

THE STANDARD *Bearer* A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XXII

JUNE 15, 1946 — Grand Rapids, Michigan

NUMBER 18

MEDITATION

The Outpouring Of The Promised Spirit

But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.

Acts 2:16-18.

This is that!

The "that" is the promise, spoken centuries before, and preserved in the Holy Scriptures of the old dispensation.

And the "this" is the fulfillment of the promise, witnessed in the signs of the sound as of a rushing wind, the cloven tongues as of fire that sat upon each of the company of one hundred and twenty gathered in Jerusalem; and witnessed, too, by the fact that now they all had become prophets, and spoke of the wonderful works of God "with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

This is that!

It certainly is not, thus the apostle Peter "standing up with the eleven," emphatically declares before the great multitude that had come together to that wonderful sight, what some of you mockers make of this: these are not signs of drunkenness. Thus, in fact, some of the multitude had tried to explain away their amazement: "Thee men are full of new wine." Unbelief, standing amazed and dumbfounded in "the day of the Lord," is always ready with an "explanation" of the signs of that day, an explanation that can allay its fears of the coming judgment. A wicked and adulter-

ous generation always asks for a sign; yet, when the sign comes, God's sign, they do not want it, and impose upon it their own interpretation. . . .

This is not that!

These men are not full of sweet wine!

Such an interpretation of these strange signs, such an explanation of what these men spoke, would, to the mockers and unbelievers, at least be harmless. It would leave them undisturbed. Who would have to pay attention to the babble and twaddle of drunken men? If such an explanation, of the thing had come to pass in Jerusalem, could be accepted as correct, preferably by majority vote, they could ignore this prophesying, the call to repentance and to be baptized in the name of Jesus, Who had been condemned and crucified, also by majority vote; and they could continue in their sin!

Life could go on as before!

The temple could remain, the altar could stand, the sacrifices could be offered as always; proper respect could be paid to the leaders of the Church, the Sanhedrin and the high priest, the scribes and the Pharisees. And if these men that were full of sweet wine could only be persuaded to submit to the vote of the majority, or to the sentence of the supreme council of the Church, and promise to speak no more of these things, or, at least, to confine their speech to their own company, even they might be tolerated. One does not have to be hard on people that are full of new wine!

All would be well.

The axe could still be removed from the root of the tree, and the tree, the ecclesiastical tree, in which also mockers and unbelievers were permitted to make their nests, would remain standing.

So, let us mock at the thing, and pass on!

When John the Baptist spoke of things similar to those now uttered by this company of men and women on the day of Pentecost, these same mockers and unbelievers,—O, they were "church-men!"—made it very plain that his word could not be accepted: was he not in the desert, instead of in Jerusalem; and was he not really an Anabaptist, who came neither eating nor

drinking; and did he, then, not have a devil? When, in the days of His flesh, Jesus of Nazareth, followed up the preaching of John, proclaiming the nearness of the same kingdom of God, these mockers and unbelievers that are always present wherever the kingdom of God is coming, sang a different tune but with the same end in view. Did He not come eating and drinking, and that, too, with publicans and sinners? O, to drink, even a glass of wine, with respectable men, such as Pharisees and scribes, may be perfectly proper; but who does not know that one who eats with publicans and sinners is a glutton and winebibber? And, besides, was He not from Nazareth, from which place nothing good ever came? And did they not know His Father and mother, and even His brothers and sisters? How, then, could He be the Christ? And if you should call attention to the fact that this Jesus did many wonderful works, and that He cast out devils, the explanation was not difficult to find: He cast out devils through Beëlzebub, the prince of devils!

Yes, indeed, rumors had it, later, that He rose from the dead. But it was not at all difficult to see the true meaning of these rumors: His disciples had stolen the body of Jesus, while the Roman death-watch slept!

These men are full of sweet wine!

O, this explanation might not fit all the facts; but it was satisfactory enough. And if only it could be officially adopted by majority vote, the voice of these men would be silenced, and the house of these mockers would be saved from destruction.

But, thus Peter, standing up with the eleven, this is not that!

These men are not drunken. Apart now from the obvious fact that such a theory would not explain the signs of the sound as of a mighty wind, and of the cloven tongues as of fire, it was only the third hour of the day. And to be sure, at nine o'clock in the morning one might meet a stray drunk on the street, but how absurd to suppose that a company of one hundred and twenty men would go banqueting and revelling in the wee hours of the morning!

No, this is not that!

But this is the realization of the promise!

This is that which was, long ago, spoken by the prophet Joël: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh". . . .

It means that God has visited His people!

The promise has been fulfilled!

This is that!

And that puts the mockers in an entirely critical position!

For if this, these signs, and the fact that these men speak in other tongues, and what they speak, is the

manifestation of the fact that the promise, as spoken by the prophet Joel, has been fulfilled, then this is the day of the Lord!

Then, indeed, there is cause for great joy and thanksgiving for the Church of God in the world, for those that look for the salvation in Israel; but, as always on "the day of the Lord," then there is reason for fear and consternation on the part of all the carnal seed, for those that will not repent, and that never enter into the kingdom of God, whenever, and howsoever it comes!

For then these men, instead of babbling like drunken men, speak "as the Spirit gave them utterance," and they do, indeed, speak of the wonderful works of God!

God has poured out of His Spirit.

And it is in the power of that Spirit that these men now speak!

The Spirit speaks through them: they prophesy!

In the Spirit, the God of our salvation, in Jesus Christ, has come down to us, to establish His dwelling-place with us, and to abide with us for ever!

For He is the Spirit of God. He is very God, like the Father and the Son. For so He is called, and so He revealed in all His mighty works. All the works of God are of the Father, through the Son, and in the Spirit. And with the Father and the Son, He is co-equal in divine perfections. Nor is He a mere power or effluence of God Who is a Spirit. Indeed, when the text here teaches that, on the day of Pentecost, God poured out of His Spirit, the emphasis lies on the fact that, by this pouring out, many gifts of grace are bestowed upon the Church; besides, He is poured out on *all* flesh, and on all the servants and handmaidens of the living God: all partake of the Spirit. But He is, like the Father and the Son, a definite divine Person: He wills, and knows, and acts; He instructs, and witnesses, and assures. He is the Spirit of the Father, and of the Son, in Whom the Father loves the Son, and the Son loves the Father, and Who searches the depths of God! Where He dwells, there dwell the Father and the Son: there is the dwellingplace, the covenant of the triune God!

And He is the Spirit of Christ!

For He is so called. And, indeed, the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ are one and the same divine Person, yet, the viewpoint is different. For as the Spirit of Christ, He is the God of our salvation, dwelling in and with the Church, to fill her with all the blessings of grace obtained for her by the death and resurrection of her Lord. For the Son of God came to dwell in human flesh, tabernacled among us, obtained eternal salvation for us, died and was raised; was exalted in highest glory, far above all principalities and powers, leading captivity captive, richly endowed with all spiritual blessings of salvation for His people. And that exalted Lord, that exceedingly glorious Christ,

that rich Head of His Church, received the promise of the Holy Spirit, that in that Spirit He might return to His Church, and fill her with His grace.

Thus the apostle Peter, "standing up with the eleven," proclaims the gospel on that memorable day of Pentecost: "This Jesus God hath raised up, whereof we are all witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which we now see and hear."

In Him, the exalted Christ, returned!

He is the Spirit of the fulfillment of the promise. As such He was not yet under the old dispensation, because Jesus was not yet glorified. John 7:39. O, indeed, also in the Church of the Old Testament, the Spirit of God, and that, too, as the Spirit of Christ that was to come, was revealed, and operated. For also the saints of old were saved, were regenerated, believed, and had the forgiveness of sins. Yet, even as Christ had not yet come, so the Spirit of Christ, as the fulfillment of the promise, was not yet. Even as the Church of the old dispensation knew and saw the day of Christ only in the dim shadows of the law; so the Spirit of Christ led that Church always to the law, to temple and altar and sacrifices, to prophet and priest and king, to the signs and symbols of that which was to come, in order that they might dimly apprehend the things of the kingdom of God. And, for the rest, this Spirit dwelled in a few prophets, enlightening them, and speaking through them of things to come. These prophets saw visions and dreamed dreams. They stood on the mountain-tops of revelation, whence they could see the things of the kingdom of God, "the day of the Lord," afar off; and the people dwelled in the valley below, and looked up to these prophets for the knowledge of the Lord.

But now the Spirit is come!

He is poured out, not upon a few prophets, but upon all flesh!

On all the servants and handmaidens of the Lord He is shed forth!

Now, all dwell on the mountain-tops of revelation. All prophesy. All see visions, and all dream dreams. All look, O, to be sure, still as in a mirror, but nevertheless, at the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same image.

From the smallest to the greatest, they now all know the Lord!

But then, the mockers may well be filled with fear!

For then they are hearing, not the idle prattle of drunken men, but the Word of God!

Then they stand condemned. For then Jesus is the Christ, whom they crucified. Then He was raised from the dead, and is become the Lord of all!

Then the day of the Lord is, indeed, at hand!

But glory and blessing and eternal salvation is

come for all that look for the promise!

O, glorious Spirit of promise!

This is that. . . .

The Word spoken by the prophet is now fulfilled.

And this means that, on the day of Pentecost, it was upon *the Church* that the Spirit was poured out.

For always, the promise of God is for the Church. Ever it follows the rule: "Unto you is the promise, and unto your children." It was to that Church that the promise was made, through the word of the prophet Joel, and of other prophets as well. If, then, "this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel," it is the Church that received the fulfillment of the promise.

That Church is not born on the day of Pentecost, as some claim, and as others often thoughtlessly repeat. On the contrary, it was from the very beginning of the world, and will be even unto the end. It was in Paradise, and in the ark, and in the loins of Abraham. And, for a time, that Church is placed under the law, and assumes the form of Israel's national existence, and of the Mosaic institution.

And the line runs through.

God does not forsake His people. He continues His covenant. When the promise, long expected, is realized, the Spirit is poured out upon the Church. For, it is true that the word by the prophet Joel spoke of "all flesh"; and it is equally true that this looks for the fulfillment of the promise far beyond the boundaries of Israel's national existence; it embraces all the nations of the world. Yet, even so, the promise is for the Church, and its realization is accomplished in the Church. The "world" cannot and does not receive the Spirit of Christ. Hence, the prophet explains: "*your* sons and *your* daughters shall prophesy and *your* young men shall see visions, and *your* old men shall dream dreams."

The Church, through the outpouring of the Spirit, would, indeed, put off her old garments of the law and of the shadows, and put on her beautiful garments of grace and truth; but it was still the Church.

Hence, it was but proper that the Spirit should be poured out upon the Church *in Jerusalem*.

And it was equally proper, and inevitable, that the Church on which the Spirit was poured out, should not be found in the temple, but in the upper room; should not consist of priests and scribes and pharisees, but of the one hundred and twenty disciples of the Lord that, under the leadership of the apostles, waited for the promise! In them the Church is continued, and in all that, through their word, shall be called.

The day of the Lord is at hand! Woe unto all that mock!

Rejoice, O Zion! Thy salvation is come!

Put on thy beautiful garments!

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.

EDITOR — Rev. H. Hoeksema

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

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

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

(Subscription price \$2.50 per year)

Entered as Second Class mail at Grand Rapids, Michigan.

CONTENTS

MEDITATION —

- THE OUTPOURING OF THE PROMISED SPIRIT.....409
Rev. H. Hoeksema

EDITORIALS —

- THE LIBERATED CHURCHES IN THE NETHERLANDS.....412
AS TO SUFFERING414
THE IDEA OF CONSCIENCE IN THE EPISTLES OF
PAUL415
EXPOSITION OF THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM419
Rev. H. Hoeksema

- THE CALLING OF THE MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.....421
ICHABOD425

Rev. G. M. Ophoff

- WONDERE VEILIGHEID426
Rev. G. Vos

- IN HIS FEAR428
Rev. C. Hanko

- PERISCOPE431
Rev. B. Kok

EDITORIALS

The Liberated Churches In The Netherlands

THE CHURCH POLITICAL ASPECT:

As might be expected, the heirarchical tendency and character of the Synod of Utrecht, 1943-1945, reached its climax, and expressed itself most clearly in the deposition of officebearers, ministers and elders.

The Church Order stipulates rather definitely that this belongs to the jurisdiction of the consistory.

Thus we read in Art. 79: "When ministers of the divine Word, Elders or Deacons, have committed any public, gross sin, which is a disgrace to the Church, or worthy of punishment by the Authorities, the Elders or Deacons shall immediately by preceding sentence of the Consistory thereof and of the nearest Church, be suspended or expelled from their office, but the Ministers shall only be suspended. Whether these shall be entirely deposed from office, shall be subject to the judgment of the Classis, with the advice of the Delegates of the (Particular) Synod mentioned in Article 11."

And in Art. 80 a list of such sins as render one worthy of suspension and deposition is offered; "Furthermore among the gross sins, which are worthy of being punished with suspension or deposition from office, these are the principal ones: false doctrine or heresy, public schism, public blasphemy, simony, faithless desertion of office or intrusion upon that of another, perjury, adultery, fornication, theft, acts of violence, habitual drunkenness, brawling, filthy lucre; in short all sins and gross offenses as render the perpetrators infamous before the world, and which in any private member of the Church would be considered worthy of excommunication."

Let us note here:

1. That the suspension and deposition of officebearers must always have its beginning with the consistory. Because of the importance of the matter, as well as to prevent the possibility that a consistory sit as judge in its own case, the advice of a neighboring consistory is required; and because all the churches, and not only the local congregation, are concerned in the office of a minister, his deposition requires the advice of the classis, and of the synodical delegates.

2. The sins on account of which an officebearer can be suspended or deposed from office must be of such a nature that there can be no doubt about their being heinous offenses, and worthy of punishment. To remove any doubt on this score Art. 80 was, evidently, put into the Church Order.

3. The sins must be of such a nature that the guilty party is worthy of excommunication. From this it follows that one should never be deposed from office, unless he is also worthy of excommunication.

We understand that the Rev. Barkey Wolf, a visitor from the Netherlands here, dropped the remark, at a conference in Calvin College, that Dr. Schilder was, in his opinion, not a Christian. This remark, however, he retracted, and for it he apologized. From his standpoint, as a representative of the synodical Churches of the Netherlands, he should have let the remark stand after he made it. That he apologized for it implies that, in his opinion, Dr. Schilder should not have been deposed. The sins that make one worthy of deposition are the same as those which make one worthy of excommunication. And to excommunicate one from the fellowship of the Church is to declare that he is not a Christian. The Rev. Barkey Wolf should have had the courage of his conviction.

But let us now turn to the synod of 1943-45 to see how also in this respect it simply ignored the consistories, rode rough-shod over its authority, and took matters in its own hand.

As to the suspension and deposition of Dr. Schilder, its history is, in brief, as follows.

1. Because of Dr. Schilder's expressed disagreement with the doctrinal decisions of the Synod of Sneek-Utrecht; and because of a letter which he had addressed to his consistory in Kampen, and letters by him written to all the churches; the Synod, in its session of Febr. 25, 1943 decided to place Dr. Schilder categorically before the demand that he teach nothing contrary to the doctrinal decisions of Sneek-Utrecht, that he do not agitate against those decisions in the churches, and that he apologize for his action of sending the above mentioned letter to the consistory of Kampen. Synod gave Dr. Schilder time to answer till March 9, 11 P.M. At this session Synod had already decided that the attitude and action of Dr. Schilder made him guilty of public schism according to Art. 80 of the Church Order.

To all the questions sent him by Synod, Dr. Schilder replied with an unqualified, but motivated *No*.

The result was that in its session of March 23, 1943, Synod decided as follows:

"Considering:

"1. That Prof. Schilder, in a letter of Oct. 1942 addressed to the consistory of Kampen, advised that consistory, among other things, that it should not consider the decisions of the Synod (of Sneek-Utrecht), taken in agreement with Art. 31 of the Church Order, as settled and binding;

"2. That he did not comply with the expressed expectation of the Synod Utrecht, to acknowledge that he should have refrained from offering his advice to the consistory of Kampen;

"3. That he offered no grievances against the doctrinal decisions of that Synod (Sneek-Utrecht, H.H.) nor any other objections to the present Synod, and now publicly opposes these decisions, though Synod maintained them over against objections filed by others;

"4. That he, even after repeated summons, withdrew himself from the discussion of the differences of opinion (*meningsverschillen*) in the sessions of the Synod of Sneek-Utrecht May 1942;

"5. That he exhorts the churches not to accept the doctrinal decisions as binding, and to act contrary to the decision of the Synod of Sneek-Utrecht that the classes shall ascertain at the examination of candidates for the ministry that these agree with those doctrinal decisions;

"6. That he refused to apologize for the attitude he assumed, to acknowledge that he should have refrained from giving advice to the consistory of Kampen, to promise that he would teach nothing that is not in full agreement with the doctrinal decisions of the Synod of Sneek-Utrecht, and to declare that he will in no way agitate against these decisions in the churches; and that he thus perseveres in the attitude he assumed over against the Synod as the legal gathering of the Reformed Churches.

"Declares that he rendered himself guilty of the sin of schism mentioned in Art. 80 of the Church Order; and decides:

"1. With deep regret, on the basis of Artt. 79 and 80 of the Church Order, and of the "Rules concerning the termination of the suspension from, or the granting of permission to leave, the service of those, who occupy a permanent position as professor at the Theol. School of the Reformed Churches," to suspend him as professor at the Theol. School and as Emeritus-minister of the Reformed Church of Rotterdam-Delftshaven for the time of three months, in order to offer him an opportunity to confess his aberration, and to declare himself with a view to the question proposed to him by Synod; to which the Synod urgently exhorts him, praying the Lord that He may give him all he needs in this way; and

"2. To send a copy of this decision, together with copy of the reports that have bearing on this case (in as far as necessary also a copy of the reply of Dr. Schilder of March 8 and 9, 1944) to Prof. K. Schilder, the Curators of the Theol. School, the consistory of Rotterdam-Delftshaven, the classis Rotterdam, and the consistory of Kampen, and further to notify all the consistories of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands."

The vote of the Synod was 41 in favor, 5 against. Two members were absent. (*Verslag*, pp. 160-162).

The Synod was flooded with protests from the churches against this suspension. This in itself should have been sufficient to convince Synod that the alleged

public schism of Dr. Schilder was a debatable question, and could hardly be considered as falling under the category of the sins meant in Art. 80 of the Church Order. When one is accused of adultery or theft or habitual drunkenness, there may exist doubt as to whether the accused party is guilty, but there is no possible doubt as to guiltiness of the sin itself. But in this case it was quite different. The attitude and actions of Dr. Schilder were generally known. But the churches were not convinced that by these actions he had made himself guilty of public schism.

Besides, the protests were directed against the hierarchical action of Synod whereby it had suspended a minister of the Word, without even considering his consistency.

The Synod, however, maintained its decision over against all protests.

And in a closed session of Aug. 3, 1944, it finally deposed Dr. Schilder from office, both as professor at the Theol. School, and as emeritus-minister of Rotterdam-Delftshaven.

On similar grounds and in the same hierarchical way, Dr. S. Greydanus was suspended as emeritus-professor at Kampen, and as emeritus-minister of the church of Paesens.

Likewise, at a closed session of Aug. 18, 1944, the Synod suspended those elders of the church in Kampen, that openly refused to recognize the suspension of Dr. Schilder.

Other actions of a similar nature could be mentioned. But the above is quite sufficient to prove that the Synod of 1943-1945 took and maintained the hierarchical stand that it could directly exercise keypower over the churches, its officebearers and members. In fact, in the course of a discussion on the floor of the Synod, this was literally maintained by Dr. K. Dijk, professor at Kampen: "Also the Synod has keypower, and not only the local church." This is bad enough. The action of Synod, however, was worse, for it wholly ignored and denied the keypower of the local church, and completely monopolized the keys!

We conclude, therefore:

1. That we do not agree with the doctrinal decisions of the Synod of Sneek-Utrecht, nor with their modified form as adopted by the last special Synod.

2. That we still less agree with the stand of the Liberated Churches on the covenant. In following Heyns they leave the track of Reformed truth.

3. That we abhor the hierarchical stand and actions of the Synod of Utrecht, and would never bend our neck under their popish yoke.

In future issues we will discuss the rest of the doctrinal decisions of the Synod of Sneek-Utrecht, the Lord willing.

H. H.

As To Suffering

I received the following communication:

Dear Editor of the Standard Bearer,

In recent discussions with the brethren the question has arisen whether the "sufferings of this present time" have any spiritual value in the plan of God and as a means to our salvation and eternal glory?

To clarify the point, allow me to state the following:

1. Some passages of Scripture speak directly of suffering for Christ's sake, e.g. I Peter 2:19 ff.

2. Other passages speak of falling into divers temptations which serve to the trying of our faith as in James 1:2.

3. But (here is the point in question) does the Word of God allow us to speak of "the sufferings of this present time", by which I mean the sufferings *in this body*, such as physical pain, agony, anguish of heart, weeping, misery, distress, loneliness, grief, etc., as having spiritual value. Do the afflictions which are common to the body as such have value in this life and for the life to come? Although these are truly the consequences of sin which we must bear and are, in the life of the Christian, often closely connected with 1 and 2 above, they are not necessarily the direct result of the sufferings mentioned in 1 and 2 above. Do these also have spiritual value?

a. If so, what value and how?

b. May a Christian derive comfort from this suffering knowing that it will be to his eternal welfare and value?

c. May we speak of these sufferings as blessings and means of God enhancing the blessedness of our eternal salvation and glory?

d. May we unite these present sufferings of the body with those of soul as having relative value for our redemption in body and soul and, hence, speak of them thus to comfort the sick, afflicted, suffering and dying child of God when we as officebearers call on them to console them with God's Word?

I have broadened out slightly so as to clarify the point in question. There is a difference of opinion on this score, some maintaining that these sufferings as in 3 above have nothing at all to do with our spiritual welfare and have no spiritual value, but must be borne only as the natural consequence of sin. They maintain that only the suffering as stated in 1 and 2 above have value in God's plan to effect our welfare and salvation.

Will you please shed some light on this question in the Standard Bearer for which I thank you in advance.

Your brother in Christ,

H. A. Van Putten.

Holland, Mich.

ANSWER:

It is difficult for me to believe that there can be a dispute about the question as formulated above. That there are brethren who take the stand that suffering in general, apart from direct persecution for Christ's sake, has nothing to do with our spiritual condition, and with our eternal salvation, I can hardly conceive. As I write this answer to Mr. Van Putten's question, I have a vague notion that there is some element of misunderstanding between the brethren, and that the brethren that oppose him in this dispute can, probably, throw a different light on the matter. If so, I hope that they will clarify the situation by writing about it.

As the matter stands, I can only answer Mr. Van Putten's question by an unqualified affirmative: Yes, all the sufferings of this present time, both those that are inflicted upon us by the enemies of the cross of Christ, and those that come to us, not in the form of persecutions for Christ's sake, but directly from the hand of God.

And I suggest the following reasons:

1. One cannot so separate suffering in general from suffering for Christ's sake as is, evidently done in the above mentioned debate. They may be distinguished, of course. There are, indeed, afflictions that come to us through the agency of the hostile world, because the world lies in darkness, and we are children of light; because we are confessing believers, and Christ becomes manifest in us; because the anti-christian world requires that its subjects shall show the mark of the beast, and we refuse to receive it. And there are other sufferings, which we endure in common with the whole world: sickness, pain, sorrow, war, depression, death.

Yet, although they may be distinguished, they cannot be separated. In a higher sense, especially if we look at all things in a supralapsarian light, all the suffering the elect endure in this world is for Christ's sake, for God's glory's sake, and for their own eternal salvation's sake. If it had not been God's good pleasure to glorify Himself in the deep way of sin and grace, to make Christ His Son the firstborn of every creature, and that, too, as the firstbegotten of the dead, and to lead His elect in Christ on to the higher glory of His everlasting, heavenly tabernacle, sin and death would never have been. Now, however, we must be made perfect through suffering and death. There is no other way into the glory of the resurrection. Hence, we may say that all the suffering of this present time is for Christ's sake, and leads to glory. "Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world; or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all things are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." I Cor. 3:22, 23.

The other reasons must wait till the next issue, the Lord willing.

H. H.

The Idea Of Conscience In The Epistles Of Paul *

The subject assigned to me is of an exegetical nature. However, the purpose is not the exegesis of certain passages of Scripture, particularly of the Pauline epistles, but rather the arrival at certain synthetic conclusions with respect to the idea of the conscience as defined in these passages. We approach the passages that apply to our subject with certain definite questions in mind. What is the conscience? Is it a distinct faculty of the soul? Or is it rather a certain aspect of our consciousness? The distinction is usually made between sequent and antecedent conscience, the former passing judgment upon the action performed, the latter functioning before any moral action, and enjoining upon the will the right course of action in any given alternative. And the question arises: Is this distinction correct? Is the conscience according to Scripture, equivalent, in part at least, to Kant's categorical imperative? Do all men, heathen and Christians, have a conscience? Is the conscience infallible, and can one speak of an obligation always to follow the voice of conscience? What is a good or pure conscience, and what is its opposite? And to this might be added, perhaps, whether in the Christian there are two consciences, or, at least, whether his conscience at the same time accuses and condemns him, and justifies and approves him in the sight of God? Although, therefore, our task is largely exegetical, the purpose of our exegesis must needs be from the outset to find an answer to these and similar questions.

My subject limits the exegetical task to the Pauline epistles. Even though I am personally by no means sure that the epistle to the Hebrews was written by the great Apostle, I have included in the discussion that follows the passages in that epistle that are related to my subject. We must consider then, the following passages: Rom. 2:15; 9:1; 13:5; I Cor. 8:7, 10, 12; 10:25-29; II Cor. 1:12; 4:2; 5:11; I Tim. 1:5, 19; 3:9; 4:2; II Tim. 1:3; Heb. 9:9, 14; 10:2, 22; 13:18. It would, perhaps, be possible, to arrange these passages from the outset according to a definite classification, such as those that speak of the conscience in the

* Paper delivered at the Conference of Protestant Reformed ministers in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

heathen and in the Christian, those that speak of a good and of an evil conscience, and those that refer to the conscience of the weak and of the strong. However, without much fear of repetition we may follow the order in which they occur in the epistles. And it is in this order that we intend to discuss them.

The very first text to be considered, Rom. 2:15, is of great importance for our subject. I translate the passage as follows: "Such as show that they have the work of the law written in their hearts, for with this their conscience bears witness, and by this their judgments or considerations (toon logismoon) accuse or excuse them among one another." I would call attention to the following points of interest for our subject:

1. As the general relative *Hoitines*, that introduces this verse, shows, the text is an explanation and further proof of the fact, stated in the preceding verse, namely, that the heathen which have not the law *fusei ta tou nomou poioosin*, by nature do the things of the law. I understand the genitive *tou nomou* as a subjective genitive. *Ta tou nomou*, therefore, are the things which the law, wherever it exists and functions as a code of precepts, does. The law performs especially three things: it presents to the will of man that which is good and evil, it commands the will to choose the good and to reject the evil, and it judges the moral acts of man, either approving and promising life, or condemning and threatening death. These functions are performed by the heathen *fusei*, i.e. without any external code of precepts, without a verbally revealed law, by nature: their own natural mind and existence in conjunction with "nature" without them, creation, providence, history, and social interrelations.

2. By doing this, they show, according to vs. 15, that they have to *ergon tou nomou grapton en tais kardiais autoon*, they have the work of the law written in their hearts. This expression is, to an extent, epexegetical of *ta tou nomou poioosin fusei*. Also here I understand the genitive *tou nomou* as subjective genitive: *the ergon tou nomou* is the work which the law does. Only, the fact that they, the heathen, do by nature the things of the law, so that formally they act according to the law, distinguishing correctly between good and evil, formally giving preference to the good as an obligation, and judging themselves and others, is proof of the fact that they have this threefold groundwork of the law written in their hearts. The latter is the basis of the former, and is manifest (*endeiknuntai*) in the former. This ground work of the law, this basis of the threefold function of the law, is *grapton* in their hearts. The writing presupposes a Writer. And from the fact that the writing concerns the law, the work of the law, it follows that the Writer is none other than the Lawgiver, that is God. God, therefore, writes the work of the law in the

hearts of the Gentiles. The question arises: how does God accomplish this writing? And the answer to this question cannot be dubious in the general light of Scripture. This writing is God's own testimony, His witness, concerning Himself, His will and law, in the hearts of the Gentiles. And the witness of God always takes place by the Spirit and through the Logos. There is no witness of God without the Logos. And there is no inscription of this testimony of God without the Spirit. Since, therefore, the reference in the text is to the heathen, the inscription of the work of the law in their hearts must be attributed to the general testimony of the Spirit through the Logos in creation, "the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." John 1:9. "Because that which may be known of God (or is known) is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." Rom. 1:19, 20. It is evident, then, that this *grapton* in the hearts of the heathen is not to be conceived as a sort of mystical code that is once for all inscribed into their inner soul and consciousness, as the written law was engraved into tables of stone, but rather as the result of a continuous testimony of God in them, by His Spirit and through the Logos.

3. Now, this testimony of God in the hearts of the Gentiles is not itself their conscience, but is the basis, the *conditio sine qua non* of it. Without it there would be no conscience in the Gentiles. The conscience itself is the awareness, the consciousness on the part of the Gentiles of this handwriting of God in their hearts, and their inevitable agreement with it, and consent to it. This is evident from the phrase in the genitive absolute that follows: *sunmartuousees autoon tees suneideeseos*: with which their conscience bears witness. This phrase, and especially in this connection, is significant as far as our subject is concerned, because it throws light upon the meaning of the term *suneideesis*, and, it seems to me, gives a rather definite answer to the question concerning the subject referred to by the preposition *sun* in this *nomen compositum*. The noun *suneideesis* is derived from the verb *sunoida*, the perfect of *eidon*, with the infinitive *suneidenai*. The meaning, therefore, is "to know together with," "to be witness in conjunction with." The question, however, arises: to know together with whom? Does *suneideesis* denote *eidennai sun tini*, to know together with someone else, or *eidennai sun heautoo*, to know together with oneself? It is rather striking that in classic Greek the word seems to denote the latter: to know with oneself. This might be expected because of the consideration that the Gentiles did not acknowledge the

work of the law in their hearts as the writing of God. They simply knew the work of the law *fusei* by their own nature, that is, of themselves. (Hence, according to their conception, the conscience was a knowledge which they had with themselves a witness in conjunction with their own hearts. But, and again this might be expected, in Scripture this is different. There *suneideesis* denotes not a knowledge with oneself, but a knowledge together with the judgment and witness of God. This is evident from Rom. 2:15, particularly from the genitive absolute phrase we are now discussing. For the conscience is here said to *sunmarturein*, to witness together with. And there can be no doubt that the *sun* in this compound refers back to the immediately preceding, that is, to the work of the law written in the hearts. It is plain, then, that it is the function of the *suneideesis* to know together, to witness together with that testimony of God written in the hearts of the Gentiles. It is, therefore, an awareness, a knowing and agreeing with the judgment of God concerning our moral actions.

4. This presence of the work of the law written in their hearts is further manifest in the fact that in their judgments of one another they accuse or excuse one another. Thus we would explain the last phrase, another genitive absolute: *kai metaksu alleeloon toon logismoon kategorountoon ee kai apologoumenoon*. According to this interpretation *alleeloon* refers to the Gentiles, not to *logismoon*, and the meaning is, not that their thoughts or considerations accuse or excuse one another, in which case *metaksu* is rendered by the rather meaningless "meanwhile"; but that the Gentiles judge one another, the one accusing or excusing the other. This interpretation is based upon the consideration that *alleeloon* is here used in distinction from the preceding *autoon*, and that *metaksu* is evidently used, not as an adverb, but as a preposition with the genitive *alleeloon*.

Time, of course, forbids us to give an equally elaborate explanation of all the other passages in which the word conscience occurs. Nor is this necessary. For we may consider Rom. 2:15 the most important passage for a discussion of our entire subject. In the light of the preceding discussion we may even now establish the following conclusions:

1. That conscience is grounded in a constant divine judgment written in the hearts of men by the Spirit and through the Word concerning their moral actions. This judgment is, of course, true and infallible. It is, therefore, more than a mere "du sollst."

2. That conscience is the knowledge man has of the ethical character and value of his acts together with the judgment of God, that he cannot but agree with this divine judgment, and that, accordingly, he approves or condemns, not merely the act, but himself,

as the subject of the act. Conscience, therefore, is much more than Kant's categorical imperative.

3. That conscience is, strictly speaking, not antecedent, but always sequent, a judgment upon the act accomplished. It may, of course, precede the actual, outward deed. But an act of man is not limited to its outward expression: it rises from the heart. And to the ethical act of man, as arising from the heart, conscience is never antecedent.

Let us now, briefly, consider the other passages of the Pauline epistles that have bearing upon our subject, to discover whether they corroborate the conclusions reached thus far, as well as, whether they, perhaps, throw additional light upon the meaning of the concept conscience.

In the epistle to the Romans the word occurs twice more. First of all in the well-known text of Rom. 9:1: "I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost." We find here the same general truths we already discovered in Rom. 2:15. First of all, it is very evident that also here the conscience is presented as having its ground in a testimony of God, this time not the general witness of the creation-Logos, but of the Christ, wrought in the heart of the apostle Paul by the Spirit of Christ. This must be the meaning of "speaking the truth *en Christoo*," that is, in the sphere of Christ. His speech is determined by the revelation of Jesus Christ. And this is also the meaning of the emphatic addition: "I lie not, *sunmarturousees moi tees suneideeseos mou en Pneumati Hagioo*." The *sun* in *sunmarturousees* again is used with a view to the Holy Ghost in Christ, for *moi* is indirect object. The Spirit, therefore, in the sphere of Whom Paul speaks, passes judgment that he does not lie. Secondly, also here it is evident that the conscience is distinct from this judgment of the Spirit of Christ, is based upon it, and consists of awareness of it, and agreement with it. And lastly, also from this passage it is plain that the conscience is sequent, not antecedent: it is a judgment of the ethical character of his declaration that he lives in constant and profound sorrow because of the state of his brethren according to the flesh.

The other passage where the word conscience occurs in the epistle to the Romans is 13:5: "Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake." Only in a general way can we discover the same meaning of the word here, i.e. as a knowledge and moral judgment together with the judgment of God. The magistrate is a minister of God. Hence, he represents the divine judgment. For their conscience' sake, i.e. to keep their conscience free and pure, believers must, therefore, be subject to the higher powers. For if they are not, the judgment of God will

condemn them, and they will be conscious of this judgment, i.e. their conscience will become evil, impure, guilty.

Turning now to the first epistle to the Corinthians, we find that the term conscience is repeatedly used in chapter eight, and again in chapter ten. These passages are of interest to us, because they speak of a weak conscience and, by implication, of a strong conscience. In 8:7 the apostle, having spoken of meat sacrificed to idols as being no different from other meat for the simple reason that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is but one God, continues: "Howbeit, there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour (*suneideesei tou eidoolou heoos arti*) eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled." We may note here:

1. That a weak conscience is, evidently, a conscience that is not sufficiently enlightened by the gospel and liberated by the Word of truth. They that are in that condition have the conscience of an idol. The genitive *eidoolou* is a genitive objective with *suneideesei*. In their conscience they are aware of the idol, i.e. as a reality, as a real god, perhaps of a lower order than the Most High. In other words, although the Spirit of Christ certainly inscribes the judgment in their hearts through the gospel, that an idol is nothing, and that, therefore, it is no sin to eat meat sacrificed to idols, they do not clearly discern this judgment of God in Christ, because of lack of knowledge and the influence of their former heathenish instruction and life. To eat meat sacrificed to idols was, to them, to have fellowship with real false gods.

2. That, if in that state and for other reasons than the fear of God, those that have such a conscience of an idol eat meat sacrificed to idols, it is sin to them, and they defile their conscience by so doing, even though the thing itself is an *adiaphoron*. This is evident from vs. 10 in connection with the last part of vs. 7: "For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him that is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols?" And in vs. 7: "and their conscience being weak is defiled."

We learn here, that, although the judgment of God upon which the conscience is based is always true and infallible, the conscience may err, at least in regard to *adiaphoro*, through lack of knowledge. Through thorough instruction in the truth of the gospel the conscience, the Christian conscience may be and must be strengthened. In the meantime the strong must not become a stumbling-block to those that have a weak conscience, but must rather have respect thereunto. This is emphasized once more in I Cor. 10:25-29. The man with a strong conscience may eat whatsoever is

sold in the shambles, asking no question for conscience' sake, for the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof. Bidden to a feast, a believer with a strong conscience eats whatever is set before him, asking no questions for conscience' sake. For the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof. But if there should be present a man with a weak conscience, and that man should call his attention to the fact that the meat that is set before him was sacrificed to idols, he should refrain from eating for the sake of the other's conscience.

In the second epistle to the Corinthians we find three passages that speak of the conscience. The first is in ch. 1:12. Here the apostle speaks of his boasting or rejoicing (*kaucheesis*), consisting in the testimony of his conscience (*to marturion tes suneideeseos heemoon*) that in holiness and sincerity of God (*en hagioteeti kai eilikrinia tou Theou*) he walked in the world, and more abundantly so toward them, the Corinthians. There is no direct indication here as to the ground of this testimony of his conscience. Indirectly however, we may find it in the expression: in holiness and sincerity of God. The genitive *tou Theou* is a genitive of source. The holiness and sincerity of which he speaks, and in the sphere of which he walks, is from God. The testimony, therefore, that he walked in that sphere, is principally also from him. And his conscience witnesses together with the testimony of the Spirit of God. Thus his boasting and rejoicing in this testimony of his conscience is not in self, or in the flesh, but in God alone.

The second passage is II Cor. 4:2: "But we have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." The last phrase reads in the original: *sunistanonentes pros pasan suneideesin anthroopoon enoopia tou Theou*. We learn here: 1. That every man has a conscience, and that, moreover, every conscience is bound to respond to the manifestation of the truth. This is implied in the statement of the apostle that by the pure and unadulterated proclamation of the truth he commends himself to every conscience of men. 2. That every conscience of man must give positive testimony to the truth as truth. This is implied in the idea of commendation. Whether men receive the gospel or reject it, they are conscience bound to acknowledge the truth of it when it is proclaimed to them in its purity. 3. The reason is that the Spirit always witnesses that the Spirit is truth. Here, too, therefore, the testimony of men's consciences witnesses with the testimony of the Spirit through the gospel concerning the truth.

And the third passage is II Cor. 5:11: "Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord (*ton phobon tou Kurion*),

we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences." The apostle always seeks to be well-pleasing to the Lord, and labors in the consciousness of the impending judgment in which all must be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ. Hence, the fear of the Lord motivates him in all his labors. Of this fact he persuades men. That this is true is manifest to God, and he trusts that it may also be manifest in the consciences of the Corinthians, and that, too, in spite of and in opposition to the slander of his enemies. This confidence on the part of the apostle can only be based on the knowledge that the Spirit of God in Christ dwells and witnesses in the Church of Corinth. And as his godly and upright walk is manifest to God, he knows that the same divine testimony will operate in the believers of Corinth, and find response in their consciences.

(to be continued)

H. H.

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

Part Two.

Of Man's Redemption

LORD'S DAY XX

1.

The Spirit Of God.

Eternally, therefore, the Spirit searches the depths of God, and knows the mind of God. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." I Cor. 2:11.

Besides, also the work of creation is ascribed to this Spirit of God, as well as to the Father and to the Son. In the beginning "the Spirit moved upon the face of the waters." Gen. 1:2. And "by the Word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the Spirit (breath) of his mouth." Ps. 33:6. And as He is the Creator-Spirit, so it is also in the Spirit that all things are sustained and constantly quickened. For "Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth." Ps. 104:30. And that, with the Father and the Son, He is the Author of our salvation, "applying unto us that which we have in Christ," and filling the Church with spiritual gifts, the Word of God teaches us everywhere. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord

but by the Holy Ghost. Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues." I Cor. 12:3-10.

Moreover, the Spirit is described as possessing virtues that are distinctly divine. He is omnipresent: "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up to heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there." Ps. 138:7, 8. He is the omniscient, for He knows and searches the deep things of God, I Cor. 2:10, 11. He is eternal, for by the Spirit Christ offered Himself up to God without spot. Heb. 9:14. Hence, He receives divine honor. On a par with the Father and the Son, He is mentioned in the commission of Christ to the Church: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Matt. 28:19. And with the Father and the Son, He is the source and Author of blessing: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." II Cor. 13:13.

Indeed, the Holy Spirit is God, co-equal with the Father and the Son.

However, it is equally important, and, perhaps, more imperative that the personality of the Spirit is maintained and emphasized. For it is especially the distinct personality of the Holy Ghost that is denied by all forms of Unitarianism. And if His personality is denied, His essential Godhead cannot be maintained. The two stand or fall together. If the Spirit is not a person, then what is called Spirit in Holy Writ, either refers to the one God, one in essence and in person, in the sense in which Scripture teaches that God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth. John 4:24; or it simply refers to a power and effluence of God. If the Holy Spirit is not a distinct person, then He is not God, but merely a mode of divine revelation, or operation, or power, or gift; then, in fact, He is not at all!

And it would seem that the revelation we have in the Scriptures concerning the Holy Spirit, lends support to the view of the Spirit as merely a power of God, rather than a person. Both in the Old and in

the New Testament, the Spirit is presented as a gift to men. He is bestowed on men, rests on them, fills them with wisdom and knowledge, in a way that might leave the impression that He is an operation and power of God, rather than a person. Christ breathes on His disciples, and they receive the Holy Ghost. On the day of Pentecost, the promise is fulfilled that God will pour out of *His Spirit* upon all flesh; and they are all filled with the Holy Ghost. And the apostle Peter explains that the exalted and glorified Christ has "shed forth this that ye now see and hear." Acts 2:33. Even the apostles appear to have had the power to bestow the gift of the Holy Spirit on men, by the laying on of hands. What is more, it appears that the gift of the Holy Ghost is something that is received after a man has been regenerated, has repented, and come to faith. For the apostle proclaims on the day of Pentecost: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2:38. And again: "And we are witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him." Acts 5:32. And in Acts 8:14-17, we read: "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost." And in Acts 19:1-6: "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be an Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied."

Besides, it is argued, by those that deny the personality of the Spirit, that we never read in the Bible, that the Spirit is worshipped. The Father is the object of prayer; the Son, too, is addressed in worship; but the Holy Spirit never.

However, though these passages teach us that we must, indeed, distinguish between the Holy Ghost, as the third Person of the Holy Trinity, and as the Spirit of Christ; and that many passages of Scripture empha-

size the gifts that are bestowed by the Spirit rather than His personal subsistence; and even refer, by the term Holy Ghost, to the very special gifts that were bestowed on the early Church, such as the gift of tongues, the gift of healing, the gift of prophesying; yet, the fact remains that there can be no doubt at all that the Scriptures clearly speak of the Holy Ghost as a definite Person, subsisting with the Father and the Son in the divine essence. He thinks as a person, He wills as a person, He acts as a person. He searches the deep things of God, I Cor. 2:10; and knows them, I Cor. 2:11; he teaches the apostles to speak, I Cor. 2:13; He prays for the believers with groanings that cannot be uttered, Rom. 8:27; he leads them that are children of God, and witnesses with their spirit that they are sons, Rom. 8:14, 16; He is the Spirit of the Son, that cries Abba, Father, Gal. 4:6; He commands Philip to join himself to the chariot of the Ethiopian, Acts 8:29; and when the apostles want to go to Mysia, the Spirit "suffered them not," Acts 16:7; He leads Christ into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, Matt. 4:1; He gives life, II Cor. 3:6; and bears witness that the Spirit is truth, I John 5:6. And as to spiritual gifts, "all these worketh that one and self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." I Cor. 12:11. Moreover, He moves upon the face of the waters, Gen. 1:2; He strives with men, Gen. 6:3; and He sends the prophets and servants of Jehovah, Isa. 48:16; Ezek. 3:12.

All these passages, and many others, teach us plainly, that, like the Father and the Son, the Spirit, too, is a person, and not a mere power or effluence of God.

He is the third Person of the Holy Trinity.

Third He is, not in the sense that He is subordinate to the Father and to the Son, but in order.

For He is the Spirit, the *Ruach* of God, the *Pneuma*, *Spiritus*, wind, breath.

And this name does not denote His essence, for essentially, also the Father and the Son are spirit. God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. But the name Spirit, or Holy Ghost, denotes the third Person of the Trinity in His relation to the Father and to the Son. As a person He is Spirit. Just as the names Father and Son are expressive of the personal properties of the first and second Persons of the holy Trinity respectively, so the name Spirit denotes the personal property of the third Person.

He is spirited, breathed forth.

He proceeds from the Father and from the Son. Thus the Western Church defined and maintained the truth concerning the Holy Spirit in distinction from the Eastern, which repudiated the *filioque*, that is, the doctrine that the Spirit proceeds, not only from the Father, but also from the Son.

Direct and literal proof from Scripture, for this double procession of the Holy Spirit, can, probably, not be furnished. In fact, on the face of it, the text in John 15:26 would appear to favor the idea that He proceeds from the Father only: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me."

However, we may note, first of all, that He is called the Spirit of the Son in Gal. 4:6: "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." And there can be no doubt, that as the Spirit of the Son (He proceeds from Him. Moreover, although in the passage just quoted from Galatians it is said that *God sent* the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, this sending of the Spirit takes place through Christ. He sent Him unto us. John 15:26; 16:7. Besides, of this Spirit our Lord declares: "he shall testify of me"; and again: "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you." John 15:26; 16:14, 15. And, lastly, it may be pointed out, that in the indwelling Spirit, sent into our hearts, we have fellowship with the triune God: in the Spirit, through the Son, the Father makes our abode with us. "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." John 14:23.

Even though, therefore, one may not be able to find the literal expression that the Spirit proceeds from the Son, the general teaching of Holy Writ certainly sustains this doctrine.

From the Father He proceeds, as the Spirit of the Father, unto the Son; in order, through the Son, and as the Spirit of the Son, to return unto the Father.

In the Spirit the Father knows and loves the Son; and in the same Spirit, the Son knows and loves the Father; while in Himself, searching the deep things of God, the Spirit knows and loves the Father and the Son.

In the Spirit, the Father eternally says unto the Son: "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee"; and in the same Spirit, the Son cries eternally: Abba, Father!

Of the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit, the three Persons of the holy Trinity live an eternal life of friendship in infinite perfection.

He is our covenant God in Himself.

And when that Spirit is sent into our hearts, and makes our abode with us, it is in that Spirit that we, too, have covenant-fellowship with the living God, and that the word of our Lord is realized: "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." John 17:23.

H.H.

THROUGH THE AGES

The Calling of the Minister of The Gospel *

Christ gave to his Church key-power, that is, the right and duty to preach the gospel and to excommunicate out of the Christian church. The church, that is, the church as institute, is the only organization on the face of the earth that administers the word, preaches the Gospel, officially. There are other organizations and institutions, several of them, that make it their business to instruct men out of the Scriptures. Societies are formed for the purpose of the study of God's Word. And our Christians schools give courses in Bible study. And certainly there must be an open Bible in every home. But none of this labor is official preaching of the Gospel. God will bless this labor certainly, provided it is not labor done with a view to providing men with a substitute for the preaching of the Gospel by the church institute. If that be the aim, it is labor lost. It is the church as institution that officially preaches the Gospel. The church, however, exercises this right and duty not through any of and every one of its members but only through those whom Christ raises up, calls and qualifies for this work, to wit, the ministers of the Gospel. This is an article of faith with us. We declare, in the language of the Church Order, Article 3, that "no one, though he be a professor of theology, elder or deacon, shall be permitted to enter upon the ministry of the word and the sacraments without having been lawfully called thereto."

It is the calling of the ministers of the Gospel for which I ask your attention. In treating this subject, I arrange my materials under the following points:

The Calling Of The Minister Of The Gospel.

1. The Reality of it.
2. Its Essence.
3. The Means by which it is effected.
4. Its Author.
5. Its Significance.
6. Its Sign.

My subject, as I have formulated it, contains the term calling. This word, as I am using it, means not *occupation* but *summons*, and thus signifies, as a word-element in my theme, not the office of ministers of the

* Address delivered on the occasion of the graduation of Candidate James Howerzyl.

Gospel, and the duties that belong thereto as such, but the minister's *being called* to this office and its duties. This then is the matter with which we are now occupied.

Certainly, it must be a matter of common knowledge among us that the proposition to the effect that the minister of the Gospel is called of God is an article of faith contained in our official creeds. There is that clause in Art. 31 of the Belgic Confession, reading, "*Therefore every one must take heed not to intrude himself by indecent means, but is bound to wait till it please God to call him, that he may have testimony of his calling, and be certain and assured that it is of God.*" Here it is plainly stated that the minister of the Gospel is called of God. And the Form of the Ordination of ministers of God's Word, contains this question, which it puts to the minister, "*I ask thee whether thou feelest in thine heart that thou art lawfully called of God's church, and therefore of God Himself, to this holy ministry.*" And to this question the one being ordained replies, "*Yes, truly, with all my heart.*" And the concluding paragraph of the call-letter reads, "*Now dear reverend brother, may the King of the church so impress this call upon your heart and give you light, that you may arrive at a decision pleasing to him.*" Certainly the statement, "*May the King of the church so impress this call upon your heart,*" is equivalent in meaning to the statement that the minister of the Gospel is called of God.

That the minister of the Gospel is called of God is also, to be sure, the plain teaching of the Bible. This, too, certainly, is a matter of common knowledge among us. There is this text, "*And he gave some, apostles; some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some pastors and teachers—for the perfection of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ*" (Eph. 4:11, 12). According to this text, the ministers of the Gospel are Christ's gifts to His church, which must imply, certainly, that He calls His servants and qualifies them for the work of the ministry. Then, finally, there is this text from Paul's pen, "*And how shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach except they be sent?*" Sent by whom? By Christ, the Lord of the Church. So, then, according to the plain teachings of God's Word, the ministers of the Gospel are called of God.

Let us now attend to our first proposition: The minister's being called of God is an actuality. The minister of the Gospel, of today; that is, of the post-Apostolic Church, is as actually called of God as were the prophets and the apostles of the Scriptures. And they were called of God actually. Spake the Lord to Jeremiah, "*Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nation.*" And this is the word of the Lord unto

Ezekiel, "*Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee. . . . Son of man, I send thee unto the children of Israel. . . .*" Ezek. 2:1-3. God called Moses actually. The Lord appeared unto him and said to him, "*Come now, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt*". (Ex. 3:9, 10). The Lord called Samuel. Thus we read, "*And the Lord came and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. . . .*" The apostles were called of Christ actually. Who will deny it. "*Go ye therefore,*" said the resurrected Christ to them, "*and teach all nations. . . .*" (Matt. 28:20). Paul's calling was an actuality, was it not? He heard Christ's voice, "*I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.*" And the prophets and the apostles knew themselves as called of God. Samuel did, for he said, "*Speak, for thy servant heareth.*" Ezekiel did, for he said, "*And the Spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me.*" All the prophets knew that they were called of God and that Christ spake through them; for they invariably began their discourses with, "*Thus saith the Lord.*" The apostles knew themselves as called. In his epistles to the churches, Paul, for one, sets out with placing himself before God's people as a servant of Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God. I quote, "*Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God.*" And again at I Cor. 1:1, "*Paul called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, through the will of God.*"

Well now, the calling of the minister of the Gospel of today is just as actual as was the calling of Moses and Samuel and all the other prophets and apostles of the Scriptures. Also now, when God calls a man to the holy ministry He speaks to him as actually as he spake to Moses and Samuel, and the man hears Christ's voice as truly as did they. And this of necessity, if the man is actually called of God to the ministry of the Gospel.

I have heard this denied, by one who himself was a minister of the Gospel. And what is worse, he was not a modernist preacher, but a man of supposedly reformed persuasion. He said this to me, "*It is nonsense to say that we ministers are called of God. I for one never heard the call. With just as good a conscience, I could have become a lawyer, or a doctor, or a farmer as a minister of the Gospel. I selected this profession, because of its greater appeal. But as for me being called of God, I know nothing of that.*" And yet, when, on the day of his ordination, the church put to him the question, "*Dost thou feel in thy heart that thou art lawfully called of God's church and therefore of God Himself to this holy ministry,*" he, too, replied, "*Yes, truly, with all my heart.*"

Let me ask, Why should not a minister of the

Gospel of today be called of God as actually as Moses and Samuel, and all the other prophets and apostles of the Scriptures were called of God? Can it be that after the death of the last apostle God ceased to speak to His people and to communicate to them His will? It cannot be. The fact of the matter is that God continued to speak to His people through the past ages of this dispensation to the present and that He will continue to speak to His people everlastingly. Through Christ in the Spirit of Christ, He calls His people irresistibly out of the world into His sanctuary; testifies with their spirits that they are the sons of God; tells them that they are forgiven; that they are His heirs and co-heirs of Christ, and that by virtue thereof they possess all things. And with this testimony in their hearts, they rejoice in Him their God and Saviour, and walk and talk with the Lord. Well, now, if there is this intimate intercourse of God with His people, should it be considered strange, that God calls His servants—the ministers of the Gospel—to the work of the ministry as truly as Moses and Samuel were called to this ministry? How shall a man preach, if he be not called? How shall he have the right to preach, if he be not called of God? How shall he have the ability to preach, if he be not called of God. How shall he have the faintest desire to preach—to preach the Christ of the Scriptures—if he is not called of God?

But let there be no misunderstanding. In saying that the common ministers of the post-apostolic age are called of God as actually as Moses and Samuel were called of God, I am not placing the common ministers in the Christian church in a class with the prophets and the apostles of the Scriptures. The latter, too, were ministers of the Gospel; however their ministry formed a very special office in the church. The function of their office is known from the statement that the church is built upon the foundation of the prophets and the apostles. Thus their task was to lay the foundation of the church universal, which they did through their infallible doctrine. With the death of the last apostle, their function ceased, and with it the office of the apostles; and the Canon of the Scriptures was closed. Thus, the common ministers in the Christian church are not successors of the apostles. The latter could have no successors. It means that the common ministers of the Gospel together with all God's people are seated at the feet of the prophets and the apostles of the Scriptures, whom the church now possesses in the Scriptures, that Christ through them prepared for His church. There is then this difference between the prophets and the apostles of the Scriptures and the common ministers in the Christian church. But certainly the latter are called of God as actually as were the former called of God to the holy ministry.

2. Let us then, in the second place, consider the essence of this calling. Just what forms the essence of being called of God to the holy ministry? The question is answered at I Cor. 9:16. It is Paul speaking here. He says, "*For necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel.*" Here we have the answer to the question, what forms the essence of being called of God to the holy ministry. It is this *necessity, obligation*, as laid upon the one called, so that he feels in his heart that he *must* preach the Gospel. There never yet lived a man, actually called of God to the holy ministry, who did not say, and say continually, "I must preach; necessity is laid upon me; woe is unto me, if I do not preach the Gospel." A man is not called of God to the holy ministry, because *he* desires and wills to preach the gospel, because in a pious moment *he* promised God to dedicate his life to the work of the ministry; but the fact is that in the sight of God a man is a minister of the Gospel because he *must be* in that he feels in his heart that this necessity is laid upon him. For what says Paul there at I Cor. 9:16. Let us quote the apostle a little more fully, "*For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have reward, but if against my will, a dispensation is given unto me.*" How strangely the apostle speaks here doesn't he? "*If against my will I preach the gospel, a dispensation is given unto me.*" This reasoning of Paul loses for us its strangeness, the moment we discern its meaning. A good paraphrase of this Scripture is the following, "If I, Paul, do this thing willingly, preach God's Gospel because I so choose, desire, will, decree, and not because I *must* in that necessity is laid upon me; if, in a word, I am minister of the Gospel by *my* will instead of by the will of God, God is under obligation to me, and I have reward. But—says the apostle—such is not the case. I have no choice in the matter. I *must* preach God's Gospel, because Christ laid this necessity upon me; and because—the apostle means to say—Christ, who redeemed me from all my sin by His blood, and thereby made me His own, qualifies me, sustains me, and constrains me by His love in my heart, to obey that necessity, laid upon me by him. Hence, I have nothing to glory of."

In a word, Paul is a minister of the Gospel, not because *he* willed to be, but because he *had* to be. The fact of the matter is that *Paul* was unwilling. "If against my will, a dispensation is given unto me". What man is willing to preach God's Gospel? I speak now not of unbelievers but of believers. Was Moses willing to be a minister of the Gospel? When the Lord eventually came to him and by His command laid necessity on Moses, he resisted. He said to the Lord, "*Behold, they will not believe me.*" And again.

"O, my Lord, I am not eloquent. . . . but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue." And finally, "O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send." So persistently unwilling was Moses that finally the anger of the Lord was kindled against him. Some time after that, when Pharaoh increased the burdens and in consequence thereof the people bewailed their lot in his ears, he wanted to know why the Lord had sent him. Some time after that, when the people went to loathing the manna and to crying for flesh, Moses, driven to distraction by their wailing, prayed the Lord to kill him out of the land.

There was a time when Moses was willing. In fact he was that willing that the Lord couldn't use him. That was the time he went forth and slew that Egyptian. He was in the prime of life then, ambitious, full of courage, and impatient.

A man is a minister of the Gospel not because *he* wants to be but because he must be. Necessity is laid upon him. The essence of being called of God is that necessity and the grace to obey it. And this necessity is laid upon a man. It thus springs not from a promise on the part of a man to preach God's Gospel; for if so the man is called not of God but of himself; this necessity springs from an objective command imposed upon a man by one who has the authority to command him; and that one is none other than Christ. For the *Gospel* is God's Gospel; and Christ is the head over all things in the church and the Lord of that man on whom He lays that necessity.

This brings us to our third point, namely, the means by which this calling is effected. This means is a voice—a voice coming to a man, calling him and exhorting him and commanding him to preach God's Gospel; and that voice comes to him, as it came to Moses, from out of the burning bush; that is, from out of the bosom of the afflicted church of God in the world. And that voice—the voice of the church—prays and commands, and admonishes the man called of God. "Come over and help us," says the voice to him, and further, "Take heed therefore, beloved brother, and fellow servant in Christ, unto thyself and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made thee overseer, to feed the church of God which He had purchased, with His own blood; love Christ and feed His sheep, taking the oversight of them not by constraint, but willingly; not by filthy lucre, but by a ready mind, neither being Lord over God's heritage, but as an example to the flock. Be an example to all believers, in word and in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all; take heed to the doctrine, and continue steadfast therein. Bear patiently all suffering, and oppression, as a

good soldier of Jesus Christ, for in doing this thou shalt save thyself and them that hear thee. And when the chief shepherd shall appear, thou shalt receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." So speaketh the voice that comes to a man called of God, comes to him from out of the burning bush, Christ's church in affliction.

Assuredly, it is the voice of the church; for as you perceived, I was quoting here from the Form of Ordination of ministers of the Gospel. But consider that the church is not the author of that voice. The author of that voice is Christ. And here is the proof.

1. Consider in the first place that this voice commands a man to preach God's Gospel. The church apart from Christ cannot issue this command. It has neither the right nor the power. For the Gospel is God's Gospel. And apart from Christ the Church is non-existent. Therefore the voice must be that of Christ, the vicar of God and the Lord of the church and the life of God's people.

2. Secondly, consider those commands and exhortations that the church addresses to the man whom she ordains. From whence are these commands and exhortations? All of them, without exception, are taken from the Scriptures of God, so that, in commanding and exhorting a man called of God, the church directs to him God's very own words, and this under the constraint of a faith gendered in her by Christ's Spirit and under the impulse of a love shed abroad in her heart by her God, and with a mind and a will that bear the impress of Christ's image, and with a heart upon whose tables He inscribes His law. Verily, the voice is Christ's.

3. Thirdly, let us consider that after His resurrection and ascension, Christ does all His proclaiming through the voice of His church. It is through the voice of the church that He proclaims all His Gospel to all His creatures. It could be expected therefore that by the voice of the church He should also call His servants to the holy ministry, proclaim to them the commands by which He lays upon them the necessity of preaching God's Gospel. Indeed, it should have to be considered strange, if Christ, passing by and completely ignoring His church, had continued to call His servants by His own personal voice, coming to them directly from His throne in heaven.

4. Fourthly, the commands and exhortations and words of blessing that the church directs to the man whom she ordains impress themselves upon his mind and will; they grip his soul and bind themselves upon his heart; they raise him up, sustain him, comfort him, give him utterance, so that he boldly opens his mouth to proclaim the mysteries of the Gospel in season and out of season, and though reviled and persecuted by unprincipled men on account of God's Gospel. The only possible explanation of this is that the voice of the

church is the voice of Christ. By those commands, exhortations, and words of blessing as voiced by the church and proclaimed by her to the man whom she ordains, Christ exhorts, commands and blesses the man and thereby calls him irresistibly to the holy ministry not certainly once and for all on the day of his ordination but continually though all the days of his life as long as He has use of the man in His church here below.

(to be continued)

G. M. O.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

Ichabod

The Philistines fought, "and Israel—so we saw—was smitten, and they fled every man to his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. And the ark of God was taken: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain." So had the Lord made a beginning of performing against Eli all things which He had spoken concerning his house (chap. 3:12). What the sacred writer relates in the immediate sequel shows that Eli, however deserving of punishment on account of his failure to restrain his wicked sons, was nevertheless, in the heart of his dispositions a man who truly feared the Lord. We read, "And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army and came to Shiloh." He came with grievous tidings, as was indicated by his rent clothes and the earth upon his head. And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the way watching. The Hebrew text reads here, "And he came, and behold, Eli sat upon *the* seat by the side of the way looking out." As appears from verse 18, the way by which Eli sat led by the side of the gate of the tabernacle. Here he sat in *his* seat; that is, in a seat that he only was wont to occupy. The Hebrew word translated seat in our version is *throne*, and it appears with the article and thus implies something of an official dignity. On that way Eli was looking out intently, forgetful of all about him, in intense expectation of a messenger with tidings. Such is the thought conveyed in the piel part. of the original text. "For Eli's heart was trembling" not primarily for his sons and for the army of Israel, but "for the ark of God." Under the pressure brought to bear upon him by the Elders of Israel, he had let the ark go from its dwelling-place into the camp without the command of God. "And when the man came into the

city, and told it. . . ." Heb., "And the man came to tell it in the city. . . ." Fleeing from the scene of battle, the man (messenger) had not without intent strayed into Shiloh; he had resolutely pursued the way that led to this city intent on reporting to Eli, he being the highpriest and as such the highest official in Israel. The view that the messenger had purposed to divulge the terrible news first to Eli is in harmony with the notice, "And the man came in hastily and told Eli". Heb., "And the man hastened, and he came and told Eli." That he had not arrived sooner was due to his having been prevented against his will by anxious inquirers among the people, who had interrogated him on the way about the outcome of the battle. As soon as he could free himself, he hastened to Eli. The report of the messenger had spread with lightning rapidity, and created a great emotion. "The whole city cried." "And Eli heard the voice of the cry and he said, What meaneth the voice of the tumult." For his heart trembled for the ark of God. Presently the messenger stood before him with rent clothes and with a head strown with earth. But these tokens of grief could make no impression on Eli; for he "was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim (Heb., his eyes stood; that is, were set), that he could not see". His eyes were "set" from feebleness of the optic nerve. It is the description of the motionless appearance of the eyes, quenched by senile weakness. But the process of blinding was not completed; his eyes still had a glimmer of light. For according to 3:2, "his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see." And according to 4:13, he sat by the way looking out.

Eli being partially blind, the messenger had to introduce himself, which he did in these words, "I am the one that came out of the army, and I fled today out of the army." The expression "I am the one who came" (a correct translation of the qal active part. with the article) indicates that it had already been told Eli that a messenger had arrived from the battle field with tidings; but he was still ignorant of the full truth. Having learned that the man who stood before him was that messenger, Eli said, "What is there done, my son?" Heb., "What is the thing or matter, my son?" The messenger replied in four short sentences, each a blow, the last of which crushed the aged priest, "Israel is fled before the Philistines, and also there hath been a great slaughter among the people, and also thy two sons Hophni and Phinehas are dead, and the ark of God is taken." The double "and also" indicates the excitement with which these words were spoken. It is expressly remarked that the news of the capture of the ark by the Philistines led to Eli's death. That was the death-blow. "And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side

of the gate, and his neck brake and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy." It shows that the fear of God was deeply rooted in his soul. Yet there is the question just why the loss of the ark of God was a shock to him so great as to render him insensible so that he fell from his seat? Was Eli, too, worshipping the ark and was he shocked into insensibility by the loss of an idol? He should not be accused of this. At 4:3 we read, "And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, if ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you. . . ." There is no statement occurring in the narrative to indicate that Eli served idols. This was not his sin. His guilt was that he was unwilling to take action against wicked priests who desecrated the sacrifices. Besides, an idolater, being a rational being, does not truly believe in the existence of his idol and could not therefore be so evilly affected by the tidings of its capture as to fall insensible to the ground. The Philistines ascribed their victory over the Israelites to Dagon; therefore they brought the ark as a thank-offering to his temple. But in the crisis of the battle, they cried not to Dagon to deliver them but relied solely on their own arm—the arm of flesh—to save them. Eli's great grief was caused by his interpretation of the capture of the ark of God. The ark was Jehovah's throne; it was the symbol of the covenant and the chief instrument of its working. To Eli therefore, its capture by the heathen betokened that the Lord had cast off and departed from His people. That was his great grief undoubtedly. Thus, though the manner of his death was terrible in that it bore the mark of divine judgment, he nevertheless died in the fear of the Lord.

The narrative of the events that led to Eli's death is followed by the sad story of his daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas. She was "with child to bear. And she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken and that her father-in-law and husband were dead. And she bowed herself and gave birth to a son; for her pains turned upon her." It is not explicitly stated that her pains came prematurely on account of her being so violently effected by the evil tidings; yet this is the thought conveyed by the order of the clauses in the narrative. She was with child. She heard the evil tidings and travailed. These events are actively related.

The child having been borne, the mother lay on the brink of death, slain by a great sorrow. The word of the midwife—the woman appointed over her, "Fear not, a son thou hast borne," was calculated to revive her soul by arousing the mother's love in her heart. But the word failed of its aim. She gave no answer. She turned not her eyes to the speaker. Her soul was occupied with the loss of the ark. When her thoughts did turn to her child, it was only to whisper the name

by which she would have it called, "Ichabod," meaning *not-glory*. Why should the child be named Ichabod? The woman appointed over her—the midwife—must come close to hear her reply, for she was dying, "The glory is departed from Israel; for the ark of God is taken." These were her last words.

This woman, like Eli her father-in-law, feared the Lord. The wife of a deeply corrupted man, she was not one with him in spirit. She loved the Lord and kept His covenant. Let us therefore try to understand her grief. The ark of God with the law and the mercy-seat was for the true Israel the throne of grace and as such the visible pledge of the covenant which the Lord had made with His people. As enthroned above the ark He sat as Israel's God and dwelt in the midst of His people. Thus the capture of the ark seemed to declare that the Lord had abandoned His throne and annulled His covenant; that, in a word, the glory of Israel was gone into captivity indeed. The glory of Israel is the glorious Jehovah as the fountain of all the glory, honor, and true beauty that was found in Israel. And the Lord was now in captivity. The God-fearing in Israel were as perplexed and as troubled as were the disciples in the hour of Christ's crucifixion. It is plain from the psalms that the capture of the ark must be regarded as a type of the humiliation of Christ.

G. M. O.

SION'S ZANGEN

Wondere Veiligheid

(Psalm 91; Eerste Deel)

Het eerste vers van een psalm geeft ons vaak in een paar woorden de inhoud van den geheelen psalm. Zoo vindt ge het, bij voorbeeld, in psalm 73: Ja, waarlijk, God is Israel goed! En de psalm is een commentaar op die woorden. Zoo ook hier: Die in de schuilplaats des Allerhoogsten is gezeten, die zal vernachten in de schaduw des Almachtigen. Psalm 91 zal ons dit vers verklaren.

Wat in het eerste lid van dit vers staat is reden voor hetgeen ons wordt veroorzaakt door Uw zitten in de schuilplaats des Allerhoogsten. Het eerste lid is oorzaak voor het tweede.

In het Engelsch staat: "abide", verblijven, doch de idee is zuiverder uitgedrukt in de Hollandsche vertaling. Het is "vernachten".

De nacht is beeldspraak van het kwade, het gevaarlijke, het bange. Nacht en storm behooren bij

elkaar. En dan is storm het waaien van de toornende orkanen Gods.

Paulus zegt van den mensch: De nacht is voorbij gegaan en de dag is nabij gekomen. Laat ons dan afleggen de werken der duisternis en aandoen de wapenen des lichts. Laat ons als in den dag eerbaar wandelen. Dat zegt hij in den brief aan de Romeinen; en in Thess. 5:5 zegt hij: Gij zijt allen kinderen des lichts en kinderen des dags, wij zijn niet des nachts noch der duisternis.

Ik denk dat het U wel duidelijk zal zijn nu, wat de tekst beteekent. Vernachten wil zeggen, dat ge de vreeselijken nacht van zonde, schuld en verdoemenis doorkomt.

En wat een nacht!

O, ik weet het wel, dat ik onzin spreek voor allen die geestelijk blind zijn. Die spreken van "verlichting", van de "verlichte eeuw", en meer van die dingen. Die denken, dat de wereld al beter wordt; en alhoewel ze moeten toestemmen, dat het menschenlijke ras er nog niet is, toch zien ze uit naar den vollen dag van licht en verlichting, van heerlijkheid en schoonheid. Het koninkrijk van vrede des menschen zal geen einde hebben.

Wat een droombeeld!

Het tegenovergestelde is waar. Het is nacht, stikdonkere nacht op 't heden. Er heerscht een dikke duisternis in deze wereld.

Dat was eerst niet zoo. Eerst was het licht en scheen de zon den ganschen dag. De ethische zon van kennis, gerechtigheid en heiligheid in het heerlijke paradijs. De mensch zag waar hij aan toe was. Hij kende God en was zalig; hij deed gerechtigheid en jubelde van geluk; hij was heilig in denken, spreken en handelen en hij zag God vanuit een heilig, rein hart. Het was de volle dag.

Doch nadat de zonde haar intrede deed in de wereld, gleed er een akelige schaduw vanuit de hel over dit zonnige tafereel. Het werd nacht. Dat wil zeggen, alles wat de mensch deed was verkeerd. Dat is zijn nacht, allereerst. De aarde werd vervuld met wrevel. Men haatte elkaar en men haatte ook God.

Daar kwam dit bij: de orkanen van den toorn Gods loeiden en stormden. De nacht en de storm behooren bij elkaar. God stormt van den hemel.

Ziedaar Uw wereld van vandaag. Het is nacht, want men steelt, rooft, vloekt, haat en verderft alles. En het stormt want de toorn Gods is geopenbaard van den hemel. Daarom eischt Stalin hardelijk en Molotov brengt zijn harde eischen over. Daarom wordt Engeland kwaad en knarsetandt Amerika. Daarom is er overal onrust, onzekerheid, bangigheid, vreeze en sidderen der volkeren. Het is veel donkerder nu dan eeuwen geleden. Het is stikdonker.

Temidden van dien stikdonkeren nacht verkeert ook Christen.

En als men hem toeroept vanuit de wereld: Wachter! Wachter! Wat is er van den nacht? Dan antwoordt hij: De morgenstond is wel gekomen, doch het is nog steeds nacht! En dat is waar. De morgenstond is gekomen: dat is Jezus Christus. Hij is het inbegrip van alles wat licht en dag is. Zijn naam is Lukas: Opgang uit de hoogte! Hij is niet alleen of slechts Licht, Hij is het schoonste Licht wat ooit geopenbaard is. Hij is schooner Licht dan straalde in den vroegen morgen van de historie. Hij is het hart van God. Ziet ge, alles wat God is en doet is goed, maar er is verschil. Jezus Christus is het lieflijkste van wat God ooit ons getoond heeft. Mooier, heerlijker, schooner kan het niet.

Nu dan, Christen komt dien nacht door. Hij vernacht. Hij zal den vollen dag zeker zien en begroeten. Dat wordt ons in dit eerste vers gezegd. Terwijl de wereld zich al maar en steeds erger verderft, komt hij den nacht door.

En gij doet dat in de schaduw des Almachtigen.

De Almachtige is God, hier vanuit het oogpunt van die deugt Gods, waardoor Hij alles kan doen wat Hem behaagt. Almacht is niet, dat God alles doen kan. Want dat kan Hij niet. God kan niet liegen. God kan geen raad tegelijkertijd rechts en links laten draaien, want dat is liegen. Almacht is, dat Hij alles kan doen wat Hij gaarne wil. Zoo is er geen bepaling van die deugd. Zij is zoo groot als God is.

En Christen vernacht, komt den nacht van zonde, schuld en verdoemenis door, in de schaduw van dien Almachtigen God.

Dat hij in de schaduw van God zit, wil zeggen, dat hij dicht bij God verkeert. Als iemand zijn schaduw zoo dicht bij U is, dat ge in die schaduw kan verkeerren, dan is hij zeer dicht bij U. En dat wordt ons hier geleerd. De Almachtige God is dicht bij Christen en zóó komt hij door den nacht heen.

En de reden is, omdat hij zit in de schuilplaats des Allerhoogsten.

Het woord, dat vertaald is door "schuilplaats" wordt wel honderdmaal gebruikt in de Heilige Schrift. In psalm 25 heet het de "verborgenheid des Heeren"; in psalm 27 wordt dit woord gebruikt waar in 't Hollandsch staat: " 't verborgene van Zijn tent". Het is een woord, dat ook gebruikt wordt voor het heilige der heiligen. En dat is dan ook de gedachte hier.

Zitten in de schuilplaats des Allerhoogsten beteekent, dat men opgenomen is in het verbond der genade. Het heilige der heiligen was daar type van. In dat Heilige der heiligen woonde God immers met Zijn volk?

En dat is reden van de veiligheid van Christen. Want daar gaat het over in dezen psalm.

Die plaats, in het heiligdom, is verworven door den Heere Jezus Christus. En als het U gegeven is om daar te zitten, komt ge zeker den nacht van zonde en

verdoemenis door. Want Jezus heeft dien nacht voor U doorgestaan.

Daar zit Christen, want hij komt er nooit weer uit. Daar woont hij met God in den Heere Jezus Christus.

Die gedachte wordt verder uitgewerkt in den psalm.

Omdat Christen zoo veilig is, zegt hij verder: Ik zal tot den Heere zeggen: Mijne Toevlucht en mijn Burg, mijn God op wien ik vertrouw!

Ik zal tot den Heere zeggen! Heerlijk voornemen. Let hier toch op: daarin hebt ge juist het onderscheid tusschen hen die God vreezen en die Hem niet kennen. De eersten zeggen: Ik ga naar God heen; ik ga Hem zoeken, zelfs bij 't kriecken van den dageraad. Ze zoeken Hem vroeg; en daarom vinden ze Hem ook. En de laatsten zeggen dat nooit. O, ze mogen de woorden uiten, doch ik bedoel een zeggen, dat waar is. De Heilige Schrift gaat ons daarin voor, want de Heilige Geest zegt: Niemand kan zeggen: HEERE JEZUS! dan door den Heiligen Geest. De goddeloozen zijn bang van God, haten Hem en willen nooit naar Hem toe. Hoe verder God zich van hen houdt, hoe beter.

Ik zal tot den Heere zeggen! Daarin hebt ge het beginsel des hemels. Ik verzeker U dat ge die hunkering nooit zult verliezen. Tot in alle eeuwigheid zult ge tot Uzelf zeggen: Ik ga het den Heere zeggen. En het hunkerend zeggen is hetzelfde als doen; ge zult het doen tot in alle eeuwigheid.

En de inhoud van Uw boodschap is: Mijne Toevlucht, mijn Berg, mijn God, ik vertrouw op U!

En ge moogt er hier tusschen twee haakjes wel bijvoegen: en hier was en is het God om te doen! De Heere verlustigt Zich juist in het zeggen van Zijn volk. Hij heeft er schik in als gij tot Uzelf zegt: Ik ga naar den Heere om Hem te vertellen wat ik van Hem denk! De Heere verlustigt Zich in het gebed van Zijn volk. Hij bemint "de stem des roependen".

Mijn Toevlucht en mijn Burg! Wat juiste vertolking van den Naam des Heeren nu in den nacht.

Hij is onze Toevlucht. Want er zijn vijanden die op ons loeren. Er zijn duivelen en die door duivelen bezeten zijn. Er is een volk dat er altijd op uit is om Gods volk te plagen, te dooden den ganschen dag. En dan gaat dat volk naar God heen. En dan is God hun tot een Toevlucht. En beschermt Hij hen.

En als ze zoo bij God aankomen, tot Hem gevlucht zijn, dan is Hij hun ook een Burg. Dat wil zeggen, dat ze veilig zijn in God. God heeft Zijn armen om hen heen gestrengeld en "Hij liet geen mensch toe hen te onderdrukken". En dat is waar ook al branden de brandstapels van het vuur dat gestookt wordt onder en voor Gods volk; dat is waar al druipen de slachbanken van het bloed van Gods volk. Ook dan is het waar, dat zij veilig zijn. Ook dan is het waar, dat zij omstrengeld worden door Gods armen. Al staat ge op het schavot en wordt gemarteld en ten finale ver-

moord door de goddeloozen, dan is het nog heel passend om te zingen: Veilig in Jezus' armen!

Om dat te verstaan, moet ge weten en gelooven, dat er verschil is tusschen vleesch en geest, tusschen Christen naar het vleesch en Christen naar den nieuwen mensch. Naar het vleesch wordt ge wel onderdrukt, doch naar den nieuwen mensch wordt ge nooit onderdrukt. God zegt immers, dat Hij niet toegelaten heeft, dat iemand Zijn volk onderdrukte? En dat is ons genoeg. Ook zal de ondervinding het U leeren, dat dagen van vleeschelijke smart, goede dagen zijn voor de ziel en het hart, dat wederomgeboren en bekeerd is. In de grootste smarten blijven onze harten in den Heer gerust. Dat is een feit. Ook weet het mijn ziel zeer wel. Ik heb het bij ondervinding.

En dat komt, onderwerpelijk, omdat ik door Gods genade op Hem vertrouw. Vertrouwen is bouwen op God. Ge laat het aan Hem over.

Uw triumfkreet is: Hij zal het maken!

Klinkt het U niet bekend in de ooren? Dat komt hier vandaan: Zoo leidt God Zijn volk altijd. Opdat die roeme, roeme in den Heere!

G. V.

IN HIS FEAR

Call it a digression if you will, but the contributor of the next few articles for this department intends to use the allotted space for a brief discussion of our Form for the Baptism of Infants, as we find it in our Psalters.

An apology for this digression is hardly required. The Form itself is significant and rich enough to warrant a discussion at any available opportunity. The subject matter is always of fundamental importance, and is especially timely today while a new interest is being aroused by the discussion of this subject both in the Netherlands and in our own country. And though it may not entirely comply with the nature of this department, a discussion of this kind can serve the practical purpose of enriching for us the significance of our own baptism and the baptism of the covenant seed of the church, as well as reminding us anew of our covenant obligations resulting from this baptism.

The Form for infant baptism is but one of the many forms that we use in our public worship as the occasion requires. Accompanying this part of the form is another for the baptism of adults. Besides, we have a form for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, for the confirmation of marriage, for ex-

communication and for the readmitting of excommunicated persons, for the ordination of ministers, of elders and deacons, of professors and of missionaries.

All these serve a very definite purpose within the church. They serve to instruct the church in the significance of her various institutions, in order to help her in keeping them according to the mandate of Scripture. The Baptism Form treats the significance of baptism and the necessity of infant baptism, and directs the church in the proper administration of it. The forms for ordination of office bearers discuss the significance of the office and lead the ordination in its proper channels.

But the forms do also more than that. They serve to unite the churches that have these forms on a common basis of faith and confession. In that sense they are confessions as well as the well-known Three Forms of Unity. With this difference, that in these forms the church confesses her faith in regard to the rites that she is called to keep, whether it be baptism, the confirmation of marriage, the ordination of office bearers, et cetera.

Thus they also serve to preserve the truth as confessed in these Forms for the generations to come. They are witnesses of the truth overagainst all heresy that seeks to undermine it. The very fact that they have been used for more than three hundred years, and are still accepted as the standards of the church, shows that they are time-tried bulwarks of truth, capable of preserving it for the future. A church that understands and cherishes her forms will not readily depart from the truth that is confessed in them.

That does not mean that our forms are beyond all criticism. This would only spell a stagnation for the church. Nor does it mean that they can be placed on a par with Scripture as an appendix to it. Scripture is the infallible Word of God, our confessions are the work of men. Scripture lays down the fundamental truths, our confessions draw their formulation of these truths from Scripture. Yet even in this the church of the past has been so guided by the Holy Spirit that she was able to formulate these truths as she saw them in the form of a confession.

Of the various forms we possess the Baptism Form is by no means the least important. And that for various reasons. In the first place, it deals with one of the most fundamental truths of Scripture, which is the peculiar heritage entrusted to the Reformed churches, namely, the truth of God's covenant. That truth is as fundamental to our Reformed faith as the doctrine of God's sovereignty, and therefore worthy of serious study. Secondly, the truth of God's covenant, and with it the sacrament of infant baptism have always required a staunch defence overagainst

the foes that have continually assailed them. This is as true today as it has ever been in the past, for the opposition is as keen and bitter as ever before, even within the stronghold of Reformed persuasion. Possibly their greatest enemy is the error of the free-will that forces its way into the Reformed churches. It is a matter of either-or; either you hold the truth of God's covenant throughout, or you deny it by introducing the error of the free-will. The two cannot live together under the same roof, for the one annuls the other. And, finally, the Baptism Form is important because of its practical value. If the sacrament of baptism is to mean anything to us, and our baptism is to have positive value for us, we must understand their significance. In this a serious study of our Form can greatly aid us, for it is compact, yet complete; simple, yet to the point; doctrinal, yet at the same time deeply spiritual and practical.

Biesterveld informs us in "Het Gereformeerd Kerkboek", that our present form for infant baptism is a composite of various other forms existing in the churches of the Reformation at that time. The first section, up to the prayer, is said to be taken from the forms of Calvin and Micronius. The prayer was adopted from the form of Zurich. The questions to the parents were composed by Datheen, who made use of the questions from the form of a Lasco, from which also the thanksgiving was borrowed. Various synods from 1578-1586 advised the use of the form in the public worship, and the Synod of Dordrecht, 1618-19, made a few revisions before it became the finished product as we now know it.

For convenience the Form can be divided as follows:

- I. A brief discussion of the significance of baptism. This is again divided into three parts:
 - A. Baptism as a sign of our entrance into God's covenant through regeneration.
 - B. Baptism as a seal of the establishment of God's covenant with us.
 - C. The fruit of baptism for those sealed.
- II. A discussion of the necessity of infant baptism, pointing to the Scriptural basis for it.
 - A. A defence of infant baptism overagainst those who deny it.
 - B. The basis for it.
- III. The ritual for baptism.
 - A. The prayer.
 - B. The address to the parents, including the questions to be affirmed.

C. The ritual proper, as given in Scripture.

D. The concluding thanksgiving.

The Form starts out by saying, "The principle parts of the doctrine of baptism are these three. . . ."

Although it speaks of the "doctrine" of baptism, we note at once that the church is speaking, and is giving expression to her faith in regard to the sacrament of baptism as that faith lives in her heart. She draws from her own christian experience as it is based on the Word of God. She confesses that "we and our children are conceived and born in sin, and therefore are children of wrath, in so much that we cannot enter into the kingdom of God, except we are born again." To that she adds that "God. . . . makes an eternal covenant of grace with us, adopts us for children and heirs, washes us in His blood from all our sins, and sanctifies us to be members of Christ, daily renewing our lives. . . ." And, finally, she speaks of a new obedience that is worked in us by the Holy Spirit, namely, "that we cleave to this one God. . . . trust in Him, love Him with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our mind, and with all our strength; that we forsake the world, crucify our old nature, and walk in a new and holy life." We immediately recognize the three well-known parts of our Heidelberg Catechism; a confession of our misery, our deliverance and our gratitude; all of which is signified and sealed to the believer by holy baptism.

The first paragraph reads: "First, that we with our children are conceived and born in sin, and therefore are children of wrath, in so much that we cannot enter into the kingdom of God, except we are born again. This the dipping in, or sprinkling with water teaches us, whereby the impurity of our souls is signified, and we admonished to loathe and humble ourselves before God, and seek for our purification without ourselves."

Here baptism is called a sign which signifies the impurity of our souls and our need for purification outside of ourselves.

Very plainly the fathers immediately set out to oppose the Roman Catholic conception of the sacrament, as if the grace of God were inherently present in, and transfered to us through the channel of the sacrament. In that case the value of baptism would lie in receiving the water itself, so that the Catholics are always eager to baptize the child as soon as possible after birth to be sure to transfer this grace to it. The danger of that error is not altogether foreign to our Reformed circles, especially among those who speak of a certain "baptismal grace" which the child receives at the time of its baptism. The form emphasizes that the water is symbolical, a *sign*.

Yet, if we would call it a mere sign we would fail

to do justice to the sacrament. There are many signs in nature and in our daily lives, which are by no means sacraments. Jesus says that all things "happen in parables", that those to whom it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven may both see and understand. A sower goes out to sow, wheat and tares spring up and mature in the same field, the wind blows where it listeth. These are so many signs, as also the vine, the olive tree and the oak, the lion, the lamb and the eagle, the sun, moon and stars in the heavens, the grass and the flowers of the field, the evening and the dawn of each day. But these are not yet sacraments, for sacraments are *holy signs*, which differ from all other signs because they are instituted by God to be administered and kept by the church to strengthen the faith of the believers. (The word 'sacrament' means 'holy sign'). Both baptism and the Lord's Supper were thus instituted by God. The latter, the Lord's Supper, was instituted when Christ celebrated His last passover with His disciples in the night of the betrayal. Matt. 26:26-29. The former, baptism, was instituted when Christ sent His disciples out to preach the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, with the instructions to baptize those who believed. Matt. 28:28. Both of these had been instituted in another form in the old dispensation, for the Lord's Supper came in the place of the passover, and baptism came in the place of circumcision.

And because they are holy signs through the institution of God, they are also seals, sealing to us the promise of God which comes to us through His Word.

C. H.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

1921 — 1946

On June 15, the Lord willing, our parents,

JOHN KNOTT

and

MARTHA KNOTT nee STAP

hope to celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary. We extend to them our hearty congratulations, and, thankful that God has spared them for each other and for us, pray that they may have many more years together.

Edward J.

Harold G.

Robert

Kenneth J.

Grand Rapids, Michigan

Open house will be held at 602 Alexander St., S. E., June 22, from 7:00 to 10:00 P. M.

PERISCOPE

The Northern Baptist Convention:

Several thousand delegates and guests met in Grand Rapids, Michigan, to attend the Northern Baptist Convention, from May 21 to May 26. The sessions were held in the large Civic Auditorium, which has a seating capacity of over 5000. Among the distinguished guests who were to address this assembly was the Hon. Harold E. Stassen, former governor of Minnesota, but who was compelled to cancel this speaking engagement because of the national railroad strike. The president of this large church Convention was a woman, a certain Mrs. Leslie E. Swain of Craigville, Massachusetts. It is indeed a sad commentary on the church when an entire denomination is presided over by a woman. There have indeed been times in the history of the church when women played a predominant role, just think of Deborah in the days of the judges, but this was usually the case when the church found itself in a very sad state of affairs. In this the Northern Baptist churches, according to reports, does not prove to be an exception.

A House Divided Against Itself:

The Northern Baptist Convention is composed of Liberals, (Modernists) so-called Neutrals, and Fundamentalists. It appears from the reports that the liberals, or modernists, are far in the majority. The conservatives are outnumbered approximately 4 to 1. Due to the fact that the denomination is so steeped in modernism and unbelief, the conservatives have formed a Baptist Foreign Missionary Society of their own, having their own missionaries who are supported by contributions from churches in its membership, who have withdrawn all but a small fraction of their support from the denomination and its agencies. This has caused the convention to seek the adoption of an amendment to give a church representation according to the proportion of its contributions to the unified budget of the convention. If only one fourth of its total gifts went to the unified budget it would have only one-fourth the representation it would be entitled to if all its gifts went to the unified budget. Apart from the issues involved we principally agree with the report of the committee which is as follows: "It has been brought to the attention of this committee that certain churches which have recently withdrawn all but a small fraction of their support from the convention and its agencies are planning to send large delegations to Grand Rapids in an apparent effort to control the convention. Such tactics

should have no place in Christian fellowship. Constructive criticism should be, and is, welcomed, but it should come from those within who are supporting this work, not from those who have withdrawn from an organization and seek to discredit it by outside attack." It is morally and ethically wrong of this conservative element to withdraw their financial support from the convention and its agencies, as long as they are its members. If they are convinced that the majority of the church has departed from the truth and are not worthy of their support, they should have the courage of their convictions and come out from among them and be separate.

Compromise Adopted On Faith Test:

It has been said that one cannot 'split' a rotten rail, neither can one split a church that is thoroughly corrupt. Thus also the Northern convention, instead of coming to a definite split, the two parties have come to an abominable compromise, in which they have officially rejected the Old Testament as the divinely inspired record of the Word of God. In her opening speech "The State of the Family" the president Mrs. Leslie E. Swain said among other things, "We are faced with a decision as to what is most important—our differences or our similarities. If we choose the former we shall destroy much in which we claim to believe. If we choose the latter we shall be acting like mature Christians who are willing to face responsibility." The area of agreement was finally reached in the adoption of a compromise resolution reaffirming their faith in the New Testament as the divinely inspired record, which implies that the Old Testament was officially rejected. That this reaffirmation of faith in the New Testament, as the divinely inspired record, was mere sham and mockery, is evident from the fact that a resolution requiring "that all secretaries and missionaries of agencies of the convention be not employed unless they affirmed their faith in the incarnation of Christ as stated in Matthew, Mark and John is to be considered true and trustworthy: That the record of the miracles of Jesus are true and trustworthy, and that the New Testament doctrines are obligatory in Christian faith and practice", was lost by a large majority, according to a report in the Grand Rapids Press. Indeed the Northern Baptist Convention presented us with a sad caricature of the Church of Jesus Christ.

* * * *

FAMINE IS LIKE THIS:

Under the above heading, in the Readers Digest of April, a certain John Frederick Muehl, formerly of the Royal Army Medical Corps; now a student of law at the University of Michigan, describes his im-

pressions of the great Bengal famine of 1943-1944, as he experienced them during a week's stay at Calcutta. During the first evening of his stay, Calcutta seemed unbelievable, in comparison with the Burma front, which he had left by plane, just three hours before. There was soap and hot water for bathing. There was Firpo's Restaurant, and several hotels, "each with its special assortment of steaks and chops, pastries and ice cream."

But he was soon to discover that Calcutta was also a city of hunger and death. He says, "For those who lived in its sprawling native sections, for the beggars and untouchables, who walked the streets endlessly, there was no rice or millet. For them there was only the bare sidewalks, where they begged for food, where they rubbed their swollen bodies and crawled after the affluent sahibs, where at last they lay dead in the gutter, awaiting the lorries that would come and take them away to the burning yards." Everywhere rice was dear, but human life was cheap. He continues, "For the bloated dogs of Calcutta this was a time of feasting. They roamed the streets, picking at human flesh and carrying human bones. They attacked the freshly dead as soon as resistance ceased. More than once I saw a dog fighting with an hysterical woman for possession of her husband's body."

He also describes the indifference of the 'better class' and better fed populous, to this awful spectacle of human suffering. Inquiring of a major officer in charge of a Famine Relief Station, where the dead were being counted in the rear, while the living were being tempted, with a single bag of rice for thousands of starving souls, he received this frank answer; "You can't stop a famine with a few bags of rice, you know. But the Stations serve a double purpose: just the chance for a handful of rice will attract those who are close to collapse, and even if we're unable to feed them, it makes the bodies much easier to collect."

Seeking to direct the conversation toward the famine, at a certain club where a group of women were gathered, a member of the circle exploded, "Look here, young man! This famine is causing us enough trouble already. On the streets we're clawed at and jabbered to, and in our homes we are virtually besieged. My garbage can has been rifled twice within the week, and just last Monday the Club discovered that nearly half its ducks had been stolen right off the lagoons. You are apparently a stranger, so we can forgive you, but this subject is tiresome and unwelcome to us all."

City officials continually received complaints from prominent citizens whose yards and driveways had not been cleared of the dead bodies. Among the complaints was one from a Christian Mission, threatening court action if its grounds were not cleared. The writer observes that this indifference to human misery and

suffering during a famine is a cost, even greater than the lives that are lost. "The human mind," thus the writer continues, 'can adjust to almost anything, but I never realized how great that adjustment can be till the day in Calcutta when I found myself eating a candy-bar, disinterestedly watching a woman die.'

The writer concludes his article by warning us that in our modern world the millions who have plenty to eat are not much further away from the millions who are starving, than these above mentioned society women were from the starving thousands in the streets of Calcutta.

* * * *

SHAMEFUL INDIFFERENCE:

In close connection with the foregoing article we were struck by a paragraph of the address of the president of the Northern Baptist Convention, in which she describes the shameful indifference of a great share of our populous over against the starving millions of the world. The extract, according to the Grand Rapids Press, reads as follows: "The other day we were told that half of the people, at a news reel UNRRA presentation of the famine needs of the world, by Fiorello LaGuardia, laughed uproarously. Granted that the former mayor of New York is sometimes amusingly vociferous in his statements, it is a tragic commentary on our pseudo-Christian civilization when sleek, overfed people can hear of millions of people dying of hunger and not weep."

A sad commentary indeed upon our human race, and sadder still upon our so-called Christian civilization. It is a startling revelation of our human depravity. Man by nature is a selfish brute, and constantly manifests the Cain's spirit, "Am I my brother's keeper?" This spirit is also manifested when we complain of the relatively small sacrifices we are called upon to make, in order that some of our abundance of food and grain may be shipped to the starving millions of the world.

B. K.

IN MEMORIAM

The Lord in His infinite wisdom and love suddenly called to Himself our brother and elder,

HENRY BRUNSTING

May the Lord comfort his wife and son, and direct our hearts into the love of God and into the patient waiting for Christ.
Congregation of Bellflower, California.