

THE STANDARD

Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XXII

MAY 15, 1946 — Grand Rapids, Michigan

NUMBER 16

MEDITATION

Immortality

... and this mortal must put on immortality.

I Cor. 15:53.

A necessary transformation!

For we must all be changed!

This mortal *must* put on immortality!

The reason for this necessity is to be found, on the one hand, in the purpose of God that His own are to inherit the kingdom of God; and, on the other hand, in the fact that we are, in our present state, flesh and blood, and that, too, corrupt flesh and blood, in the midst of death.

And flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

Neither is it possible that corruption inherits incorruption.

That kingdom of God is the kingdom of heaven, the glorious economy of all things that is to be revealed at the coming of the Lord in all His power and glory the Father has given Him. It is the inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, that fadeth never away. It is the new creation, united in Christ as the head over all things, in which the tabernacle of God shall be with men. In that kingdom God shall be with us, and we shall be His people, and God shall forever be our God. He shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, for the glory of that kingdom shall be so great that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with it; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things shall have completely passed away.

That kingdom is different from any state of things that ever was or is in this present world.

It is not an extension of the original economy of

things in the first paradise. Even though that first kingdom was an image of the kingdom of God that was to come, and the first man Adam was an image of the last Adam, the final state of glory cannot be conceived as a further, or even as the highest possible development of that original state.

Between the *alpha* and the *omega*, between the first man Adam, who was made a living soul, and the last Adam, Who was made a quickening Spirit, lies the wonder of grace, the revelation of God in Christ, the incarnation, the cross, the resurrection. And between our present state and our present world, and the kingdom of God lies the parousia, the wonder of His parousia, when the present things shall pass away, all things shall be changed, and we must be changed with them.

That first kingdom, over which the first Adam had dominion as a living soul, was "natural," the kingdom of God that is to come, over which the Son of God as a quickening Spirit shall reign forever, is "spiritual". The former was earthy, the latter is heavenly. In the former, even the knowledge of God was mediated through an earthly revelation; in the latter, we shall see face to face. The former had its center in the heart of a living soul, the latter is centered in the heart of the risen Lord, the glorified Son of God in human nature, Immanuel, God with us. The former was lapsible, perishable, corruptible; the latter is everlasting, incorruptible: it shall stand forever. The former was only the beginning of the blessed covenant with God, its revelation on an earthly plane; the latter is the highest possible revelation of God's fellowship of friendship with men, embracing all things, on the heavenly plane.

That kingdom the children of God must *inherit*.

For it is their Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom.

In that kingdom they must be able to exist and to live. They must be in a condition to possess it, to see and to hear, to taste and to touch the spiritual, heavenly things of that kingdom. They must be capable of seeing God, His face, in the face of Jesus

Christ, the risen Lord; not as, in those wonderful forty days, before His ascension into heaven, the disciples saw Him, occasionally, and as He appeared to the earthly senses; but they must see Him as He is, in the fulness of His resurrection-glory, and that, too, not occasionally, but constantly, always and everywhere. They must be able to inherit all things, in earth and in heaven, and, in fellowship even with the holy angels, to function as servants of the living God, and to serve Him day and night in His holy temple.

Hence, we must be changed.

For flesh and blood cannot inherit that kingdom.

And we are "flesh and blood."

And let us not make the mistake to think that *we became* flesh and blood through our willful disobedience in the first paradise, so that "flesh and blood" is applicable only to our sinful nature, weak and in dishonor, corrupt and lying in the midst of the death. On the contrary, flesh and blood we were created. The term characterizes our earthly nature.

For the first man is of the earth earthy.

And the image of that first man we bear.

Through our body of flesh and blood we stand related to, and are, at the same time strictly limited to earthly things. In our present flesh and blood we inherit earthly things, we see, and hear, and taste, and touch, and smell the things of our present, earthly world only. We cannot perceive the things of the kingdom of God. We are bound to the earth with a thousand ties. On the earth we are dependent for our subsistence. In earthy things we rejoice. The knowledge of the things of the kingdom of God can come to those, that are children of the kingdom in principle, only by the wonder of revelation in Christ, and even then we can conceive of them only in a figure, in earthly forms, and through the means of earthly realities.

And in our present flesh and blood we are mortal.

The kingdom of God is "spiritual," but we are "natural", psychical, living souls.

The kingdom of God is everlasting, glorious, transcendent over death; but we are mortal.

The kingdom of God is heavenly; but we are earthy.

As we are, we cannot inherit the kingdom.

We must be changed!

This mortal must *put on* immortality!

Such is the transformation that is called "resurrection from the dead"!

It is a change of form, but it remains the same essence, the same nature, the same person.

Resurrection is not a new creation. It is not a calling of the things that are not as if they were, but a quickening of the dead.

The seed that is planted in the earth dies, but it is not destroyed. In dying in the earth, it does not lose

its identity, nor its essence, nor even its life; it only puts off its *form*. After the seed has died in the earth, you cannot find it again in its original form. But while it shed its form, there was, in it, a living germ, and that living germ, through death, puts on a new form, a new body. It is transformed.

The same is true of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead.

He has assumed flesh and blood from the virgin Mary, He, the eternal Son of God, the only begotten, our Lord. Hence, that incarnated Son of God, Who became like unto His brethren in all things, sin excepted, is the life and the resurrection. He is the Life, for He is God of God, Who alone has immortality. And He is the resurrection, because, as the Life, He can plunge Himself into the midst of death, pass through its very depth, without being swallowed up of death, even in His human nature. He is the Seed that is cast into the earth, passes through death in His human nature, in order to appear again in the glory of His resurrection.

His "flesh and blood" was not destroyed.

His resurrection did not mean that His "flesh and blood" was left to corrupt in the sepulchre of Joseph, and that now a new body was created for Him, the "spiritual" body of the resurrection. On the contrary, the same Jesus that died on the accursed tree arose on the third day. He, the risen Lord, is the same Person. His human nature is the same in essence as before His death. The grave was vacant: "come, see the place where the Lord lay." The imprints of His suffering are still in His hands and feet: the unmistakable identification marks of the Lamb that was slain.

The same is true of the resurrection of all that are in Him.

We must be *changed*. This corruption must *put on* incorruption. This mortal must *put on* immortality.

Through all the process of death and resurrection, spiritual and physical, the identity of our person, the essence of our being, and the individuality of our nature remain: the form only is changed.

It is *I* that die, and this mortal *I*, through death and the resurrection, puts on immortality. Just as, in this present life, *I* put on many different forms, since the day I was born: the form of babyhood, of boyhood, of adolescence, of manhood, yet my person retained its identity, and I am clearly conscious of the fact that the boy that, years ago, received his first spelling-lesson in school, is the same as he that now sits at the typewriter to compose this meditation; so it will be the same *I* that presently passes through the process of temporal death, and that will forever close his eyes upon all earthly scenes, that will experience the glory of the resurrection and open his eyes upon the eternal realities of heaven.

I live now in the midst of death, I will presently pass through death, I will put on immortality in the final resurrection.

And so, even as through all the forms my earthly being assumed and may yet assume, during the brief span of this present mortal existence, my being remained the same; so it is the same human being that passes through death into the glory of the resurrection. The human nature, body and soul, as it was originally adapted to bear the image of God, will not be destroyed in death, neither will it be replaced in the resurrection by something essentially different: it will be preserved, and *put on* immortality.

And just as, through all the earthly transformations, which my nature underwent, and may still undergo, in the process of time, the individual form of my nature, by which I am distinguished from all other forms in the same human nature, remained, and will remain, so, in death, that individuality will not be destroyed; nor will it be obliterated through the resurrection: it will be transformed, glorified.

For we must all be changed, yet it is *we* that are changed.

Flesh and blood is only a present, mortal, corruptible form of the human nature.

It cannot inherit the kingdom of God!

This corruptible must *put on* incorruption!

And this mortal immortality!

Immortality!

O, blessed, glorious hope!

This *mortal* must put on *immortality*!

And beware, lest, you adopt the term *immortality* from philosophy rather than from Scripture, and thus deprive it of all the blessed glory for the denotation of which it is used exclusively in Holy Writ.

Alas! this has been, and still is, done but too frequently.

Immortality is a mystery, that is, it refers to an eternal, a spiritual, a heavenly state, of which man knows nothing of himself. It belongs to the things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have ever arisen in the heart of man. We can speak of it, obtain a glimpse of its blessedness, see it afar off, only by revelation through the Spirit of Christ!

Yet, philosophy, mere man, earthly, carnal, sold under sin, walking in darkness, and lying in the midst of death, also dreams of immortality. It stands before the fearful reality of death, which encompasses our present existence on all sides, and from which there is no way out. And, not knowing the Spirit of Christ, and despising the light of revelation, it confronts the question, nonetheless, whether there be a "beyond", an existence after death, an "hereafter". And sometimes it has answered that question in the affirmative.

It knows nothing of eternal life, nothing of the glorious resurrection, nothing of the real meaning of immortality; yet, of immortality it speaks, meaning thereby some vague, "beyond", or "hereafter".

And, alas, the Church was tempted to adopt the term immortality from philosophy, and speak of it, as if it referred merely to continued existence after death.

Is it not in this sense that many speak of *man's* "immortal soul", in distinction from this mortal body?

And, to be sure, man, both the righteous and the wicked, shall continue to exist after death.

But this is not what Scripture means by immortality.

We are, by nature, mortal, die-able, earthly, corruptible. And this mortality concerns, not only the body, but also the soul. We have a mortal nature, a mortal body, and a mortal soul. And what is more, through sin, we also lie in the midst of death, with our entire nature, body and soul. For we have died the spiritual death, and our bodies are under the power and in the clutches of death. And this mortal nature, soul and body, passes through temporal death: the body is corrupted so that it returns to the dust, the soul is unclothed, and forever separated from all earthly contact and relations. And, apart from Christ, and from the resurrection, this mortal nature will forever pass into eternal death, both as to body and spirit.

That is the mortality of our present existence!

But immortality, according to the Scriptures, is the glory of life eternal, both as to body and soul. It is resurrection-life! It is the life of the glorified Son of God in our nature, Who died and was raised from the dead, and over Whom death hath no more dominion. It is not merely an endless extension of our present existence, nor is it an everlasting extension of the life Adam had in the first paradise; it is life eternal, and this is life eternal, that we may know God, and Jesus Christ Whom He has sent; that we may dwell in His tabernacle, body and soul, enjoy His blessed friendship, taste His goodness, see Him face to face, and serve Him day and night in His holy temple! . . .

This mortal must put on immortality!

The beginning of this glorious transformation is the moment of our regeneration. It is resurrection from the dead.

And when this regenerated believer dies the temporal death, his death is like the seed that falls into the earth: the new principle of life in Christ that is in him can never die; all that is of "this mortal" passes away!

And the perfection of it all will come in the "last moment".

Then, whether we belong to the quick or to the dead, we shall be changed!

Death shall be swallowed in victory!

Blessed hope of immortality!

H. H.

The Standard Bearer

Semi-Monthly, except Monthly in July and August

Published by

The Reformed Free Publishing Association
1463 Ardmore St., S. E.

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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.

(Subscription price \$2.50 per year)

Entered as Second Class mail at Grand Rapids, Michigan.

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EDITORIALS

The Liberated Churches In The Netherlands

THE CHURCH POLITICAL ASPECT:

The following synod met on the heels of her predecessor.

It was, of course, overdue. Ordinarily its sessions should have commenced in June 1942. Due to the fact that its predecessor stretched its sessions over all of 1942 and met till May 1943, and to the fact that the churches in the way of consistories, classes, and particular synods, raised no protest against this unprecedented assumption of hierarchical power on the part of the General Synod, it was impossible for its successor to meet at the proper time.

However, as has been said, it was convoked on the heels of the final adjournment of its predecessor, on June 22, 1943.

And, as might be expected, it walked in the way of that former synod, and followed its hierarchical example.

It, too, refused to adjourn definitely when its work was finished. It adjourned provisionally several times, and prolonged its sessions till August 14, 1945.

The Reformed Churches of the Netherlands, therefore, were witnesses of the strange spectacle of an almost continuous session of the General Synod for over six years!

The first synod met from 1939 to 1943.

The second, following upon the first with only a few weeks intermission, assembled from June 22, 1943 to August 14, 1945.

And the latter was almost entirely occupied with the doctrinal decisions of 1942 concerning the covenant of grace, and with problems and difficulties that had arisen, and continued to arise in the churches in connection with those decisions.

Fortunately, we are in a position to obtain a clear and rather complete understanding of the work and methods of this synod, thanks to the thorough work of Mr. W. C. F. Scheps, a layman journalist of The Hague, who attended all the open sessions of this synod, and prepared as complete a report as possible, not only of the official acts and decisions taken, but also of the discussions that took place on the floor of the synod. This report is in the form of a book of almost three hundred pages. I found it very interesting and illuminating, and would recommend the reading of it to all that are interested in the matter concerning

the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands, and are able to read Dutch.

It is, of course, impossible to give a detailed account of the various decisions reached by this synod, and of the discussions that led up to such decisions. We can only touch upon the highlights, and give our own impressions and judgment.

We stated already that it was almost exclusively kept busy with the controversial matters concerning the decisions of 1942, particularly those about the covenant of grace.

The first important point that deserves mention is that this synod, in answer to protests against the hierarchical actions and illegal sessions of its predecessor, completely justified the former, and declared:

1. That she, i.e. the synod that convened in 1943, was competent to answer the objections offered against the alleged illegal actions of the former synod, even though the same professors that were present as advisory members at the former synod were present in the same capacity at this synod, and though the general constituency of the synod was largely the same as that of the former.

2. That the legality of the action of the former synod in postponing the convocation of the following synod for one year, and the appointment of a professor for the theological school of Kampen (which was not on the agendum of synod) could not be disputed.

3. That the synod of Sneek-Utrecht did not seriously interfere with the right of appeal by continuing its sessions.

4. That the synod of Sneek-Utrecht was justified in demanding the acknowledgement of the legality of her decisions, as long as no proof to the contrary was offered.

5. That the synod of Sneek-Utrecht did not make itself guilty of moving in the direction of hierarchical dominion over churches or persons.

Interesting this particular point is, because it shows how well-nigh impossible it is to obtain a revision, if not a condemnation, of the acts of one synod by another, and to return to the way of sound Reformed Church polity when once the way of hierarchical power has been chosen and followed.

Another point of general interest is that also this synod, following the example of her predecessor, was very loath to adjourn definitely, and instead chose the way of repeatedly adjourning "provisionally", i.e. with the provision each time that, if necessary, the same synod could be convoked again without any action of the churches. Interesting this is, because it plainly shows how tenaciously the synod clung to the hierarchical power it had assumed. In this, it was, of course, motivated by the desire to sit as judge in its own case, and to down all opposition to its

acts and decisions. Had this not been the motive, the synod would simply have decided on the matters that appeared on its agendum, treated the protests that were brought before her in regard to the decisions of the synod of Sneek-Utrecht, and adjourned definitely.

Let us clearly understand that this would, indeed, have been the only proper way for the synod to follow.

Had the synod followed this proper way, those that were aggrieved, and objected to her decisions could have followed the orderly ecclesiastical way, filed their objections with their consistories, and sent them through their consistories to the respective classes, and particular synods, and thus to the general synod that was scheduled to meet in 1946.

As it was, however, the synod continued its sessions, closed them provisionally, and at each session was flooded with hundreds of documents that had never been brought to the attention of the proper minor assemblies!

These letters and documents, literally hundreds of them, included:

1. Protests against the doctrinal decisions of the synod of Sneek-Utrecht concerning the covenant of grace, and requests to retract or to change those decisions.

2. Protests against the official enforcement of those decisions and requests to declare that they were not binding upon the churches.

3. Protests against the suspension of Dr. Schilder, both as professor at the Theological School of Kampen, and as emeritus-minister of the church of Delftshaven. We will come back to this suspension later, D. V., The reader must understand that Dr. Schilder had not been suspended by the synod of Sneek-Utrecht, but that the synod we are now discussing, in its session of March 23, 1944, suspended him from office for the time of three months. Against this action the same synod received many protests, with requests to lift the suspension.

4. Protests against several other decisions of the synod that was in session.

5. Questions concerning the proper interpretation and meaning of the doctrinal decisions of 1942 concerning the covenant of grace; and concerning the matter of dealing with aggrieved and recalcitrant office-bearers.

We must understand that all these documents, letters, requests, questions, and protests, were presented to synod by individual persons, ministers, elders, and laymen, as well as by consistories, classes, and an occasional particular synod.

And with very few exceptions, the synod received and treated them all!

Every time the synod adjourned provisionally and

assembled again, there was a flood of new documents.

And each time the synod received them, referred them to committees, and decided on them.

Consider what this means.

Ordinarily, that is, according to the proper way as stipulated in the Church Order, all such documents should have reached synod in the form of overtures from the proper minor assemblies, through consistories, classes, and particular synods. For article 30 of the Church Order states: "In these assemblies ecclesiastical matters only shall be transacted and that in an ecclesiastical manner. In major assemblies only such matters shall be dealt with as could not be finished in minor assemblies, or such as pertain to the Churches of the major assembly in common."

In other words, the decisions of synod should have been taken up at the meetings of the minor assemblies first, and whatever objections there were against them should have been brought, through the proper channels, to the attention, *not of the same synod that made the decisions, but to the meeting of the next synod.*

But the continuous sessions of the synod became the occasion that the protests and other documents were presented to the synod itself!

The minor assemblies were completely eliminated!

The result was, first of all, that the synod for two years and two months sovereignly swayed its sceptre directly over the churches, and even over individual members. They decided upon protests, they answered questions, they determined what should be done in matters concerning discipline over individual members, they rebuked and admonished both members and consistories, and they even exercised discipline directly. They suspended and deposed professors and ministers, and decided that a candidate should not be permitted to enter the ministry.

Secondly, the result was that the synod sat as judge in its own case!

Perhaps, the result would not have been materially different if the synod had adjourned, and left another synod to treat the protests against its acts and decisions!

It seems that frequently the same delegates are chosen to the general synods. Besides, the professors of the Theological School and of the Free University that are present as advisory members take an important part in the discussions, and exercise a profound influence upon the synod, as is evident from the report by Mr. Scheps.

Under such conditions it is not very probable that a later synod will revise or undo the acts of its predecessor.

Yet, it would have looked less hierarchical, had the synod, instead of continuing its sessions, and acting as judge over protests against its own decisions, would have adjourned definitely, and thus left the

way open for appeal, along the proper channels, to the next synod.

As it was, the way of appeal according to article 31 of the Church Order was virtually made impossible.

H. H.

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

Part Two.

Of Man's Redemption

LORD'S DAY XIX

4.

The Final Judgment. (cont.)

In the course of the history of dogma, various notions were developed and propounded with respect to the idea of the final judgment.

That the course of this world would be finally closed by a judgment of God was taught in the Church from the very beginning of the new dispensation. But different conceptions were formed of this revelation of the righteous judgment of God. Already in the middle ages one meets with the notion that the judgment will take place only in the consciousness of those that shall be judged, that is, all the moral creatures. It will be wholly subjective. Others, however, offered a rather objective description of the scene of this final judgment and expressed, moreover, the idea that God's people would participate in the judgment actively, especially the monks! Still others insisted that there would be no universal and public judgment at the close of the world's history: the only judgment that will ever take place is the one to which every man shall be subjected immediately after death: it is appointed for man once to die, and after that the judgment.

As is evident also from our confessions, at the time of the Reformation, the idea of the final judgment was developed rather clearly. The judgment was inseparably connected with the second coming of the Lord, Christ will be the judge, all men, the righteous and the wicked will appear before His judgment seat, they will be judged according to their works, and the books that will be opened are the consciences of men.

In modern times, especially under the influence of German theology, the idea of a distinct, final judg-

ment, that will terminate this age and the history of the world, has been rather generally denied. There will be no final judgment as a distinct and separate event in the end of time. Nor is such a judgment necessary. The world is always in judgment, and God executes His judgment constantly. History itself is judgment, and every man always receives according to his work. And God inscribes His judgment in the consciences of men.

There is, in this modern conception of the judgment of God, though it errs in denying the truth of a final judgment at the close of history, an element of truth that dare not be denied or overlooked with impunity.

It is to be feared that many believers look upon the last judgment as an isolated event, a momentary act of God by which He will, for the first time and forever, judge the affairs of men, and set straight whatever was permitted to be crooked in the history of the world. The only judgment is that which is to come at the end. In the course of the present history of the world God does not appear as the Judge of heaven and earth. He judges, to be sure, all the moral acts of men and of nations, in the sense that He evaluates them as to their ethical worth, and writes them all in His book. And, occasionally, He reminds the world of His wrath and just judgment, by sending special catastrophies, such as world-wars, earthquakes, famines, and pestilences on the earth. But for the rest, He does not, in the present dispensation execute a righteous judgment. Every man is not rewarded according to his work in this world. Many things are left crooked. For God is tolerant, forbearing, long-suffering. In fact, in the affairs of the world, it appears as if force rather than justice prevails and has the victory. The wicked prosper, especially if, as they generally have, they have the power; and the righteous suffer and are oppressed. And it seems as if there is no Judge in heaven, and no knowledge in the Most High. But God remembers. He writes all these things in His book. And although, for the present, He permits injustice to prevail and to triumph, He has appointed Christ to judge the world, and in His day, God will open the books, and execute a righteous judgment. Although, in this world, iniquity is often victorious, and the wicked are in power, in the day of Christ the righteous shall be justified, and the wicked shall be condemned forever.

The last judgment is the only and final act of God whereby He will rectify and set straight whatever was unjust in the present government of the world.

Such is the conception of many.

In fact, it is because of some such conception of God as the Judge, in respect to the affairs of the present world, that many find room for the notion that the prosperity of the wicked must be considered a

token of God's gracious disposition and attitude toward them. The wicked hate God, and blaspheme His name; they commit iniquity, and oppress the righteous, yet God blesses them in that He bestows upon them all the bounties of this present life: He sends rain upon the evil and upon the good, and causes His sun to shine upon the righteous and the unrighteous. In the end, it is true, God will execute a righteous judgment upon them, and they shall be damned forever in the pool that burneth with fire and sulphur; but, for the present, He is gracious to them as well as to the righteous. Thus the present is separated from the future, the temporal from the eternal, and the final judgment of God is an isolated act by which the Most High will really change His attitude toward the righteous and the wicked!

This view of the last judgment, in its relation to the present government of God, must be rejected.

It is false, first of all, because it implies an erroneous conception of God as the Judge of heaven and earth.

God always judges, and He always executes a righteous judgment. He is righteous and just. And He is the unchangeable One. Moreover, always He is the Governor of the whole universe. It is not thus, that during the present history of the world, He permits the affairs of men to run their own course, carefully noting them in His book, in order, at the end of the world, to ascend His throne of judgment. Always He sits on the throne. From moment to moment He rules. Never do the reins of government slip from His hands. Constantly He judges, and all His moral creatures stand before Him in judgment. Nor does He simply remember their acts, in order to express His verdict and execute His judgment in the end of time. On the contrary, all the works of God are perfect, and all His judgments are just. Even though the final and everlasting reward of the righteous in glory, and retribution of the wicked in hell, cannot be realized in this present time, with both God deals according to strictest justice.

It is true that we cannot discern this righteous judgment of God in detail. To us God's dealings with the righteous and the wicked often appear to be contrary to justice. It is often the complaint of the people of God that He seems to favor the wicked, and to turn His face against the righteous. Asaph speaks of this in the seventy-third psalm. He saw the wicked prosper, and the righteous suffer. Their eyes were standing out with fatness, while his own punishment was awaiting him every morning. In vain it seemed that he could wash his hands in innocency. The book of Job deals with the same problem. The philosophy of the three friends, who insisted that the temporal suffering of man was indicative of some special sin, did

not fit the case of Job, and their speech was painful to him.

But this appearance of things is due only to our limited understanding, and to the fact that we often fail to discern the meaning of the present for man's eternal state. God's ways are higher than our ways. His ways are deep and mysterious. We consider only that which we see at the moment. The relation between all things we cannot discern. If, however, it were possible for us to comprehend the work of God, to understand His government of His moral creatures in detail, we would, no doubt, also clearly discern that God always judges righteously, and that He executes a righteous judgment upon men. Never would we complain anymore, in that case, that He favors the wicked, and that His face is against the righteous. Always God rewards the good with good. Never does the sinner advance one step on the way of iniquity that is not visited with evil on the spot.

In the light of Scripture, we can, even now, see a little of this just government of God in the present world.

Thus, according to Scripture, it is the righteous judgment of God that the prosperity of the wicked is to them a slippery path on the which he hastens to destruction. Thus Asaph saw God's dealings with the workers of iniquity, when he entered into the sanctuary of God, and took cognizance of the end of the ungodly. Thus we are taught in the ninety-second psalm, where the author is inspired to extol the marvellous works and the deep thoughts of God, with regard to the workers of iniquity. They flourish, and grow as the grass, in order that they may be destroyed forever. Thus it is plainly revealed in that dreadful first chapter of the epistle to the Romans. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven over all the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. They know God, and they are aware that He is to be thanked and glorified. But they refuse to acknowledge Him. And God executes a righteous judgment upon them. He makes them foolish. He causes them to grope in the darkness of idolatry, so that they, foolishly, bow before four-footed beasts and creeping things. He punishes sin with sin. He casts them into the mire of sin, so that they become more corrupt all the time, and thus hasten to their own destruction.

It is evident, then, that also in this world the Judge of heaven and earth executes a righteous judgment.

All things are made to work together for good to them that love God.

And it is equally true that all things work together for evil to them that hate Him.

God is the Lord.

He cannot be mocked, not even for a moment.

And not only does God deal with His moral creatures righteously in this world, and does He execute judgment constantly, both upon the righteous and upon the wicked; but He also inscribes His righteous judgment in the conscience of every man. Man's conscience is his awareness of God's just judgment of his every act. It is because of this judging act of God that men have the work of the law inscribed in their hearts, and that their conscience witnesses with the testimony of God's law, so that they accuse or excuse themselves and one another.

In this sense, man's conscience is indeed a book, filled with the handwriting of God, expressing His just judgment of every act he ever accomplished, and of every thought and desire that ever arose in his heart.

Besides, it is also plain from Scripture that there is an individual, preliminary judgment immediately after death, that will be executed in the damnation of the wicked, and in the intermediate glory of the saints with Christ.

Yet, in distinction from God's present just government of the world, and from that preliminary judgment that will be passed upon every soul that departs from this present life, the Church, on the basis of Holy Writ, confesses that she looks for a final judgment, when Christ shall come again "to judge the quick and the dead."

The main idea of this final judgment is that of the theodicy, the justification of God in the consciousness of all His moral creatures. It will be "the revelation of the righteous judgment of God." As has been said, in this world, too, God's government is characterized by strictest justice. But the justice of God's judgments is not clearly revealed. For, first of all, many things are hid. We judge only according to that which is apparent. The hidden things of the heart, the reasons and motives that lie behind the outward deed, we cannot judge. Moreover, there are many things done in secret, words that are spoken in secret, secret counsels that are never revealed, secret abominations that are committed in darkness. Besides, we do not clearly discern the dealings of God with men in relation to their moral deeds. But in that day, all will be revealed. And then it will be revealed, not only that God will finally reward every man according to His deeds, but also that He always did execute a righteous judgment in His government of the world. It will be the revelation of the righteous judgment also in this respect, that He will be clearly revealed as the Judge, so that the moral creature can no longer deny Him. Here the fool saith in his heart that there is no God. The ungodly ascribe the righteous judgments of God, especially when they become manifest in great upheavals and special calamities, to the inevitable "laws of nature", or to fate, or to man's own folly and weak-

ness. He sets himself against God, and vows that he will overcome Him in judgment. He will still make a good world out of it all, and establish peace and prosperity without God and His Christ. But in that day, God will so reveal Himself, that all must acknowledge that He is the Lord of the universe, and that He is the righteous Judge of heaven and earth.

The last judgment will be revelation of God as the righteous Judge.

Its idea is the theodicy.

History, as a human record, and the expression of a human judgment upon the affairs of men and humanity, of individuals and nations, will be rewritten in the light of God's perfect judgment.

This implies that it will be a public judgment, in the sense that the righteousness of God's judgment will be clearly revealed to all the moral creatures. It will not be individualistic, so that each one will be convinced of the justice of his own sentence, but it will be given unto all, in that day, to behold the whole of the works of God, of His righteous government, and His just judgment with regard to all His moral creatures. Christ and His cause shall be publicly justified, and His saints shall share in this public justification, so that even the wicked that here condemned and persecuted them, will have to acknowledge that they are the rightful heirs of all things. And, on the other hand, they shall behold the retribution of the wicked, and acknowledge that the Lord of all is just in consigning them to eternal desolation.

And, lastly, the idea of this judgment, in distinction from the current judgment of God in the history of the world, as also from the preliminary judgment of each individual after death, is that it is *final*. The history of this world will be terminated by it. The ethical fruit of the moral creature will be ripe. This final judgment will be the everlasting separation of the chaff from the wheat, of the wicked from the righteous, of the reprobate from the elect. And all will receive their final, their everlasting reward.

Quite in harmony with this idea of the last judgment is the truth that Christ shall appear as Judge. That this is the teaching of Holy Writ we have already shown. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. He will come quickly, and His reward is with Him, to give to every man according as His work shall be. The Father delivered all judgment unto Him. And He gave Him power to execute judgment also.

This means that the Son of God will appear in His glorified human nature as the visible representative of the invisible God, and that, too, in such a way that all the moral world will recognize Him as the revelation of the Lord of all, and receive His judgment as the revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

Exactly because this last judgment must be the *revelation* of the righteous judgment of God, and because God in Himself is the invisible One, and because Christ is the image of the invisible God, His highest revelation, Christ will appear as the representative of God as Judge in the visible world. And every knee shall bow before Him, and every tongue shall confess that Christ is the Lord-Judge, to the glory of God the Father. And all things will be naked and open before Him Whose eyes are like a flame of fire, Whose feet are like burnished brass, and out of Whose mouth proceedeth a sharp two-edged sword.

Besides, it is but proper that the judgment of the whole world be delivered to Christ, first of all, because He is appointed the High Priest and Head over the whole house of God. Of that house He is the builder. That house was manifested, in its mixed and imperfect state, in this world. From that house judgment must begin, and the Head and Builder of that house of God's everlasting covenant is also its proper Judge. He shall cast out from it all that do and love iniquity, all the ungodly and hypocrites, and gather His own into the everlasting tabernacle of God with men. And not only this, but by Him was accomplished the judgment of the world, when He was sojourning among us in the likeness of sinful flesh. He was the perfect Servant of the Lord, Whose meat it is to do the will of the Father. And the world judged Him, rejected Him, killed Him. Yet, He committed His cause to God even to the end, and announced to all the world that their judgment of Him was the condemnation of the powers of darkness. How proper, then, that in the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God, this Servant of Jehovah will appear as the Judge of all, representing the Father in the glory of that day, even as He was His faithful witness in the days of His deep humiliation!

H. H.

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the Grand Haven Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sympathy with our former Pastor, Rev. A. Petter in the recent loss of his

SISTER

Mrs. Margaret Bierema, of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

May God's grace sustain the bereaved and cause them to rely fully on His righteousness.

N. J. Jonker, Vice-Pres.

A. Peterson, Clerk.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

Eli's Sentence Irrevocable

As has already been remarked, if it be considered that the age of the judges numbered some 375 or possibly 400 years, and that this whole period knew but four prophets, three of whom were obscure men whose words were exceedingly few, we feel the force of the statement that the "word of the Lord was precious in those days, there being no vision breaking through and spread abroad." As has already been fully explained, this notice can only mean that in those days—the age of the judges—no new revelations were added to those already given in preceding centuries, that, otherwise said, there was no word of God that came to Israel *directly* from the Lord by prophetic announcement. The Lord had spoken in the past, but spake no more. Hence, there was no man—prophet of God—who confronted Israel with a "Thus saith the Lord". Revelation—intercourse of God with the people of Israel—had ceased. This was judgment inflicted by the Lord on account of the continued apostacy of the people of Israel in that age. A similar judgment came upon Saul. "And when Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by the prophets (38:9), for God was departed from him, and answered him no more, neither by prophets nor by dreams (vs. 15). With such a cessation of revelatory dreams and visions the nation was threatened by the prophet Amos, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the word of the Lord: and they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it" (Amos 8:11, 12). The days of the judges were evil. The night was dark. Lawlessness and idolatry abounded. The nation was being oppressed by the Philistines. And the Lord was silent. And it must be assumed that the hearts of the faithful in Israel were troubled; that they uttered the familiar cry, "We see not our signs: there is no more any prophet; neither is there any among us that knoweth how long. O God, how long shall the adversary reproach?" (Ps. 74:9) and that in response to this cry the Lord broke his long silence, when He sent to Eli the "man of God" to speak against Eli's house, and when He called Samuel to be His prophet to the people of Israel. To Samuel, as was said, the Lord appeared. Samuel's prophecies came to him by vision.

It indicates, as was observed, that Samuel was not an ordinary prophet. Prophets such as he were raised up only at the great turning-points in Israel's history, when the Lord was about to do some new and terrible thing. (Having called Samuel, the Lord communicates to him His word. The prophecy is found on and supposes the message of the "man of God". Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, being wicked, imagined that they could sin with impunity. Instead of forsaking their abomination and turning to the Lord in true contrition of heart, they had doubtless mocked when told of the doom that awaited them. For so the wicked are wont to react to the prophecies of God. The idea that both of them would die in one day must have impressed them as being too ridiculous for words, as also the consideration that *God* had said it, and that the message had come straight from the Throne. Others might believe that, but they did not. It was a dreadful message, to be sure; and in their inmost hearts they were afraid. But the man who had said those things, who could he be? A wild-conjecturing, evil-imagining fanatic, a religious crank, that's what he was. Why allow themselves to be troubled by the words of such a one? They saw little sense in that. So they must have reasoned by themselves; for they were unbelieving, and had gone far into sin. Their father had rebuked them, be it mildly, but they had not hearkened unto his voice. The "man of God" had threatened them, but they took it not to heart, "because the Lord would slay them". As to Eli, doubtless the prophetic announcement of the "man of God" had left its impress upon his mind, and gripped his soul. Indeed, it troubled him not a little. Still even now he did not arouse himself to restrain his sons. For by temperament (not by grace) he was a peace-loving man (but not truly so). He hated trouble. Besides, those wicked priests were his own flesh and blood; and he was an indulgent father. So, though his house had been threatened with near destruction on account of his, Eli's, sins, he persisted in allowing his sons to desecrate the offering. It was but natural that in this state of progressive and sinful inaction, he tried hard to persuade himself that the prediction of the "man of God" bore on its face all the marks of being the vain imaginings of a self-appointed prophet and therefore would take no effect. Doubtless, in his attempt to reassure himself he was successful in a measure. Once more he was at ease in Shiloh, the fear that lurked in his bosom having been put to sleep by his false optimism. He again had hope for the future of his house; but his hope was groundless, as he was now about to learn anew.

That we judge the man aright, that such was the state of mind and heart of Eli at this juncture, is evident from the divine communication to Samuel in which the Lord repeats with emphasis what he had

told Eli and even swears by himself in confirmation of the prophecy, "And the Lord said unto Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of everyone that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifices nor offerings forever."

Samuel understood that he was under the necessity of imparting the divine communication to Eli. But the dreadfulness of the message, Eli's age and position, his being as a father to Samuel, the latter's youth, his reverential and filial regard for Eli, his reluctance to cause him pain,—all combined to make Samuel afraid to tell Eli his vision. "And Samuel feared to show Eli the vision" (3:15). So he lay until the morning, sleep having fled from him doubtless; and when it was morning, he went about his usual duties opening the doors of the sanctuary but not going to Eli.

As to Eli, when he perceived that it was the Lord calling Samuel, all his old fears revived. What could the Lord be wanting to say to the lad? Was he to speak against Eli's house, reiterating the judgments of the "man of God"? The question burned in his soul. And its answer would lie with Samuel and not with Eli, as the Lord was passing him by. He would learn the truth when morning had come. After what seemed an endless waiting, he heard the familiar sounds indicative of Samuel's being up and doing. But why did the youth not come to him as on other mornings? Did he dread being interviewed about the vision because it spelled evil for Eli's house? The suspense was insufferable. Eli must learn the whole truth without delay. So he called Samuel and said, Samuel, my son (he calls Samuel his son). And he answered, here am I. And he said, What is the thing that the Lord hath said unto thee? Perceiving that Samuel was hesitant, Eli implores, "I pray thee, hide it not from me." He even invoked God to visit Samuel with appropriate punishment, should he not tell him all, "God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide anything from me of all the things that he said unto thee." But he must have felt certain that the vision spelled evil for his house. Was he then so eager to hear himself sentenced anew? Did the atrocities of his sons fill his soul with such revulsion that a recital of the new tidings of their doom would be as music to his ears? Was the word of God so dear to him that, however dreadful it might be from the point of view of the well-being of his house, he never-

theless wanted to hear it? This cannot be. For Eli was carnal. How then is the fierce interest of the man in Samuel's vision to be explained? He still must have been clinging to the dying hope either that it would appear that Samuel's vision had no reference to him and his house, so that he could continue to hold the first prophecy baseless or that the vision would prove that prophecy false or at least meliorate somewhat its severity. Thus his interest in the vision was at bottom sheer concern about his own well-being and the well-being of his house. And that concern was carnal. It sprang from a desire that the Lord spare him in his sins instead of in the way of his forsaking his abominations. For he did not repent. "And Samuel told him every wit, and hid nothing from him." Having been placed under an oath by Eli, Samuel dared to do nothing else but tell him every wit. Eli heard God's word. God would perform against him all that He had spoken concerning his house. . . . "All that he had spoken. . . ." By whose mouth? By that of "the man of God". Thus to his unutterable dismay, Eli now learned that the Lord owned the prophetic announcement of that "man" whoever he might have been. God had indeed sent the man. His message had originated in the mind of the Lord. And it *shall* come to pass; the Lord hath sworn. Samuel had spoken and was silent. Eli now spake, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." Were these words as coming from Eli the expression of faith in the incomparable God, in His infinite goodness and wisdom, and in the righteousness of His judgments, or were they words of despair? Was Eli giving himself and his house in the hands of God in contrition of heart or was he merely bowing before the inevitable? God only knows. Eli's reply contains no expressions indicating a deep sense of guilt. On the other hand, he had not one excuse. Not a word of complaint comes over his lips. Neither does he justify self and condemn God. Doubtless the man was a believer despite his sinful inaction regarding his wicked sons.

So had Eli and his sons now come into the possession of the clearest evidence that God had said it and that the doom of Eli's house was certain and irrevocable. For this time the first recipient of the revelation was not some unknown man—a stranger to them—who, as they doubtless liked to suppose, had strayed into the precincts of the sanctuary, but Samuel, one of their own household. It could not well be maintained that there had been no voice of God and that Samuel's sensation of hearing in that hour had been without external cause, having risen in a mind disordered by a crave of visions. They knew that Samuel was a sober and right-minded youth. And they knew, too, that he was not expecting the vision. Had he not run thrice to Eli because he thought that it was the

aged priest who had called? Nor could they succeed in convincing themselves that Samuel, whom they knew to be a God-fearing, truth-loving, youth, was falsifying, that the story of his nocturnal experience was one of his own fabrication. They felt in their hearts that the vision was genuine, that the Lord had revealed Himself to the youth. Yet they sought not after God even now, for the Lord would slay them.

As to Samuel, he "grew and the Lord with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord". The verse "And did let none of his words fall to the ground" must have reference to the prophetic announcement of the "man of God" concerning the punishment of Eli. As Samuel's vision was founded upon this announcement, the Lord by his bringing to pass all that had been announced established Samuel a prophet in Israel. However, the prophecies of the "man of God" must have become matters of common knowledge long before they were proclaimed by Samuel, and therefore it is rather difficult to understand how that Samuel was established a prophet in Israel through the fulfillment of these prophecies. It may be that the "man of God" was sent only to Eli and that his prophecies came to all Israel by Samuel, and it may also be that Samuel received additional revelations not recorded in the sacred narrative.

And now the sacred writer continues, "And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh: for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord." This statement closes the third chapter. The narrative continues at chap. 4:1 as follows, "And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. . . ." These two statements stand in active relation to each other. They belong together. The word of Samuel that came to all Israel of chap. 4:1 is the revelation of the Lord of chap. 3:21. Here the narrative flows along in unbroken continuity so that we should read, "And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh: for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord. And the word of Samuel came to all Israel." Then we read, "Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle. . . ." Perhaps the notice, "And the word of the Lord came to all Israel" is the summons to this war; that is, the word of Samuel was a command to the effect that Israel march to battle against the Philistines. But opposed to this interpretation is the indefiniteness of the text. If Samuel commanded this war as the spokesman of the Lord, it could be expected that this be plainly stated. Such a statement is lacking. The text reads, "And the word of Samuel came to all Israel, and Israel went out against the Philistines." Whether the comparative vagueness of the text at this place should be allowed to invalidate the above interpretation, must remain, it seems to us, an

unsettled question. The text at chap. 3:21, "And the Lord appeared *again* in Shiloh," could also be translated, "And the Lord *continued* to appear in Shiloh. . . ." The verb appearing in the Hebrew text—*yasaph*—has both these meanings. If we translate "continued to appear" the statement "And the word of Samuel came to all Israel" concludes and sums up the description of the origin and commencement of Samuel's prophetic work and if so, the notice, "Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle," begins the new chapter, and introduces us to a new scene of the history—a scene on which Samuel henceforth appears as the Lord's instrument.

Israel then went out against the Philistines to battle. If we reject the interpretation according to which the Lord commanded this war, the people of Israel took up arms against the Philistines on their own initiative. This was never done when the nation kept covenant fidelity. But this war occurred in the age of the judges, when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." The nation was lawless, and served the idols, there being no king in Israel. And their marching against the Philistines without first inquiring of the Lord is, in all likelihood but another example of such lawlessness. Again they did what was right in their own eyes without considering that the thing might not be right in the sight of God. So the people of Israel were want to behave in that age. For their hearts were far from God. Yet the men of Israel, in marching to battle against the Philistines, felt confident that the Lord was with them in that venture, would bless their arms, and give victory. This is evident from the sequel. "When they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines: and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men." The defeat gendered surprise. "When the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us today before the Philistines?" That was a calamity they had not anticipated. But what may have been the grounds of the confidence of these faithless men? They had no grounds. As was said, whether the Lord had commanded the war, cannot be determined, but it is certain that He had not promised victory. For he never fails to do as he promised. Nor had the people of Israel humbled themselves before the Lord and in true contrition of heart petitioned Him for success of arms. No statement occurs in the narrative to show that the appropriate sacrifices—burnt and peace-offerings—had been brought. Thus if the Lord had nevertheless commanded the war, His purpose was to chastise the nation through the infliction of defeat. His commanding the war, did not free them of the obligation to petition Him for His favor and power to war His warfare. The promise of victory was not implicit in the command. Rightly considered, it was not needful

that the Lord command Israel to take up arms against the Philistines, as if that obligation was not already theirs. The Philistines were imposters, desecrators of the Lord's heritage. Besides, they were under the ban of God as were all the Canaanites. They should have been dispossessed and driven from the soil of Canaan long ago. It is likely therefore that Samuel had admonished the people of Israel to forsake their abomination and return to the Lord and to fight by his favor and in His power the warfare of their God by taking up arms against the Philistines by whom Israel was again being oppressed.

And if there was such a word of Samuel at this time it was a word that also assured the people of Israel that, as having repented of their sins and turned to the Lord, they could march to battle against the adversary in the confidence that God would fight for them according to His promise. For that promise had been given as well as the command that Israel fight the good fight of faith and in the way of this fight possess his inheritance. But the promise of victory would take effect only when Israel served God. So it was written in their law. "For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, and to cleave unto him; then will the Lord drive out all these nations before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves. There shall no man be able to stand before you: for the Lord your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as he hath said unto you" (Deut. 11:22-25). But on the other hand, it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God . . . the Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them. . . ." (Deut. 28:25). Now of this the elders of Israel who said, "Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us today before the Philistines," were willingly ignorant. Israel was serving the idols. But it is not instruction that these elders desired but an audience to agree with them that the Lord had done Israel an injustice that day and had proved Himself unfaithful. He should have given victory according to His promise. What they wanted is that the Lord bless them in their sins, be for them in their iniquity, and give them the victory without demanding that they burn their idols and serve the living God. But the Lord caused them to be smitten before their enemies. One way they had gone out against them only to flee seven ways before them. And four thousand of their number were slain.

But the people of Israel refused to be instructed. They refused to discern that the cause of their defeat lay in God's holiness and justice revealing itself against their sins. In their spiritual blindness they now did

a strange and irrational thing. They acted upon the advice of the elders that they take to them the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh and remove it among them, that "it may save us out of the hand of our enemies. "This being an irrational doing, it is difficult to understand the working of the minds of these men. This is certain, the ark was to them an object of worship and in this lifeless material vessel they put their trust, believing that it would save them. For they say, "When *it* cometh among us, *it*,—that is, the ark—will save us." It is hardly believable that rational men would say to a lifeless thing of wood and metal "Thou art my God", and expect help from it. Yet it is a fact. Like any worshipper of graven images, the men of Israel leaned on and trusted in the ark in the expectation that it was the god that would stand by them in that war. That such is the foolishness of the image worshipper, that such was also the foolishness of the Israelites, the Bible plainly teaches. "They that make them (idols) are like them: so is every one that *trusteth* in them" (Ps. 115:8). "And of the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and says, *Deliver me: for thou art my God*" (Isa. 44:17). To this foolishness God gives up men in punishment of the sin of changing His glory into an image made like unto the corruptible creature. Why the men of Israel imagined that the ark—a thing without life—would bring salvation, if removed from its resting place in Shiloh and stationed among them on the battlefield, is hard to explain.

Their doing cannot be ascribed to a lack of culture. For there is no essential difference between trust in a lifeless thing such as was the ark, and the strange superstitions of this modern age. The feeling of security that men have who go about with a rabbit's foot concealed on their person, is just as foolish, sinful and irrational as the doing of those Israelites. So they thought that the ark would save them. There was magic in the ark, they believed. It was Jehovah's throne.

G. M. O.

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the Grand Haven Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sympathy with our fellow officebearer, Mr. Andrew Peterson, in the recent loss of his

SISTER

Mrs. Nellie DeWitt, of Holland, Michigan.

May the Lord graciously sanctify this sorrow unto the bereaved, to the glory of His Name.

N. J. Jonker, Vice-Pres.

THROUGH THE AGES

Innocent's Transaction With The King John Of England

Innocent III, as did all the popes of the middle ages, laid claim, as we have seen, to jurisdiction over the entire world—kings, governments and republics—as the lord of the world, and over the whole church as its lord too. And he succeeded, better than any of his predecessors in realizing these preposterous and antiscritptural claims, firstly because circumstances favored him. Secondly, because he was great in his shrewdness as a worldly politician. For that is what he was, as we began to make plain, a shrewd and unscrupulous politician. He went far in making good the papal claims to world-dominion thirdly because there were few able rulers in all his patriarchate to oppose him. As we have seen, his first act was to subject the city of Rome to his authority. Thereupon he addressed himself to the task of pushing his claims beyond the walls of Rome. By the removal of Otto, the day was saved for him in Germany. Next he extended his temporal authority over the kingdom of the two Sicilies, where he established himself as the all-controlling power. The Italian cities swore allegiance to the apostolic see, and large parts of Italy were passed under its dominion.

Innocent's greatest victory was in the case of England. His contest with king John, 1167-1216, makes a remarkable story. As was said, in beating down the enemies of the papacy, the pope had at his disposal two powers: the key-power—excommunication and the interdict, which he exercised directly as the spiritual ruler of all men, including the kings of the earth—and secondly, the sword-power, which he exercised through the friendly lay-rulers. In humbling king John, Innocent knew how to make excellent use of these two powers, as we shall now see. John was a wicked man. One contemporary annalist says, "John stands before us polluted with meanness, cruelty, perjury, murder, and unbridled licentiousness." And another, "foul as hell is, hell itself is defiled with the foul presence of John." And still another, "He was mean, false, vindictive, abominably cruel, and scandalously immoral."

The commencement of the struggle between John and Innocent was the election of a new archbishop of Canterbury. Archbishop Hubert had died. The monks of Canterbury privately chose Reginald, their superior, for his successor. To avoid incurring the indignation of the king, they afterward chose, upon his recom-

mendation, John Grey, bishop of Norwick. He was immediately put into possession of the temporalities of the see of Canterbury by the king. Both parties made an appeal to Rome. Innocent declared both elections null and ordered the monks of Canterbury present in Rome to choose a new candidate. Innocent imposed upon them one Stephen Langton and Stephen was chosen and consecrated by the pope. He was a man of great learning and moral worth and a native of England. When informed of what had taken place in Rome, the king was angry beyond measure. He drove all the monks from Canterbury, confiscated all their lands, and forbade Stephen to set foot in England. Innocent admonished the king, warning him that if he did not restore to the monks their lands and receive the archbishop, he would lay his whole kingdom under an interdict. But the king continued obstinate. In a fit of anger, he drove the pope's prelates from his presence with vilest language and dreadful threats not only against them but against the whole body of the clergy. The interdict was published, and was strictly observed by all the ecclesiastice throughout the kingdom. All religious functions ceased. All churches were closed. The doors of monasteries remained unopened. The dead were buried in fields instead of in consecrated ground and without prayers and the presence of the clergy. A deep gloom encircled the whole nation. But John the king appeared unperturbed. He even retaliated by driving the higher clergy from their churches and confiscating their lands. He possessed the convents and ejected their inmates.

The interdict had been laid upon the nation in 1208. The following year Innocent placed John under the sentence of excommunication. But the king continued defiant. But Innocent had one more weapon. The following year, 1212, he declared John deposed, freed all his subjects from the obligation of allegiance to him, and exhorted all the Christian lay rulers of Europe to drive John from his throne and eject him from his kingdom. King Philip of France heard the summons and was quick to take action. He gathered a powerful army with a view to invading England. Innocent exhorted by letters all the christian princes of Europe and all good christians to take the cross and aid the king of France in the holy war against the king of England, the cruel persecutor of the English church, and a disturber of the church universal. Hearing of Phillip's vast preparations, John was not idle but collected a large army and assembled a huge fleet to do battle with the French. The invasion, as a result, was postponed. While John was watching at Dover the movements of the French, a messenger arrived with a letter from Innocent to the king, telling him that if he did not submit to the terms prescribed, he, pope Innocent, would deliver the church of England,

as God did that of Israel, with a strong hand. Innocent's messenger exaggerated the strength of Philip's army and fleet, and told the king that his own subjects and many of his barons would rise up against him as soon as Philip landed in England. And one Peter the Hermit was on hand to prophesy that the king would certainly lose his kingdom before the approaching feast of the Ascension. The king was afraid. Perceiving that he was in as great a danger from his own subjects as from the French, he chose to submit to the hard terms of the pope rather than run the risk of losing his kingdom. On the following Monday, the 13th of May, the king promised in writing to receive the archbishop Laugton, allow him to take possession of his see, recall all the banished ecclesiastics—bishops, monks and laymen—restore to them all their confiscated lands, deliver up to Innocent England and Ireland to receive them back again as a papal gift, that is, fief, and pay yearly seven hundred marks for the former and three hundred for the latter, besides the Peter pence for both kingdoms. Finally, he also agreed to reimburse the banished bishops to the amount of 40,000 marks. Having thus surrendered to the pope his two kingdoms, he took from off his head the crown, gave it to the pope's representative there present, who returned it five days after the king in writing declared himself to be a vassal of the pope. And not until all the exiles had returned and were re-stated in their offices and possessions, was the king absolved from the excommunication. The interdict had been in force for more than six years. Innocent had gained a complete victory but only to the detriment of the papal institution. England did not forget the transaction. Nowhere in after years was the pope's rule more steadfastly resisted than in England.

Let us have regard to Innocent's behaviour regarding what has always been considered the most important concession ever wrung from a tyrannical sovereign such as this John, king of England was. What we have reference to is the Magna Carta (the Great Charter) held dear by every Englishman as the safeguard of English liberties. According to contemporary annalists, John surpassed the worst of his predecessors in wickedness and tyranny. He was unspeakably cruel as in the case of a Jew of Bristol from whom he had demanded 10,000 marks. The Jew refused, and the king ordered ten teeth extracted, one each day. The executioner began with the molars. The sufferer endured the pain of seven extractions. Then he yielded. John was also immoral. Though married, no well-born woman was safe in his presence. The king's atrocities resulted in an uprising of his nobles. To appease their wrath, John met them near Windsor and affixed his seal to an instrument—the Madna Carta—that had been previously prepared.

The following is one of its most significant articles, "No free man shall be taken or imprisoned or dispossessed, or outlawed, or banished, or in any way destroyed, nor will we go upon him, nor send upon him, except by the legal judgment of his peers or by the law of the land." (We let rest the matter of the right or wrong of the action of the nobles. Much space would be taken up with a discussion of the principles involved). The king was furious. It is reported that he gnawed sticks and straw like a madman. He besought Innocent to come to his aid, averring that he had affixed his seal under restraint. The pope went over to his side. He nullified the king's oath on the ground that Satan had "by his crafty arts, excited the nobles against him". He maintained that the "wicked audacity of the nobles tended to the contempt of the Apostolic see, the detriment of the kingly prerogatives, the disgrace of the English nation, and the endangering of the cross." He lauded John for submitting to the jurisdiction of the supreme head of Christendom, and for his promise of yearly tribute. He reprobated the Magna Carta, branding it "a low and base instrument, yea, truly wicked and deserving to be reprobated by all, especially because the king's assent was secured by force," and pronounced it null and void for all time." Finally, he placed the insurgent nobles, one and all, under sentence of excommunication. Here the great offence of Innocent is not that he condemned the Magna Carta, and the action of the nobles, but that he had not one word of censure for the wickedness, tyranny and despotism of John. When this monster of iniquity was opposing him in his effort to realize his claims to world-dominion, he exiled the king to the place of everlasting desolation. But now, seeing that the king had kissed his toe, he took him to his bosom as one of the dear sons of the church, though he was still the wicked king of yore.

(to be continued)

G. M. O.

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the Protestant Reformed Church of Orange City, Iowa, wishes hereby to express its sympathy with its brother elder, August Katje, in the loss of his father-in-law,

PETER KRACHT

May the Lord give to the bereaved relatives and to us all the wisdom to see the riches of His grace shown to the departed brother and through him to us all among whom he lived and died in abundant hope and peace.

Rev. A. Petter, President
M. De Jager, Vice-Pres.

SION'S ZANGEN

Uit Den Treure

(Psalm 90; Tweede Deel)

Het is niet gemakkelijk om het rede-bedoeld te volgen van vers drie op vers vier. In het derde vers had God gezegd: Keert weder, gij menschen-kinderen! En het volgende vers zegt: Want duizend jaren zijn in Uwe oogen als de dag van gisteren. . . ., enz. Wat is het verband hier? Het voegwoord "want" moet een reden inleiden voor hetgeen in het vorige vers gezegd werd. Welnu, hoe is het feit, dat bij den Heere duizend jaren gelijk staan met een dag, een reden voor de verbrijzeling der menschenkinderen?

Het is mijn overtuiging, dat men het vierde vers verbinden moet aan het tweede vers. In het tweede vers duizelde Mozes vanwege de eeuwigheid Gods. Daartegenover stelde hij de kortheid en broosheid van den mensch in vers drie; en in vers 4 keert hij weer terug naar de geweldigheid van God's eeuwigheid: Want duizend jaren zijn in Uwe oogen als de dag van gisteren, als hij voorbijgegaan is, en als een nachtwake. En dan loopt alles los. Bij den Eeuwige is tijd als niets. Hij leeft in een onveranderlijk Heden. Er is geen serie van elkaar opvolgende oogenblikken als bij ons. Wij kunnen er niet inkomen: we duizelen bij de gedachte van het eeuwig onveranderlijke!

Duizend jaren als gister!

Gister als het voorbijgegaan is, is zeer kort. Probeert eens om terug te roepen, al wat ge gedaan en gesproken en gedacht hebt. Het zal U verbazen om te merken, hoe spoedig of ge klaar zijt. Er zijn menschen die er een dagboek op na houden. En dan schrijven ze des avonds op, wat ze dien dag doorleefden. Maar, och arme, bij verreweg de meesten zijn het slechts eenige regels. En dan is de dag nog niet eens voortgeschreden tot den staat van *gister*, want het is nog pas avond geworden.

Daarom staat er bij, dat ze bij God zijn als een nachtwake. Duizend jaren zijn bij God als een nachtwake. De Joden verdeelden den nacht in drie nachtwaken, elk van vier uren, zooals het blijkt uit Richteren 7:19, waar gesproken wordt van de middelste nachtwake. En als er hier gesproken wordt van "eene nachtwake", ook lettende op het verband, dan is het onze overtuiging, dat er hier sprake is van die middelste nachtwake, die begon twee uur vóór het middernachtuur en eindigde twee uren daarna.

Welnu, duizend jaren zijn in Gods oog gelijk die nachtwak.

Die vergelijking met Gods ervaren van den tijd is nog schokkender dan de eerste. Een dag, al is het dan ook de dag van gister, geeft toch een indruk van korten *duur*. Doch hoe geheel anders is het met de middelste nachtwake! Want, let wel, hier wordt gesproken van de nachtwake, zooals wij hem wegslapen, en niet zooals die ervaren wordt door den soldaat die op wacht staat.

Nu moeten we U voor één ding waarschuwen. De Heilige Geest schrijft dit gedeelte niet neer, om ons een idee te geven, dat de eeuwigheid zoo veel langer duurt dan een periode van tijd. O neen. De Heilige Schrift zegt ons dit, om ons te vertellen, dat de eeuwigheid en de tijd eigenlijk niet met elkaar vergeleken kunnen worden. Dat zal ons duidelijk worden, als we bedenken, dat Petrus ook het tegenovergestelde zegt: Bij den Heere is duidend jaren als één dag! Het is er mee als met alles wat Goddelijk is: Hij is de geheel Andere! Daarom zegt Hij in Jesaja 40: Bij wien dan zult gijlieden Mij vergelijken die Ik gelijk zij?

Dat groote en vreeselijke feit heeft Mozes gezien als hij stond op de bergtoppen des geloofs.

"Gij overstroomt ze, zij zijn gelijk een slaap; in den morgenstond zijn ze gelijk het gras dat verandert; in den morgenstond bloeit het en het verandert, des avonds wordt het afgesneden en het verdort!"

In deze twee verzen hebt ge dezelfde waarheid als die we beluisterden in vers 4. De groote, vreeselijke, eeuwige God komt over duizend jaren van "vaderlandsche geschiedenis" en het resultaat is het zelfde, als wanneer de zon over het gras ging, dat 's morgens zoo schoon stond te prijken, doch 's avonds terneer lag, verdord, verschrompeld, vergaan!

Daarom volgt hierop: Want wij vergaan door Uwen toorn en door Uwe grimmigheid worden wij verschrikt!

Hier is eindelijk het vers, dat ons de woorden verklaart die we eerder lazen in het derde vers: Keert weder, gij menschenkinderen! En die wederkeering is de verbrijzeling des doods. Dat wordt hier verklaard. In één woord: het is de toorn des Heeren. Hoe zullen we daar genoeg van zeggen?

De woorden *vergaan* en *verschrikken* hooren bij elkaar en de woorden *toorn* en *grimmigheid*.

En daar hebt ge het leven van den natuurlijken mensch op aarde. Zijn heele leven is vergaan en verschrikking. Dat begint al vroeg in zijn zoogenaamde leven. O, als we slechts eventjes konden zien, hoe Adam en Eva leefden in den staat der oorspronkelijke gerechtigheid. Of zooals de hemelingen nu leven! Gods toorn en grimmigheid is Zijn onlust, Zijn haat tegen den zondaar. Allen die Zijn wet overtreden is Hij een Worstelaar. En God zorgt er voor, dat zij zich niet vermaken op aarde. Zoo spoedig Adam en Eva zondigden, zoo spoedig gevoelden zij zichzelve ellendig. En al hun zaad is gedoopt in groote smart

en wordt voortgezweept door den dood die een ieder niet alleen op de hielen zit, doch die hen op den rug, neen, tot in het diepe hart vervolgt.

En, let wel God doet dat.

God overstroomt ons als met een vloed. Zijn eeuwigheid, Zijn eeuwige deugden vervolgen ons en maken ons ellendig. Wij zijn zóó kwaad, dat de deugd van Gods wondere gerechtigheid ons brandt en wegbrandt tot in der eeuwen eeuwigheid.

Zoo staan de zaken met het menschdom. Leest slechts de volgende twee verzen: Gij stelt onze ongerechtigheden vóór U, onze heimelijke zonden in het licht Uws aanschijns. Want alle onze dagen gaan heen door Uwe verbolgenheid, wij brengen onze jaren door als een gedachte.

Vreeselijke verzen. God neemt onze zonden, onze heimelijke zonden, en zet ze vlak voor Zijn gezicht, in het volle licht. O, wij verbergen onze zonden. Dat is erg natuurlijk. Dat doen de besten onder ons. Eigenlijk doen we dat altijd. Dat is de hypocriet in ons. Het ergste is het, als we zulke heimelijke zonden door laten gaan voor gerechtigheid. Walgelijk schouwspel. Maar alle dingen zijn naakt en geopend voor het oog van Hem met wien we te doen hebben. Hij ziet die zonden en Hij neemt die zonden en zet ze in het licht van Zijn aanschijn. En Hij zorgt er voor, dat wij dat weten. Ik heb eens iemand hooren zeggen De Heere laat ons in ons binnenste hart voelen, wat Hij van ons denkt. *Daar heeft Mozes het over hier!* God zorgt er voor, dat wij onze jaren doorbrengen onder den toorn Gods. Mozes zegt het immers: Want alle onze dagen gaan henen door Uwe verbolgenheid! Niet sommige der dagen, doch *alle dagen*.

Maar hoe kan dat? Mozes is toch de man Gods? En God heeft toch Zijn volk lief? Ik dacht, dat Hij ons leidde aan zeer stille wateren? Doet Hij ons dan niet nederliggen in grazige weiden? En als er nu nog stond, dat sommige van onze dagen heengaan onder Zijn verbolgenheid, dan moest ik nog de wenkbrauwen fronsen en zeggen, dat het moeite in mijn oogen is om het te mogen verstaan; doch Mozes zegt, dat *alle* onze dagen vergaan onder Zijn verbolgenheid. Hoe zit dat?

Mozes staat hier aan het einde van zijn leven vlak voor het historische, organische volk Israel. En hij weet zich één met dat volk. En dat volk bestaat uit kern en bolster. De kern is de Zone Gods, de latere Jezus Christus, onze Heere. (Eigenlijk mag ik ook niet zeggen: *de latere* Jezus Christus, want hij is er altijd geweest. Eer Abraham was, ben Ik, zei Jezus later.) En de bolster bestaat uit vleesch, goddeloos vleesch. Als daar zijn: 1. de verworpen Israelieten, die nooit tot het nieuwe leven zouden komen; 2. de verkoren Israelieten die nog niet tot wedergeboorte gekomen waren; en 3. het vleesch van Gods eigen volk, het vleesch van Mozes ingesloten.

En de Heere haat het vleesch. En Hij doet dat

vleesch ook gevoelen, dat Hij het haat. En als de uitverkoren persoon van het kind Gods zich verbindt en leeft uit het vleesch, dan zondigt hij en dan ervaart hij de onlust des Almachtigen.

En als ge nu mij vragen zoudt: maar waarom doet God Zijn uitverkoren volk tot wording en tot ontwikkeling komen zoo nauw verbonden aan het vleesch, dat Hij toch haat, dan is ons antwoord: Omdat Hij al de eer wil hebben. God wil op 't hoogst ge-eerd worden tot in alle eeuwigheid. En daarom heeft Hij in Zijn eeuwige wijsheid besloten om Israel, Zijn uitverkorenen, door den diepen weg van zonde en genade tot Zijn hart te trekken. Tot in alle eeuwigheid zal Mozes en wij allen Hem toeroepen: Halleluja! Gij hebt ons uit zóó grooten dood verlost!

En als ge dan zoudt blijven volhouden en zeggen: Maar wat moeten wij dan denken van al die duizende teksten die in liefelijke klanken zingen van de liefde Gods en van het nederliggen in grazige weiden of het geleid worden langs zeer stille wateren, dan zouden we willen opmerken, dat dit een beschrijving is van het innerlijke, diepste leven van Uw diepste hart. Het kind Gods ervaart, door Gods genade, dat Hij hem liefheeft, dat zijn binnenste hart onzondig, rein is en dat hij wat zijn nieuwe leven aangaat niet *kan* zondigen. In zijn diepste hart wordt hij niet ontroerd, want hij gelooft in God door Jezus Christus den Heere.

Doch Mozes bezag Sion vanuit het oogpunt der historie, des tijds, des zondigen levens hier op aarde. En dan staat het er treurig bij. Dan zingen we wel, doch dan zingen we "uit den treure".

Het leven is kort van duur, en gedurende dat korte leven zijn onze beste dagen moeite en verdriet. En dan wordt het afgesneden en vliegen we daarheen.

Kort, zeer kort. Zijt ge sterk, dan moogt ge 70 jaren leven. Zijt ge zeer sterk, dan is Uw leeftijd 80 jaren. Maar wat geeft het, de heerlijkste dagen zijn toch slechts moeite en verdriet. Ik weet er alles van. Soms denken we, dat we het hemelleven zelve gevonden hebben. Doch het einde is, nog dieper ellende, nog schrijnender verdriet.

Nu is het mogelijk, dat een zeer oppervlakkig mensch dit stukje leest en zegt: Staat het er zóó ellendig bij? Ik kan het niet gelooven. Dan zou ik willen antwoorden: Mensch, wie ge ook zijt, denk er om, dat terwijl ge dit leest, zijt ge aan 't zondigen. Terwijl ge als een wicht in de wieg ligt zondigt ge. Ge zondigt des daags en des nachts, als ge vloekt en als ge bidt. Ge zondigt met Uw vrome gezicht in de kerk en met Uw van woede verwrongen gelaatstrekken in het vechten. Ge zondigt altijd! En nu is God lieflijk, recht, heilig! Doet die twee dingen bij elkaar; en wat hebt ge? Een treurig mensch die psalm 90 zingt! Paulus die zegt: Ik ellendig mensch!

Ik sprak daar van een oppervlakkig mensch die

leeren moet te zuchten. Ach, laat hem het volgende vers lezen en zeer stille wezen.

Wie kent de sterkte Uws toorns, en Uwe verbolgenheid naardat Gij te vreezen zijt?

Wie die toorn kent? En die verbolgenheid? Vraagt het aan Kain en Ezau en Judas in de benedenste deelen der hel: zij zullen het U vertellen. Vraagt het de duivelen en zij zullen U sidderende vertellen, dat zij de komende martelingen schuwen.

In een aparte paragraaf, zoodat ik Hem bevende een aparte plaats geven mag in dit stukje en niet Kain en den duivel op één lijn plaatsen, zou ik U willen vragen: vraagt het aan Jezus en Hij zal het U vertellen hoe sterk is de toorn Gods. Hij weet het, want Hij heeft den dood verzwolgen tot overwinning. Zijn blik is verdiept door het bloed van Gethsemane en de foltering van Golgotha. Hij kent de sterkte van Gods rechtvaardige toorn. En Hij vreest Zijn God in ongekende liefde.

Zóó, en niet anders, moet ge Uw dagen tellen, O mensch!

Ge moet elken dag vragen: O God! ik zoek U, ook al is het, dat Uw aanwezigheid mij smart geeft in bewustzijn van zonde en schuld. Ik zoek U, omdat bij U alleen de levensbron is. Ik ben dood in mij-zelfen, vanwege ongerechtigheden die Gij in 't licht van U aanschijn zet. Ik zoek U bij 't kriecken van den dageraad. Ik zoek U om vergeving van zonde te mogen hebben in 't bloed van Hem die de eeuwigheid van straf moest doorwaden, waar Hij tevergeefs zocht en klaagde en brulde tot U.

Ik wil wijs zijn en wijzer worden. Daarom zullen we zóó onze dagen tellen. We zullen onze zonden, onze groote zondenlast, bij God brengen. Neen, bij Jehova, den getrouwen VerbondsGod, en daar zullen we vergeving van ongerechtigheden ontvangen.

En voorts zingen we.

Maar "uit den treure".

Was het Job die snikte: Mijn oog traant tot God?

Dat bloed, die tranen en zulk lijden zijn Gode dierbaar!
G. V.

IN MEMORIAM

The Men's Society of the Fourth Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan hereby wishes to express its sympathy to one of our fellow members, Mr. H. Mulder, in the loss of his

SISTER

May the heavenly Father comfort the bereaved ones by His Spirit, strengthening their hope in His Eternal House of many mansions.

Rev. R. Veldman, Pres.
P. Koster, Sec'y.

IN HIS FEAR

To The Utmost Of Your Power

IV.

Am I Using All My Power In Conformity With My Vow?

How often are not parents guilty of teaching their children unspiritual things when a wonderful opportunity for instructing them in the fear of the Lord arose! There are many little things that occur all about us which speak of God's praises, and we ought to call the attention of our children to them. Usually we let them go by without a remark. Often we are so unspiritual ourselves and so weak in our own fear of the Lord that we ourselves do not see these things or hear them speaking God's praises. "The heavens declare His glory and the firmament showeth forth His handiwork", the Psalmist declares in Psalm 19. How often do we hear them speak God's praises? Still worse, there are times when we do call the attention of our children to things that we see and that occur round about us in such a way that we do anything but teach them the fear of the Lord. Let us beware of such things.

One such instance is so commonly practiced in Christian circles when there is a child born in a family that is already blessed with other children. The older child looks in wonderment and pride at the "new arrival" and says, "Mommy, where did our baby come from?" Parents are often caught off their guard, so to speak, and if they themselves are not living any too firmly in the fear of the Lord, they will reply, "Oh, the doctor brought it". Still worse is the worldly practice of saying that the stork brought it.

He who fears the Lord and is living from that principle is wise, for the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Psalm 111:10). Such a parent will himself be conscious of the fact that this child is absolutely God's gift. He will realize that he is absolutely dependent upon God for *all* things and that this child, no matter how he may look at it, is their because of what God has done. He will realize that in the conception and birth of that child absolutely none of the credit should be bestowed upon the parents. It simply is a case of God working through them, and without Him nothing would have been accomplished. Parents who know and believe this and live from the principle of that knowledge have the fear of the Lord. Such parents will tell their child that this "new arrival" is given to them by God.

That is the only wise thing to say since it is the

only way to teach them the fear of the Lord. Remember that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. To answer the child's question any other way is folly. To do anything wisely one must do it in the fear of the Lord. Tell your child that the doctor or the stork brought the babe and you ascribe to these what ought to be attributed to the Lord. Make use of this opportunity to impress upon the mind of the Child the wisdom and power of God that he may marvel after Him and reverence His name. Call his attention to the tiny little hands that are so perfectly shaped and to the fact that each one has five little fingers just like his own. Give him to understand that God does wonderful things. Exalt God in his mind and help him to think in terms of God's praise and to be God-centered in his thinking.

Not only is this the only wise thing to tell your child because it is teaching him the fear of the Lord, but it is the only wise thing to tell him also because it is the only answer upon which you can build later when the child is able to understand more fully how God brings that child in this world and how He gives it unto the parents. The "doctor" story and the "stork" story cannot be built upon when the child will no longer believe such nonsense.

Another evil practice which teaches the child doctrines not contained in the Old and the New Testament presents itself around Christmastide. No, no, we do not teach our children that there is a Santa Claus, but we do take them down town to see a Santa Claus. Yea, still worse, some parents will even keep their children out of their catechism class on Saturday morning to take them downtown to see the Santa Claus parade. Those things have been done also in our circles, and do not forget it! That surely is not doing the utmost in our power to help or cause them to be instructed in the doctrine of God's Word.

It is contrary to the baptism vow whether you keep your child out of his catechism class or not. If we keep them out of their catechism class, it surely is true that we are not helping them to be instructed in the doctrine contained in the Old and New Testaments. The Santa Claus will not teach them that. Your child ought to be in catechism where he can and will be taught the fear of the Lord. But granted that he need not miss a catechism class for his visit to Santa Claus, this visit will teach him doctrines contrary to the doctrine contained in the Old and New Testament. It will do so first of all in that it will turn his mind away from the true significance of Christmas. It will give a significance to this time and day of the year which is not to be found anywhere in the Old and New Testament. In his mind Santa Claus and Christmas will belong to each other while in his thoughts Christmas and the birth of Christ ought to belong together. The child should be taught that Santa Claus

is only a fictitious personage, and indeed we do teach our children that. Yet by taking them down to go and see a Santa Claus we nevertheless teach them that Christmas is the time of Santa Claus rather than the time of celebrating the birth of Christ and the manifestation of God's marvelous love. You must do that to teach your child the fear of the Lord at Christmastide.

The doctrine contained in the Old Testament teaches us plainly that Israel, God's people in that dispensation, was to accept *nothing* of the heathenish practices round about them. They were to exterminate all the heathen out of the land of Canaan lest there should be these heathenish practices to be seen and followed by their children. They might not marry any heathens. They were to teach their children the unique and wonderful history of their deliverance wherein the glory of the Lord was displayed. So should we, the church of this dispensation, teach our children spiritual things and warm them of ALL the heathenish practices of the ungodly who live round about us.

Another thing that must be said in this connection is the fact that the Santa Claus theory is indeed a heathenish superstition, a doctrine of unbelief and a practice solely without the fear of the Lord. The world has need of a Santa Claus myth because it cannot teach its children the fear of the Lord. The world must teach its children that Santa Claus will reward good boys and girls at Christmas and give them what they wish if they will only do as their fathers and mothers tell them to do. How unspiritual that is! How contrary to the doctrine contained in the Old and New Testament! How contrary to the very idea of Christmas! Does not Christmas speak to us of God's great love according to which He gave us His Son although we ourselves did not deserve a thing? Does not the birth of the Saviour imply that we were dead in sin and trespasses and that in 4000 years men could not bring forth a Saviour? Did the angel not say to Mary in regard to His birth that He should be called Jesus because He would save His people from their sins? Then God gave a gift at Christmas not for deserving people but for those who were sinning against Him with all their being. At Christmastide you have a wonderful opportunity to teach your child the fear of the Lord, for you can explain to him the greatness, the wisdom and the grace of God. But this Santa Claus business leaves God out of the picture entirely, and it ignores His Christ entirely. It seeks to be a substitute for Christ, and take Christ out of Christmas and you have nothing left. Yea, what you will have left is an Antichristmas. Do not take your child to go and see this forerunner and representative of the Antichrist who will present himself as the Christ.

Besides this, are we to teach our children to be good boys and girls in order to receive a nice present at Christmas? That likewise is not the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord consists in this, as we said before, that one serves the Lord and obeys Him in love. He who fears the Lord obeys Him because He recognizes Him to be the Lord of heaven and earth Whom all creatures must serve. The world has need of a Santa Claus to teach its children *compliance* to laws and regulations. Only thus can the world get its children to do as they are told, for they know not God and have not His fear. God's people have no need of these kind of things. They can come to their children with the doctrine contained in the Old and New Testament, namely, that they must serve God because He is the Lord of all things, Who has a perfect right to demand perfect obedience from every creature, for every creature is the work of His hands and has been made for His glory. The world and its practices will never teach your child that. Only the doctrine contained in the Old and New Testaments has been given by God unto us for the purpose of teaching that truth and the true obedience which it demands.

Before mentioning any more instances wherein we can and ought to teach our children the fear of the Lord when the world uses things to teach them its philosophy, we would by way of introduction make a few remarks. First of all we would have you turn your thoughts to what God says in Deuteronomy 6:6, 7. There God says: "And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." How much of that is done today? We think that this man-made vow that we instruct our children to the utmost of our power is a severe demand which is asked of us when we present our children to be baptized. What then would we say of these words of God? But there it is black on white in His word. That is what He demands. Wherever we go, wherever we are, no matter what occurs we must use it to teach our children the fear of the Lord. We will teach them how to drive an automobile, how to run a tractor and plow a field, but how much effort do we put forth to teach them the fear of the Lord? How many opportunities do we not allow to slip by without our taking advantage of them when we walk by the way. When we sit in our houses with them, when we lie down with them and rise up with them in the morning to greet the new day? How much of the fear of the Lord and its instruction is revealed in our prayers which we utter before them when we lie down with them at night or arise with them in the morning?

We so easily complain that we have no ability to

teach. Yet we taught them how to plow and to drive a car and so many other things. And in such things as the birth of a child and Santa Claus we show that we *are able* to teach them wrong things. Let us not try to talk ourselves into thinking that we cannot teach our children as we walk by the way, when we sit in our houses, when we lie down and arise in the morning. We all have far more ability than we want to admit. Let us use it.

In our next and last installment of this brief consideration of the vow we as parents have made, we hope D. V., to present a few more ways in which we as parents can speak of these things to our children and teach them the fear of the Lord to the utmost of our own power in the home and its family life.

J. A. H.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On April 19, 1946, our beloved parents

CORNELIUS DOEZEMA

and

JESSIE DOEZEMA nee Van Der West

celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary.

We their children and grandchildren extend to them our loving and sincere congratulations.

We thank our God for sparing them for each other and for us. We pray that the Lord may continue to be with them in His grace and to prepare for them an abundant entrance into His heavenly kingdom.

Their grateful children:

Mrs. Philip Persenaire

Mr. and Mrs. Mart Doezeema

Mrs. Charles Doezeema

Rev. and Mrs. Adam Persenaire

Dr. and Mrs. Henry Stevens

Mr. and Mrs. Jacob De Vries

Miss Helen Doezeema

36 grandchildren.

Grand Rapids, Michigan

TEACHER — WANTED

The Hope Protestant Reformed School Society is in urgent need of a school-teacher for this coming year.

Please contact: Mr. John Lanning
R. R. 5

Grand Rapids, Michigan.

PERISCOPE

WILL YOU BE ONE OF THEM?

A pamphlet by the European Christian Mission asks me that question.

It tells me that 400,000,000 people in Europe are still unevangelized. Two hundred million who profess no religion whatever, found chiefly in such countries as Russia, France and Spain. In Portugal only one in a thousand is what one could call protestant.

It goes on to state that this Mission wants to send one hundred workers from this country and England, assuring me that even these hundred could make but a very small beginning.

Then it comes straight at me and says, "will you be one of them?"

Apart from the fact that if one shall be a missionary one has to be sent of God and consequently called by the churches, and apart from the designation of Europe as the field for such labor, apart from that all we are reminded of what awful conditions obtain at this late hour on God's clock.

But I would like to pass on this question to some of you young men. YOU. . . . will YOU be one of them? One of you takes up farming, another becomes a mechanic, another a draftsman. But is there any one among our young men that would desire, would dare to dedicate his life to missionary work?

Our churches are reminding you that we are becoming ready for missionary work on a broader scale. There is a challenge going out to YOU for this type of work. Will we see you in our School some time, preparing for this type of work? Will you perhaps sometime be one of them?

* * * *

THREE-SCORE WANT-ADDS.

That is the amount of Teacher-wanted ads we counted in a recent issue of The Banner.

Where are our teachers going? Where have they gone?

Young man, young lady, with the Summer before you, planning what life's work you will take up—how about becoming a teacher in one of our Christian Schools? There is not only a great need for teachers, but above all for thoroughly christian, well prepared and God-centered teachers.

Did you know, moreover, that in one of our churches the parents recently banded together and decided to build a school of their own, but they cannot find a

teacher? If they had a teacher I understand they would be ready to start their school, come Fall.

But you didn't take up teaching.

You could still start. Our christian schools need you otherwise there would not be these three score want ads. As we acquire schools of our own, we will soon need teachers. . . . need you.

Underpaid, you say!

I know, the junk dealer and the garbage hauler get higher wages as a general rule, than do ministers and teachers, the fact however remains that there must be young men and young women who are ready to forfeit the higher wages in other occupations and devote themselves to this spiritual work.

* * * *

BAR LEVEL.

That's where the American family life is at present. "American family life has descended to barroom standards and home drinking is five times what it was in 1934", says a certain Mrs. D. Leigh Colvin, president of the W.C.T.U. 52,000,000 barrels of drink carried home this year. Better, you say, that they drink it at home than in filthy saloons and roadhouses. But that is just the charge which this woman makes, she says that our homes have been converted into veritable saloons and roadhouses. Every house has become a roadhouse and every home a saloon.

This is not true of every home. Certainly our homes, the homes of us as Protestant Reformed, the homes of all christians show a contrast in opposites to such beer-and-ale homes. At least they should.

Scripture does not forbid the use of wine, we are well aware of that. And beer is one of God's good creatures, I know.

A young lad of my acquaintance one time purchased a junior chemistry set. He mixed several of God's good creatures in a test tube and the resultant mixture exploded in his face, destroying one of his eyes. Barbiturates (sleeping pills) are also compounded and chemically assayed from God's good creatures, but they take many lives. God's creatures, such as barley, rye, corn, grapes, etc. are certainly good, but when a depraved nature, in a person whose belly is his god, mixes these good creatures and ferments them, and then spikes them, you have a resultant concoction that counts its victims by the millions.

But to get back where our Periscope was periscoping—we have here another lament concerning what family life in this country is. It is sin that does these things. Yes. But sin is nothing apart from God. It is the judgment of God against a sinful and godless generation that does these things. God punishes sin with sin. You despise the Spirit? You would not be

full of the Spirit? Then you shall be full of wine. You will not seek your only comfort, in troubles, with God? Seek it then in the mock-comfort of the bottle, and drown in your own lust.

If we are full of the Spirit, and are filling your household with that Spirit, I have no fear that you will fill them with drink. If you are full of the Spirit, your moderation will be known to all men, and the Spirit will be saying to you, "wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, whoever is deceived thereby is not wise".

* * * *

EDUCATION BY MOVIES.

"Education by the method of movies and sight seeing will not add to an individual's capacity to think, a fraction as much as working out one single difficult problem in arithmetic". Thus comments a School Magazine.

Side shows, he comments further.

Whether we like it or not, we will all be forced to take a stand in re the increasingly popular practice in some of our christian schools to show pictures on the school screen. They are mostly nature pictures (is Krazy Kat a nature picture, too?) they are shown rather regularly so that they become part of the curriculum and are in great demand (except with those who already attend the theatres regularly and would like other kinds of 'nature').

The writer above quoted tells us that these movies contribute nothing to the individuals capacity to think.

Entertainment therefore.

That is just one of the dangers to which we commit ourselves when we bring movies into the school. Education becomes entertainment. Now it is possible, I imagine, if he be a real good teacher, to combine these two so that the result is wholesome and the mental and spiritual development proper, but it is following the path of least resistance to want to be entertained rather than to be instructed or edified. Witness the difference in the size of the audience when a play is given or when some lecturer comes to speak on christian instruction. Entertainment is the paramount thing—the capacity to think—why, that's something else.

* * * *

GOING, GOING—*Sold For Five Dollars!*

Ho, everyone!

A sale going on.

The So and So Society of the So and So Church is having a sale in the church basement. Proceeds are

for. . . well just bid high because it's for a good cause.

That article that sold for five dollars was worth about forty cents, but competition set in, one would not be outdone by the other, so they did what they would never do otherwise, they paid ten times too much for the article. Of course the poorer members could not get along at this high cost of buying. But the sale brought up a lot of money and that is the important thing. . . that's why a Ladies Aid exists, isn't it? Or doesn't it?

One notices, by and large, that the success of the Society is measured by how much their sale brought up. The purpose of their existence has almost entirely become the raising of moneys. Apart from the fact that Scripture does not assign to ladies the task of raising money for the church, apart from the fact that such public auctions, with competitive bidding, induce careless handling of money, apart from the fact that the sale and everything that stands in connection with it becomes its primary concern; apart from all that stands the fact that the original purpose of the Ladies' Aid was to sew for the needy or for the busy mothers. The garments were sometimes distributed through the deaconate to local or distant needy. The raising of huge, or less huge, sums of money is a factor which was added to it during the course of history. I fear the addition has something carnal in it, don't you?

M. G.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On Thursday, May 16, 1946, our beloved parents

PETER KOOISTRA

and

GRACE KOOISTRA nee Wiersma

will celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary, the Lord willing.

It is the earnest hope and prayer of us, their children, that the Lord may grant them His peace in their remaining years.

Their grateful children:

Mr. and Mrs. P. Bosscher

Mr. and Mrs. M. P. Kooistra

Dr. and Mrs. H. P. Kooistra

Mr. and Mrs. C. Kooistra

Gertrude Kooistra

Hilda Kooistra

six grandchildren.

Grand Rapids, Michigan

CONTRIBUTION

Strange Actions by the King of His Church

Of this we were reminded when we read in the *Banner* of March 22, page 381, the following news item in connection with the classical meeting of Classis Kalamazoo, Feb. 20, 1946: "The Reconciliation Committee reported that it had effected the union, with the cooperation of the Classical Committee, between the congregation now known as the Grace Christian Reformed Church and the Christian Reformed denomination, on November 1, 1945. Classis is deeply grateful to the King of the Church that he has blessed the efforts that have been put forth so that this union could be effected."

First of all, from the viewpoint of the local congregation involved, this reunion implies that her struggle of 1924 was a sad mistake, and that the words of the Reverend H. Danhof at that time, to the effect that they might represent the cause of Christ, were an illusion. It may be granted that there are probably some who are inclined to dispute this statement. One hears the claim, e.g., that the reunion has occurred on a pre-1924 basis. Also, that they are in utter disagreement with the Three Points. Even consistory members, who therefore had arranged this reunion, allege these things. Did not the reunion occur only on the basis of the Word of God, the D.K.O., and the Three Forms of Unity? Is it not a fact, so they claim, that the Three Points were not even mentioned? Yea, is it not true, that the pastor of said congregation, as late as during the summer of 1945, was openly contradicting the Three Points from his pulpit?

We must, however, attend to the following. In the first place, the undersigned received the assurance from a very reliable source, while the negotiations were in progress, that to be reunited on the basis of the Three Forms of Unity implied those Three Forms of Unity as *interpreted by the Christian Reformed Church*. We received this assurance from one of the members of the Classis of Kalamazoo. Secondly, the congregation involved should bear in mind the decision of the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church held at Englewood, Chicago, in 1926. That synod officially endorsed the Three Points and rejected the protests against these famous declarations of 1924. In 1924 the Three Points saw the light of day. In 1926 the right to protest against them was officially denied. Thirdly, all the teaching in the Grace Christian Reformed Church will be Christian Reformed from now

on. Fourthly, it is true that the local consistory has promised to be silent as far as their personal attitude toward the Three Points is concerned? And how can the Reverend H. Danhof harmonize this with statements of his of the past? What was his stand which he took at the time of Classis West of Grand Rapids which was held late in 1924 and during the early part of 1925? Finally, if it be true that the reunion had occurred on the pre-1924 basis, why is it that the Reverend H. Danhof did not receive the right to preach and administer the sacraments in all the Christian Reformed Churches?

Permit me to review briefly the history of this reunion. We will limit ourselves to this history as it occurred last year. We will confine ourselves to 1945, firstly, because we are somewhat acquainted with that part of the history, and, secondly because it constitutes the official part of this ecclesiastical transaction. It was during the early months of 1945 that a basis was drawn up for reconciliation and presented to the classis of Kalamazoo. This basis for reunion proceeded from and was suggested by the consistory of the congregation of Rev. H. Danhof. It was their basis for reaffiliation. This basis set forth the reunion as to take place upon the following points of agreement:

1. The Word of God.
2. The D.K.O. — the Church Order as adopted at the Synod of Dordrecht.
3. The Three Forms of Unity.
4. The emeritus status of the Rev. H. Danhof would cease as soon as the reunion had been effected. (We must bear in mind that an emeritus minister in the Christian Reformed Church retains his official status—H.V.).

This basis was accepted by the Classis Kalamazoo at her meeting which was held during the early month of 1945. However, it was in turn rejected by the consistory of the then Protesting First Christian Reformed Church. It must be borne in mind that this basis stipulated that, as soon as the reunion would be accomplished, the Rev. H. Danhof would no longer be in office.

The attempt to seek reunion continued however. Finally, another basis was drawn up, accepted by the classis of Kalamazoo, and finally also approved by the consistory of said congregation. The congregation had already decided at a previous meeting to return to the Christian Reformed Church. According to this basis the classis gave the local congregation the right to acknowledge their pastor as their pastor, which implies, of course, that the Rev. H. Danhof has the right

to function as minister in his local congregation. He may not be a minister or function as minister in the Christian Reformed Churches, but he may perform the duties of a minister in one of the Christian Reformed Churches, his own congregation.

What does this mean? The report of the meeting of Classis Kalamazoo of Feb. 20 declares that the classis is deeply grateful to the King of the Church that he has blessed the efforts that have been put forth so that this union could be effected. The undersigned wonders whether the delegate from one of the churches of this classis (I believe it was the minister from the congregation of Battle Creek who did not favour the actions of the classis in this matter) also heartily endorses this part of the report as it appears in the *Banner* of March 22. If this action is to be ascribed to the King of His Church one may well ask himself the question whether that King of His Church also is guilty of deception and ecclesiastical politics. No confession has occurred. No sin has been confessed. The Reverend H. Danhof may not serve in the Christian Reformed Churches but he may officiate in one of those churches, his own. And as late as the summer of 1945, while the negotiations were in progress therefore to effect reconciliation, he openly from his pulpit contradicted the Three Points. In fact, the undersigned does not hesitate to say that there is not a single members of the classis of Kalamazoo who is not fully aware of the fact that the Rev. H. Danhof believes today as he always has believed. He may not break the Bread of life elsewhere in the Christian Reformed Church, had been deposed in 1925 surely because of his opposition to the Three Points; yet, the Christian Reformed Church seems little concerned about his breaking of the Bread of Life in his own church and they do not seem alarmed at all about the spiritual food which some 1000(?) souls may receive from his hand. If the consistory erred in 1924 they erred grievously, and would surely desire to make a confession, and the church should demand this confession. Then this local consistory was guilty of creating schism, of disrupting the Church. And we know that the wrath of the King of His Church rests upon all those who raise discord not only in the state but also in the church. If, on the other hand, the Christian Reformed Church erred in 1924, then it is an inexcusable action on the part of this local church to subject and expose themselves and their children to the dangers of the Three Points. The undersigned is convinced, however, that the King of His Church will bless only that kind of reunion and reaffiliation, which occurs on the basis of the truth and not on that of the Three Points, and which re-union occurs also with confession of sin by those who have been guilty of schism within the Church of God.

H. V.

IN MEMORIAM

Het behaagde den Heere aan den 17den April van ons te nemen, onze geliefde echtgenoot, moeder en zuster,

GRIETJE BIEREMA—Pastoor
in den ouderdom van 74 jaren.

Zwaar valt ons dit verlies, doch wij hebben de onuitsprekelijke troost te mogen gelooven dat zij de rust is ingegaan die er overblijft voor het volk van God.

De bedroefde echtgenoot,
A. Bierema, en kinderen
Mrs. M. Jager.

1147 Bemis St., S. E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

IN MEMORIAM

De Hollandsche Vrouwen Vereeniging "Wees een Zegen", der Eerste Protestantsche Gereformeerde Gemeente te Grand Rapids werd op den 17de April bedroefd doordat de Heere uit ons midden wegnam een onzer leden

MRS. A. BIEREMA
in den ouderdom van 74 jaar.

Wij zullen haar missen, daar zij gaarne en getrouw de vereeniging bijwoonde. Maar wij mogen ook gelooven dat ons verlies haar groot gewin. Zij mocht met vrijmoedigheid belijde dat zij zichzelf kende, als een gekochte des Heeren, wetende in Wien zij geloofde.

Trooste de Heere, onze VerbondsGod, de bedroefde familie.
Namens de Vereeniging,
Mrs. D. Jonker, Pres.
Miss W. Woudenberg, Secr.

IN MEMORIAM

De Hollandsche Mannen Vereeniging van de Eerste Protestantsche Gereformeerde Kerk betuigt hiermede hun innig leedwezen aan Mr. A. Bierema, vice-pres. onzer vereeniging, bij het verlies zijner echtgenoot

GRIETJE BIEREMA
Moge de Heere hem nabij zijn met Zijn troost en genade.

G. Koster, Pres.
B. Veldkamp, Secr.