*, p. 97 ff.

And they remind us of the agitation against the Kuyperian teachings on the part of "De Wachter," under the editorship of the Rev. T. Bos of Bedum.

It is on the background of this situation and of that attitude of opposition to the views of Dr. A. Kuyper Sr., particularly to that of presupposed regeneration, that the fact must be explained that, after 1905, the A-men were rather satisfied, proposed that all should abide by the Conclusions of the Synod of Utrecht, and changed their attitude of opposition to one of cooperation.

This is simply a matter of history.

The aggrieved leaders of the A-group did not in all respects fully agree with every expression in the Conclusions, but they felt that this was hardly possible in view of the fact that they meant to be a compromise statement about the controversial points. But they felt that the warning implied in those Conclusions, to avoid all extremes, was chiefly directed against Dr. A. Kuyper and the B-group. The Rev. T. Bos wrote in "De Wachter" that the Synod had closed the door to further deviations from the Confessions; and this was necessary to satisfy the consciences of the aggrieved A-brethren. Cf. "De Wachter over 1905," by J. Van Hulsteyn, p. 13. He admits that Synod had expressed itself somewhat vaguely and in general terms, but he considers this praiseworthy, in view of the fact that she looked for a declaration in which all could find themselves, and to which both sides could subscribe. *Idem* p. 15. The fourth of the Conclusions, that concerning the covenant and the meaning of baptism, the Rev. Bos explains as being directed, on the one hand against those that recognized no difference between covenant children and those that were without; and, on the other hand, against those who held that children

of believers were regenerated at birth, and that in all the children of the covenant regeneration must be presupposed; and as teaching that the sacraments seal no internal grace but the promise of the covenant. *Idem* p. 16. The Rev. J. Westerhuis, a determined A-man, published a special, separate edition of the Conclusions, and in "De Wachter" he wrote about them as follows: "We cannot deny that the Synod *in re* the controversial points took a step in the right direction. Those ministers who were of the opinion that they did not have to adhere to the letter of the Confessions, if only they did not abandon the 'reformed principles' received a good lesson (*een gevoelige les*). If, as rumors have it, no account is taken of the short declaration of Synod, the way is open in such cases, to bring the matter to the attention of the consistory, and if need be to the classis. As far as we are concerned, we are very much pleased with this short declaration, and this explains that we provided the opportunity for all the members to secure a copy of it." *Idem*, p. 24.

There is, therefore, abundant evidence that the A-group were well satisfied, even rather pleased with the Conclusions of Utrecht 1905. They considered that, in the main, they directed a warning at the address of the B-men, of those who emphasized presupposed regeneration.

Now, what is the meaning of this historical fact?

Let me give the answer by quoting the Rev. C. Veenhof, who writes on page 53 of his "In Den Chaos":

"In the present time, it is sometimes alleged that the proposition of Prof. Lindeboom and his group, viz. that baptism does not seal internally realized grace, but only the promise of the covenant, was *condemned* by the Synod of 1905. It is pure folly to aver anything like this! The views of Prof. Lindeboom were completely left outside of the scope of consideration by the Synod. Let us not forget that he was not the *accused* but the *accuser*! Or, still more foolish, it is also argued that Prof. Lindeboom, during the debate on the floor of the synod, though it did not intentionally refer to this question, was *converted* to the view of Dr. Kuyper! Believe it who will! It is simply ridiculous to even suppose such a thing. How could Prof. Lindeboom, a few years later, have written that the Synod of 1905 had decided the doctrinal differences, 'in the main', 'in the spirit' of himself and those that agreed with him?"

In other words: "Prof. Lindeboom and his group could heartily agree with this clause (the beginning of the fourth conclusion, that concerning "het houden voor wedergeboren")! They stood unmoveable on the basis of the doctrine, maintained by their synod, and taught and defended by themselves from their very youth, that baptism does not seal anything that is *in man*, but the promise of God." *idem*, p. 53.

Or, more briefly: the Synod of 1905 had not decided contrary to the A-group, as the editor of *The Banner* thinks (contrary to Heyns, who was definitely an A-man), but in their favor.

And the Christian Reformed Churches ("Church" according to Kuiper) never meant to take a position *contrary to Heyns*, when they adopted the Conclusions of Utrecht in 1905.

Nor did they adopt the theory of presupposed regeneration.

By adopting those Conclusions, the Christian Reformed Churches ("Church" according to Kuiper) rather took the stand favored by the "Liberated Churches" in the Netherlands of today.

The truth of this can be demonstrated in still another way.

But this must wait till the next issue, D. V.

H. H.

The Liberated Churches In The Netherlands

We were to prove that the general position of the Liberated Churches, viz., that all the children of believers are really in the covenant in virtue of the promise, i.e., that the promise is for them all, is contrary to the plain teaching of the Bible on this point.

It is exactly this teaching that is denied in Rom. 9:6-8.

The ninth chapter of the epistle to the Romans teaches plainly that God's sovereign predestination cuts right through the historical line of the covenant, and, in the generations of believers, makes separation between children of the promise and children of the flesh.

That this is emphatically and exactly the point in Rom 9:6-8 is denied by the leaders of the Liberated Churches. Instead of the antithesis: *election and reprobation*, they insist that the antithesis: *faith and unbelief* determines, according to the teaching of Rom. 9, who are children of the promise and who are children of the flesh.

That this is their contention may be proved from an article by the Rev. R. H. Bremmer, in *De Reformatie*, Vol. 20, No. 48, from which I translate the following:

"This concerns the great problem raised in Rom. 9-12 (9-11? H.H.), and in connection with it Galatians 3. It is this great problem: is the Word of God become of none effect, now the blessing of Abraham is bestowed on the Gentiles, and Israel is rejected? Is this in conflict with the faithfulness to His Word once given?

"That is the problem raised here. *The passage is not concerned with the relation of election to the covenant*, or with the relation of the carnal to the spiritual seed, even though these questions are touched upon here, but the great question underlying these chapters is this: can it be harmonized with God's promise, and with His faithfulness, that Israel is being rejected and the Gentiles are accepted?"

The italics in the above quotation are mine.

According to the Rev. Bremmer, it is this question which the apostle Paul in the passage from Romans and in Galatians 3, answers negatively. And attend to the following:

"He purposed, already when He gave His promise to Abraham, to bestow His salvation upon the Gentiles. He waited long, centuries, in fact, with the realization of this purpose. He waited until out of Abraham's seed the Christ should have been born, in order then to realize fully that which He already intended to do at the time of Abraham. But already in the tents of Abraham and Isaac, He showed them something of that which He intended to do later.

"For even then the Lord showed clearly that His salvation was not bound to the carnal seed. For Abraham had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac. Both were circumcised. *The covenant benefits were promised to both.* But what saith the Scripture? 'Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.' (Gal. 4:30). The one is a son of the promise, born not out of the natural considerations of Abraham and Sarah, as Ishmael, but born from the supernatural power of the word of promise. This is Isaac. And the other is the son of Abraham's 'invention', that he could perhaps be established through Hagar. And this son is now struck with the vengeance of the covenant. He is exiled from the camp of Abraham, excommunicated as a covenant-breaker. Even then, therefore, God partly revealed that carnal descent from Abraham does not guarantee eternal salvation, *but only faith in the promise of the Messiah Who would come in the line of Isaac.* Even then God cut a dead limb out of the tree of Abraham."

Again the italics in the above quotation are mine. They are intended to bring out that the writer presents both Ishmael and Isaac as having the promise of the covenant, while the fact that the former does not receive the promise is ascribed to his unbelief only. Whether this is in harmony with the teaching of Rom. 9, we will investigate presently.

The writer continues:

"Even as the Scriptures says of Esau that he was a fornicator (Heb. 12:16), that is, a covenant-breaker, who was struck by the curse of the covenant. Again God cut out a dead limb from the living tree of Abraham.

And then, in the camp of Abraham, the tremendous law was revealed that not all are Israel that are of Israel; that carnal descent does not guarantee a spiritual, believing, God-fearing disposition of the soul, cf. Matt. 3:9; John 8:36-44, nor reception or possession of, or participation in the promise of salvation. . . . There is a covenant-vengeance and a covenant-blessing, and the dreadful reality of this became already evident in Ishmael and Esau. Likewise the elective, sovereign good pleasure of the Lord became evident. Carnal descent surely does not guarantee participation in the blessings of the covenant. *For this faith in the promise is necessity, compliance with the covenant-demand that accompanies the covenant-promise and is inseparably connected with it.*"

Again I underscore, and for the same purpose that the writer makes faith and not predestination the deciding factor to determine whether one receives the blessings of the covenant.

One more quotation:

"Thus also must be understood vs. 8 of Romans 9: 'That is, they which are of the flesh, these are not the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.'

"Carnal descent does not determine the reception of the blessings of salvation, *only faith in the promise does this* (I underscore, H.H.). But the reality of this law does indeed not exclude the fact that all the children of believing parents are really children of the covenant; if only, in the covenant, we maintain the covenant-curse and the covenant-blessing next to each other, and we do not separate promise and demand, but view the position of the children in this light."

I might quote more.

But the above is sufficient to show that the Rev. Bremmer so interprets Rom. 9:6-8 that not election and reprobation, but faith and unbelief are the deciding factors in determining who receives the blessings of the covenant that are promised to all.

However, it should not be difficult to see that the author badly distorts the plain meaning of the words in Romans 9.

Let us follow the reasoning of the apostle.

He is dealing with a tremendous fact. Not only was the nation of Israel as such rejected, but thousands upon thousands of individual Jews did not enter into the kingdom of God, had no part with Christ and the blessings of salvation, now the promise of God was realized through the death and resurrection of Christ, His exaltation and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. They did not receive the promise. Facing this fact, the apostle faces the question: how must this be explained in the light of the promise to Abraham and his seed? Were they not Israelites, children of Abraham? And if so, did not the covenant pertain to them? Did they not have the promise of God? And was not

the promise of God: "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee"? Where, then, was the fulfillment of this promise? In the light of this promise to Abraham and to his seed, how must it be understood that so many of Abraham's seed never received the blessings promised, were rejected?

This question the apostle puts in a very specific form, at least by implication: Is the Word of God fallen out, become of none effect? Did God fail to realize His promise to the seed of Abraham?

It is this question which he answers in the first part of Rom. 9.

And how does he answer it?

Does he say: No, the promise of God is faithful, and the Word of God has not fallen out, but the promise was conditional, contingent upon the faith of those to whom it was promised; and since many did not believe the promise they did not receive the blessings promised to them, bequeathed upon them, as the Rev. Bremmer would have it?

Not at all. There is not a word in this passage that suggests such an interpretation.

Moreover, in that case, the Word of God, the promise to Abraham, would indeed have become of none effect, and that, too, through the unbelief of Abraham's seed. And it is exactly this that the apostle emphatically denies. The Word of God has not fallen out. Man's unbelief cannot bring to nought the faithfulness of God.

But, thus he informs us, under the promise to Abraham and his seed not all the children according to the flesh are comprehended!

The Word of God has not become of none effect: it never had reference to all the descendants of Abraham!

That is the meaning of Rom. 9.

More about this next time, D. V.

H. H.

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland, Michigan, hereby wishes to express its heartfelt sympathy to our brother-elder, Mr. H. A. Van Putten, in the loss of his wife,

MRS. H. A. VAN PUTTEN

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

W. Hofman, Pres.

R. Bouwman, Clerk.

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

Part Two.

Of Man's Redemption

Lord's Day XVIII

2.

The Presence Of The Ascended Lord (cont.)

We must bear in mind that it is *He* of Whose presence with us the Catechism speaks.

He, Jesus Christ our Lord, is ever present with us in His Godhead and majesty. He it is that never leaves us in respect to His grace and Spirit.

It is the presence of the Son of God in the flesh, Who united Himself with our nature, and still is God and man in unity of the divine Person; the Presence, not merely of God the Creator, Who calls the things that are not as if they were, but of God our *Redemptor*, Who quickens the dead; of Him Who died for our transgressions, and Who was raised for our justification, in Whom God was reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and Who is exalted in the highest heavens, the ascended Lord Who led captivity captive, and Who, as the Head of the Church, received the promise of the Holy Ghost. He, the revelation of the God of our salvation, in Whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily, Who is our wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, is never absent, but ever present with us.

As such He is present with us as respects His Godhead.

His Godhead is His divine nature, the implication of all infinite perfections, His self-existence and independence, His eternity and immensity, His sovereignty and immutability, His infinite wisdom and knowledge, His boundless love and mercy, His absolute righteousness and perfect holiness, His limitless power and Lordship over all created things. With respect to His Godhead He is eternally in the bosom of the Father, co-essential with Him and with the Holy Ghost. He is the Son, the Word of God, the effulgence of the Father's glory, the express image of His substance, Who knows the Father and is known of Him; Who loves the Father and is loved of Him; Who dwells with the Father and the Holy Ghost in eternal fellowship of perfect friendship, and Who has life in Himself.

With respect to that Godhead He is ever present, never absent.

And if now we forget that it is He, the Christ, the God of our salvation, that is thus present with us as to His Godhead, the statement of the Catechism becomes quite general, devoid of any special significance. For in that case it simply means that, as Christ is God, and the Godhead is omnipresent, He is immanent in all things, and, therefore, always near us. As He is in the heavens above and on the earth beneath, as He is in the rain and in the sunshine, in the lightning and in the thunder, in river and sea, in lake and brook, in flower and tree, in the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air; and as He upholds all things by the Word of His power, So He is also present with us, in us, about us, and sustains us by His power. But in that sense the statement expresses nothing special about *the kind* of nearness and presence with us of the Son of God.

But how different a conception we obtain of this presence the moment we remember that it is the Godhead of the Christ of which we are speaking, or rather, that it is He Himself, personally, Who with respect to His Godhead is never absent from us, but always near! For then we believe and understand that it is the presence of the mighty God *that is for us*, of which we are trying to say something. It means that He favors us. It implies that He employs and applies all His divine virtues, His wisdom and power, His infinite love and mercy, in behalf of our salvation. It signifies not merely that He is present with us in His providence, but it characterizes and defines that almighty and allwise providence for us as a government of everlasting, immutable, ever faithful love. It denotes, moreover, that He is present with us in His divine life, His covenant-life, and that He reveals the Father unto us, that we, too, might partake of His life, and share in His covenant fellowship. The Redeemer-God, Christ our Saviour, is ever present with us as respect His Godhead!

He is present with us with respect to His majesty.

Majesty is the dignity of royalty, the glory of sovereignty, the authority of lordship. And Christ has majesty. As Son of God, in His divine nature, He is the absolute Majesty in Himself. He is the Lord, clothed with divine dignity, absolutely sovereign over all, possessing all and the only power and authority in all creation for ever. And at His exaltation also His human nature was clothed with majesty, for all power was given unto Him in heaven and on earth. He rules. He judges. He executes judgment. His Word is quick and powerful, sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing to the dividing of soul and spirit, of the joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart.

But again, we could but tremble and quake with terror at the presence of His majesty, were we forgetful of the truth that it is *His* majesty that is never absent from us; that it is *He*, the Christ of God, Who

loved us even unto death, and Who was raised for our justification, that is present with us constantly and forever. Now we still tremble and fear, indeed, but with the awe and reverence of love. We know that this awful majesty loves us, that He employs His royal power and dignity unto our salvation, that His mighty sovereignty rules over us in boundless grace. And being thus ever present with us as respects His glorious majesty, He makes us longing and willing to bow before Him, to know and to do His will. Conscious of the constant presence of His majesty, we work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, and become diligent to strive to enter into His rest.

And so we understand also that, finally, His presence with us as respects His grace and Spirit, is not something additional to the foregoing, something separate from the rest, but that it rather explains the mode of His whole presence with us.

He is not present with us in respect to His Godhead and Majesty, and in addition to this, also with His grace and Spirit, but the former are modified by the latter: it is a gracious Godhead, and a gracious Majesty, that are present with us through Jesus Christ, our ascended Lord.

His grace and Spirit: these two belong together.

They are not to be conceived as coordinate in their relation to each other, but rather thus that the one is the cause, the source, the author of the other. In and through His Spirit, He is present with us as respects His grace.

Of His Spirit we must speak in a later connection.

For the present it is sufficient that we remember that this Spirit is the Holy Ghost but as the Spirit of Christ, the ascended Lord. For to Christ as the Mediator of redemption, as the Head of His Church, the promise of the Holy Spirit was given. And this promise was fulfilled when He ascended up on high, and sat down at the right hand of God. For He ascended up on high, leading captivity captive, that He might give gifts, glorious gifts of grace, gifts of forgiveness and righteousness, of holiness and love of God, of eternal life and glory, to men. Unto this end He received the Spirit. And in that Spirit He returned to His own, to dwell in them and be with them for ever. For the apostle Peter proclaims on the glorious day of Pentecost: "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which we now see and hear." Acts 2:33.

In that Spirit He is ever present with us.

And that presence is full of grace.

Through the Spirit He is gracious to us, causes us to taste His grace and makes us partakers of all the blessings of grace He merited for us. Of this we must speak in our next chapter.

Thus, then, is the nature of the presence of our ascended Lord.

And this presence is constant. He never leaves us.

We may not be, and are not always conscious of this blessed nearness of the God of our salvation, but His presence never fails. We may wander far away sometimes, as sheep that go astray, so that we are quite oblivious of His presence; but He never forgets us, neither forsakes us. Nor does He ever fail to bring us back from our evil wanderings to the blessedness of His fellowship. But in the measure that we live by faith, hear His Word, walk in His way, we also experience that Christ, the ascended Lord, as respects His Godhead, majesty, grace and Spirits, is ever present with us!

The consciousness of that presence is the joy of faith.

H. H.

Freedom From Condemnation

There is therefore now no condemnation for them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

Romans 8:1.

The eighth chapter of the Romans is a beautiful, inspired song of redemption, sung in the pure and clear atmosphere of the wondrous grace of God on the very mountain-tops of faith. Beginning with the negative, yet emphatic declaration that there is no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus, the apostle sings of the glorious liberty of the sons of God, of their freedom from the law of sin and death, of their blessed hope of everlasting glory, of their safety and preservation in this present world, and of the certainty of their final adoption unto children and heirs in the day of Christ. The law of the Spirit of life made them free from the law of sin and death, and they walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. The Spirit of God in Christ Jesus dwells in them, causes them to mind the things of the Spirit, leads them, so that by His grace they mortify the deeds of the body, witness with their spirit that they are the children of God, and is the earnest of their final salvation. Sons of God they are, and co-heirs with Christ. And even though in this world they will have to suffer with Him, they may be assured that they will also be glorified with Him. And the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in them. All creation, now subject to vanity and to the bondage of corruption, eagerly

looks forward and groans in longing for its share in that glorious redemption of the sons of God. And we ourselves, that have the firstfruits of the Spirit, also groan, as we are saved in hope, while the Spirit within us prays for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. And the realization of this future glory is absolutely certain. It is rooted in God's immutable counsel. To that end all things must work together. God is for us. Christ died, was raised, is exalted at the right hand of God, intercedes for us. And nothing in heaven, on earth, or in hell, can ever separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us!

All this is introduced by the emphatic statement of the first verse: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus!" And to this we would like to call your attention more particularly.

It is plain that in these words the apostle draws an inference, a logical conclusion from what he had expounded in the preceding part of the epistle. I would find the connection, not in any expression in the immediately preceding chapter only, but in all that has been set forth in the previous section concerning the righteousness of God which is by faith in Christ Jesus. "There is therefore now no condemnation." The word "now" does not imply that there was condemnation before, but that now it is removed, for there never was any condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus. Rather must we understand the words as meaning: "in the light of all that was expounded concerning the righteousness of God by faith, it is now evident that there is not, that there never was any condemnation at all for those that are in Christ Jesus!"

Thus conceived, the words have a tremendous significance!

To apprehend their full import we must understand that they place us, sinners, in our present existence, with all our present experience in judgment before God, the righteous and only Judge of heaven and earth. For that is the implication of the word "condemnation". It is a legal term. It means that God sits on the throne of judgment, and that we stand before Him as the defendants. It implies that the Most High judges us according to the strictest standards of justice and righteousness, and that He passes sentence, expresses His verdict concerning our moral, ethical state. And, mark you well, we must realize that this is a present and constant reality. We dare not project this whole situation into the future, the still distant day of judgment, as if the text should mean that in that future judgment day we shall be judged and acquitted. For that would deprive the text of its tremendous significance. It is true that there will be a day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God, and that in that day it will publicly and finally appear that there

is no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus. Nevertheless, this is not the meaning of the words here. We must conceive of the judgment as present. We are now in judgment. For always God judges. And always He passes a righteous judgment, and expresses a righteous verdict upon us. And that verdict is, for those that are in Christ Jesus: *No condemnation!*

Do not imagine that this negative expression is rather weak, and that the declaration of the apostle would have been much more forceful if he had written positively that there is an eternal righteousness for us. For by the negative assertion the apostle refers to our real situation, to what we are in ourselves, and to what verdict might be, nay, must be expected when we stand in judgment before God. Condemnation, utter and complete condemnation, nothing but condemnation, could possibly be expected when we stand before the bar of divine justice. For God is the righteous Lord. He is God! He is the Holy One, that can have no communion with sin. He cannot deny Himself. When He judges, His judgment must always be according to righteousness. He cannot acquit the guilty. His favor cannot be upon the ungodly. To the sinner He is a consuming fire, always, in time and eternity. O, if you might conceive of God as some good natured being, who winks at sin, and who is so weakly and effeminately merciful that He cannot maintain His righteousness and pass a righteous judgment, there would be nothing profound and amazing in the statement of the apostle that there is no condemnation. In fact, then there is no condemnation for any man, and the addition: "for them that are in Christ Jesus," has no sense. But now it is different. The words place us before God, Whose very essence is justice and righteousness, and Who will surely reward every man according to his works!

And, as we stand before that highest tribunal, what is our situation? Is there, in our present existence, anything at all that can serve as a basis for the hope and expectation that there is no condemnation? You know better. The very opposite is true. The fact is that absolutely everything in our present situation loudly and persistently clamors for our condemnation. Nay, what is worse, everything very definitely testifies that we are already, that we are always under condemnation. As mere men, we are born under condemnation, for with the whole human race we are guilty of Adam's transgression, and we are children of wrath. Moreover, our nature is corrupt, so that there is no good at all in us, and we are always inclined to do evil. And we know it, and are keenly aware of it, when we stand before the judgment seat of God. Moreover, whatever may be our boast of righteousness before men, when we face the Judge of heaven and earth, we know only too well that we have sinned, and that we have always corrupted our way. Our own conscience

accuses us, and loudly proclaims to us the inevitable judgment of God that we are under condemnation. And so does all our experience in our present existence. For we lie in the midst of death, and there is no way out. We are mortal and corruptible. We suffer and die. And in all our suffering and death we feel the heavy hand of God, the Judge of heaven and earth, upon us. His wrath is revealed from heaven! Condemnation, utter and irrevocable condemnation,—that is the testimony that is, as it were, shouted at us from every side, as we stand before the bar of God's justice!

Thus conceived, the words of the apostle are seen to have an astounding significance. They are not the expression of actual experience at all, but its flat contradiction. Our own conscience condemns us, yet here is a testimony that overcomes and contradicts the voice of that conscience, and says: there is no condemnation! Our relation to Adam condemns us and assures us that we are children of wrath, yet here is a bold declaration that lifts us out of that damning connection with the human race, and asserts: there is no condemnation! All our actual sins clamor for our condemnation, yet the words of our text contradict their persistent clamor and declare: there is no condemnation! All our experience emphatically witnesses that we lie in the midst of death, yet even while we suffer and die, the words of our text would have us cry from the depth of death: there is no condemnation! They are not the words of experience, but the triumphant shout of that faith that overcomes the world, and that casts itself upon the mercies of God, and clings to Him as seeing the Invisible!

And the words are very emphatic. In the original they read: in no respect is there any condemnation. Experience testifies that there is condemnation in every respect: in respect to our relation to Adam and the human race, in respect to our original guilt, in respect to our corruption and the defilement of our nature, in respect to our actual walk and life, in respect to our suffering and death: wherever we look, and from whatever aspect we consider our present existence and situation, there is nothing but condemnation. But as we by faith lay hold on the Word of God in our text, we boldly declare that in all these respects there is no condemnation. Positively, this means that according to the judgment of God Who cannot lie we have no sin, we are perfectly righteous, we are the objects of God's favor, and worthy of everlasting life and glory! In the midst of sin we declare that we are righteous! Under condemnation we insist that we are justified! Crying from the depth of death, we triumphantly claim that we have eternal life! There is no condemnation!

But how is this possible?

Where may be found the solution of this paradox? The answer is in the words: "for them which are

in Christ Jesus." These words signify that in the midst of the natural body and organism of the human race, of which Adam is the head and first father and root, and which lies under condemnation and wrath, there is another, a new corporation and body, of which Christ Jesus is the Head and representative. And for those that belong to this new corporation, and that are members of this spiritual body, there is not, there never was, and there never will be condemnation. In Christ Jesus, and because of their relation to Him, they are free from the condemnation of the whole human race, perfectly righteous, and worthy of everlasting life and glory. Where does this new body have its origin? Who forms it? How do we become members of it? And how do we know that we belong to it, and that, therefore, we are free from condemnation?

The answer to the first question takes us to eternity, to the eternal sovereign grace of God. For this new, spiritual corporation and body for the which there is no condemnation, has its origin solely in God's eternal counsel of redemption. Christ Jesus is the eternal Son of God, ordained from before the foundation of the world to be the Head of His people, their Redeemer from sin and death, the Captain of their salvation through Whom it pleased God to lead many children to glory. And the members of this corporation, those that are in Christ Jesus, are those whom God has from all eternity chosen in Him. Christ Jesus and His body were established and determined in eternity by the sovereign grace of God. For thus the Word of God teaches us in Eph. 1:3, 4: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." That is why we said that there never was condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus. Even though in time they are born as children of wrath, in God's eternal counsel they stand eternally as the company of the redeemed and justified and glorified! For them there is no condemnation!

(to be continued)

H. H.

LECTURE

By the Rev. H. Hoeksema

Subject: Children of the Promise.

Date: Thursday, February 7, 1946.

Place: Gospel Hall, South Park and W. Vine Streets, Kalamazoo, Mich.

THROUGH THE AGES

The Second Degradation of the Papacy, and the Reform Popes

In the previous article regard was had to the first degradation of the papacy, which occurred in the tenth century. As we saw, the popes of this period with few exceptions were wicked men, the reason being that their election was controlled by political factions in Rome headed by Italian nobles. As was explained, from the tyranny of these nobles the papacy was rescued by Otho I surnamed the Great. Otho and his successors—Otho II (937-983) and Otho III (983-1002) did the papacy a great service. They delivered it from the power of Roman nobles, restored it to wealth, and placed in the papal throne occupants who were at least not criminals. But the reform of the papacy was only temporal. It was followed by a second period of disgrace that lasted till the middle of the 11th century. After the death of Otho III, the papacy passed under the control of the counts of the powerful Tusculum family in Italy. The next three popes—Benedict VIII (1012-1024) John XIX (1024-1032), and Benedict IX (1033-1048) were the creations of these counts. All three were unworthy, but the last—Benedict IX—was one of the worst occupants of the papal throne. His two predecessors had bought the papal dignity by open bribery, and his election likewise was a mere money bargain between the Tusculum family and the clergy and the populace of Rome. He was a boy of only ten or twelve years of age when he became pope, but this boy-pope equaled and even surpassed John XII in wickedness. He was childish and vicious, growing worse as he advanced in years. He committed murders and adulteries in open day-light, robbed pilgrims on the graves of martyrs, and converted Rome into a haunt of thieves. And his crimes went unpunished; for a pope could be judged by no man but by God alone. Besides, Gregory was patrician of the city, and Gregory was the brother of this Benedict; and Alberic, the powerful count of Tusculum, who had spared no money in getting him elected, was his father. Desiderius, afterwards pope under the name of Victor II, speaking of him, styles him Simon the Sorcerer and describes him as abandoned to all manner of crime. It is reported that at one time he wanted to marry his cousin and to seat her in the papal chair; but the father of the woman refused unless he abdicated the papacy. There were at this time two powerful factions in Rome, dividing the city into two hostile

camp. The one was headed by the aforesaid counts of Tusculum and the other by the Roman family of the Ptolemies. The latter, making use of the reports of the daily rapines, murders, and abominations of Benedict, stirred up the Roman people against him. The result was that he was expelled from the city and the victorious faction—the family of Ptolemies—placed John, Bishop of Sabina, under the name of Sylvester III, in the papal chair as antipope (Jan. 1044). Perceiving that he had become an object of public contempt and abhorrence, on account of his enormous wickedness, Benedict decided to part with the popedom, and accordingly sold it to John Gratian, who assumed the name of Gregory VI. Regretting the bargain, Benedict claimed the dignity again. Thus, there now were three popes claiming possession of the papal throne—Benedict IX, Sylvester III, and Gregory VI. Their rivalries bespoke the general condition of Italy. The streets of Rome were filled with hired assassins and the whole country with robbers. Henry III, emperor of Germany, of the house of Franconia, hearing of the dreadful disorders that prevailed in Rome, and entreated by the advocates of reform to take action, went to Rome in person to enquire upon the spot into the conduct of the popes and the state of the church. Arriving at Sutri, a small town about twenty-five miles north of Rome, he ordered Gregory VI to convoke there a synod to consider the claims of the three rival pontiffs. Benedict IX and Sylvester III were declared usurpers, simoniacs, intruders and as such deposed. Gregory VI—likewise had bought the papacy. But as he otherwise was a worthy person—his purpose in buying the papacy was to reform it—he was allowed to depose himself, which he did in these words, “I, Gregory, bishop, servant of the servants of God, do hereby adjudge myself to be removed from the pontificate of the Holy Roman Church, because of the enormous error which by simoniacal impurity has crept into and vitiated my election.” Then he asked the Council, “Is it your pleasure that so it shall be?” to which the assembled fathers replied, “Your pleasure is our pleasure; therefore, so let it be.” Thereupon he divested himself, in full council, of the pontifical robes, surrendered the pastoral staff, renounced all claim to the papal chair, and begged for forgiveness. Simony is the vile doing of buying the sacred office with a price. But there were few popes in the tenth century whose election was not vitiated by this sin. And as compared with the atrocities of many of these Judases, the sin seemed a small one. Of the three deposed pontiffs, Gregory is the one who is recognized in all the catalogues among the lawful popes. The see being vacant by the resignation of Gregory, Henry nominated and the clergy and the people chose a new pope, who assumed the name of Clement II and who crowned the king emperor. So was the papacy again rescued by a

king of Germany—rescued for the second time from political factions in Rome.

The control of Henry III over papal elections was complete for the rest of his days. He raised successively to the papal throne four of his own selections—the aforesaid Clement II, who survived his election only nine months; Damascus II, who died twenty three days after his consecration; Leo IX and Victor II. Leo IX was a man of noble birth, venerable appearance and spotless character, who vigorously addressed himself to the task of reforming the church by holding synods and enforcing papal authority in the condemnation of priestly marriages and simony. Toward the close of his career he undertook a military expedition against the Normans in defense of church property. Defeated and taken prisoner, he gained release again by granting the Normans their conquests. Victor II, who died two years after his election, was the last of these German popes. After his death, the people of Rome, as led by the reformers, elected Stephen IX, Aug. 3, 1057; but he died in the following year. The death of Stephen resulted in a crisis. The corrupt Roman Nobles, from whose overlordship the papacy again had been rescued by Henry III, set up a pope according to their own mind, who named himself Benedict X. The reform party protested, but they could effect nothing against superior force and were obliged to flee. The situation was saved by one man—Hildebrand, the soul and leader of the reform party. He gathered his followers in a small town—Siena—in the vicinity of Rome, and there the bishop of Florence was chosen as Nicholas II. The new pope was made master of Rome by a military force supplied by a lay ruler in Italy—Godfrey of Tuscany.

The most significant event of the pontificate of Nicholas II was the enactment of a special law on the matter of papal elections. Heretofore the popes had been chosen by the clergy and the people of Rome. That was called a canonical election. But in the past, as we have seen, the people often had been bribed to raise to the papal throne the candidate of whatever political party was dominant in Rome. The aim of the new legislation was twofold, namely, to remove that evil and to free the election of the popes from the control of the kings of Germany. Accordingly, it provided that the pope should be chosen by the college of cardinals, which included not all the clergy but the presbyters of the most important churches in Rome, the leading deacons or heads of the charity districts into which Rome was divided, and the suburban bishops. It provided, did the new legislation, that the selection of this body be submitted to the people for approbation. It refrained from giving the emperor a share in the choice but stipulated that the pope might come from anywhere in the church. The new constitution governs the election of popes to this day. That the papacy at

this juncture, dared to break with the king of Germany can be explained. Henry III had died, 1056, and his son and heir to the throne, Henry IV, then was a boy of six, under the regency of his mother, Agnes. But the papacy was well aware that it could not maintain itself without the military support of some temporal power. It could count on the aid of Godfrey of Tuscany. But this was not enough. The Normans were chafing under the yoke imposed upon them by the German crown. Aware of this, Nicholas II acknowledged their conquests, freed them from their allegiance to the Emperor and annexed their territory to his own throne. He claimed that right on the ground that, being lord of lords, it lay also within his power to grant and withhold kingdoms. The Normans did not demur. They were eager to league with the pope in freeing themselves from the shackles of the emperor. The conquests of the Normans included also Lower Italy, where dwelt the Lombards and besides many Greeks and Arabs most of whom were heretics. But Nicholas carefully avoided any interference with heretics, for he did not want to be hindered in his operations for the aggrandizement of the church. The papacy, as it became flesh and blood even in these reform popes, was ready to twist itself into any shape in order to achieve its aims for world dominion. As strengthened by these new alliances, Nicholas II now dared to assert himself which he also did by forbidding lay investiture under any circumstances.

Pope Nicholas II died July 27, 1061. Some months later the cardinals under the guidance of Hildebrand, elected a new pope, who took the name Alexander II (1061-1073). But the German bishops, resentful of a method to papal election that excluded their king, did not acknowledge him, but chose for their pope at a council held at Basle, bishop of Parma, under the name of Honorius II. The election of this anti-pope was a protest against the new system of church government of these Hildebrandian popes. Especially hated was the ordinance forbidding the clergy to marry. Thus, the opposition included the married clergy and the simoniacal laity. What was desired is a modification of discipline and legalization of clerical marriage. All hopes were pinned on the ability of Honorius to maintain himself. Doubtless, he would have won, were it not for a single event. Anno, arch-bishop of Cologne, wrestled the tutorship of Henry IV out of the hands of his mother Agnes and threw his influence on the side of the reform party. This hastened a decision of the contest. A synod of German and Italian bishops, held at Mantus, May 31, declared Alexander the rightful pope and anathematized Honorius, who disappeared from history.

Not only in Rome but throughout the church, the office of bishops had become a matter of traffic and sale. The evil practice is known by the name "simony"

The reason of this abomination, which proceeded from the seat of the pope, will be made plain in the sequence. It will be found that the root of this evil was the acquisition of enormous material wealth by the Roman hierarchy. All during his pontificate, Alexander II, as supported and encouraged by Hildebrand, made relentless war against simony by threatening the offending bishops with excommunication. By the same weapon, he made war also against clerical marriage. But in Germany there again arose a powerful opposition to the Hildebrandian polity, which led to the conflict between Gregory VII (Hildebrand) and Henry IV. Alexander extended papal jurisdiction remarkably. With Hildebrand's guidance, he sanctioned the piratical expedition of William the Conqueror against England in 1066, knowing William's plan to bring the English see under papal jurisdiction.

Alexander II died April 21, 1073. After a three days' fast, ordered by Hildebrand, the cardinals assembled to elect a new pope. Even during the progress of the funeral service of Alexander the people shouted, "Hildebrand shall be pope." A bishop ascended the pulpit and declared, "Men and brethren, ye know how since the days of Leo IX Hildebrand has exalted the Holy Roman Church, and defended the freedom of our city. And as we cannot find for the papacy a better man, or even one that is his equal, let us elect him, a clergyman of our church, well known and thoroughly approved among us." The cardinals and the clergy replied, "St. Peter elects Gregory (Hildebrand) pope." The people bore him to the church of St. Peter, where he was clothed with the pontifical robes, and declared elected, as :a man eminent in piety and learning, a lover of equity and justice, firm in adversity, temperate in prosperity, according to the apostolic precept (I Tim. 3:2), 'without reproach. . . . temperate, sober-minded, chaste, given to hospitality, ruling his house well'. . . . already well brought up and educated in the bosom of this mother church, for his merits advanced to the office of archdeacon, whom now and henceforth we will call Gregory, pope, and Apostolic Primate." We must attend to his conception of the relation of church and state. The rulers in those days did not believe in the separation of church and state in the sense that, according to divine ordinance, each must limit itself to its own sphere of operation. Church and State, such was the conception, formed the Christian commonwealth. According to the papal party it is the pope, but according to the imperial party it is the emperor, who forms in this commonwealth the supreme judicial power, and this as the vice-gerent of Christ in church and state. Hence, we see emperors like Otho I, and Henry III depose and elect popes; and popes like Gregory VII and Innocent III depose and elect emperors. Hildebrand's principles are well set forth in the *Dictatus* of Cardinal Deusdedit. "The Roman church

was founded by God alone. The Roman pontiff alone can with right be called universal. He alone can depose or reinstate bishops. It may be permitted him to depose emperors. He himself may be judged of no one. He may absolve subjects of their fidelity to wicked rulers." On these principles Hildebrand, as pope, reigned and strove for nothing short of world dominion. And because of the uncommon consistency and vigor of mind and will with which he acted upon these principles, and also because of the success which he achieved, he has been surnamed "The Great". The war which he waged was at bottom an unholy contest between priestcraft and statecraft for all power on earth.

But the prospect of bringing the world at his feet seemed not any too bright to Hildebrand, judging from his lamentation in which he describes the condition of the times:—"The Eastern Church fallen from the faith, and attacked by the infidels from without. In the West, South, or North scarcely any bishops who have obtained their office regularly, or whose life and conduct correspond to their calling, and who are actuated by the love of Christ instead of worldly ambition. Nowhere princes who prefer God's honor to their own, and justice to gain. The Romans, Longobards, and Normans among whom I live, as I often told them, are worse than Jews and heathens. And when I look at myself, I feel oppressed by such a burden of sin that no other hope of salvation is left to me but in the mercy of Christ alone." How could he, a mere man, even with the weapons at his disposal,—Excommunication and the Interdict—ever succeed in binding a world of such men to his throne! But aside from this, who was Hildebrand to complain about bishops actuated by worldly ambition, and about princes preferring their own honor to that of God and gain to justice! He was to them all the shining example of such perfidy. He complains about the people of his patriarchate being worse than heathens; but what else could he expect seeing that what he sought was not the church in the world but very actually the world! What else could he expect considering the methods that were employed in bringing the heathen into the church? And well might he be oppressed by his sins, especially by the sins of usurping Christ's place in the universe, of using excommunication to frighten men into kissing his toe, and also of inventing the interdict for the aggrandizement of the church. Had he wanted to be of real benefit to the church, he would have renounced his worldly ambition, stepped down from his throne, disposed of his vast estates, and become a common pastor and admonished all the bishops to do likewise. Yet he died, May 25, 1085, with these words: "I have loved righteousness and hated iniquity; and therefore I die in exile", to which one of his bishops replied, "Nay, in exile thou canst not die, who, as the

vicar of Christ and his apostles, hast received all the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possessions" (Ps. 2:8). As well as any words could, these words of that bishop set forth the absurd pretention of Gregory. That it was thought that this pope in his dying moments could take comfort from the mention of it, is revealing. We must now attend to the acts of this pontiff by which he sought to secure his power and freedom of the church. This will be done in the article to follow.

G. M. O.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

Faith Rewarded

Ruth, so we saw, had made the good choice. She was dead to Moab, to the pleasures of Moab, which were the pleasures of sin; dead was she to Moab's idols, but she was alive to God. Thus she wanted God, His people, and Naomi. Forsaking Moab and all that Moab represented, she went to God in Canaan. He was calling her to His sanctuary. Naomi, considering that the blessings of Abraham were for Israel alone—it was the dispensation of shadows—was insistent that Ruth return to her people. But she was adamant. Great was her faith and great therefore was her determination that nothing should deter her. "Cease urging me to leave thee. . . ." said she to Naomi. Then she left off speaking to her. But she was still doubtful. Yet, in the end she was made to see that Ruth was truly accepted of God. She gained permission of Naomi to go to the field and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight she might find grace, and the Lord directed her feet to the fields of Boaz, who bestowed upon her signal favors and blessed her. Considering her good confession and her love of God and of His people and of Naomi, mindful of how she had come to trust under the wings of Israel's God, he perceived that she was of the sheep of God's pasture, despite her being a Moabitess. Naomi, too, perceived, that the Lord had accepted Ruth's person, and joyfully exclaimed, "Blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead." This exclamation of Naomi on hearing the name of Boaz, is worthy of careful attention. Without knowing what field to select, Ruth had lighted on that of Boaz. Without knowing who he was, she was favored by him. Naomi profoundly recognized God's hand in this. Let us remember that her great grief was that God's hand

her. He had slain her husband. And her two sons had died in the land of Moab without children. Thus there was no man child left to her to perpetuate the name of her husband and to repossess his inheritance in Israel. Hence, his name was to be extinguished and as, upon Naomi's death, his inheritance would go to his nearest kin, his very place in the Israelitish commonwealth, the (typical) city of God, would know him no more. That to her was the certain token that the Lord had forsaken her dead. He had blotted out their name and taken from them their place in His country. This was her great grief. For to every God-fearing Israelite the land of Canaan was heaven. For there dwelt God. There His people sought and found His fellowship. Considering the calamity that had befallen her and the departed, it seemed that God had excluded her and them from His fellowship. It was as she lamented. "I went out full". 'I had husband and sons and a name and place in Israel.' "And the Lord hath brought me home again empty," empty of all these.

True, there was a law in Israel (Deut. 25:5) that when a man died without issue, his brother was bound to marry his widow. This was the right of the woman. She could demand it of him, and if he refuse, put him openly to shame. The firstborn of the woman succeeded in the name of the deceased husband that his name be not put out in Israel. The law reads, "If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him a wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother unto her. And it shall be, that the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel." Thus the firstborn, that she bore, was accounted the issue of the one who had died, in order that his name and place might be perpetuated in Israel. If a man die without children, a branch withered in the family tree. To remedy this, the brother married the widow, and regarded the son she bore as heir to the name and the inheritance of the deceased husband. And if there was no brother, the law, as given in Deut. 25:5 ff, does not declare it, but it is an inference in accordance with its spirit, that in that case the obligation passes over to the nearest relative of the deceased. This is what the narrative of our book plainly shows. Naomi understood these things certainly. Yet, at first she could take no comfort from them, for she herself was too far advanced in years to bear and Ruth was a heathen with respect to whom the law could not operate. Of this she felt certain. To her mind there could be no husband for Ruth among Elimelech's kin in Canaan. She could not see how the covenant of Jehovah, established, as it was, with Abra-

time, she must have perceived that any heathen, who like Ruth, came to trust under the wings of the Lord God of Israel, was accepted of him and His people. Boaz had understanding of this and likewise all the elders and the people. For Ruth is blessed of them all. There is the notice, "And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, . . . The Lord make the woman that is come unto thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem: And let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the Lord shall give thee of this woman." Assuredly, Naomi, too, knew that if the Moabitess truly sought she would find and that asking she would receive. Hence, the reason of her urging Ruth to return to her people was not that, to her mind, a truly converted heathen found no favor with God. Such a strange belief could not have been hers. The reason that she with such persistence, urged Ruth to return was that, whereas Ruth was a Moabitess, she had great difficulty in believing that Ruth, in cleaving to her, was truly being constrained by the love of Christ, and not by a purely natural love of Naomi. Either wittingly or unwittingly, she put Ruth to the severest test. And the test was endured. Every one in Bethlehem, hearing Ruth's story, concluded that her heart was with God and His people. And of God and His people she was accepted. And when Naomi heard of Ruth, that, without knowing what field to select, she had lighted on the field of Boaz, she instantaneously perceived that the Lord had not, as it had seemed, left off His kindness to the living and to the dead, that is, to her deceased husband and to her deceased son, the husband of Ruth. Having heard Ruth's story of her experiences of the day, she was persuaded, that, however ill-deserving she and her dead might be, the Lord would not blot out Elimelech's name but would perpetuate his name and place in Israel, and this by uniting Ruth and Boaz in marriage. Thus, despite her sins, the Lord was for her and the dead. She and they were forgiven. For He showed them kindness. Her joy was full. And she blessed Boaz.

That Naomi so interpreted Ruth's lighting on the fields of Boaz and the latter's kindly treatment of Ruth, is plain. Having heard Ruth's story, she said to her, "The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen." In saying this to Ruth, she had reference, certainly, to the obligation under which the law in Deut. 25:5ff. put Boaz with respect to Naomi, Ruth, and the dead. And even now, she was persuaded that Boaz would assume the obligation. How otherwise could she say that the Lord was showing kindness unto the living and the dead. The marriage would take place. Of that she was confident. It was in this confidence that she instructed Ruth to glean in no other field but that

of Boaz for the rest of the season. It was again in this confidence that, at the end of the barley harvest, she actively sought rest for Ruth, that it might go well with her. She sent Ruth to request Boaz to fulfill the right. Now this right had its symbol, under which it was claimed. We are made acquainted with it by the words addressed by Ruth to Boaz, and by her action in drawing an end of the coverlet over herself. Boaz had eaten and drunk and his heart was merry, and he went to lie down at the end of a heap of corn. Then came Ruth softly, uncovered his feet, and laid her down. Becoming aware of her presence at midnight, he was startled. "Who art thou," he said to her. And she said, "I am Ruth thy handmaid, spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman." The reply of Boaz is worthy of careful attention. "Blessed be thou of Jehovah, my daughter! Thou hast made thy latter kindness even more beautiful than the former, inasmuch as thou followest not young men whether rich or poor." Ruth's former kindness approved itself, when, after the death of her husband, she left parents and home in order to take care of her mother-in-law, unmoved by the certainty of misery and humiliation in a foreign land. And this is what she does now. Young and comely, she might before this looked out a husband according to her wish, rich or poor, from among the young men of Israel. But this she did not. Instead of preferring the love of young men, as were natural, she came to assert her right with one more advanced in years and this one was Boaz, her redeemer. She asked him for the protection of his wings, in order that he, a blood relative, may again raise up a name for her husband and mother-in-law. In this also she offered her heart and happiness as a sacrifice of love to her family. She had come to trust under the wing of Jehovah and she was ready to run the way of His commands. Doubtless Boaz was no longer young. But Ruth found rest with him more than she would have found among thousands of young men.

Trembling, Ruth had done what she had been instructed. What Boaz hitherto had said, contained no decision but only praise. Hence, he speaks to her again, addressing her as daughter. He will do all that she required: for "all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman." However, there was a kinsman, nearer than he, who proved unwilling. So Boaz took Ruth and she was his wife.

G. M. O.

No foreign foe provokes alarm,
But enemies within;
May God destroy their power to harm
And recompense their sin,

IN HIS FEAR

Instruction In The Word

In our last article under the general heading "IN HIS FEAR," we emphasized that 'the man of God must be thoroughly furnished unto all good works.' We also brought out that in this furnishing unto all good works the Church Institute has to perform a very vital task. And we promised to say something more in our next article about the question as to how the Church must quit herself of that task.

We live in an age wherein the Church by various means tries to hold on to her youthful members and keep them in her bosom. This effort in itself is laudable. A church which is not interested enough in her own membership and puts forth no effort to keep her members, give guidance, instruction, leadership to her youth, is not worthy to even exist. We may go still further and say that a church ignoring and neglecting her seed, her children, is actively engaged in committing suicide by strangulation. She is doomed to die as an organization, and that for the very simple reason that she is not at all interested in her own future and wellbeing. The church of tomorrow is the outgrowth of the church of today, the youth is the future of the church. Neglect the youth and you destroy the church by the mere process of gradual elimination.

However, the very fact that a church puts forth effort, even special effort, to retain her youth does as yet not imply that she 'furnishes the man of God unto all good works.' She may do many things for her youth, but unless she does the right thing she does not live up to her God-given calling.

Alas, there are too many churches in our day which sadly neglect their basic calling with respect to the coming generation and waste their time with trivialities. A host of societies are organized and many programs are held which have nothing at all, or scarcely anything, to do with the basic calling of the church toward her seed. Having a strong desire to keep her youth, many a church caters to the wishes of her 'seed' and gives the youth the things they crave. For that reason the church sponsors clubs and societies which chief purpose it is to entertain the youth, to give them a good time, to emphasize bodily exercise, to stress health and hygiene. This is also to a great extent the purpose of recreational youth centers for young people who belong to the same church, denomination, or in the broader sense of the word can be classified as christian youth.

Now, the writer of this article is the last one to claim that our youth should not have a certain amount

of entertainment, bodily exercise, etc. (Although personally I am not at all athletically inclined, was always clumsy at it, and neither did I ever care for all kind of social activities). However, the complaint is heard often that the church is doing *nothing* for her children, for the youth, in the line of entertainment, social activities, etc. And this complaint is hurled against the church as a rather grievous accusation, an indictment. There are those, and often young people express themselves that way, who seem to have a notion that the 'Church' must *do* something in that line. If any reader of this article also has that notion, I would say to such a person: "My friend, this is not at all the business of the church." Don't expect entertainment, youth centers and what have you, from the church. It's not the calling of the church, it does not lie within her sphere of labor, it is none of her business.

The foregoing does not mean that the church has no interest in these things, but it means that all such things are not sponsored by the church, the initiative to bring these plans, programs and entertainments into being, does not at all proceed and should not proceed from the church institute. And when the church nevertheless, perhaps sometimes under pressure of its own members, starts with these things, she is definitely on the wrong track. She neglects her specific calling, undermines the very foundation of her existence, becomes a secular organization, and deteriorates spiritually.

No, but the church must *furnish the man of God unto all good works*. And the church is an institution which is preeminently fit for this particular task. You ask "Why"? Because the church handles the Word of God, preaches, declares, proclaims the Scriptures. That is her God-given task, as is very plain from the Scriptures themselves.

And "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." That's why *Scripture* is the means whereby the man of God is furnished unto all good works.

If your aim in life is not any higher than to do 'works', you do not need Scripture. You can learn 'work' on a farm, in the kitchen, in a school, in a machine shop, in a college, in a university, etc. The world has a great many institutions which are well qualified to make you an expert in your particular trade, vocation, field of labor. To give a clear example of what I mean: If you want to become a good auto mechanic you don't need Scripture, because the Bible is no text book for various trades, but you must study mechanics, and you must acquire practical experience in a garage, etc.

On the other hand, if you are ever to become an expert in performing 'good works', as we have defined and described them in a previous article, you need

Scripture. The world *cannot* furnish you unto all good works. And that for the simple reason that the world lies in darkness, is spiritually corrupt, lives in enmity toward God, denies the truth of God, loves, teaches, practices the lie. The world is spiritually-ethically corrupt, and for that reason can never furnish the man of God unto all good works that are *spiritually-ethically good*. The wisdom and philosophy of the world is indeed enmity with God.

From the foregoing follows with iron logic that Scripture is the sole means whereby the man of God may be furnished unto all good works. I said the *sole* means, and that is just exactly what I mean. Perhaps you ask, "But is there proof for this?" Yes, indeed, there is, and ye have this very definitely and specifically stated in II Timothy 3:16. This text, which we quoted already, states some very fundamental principles. From the text it is as clear as crystal that if it is your aim in life to be equipped with the necessary knowledge to please God to live to His Name's honor and glory in every sphere of life, you need the Word of God. For the Word of God, and the Word of God alone, reveals His will, it is a light upon our path and a lamp before our feet, and it is the complete and sole source of information we need to be pleasing unto him and to become equipped to serve Him with all our heart and mind and strength, 'to be thoroughly furnished.'

For the above text clearly states that Scripture is first of all profitable unto doctrine. The Word of God furnishes us positively with the knowledge of the truth, of the will of God. Would you like to know how to live, how to please God, would you like to know His will and constantly learn more about it, learn it better, understand it deeper? Then you need the Scriptures, and they can, will, and do tell you all you need to know. And, as we saw in a previous article, in order to perform good works, it is indeed 'basic' to know the will of God.

In the second place, the Word of God is profitable to train us into righteousness, because that Word of God tells us how we must live in this world in every sphere of life. It teaches us to discern between light and darkness, good and evil. It gives us all the precepts of God which we are to observe in our entire life, and it states the principles which must guide us in our every thought, word, deed, and in our entire walk of life.

In the third place, the Word of God is also profitable for reproof, for correction. It is profitable to convict us of sin, warn, condemn, rebuke us if in any way, manner or situation of life we have gone astray. It admonishes us constantly to walk in the ways of God, and it unhesitatingly condemns our every evil thought, word, deed. The Word of God is absolutely uncompromising, and it is at all times a shining light upon the

way of all those who love to walk in the precepts of our covenant God.

Therefore, we need instruction in the Word of God, in the inspired Scriptures if we are to be furnished unto all good works. And for that purpose we need *nothing else* but the Word.

If you agree with the foregoing and clearly grasp its meaning, you will also immediately understand why the Church is a very important institution to furnish the man of God unto all good works. Yea, the church is preeminently fit for this task. In fact without the church even the parents could not perform their task in this work of thoroughly furnishing their children. For the Word of God was entrusted unto the church for the purpose that she might declare, proclaim, preach, expound, teach it to 'all creatures'. Yes, but that means first of all unto her own members, her own constituency, and necessarily unto her own seed.

Indeed the Word of God is the sole means to furnish the man of God unto all good works. And the Church being, so to speak, the custodian, proclaimer, interpreter, teacher of the Scriptures, as authorized by God, in an official manner, must serve as the institution and the instrument par excellence whereby the man of God is made perfect, that is thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

We did not quite reach the goal which we had in mind for this time. Hence, we did not fully answer the question which we set out to answer. For this reason there must needs be a sequence to this article. Therefore we must leave for the next time the question as to *how* the Church teaches the Word, and instructs in the Word 'the man of God,' by whom is meant here the covenant seed, and endeavors to make that Word profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

J. D. J.

IN MEMORIAM

The Men's Society of the Creston Protestant Reformed Church mourns the loss of one of its most faithful members, brother

C. N. KUNZ

who was suddenly taken away out of our midst.

May the Lord comfort the bereaved family in this way of affliction. And may the sudden departure of brother Kunz spur us on to renewed zeal and vigor in the study of the Holy Scriptures, which was so dearly loved by our departed brother.

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

In name of the Society,

Pres. John D. De Jong

Secy. N. Kunz

FROM HOLY WRIT

(Ephesians 1:6-10)

We should remember, that, in our discussion, we are still occupied by the verses 6-10. Up to this point we have called attention to the 7th verse. More particularly, we would point out, that we have called attention to the following elements:

1. We have called attention to the phrases, "the redemption in His blood" and "the forgiveness of sins." In doing so, we attempted, not only to show the implication of each phrase taken by itself, but also to show how these two ideas are related mutually as a benefit of God's grace.

2. Attention was also directed to the fact, that: (a) We have this benefit as the living Church of God, the body of Jesus Christ. We have this as a present and an abiding possession, both legally and spiritually ethically. (b) We have this great benefit in our Head, the Beloved Son of God in the flesh, the Firstborn of every creature, and the First-Begotten out of the dead.

3. It also became evident, that, whereas we have this redemption and forgiveness of sins in the "Beloved", this at once implies that we have it according to the riches of God's grace.

We believe that the above line of thought we found in the verses 6 and 7. That line of thought should be kept in mind, also, in the further study of the verses that follow.

The apostle has more to say yet about the "riches" of this grace. Just because grace is "rich", rich in the Beloved Son in the flesh, rich in His atoning death, and justifying resurrection and glorification, it must needs abound in other graces than the "forgiveness of transgressions". And these other graces are not merely additional graces, but they are rather benefits implied, benefits to which we have an acquired, a bequeathed right in the Lord, a right that became ours in the redemption in His blood.

These other benefits are many. However, in verse 8, there are two that are singled out, and placed strikingly on the foreground. They are called "wisdom and prudence". Of these we wrote in our first article (page 164) "That to this Church, who thus has been redeemed, God has caused to abound all wisdom and prudence, by revealing the Mystery of His will to them". This thought is developed by the apostle in the verses 8-10.

At the outset, we would emphasize very strongly, that the subject in this portion is not at all: The eternal purpose of God to reunite all things in Jesus Christ, all things in heaven and on earth, and that, in the dispensation of the fulness of time. This thought is, in-

deed, expressed in the verses 9 and 10 of this chapter. But these verses do not contain the subject discussed by the Apostle. The thought contained in these verses is only introduced by the writer in a subservient way; introduced to show the historical dispensation of God's redemptive history where not only all "wisdom and prudence" are given, are a possibility, but, where also they are freely exercised, by the redeemed and forgiven Sons of adoption.

Hence, the subject is, a particularization of "all the blessings in heavenly places", of which verse 3 speaks, and to which Rev. H. Veldman called attention. Among all these blessings which are ours by Christ's redemptive labors, the apostle singles out "all wisdom and prudence."

It can be of great service to us to take notice of the Apostle's mode of reasoning. He does not reason from the Council to time and the benefits which we receive in time, but He reasons in the very opposite direction. He reasons from the concrete benefits to their source and eternal background. He takes his stand in the midst of the blessings, on the historical plane, on the level of the concrete situation in time, in our world lying in the midst of death, sold under sin. Here the cross was raised up, here the blood of Jesus was shed a ransom for many. It is here that we confess the Articles of our apostolic, Christian faith. Here were we born and here we die, here we fight the battle and long to be delivered. Here the Church has received every spiritual blessing in heavenly places! And the Apostle takes his stand, his point of departure here in this world, in time, among the blessings in time! And thus having taken his stand here, he traces these blessings in heavenly places to their source, their Author, Who works all things according to the Council of His will.

And this same mode of reasoning the writer follows in the verses. Again he is speaking of the blessings that are ours. They are ours now in the dispensation of the fulness of times. They are for the whole Church, emphatically for her. And, as was said, they are the blessings of "wisdom and prudence". These we have in a divinely arranged historical context. We have these in knowing the Mystery of God's will, or, since God has made known the Mystery of His will. Important as the knowledge of this will is, it is not the subject, at best it is that part of the text which shows us how and why we have this wisdom and prudence.

To be sure, the Apostle does speak, in this passage of Holy Writ, of God's eternal good-pleasure, His plan and Decree, as it determines the entire history of the world, and the economy of Salvation. It is God's good-pleasure to reunite all things in Christ our Lord, things in heaven and things on earth. And this God has made known unto us now in the Dispensation of the fulness of times, as He did not do this to the former generations of the sons of men. Eph. 3:1-6. The fact that God thus

reunites all things in Christ in the present dispensation is assumed, as may be evident from a comparison with Acts 3:21, where we read: "Whom the heaven must receive until the times of the restitution of all things." It is here assumed that God will reunite all things in Christ, rather than explicitly taught. Not the fact as such, but the *making known of this truth* is the important point here.

That this *making known* is indeed the important point we trust will become further evident in the closer study of these verses. Let us, therefore, turn to the text to attempt to see its implications.

As was already said, the subject here is: *God has caused all wisdom and prudence to abound to us.*

The verb "to abound" calls for just a few remarks. The fundamental meaning of this verb is that of: overflowing, to exceed a fixed number or measure. Hence, it means to abound. It is the very opposite of that which is partial, and in but a limited degree. In connection with this verb, we should further notice, that it can be taken either in intransitive or in a transitive sense. The King James' Version renders it intransitively and translates: "Wherein He hath abounded". On the other hand, the American Revised Version renders it transitively and translates: "Which He hath made to abound". Materially it does not make a great deal of difference which rendering one chooses. In both cases God is the Author, He does something. That this is the case even when one renders it transitively becomes evident as soon as one asks the question: Wherein does God abound toward us? And the answer then is: in the *riches* of His grace. When God abounds in this "riches", He does so, with a view to us, causatively. Causatively, with Divine efficaciousness the riches of grace becomes abundant from God to us. However, be this as it may, we prefer to render this verb transitively, and translate, as does the American Revised Version, "Which He has caused to abound."

The question is: What has God caused to abound to us? The answer to this question, to a great extent, depends on the interpretation of the phrase: "in all wisdom and prudence." The first matter, to which we must give attention is, the question of the grammatical place that this phrase occupies in the sentence. Must it be joint with the verb "He caused to abound", or does it belong with the participle that follows, to wit, "having made known the Mystery of His will". Grammatically both are possible. The more natural of the two constructions would be the former. We would then read: God has caused the riches of His grace to abound to us in all wisdom and prudence.

But how will one decide? To come to a decision we will have as yet another question, namely, how must we view the relationship of "in all wisdom and prudence" to the verb "caused to abound". Is this phrase thus related that it tells how God makes the riches of

His grace to abound? Does it tell us what motivated God to thus give grace in such a rich measure? If so, then the phrase is adverbial with the verb. However, there is also another construction possible, a construction which has our preference. According to this construction, which views "all wisdom and prudence" as the content of the riches of grace given, the Apostle is speaking of the actual display of grace as revealed in us, and not at all of the manner of God's dealing with us. Not God's doing is here then characterized, but His gift to us is here named. Wisdom and prudence are then not attributes and perfections in God, but they are gifts of God to us! They are concrete exhibitions and manifestations of the riches of God's grace, a particularization of all the spiritual blessings in heavenly places, and that, also, as the peculiar grace that the New Testament Church may possess having come to manhood, to maturity in the Dispensation of the fulness of times.

This construction and interpretation just enumerated may be said to have the following in its favor.

In the first place, this is the more natural interpretation in the light of the immediate context. One would rather expect a further indication, a more explicit statement of the grace that is caused to abound, than that would expect a further description of the manner in which God caused this grace to abound.

Secondly, if "wisdom" would here refer to God's wisdom one would hardly expect it to be prefixed, modified by the adjective "all". "All" and "every" are hardly terms that fit with the wisdom of God. What is more "all" is not the same as the "highest" wisdom. "All" rather presupposes a predetermined measure. And this notion does not fit with the infinity of God. In elective grace God has determined the extent of "every spiritual blessing in heavenly places". And "all Wisdom" rather refers to all the wisdom that fits in that Divinely arranged pattern of things. Compare the "all" in verse 3 with the "all" of this passage. Someone may interrupt and say: What about Eph. 3:10? Do we not read there of "the manifold wisdom of God?" We answer to this, that firstly, it should not be overlooked, that in 3:10 we have the addition "of God"; secondly, we should bear in mind that "manifold" there, evidently, characterizes this simple and Divine wisdom in its historically revealed character. Of this wisdom, thus conceived, the Apostle exclaims, in profound amazement: "O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out." Rom. 11:33.

Thirdly, and this is very conclusive, the apostle does not only write "in all wisdom", but, he adds "and prudence". Now prudence, practical sagacity, a judging of and choosing between the various alternatives in a given case is not to be ascribed unto God. His is a

different, a Divinely other wisdom. That this is the proper interpretation of the phrase "in all wisdom and prudence" is clear beyond a shadow of doubt when we make a study of the parallel passage in Col. 1:9, 10, which reads, "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." From this passage it is abundantly evident that the apostle has in mind a "wisdom and understanding by which we walk according to the law of God and in His fear. This wisdom is "spiritual", it is the fruit of the Holy Spirit, it is the part of the man who has the mind of Christ.

We conclude there, that the phrase "in all wisdom and prudence" does not define God's dealing with us, but it indicates concretely the grace that becomes ours when He opens the flood-gates of the heavenly blessings upon us as the New Testament Church!

(To be Continued)

G. L.

PERISCOPE

A CHRISTIAN NATION?

We become impatient with church people who talk about nations that are christian, in distinction from nations that are not. Especially when they speak of America as a Christian Nation. Not long ago we read an article by Dr. G. Goris on "Not by might—but by the Lord" in which he compares (our country not only but) the United Nations as countries whose battles were won as David won his battle over Goliath. Not by might but by the Lord. Hitler was the modern Goliath. Then he continues: "Yes God is involved in this war. God is interested in the fate of the oppressed nations of the world who, without any reason are attacked and crushed and their liberties taken away. God hears the call of Czecho-Slovakia, Belgium, Poland, China, Norway, the Netherlands. This battle is the Lord's." When reading such I say to myself: What nonsense! If one must be a Doctor to write such nonsense, then I am glad there are no Doctors in the Prot. Ref. Churches. For note: what have the United Nations done to free Poland, and the Baltic countries? Doesn't God hear their call? Just a few issues ago of the Banner (Nov. 16) Rev. M. Ghysels wrote: "Israel felt grateful that it was strong to withstand its foes and secure against danger. We can say the same thing about our nation. It is stronger today than at

any time in its history. The might of its enemies has been crushed permanently. The two nations that have come out of the war as the mightiest nations on earth are Russia and the United States". And remember the Rev. Ghysels was writing a Thanksgiving Day meditation, while sitting in Washington, D.C. Perhaps that accounts for such foolishness. Foolishness it certainly is.

We are not a Christian Nation. And there is nowhere a Christian nation anymore, as in the days of Israel. We, a Christian Nation? when nearly 70 per cent of our population does not even attend divine worship on the Lord's Day? America in which you find more divorce and Hollywood adultery than in *any other nation under the sun*, including Japan and Germany. America which does not even safeguard the right of the Christian workingman to work when his fellow-workmen strike. America which is facing disaster, according even to President Truman, if it persists in its present way, stronger than at any time in its history? And "the might of its enemies crushed permanently"? One would almost think that Rev. Ghysels was closing his eyes to reality. He speaks like a child. It will soon be revealed that the might of its enemies is greater than ever before. Think of Russia. Think of the enemies within our own borders, such as Communism, Socialistic labor unions, greedy Capitalists, corrupt Politicians, etc. I just received at this moment a card from one of our boys just returning from Europe, in which he writes: "The Germans are running the Yankees instead of the Yankees the Germans, over here". Please let us not be so superficial as to haughtily think that America has crushed the might of her enemies permanently.

But what we wished most of all to emphasize is that in all history, there has been but one nation which was worthy of the name Christian, and that only because God had made it His own, peculiar people. Not surely because there was no corruption or sin to be found in its borders. Surely Israel sinned grievously and made herself worthy of rejection. But there was always the elect nucleus, and for its sake Israel was not destroyed until Christ was born in the fulness of time. In Christ Jerusalem is above and is the mother of us all. But the Holy Spirit, poured out upon the Church, is poured out upon *all flesh*. It is not confined to any national boundaries. It brings forth children from all nations, tribes and tongues. Therefore the Church is in strictest sense a universal church, in so far that it is not confined to any certain country. *Of that universal church alone may it be said: Ye are a chosen nation.* America is not the object of God's choice; not any more than Japan is. True, there are many children of God in America but they are also in other countries, also in the defeated nations. Now, my chief remark concerning all this, is that we must have only

such a world and life view, which sees the blessing of Jehovah NOT on a certain country called America or Britain or Russia, but God's view we must have, which sees the blessing of Jehovah ONLY upon the peculiar people, the chosen nation from all peoples and from under all flags. Therefore also the church as church shows not a flag of one certain nation, thereby splitting the church of God on earth into national groups, but the church from all nations marches on under the banner of truth. And she has not her enemy beyond the Rhine or on the other side of the Pacific Ocean, but her enemies are also among all nations, namely, those who care not for the truth of God. There is no Christian nation since Christ proclaimed to Israel: "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate". Except the Nation of God, the mystical body of Christ throughout the world.

* * * *

SMALL CONGREGATIONS:

While thinking about the great, universal Church of God out of all nations, we also thought of the many small and local manifestations of that one Church. In many cities and villages and country communities, that Church of God comes to manifestation. And many of those congregations are small. We experienced the gathering of those small groups when they were first organized many years ago. We still see them and may share with them. But it used to be thrilling to see these small groups come into being. We were reminded of this again when reading "De Reformatie", and the beginnings of churches who become "liberated" from the Synodical Church in old Holland. A few typical quotations are interesting. (I translate, L. V.)

"Meppel—We notice that also at Meppel, members and elders have been suspended from office, despite the words of the minister that nothing serious has happened. And on Nov. 18, 1945 these men began services upon the old Reformed basis."

"Ijmuiden—On Nov. 5, 1945, Prof. K. Schilder addressed a large gathering, giving light concerning the questions troubling the churches. The question of "liberation" is very acute".

"Gameren—Here at Gameren a majority of the consistory, (including Rev. R. Brands) have liberated themselves from the evil, unscriptural, and church-politically-condemned decisions of "Synod" and thus has again brought our church back to her (original) basis".

And many more church notices are to be read. At Emmen the brethren who are grieved at the action of the Synod gathered in an open cafe because the building of the Reformed church was denied them. There were about 130 people present. The gathering was led by an elder who was admonished and soon suspended from office for this seeking after the truth. Then

a minister (Rev. H. Vogel) came and after a speech, in which he enlightened the brethren, 40 confessing members signed the act of Liberation. At another place 61 members organized a new congregation. Many more examples could be quoted. Though we as Protestant Reformed are not one with either the Synod group or the "Liberated" group, nevertheless we see much semblance in the beginnings there and as they were with us around 20 years ago. Here and there small groups of believers "liberated" themselves from the Christian Reformed hierarchy, repudiated the lying "three points" and organized themselves into small Protestant Reformed congregations. Some of these small congregations have grown considerably, some have remained about the same, some have even disappeared from our church map.

We have good reasons for passing on this news to our reading public. Many of you belong to such small flocks. Those small flocks usually experience much struggle to keep going. Generally they are poor (financially). There is not much in them that would attract others, except the truth. It is hard often to elect a consistory of four or five members. Many times reading services have to be held, with not always reading talent in their midst. The deacons often must sweat to get the monthly salary check for the minister. Many other hardships are encountered. But it is ever thus. It was so in the days of the Apostles, as f.i., in the church at Philadelphia. There were but eight members of the church at the time of the flood. When most people left off from following the Christ, and the twelve stood before Christ, He asked them: "Will ye not also go?" And Jesus emphasizes that it is but a LITTLE flock, to whom the kingdom shall be given, according to the Father's good pleasure. We therefore say also to our little flocks, that they must not be discouraged simply because they are small. We like to grow numerically also, but only because of the truth. Essentially it makes no difference whether we are small or large, if we are gathered together in the blessed NAME, for the Lord assures us: "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them".

* * * *

A NEW CHURCH

I am not referring to a new Protestant Reformed Church, but to a new Christian Reformed Church, in Kalamazoo, Michigan. With what the Editor of Concordia wrote concerning the church, formerly ministered to by Rev. H. Danhof, we heartily agree and we will not repeat what he said. But a few remarks we wish to make in addition to that of Rev. Vos. The name of the new church was sent us by a friend. It is "The Grace Christian Reformed Church". This church formerly called itself: "The Protesting First Christian

Reformed Church". It carried this name for the last 21 years. And if names mean anything it means that this Kalamazoo church has ceased to protest. Whereas it formerly protested against the injustice done to them by the Chr. Ref. churches, and protested against the adoption of the three points of common grace, now they withdraw their protest. They used to stand on ONE grace, now they stand on TWO graces. Let me quote the literal words of Rev. H. Danhof, written in *The Standard Bearer*, Vol. 1, p. 6, No. 12, (I translate, L. V.): "The Christian Reformed Church wants TWO graces; TWO life principles; but we want only ONE. Besides the saving grace, which God gives to the elect, He also reveals, according to Synod, a certain grace or favor unto reprobates; who because of such certain grace, can perform good before God. Because it is impossible for us to see it that way, and therefore can preach unto the churches with a free conscience, therefore and therefore ALONE, are we separated from the Christian Reformed Churches." Now my remark is: that according to the very words of the Rev. H. Danhof the church at Kalamazoo, by adopting the name *Grace Christian Reformed Church*, has finally stopped protesting against the two graces or life principles, and has accepted that doctrine. It formerly believed in ONE grace to the elect only, now it believes also in the second grace of the Christian Reformed Church. Hence her newly adopted name: "Grace Chr. Ref. Church". And we believe also in the co-responsibility of all its members to this new name and also new teaching. Those who cannot bear this responsibility, must join our Protestant Reformed Church in Kalamazoo.

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A CALVIN UNIVERSITY

Here is an item of interest to those who have wished for and longed to have also a Calvin University. It appears in the *Presbyterian Guardian* as follows: "The Board of Trustees of the Christian University Association of America met in Philadelphia on Oct. 10th. Among the items transacted was the election of the following officers of the board: Pres. Dr. Ned B. Stonehouse, Glenside, Pa.; Vice Pres. Dr. Howard Higgins, New York, N. Y.; Sec'y, Dr. Robert K. Rudolph, Philadelphia; and Treas. Mr. Lambert Steen, Midland Park, N. J." Note that all these members of the board of trustees are Eastern men. And as far as we know only Ned. B. Stonehouse was formerly of the Christian Reformed Churches. Calvin's professors are left out. Not long ago some of the leaders of the latter named churches were pulling for a specific Calvin University to grow up from Calvin Seminary and Calvin College. They even bemoaned the fact that a Christian University as proposed by these Eastern men was too general and not specific enough. However, Calvin

and has become even more general (or shall we say common) than many an orthodox church of other denominations. In Calvin today there is no room for truly Calvinistic truth and teachings. Her professors even advise putting out of her church denomination fundamentally Reformed and therefore Calvinistic teachers. Surely such little leaders(?) are not to be trusted in beginning an institution as a Calvin University? Calvin College and Theological School should re-learn Calvinism.

* * * *

GERMAN CHURCHES

"Protestantism has made its first contribution toward the reconstruction of religious life in Germany with the giving of the sum of \$180,000. The money came from various denominations and creeds. The step was taken as Confessional (anti-Nazi) church leaders again took the reins in Berlin. The money is the first of a much larger amount that will be needed if the German churches are to take their places as forces for reconstruction". So we read in the *Religious Telescope*. Only a drop in the bucket when we consider the hundreds of churches destroyed completely with other hundreds partially damaged. Yet it is a beginning.

L. V.

Foreign Mission Activity

The Synod of 1944 had received an overture from Classis West that Synod "investigate the possibility of establishing an outlet for Foreign Mission Endeavor in the way of supporting some reputable Mission now, and, in case this proves to be impossible, that a fund be established for this work in order that when the opportunity presents itself, either to support some reputable Mission or to establish our own Foreign Mission, we will be prepared to make use of it".

The Synod of 1944 adopted this overture and gave the matter to the Mission Committee for study. It was also decided that the Mission Committee send a copy of its report and recommendation to the various Consistories for study, previous to its discussion at Synod. Since nothing was accomplished before Synod of 1945, that Synod reminded the Mission Committee of its mandate. Since then the present Mission Committee has been studying this matter and is ready to report.

The Mission Committee feeling that this report is of interest to our Churches as a whole and not only our Consistories, and since, no doubt, all of our people are interested in the matter, decided to publish its findings and recommendations in the *Standard Bearer*.

Instead, therefore, of sending a copy of the report to all our Consistories by private mail, we publish it in this issue of the Standard Bearer, and Consistories will please take note.

The report here follows:

The Mission Committee has studied the mandate received from Synod of 1944 regarding Foreign Mission endeavor (cf. Acts 1944, Art. 49). As a result of our study and investigations we offer the following advice and recommendations:

I. That our Churches raise a fund with a view to seeking out and establishing a Foreign Mission of our own at the earliest possible date.

Grounds:

1. Foreign Mission activity is our calling, as churches of Christ, to preach the Gospel to all nations.

2. The opening of a work of our own is the ideal in order that all of our Mission activity may be exclusively based upon and controlled by our own churches and their principles.

3. Our Churches are now numerically and financially strong enough to support a work of their own.

4. Missionary leaders of other denominations have advised that this procedure would be most preferable.

II. That the minimum amount necessary for the establishment of a Foreign work is \$10,000 and we suggest this as the initial amount to be raised.

Ground:

Preliminary investigation reveals that this would be the amount required (in normal times) to provide for travelling expenses, investigation of field, language study, purchase or rental of buildings, etc., required for the establishment of a work.

III. That this fund, after its establishment, may be used to support some reputable existing Foreign Mission endeavor in case it becomes impossible to begin a work of our own.

Grounds:

1. Many factors may make it impossible to establish a work of our own in the near future.

2. Since we can do something, we are not to be excused from assuming our obligation in this respect but are in duty bound to do what we can.

3. This would keep the work and principal of Foreign Mission activity alive within our Churches as preparatory to establishing our own work.

IV. That Synod consider China as the possible field to begin our Foreign Mission Activity.

Grounds:

1. Many large portions of China have never heard the Gospel.

2. Preliminary investigation indicates that China presents an "open door" for the Gospel and that work may soon be begun there.

3. Testimony of Missionaries that have served in China reveals that the Chinese are generally of greater

than average mentality.

4. From testimony it is evident that the Chinese are receptive to the Truth and willing to give audience to the Missionary.

5. A work in China would not be too great a financial burden for our Churches.

6. Many lesser considerations, viz.: climate, transportation facilities, density of population, etc. favor the choice of China over other possibilities considered.

V. That Synod devise ways and means to seek out and encourage young men to present themselves for this work.

Grounds:

1. Foreign Mission service is work of a special nature and implies a particular calling, e.g. the Apostle Paul.

2. About a year's study is required beyond the theological training period to gain a working knowledge of the language. This would require young men for their ability to learn and in order to insure a greater length of service in the work.

3. Particular training throughout the period of preparation would be beneficial.

VI. Finally, the Committee brings to the attention of Synod the question as to whether or not the existing Mission Funds should be used for the establishment of a Foreign Mission endeavor.

Respectfully submitted,

The Mission Committee:

R. Veldman, President

W. Hofman, Secretary

B. Kok

N. Vander Wal

N. Yonker

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On January 20, 1946, our dear parents,

JAKE DE VRIES

and

JEANETTE DE VRIES—Boertjes

celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary. We as children are deeply grateful to our faithful covenant God for sparing them these years, and in giving to us such Christian parents. Our prayer is that God may be with them in His grace, in their remaining years, and provide for them abundant entrance into His kingdom.

Their grateful children:

Harriet

James

Bernie

Caroline

Mainard

Anna Mae

Raymond

Report of Classis East — Convened Jan. 9, 1946 at Grand Rapids, Mich.

The January meeting of Classis, held at Fuller Ave., was opened with the singing of No. 65 from the Psalter. Rev. B. Kok, who had charge of the opening exercises, read Psalm 25 and led in prayer. The credentials were read and accepted, showing that all the churches were represented at Classis. Classis is declared constituted and Rev. G. Lubbers is called upon to preside.

The delegates attending classis for the first time sign the Formula of Subscription. The minutes of the preceding classical meeting are read and approved. Rev. G. M. Ophoff and D. Jonker are given advisory vote.

A communication from the consistory of Hudsonville is read and received for information. Classis now expresses that this communication reveals that Hudsonville has followed the advice of Classis.

The report of the committee, that was appointed at the last Classis for the purpose of studying the question involved in the matter of the protest of two brethren against their consistory, is read and received for information. Classis decided to table this matter until the following meeting of Classis.

The Stated Clerk reports that he has carried out the duties assigned to him and further he reports, that the Classical Diplomas will soon be sent to all the ministers that are entitled to them.

Oak Lawn comes to the Classis with a request that a Yearbook of our churches be compiled and published. Classis advised Oak Lawn that this is the work of Synod; and that, if they desire, they can overture Synod in re this matter.

Grand Haven requests classical ap-

pointments. This request is granted by Classis. The following committee is appointed to draw up a schedule for classical appointments: The Revs. J. A. Heys and W. Hofman and Elder J. Cammenga. The committee later presents the following schedule, which is adopted by Classis:

1. Rev. H. De Wolf, 2. Rev. M. Gritters,
3. Rev. G. Lubbers, 4. Rev. M. Schipper,
5. Rev. R. Veldman, 6. Rev. H. Veldman,
7. Rev. B. Kok, 8. Rev. J. D. De Jong,
9. Rev. S. Cammenga, 10. Rev. J. Heys,
11. Rev. W. Hofman.

Classis decides that these appointments will be filled in the order given and that Grand Haven is to notify the ministers when they are expected there.

A consistory requests edvice of Classis in re the second step of censure for a member of the congregation. After the consistory sheds some light on this matter, a motion is made to advise the consistory to proceed with the censure, but this motion does not carry.

The report of the Church Visitors, showing that the condition of our churches on the whole is good, is read and received and the recommendations of the committee were adopted by Classis.

The committee in re Netherlands Relief gives a brief report of its labors and reads a letter from Mr. H. Van der Wilde of Rotterdam. This report is received for information. Classis decides to ask Rev. J. D. De Jong to answer the letter of Mr. H. Van der Wilde expressing our approval of their method of distributing the goods sent for relief. Classis later decided that this committee should be continued. Rev. B. Kok was appointed to serve in this committee instead of

Rev. A. Petter, who is soon leaving for Classis West.

The Classical Committee reports that they had approved the papers of Rev. S. Cammenga, who had accepted the call to the Second Church of Grand Rapids.

Mr. R. Ezinga thanked the ladies of Fuller Ave. for their excellent catering services.

The questions of Art. 41 of the Church Order are asked of the various consistories and answered to the satisfaction of Classis. Grand Haven has a question in this connection, asking whether it is obligatory to re-install officebearers who succeed themselves. Classis answers this question in the affirmative.

The next meeting of Classis will be held the first Wednesday in April at Fuller Ave.

The minutes are read and approved. Rev. G. Lubbers, as president of Classis, addresses a few words of farewell to Rev. A. Petter, who has accepted the call from Orange City, Iowa. After the singing of No. 356 of the Psalter, Rev. R. Veldman closes this session of Classis with prayer.

D. JONKER, Stated Clerk.