

# THE STANDARD *Bearer* A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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## MEDITATION

### Verzocht Als Wij

*Toen werd Jezus van den Geest weggeleid  
in de woestijn, om verzocht te worden van  
den duivel, etc. Matth. 4:1-11.*

Toen . . . .

't Was Gods tijd.

Het stond alzoo op Gods program, zooals dat naar Zijn welbehagen in de eeuwigheid tot in de kleinste bijzonderheden is opgesteld voor den Knecht des Heeren.

Want er zit Goddelijke wijsheid, eeuwige noodwendigheid van Goddelijke logica in het lijdensprogram van den Christus, Die van eeuwigheid gezalfd is om des Vaders welbehagen te doen, en Die van Zijnen God mocht eischen en de einden der aarde zouden Hem gegeven worden tot eene bezitting.

Toen werd Jezus van den Geest weggeleid in de woestijn.

Och neen, ge behoeft niet nieuwsgieriglijk te vragen naar den preciesen datum van dit "toen". Daarop geeft Gods Woord u geen antwoord. Het heeft in onzen tijd, in onze menselijke tijdsrekening geen belang. De Evangelie verhalen laten u niet zelden in den steek, als ge hen onderzoekt met de bedoeling om een nauwkeurige historische beschrijving op te stellen van Jezus' "leven". Het is hun er immers niet om te doen, om historie te schrijven, of een "Leben Jesu" te teekenen, maar om den erfgenamen der belofte de vervulling der belofte te verkondigen, het evangelie, in de openbaring van Jezus Christus, opdat zij in Hem zouden aanschouwen en kennen den God hunner volkomene zaligheid.

Vandaar, dat dit "toen" genoeg is om de Goddelijke wijsheid aan te duiden in het program van die openbaring.

't Wil immers zeggen: toen de Knecht des Heeren op het punt stond om publiekelijk op te treden, om Zich in Woord en daad te openbaren als den Christus Gods. Toen. . . . toen Hij Zich door den Wegbereider, die den

doop der bekeering en der vergeving der zonden predikte, had laten doopen, om alle gerechtigheid te vervullen; toen Hij, door dat ingaan en ondergaan in het doopwater, Zijn "deel" van Gods Verbond had aanvaard, en trouw tot in den dood, ja, tot in den bangen kruisdood, aan den Vader gezworen had; toen uit den hemel de Heilige Geest op Hem was nedergedaald, en de stem vernomen was: "Deze is Mijn Zoon, Mijn Geliefde, in Denwelken Ik Mijn welbehagen heb!"; toen Hij aldus door den Vader Zelf was aangeduid, ook voor de ooren van den Satan, als den Gezalfde des Vaders; en toen Hij als zoodanig in de wereld zou optreden, den strijd zou aanbinden met de machten der duisternis, om den kop der slang te vermorzelen. . . . toen werd Hij van den Geest weggeleid in de woestijn om verzocht te worden van den duivel.

En toen was het juist het rechte moment voor deze verzoeking.

Hij was immers de Knecht des Heeren. Hij stond in en voor Gods eeuwig vriendschapsverbond in de wereld. Hij moest den strijd des Heeren strijden tot in den dood. En in dien strijd was Zijn groote tegenstander de Satan Zelf.

Hoe gepast dan, dat Hij dien vijand juist aan het begin van den kamp persoonlijk, aangezicht tot aangezicht, zou ontmoeten!

Reeds nu moest het blijken of deze Knecht des Heeren de verzoeking zou weerstaan, en tot het uiterste toe den Vader zou gehoorzamen.

Zoo was, in den beginne, de eerste mensch Adam verzocht geworden. En hij was ontrouw geworden, en had Gods verbond overtreden.

Zoo moest ook deze Knecht, aan het begin van Zijn loopbaan op de proef gesteld worden, opdat het zou mogen blijken, dat in Hem Gods verbond eeuwig vast ligt.

Valt Hij in dezen persoonlijken strijd met den overste dezer wereld, dan is alle verdere poging om de "wereld" te overwinnen ijdel.

Overwint Hij in dezen kamp, Hij kan in des Geweldenaars huis binnen dringen.

Toen werd Jezus van den Geest weggeleid in de

woestijn. . . .

Om den vijand te ontmoeten.

Op Gods tijd.

Verzocht als wij. . . .

Alleen maar: veel zwaarder dan wij ooit verzocht zouden kunnen worden, want Hij stond aan de spitse der Zijnen, en moest den strijd alleen strijden.

En ook: zonder zonde was en bleef Hij temidden van de zwaarste en diepste verzoeken.

Wel was de verzoeking, ook deze, die Hem rechtstreeks van den duivel werd aangedaan, volle werkelijkheid.

Ze was volle werkelijkheid, allereerst in den zin, dat ze *feitelijk* was, en plaats had in de voor den Heiland objectieve wereld Zijner ervaring. We mogen de verhalen in de Evangelie-beschrijvingen niet lezen, alsof ze ons een *gelijkenis* boden; noch ook mogen we deze drievoudige verzoeking van den Knecht des Heeren verklaren, alsof ze alleen maar had plaats gehad in het bewustzijn van den Verzochte. Dit laatste is zelfs moeilijk voorstelbaar op zulk eene wijze, dat toch de zondeloosheid des Heilands gehandhaafd kan blijven. Neen, werkelijkheid was ze. De Heiland werd werkelijk naar de woestijn geleid, schoon het er verder niet op aankomt precies welke woestijn hier bedoeld is; Hij hongerde daar, en werd aldaar werkelijk door den Satan in persoon aangevallen; Hij stond werkelijk op de tinne des tempels, en op den hoogen berg, en Hem werden werkelijk al de koninkrijken der wereld en hunne heerlijkheid getoond.

Zeker, ook zoo blijven er in deze drievoudige verzoeking elementen, die in het raam onzer gewone ervaring niet passen. Doch aan hare objectieve werkelijkheid valt, in het licht van het Schriftverhaal, niet te twifelen.

Werkelijk was de verzoeking in den zin, dat ze, gelijk alle verzoeking, eene poging was, om den Knecht des Heeren te verleiden den weg der gehoorzaamheid te verlaten, en eigen weg de voorkeur te geven. Voor den Heiland was de weg des Vaders een lijdensweg. Hij moest gehoorzaam zijn tot in den dood, ja, tot den dood des kruises. En alle drie verzoeken zijn hierdoor gekenmerkt, dat de duivel den Knecht des Heeren eenen anderen weg voorstelt, eenen weg van eigenwillige machtsopenbaring in plaats van dien van lijden, van zelfbehoud in plaats van zelfverloochening, van de eere van menschen in plaats van de eere Gods, den weg van den valschen profeet, van den afvalligen priester, van den koning *dezer* wereld. . . .

Den weg van den Antichrist!

't Ging om Christus' knechtschap, om Zijn ambt!

De vraag aller eeuwen werd hier aan de orde gesteld, wie koning zou zijn, de Knecht des Heeren of de slaaf des duivels!

De Christus of de Antichrist!

Vandaar dan ook, dat deze verzoeking wel een drievoudig karakter moest vertoonen. Christus' ambt zelf was immers drievoudig: Hij was profeet om Gods Woord te bewaren en te verkondigen; priester, om Gods Huis te bouwen, den tempel des Heeren te realizeeren; koning, om het rijk van den vorst der duisternis te verwoesten, en Gods rijk op eeuwige grondslagen van heilig recht op te richten en te bevestigen. En in alle deze drie zijden van Zijn knechtschap werd de Heiland door den duivel aangevallen. In de woestijn ging het om Gods Woord, op de tinne des tempels om Gods Huis, op den hoogen berg om Gods koninkrijk.

Hij alleen, Die Gods Woord bewaarde en Zijn lof verkondigde; Hij, Die als bewaarder en verkondiger van het Woord Gods, in den weg der gehoorzaamheid Gods Huis bouwde; Hij alleen kon en mocht ook erfgenaam der wereld zijn, koning onder God!

Werkelijk was de verzoeking, ook al was er geen mogelijkheid dat ditmaal de Knecht des Heeren zou vallen.

Want dit moet wel met nadruk gehandhaafd worden: deze Knecht kon niet vallen. In Hem lag Gods verbond eeuwig vast. En dat hier de mogelijkheid van afval niet bestond, lag niet aan eenigen drang van buiten af; moet ook niet daaruit verklaard worden, dat Hij maar Zijne menschenlijke natuur zonder zonde was; maar is wel hierdoor gewaarborgd, dat Hij de Zoon Gods in het vleesch was. De Persoon des Zoons in de menschenlijke natuur kon aan den weg der ongehoorzaamheid geen oogenblik de voorkeur geven.

Toch was daarom de verzoeking niet minder werkelijk.

Of was de last Zijns lijdens minder zwaar omdat Zijn sterke schouders dien konden dragen, en er niet onder konden bezwijken? Of waren Zijn angst en vrees, Zijn pijn en smart, Zijn bitterlijk bedroefd zijn tot den dood toe, Zijn verbazing in het verlaten zijn van God, minder werkelijk, omdat het niet mogelijk was, dat Hij ook maar een oogenblik er aan kon denken om den drinkbeker te weigeren te drinken? Of was Zijn bewuste keuze van den weg des lijdens minder vrijwillig, omdat Hij er nimmer aan kon denken, ook als Hij tot het uiterste werd gedreven, om eene andere keuze te doen?

O, veeleer is het tegendeel waar!

Niemand kon als Hij, de zondeloze Zoon Gods in het vleesch, de bitterheid des doods smaken!

Niemand kon als Hij zoo bitterlijk bedroefd worden, dat Zijn zweet werd als groote druppelen bloeds!

Niemand kon als Hij de vreeselijk benauwende werkelijkheid van den toorn Gods tegen de zonde ervaren in heel Zijn bestaan!

Wie kon beangst worden als Hij?

Verzocht, ja; werkelijk verzocht.

Doch zonder zonde!

Trouw aan het Woord!

Ook als alles in Hem schreeuwt om brood, klemmt Hij Zich vertrouwend vast aan Gods Woord.

Ook als Hij schier sterft van honger, is Hem Gods gunst meer dan de uitgezochtste spijsen, Zijne goedertierenheid beter dan het leven!

Ook als er nergens hulp of uitkomst schijnt te zijn, is Zijn laatste antwoord aan den verzoeker: De mensch zal bij brood alleen niet leven, maar bij alle woord, dat door den mond Gods uitgaat!

Of was Hij, op het moment dier eerste verzoeking, niet tot het uiterste gedreven, en dat wel door Zijnen God Zelf? Want het was immers de Geest Gods, Die Hem in de bange en vreeselijke woestijn had geleid, in een land dor en mat, waar geen water was, en waar Hij verkeerde bij de wilde beesten? Ach ja, Hij verstond het, hier was de wereld onder den last van den vloek Gods. Hij begreep het, hiertoe was Hij in de wereld gekomen, om niet in een paradijs, maar in eene woestijn den wil des Vaders te doen, den vloek te dragen. En nu drukte de vloek zwaar op Hem, de vloek Gods, daar in de woestijn, en Hij droeg hem reeds in den steeds meer persenden honger. . . .

Hij werd van God geplaagd, verdrukt. . . .

En als Hij veertig dagen en veertig nachten gevestigd had. . . . toen kwam de verzoeker tot Hem!

Toen was het de tijd, Gods tijd, ja, maar ook des duivels tijd.

Eerder dan op dit uiterste moment mocht het pleit niet beslecht worden; toen kon het ook geen uitstel meer lijden: de Knecht des Heeren zou het van honger besterven!

Veertig is immers tien maal vier. En vier is het getal van de wereld, van het schepsel; tien is de volle mate naar den wille Gods. Naar den wil des Vaders had de Knecht dus gevestigd in de woestijn tot aan het uiterste van de draagkracht Zijner menschelijke natuur toe. Hij hongerde nu! Ach, neen, versta dit toch niet zoo, alsof Hij nu voor het eerst naar brood begon te verlangen. Maar alles, wat in Hem was, schreeuwde nu om brood. Tot het uiterste had Zijn God Hem gedreven. Naar brood verlangde Hij met heel het begeren van Zijn lichaam en ziel. . . .

Toen! . . . .

Toen in den honger de woestijn-vloek Gods zwaar op Hem drukte. . . .

Toen Hij reeds het lied der verbazing begon te zingen:

“Mijn God, mijn God, waarom verlaat  
Gij Mij,

En redt Mij niet, terwijl Ik zwoeg  
en strij”. . . .

Toen kwam de verzoeker, en sprak: Red Uzelf: als Gij Gods Zoon zijt, zeg tot deze steenen, dat zij brood worden!

En toen bleef Hij trouw aan Gods Woord: De

mensch zal bij brood alleen niet leven, maar bij alle woord, dat door den mond Gods uitgaat!

Uw gunst is meer dan d' uitgezochtste spijsen!

Ik zal Uwen lof verkondigen, ook als Ik moet sterven van honger!

Uw Woord is mij een lamp voor Mijnen voet, Mijn pad ten licht!

Hoe lief heb Ik Uwe wet!

O, Mijn God!

Trouw aan Gods Huis!

Ook als Hij daar staat op de tinne des tempels, vier honderd en vijftig voet boven de Kedron vallei.

Beneden Hem staan de grootsche tempelgebouwen. Die tempel is immers het Huis Gods, het Huis Zijns Vaders, Zijn eigen Huis? En zou Hij, ook naar het Woord Gods, niet haastiglijk tot Zijnen tempel komen?

Daar beneden is ook de schare vergaderd, Zijn volk, het volk, waarnaar Zijn hart uitgaat. Het brengt daar zijn gaven en offeranden in Gods Huis, het aanbidt aldaar den God Israels. En als Hij daar staat, boven op de tinne des tempels, ziet Hij als in 't verschiep, dat volk zich tegen Hem keeren; hoort Hij als uit de verte, dat volk Hem vervloeken; draagt Hij reeds hun smaadheid, weet Hij Zich reeds door hen veracht, bespogen, gegeeseld, gekruisigd. . . .

Toen. . . .

Werpt Uzelven nederwaarts: maak een glorieus spektakel; geef dit volk een teeken, en ze zullen U eeren als den Messias. . . .

Gij zult den Heere Uwen God niet verzoeken! Niet God in Mijn, maar Ik in Gods weg wandelen is het program!

Zoo wordt Gods Huis gebouwd!

De getrouwe priester!

Gods koningsknecht!

Ook daar boven op den berg!

Ook als daar op dien berg, wij weten niet hoe, Hem al de koninkrijken der wereld en hunne heerlijkheid worden getoond.

Getoond en aangeboden!

Want hoort den overste dezer wereld: Dit is mijn gebied, deze wereld. Ik ben overste van de koningen der aarde. De machten der wereld zijn mijne knechten. Ik zit in de hooge plaatsen. Ik maak oorlog en vrede. Ik ben voorzitter van der wereld vredesconferenties, ik geef werkelijke leiding aan alle unions en genootschappen der wereld. Straks formeer ik een mooie wereld, vol voorspoed en vrede, leven en genot, weelde en lust, onder één hoofd, mijn knecht: Ik bied U dat hoofdschap aan. . . .

Eén knieval voor mij, en 't is alles van U! . . . .

Den Heere God alleen aanbid Ik! Ga weg, Satan!

Gods trouwe Koningsknecht!

H. H.

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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. Hofman.

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

Communications relative to subscription should be addressed to MR. GERRIT PIPE, 1463 Ardmore St., S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan. All Announcements, and Obituaries must be sent to the above address and will not be placed unless the regular fee of \$1.00 accompanies the notice.

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Rev. M. Gritters

## EDITORIALS

### The Liberated Churches In The Netherlands

#### A NEW SET OF CONCLUSIONS:

The Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands that met in special session in January and February of this year, for the purpose of reviewing the decisions of the Synod of Utrecht 1942, and to consider objections and protests that had been filed against those decisions; and that was supposed to take into consideration the possibility of a reunion and a healing of the schism that has been caused in connection with those decisions, — that Synod composed and adopted an entirely new set of declarations on the question of the covenant of grace, that is to replace, not only the decisions of 1942, point two to four on this question, but also the fourth of the Conclusions of Utrecht 1905.

Besides, it adopted a set of declarations concerning the church-political aspect of the present controversy and schism.

The doctrinal decisions that are to replace those of 1942 and of 1905 on the question of the covenant are as follows (we translate):

"1. In the covenant of grace the Lord is pleased to deliver man, fallen in Adam, out of his misery, and to receive him again into His fellowship.

Unto this end He laid the iniquity of us all on the Mediator Jesus Christ, who, by his death and the shedding of His blood, confirmed the new and eternal testament, that covenant of grace and reconciliation.

Through the Holy Spirit the Lord applies this salvation, obtained by Christ, to His own; and in this grace, once bestowed upon them, He mercifully confirms them and preserves them to the end.

"2. In this covenant the Lord comes to us with the promise of salvation, and, on its ground, with the demand unto faith and repentance. These two, promise and demand, are so related to each other, that man's responsibility is fully maintained, while yet the Lord in His covenant is not dependent on the action of man. For in the promise He declares, not only that whosoever believeth on the Son hath eternal life, but He also promises the Holy Spirit Who works faith in us, whereby He makes us partakers of Christ and all His benefits. Accordingly, He works in the elect that which He demands of all, fulfilling unto them all the promises of the covenant, counting, not 'the children of the flesh' but 'the children of the promise' for the seed.

"3. According to the Word of God, the children of believers are as well as the adults comprehended in

the covenant of God in His Church, and they are sanctified in Christ, so that they partake of the promise and are placed under the demand of the covenant. At the same time, Scripture teaches us that not all are Israel that are of Israel. Nevertheless, the Church, while it is not given her to judge the hidden things, must make no distinction between members and members, but, trusting in the promise of God, and in harmony with the manner of speaking of the Scriptures, consider and treat the children, unless they reveal themselves as unbelievers, as such that partake of the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit. This does not imply that any definite declaration can be made, on the basis of the Word of God, regarding the time when the Holy Spirit commences His regenerating work in the elect; the Lord fulfills His promise according to His sovereign good pleasure in His own time, whether before, during, or after Baptism. Further we declare with our confession that godly parents have no reason to doubt of the election and salvation of their children, whom it pleases God to call out of this life in their infancy, since they are holy, not by nature, but in virtue of the covenant of grace. Likewise, the parents, in the education of their children, are ever to proceed from the promise of the covenant, and to plead on its ground. Those who, in unbelief and impenitence, despise the covenant of God, the Church must exclude from her communion. By this she declares that such have no part in the kingdom of Christ, and that they, as covenant-breakers lie under the judgment of God as long as they do not repent. Nevertheless, the Church shall call upon the Lord on the basis of the promise of the covenant, also in behalf of these backsliders.

"4. The children of believers are to be baptized on the basis of God's promise and command, and this baptism signifies and seals the washing away of sins through the blood and Spirit of Christ. Therefore the Church thanks and praises the Lord for "His fatherly goodness and mercy which He has shown to us and our children," and calls all to faith in the promise of the gospel that comes to them in holy baptism. For without faith the sacrament will not profit them, but aggravate their judgment, even as also our confession declares that the ungodly does indeed receive the sacrament to his condemnation, but not the truth of the sacrament, which is Christ Jesus, without whom the sacraments would be of no moment.

"5. The covenant of the Lord obligates every one to examine himself earnestly, whether he really believes in the Christ of God and brings forth fruits of thankfulness; for the Scriptures declare that only he that believes and is baptized shall be saved.

In harmony with the above, the Synod repudiates every view that does not do justice to the doctrine of election and of the efficacious operation of the Holy Spirit in the doctrine of the covenant, and that reduces

the promise of the covenant to a conditional offer ("toezegging")."

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Thus far the doctrinal decisions of 1946.

We have no time, at present, to discuss these new decisions.

What strikes one is that the Synod, without having a mandate from the Churches they represented, as far as we know, now imposes an entirely new set of doctrinal declarations upon those Churches, and takes away from them former doctrinal declarations that were considered binding upon them.

First there was the compromise of 1905. This is now declared void.

Next came the decisions of Utrecht 1942. They were binding on all for about three years. Refusal to bend their neck under this synodical yoke cost many their office, and became the occasion of a very serious split in the churches. Now this binding decision is also declared void.

Instead there is, not offered, but imposed on the churches an entirely new formulation of the matter. And now these are made binding, even before the churches had an opportunity to study the new decisions, and before the poor consciences of believers could speak concerning this new formulation.

For it was decided "to add to this new formulation that this new declaration serves to replace that of 1905, point 4, and that of 1942 concerning the covenant of grace, points 2-4, and that, as ecclesiastical expression of doctrine it implicitly has binding power."

What is next?

Will the churches humbly accept this new formulation too? Will they not wake up to the fact that this group of learned theologians, that vest themselves with the supreme power and authority in doctrinal matters, does not quite know what it is doing?

If they don't, it is not the fault of the Synod.

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As to the decisions of this latest Synod in regard to the church-political questions involved in the present controversy and schism in the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands, we shall not weary the reader by a literal translation of them.

This is hardly necessary.

For, first of all, the Lord willing, we intend to discuss this phase of the matter before long. It is sufficiently important to warrant a separate discussion.

And, secondly, the present or latest decisions did not principally change the church-political situation at all. In general, it may be said that the Synod of 1946 justified and maintained the position assumed by

the Synod of Utrecht 1939-1943, and of Utrecht 1943-1945.

She does this in fourteen conclusions.

In the first it is declared that the work of the two preceding synods reveals that they were motivated by the desire to serve the wellbeing of the Churches.

The second justifies the action of the Synod of Amsterdam, 1936, in taking up the matter of the doctrinal differences without mandate from the Churches.

The third defends the closed session methods of the Synod of Sneek-Utrecht.

The fourth declares the desirability of sending reports about serious matters to the Churches, before the convocation of the Synods.

The fifth expresses that there is no need of a new interpretation of Art. 30 D.K.O.

The sixth conclusion denies that the former synods offered contradictory interpretations of Art. 31 D.K.O.; and defends the synodical interpretation of that article: proof that any decision of a major body is contrary to the Word of God or in conflict with the Church Order must be given to the satisfaction of the body that made the decision.

The seventh declaration expresses the opinion that to conform oneself to a doctrinal decision may simply mean that one does not feel himself called openly to protest against it, or that one simply acquiesces though for himself he is not convinced of the truth of such a decision, after he has attempted in vain to convince the ecclesiastical gathering concerned of the error. This is rather important. And strange, too!

The eighth declares that the Churches have the right to bear with an erring brother, provided his error does not concern a fundamental principle of the truth, and he makes no propaganda for his error.

The ninth conclusion bewails the fact that the immediately preceding synod expressed itself ambiguously about delegation of aggrieved members to Synod.

Conclusions ten and eleven concern the prolonged sessions of the two former synods, justifies them under certain conditions, but declares that such things should belong to the great exceptions.

The twelfth conclusion declares that the fact the former Synod found itself obliged to exercise discipline directly, may not have the effect that, in the future, minor assemblies leave such matters to the major assemblies. Here it appears as if the synod was afraid of a boomerang!

The thirteenth conclusion maintains the suspension and deposition of professors Schilder and Greydanus, and defends the action taken against candidate H. Schilder.

The fourteenth conclusion explains the grounds upon which candidate Schilder was refused admission to the ministry of the Word in the Reformed Churches.

H. H.

## THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

### An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

Part Two.

Of Man's Redemption

LORD'S DAY XIX

2.

The Significance Of Christ's Exaltation (cont.)

He rules, not only within the domain of His Church, and by grace; but also in the realm of creation, and over all the forces of darkness in this world, by His power.

All power is given unto Him, in heaven and on earth. Angels and principalities and powers are subject unto Him.

And this power He employs, according to the Catechism, to defend and preserve us against all enemies.

The Church is in the world. And in that world she has many enemies. For the world is in darkness, and of the darkness. She loves the darkness rather than the light. But the Church is of the light, witnesses of the light, and walks in the light. Hence, the world hates the Church. This is inevitable. If believers are faithful they cannot be friends of the world. The friendship of the world is enmity with God; and whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God, Jas. 4:4. The world loves its own, but believers are not of the world, and therefore the world hates them. John 15:19. The more faithful the Church becomes in her confession and walk, the more Christ becomes manifest in her, the more bitterly the world will hate her, and set herself to destroy her, and wipe out her very existence.

And these enemies of the Church are powerful, and they are able to use many means to reach their purpose. Theirs are usually the wisdom and power, the riches and resources, the might and dominion of this world. It is by way of exception that God's people are found in high places, occupy positions of authority and honor, belong to the rich and mighty of men. Hence, the world is in power. It is in a position to employ various means and methods to seek the destruction of the Church. Its wise men seek to entangle believers in their false doctrine, to lead them astray from the way of truth and righteousness. Its powerful men offer them a name and position, honor and riches, the treasures and pleasures of Egypt. Or they make the place of the faithful very narrow, take away their name and their job, their place and their very bread;

and fill them with reproach, persecute them, leave them no standing-room in the world, kill them all the day long.

All through the ages of this dispensation these attacks of the enemies have been launched against the Church in the world. And Scripture very clearly predicts that there will be more of such assaults in the future. We must not expect that the world will assume a friendly attitude toward the Church, if the latter is faithful. On the contrary, the time is still coming when there will be a great tribulation, when the very elect would be deceived if the days were not shortened, when the love of many shall wax cold, and they that refuse to worship the beast will not be able to buy or to sell. The cruel sword of the world-power shall literally be turned against the Church once more, and as never before, in those days.

Thus the world seeks to destroy the Church.

She shall never succeed, neither by her false philosophy, nor by her enticing offers, nor by her raving fury and bloody sword.

The Lord of the Church, Who loved her and gave Himself for her, is Lord of the world also. He defends and preserves her against all her enemies.

O, He preserves them all by His grace. For He dwells in them by His Spirit, and abides with them forever. He never forsakes them. He ever lives to make intercession for them. In the midst of all these subtle dangers He is able to preserve His Church. No one can pluck the faithful out of His hand. He keeps them by His grace.

But He also defends and preserves them by His power. The enemies cannot touch them by His will and direction. This preservation is not such that the enemy has no power to make them suffer, and to persecute them even to the death. On the contrary, it is the will of our Lord that believers shall suffer with Him, and that they fill the measure of His suffering. But this defensive and preserving power of Christ does so operate that, first of all, the elect shall never be deceived and finally fall away; secondly, the enemy can attack and realize his wicked devices of destruction against the Church only under the direction of Christ, and to the extent that He permits him; and, thirdly, affairs of men and history are so directed that the world remains a house divided against itself, and cannot unite all its forces against the Church until the very end of time. In wars and contentions, in economic strife and dissension, in strikes, boycotts, and revolutions, the world is fighting itself, and cannot direct all her attention to the Church of Christ in the world. But Scripture instructs us that, toward the very end, the world will, for a little while, unite under one head. The man of sin must come, and under him the forces of darkness will unitedly attack the true believers. However, he may not come before his time. Always there is some-

thing that withholds. And it is the power of Christ by which the world is so ruled that Antichrist can appear only in his own time.

And even in the days of Antichrist, He will preserve and defend His own. All the forces of the universe He shall marshal to fight for His own, and with the heat of the sun, the destructive elements of creation, hail, fire, locusts, wild beasts, earthquakes, pestilence, and the like, He shall oppose and harass the enemy, until He shall consume him by the sword that proceeds out of His mouth.

Christ is Lord over all, and forever!

For "he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him." I Cor. 15:27. It is true, to this it is added: "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all," vs. 28. But this cannot mean that, in the end, Christ shall be deprived of His present power over all things, so that He shall not be king forever. On the contrary, He shall reign forever. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. It shall have no end. All things shall be united in and under Him in the new creation, and that unto unending ages of ages. Yet, even in that position, He is now, and shall forever be, subject to God. The power and dominion unto which He is exalted is vested in His human nature. In that nature the incarnated Son of God is subject to the Father, and He will be subject to Him also in the new creation.

Priest He is forever, after the order of Melchisedec. God's Servant-king!

### 3.

#### The Coming Of The Lord.

"From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead."

In the Apostolic Confession, the Church inseparably connected the final judgment with the second coming of our Lord from heaven, and speaks in one breath of them.

The Heidelberg Catechism treats this article of the confession in question and answer fifty two: "What comfort is it to thee that Christ shall come again to judge the quick and the dead? That in all my sorrows and persecutions with uplifted head I look for the very same person, who before offered himself for my sake, to the tribunal of God, and has removed all curse from me, to come as judge from heaven: who shall cast all his and my enemies into everlasting condemnation. but

shall translate me with all his chosen ones unto himself, into heavenly joys and glory."

However, even though also the Catechism devotes only one question and answer to these subjects, we shall have to speak of them separately.

But let us first pay attention to the spiritual note that is struck here by the catechism, and to the spiritual disposition and attitude that is assumed with relation to the coming again of the Lord, and the final judgment. We should not overlook these, when we preach on these doctrines, especially not in the days in which we live. They, this spiritual note and attitude assumed, are all important. The Catechism does not inquire into the doctrinal implications of the future advent and judgment, but asks: "What comfort is it to thee that Christ shall come again to judge the quick and the dead?" The Catechism, therefore, proceeds from the assumption that, to the believer, to the Christian in this world, his faith that the Lord will come again to judge is a comfort to him.

In our own day, we might, perhaps, go a step farther back than the Heidelberg, and ask the question: "Is it a comfort to thee that Christ shall come again to judge the quick and the dead?" We are not living in a time when, as a whole, the Church is living in a proper attitude with respect to the coming again of her Lord. In that sense, the article of the *Apostolicum* concerning this coming of the Lord, is more or less obsolete. As the expression of the living comfort of faith, comparatively few take it upon their lips. It is true, there are many today that profess to look and long for a certain appearance or manifestation of the Lord, at which the faithful shall be taken out of this world, in order, for a time, the time of the great tribulation, to be with the Lord in the air. However, the Apostolic Confession does not refer to such a "rapture." It speaks of the coming of our mighty Lord to judge the quick and the dead! It refers to the *parousia*; it has in mind the end of this world; it speaks of the final revelation of the righteous judgment of God. And the Catechism presents these truths, as do the Scriptures always, not as cold matters of fact, but as the objects of the believer's joy and comfort, longing and hope. And the question may be raised: are we ready to follow the Catechism in this method of approach? It is not true that for many a Christian today, the advent and the judgment are matters that are either thought of very little, or, when they are thought about, they are objects of fear rather than of hope and longing?

What is wrong?

If you will look closely at the answer the Heidelberg Catechism gives to this question, and compare it with the life of the Church in the world of our own day, it should not be difficult to discover what is wrong.

The spiritual disposition and attitude of the be-

liever that is supposed to be able to answer the question: "What comfort is it to thee that Christ shall come again to judge the quick and the dead?" is that of a conscious faith, and of the antithesis in relation to the world. It speaks of "all my sorrows and persecutions," of looking "with uplifted head for the very same person, who before offered himself, for my sake, to the tribunal of God, and has removed all curse from me"; it makes mention of "his and my enemies" in one breath, and it rejoices in the hope that in that day these enemies of Christ and His Church shall be cast into everlasting condemnation, and in the hope of the justification and glorification of the saints with Christ: "he shall translate me with all his chosen ones unto himself, into heavenly joys and glory."

But where is this faith manifest today?

Where are all our "sorrows and persecutions"? Are we not rather good friends with the world? Are we not seeking the things that are below rather than those that are above? Is it not a fact that we amalgamate and fraternize with the ungodly, and that we are not even willing to give up our job for Christ's sake? And being so earthly- and worldly-minded, how could we possibly, except as a matter of dead tradition, speak of Christ's enemies as ours, and long for the day when He shall come to execute judgment and vengeance upon those enemies, whom we here joined, whose friendship we sought, and with whom we enjoyed the things of the world?

Let us remember that the Catechism proceeds from the presupposition of the antithesis: the believer stands for the cause of the Son of God in confession and walk in the midst of a world that lieth in darkness; hence, the enemies of Christ are his enemies, and he must suffer persecutions for his Lord's sake.

And it is only in as far as we assume that position, keep our garments clean, put on no unequal yoke with the infidel, and are willing to suffer for Christ's sake, that the coming again of our Lord can really be a comfort to us.

The hope of Christ's coming and a sanctified walk in the world are inseparably connected.

And by the same token, love of the world and the comfort of Christ's coming are mutually exclusive. If we walk as the enemies of the cross of Christ, "whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things," we cannot be interested in the *parousia*, we hate to think of the coming again of our Lord, and of the final revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

But if we are followers together of the apostles of the Lord Jesus, and keep our eye on them that walk after their example, our conversation is in heaven, and then we look from thence for the Saviour, "who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby

he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." Phil. 3:17-21.

This spiritual note of our Heidelberger in its fifty second question and answer must not fail to draw our attention, and to receive due emphasis.

Approaching now the subject of the second coming of our Lord, we may note that Scripture everywhere fixes the eyes of our hope upon that coming event, that final wonder of grace.

It is true that the Word of God also comforts believers in this world with the hope of glory that shall be their portion immediately after death, before the resurrection. It is also true that Scripture speaks of the coming of Christ in more than one sense of the word. He promised His disciples that He would not leave them orphans in the world, that He would come to them after His death and resurrection. For He would pray the Father, and He would give them another Comforter, that he might abide with them forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but they know him, for he dwelleth with them, and shall be in them. John 14:16-18. This promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. In the Spirit the glorified Christ returned to His own to dwell with and in them. It may even be said that Scripture speaks of a coming of the Lord throughout the ages. To the high priest's question, whether he were the Christ, the Son of God, he replied: "Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Matt. 26:64. And the phrase that is translated "hereafter" is better rendered by "from now on", or "henceforth". Christ is coming!

At the right hand of God, He is not idle, but constantly active with His great power. And all His activity is directed toward the final goal of His parousia. In that sense it may be said that He is constantly coming. He is coming in and through the preaching of the gospel, by which He gathers His Church until the last one of the elect shall have been called. He is coming also through all the events of this world, in wars and rumors of war, in unrest and revolutions, in earthquakes and famines, in all the tumult of the nations. For these events are so directed by His power that they lead up to the "day of the Lord."

Yet, in last analysis, Scripture always directs the eye of our hope to the final coming of Christ, the last wonder of grace, whereby the history of this world will be closed, and the "age of ages," the kingdom of heaven in all its glory and perfection will be ushered in.

Of this coming, His parousia, the Lord Himself

spoke elaborately when He was still with us in the likeness of sinful flesh. He forewarned us that many things must still be accomplished before the end can come. For "ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars," and all these things must come to pass, yet, the end lies beyond them all. "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these things are the beginning of sorrows." Matt. 24:6-8. Then, too, he warned us to expect great tribulation and distress before the redemption of the end will come. "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elects' sakes those days shall be shortened." Matt. 24:21, 22. And "immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matt. 24:29, 30.

H. H.

#### ATTENTION! PLEASE!

Whereas the material contained in the wellknown brochure of the Rev. H. Hoeksema, "De Geloovigen en Hun Zaad", is pertinent to the present controversy in the Netherlands, the Mission Committee of our Protestant Reformed Churches has decided to reprint this excellent and instructive work for the purpose of free distribution among the Reformed people of the Netherlands. It is the desire of your committee that these pamphlets shall reach not only the ministers and consistory members but also and especially the laymen. Since there is much contact these days between our people in general and friends and relatives in the Netherlands, and our people as a whole are in possession of numerous addresses, we deemed it advisable to enlist the aid of all our people in this worthwhile undertaking. The brochures are now ready for distribution. In the very near future we shall send a number of copies to all our churches. Will our ministers and consistories call them to the attention of their respective congregations as soon as they arrive? And will the brethren and sisters of our churches aid us by obtaining as many copies as they can use, free of charge, and sending them to their relatives and acquaintances in the Netherlands? Send extra copies, as many as you feel will accomplish their purpose.

that your friends and relatives across the sea can pass them on to *their* friends and consistory members. Please! In this way the committee will be spared much unnecessary work, all our people will be engaged in the work of spreading the truth, and some measure of light may be shed on the present controversy and confusion in the Netherlands. Consistories, kindly co-operate!

The Mission Committee.

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## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

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### Hannah's Song Of Thanksgiving

In the way of her prayer, God would save Hannah, according to His word by giving her a man-child. This was her confidence, which was not put to shame. She bare a son and "called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the Lord." Yet the name Samuel is a compound of the Hebrew word *shamah*, to hear, and the noun *el*, God, so that the thought conveyed is that she named him "heard of God" because she asked him of the Lord. It indicates that she wanted her child to stand out in the mind of her people as a living monument to God's hearing and answering her prayer for a man-child. She waited with going up to offer unto the Lord the yearly sacrifice until the child was weaned and could be brought to the sanctuary to abide there forever, doubtless because she deemed it improper to go up to the sanctuary as long as she could not appear before the face of God with her child and thus perform her vow. Elkanah, her husband, was willing that she have her way in the matter. "Do what seemeth thee good;" said he to her. "Tarry until thou have weaned him; only the Lord establish His word." The word of the Lord to which this reply has reference is the promise of God implicit in His hearing and answering Hannah's prayer for a man-child—the promise that according to her vow He would take the child to Himself and wholly dedicate him to His service at the sanctuary. When the child was weaned she brought him to the sanctuary and gave him to the Lord with the required sacrifices. She brought the child to Eli. But she must identify herself, which she did in these words, "Oh my Lord, as thy soul liveth, my Lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord. For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him; therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; and as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord." It is doubtful whether the clause, "Therefore

also have I *lent* him. . . ." can be received as a correct translation of the Hebrew text at this place. Man cannot lend to his Maker. Some translate, "Therefore I have given him to the Lord." But the Hebrew verb is *sha-al*, to ask, in the Hiphil. Doubtless the text must be rendered, "Therefore also I have asked him for the Lord; and he was asked for the Lord as long as he liveth." "And he (or she) worshipped the Lord there. And Hannah prayed and said,

My heart rejoiceth in Jehovah,  
My horn is exalted in Jehovah;  
My mouth is opened wide over mine enemies,  
Because I rejoice in thy salvation.

There is none holy as Jehovah,  
For there is none beside thee,  
And there is no rock like our God.

Talk no more so exceedingly proudly;  
Let not arrogancy come out of thy mouth;  
For the Lord is a God of knowledge,  
And by His actions are weighed.

The bows of the mighty men are broken,  
And they that stumbled are girded with strength.  
They that were full have hired themselves out  
for bread,  
And they that were hungry ceased (to hunger);  
So that the barren hath borne seven,  
And she that hath many children hath waxed feeble.

Jehovah killeth and maketh alive,  
Bringeth down to Sheol and bringeth up.  
Jehovah maketh poor and maketh rich,  
Bringeth low and lifteth up.

He raiseth up the poor out of the dust,  
And lifteth up the needy out of the dunghill,  
To set among princes,  
And he makes them to inherit a throne of glory:  
For the pillars of the earth are Jehovah's,  
And he hath set the world upon them.

He will keep the feet of his favored ones,  
And the wicked shall perish in darkness;  
For not by strength shall a man prevail.

The adversaries of Jehovah shall be broken  
in pieces;  
And out of heaven will he thunder upon them.  
Jehovah will judge the ends of the earth,  
And he will give strength unto his king.

The above comes close to being a literal translation from the Hebrew of Hannah's song of thanksgiving. The prayer or song with which we here deal is truly remarkable. Mark you, it expresses great joy in Jehovah and His salvation. It extols His virtues. It directs words of rebuke to the proud and the arrogant. It predicts the destruction of the mighty, and speaks of the strengthening of the weak, the depletion of the full, the satisfying of the hungry, the fruitfulness of the barren, and the enfeebling of the fruitful, and then sets forth Jehovah as the one who works all these things, goes on to describe the Lord's gracious dealing with the poor and the needy—his favored ones, who put their trust in God—again predicts the destruction of Jehovah's adversaries and ends with extoling the universality of Jehovah's reign in and through His king. There is this question. How could Hannah's giving birth to a son be the cause of such rejoicing on her part and give rise in her soul to a song of such themes as her own personal salvation and the salvation and exaltation of God's people in general? To understand her peculiar joy, it must always be borne in mind that it was the dispensation of shadows. As has already been explained, in the Old Dispensation, Canaan was heaven for the Old Testament Church, for there dwelt the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ with His people. Hence, the one great desire of every believing Israelitess was to bear children, sons and daughters, in order that in her generations, she and her house might continue to have a name and a place in God's country. When an Israelite died without an issue, his inheritance went to another, and his place would know him no more. That was equivalent to his being banished from God's presence even in death. Jacob's desire was to be buried in Canaan. And such was also the desire of Joseph. He took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God shall surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. Certain it is that a childless marriage caused sadness of soul, if those, so afflicted, were true children of God, as was Hannah; for though a God-fearing woman, she bore in her body what was generally regarded as the mark of divine disfavor. But what caused her greatest grief was the taunts of that wicked Peninnah by whom she was being despised and held in visible contempt on account of her barrenness. And in all likelihood she was quoting the very words of the Lord in defence of her stand that the God-fearing Hannah, being childless, was the object of divine disfavor however God-fearing she might appear to be. For the Lord, in commanding His people, had said by the mouth of Moses, "And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all His commandments which I commanded thee this day. . . . that all these blessings shall come upon thee and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the

voice of the Lord thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle. . . . And the Lord shall make thee plenteous of goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle and in the fruit of thy ground. . . ." (Deut. 28:1-3, 11). In the Old Dispensation, being as it was the dispensation of shadows, the Lord would bestow upon the nation all these gifts, in the way of its keeping His covenant. When the covenant was broken, these gifts were withheld and the nation was visited with social and economic disasters, which, according to the law, had to include also the unfruitfulness of the body. But the cursings and blessings of the law in their working were made to pursue only the nation on a whole and not lone members of the theocracy by themselves. Also in Israel, the wicked often prospered, while the believer might be plagued all the day long and chastened every morning. Such was the lot of Hannah. Though truly God-fearing, she was barren and on this account reviled all the day long by her adversary, the malicious Peninnah, who, though wicked, was fruitful. It was also of this woman that Asaph was speaking when he said, "For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. . . . They are corrupt, and speak wickedly of oppression; they speak loftily," Psalm 73:4-8. It was from the persecutions of that wicked woman that the Lord saved Hannah by hearing and answering her prayer for a man-child. And she was glad and praised the Lord her Saviour for the salvation that he sent her. Thus a right understanding of this song requires that we perceive that the strife between Peninnah and Hannah was not a common quarrel between two women vying for the affections of a man, but rather the working of the enmity between the serpent brood and the seed of the woman set by God at the dawn of history. It was thus a manifestation of the strife of the ages between darkness and light with the light always the victor. The spirit of the serpent brood was revealed in Peninnah. The ambition of this brood stirred in her bosom. Her aim was to destroy Hannah's faith in God. But the faith of Hannah was indestructable. The triumph was therefore hers. She overcame her adversary not by opposing reviling to reviling, thus not by the weapons of the flesh, but by putting her trust in Jehovah and by casting herself upon His mercy. Thus she prevailed; and her victory was her faith.

Therefore her heart rejoiced in Jehovah; and she was conscious of being filled with courage and power, of which the source was Jehovah, to bless His name, declare His glories, rebuke the pride of her enemies,

and proclaim and foretell their abasement. In the words of the song, her horn was exalted in Jehovah; her mouth was opened wide over her enemies, because she rejoiced in the Lord's salvation. She next sets forth the oneliness and absoluteness of God, His infinite transcendence over everything earthy, human, creaturely, and His perfect devotion to self as the only and incomparable God. These ideas are indicated by her words, "For there is none beside thee." And thus it follows that, in the words of her song, "There is none holy as Jehovah and there is no rock like our God." These words set forth the oneliness of God by the names *holy* and *rock*. As the Holy One, He is the Unchangeable, Immoveable, in His faithfulness toward His people, unshakable and indestructible in His trustworthiness. And this rock is "our God". He chose His people in Christ and makes them His possession by His grace so that He is "our God".

Having exalted Jehovah in her song, Hannah addresses words of censure to the ungodly. Let them not increase to speak proudly; let not arrogancy come out of their mouth. The soul of the wicked is haughty and shows itself in haughty talk, directed towards God's believing people. Reference here is not to the heathen that dwelt on Israel's borders, but to the enemy within the gate, to the carnal seed in the church that, in the language of the psalmist "utter and speak hard things; boast themselves, break in pieces thy people and afflict thy heritage; slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless," Psalm 94:2-6. But let them consider that, in the words of Hannah's song, "The Lord is a God of knowledge and by Him actions are weighed." He knows all the deeds and all the words of the wicked. His eye pierces even to the dividing assunder of soul and spirit and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart; in his sight all things are naked and opened, and no man can withdraw from His rule. It is plain that Hannah was mindful of the fact that she was but one of many harrassed and reviled by the haters of God, one of many who fight the good fight, and that, as mindful of this, she merged herself in the many, in the nation according to the election, in the church universal in fact; and that, looking forward from her own strife and from the triumph of her own faith, she extended her song into a large outburst of praise to God for His saving love to all His people in Christ. This comes out especially in the sequel of the song.

Having exhorted the proud to recollect that Jehovah weighs actions, she proclaims the conduct of the Holy and Faithful God toward the ungodly and the godly by a sharply contrasted change in their respective lots. The idea set forth is that the strong who will be something in themselves are destroyed; and that the weak who despair of themselves are made strong. Thus in the words of the song, "The bows

of the mighty are broken, and they that stumble are girded with strength. They that were full have hired themselves out for bread, and they that were hungry were filled; so that the barren hath borne seven; and she that hath many children hath waxed feeble."

And because Hannah would have God's people consider that this cometh from the Lord, she continued, "Jehovah killeth and maketh alive, Bringeth down to Sheol (the grave) and bringeth up. Jehovah maketh poor and maketh rich, bringeth low and lifteth up." But doubtless there is more in these words. To kill is also to bring the soul near to death by extremest suffering—making alive is saving from deadly sorrow unto safety and joy. Thus at Deut. 32:29, "I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal;" Psalm 30:4, "Thou hast brought up my soul from the grave (Sheol), thou hast made me alive," Psalm 71:20, "Thou who hast shown us great and sore trouble, wilt quicken us again, and wilt bring us up from the depths of the earth." Psalm 86:13, "Great is thy mercy toward me, and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest grave." There is then no reference in this part of the song to the physical resurrection of the dead. Doubtless in this verse the prophetess (Hannah) concentrates solely on God's dealings with His people (the believers). The thought set forth is that sorrow as well as joy, adversity as well as prosperity come to the believers by God's fatherly hand; and further that He submerges His people in deepest suffering in order to create for Himself the opportunity, so to say, to save them from all their troubles, that He may be feared. This thought is continued and further developed in the lines that follow. "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the needy out of the dunghill, to set among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory." This language agrees almost word for word with Psalm 113:7, 8, "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people." The poor and the needy are the oppressed believers in Israel, whose expectation is the Lord. "Dust" and "dunghill" are words descriptive of deepest dishonor and disgrace. One in this condition was, as it were, being trampled by men, definitely by the violent men, who feared not God and had no regard for His people. Thus the "raising and lifting up" indicate the gracious intervening of God whereby shame and contempt are changed into honor and glory, that consists in the oppressed ones being made to sit in the company of nobles and princes, on the throne of glory. And this salutary government of God, whereby He saves His people cannot fail, for He is Israel's mighty God; "the pillars of the earth are Jehovah's, and he hath set the world upon them," meaning that He is the Creator and Sustainer of the earth, and therefore by His power exercises unlimited

rule over the earth and in the hearts of all mankind. Thus "He will keep the feet of His favored ones, and the wicked shall perish in darkness; For not by strength shall a man prevail. The adversaries of Jehovah shall be broken in pieces; and out of heaven will He thunder upon them. Jehovah will judge the ends of the earth, and He will give strength unto his king." So does the song culminate in the prediction of the rule of God in the manifestation of His justice towards the godly and the ungodly and in extending His kingdom over the world in the person of His anointed, who in the first instance was king David as including Solomon, and in the final instance Christ. Thus, these last words do not, as the critics maintain, assume the existence of a king but the promise of one.

Hannah's song is gospel. As there is but one gospel, the themes of her song are discernible in every proclamation of the gospel in the ages that preceded. The "king" of her song is the "seed" of the woman that shall bruise the head of the serpent, Gen. 3:15; He is the "seed" in whom all the nations of the earth will be blessed, Gen. 12:3; He is the Shiloh to whom shall be the gathering of the people, Gen. 49:10. And Balaam prophesied that "Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion. . . . Num. 24:19. Then there is the law of the king in Deut. 17. The things of which Hannah spake had been heard before, for it was the gospel that she proclaimed. Only, as filled with the Spirit of prophecy, whose representative and instrument she was, she shed upon the gospel, upon its promise, a new light. But it was the same gospel. The hope that the Lord would raise up a king, who would save His people from their troubles and deep sorrows, was already living. Hence, that Hannah lived at a time when the nation was still without a king, cannot be adduced against the view that the song is of her but of one who lived when the king was in existence. Besides, the sacred writer puts the song in her mouth. There is certainly no arguing with the Scriptures.

G. M. O.

### ATTENTION!

Very soon now work will begin on the reprint of Rev. Hoeksema's book: "The Protestant Reformed Churches in America." If you desire that pictures of church properties shall be included in this book, send cuts or pictures at once to either the Rev. B. Kok, Hudsonville, Michigan, or the Rev. R. Veldman, 1436 Kalamazoo Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The Mission Committee.

## THROUGH THE AGES

### The Peace Of Venice

As we saw, the long war between the papacy and the emperor over lay investiture was terminated by the Concordat of Worms, September 23, 1122. As was explained, according to the articles of this Concordat, the bishops in their capacity of temporal rulers, continued in the possession of their estates but as vassals of the emperor and thus under his overlordship. Only as spiritual rulers should they be subject to the pope. Their election should be the sole task of the clergy and the people with the king approving the choice and the pope as represented by the arch-bishop confirming it. Thus the emperor waived the right of appointing the bishops; but he was allowed the so-called touch of the sceptre in token that the bishop received from him his temporal possessions and power as a fief. Such were the articles of this rather ambiguous concordat. But in subscribing to them the pope did not mean to relinquish his claim to the supreme lordship over the kings of the earth, in particular over the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, in their capacity of temporal rulers. In his own eyes the pope, under God, was still the head over all things in state and church, the lord of the earth and its fulness, from whom the kings of the earth, as his vassals, received their power and dominion, so that, according to the way of thinking of the pope, the emperor, in bestowing upon the bishops their temporal possessions and authority was granting out the pope's possessions, and this also by reason of the fact that these possessions, this vast amount of real estate, represented the accumulated gifts of the faithful bestowed upon the church in the ages of the past. The pope, therefore, had insisted that the right to appoint the bishops belonged to him and not to the emperor. The latter agreed to this and the result was the Concordat of Worms. However, the emperors of Germany did not long hold themselves to this agreement. Soon they again went to appointing bishops. They even made direct war upon the pope, their aim being to bring the papacy in subjection to themselves. The papacy in turn made relentless war upon the emperor, its aim being to maintain itself as the supreme judicial power in church and state through the subjugation of the emperor. As has been explained in a previous article, church and state, according to the prevailing conception, formed a Christian commonwealth. According to the papal party it was the pope, according to the imperial party it was the emperor, who formed under God the supreme judicial power in this commonwealth. Each—emperor and pope—strove to subject

the other to himself. Each strove to free himself from the yoke of the other, when the other would momentarily prevail. Each strove to resist the encroachments of the other upon what he considered to be his domain. The war of lay investiture is but a chapter in this carnal warfare. And we now pass on to its next chapter—a chapter that covers the years that intervened the adoption of the Concordat of Worms, 1122 and the peace of Venice, 1177.

Henry, who had acted so criminally toward his parent, Henry IV, expired in 1122. Having no issue, he bequeathed his dominions to the faithful Hohenstaufen, the third great dynasty of the emperors of Germany. In 1138 this family, in the person of Conrad III, was able to capture the imperial throne and the struggle between the papacy and the emperor for supremacy commenced anew. On the one side stood the pope, supported by France and an unGerman faction in Germany. On the other side stood the emperor determined to defend the prerogatives of state against the encroachments of the pope and to bring the papacy under his control.

Conrad died in 1152. Being without an heir to the throne—shortly before his death his only son Henry had expired in the bloom of youth—his nephew Frederick was elected emperor at Frankford. Besides being remarkable for the handsome and manly appearance, and the genuine German cast of his countenance, Frederick, according to the standard of the world, was one of the ablest of the Holy Roman emperors. He vigorously maintained the independence of the monarchy, as a divine institution, against the claims of the papacy to supreme lordship over the temporal rulers. He set at naught the Concordat of Worms by controlling the election of bishops and thereby made himself complete master of both state and church in Germany. In Rome the papal chair was occupied by the able and energetic Adrian IV, a beggar, raised to the most exalted position in Christendom. He was an Englishman in whom these extremes of fortune met. The Romans demanded that he resign as temporal ruler. He refused and placed the city under the interdict. This was one of the pope's most effective weapons for enforcing the submission of men to his will, the other being excommunication. The latter was directed against individuals. It separated the person from all relations with his fellow-men. It released the subjects from their oath of allegiance to their king. Any one providing the excommunicated one with food or shelter was penalized by the church. The excommunicated person was shunned as though he were infected by a contagious disease; and if he died he was refused the rites of burial. The interdict was directed against a city, province, or kingdom. It closed the churches in the region and silenced the bells. No marriages could be confirmed and no burial rites performed. The sacra-

ments of baptism and extreme unction alone could be administered. At this time Frederick (surnamed by the Italians "Barbarossa" redbeard) was in Italy with a powerful army to receive the token of royalty from the Lombards and to be crowned by the pope. The pope was willing only on condition that Frederick order the execution of Arnold a popular agitator of whom more will be said in the sequel. Frederick complied, kissed the pope's toe, and was crowned. The rebellion of the Roman people was speedily suppressed. But Frederick and Adrian did not live in peace for long. "Who shall be subject to the other?" was the question, or, "Who shall be the greater?" Both wanted to be the greater. So Adrian spoke of Frederick's empire as his gift to the emperor. This was more than Frederick could endure. He marched into Italy with an army to humble Milan and other rebellious Lombard cities. This accomplished, he convoked a diet that rendered the decision that the emperor held his empire by independent divine right and not by the will of the pope. Adrian had more fault to find with Frederick. He rebuked him for taxing certain papal estates, demanding that he should recognize the papal claim of feudal rights over them. The incensed monarch replied that instead of his being a vassal of the pope, the latter was a vassal of the emperor. A war of letters followed. Finally Adrian was decided to excommunicate his imperial foe; but he died before he could execute his intention. He was succeeded by Alexander III, a professor at Bologne, and a distinguished canonist. With this pope the conflict assumed a serious character. The cardinals were divided in their choice and a minority, favorable to the emperor, elected an anti-pope, who assumed the name of Victor IV. Frederick recognized Victor, thinking thereby to gain control of the papacy. Victor now excommunicated Alexander. The latter replied by excommunicating Victor and Frederick and thereby instigated revolt in Lombard and division in the entire patriarchate of the papacy, so that the church was rent by another schism. France, Spain, and England held with Alexander, while Germany, Hungary, Bohemia, Norway and Sweden sided with Victor. Italy was rent in twain. Rome and Tuscany, being under the power of the emperor, supported Victor while the proud commercial and manufacturing cities of Lombardy gave their allegiance to Alexander mostly out of antipathy toward Frederick, whom they refused to recognize as their temporal lord. He crushed the revolt with a mailed fist. Milan was razed to the ground and its population scattered.

Victor IV died in April 1164. He was succeeded by Pascal III. So there were still two popes. Alexander now formed a league of Lombard cities against Frederick. The following year the emperor a fourth time marched into Italy with a strong army, captured Rome and enthroned Pascal III and was once more

crowned. Thereupon he planned to chastise the rebellious Lombards; but his army was decimated by the Roman fever and all Lombardy was in league against him. He was obliged therefore to recross the Alps for safety, which he did almost a fugitive. Pascal III died and Calixtus III was elected as his successor. A fifth time Frederick marched into Italy only to be defeated after a terrible slaughter in a pitched battle with the Lombards. Broken in spirit and in this state of mind despairing of ever being able to beat down the forces supporting Alexander, Frederick forsook Calixtus and made his peace with his rival, known as the Peace of Venice. It was ratified in the presence of cardinals, arch-bishops, bishops and a vast multitude that filled the public square, 1177. Frederick prostrated himself before Alexander, and the pope in tears raised him up and gave him the kiss of peace and reconciliation. Glad tidings of the peace were sent to all parts of Christendom. The scenes of Canossa were reenacted in Venice. After ten years of exile, Alexander entered Rome, March 12, 1178. The attempt of Frederick to make himself master of the papacy ended in the triumph of the papacy over him. But his lordship over the bishops of Germany continued. As to Alexander, in 1179 he was driven into exile by the Roman republic. Two years later he died. The coffin in which his remains were carried to Rome for burial were pelted with mud and stones by the Roman populace. Insults such as this show that the people of Rome had as little love for the popes as had the secular power anywhere in the papal patriarchate.

G. M. O.

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## SION'S ZANGEN

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### De Verbonds Psalm

(Psalm 89; Vijfde Deel)

We hebben gezien, dat Psalm 89 het eeuwig verbond van Gods genade bezingt en dat dit eeuwig verbond vast ligt in David, den beteren David, onzen Heere Jezus Christus. Van Hem zingen we daarom: Een eerstgeboren Zoon, door al Zijn broeders 't eeren; als Koning zal Hij zelf de koningen regeeren; Mijn goedertierenheid Zijns rijkstroon eeuwig stijven en Mijn gemaakt verbond met Hem bestendig blijven!"

Omdat dat zoo is, is er dan ook eeuwige zaligheid voor Zijn zaad; en dat zijn wij, de kerk van Jezus Christus. Als Hij het eeuwig verbond in den tijd geopenbaard heeft in Zijn lijden, sterven en verrijzenis, dan zal Hij zaad zien! is de juichtoon van Jesaja. Hij

zal zaad zien: en dat zaad zijn alleen die van Christus zijn; gekend in eeuwige liefde en verkoren om te zijn tot prijs van den DrieEenigen God.

Evenwel: "indien Zijne kinderen Mijne wet verlaten en in Mijne rechten niet wandelen, indien zij Mijne inzettingen ontheiligen en Mijne geboden niet houden, zoo zal Ik hunne overtreding met de roede bezoeken, en hunne ongerechtigheid met plagen."

Hieruit leeren we eerst, dat het geloof in Jezus als bewijs, dat wij van eeuwigheid bemind zijn, geen vrijbrief is tot de zonde en de ongerechtigheid. Het is een droef feit, dat Gods volk zondigt. En zonde is de overtreding van de wet, Gods rechten, Zijn inzettingen en geboden. Wij struikelen allen in vele, zegt Jakobus. Een mensch die in woorden niet struikelt is volmaakt; en die zijn er niet op aarde. En, ik heb het van mijn prilste jeugd gehoord, Gods volk zondigt duur! Al heeft God mij lief, dan is dat geen reden om te denken, dat ik nu maar raak leven kan en mij niet storen aan Zijn wet. Hij zal ons plagen als wij Zijn wet overtreden.

Zoo zien we, dat de "duizendjarige rijkers" het mis hebben, als zij zich zetten tegen de wet. De wet moet niet meer gelezen noch bepreekt, zoo zeggen ze. Wij zijn niet meer onder de wet, doch onder de genade.

Hoe zit dat?

Het is toch waar, dat wij onder de genade zijn? Christus heeft toch alles betaald? Alle onze zonden toch betaald? Ook de zonden van de toekomst? Waarom verbindt God dan den vrede aan het houden der wetten en inzettingen?

Dat dit zóó: De wet Gods is vervuld in één woord: De Liefde Gods! Liefde tot God en liefde tot den naaste. Welnu: die wet heeft Jezus vervuld; en die wet-vervullende-Jezus woont nu in ons door Zijn Geest en Woord. En telkens wanneer we tegen de wet zondigen, zondigen we ook tegen Jezus die in ons woont. Christus is het einde der wet, zegt de chiliast en dan haalt hij daarmede de Heilige Schrift aan; we stemmen het volmondig toe. Doch dat beteekent niet, dat Christus het einde van de wet is in den zin, dat die wet uitgedaan heeft, dat we nu klaar zijn met de wet. Einde is hier *doeleinde*. Christus is het *doeleinde der wet*. Het was God er om te doen, om Zijn wet die Hij den stervling zet, geschreven te hebben in hun diepste hart. Daarom is Jezus verschenen, daarom vervuld Hij die wet voor ons, doch ook door ons. Om het nu helder en klaar te zeggen: als het *doeleinde* bereikt is, dan vervult ieder kind van God de wet, naar ziel en lichaam tot in alle eeuwigheid. Hemelleven is niet dan het vervullen van de wet Gods.

Bovendien, een ieder kind van God vindt uit, dat het precies zoo is als er hier geleerd wordt. Indien we ook slechts eenigszins zondigen tegen de wet Gods, dan ontvangen wij ons loon in een aan vrede gespeend hart. Om een Amerikaansche idioom te gebruiken:

No one gets away with anything! Zoo spoedig wij zondigen komt God met Zijn roede en met Zijn plagen. Dat behoeft nog niet eens bijzondere bezoeking te zijn in den zin van vreeselijke slagen, zooals het wegnemen van beminde kinderen, of iets dergelijks. De roede en de plagen zijn veel meer de onvrede, de smart in het hart. Ik heb vele jaren ergens gelezen van iemand die zeide: Als men in haat leeft, dan slaat met een gat in zijn hart. En dat is de bezoekende God. God reageert direkt tegen alle zonde, bij Zijn kind ook. Dat bedoelt Mozes, als hij zegt: Wij vergaan door Uwe toorn en door Uwe grimmigheid worden wij verschrikt. Ik weet wel, dat het daar niet uitsluitend gaat over de zonde van de uitverkorenen, doch die zijn er ook bij gerekend. Als Mozes zegt: *wij vergaan door Uwe toorn*, dan sluit hij zichzelf in dat *wij* in.

Bij de goddeloozen is die roede en plage voor eeuwig. Het einde daarvan is de hel.

Doch niet zoo bij de kerk.

Luistert maar: "Maar Mijne goedertierenheid zal Ik van Hem niet wegnemen, en in Mijne getrouwheid niet feilen."

Let er op, dat hier staat: "*van Hem*", en niet "*van hen*", gelijk ge zoudt verwachten. Immers, het ging over het zaad van Jezus. Indien zij zondigen, dan zou de Heere hen bezoeken met plagen en de roede. Nu zou men verwachten, dat er op zou volgen: doch Ik zal Mijn goedertierenheid niet van *hen* wegnemen!

Daar zit een mooie les in. We zien hier, dat we alles bezitten en genieten om Jezus wil. Als wij zondigen, dan komt God met de roede. Doch dat Hij ons weer opzoekt en terugkeert van Zijn straffende hand komt ons toe om Jezus wil.

Al de zaligheid die we voor tijd en eeuwigheid zullen genieten is eerst in Jezus; en uit Jezus vloeit die zaligheid in de kerk.

En waarom zal de Heere Zijn goedertierenheid niet van Hem wegnemen? Hier is het antwoord: "Ik zal Mijn verbond niet ontheiligen, en het hetgeen dat uit Mijne lippen gegaan is, zal Ik niet veranderen. Ik heb ééns gezworen bij Mijne heiligheid: Zoo Ik aan David lieg! Zijn zaad zal in eeuwigheid zijn, en Zijn troon zal voor Mij zijn gelijk de zon. Hij zal eeuwiglijk bevestigd worden gelijk de maan, en de getuige in den hemel is getrouw. Sela!"

Het hart van dit gedeelte ligt ongetwijfeld in dat: "niet veranderen". Wat is het anders, dan de negatieve vorm van Gods heiligen Naam: Jehovah! De "Ik zal zijn die Ik zijn zal!" Ja, "ééns heeft God gezworen!" En dat "ééns" is de stille eeuwigheid. Van eeuwigheid heeft God iets gezegd. Hij heeft ongeveer dit gezegd: In U Mijn Zoon is al Mijn welbehagen! En in U zal al Onze lieflijkheid en heerlijkheid gezien worden. En in U zullen alle geslachten der aarde gezegend worden. Gij zult ze weiden als Onze Vertegenwoordiger van geslachte tot geslachte. En Gij zult ze door Ons Woord

en Onzen Geest leiden als de Goede Herder langs de lange en bange wegen van zonde en genade. Ik zal nooit veranderen. Ik zal hunne zonden bezoeken, doch Ik zal al Mijn goedertierenheid U geduriglijk en bestendiglijk geven tot het thuisbrengen der schapen in de eeuwige stallen.

Geliefde lezer, Uw zaligheid ligt vast in de onveranderlijke liefde van het Verbond, dat Godes is. God en Zijn volk zijn in Jezus Christus ineengestrengeld van alle eeuwigheid. Dat ziet God voor Zich van eeuwigheid tot eeuwigheid. En daartegen liegt Hij nooit. Hij kan dat niet, want Zijn naam beteekent de Getrouwe!

Daarom is de troon van Jezus als de zon en de maan.

Dat is beeldspraak. Er ligt in de maan en de zon een sprake en die sprake is vervuld in Jezus. Die sprake is de getuigenis van trouw van God. Die getuigenis is zóó trouw, dat niemand er meer op let. Of ge moet er juist bij bepaald worden. De geheele wereld van alle eeuwen rekent er op. Als de menschen, rechtvaardig en goddeloos, gaan slapen des avonds dan is er niet een die bij zichzelf mijmert: Ik hoop, dat de zon en de maan hun loop volbrengen, zoodat er morgen weer zonsopgang is! En waarom doen we dat niet? Omdat we gewoon geworden zijn aan Gods getrouwigheid.

Als ge weer eens de zon ziet in haar schitterende pracht van gouden stralen, dan moet ge denken aan God, Die in Jezus staat te schitteren voor elks oogen! Hij zal zijn als de zon en de maan in triestigen nacht. Ge zult er troost uit putten. De zon en de maan zeggen ons geduriglijk; ook als we er niet naar luisteren: Ik verander nooit! Ik zal altijd Mijn verbond gestand doen! Ik zal U, o Mijn volk, nooit verdoemen! Neen, maar Ik zal U steeds nader tot Mij trekken, totdat Mijn Zoon en Zijn troon met al Zijn zaad zullen schitteren in het nieuwe Koninkrijk!

Doch nu komt een gedeelte in dezen verbondspalm, dat menigeen heeft verbaasd. Van vers 39 tot en met vers 46 is het een verhaal van enkel ellende en smart. Er staan vreeselijke dingen in. "Gij zijt verbolgen geworden tegen Uw Gezalfde; Gij hebt het verbond Uws knechts te niet gedaan; Gij hebt Zijn troon ter aarde nedergestooten; Gij hebt Hem met schaamte overdekt!" Ik heb slechts hier en daar een greep gedaan en de ergste uitdrukkingen overgeschreven.

Hier ligt een moeilijkheid, een probleem.

Ik heb aangetoond, dat de Held die hier bezongen wordt wel David de Koning Israels was, doch dat we meer moeten zeggen, dat we, namelijk, hier ook en in den diepsten zin, Jezus Christus moeten zien, in Wien het eeuwig verbond Gods vast is.

Dus moeten al die vreeselijke dingen ook op Hem toegepast.

Doch hoe kan dat?

Neemt nu het ergste van alles in dit gedeelte. Er

staat in het 40ste vers: "Gij hebt het verbond Uws Knechts te niet gedaan!" Hoe kan dat?

Wel, laat ons eens zien.

Wat is het verbond? In weinige woorden: het is de omstrengeling van God en Zijn volk in Jezus Christus. Paulus zegt; en dan spreekt hij van dezelfde zaak: Ons leven is met Christus verborgen in God.

Nu kan dat niet, in der eeuwigheid niet, indien er geen betaling komt van een eeuwige schuld. Gods volk heeft verdiend om van God *verlaten* te worden tot in der eeuwigheid in de hel der verdoemden. Wij zijn kinderen des toorns gelijk ook de anderen. Wij zijn een vervloekt ras en kinderen des duivels van nature. De Heidelberger Catechismus leert ons, dat alleen als er een Middelaar Gods en der menschen komt, die beide God en mensch is, wij wederom in genade kunnen aangenomen worden. Als dat gebeurt, dan is er bij dien Held hulp beschoren voor Israel.

Welnu, dat gebeurt! Verbaast U dan ook niet over dit gedeelte! Wat ge in die verzen leest is eerst wel van toepassing op een gewone Koning in Israel die een veldslag verliest, doch in den diepsten zin hebt ge in deze verzen een beschrijving van Golgotha.

Het verbond, zeiden we, was de omstrengeling der liefde Gods. Dan wordt het stil en vredig daar in die armen Gods. Dan schreeuwt men niet. Doch Jezus Christus moest dat missen voor. . . . (ik had bijna geschreven *voor tijd en wijle*: ongeëvenaarde dwaasheid!) een eeuwigheid van lijden. En het hart van het lijden van Christus is juist dit: Hij gevoelde Zich van God verlaten!

Hebt ge er wel eens op gelet, dat ik vaak bij dien schreeuw op Golgotha uitkomt? Dat doe ik met opzet. Want daar hebt ge het hart en het dieptepunt van het lijden van Messias. En als ge de liefde Gods jegens U wilt meeten, dan moet ge dien schreeuw gebruiken tot maatstok! Kunt ge daarbij?

Keert nu terug naar die verbazing, dat hier kon staan: Heere, Gij hebt het *verbond Uws knechts te niet gedaan!* Herinnert U dat het verbond de omstrengeling van de armen Gods is; en ge zult zien, dat in deze woorden hetzelfde gezegd wordt als in Psalm 22, vers 1: *Eli! Eli! lama, sabachthani!*

Ter verduidelijking nog één woord: Wezenlijk is het verbond nooit verbroken, doch vanuit het smartelijke oogpunt en de ervaring van Messias was het wel zoo. Let er toch op, dat Jezus den vreeselijken voltooid verleden tijdsvorm gebruikt: *Waarom hebt Gij Mij verlaten!* Voor Zijn smartelijk gevoel, *had God Hem verlaten!*

En dat wordt hier vooruit gelezen in den verbondspalm.

Neen, wezenlijk niet verbroken, doch juist het tegenovergestelde: terwijl Jezus hangt te brullen aan het Kruis, zakt het eeuwig Koninkrijk op zijne fundamenten neer. Juist door de verlating van Messias

wordt de Kerk aan het hart van God gestrengeld. Let er op, dat het gewillig lijden van Jezus in onze plaats openbaring is van de heerlijkste liefde die ge U denken kunt. Daarom zal het Kruis thema blijven tot in eeuwigheid van hemelschen zang en lof.

Leest nu de afzonderlijke verzen van dit verschrikkelijk gedeelte en ge zult U Jezus zien. Ja, en ook met trilling van het hart, zult ge Uw zaligheid zien.

Gij hebt Hem verstooten en verworpen, Gij zijt verbolgen geworden tegen Uw Gezalfde!

Ik beken het: ik kan er niet bij. Ter eener zijde is Jezus het objekt van Gods eeuwige liefde en, ter anderzijde, is Hij verlaten, verstooten, gaat Hij onder in de baren van Gods verbolgenheid. En vanuit de diepte hooren we het schreeuwen van Messias.

Ter mogelijke verduidelijking, kan ik er dit nog aan toevoegen: God, DrieEenig zag op Hem mijn zonden en schuld, mijn ongerechtigheid en vervloeking. Toen is Hij een vloek geworden!

O God! Ik smelt weg bij het zien van zulk een reine, hemelsche Goddelijke liefde!

Het zal hemelsch leven tot in alle eeuwigheid nemen om U eenigzins daarvoor te loven en te prijzen.

We beginnen nu al, Heere!

En toch: het is slechts een stamelen!

G. V.

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## IN HIS FEAR

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### To The Utmost Of Your Power

It is to be doubted whether there is any reader of these lines, if he be one brought up in a Reformed Church, who has never heard the above words, "To the utmost of your power". It is also to be expected that all parents of the Reformed faith are able at once to tell where this phrase is found. Every parent in the Reformed Churches has given the promise that he will "to the utmost of his power" bring up his child in the fear of God's name. It is in the third and last question that is asked those who present their children for the sacrament of Holy Baptism that we find this expression.

In a series of five essays we plan to consider this promise we have given and wherein we declare that we will instruct our children "in the aforesaid doctrine . . . . to the utmost of our power".

It is not being written merely for those who have already made this vow. We trust that our young people will also carefully follow us in the discussion of this vital problem of education. It is well for us

who have made this vow to be reminded of our promise and its significance. It is also beneficial for those who as yet are single or childless but who some day will also take this vow on their lips that they may do so intelligently and sincerely. Our two predecessors in this department have treated the field of education in the school and in the church, and we felt that a series of essays on education in the home should now appear in this department.

We consider it an important question for us to ask ourselves, "What did I promise to do to the utmost of my power?" With this question we will deal in this first installment under our general heading: "To The Utmost Of Your Power". There are similar questions that demand consideration. We ought to ask, "What is that power which I must use to the utmost? Is it physical power? Mental? Spiritual? Financial? Or is it all of these together?" We ought to ask ourselves, "What is the utmost of MY power, and am I using it all to fulfill MY promise?" Another question that presses for consideration is, "Can I improve my present methods so that I can use all my power, and is it possible for me to *increase* my power?" These and related matters we hope to treat in the issues of the Standard Bearer which are to follow.

*What did I promise to perform to the utmost of my power?*

In the second question asked in the Baptism Form, mention is made of the doctrine contained in the Old and New Testament, in the articles of our Christian faith and that is taught here in this Christian Church. To this doctrine the third question of this Baptism Form refers when it asks, "Whether you intend to see this child when come to years of discretion, instructed and brought up in the aforesaid doctrine, or help or cause it to be instructed therein to the utmost of your power?" In brief then we have promised to instruct our children in the doctrine contained in the Scriptures as it is taught in the Protestant Reformed Churches.

It is our intention to consider this doctrine from the viewpoint of the heading of this department, "IN HIS FEAR". In other words we would have you consider with us that we have promised to instruct our children in the Fear of the Lord. God has given us the Old and New Testament with the doctrines they contain in order that we may fear Him. We would like to say a few things about this fear of the Lord which must be found in our children. A man must first know what work he is called to do before he can put his shoulder or his mind behind it and can exercise his powers, mental or physical, to accomplish it.

The word fear as used in the expression, "the fear of the Lord", has a beautiful meaning. It does not

mean fear in the sense of fright and dread. We are well aware of the fact that the word "fear" comes from a verb which means "to tremble" and that it is often used that way in Scripture. Thus we find it in Gen. 3:10 when it is said of Adam that he was afraid (fear-ed) after he had eaten of the forbidden fruit. But we believe that the solution is to be found exactly there too. As man is by nature, as he is apart from regeneration and the comforting word of God that his sins are forgiven him for Christ's sake, he must tremble before God and has no reason to do anything but tremble in fright and dread. However when the word fear is used in conjunction with the believer who sees God in Christ, this fear of the Lord ceases to be fright and dread. The believer has no reason for such a fear. His fear becomes one of reverence and awe. The doctrine contained in the Old and New Testament is given to work such a fear in us and not a fear of fright and dread. God need simply send an earthquake or thunders and lightnings to work such a fear in man. But when He desires to work in His people the fear of reverence and awe, He speaks to us in His Word and reveals Himself to us in the Son of His love.

Did not the angel say unto Zacharias, "Fear not"? Were not these same words spoken to Mary the mother of Jesus? The heavenly host broke forth to sing of the Christ child's birth and thereby explained to the shepherds why they need not fear. The women at the empty grave were told not to fear because they sought Jesus Who was crucified but is now risen from the dead. There is no fear of the wrath of God possible for those who believe the doctrine contained in the Old and New Testament. The Psalmist also sings in Psalm 27, "Jehovah is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear?" Should our reply be, "Let us fear God"? Not if we mean fear in the sense of fright and dread of His wrath. He is our salvation, and that does not simply mean that He saves us from all our earthly enemies. It means that He has saved us spiritually in Christ through Whom He has saved us from His own wrath.

Does that mean that we must never speak of Divine punishment to our children? Does it mean that we never warn them of God's terrible wrath? Does it mean that we may never explain to them that man ought to tremble exceedingly before Him? Of course not. The Scriptures are full of such things. But the fact remains that as believers we have no reason to fear that wrath of God. We must teach our children of that wrath, but likewise must they be taught the "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" which Romans 5:1 mentions in speaking of our "being justified by faith". That fear of the Lord is surely an eternal reality which shall remain with us forever even in heavenly glory. Does not Psalm 111:10 declare

that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom? Surely that wisdom will remain with us, yea, even be perfected, in heavenly glory. Similarly, this fear which is the beginning of wisdom will never leave us. What is more, in heaven that fear will not have any trace of the element of fright and dread of God's wrath. That will be quite impossible. And here below, when we teach the doctrines contained in the Old and New Testaments, we teach Christ and the good news of the gospel that in Him we have justification and reconciliation and fellowship (and fellowship excludes the idea of fright and dread) with God.

What then must we teach our children when we teach them the fear of the Lord? We teach them a fear of reverence and awe. This fear is a profound respect for and solemn wonder before God in love. It means that we teach our children God's virtues and glory so that in love they may respect Him and marvel before Him because they behold Him in His glory. The more one sees the virtues of another, the more respect and reverence he will have for that one. A new president, for example, is elected. You know little or nothing about him. He speaks to you, and what he says, yea even the way he says it, determines to a great deal your respect for him as a leader and public servant. He has been in office for a year or two. If he has done little and conditions become worse rather than better, your respect for him diminishes accordingly. It happens sometimes that a man does such great things, more than you expected or thought could be accomplished, that your reverence and respect for him may even be classified as awe. His deeds fill you with wonder and amazement, and you wonder after him.

Such is the case with us and our attitude toward our fellowmen. Still more must it be our attitude to God who alone does wondrous things. Before Him we really ought to stand in awe at the works of His hands. And we have promised that to the utmost of our power we will hold before our children the virtues and praises of God as He reveals them to us in His Word in order that they may respect Him and wonder after Him. Israel was commanded to do this. Read Psalm 78 for a clear example of this. Israel was to hand down from generation to generation the mighty works of God in Egypt, at the Red Sea, in the wilderness and in the promised land that each succeeding generation also might fear God. In our Psalter we sing, "Let children thus learn from history's light to hope in our God and walk in His sight, the God of their father to *fear* and obey, and ne'er like their fathers to turn from His way." That applies still today, and that is what we promised to do unto the utmost of our power, namely, to teach our children to hope in their God, walk in His sight and fear and obey Him.

Psalm 111 is also very interesting and enlightening in this regard. In the last verse of the Psalm we read

those well known words, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." The first part of the Psalm overflows with declarations of God's virtues and gives these as the reason why He ought to be feared. It declares that His works are great, honorable and glorious. It speaks of His righteousness, His grace and compassion. It speaks of His goodness in providing meat for those that fear Him. His faithfulness to His covenant is mentioned, and it is stated that He sent redemption unto His people. His name is holy and reverend, the Psalmist also declares. Then, after speaking of all these virtues of God and that His name is reverend, the Psalmist declares that the fear (reverence in love) of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. He who sees these virtues of God and loves Him because of them is wise. He who sees God's works about him and ascribes them to nature, fate, providence or to his gods of wood and stone is not only blind, but is a fool, and has not even the beginning of wisdom. He who fears the Lord points unto Him and in a profound respect for His virtues bows before Him as the God of all glory and virtue. If our children are not taught that fear, then the whole education they receive is absolutely worthless. They still do not know a thing that is worth knowing.

Of course, we are speaking of the covenant child in whose heart God has implanted His love. It is that child alone who can be taught the fear of the Lord, for this respect for His virtues must be rooted in love. There is a respect of fright and dread. The man who goes lion or tiger hunting respects the strength and craftiness of his foe. Therefore he takes every possible precaution because he fears what may happen to him otherwise. It is not a fear in love. The devils likewise fear God and walk delicately before Him, but their respect for Him is not rooted in love. The covenant, regenerated child can respect God's virtues in love because God has implanted His love in them.

When one does so fear God with the reverence of love, he will wonder before Him. He will stand in awe before Him, and if I may put it that way, he will stand, figuratively speaking, with his mouth wide open in amazement at what he sees of God. And he beholds God in the tremendous work of creation and providence or contemplates His sovereignty, His holiness or righteousness, or stands at Calvary or at the empty grave, he will be speechless with an awe rooted in profound love. He stands breathless. God is so great, so just, so wise, so good! He will find himself thrilled in his inmost being as he beholds God as the "Wholly other" like unto whom there is none other. He is thrilled in his soul that this God is his God forever and ever. That is the fear of the Lord.

Such a degree we do not find in our children. Yet it is there. Our children do not cry out in their soul, "O God how good thou art". They do not with Thomas

say, "My Lord and my God". However in their own childish way and according to their ages they will manifest this fear. Listen to them sing once, "Jesus loves me this I know. For the Bible tells me so." There is the fear of the Lord. If we teach them all the things "the Bible tells" them so, and if we teach them all the doctrines contained in the Old and New Testament, their fear will increase.

We had three other remarks we intended to make in this first installment. Our allotted space is more than up and to finish would take too much extra room. Let us note them now, and the Lord willing, we will discuss them in the next issue. 1. Another important element in this fear is trusting in God. 2. Only those who fear God thus will obey Him, the theory of Common Grace to the contrary. 3. The fruit of this fear will be praise to God, and that is the high purpose for which we are redeemed. All instruction whether in the home, in the school or in the church must serve that purpose. But more of this later.

J. A. H.

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## FROM HOLY WRIT

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"... unto a dispensation of the fulness of times, to sum up all things in Christ. . . . even in Him".

The terms "fulness" and "dispensation" in the phrase "unto a dispensation of the fulness of times" still call for exposition. Attention has been called, in our former article, to the term "times".

The conception "fulness of times" is indeed a knotty one. It is not at all so simple a matter to grasp its distinct implications as this might seem to be at first glance. This was also true of the term "times", taken by itself. But all the more is this so, when we begin to consider these "times" in connection with the idea of "fulness", and, thus, speak of the "fulness of times". It is then no easy matter to grasp its import and to pin down its meaning.

After no little consideration of this matter, it appears to us, that the crux of the entire question hinges on the correct interpretation of the term "fulness". In the Greek this term is "pleeroma". This term is a very common one in Holy Writ, especially in the writings of the apostle Paul. And again, in Paul's writings this term is most prominent in his epistles to both the Ephesians and the Colossians.

Turning our attention to the term, as we meet with it in Ephesians, we notice that it is employed by the writer in the following passages. In chapter 1:23 the Church as the Body of Christ, her Head is

called "*the fulness of Him, that filled all in all*". Further in idem 3:19 the apostle expresses what his fervent prayer is for the Church, the intent of which prayer is, as the apostle expresses it "that ye may be filled with *all the fulness of God*." Finally, we would quote idem 4:13, where, speaking of the divine intent of the offices instituted by the risen and glorified Christ in the Church, the apostle states, that the purpose and function of these offices is, that all the redeemed should come "unto the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the *fulness of Christ*."

And to call attention to the two instances, where the term under consideration is employed in the book of Colossians, we notice first of all what we read in Colossians 1:19. In this passage the apostle is speaking of God's Son in the flesh, as He is the First-born of all creatures and the First-born from the dead. As such, this Son in the flesh, is the Pre-eminent One in the flesh, the First in all things. Of Him the apostle here states, that it was God's good-pleasure, that "*all the fulness should dwell in Him*". In the same vein of thought, and that, too, over against all Gnostic philosophies, the apostle states in idem 2:9: "for in Him dwelleth all *the fulness of the Godhead bodily*".

In the above quotations we have underscored each time the term "fulness". We are obviously interested in this element in all these quoted passages. Fulness, (Pleeroma) has as its fundamental notion that of the *full measure* of anything. It is the full basket of bread-crumbs in Mark 8:19, 20. The difficulty in determining the exact meaning of this term in a given case is the fact, that it can be taken both actively and passively. When taken actively, the "fulness" is viewed from the viewpoint of its being filled up. It is then the last crumb that fills the basket. Taken passively, however, it is simply the whole of the content, the entire full measure.

Obviously, it is this distinction of the active and passive sense of the term "fulness" that has occasioned the dispute about the proper translation of Ephesians 1:23. If the term be taken actively the sense of the passage is "the filling up of Him, who is being filled by all in all". On the other hand, the sense of the passage, when taken passively, and, as given in our English translations "the fulness of Him, that filleth all in all". Which of these two renderings is the proper one, in the light of all that Scripture teaches us about God and His Son, is as clear as crystal to any orthodox student of the Bible. It is, of course, the latter. And thus the sense is also of the other passages that we have quoted from the writings of the apostle.

Thus it is also with the resultant sense of the phrase under consideration, whether the term "ful-

ness" be taken in the active or in the passive sense. However, which of these two renderings is the one the apostle has in mind, is not so easy to decide in this case, as in the one given in chapter 1:23.

One is inclined to state categorically, that it must here be considered to be taken in the passive sense, whereas the term can have no other meaning in the other instances in which it is given here in this Epistle. But, it seems to us, that such a conclusion would not fit the case before us, and that for the very cogent reason, that in the cases given, we have instances of the term, as this refers to God and His Christ. And here we do not have, as with man and all that is of time and the Creature, a filling up, a coming to that point where the full measure is attained, or reached. But the moment the idea of "fulness" is applied to man, to the creature, to time, history, one does not deal with that which *becomes*. Here we, indeed, deal with the *filling up*.

From this it should be perfectly lucid, that one cannot merely "jump at conclusions" in regard to the use of the term in our text, but that we will have to carefully study this phrase in the light of other Scripture passages that speak of the idea of fulness as this applies to time, to the great epochs of God's mighty deeds in history. That we are in this passage dealing with history in this sense we have repeatedly pointed out, and this was the burden of our former article. This should be kept sharply before our mind, lest we go off the track in this matter.

That we do have instances in Scripture where the idea of "fulness" is that of the last crumb that fills the basket, the last drop of water in the bucket that fills it, the last event in time that makes time full, should be evident, from a few quotations from the Gospels. In Mark 1:15 we read of the Key-note and of the Theme of Jesus' preaching. It is given in the brief and terse saying: "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand, repent ye and believe in the gospel". From this quotation it is evident, that in the mind of Jesus the "epochs" of the Old Testament of the types and shadows had run their course. They had arrived at the end, their Telos in His appearance. It was His appearance and preaching, His death and resurrection, that puts the "last crumb in the basket", and with this last event, time was just being made full in the very *present* moment. That is the shade of meaning that the perfect tense gives us in the Greek. And, to our mind, this is an illuminating point. The same thought is expressed in Luke 21:24. Here Jesus, speaking of the fall and destruction of the earthly, typical Jerusalem, says: "and they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times (epochs, proper seasons) of the Gentiles be fulfilled. When the last event has

taken place, the measure of time allotted the Gentiles shall be filled up. And, to mention one more instance of this use in the Gospels, we call attention to John 7:9. The Saviour here is speaking with His brothers according to the flesh. They would have Him go to the feast of tabernacles and demonstrate His power and thus gain popularity. But Jesus declines to do so, saying: "my time (season) is not yet fulfilled." It is true, that it is not clear whether Jesus is here looking back; whether the view-point is that of not having accomplished all the work yet in Galilee and thus the time made full, or whether He means the time has not yet come, for me to go to Jerusalem. Possibly the remark is in order, that if the latter were intended, the Lord would have stated "my time is *not yet* come", instead of "not yet fulfilled". On the basis of this latter observation we would hold that the "not yet fulfilled" refers to that event that must take place, those acts of Jesus that must first be performed before the "time" is just brought to the full point. When that point is reached, Jesus will not tarry for another moment!

There is one outstanding and well-known passage in the writings of the apostle Paul to which attention must be called in this connection. It is the passage recorded in Galatians 4:4, where we read the following: "But when the *fulness of time* came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law". This passage may very well be considered the nearest parallel passage in the Bible of the phrase, that we are discussing.

There is, however, an important difference in the just quoted passage, that distinguishes it from the one under consideration. This difference is not in the term "fulness". The difference is in the term "times". In our passage this is in the plural. To this plural tense and its resultant meaning we called attention last week. But in Galatians 4:4 we read the singular, we read "time" (Chronos). This difference in number, as well as in the term employed is due to the difference in view-point. And this different viewpoint is in turn to be explained from the difference in the subject, that is being discussed by the apostle.

If we may anticipate upon our conclusions in regard to these two parallel passages in their respective resultant meanings just a bit, we would say the following. In Gal. 4:4 the viewpoint of the apostle is, on the one hand, that of the time of Jesus' birth, the Word being made flesh, and from this viewpoint looking back. On the other hand, it should be observed, that the apostle does not designate this entire period from the time of the "Beginning" (Gen. 1:1) up till the time of Jesus' birth, in its various epochs, as he does this in Eph. 1:10. Just here he is not interested in this aspect. He looks at all these "epochs" to which we called attention in our last article on the "black-

board", as one whole of time. The fulness of time in which Jesus came, is evidently, the last drop in the bucket of water, that fills it. This is clear from the fact, that Jesus was born when this fulness "came". From this passage we conclude in regard to the term "fulness of time" that it evidently refers to the last event of time, that fills the measure of time, the measure that had to be filled, the events that must take place "under the law" as the Taskmaster to Christ, ere He could come. But when all the generations from Adam to Mary had been born, when all the curse of the law had been revealed in Israel, then Christ comes, and there is not a moment delay! At this point of time, when the measure of the Old Testament is full, Christ is born from a woman, born under the law!

It is our conviction, that in the phrase "unto a dispensation of the fulness of times" the term *fulness* must refer to the filling up of time, it is the last event that makes time full. That much seems to be clear not only from the parallel passage in Galatians 4:4, but also in the passages from the gospels, particularly Mark 1:15.

The question, however remains, how we are to conceive of this in this particular phrase. The answer to this question depends in good part on the proper conception of the term "dispensation". In Greek the term for dispensation is "oikonomia". Literally the term means: House-law, household arrangement. Hence it is applied to the idea of stewardship, one who manages the affairs of another. Thus Paul speaks of the "oikonomian" the stewardship, the trust, that God has intrusted unto him, in that He has placed on him the privilege and duty to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. Obviously, when this term is applied to God in our text, this household management of the text is altogether unique. It here, then, refers to God's work in the history of the world. It must refer to the actual realization of the plan of God, which is the order of the day and of God's House, in history, as this history is led to the full measure.

"Dispensation" is surely more than time-span. It is more than the bare equivalent of the distance of time from Pentacost to the Parousia of Christ. Yet it certainly is not at all divorced from it; yea, it is most closely wrapped up in it. It is the affect of the effect, it is the realizing Cause. It is the Fatherly Providence of God, whereby He rules and directs, and brings all things at the feet of His Christ, Lord over all!

Thus we can understand, that it can be conceived of and be presented as being identical with the "time" that brings all the "times" to their full point! Not only does this construction fit the case here, but it is also a good Greek construction of the genitive case. We would call "fulness of times" genitive of identity with "dispensation".

The last drop that fills the measure of times is

then the entire history of the world from the Coming of Christ in the flesh on till His Second Coming in the Last Day in glory. Let us not forget that in history we are not dealing with a mere physical measure, such as the sand in the hour-glass. We are dealing with history! The figure that Christ employs to teach us this, is that of the harvest, of the ripening grain. This grain has an end, and the end is not that it ceases to be, or that it is merely ended anywhere, but it must be brought to its ripened state of the finished fruit.

The "fulness of times" is that point in time, when time is indeed full, brought to the full point. But this full point is not attained by gradual development, but by the Wonder of grace in Christ Jesus, in the Mystery of godliness. And in this fulness of times we at once have, according to the Scriptures, the summing up of all things.

This took place centrally in the Cross and resurrection. Therefore the "end of the ages" is so uniquely different from the epochs that went before.

The consideration of this must wait till the following issue.

G. L.

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#### CONSISTORIAL UNION MEETING

The Consistorial Union will meet at Hudsonville on April 4 at 8:00 P. M. All present and former consistory members are urged to be present. Rev. W. Hofman will be the speaker of the evening.

The Committee.

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#### CLASSIS EAST

will meet in regular session Wednesday, April 3, at 9 o'clock A. M. All matters for Synod must be brought to this meeting of Classis.

D. Jonker, S. C.

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#### STANDARD BEARER DUES

For information as to when your subscription becomes due, you will find the numbers which indicate the month and year stamped with your address.

We have found that payments made by means of the mail is less confusing and much delay is eliminated. Therefore we ask your cooperation in making your payments by mail whenever possible.

The Board of the R. F. P. A.

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## PERISCOPE

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### YOUTH SAYS:

In a recent Poll of High School students a rather large cross-section was asked if they should like more help in solving their personal problems, and where they would look for this help. Fifty percent of them said they wanted the help of their parents. Only eight percent wanted the advice of teachers and a still smaller percentage would seek this advice from the ministers.

Again, concerning sex education, sixty-six percent stated a desire that such education should be given in the home, a smaller percentage desired it through the schools, a still smaller percentage sought it from the doctors and a negligibly small number would seek it from the churches and the ministers.

This perhaps does not make us ministers feel too important. Our advice, at least among them, seems not needed, and not sought. Whether this reflects upon the students or upon the ministry is a question you may decide if you please.

But the striking thing is that, even among these high school students, worldly perhaps, (although mostly church members) the majority of them feel that the HOME is the chief center of education and counsel.

This is true. We do not care who says it, it is true. The Home is the place where personal problems ought to be aired, advised and treated. The home should give the sons and daughters sex education. Even the modern world understands how signally important is the home, at least they think back on what the home used to be, and they wish it would be that again. But. . . if salt have lost its savour and its quality, how shall it be restored?

May our homes stand out prominently as the chief centers for advice, consolation and instruction of the next generation, and let our young people be able to answer that they have and have had such homes.

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### PICTURES:

"The Movies Go To Church" is flashed across our News paper. And this country has a ready-made audience of sixty million people, and, "that doesn't include the Sunday Schools, which have the most avid movie fans of all". James Kempe Friedrich has proved that "the Bible and the box-office" will mix. Several hundred religious films have been made, but "the boom is just beginning".

I suppose the boom is just beginning.

Another flash — "Sunday Schools begin to teach religion by comics". It was hailed as a great success by the general board of education of the Methodist Church at its three-day conference. Seven hundred thousand comic-picture texts were published each week. Ten other denominations were granted permission to use the same material.

Quite what you might expect in a generation brought up on pictures, movies and comics, but nevertheless a generation which lives in a so-called christian country.

**Cause:** A generation brought up on the notion that it needs to be entertained; a generation which has gone entertainment-mad and play-crazy.

**Procedure:** Make their instruction a matter of entertainment. A play- and picture-crazy generation refuses to think or meditate. Give them religion, by all means they need religion, but by pictures.

**Result:** Profanity.

If we rear a play- and picture-mad generation, we, too, will find ourselves confronted with the problem of how to instruct them in the Word of God. . . . because it's so dry the way the Bible gives it.

The radio has its dramatized, "Light of the World", the Roman Catholics are making "spiritual movies", now come the scriptural comics. . . .

Alas; alas; the foolishness of the preaching.

But does this not agree well with what Paul has told us, namely that the preaching of the Cross is foolishness to the world. They not only call it foolishness, it IS foolishness to the world-wise.

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### A WEEK AT OUR SCHOOL:

How would you like to visit our Protestant Reformed Seminary for a week. Come along. We'll go from class to class, day to day. Courses change from semester to semester and this week we find as follows:—

*Monday:* No school. An old custom. Students often out preaching and cannot get back on time for Monday sessions. A day of rest after a busy Sabbath.

*Tuesday:* Eight o'clock finds the students at school. Strictly at eight o'clock in comes Rev. (Prof.) H. Hoeksema. It was rumored about that he was once a minute late for his class, but I doubt whether this was more than a rumor. I do re-call he was once a half minute late—and we chided him for it. Later he convinced us that the school clock was thirty seconds fast.

The first thing Tuesday morning is chapel exercises. The professor reads, in Greek, from the book of James

this morning, explaining various words and passages as he goes. He then opens with prayer. Dogmatics is next. Today the class is busy with Ecclesiology (study about the Church). The Professor asks questions, the students answering them (or not) and discussion follows. At about nine-forty-five comes Exegesis, that is, reading the Bible and giving the meaning from the original text. Each student has to exegete one verse each week. In class one of the students reads the exegesis after which follows criticism and comments from the class and from the professor. After this the instructor gives them the exegesis of his own, thus teaching the class to interpret the Bible. At ten o'clock comes a few minutes of recess, current events are discussed, debates are begun, lunches are consumed etc. At eleven o'clock History of Dogma, how we got the Apostle's Creed, dogmas, principles of religion etc. Then follows a study of Latin during which the class reads from St. Augustine's Confessions and this continues until noon. One of the students closes with prayer. Afternoon—no school. The student is in his room, getting his assignments finished. The professor is in his room, making more.

*Wednesday:* Behind the instructor's desk stands the Rev. (Professor) G. M. Ophof, and at eight o'clock the students are all in their places. Opening exercises. A full schedule waits, there is no time to lose. Church Polity, first thing after opening. In the back of our Psalters you find it called the Church Manual. Prospective ministers ought to know what rules of order are necessary in the Church and the professor can tell them that. At about nine o'clock commences the study of Church History. Today the lesson is about the Reformation, dangers, trials and troubles of the Church in years gone by. This is followed by Bible History and then comes a short but welcome recess. Next comes Typology and the professor finds out whether the students know what feasts Israel observed and what these feasts meant. What is the Passover? What is the Sabbath? The students are answering well this morning and the professor is delighted. Now comes Hebrew reading, that is, reading the Bible in the Hebrew language. Sometimes one of the students has to write some Hebrew on the blackboard. To the visitor it looks like a board full of dots, dashes, scratches and chicken tracks. This over, one of the students closes with prayer and school closes for the day.

*Thursday:* Prof. Hoeksema at the desk. School starts at eight o'clock. The instructor reads, in Greek, from the book of James, commenting as he goes. He then opens with prayer. Dogmatics is the next subject and today the lesson is about Baptism and the Covenant. A general discussion follows and the Netherlands controversy is brought up for discussion.

Recess happens to be at nine-thirty this morning

instead of at ten, but only five minutes of it. Then the class turns its attention to the New Testament History, having just finished the period of four hundred years before Christ. At about ten-thirty the subject is Confessions, briefly going over the various Confessions and studying what the Church before us confessed. Finally they have Dutch, when one of the students renders a short essay in what is commonly called Dutch (although the professor often reminds them that it isn't Dutch). Again one of the students closes with prayer and school is out for today.

*Friday:* Professor Ophoff conducting class again starts at eight o'clock. First today the professor finds out how well the students have studied their Church History. Then comes Bible History in which the professor hands out typed sheets of his explanation and interpretation. Ten o'clock, and that welcome recess. Next is Isagogics (look it up in the dictionary) and exegesis and that day they were treating the book of Hosea. The last half hour is spent on Hebrew vocabulary study and the students, repeating the vocabulary, sound like they are stuttering or hiccoughing—but it's Hebrew.

Thanks to my reporter for this Periscope.

I hope you enjoyed this week at our School. Perhaps we will soon see some of you young men there, taking the lessons.  
M. G.

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#### NOTICE

The Theological School Committee will meet Friday evening, April 12, in the First Prot. Ref. Church.

Rev. J. A. Heys, Sect.

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#### IN MEMORIAM

On February 25, the Lord took unto Himself our dear wife and mother,

MRS. ANNIE BRUMMEL—Kooiker  
at the age of fifty years.

Though we are deeply grieved and greatly miss the joy and cheerfulness she brought to our home, we are grateful to the Lord for all that He has given us in her; neither do we mourn as those who have no hope, for the Lord has relieved her from much suffering to be in glory forever with Him whom, by grace, she loved and served.

"Blessed are they who die in the Lord".

Herman W. Kooiker  
Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Kooiker  
Mr. and Mrs. L. Wallinga  
Clara  
Pvt. Albert  
and 1 grandchild.

## Report of Classis West – Convened March 6, 1946 at Sioux Center, Iowa

The opening prayer and the accompanying devotionals were led by the Rev. J. Van Weelden.

The reading of the credentials showed that all our churches were represented. On account of sickness in the family, the Rev. P. Vis was unable to attend this meeting of Classis, so that the alternate delegate from Rock Valley took his place.

After the formula of subscription was signed and the meeting declared constituted, the Rev. L. Vermeer took the chair as president of the day, and the Rev. J. Van Weelden served as secretary.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved.

The committee for the publication of sermons to be used for reading services in our churches once more presented its report. The committee informed Classis that another set of books has been published. These books are designated as Volumes III and IV under the title "Beside Still Waters". They are now available to consistories and other interested parties for the sum of four dollars per set. All orders to be sent to Rev. J. Blankespoor of Doon, Iowa.

Classis decides to present a copy of the volumes I and II, published last year, to the ministers of Classis West, who have donated their time and effort toward the publication of these books.

It was furthermore decided to continue this committee with the instructions to prepare another set of books for publication during the coming year. This committee is given full power to act according to its own discretion in collecting sermons and preparing them for publication to the extent of seventy-five sets.

The Classical Committee presented a report of its activities during the interim between the two Classis meetings. This report was received for information and the action of the committee received the approval of Classis.

The church visitors for Bellflower and Redlands, as well as those for Manhattan presented reports of their work. They were able to inform us that a spirit of unity and peace prevails in the churches they visited. Later in the day church visitors for the churches of the mid-west presented a very favorable report of the churches they visited.

The consistory of Orange City came to Classis with a request for a collection in the churches of Classis West. They also

requested Classis to overture Synod requesting permission to ask for a similar collection of Classis East. The consistory explained that they were presenting their requests for these collections because they have purchased a new parsonage for their minister, which has laid an added burden upon the congregation, which they cannot possibly bear alone. Besides, they will soon be faced with the expenses of moving their new minister from his present charge in Michigan to his new home in Iowa. Considering these matters, Classis decided to grant both requests of Orange City, and also to go on record as strongly recommending these collection to all of our churches, because Classis feels that in this congregation there is a real need.

Orange City also requested Classis to overture Synod proposing that a Loan Fund be established in our churches from which churches can draw in times of special need. Classis expressed its objection to a fund of that nature because of the principle involved, that the church of Jesus Christ does not loan money but gives as the need requires.

The Classis appointed elder T. Kooima and Rev. J. Van Weelden as a committee to arrange classical appointments for the vacant churches. This committee presented its report, which was adopted by Classis. The following classical appointments have been given:

**For Orange City:**—March 24, J. Van Weelden; Apr. 7, G. Vos; Apr. 21, P. Vis.

**For Oskaloosa:**—March 21, J. Blankespoor, Apr. 14, L. Vermeer, Apr. 28 J. Van Weelden; May 12, G. Vos; May 26, A. Cammenga; June 9, P. Vis; June 30, A. Petter; July 14, J. Blankespoor; July 28, L. Vermeer; Aug. 11, J. Van Weelden; Aug. 25, G. Vos; Sept. 8, A. Cammenga; Sept. 22, P. Vis.

Classis also assigned a classical appointment for Oskaloosa to the Rev. L. Doezema for the Sunday of March 10.

The consistory of Pella presented to Classis an overture for Synod in regard to the matter of foreign missions. Classis decided to forward this to Synod with an added recommendation from Classis West.

A committee for subsidies was appointed, consisting of Rev. L. Doezema, elder W. De Vries and Rev. J. Blankespoor. This committee investigated the various requests for subsidies and presented their recommendations to Classis. After some

consideration Classis decided to adopt the report and to recommend to Synod to grant each church as requested:

To Bellflower \$500, Doon \$1100, Sioux Center \$250, Rock Valley \$350, Pella \$1300, Orange City \$2200.

Classis also recommends to Synod to send out annual questionnaires to all the churches requesting subsidies, so that these churches can supply Classis and Synod with all the necessary information regarding their expenses of the past year as well as their reasons for asking for subsidy.

Rev. P. Vis was re-elected to serve in the classical committee. Rev. A. Cammenga was re-elected as assistant treasurer for Classis West.

The following delegates were chosen to attend the next meeting of our Synod at Hull, Iowa.

Ministers	Alternates
Rev. G. Vos	Rev. P. Vis
Rev. A. Cammenga	Rev. C. Hanko
Rev. L. Vermeer	Rev. J. Blankespoor
Rev. P. De Boer	Rev. L. Doezema

Elders	Alternates
T. Kooima	M. De Jager
P. Hoekstra	G. Rijken
W. Huisken	H. Kuiper
C. Vander Molen	W. De Vries

Upon the requests of Pella and Oskaloosa to hold the September meeting of Classis in their churches, Classis decided to accept the invitation of Oskaloosa.

Rev. P. De Boer thanked the ladies for their hospitality and splendid catering.

Upon a motion to adjourn the doxology was sung and Rev. G. Vos led in thanks to God.

C. HANKO, Stated Clerk.