

# THE STANDARD

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## MEDITATION

### Coming To The Throne Of Grace

*For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

*Heb. 4:15, 16.*

All important exhortation!

Let us come boldly, that is, with perfect confidence that we shall be received, to the throne of grace!

And to this coming with boldness we are encouraged, first of all, by the very fact that the throne unto which we are exhorted to come is a throne of grace; and, secondly, by the knowledge that, in the sanctuary, where this throne of grace is established, we have a high priest that was in all points tempted as we are, and Who, because of this, can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

Moreover, it is strictly necessary that we heed this exhortation.

Let us notice that this exhortation is final, occupies the last place in a series of admonitions, and must be regarded as the indispensable condition for all the other exhortations, and that, unless it is fulfilled, we cannot possibly give heed to the admonitions that precede.

There is a rest that remaineth for the people of God, the rest of God's everlasting covenant, the rest from sin and corruption and death, and unto righteousness, light, and fellowship with God. And into that rest we must constantly labor to enter. We must strive to "love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our mind, and with all our soul, and with all

our strength." We must labor to "crucify our old nature, and to walk in a new and holy life."

Moreover, we must "hold fast our profession." With our flesh always tempting us to depart from our profession, in the midst of a world that is opposed to that profession, we are exhorted to maintain, to cling to the profession that Jesus is Lord, and to realize that profession in all our life and walk in the world.

And all this we will never be able to accomplish in our own strength.

To heed these exhortations we are in need of mercy, and of "grace to help in time of need."

This mercy, and this "grace to help in time of need" can be obtained only at the throne of grace.

Let us, therefore, come boldly!

The throne of grace!

How beautiful is the concept conveyed to our mind by this expression!

The term must not be interpreted as referring to the throne of Christ, as some explain it; neither as simply meaning "the throne on which grace reigns", as others would have it, but indicates the throne of God, and therefore, His absolute sovereignty, as it is characterized, and motivated by grace.

God sits upon His throne

And also this, we understand, is a figurative expression, for how could we ever know God, or understand anything about Him, except in figures and symbols? That He is enthroned in glory simply denotes His sole and universal and absolute sovereignty. He is the Lord. He is the Creator of the heavens and of the earth, Who calls the things that are not as if they were, and Who made all things according to His sovereign counsel and good pleasure. He is, therefore, the sole Proprietor of all things: the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein. And His alone is the prerogative to do with them all according to His good pleasure; and no one dare say to Him: "what doest Thou?"

Moreover, He is the sole Lawgiver, Who alone is above the law, and Whose will is the sole criterion for every creature; the only Judge, Who executes judgment in righteousness and equity. And He governs all things, upholding them by the Word of His power, and directing them, individually and as a whole, to the end he ordained and purposed in Himself before the foundation of the world, so that no creature moves, and nothing betides but by His will.

God's throne. . . .

That is, God in His glorious majesty, His undisputed sovereignty, His absolute authority and universal power, His holiness, and righteousness, and truth.

But this throne of the only Sovereign of heaven and earth is a throne of grace!

Glorious truth!

For what else does it signify than this that in Him authority and love, holiness and lovingkindness, righteousness and grace, justice and mercy, are united in perfect and most blessed harmony?

Grace has different connotations in Holy Writ, and we need not call attention to them all in this connection. Let it suffice to say that here it refers to that attitude and disposition of favor in God that shines upon us through the face of Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son our Lord. He is the revelation of the God of our salvation. In the face of Him, Who is God of God, Light of Light, Who is eternally in the bosom of the Father, Who reached down to us as the arm of the Lord, united Himself with us, assumed our flesh and blood, tabernacled among us, lay down His life on Calvary, was raised on the third day, and exalted above the heavens at the right hand of the Majesty on high, —in Him we behold the face of the Sovereign of heaven and earth beaming upon us in everlasting grace, the Potentate of potentates as our Father in heaven, the Creator of all as our Redeemer. . . .

The throne of grace!

It means that He purposed all things, that He created all things, that He governs all things, that He directs all things, that He judges all things, motivated by His grace over us in Christ Jesus.

It means that the Lord of all is our covenant-Friend!

Our Father in heaven!

It means that the revelation of His face fills us, to be sure, with awe and holy fear, because of His majesty, but now with the reverence of childlike love and confidence.

Let us come boldly to the throne of grace!

Let us come, that is, not merely in prayer; not, at least, if by prayer is meant an occasional approach to that throne of grace, in order then to return again and draw back into the night of our own existence, into the darkness and gloom and hopelessness of our death;

though all our coming to this throne of grace, to this Fount of all life and blessing, is essentially an act of prayer. But rather, let us come, that is, let us enter into His fellowship; let us approach to the God of our salvation with our whole being, with all our mind, and heart, and soul, and strength, to worship and adore, to praise and to serve Him that sitteth upon the throne; let us come to Him as the overflowing Fount of all good, to drink from that Fount to the satisfaction of our souls, to taste His marvellous mercy and grace, and to know that the Lord is good. Let us come, not to depart again, never to withdraw again into our own night, but to abide in His tabernacle all the days of our life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.

Let us come!

That spiritual act of coming to the throne of grace implies, first of all, a profound consciousness and acknowledgement of our own emptiness, of our sin and death, of our need of grace and mercy.

It implies, secondly, the spiritual apprehension of His fulness, of the riches of righteousness and life, of blessedness and glory, that are in Him as He stands revealed to us in all the beauty of His grace in the face of Christ Jesus.

It signifies, thirdly, a deep longing for His fellowship, a thirsting after God as the hart, escaped from the chase, thirsts after streams of living water.

And it means, finally, that with confidence of faith, we appropriate all the spiritual blessings revealed unto us, promised us, by the symbol of that throne of grace.

Let us come boldly!

Not, indeed, with a boldness that is devoid of holy fear, for the throne of grace is still a *throne*, and that, too, the throne of the most high Majesty in the heavens; nor with a carnal confidence that is based on our own worthiness, for God resisteth the proud, while He giveth grace to the lowly; but solely with a confidence that is inspired only by that throne of grace.

The boldness of faith.

The confidence that, for Christ's sake, He that sitteth upon the throne will not cast me off, but receive me, even though all things testify against me.

Blessed throne of grace!

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Seek, and ye shall find!

Ask, and it shall be given you; knock, and it shall be opened unto you!

Come boldly to the throne of grace, pray without ceasing, let your whole life be an approach to that marvellous throne, that you may obtain mercy, and grace to help in time of need; and mercy and grace you shall surely find and receive.

For him that comes to Him He will in no wise cast out.

Mercy and grace you will find.

They are closely related, yet they may be distinguished, and are distinguished in the text. Mercy is God's will to bless, to bestow bliss upon us in His fellowship, to render us blessed even as He is blessed. It means that God is filled with holy, eternal longing to lead His children into the glory of His everlasting tabernacle. With a view to our present state of sin and death, it denotes that virtue in God, that disposition of the divine heart to usward, according to which He longs to deliver us from the misery of our sin into the state of perfect righteousness, to raise us out of the deep darkness of our death and alienation from Him to the glory of eternal life, and to the heavenly fellowship of His everlasting tabernacle with men. And grace is the power by which all this is accomplished, the marvellous power whereby He redeems us, bestows upon us the forgiveness of sins and perfect righteousness, makes us partakers of the adoption of children, regenerates us, and calls us out of darkness into his marvellous light, gives us faith, and hope, and confidence, and love, and all the riches of grace in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Come boldly to the throne of grace to obtain mercy, and to find grace to help in time of need.

Ever come!

Constantly approach that throne of grace!

For always you are in need of mercy, and constantly you need grace to help.

Mercy and grace are not gifts that are once bestowed upon you, say in the moment of your regeneration, and that ever since you possess in yourselves, apart from the God of your salvation: they are a constant stream that flows into your soul from its source, the throne of grace. They are rather to be compared to the golden glory of light that radiates from the sun, and in whose brightness you may rejoice as long as you remain in the sphere of its radiation, but which you cannot take with you into the darkness of a mountain cave. Not for a moment can you withdraw yourselves from the throne of grace, without forfeiting the blessings of mercy and grace as far as your consciousness of them is concerned.

Hence, the time of need is now.

It is an ever present time.

Mercy and grace you need today and tomorrow, and forevermore.

Besides, you need grace to help, to help in time of need, that is now and constantly.

Help you need that you may daily enter into God's rest, that you may put off the old, and put on the new man, that you may put on the whole armor of God, fight the good fight of faith, and be able to stand in the evil day; help to hold fast your profession, not to

be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, nor to be seduced by the pleasures and treasures of Egypt, nor to be intimidated by the fury of the powers of darkness.

And your only help is in God's grace.

Without Him you can do nothing.

Now is the time of need; now you must obtain grace.

Come, then, always come, to the throne of grace.

That you may obtain mercy, and grace to help.

In time of need.

Be not afraid!

Approach with confidence, and let not even your infirmities induce you to stay far from that throne of grace.

For, as you approach that throne, you are met, in the sanctuary of God, by a High Priest that is over the whole house of God, that intercedes with Him that sitteth upon the throne, and that is able to sympathize with all your infirmities.

O, they are many, but He knows them. They include all our present sufferings and death, of soul and body, of mind and spirit; they are our trials and temptations in the world, our tribulations which we suffer for Christ's sake, as we hold fast our profession; they include our temptations from within, through the sinfulness of our flesh; and from without, through the seducing influence of the world; our weaknesses, our sins, our inclination to stumble in the way.

He, our High Priest, Who intercedes for us with the Father, is able to sympathize with them all.

He is acquainted with the weakness of our flesh, for He came in the likeness of sinful flesh, though without sin. He knows all our suffering and all our temptations, for He was tempted in all things even as we are, though in all His temptations He never once stumbled. He knows what it is to be utterly amazed at the justice and wrath of God against sin, and at the presence of His holiness, for He bore it all upon the tree, and entered into our death and hell. He knows by experience what it means to be tempted by the wicked machinations of evil men, for He endured all the contradictions of sinners against Himself. Never is your path of suffering and temptation so deep, but you find there the imprint of His feet.

And He has the right and the power to sympathize with your infirmities, and to obtain mercy and help for you in time of need.

Fear not! Look upon your sympathizing high priest!

And come to the throne of grace, boldly!

Your reception is assured!

H. H.

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EDITOR: — Rev. H. Hoeksema.

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

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

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## EDITORIALS

## Three Points And Four

The reader will remember that, besides the question concerning the covenant of grace, there were several other points of doctrinal controversy concerning which the Netherland Synod of Utrecht, 1942, expressed itself. They were the questions concerning common grace, self-examination, the two natures of Christ, and the immortality of the soul. There also was a controversy about the multiformity of the church. On this, however, Synod did not formulate any declaration.

Thus far we only discussed the declaration on the subject of the covenant of grace. We gave this first place because it is on this point of doctrine that the present schism occurred. The other decisions of the Synod are hardly mentioned in the old country.

To us, however, the other declarations are of interest also, and we are, of course, especially interested in the decisions concerning common grace. We will, therefore, now take up this question, and compare what the Synod of Utrecht had to say about it with the "Three Points" of 1924 that have become the official doctrine of the Christian Reformed Church(es).

We remember that the problem of so-called common grace concerns both our conception of God and that of man, more particularly that of God's grace to all men, and of the goodness of the natural man.

Concerning the matter of God's grace to all men, the Christian Reformed Synod of 1924 expressed itself as follows:

"Regarding the first point, touching the favorable attitude of God toward mankind in general and not only toward the elect, synod declares that, according to Scriptures and the Confession, it is established that besides the saving grace of God shown only to the elect unto eternal life, there is also a certain favor or grace of God which He shows to His creatures in general. This is evident from the Scripture passages quoted and from the Canons of Dordt, II, 5 and III, IV, 8, 9, where the general offer of the gospel is set forth; while it is evident from the citations made from Reformed writers belonging to the most flourishing period of Reformed theology that our fathers from of old maintained this view."

On this point we find the following in the decisions of Utrecht:

"1. That God (who, immediately after the fall, began to gather His Church, which He delivers from sin, death, and the curse), even though His wrath is revealed over all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men

(Rom. 1:18), yet does not bring upon the fallen world, in this dispensation, the full punishment of sin; but, while He bears her in His longsuffering, causes His sun to rise over the evil and the good, and does good from heaven to the whole of mankind. (Matt. 5:45; Acts 14:17);”

Then, after the Synod adopted two declarations that concern the condition of natural man, it declared:

“4. That in this God shows to (or bestows upon) the evil and the good, the righteous and the unrighteous, unbounden goodness, which among us is denoted by the name ‘general grace’ or ‘common grace’, but which must be well distinguished from saving grace to them whom the Father gave to Christ.”

The declarations of 1924 by the synod of Kalamazoo and of 1942 by the synod of Utrecht have this in common that they attempted to express that God is gracious to the wicked reprobate. This is the implication of the term “common grace”. There is a grace of God which the wicked have in common with the righteous, the reprobate with the elect. This is very plain from the original report of the committee of pre-advice on this matter that advised the synod of Kalamazoo. According to their report, it must be regarded as established “that God is graciously disposed and shows grace to them whom Scripture stamps as ‘ungodly’ and ‘unrighteous’, in whom, of course, the reprobate also are included.” We do not know in how far the synod of Utrecht consciously faced this problem, but we may well assume, as being in the nature of the case, that they, too, attempted to declare something about the same matter.

In view of this fact, it is striking that the terminology in the conclusions of both synods is rather ambiguous and vague. Those that were present at the sessions of the synod of Kalamazoo well know what debate and wrangling was caused by the proposition of the committee that God is gracious to the reprobate. In the final conclusion the expression was dropped. Instead, the synod adopted the formulation of the final substitute motion “that there is, beside the saving grace shown only to the elect unto eternal life, also a certain favor of grace of God which He shows to His creatures in general.” In the meantime, in the introductory phrase of the first point, the expression occurs: “touching the favorable disposition of God toward mankind in general, and not only toward the elect”; and in the closing sentences the proof from the Confessions and from Scripture, offered by the committee originally, is maintained. Although, therefore, superficially considered it might appear rather harmless to accept that God is gracious “to His creatures in general,” the real meaning and danger of the first point must be found in its head and tail. The synod labored under the difficulty of giving a Reformed ap-

pearance to an Arminian doctrine. Hence, the ambiguity.

But the same ambiguity characterizes the conclusions of the Synod of Utrecht 1942. In fact, we receive the impression that they felt the difficulty more keenly than the synod of Kalamazoo, and that they were still more careful to find a formulation that would appear to be in harmony with Reformed truth. Notice the following: 1. They do not speak at all of a grace, or favor, or a gracious disposition of God to the reprobate, or to mankind in general. 2. They are careful to remind us that God’s wrath is revealed over all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. 3. They declare that God does not yet bring upon the fallen world the full punishment of sin. 4. They speak of it that God bears the fallen world in His longsuffering, an expression which is itself ambiguous. 5. And in their main statement they do no more than literally refer to Scripture: God causes His sun to rise over the evil and the good, and does good from heaven to the whole of mankind. 6. In the fourth point, they declare that God shows unbounden (*ongehouden*) goodness to the evil and the good, but still they will not be responsible for the terms “general grace” and “common grace”.

All this is rather vague and ambiguous. It leaves many questions, too many for a synodical decision that is supposed to be binding upon a whole group of churches.

What, for instance, is the relation between the wrath of God that is revealed over *all* ungodliness and unrighteousness of men and the “longsuffering” and “unbounden goodness” of which the synod speaks. Surely, the wrath of God of which Rom. 1:18 speaks is revealed in *this world*, in the things of this present time, in God’s dealings with men here and now. It is, moreover, revealed over *all* ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. And if we read the rest of the first chapter of the Romans, we learn that it is revealed in a most dreadful way: God gives the wicked over from foolishness to greater folly, from corruption to deeper corruption. Where, then, does His “unbounden goodness” come in?

Again, what does the synod mean by the statement that God does not yet bring the full punishment of sin upon the fallen world? Does it merely imply that the *final* judgment is not yet revealed? Does it simply mean to express the platitude that the world is not yet in hell? Or is the meaning that, in this present time, God does not judge and execute a just judgment according to the measure and character of the present dispensation? If the former, the synod expressed a mere commonplace truth. If the latter, the synod should have confronted the problem how this is to be brought in harmony with the teaching of Scripture

that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven over all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

And what does the synod mean by "longsuffering"? Perhaps, it had in mind the idea of "forbearance". But they are not the same. God is longsuffering over His people, in love. He is forbearing with respect to the wicked, in wrath. If the synod meant the latter, it should have used the term "forbearance", in a declaration that is supposed to be binding upon the churches. In that case, however, there is no favor or grace or goodness in the term. If the synod took the term in its specific sense, however, as a revelation of God's love, it could not, in the light of Scripture, use it with respect to the wicked.

Finally, what does synod mean when it declares that God shows unbounden goodness to the evil and the good? Does it mean merely that he bestows good gifts and talents upon all men, and thereby does not leave Himself without witness, showing that He is good? Or does it refer to a favorable disposition in God toward the wicked as well as toward the righteous?

The synod of Utrecht certainly offered no solution of the problem of common grace, and came to no definite conclusion. The problem as a whole they did not even see, or, at least, they avoided it. And this is all the more striking in view of the fact that they could have profited by what had been developed in respect to this question in the course of the controversy in America about this matter; and in view of the fact also that they had been studying the problem since the synod of Amsterdam in 1936.

There is, however, also a striking difference between the conclusions of the synod of Utrecht, 1942, and those of Kalamazoo 1924.

The synod of Kalamazoo made a desperate attempt to prove that God's grace toward "His creatures in general", and His favorable disposition toward mankind in general, is taught in the Reformed Confessions. Desperate, I say, because this question is not even touched upon in the Confessions. The synod of Utrecht, however, did not even make this attempt. There is, with respect to this particular point, not a single reference to the Confessions in the decisions of Utrecht 1942.

And this led to an important difference in doctrinal contents between the declarations of Kalamazoo and those of Utrecht.

The former, in trying to base its "favorable disposition of God toward mankind in general" on the Confessions, fell into the serious error of the Arminian view that the preaching of the gospel is grace, on the part of God, to all that hear it. God's gracious disposition toward the reprobate is manifest in the well-

meaning offer of salvation to all. This is the very heart of the "First Point". And although the theologians of the Netherlands were well acquainted with the "First Point", and also clearly understood that this grace of God toward the reprobate in the well-meaning offer is the chief point of controversy between the Christian Reformed Church(es) and us, they did not follow their sister church in this respect, but confined themselves to God's manifestation of "unbounden goodness" in the things of this world.

Silence, in this case, therefore, virtually amounts to repudiation.

H. H.

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## THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

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### An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

Part Two.

Of Man's Redemption

Lord's Day XXI

2.

The Election Of The Church (cont.)

The supralapsarians conceived of the order of the various elements in God's counsel thus, that the decree of predestination *precedes* those of creation and the fall; God determined to glorify Himself in some whom He ordained unto eternal life, and in others whom He predestined to eternal perdition; He decreed to do so in the way of sin and grace: the fall; He decreed to create. The decrees of creation and the fall serve, in God's counsel, the decree of predestination.

Hence, the name supralapsarians: those who conceive of the decree of predestination as *above* or *before* the decrees concerning the fall and creation.

To the infralapsarians this conception was too hard. They, therefore, taught that the order of the various decrees in God's eternal counsel is to be conceived as similar to the order of their realization in history: God determined to create, to permit the fall, and to choose out of the fallen race some unto eternal life, while leaving others in their sin. Hence, the order is: creation, the fall, election.

They were called infralapsarians, because they conceived of the decree of predestination as following those of creation and the fall, of standing, in order, *below*, *infra*, the fall.

As was said, in its pure abstract form, the question seems of little interest.



But it becomes of significance, as soon as we put the problem in this form: what, in God's counsel, occupies the place of end or purpose, and what of means to that end?

In connection with our discussion of the gathering of the elect church out of the whole human race, the question can be formulated as follows: what is the relation, in God's decree, between the original organism of creation, and of the whole human race, on the one hand, and the organism of the body of Christ, the Church on the other?

Is this relation such that God, in His decree, conceived of the first creation as an end in itself, then foresaw the fall and the corruption of His creation through sin and death, and then determined to save out of that original world and human race a number of individual human beings, whom He purposed to glorify in Christ? Then the situation arises that God's purpose is frustrated, His creation is lost, and all that is salvaged out of the world is a number of elect, the more the better. Through the devil and the will of man, God's work is actually destroyed, and His real purpose is frustrated. The counsel and work of God may then be compared to a beautiful home that is built (God's original creation in Adam), that is set on fire by an enemy (the devil, man's fall), but from which, out of the roaring flames, some precious pieces of furniture are salvaged (the salvation of the elect in Christ). To express the matter thus, however, is sufficient to condemn it as unworthy of God and His unsearchable wisdom. God's counsel shall stand, and He will surely do all His good pleasure. His work is never frustrated, and all things are subservient to His sovereign good pleasure. From our limited viewpoint, it may appear as if sin is an accident, and as if the devil actually succeeded in frustrating God's counsel, and in seriously marring the beautiful handiwork of God: in God's counsel all things are but means unto the realization of the purpose He had in view. Yet, this is, in last analysis, the Arminian view: the race is lost, a number of individuals are saved.

Or shall we say that God's original purpose was the first creation, the development and perfection of all things in the first Adam; that sin made the realization of this original plan impossible; and that now God, in Christ, and by the power of grace, makes something else out of the wreckage, the Church? To use the same figure once more, the house is built according to plan and specifications; an evil enemy attempts to destroy it by fire; but enough building material is salvaged from the fire to erect another building, quite different from the original plan. Or, to use another figure, a taylor plans to make a complete suit of clothing out of a beautiful piece of cloth; a thief cuts into the cloth and steals part of it; and now the taylor decides to make a pair of trousers out of what is left. The

Church, in that case, is not a mere number of individuals, but a whole, the new garment, the building that was constructed out of the salvaged material. To this view, too, it must be objected that it presupposes frustration of God's original purpose. It is unworthy of God. The powers of darkness are stronger than the Almighty. The devil, sin, and death, gain a mighty victory, even though they may be overcome at last. The view is dualistic. Eut God is God alone, and there is none beside Him. He is ever the Lord, and He alone. And His wisdom is infinite. His work can never be destroyed or marred, nor can any power ever thwart His purpose.

Once more, shall we say then that, through the devil, sin, and death, nothing is really destroyed, although some parts fall away? Shall we use the figure of a beautiful vase that is broken, but that is so ably and carefully repaired that no one can detect that it was ever broken? Then the original creation is still the purpose of God, sin and death interfere with this purpose and mar God's work temporarily, but God repairs His work in Christ and brings the world to its original glory and beauty. Even in that case, however, you have no satisfactory answer to the question: why, in the wisdom of God, must sin enter into the world? Even then God's work is, for a time at least, marred, and it requires all the suffering of sin and death, yea, even the death of His Son, to restore the world to its original beauty and perfection. And this can never be allowed, for the same fundamental reason that God is God, the only Potentate of potentates, that He always does all His good pleasure, and that all things must be strictly subservient to His counsel and eternal purpose.

There is only one answer to this question: not the original creation and human race in Adam are first in God's counsel, not these are the end He has in view; but the Church and all the new and glorified creation in Christ. The Church is not an afterthought of God, it is not the product of repair-work: it is God's original design. He purposed to glorify Himself by realizing His everlasting covenant of friendship in Christ His Son, and, through Christ, in the millions upon millions of elect that constitute His body, and in whom the glory of God in Christ must shine forth in the highest possible degree. That is the end. And all the rest, creation and the fall, reprobation and all the powers of darkness, and all the history of this world are, in the decree of God, but means unto the realization of that end.

Only this conception is worthy of God.

This is the current teaching of Holy Writ. It is implied in the figure of the chaff and the wheat, so frequently used in the Bible. When the farmer sows wheat, he also grows the straw and the chaff, but his purpose is the wheat: the straw and the chaff are

subservient to the wheat, and when they have served their purpose they are separated from the wheat and burnt. This only explains the words of the apostle in I Cor. 3:21-23: "For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." This conception of all things in the counsel of God is the background of the teaching of the Scriptures that all things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to His purpose, Rom. 8:28; and of the assurance that "in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us," so that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." This view of God's eternal good pleasure is taught directly in many passages of Scripture, most clearly, perhaps, in that grand eulogy upon the glory of Christ which is found in Col. 1:15ff., and in which Christ is presented as the beginning and end, the alpha and omega of all things in the counsel of the Most High: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all the fulness dwell; And having made peace through the blood of the cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."

Hence, it is "the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth." Eph. 1:9, 10.

The *omega*, that is, the glorified Church in Christ, in the new heavens and earth, is the *alpha* in the counsel of God, and all things are ordained to be subservient to that end.

Thus, and thus only, we can understand the words of Holy Writ: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of

him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

### 3.

#### The Gathering Of The Church.

I believe an holy catholic church.

That is our confession.

Ideally, this Church comprises all the redeemed, delivered, called, sanctified, and glorified elect; and as such, in its ideal perfection, it exists as yet only in the eternal counsel of God. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Rom. 8:29, 30.

But this Church is gathered in time.

The Heidelberg Catechism instructs us "that the Son of God from the beginning to the end of the world, gathers, defends, and preserves to himself, by his Spirit and Word, out of the whole human race, a church chosen to everlasting life."

From the whole human race, from every nation, and tongue, and tribe, and from every age and generation that ever existed or will exist even to the end of ages, the holy catholic Church is gathered. Always, therefore, in every generation, the Church exists in the world. There was never a period in history in which the Church was obliterated. The line of her history is unbroken. And constantly she increases in numbers. For as she is gathered out of the human race, she exists, for a time, in this world, in order then to pass on into the Church in glory. Hence, the holy Catholic Church consists, till the end of time, of three parts: the Church on earth, or the Church militant and in suffering, though always victorious; the Church in heaven, or the Church in glory; and the Church that must still be born and called out of future generations.

To call the Church in heaven the Church victorious or triumphant in distinction from the Church on earth as the Church militant, as if the latter were not victorious, is incorrect. For the Church is always victorious in Christ, also here in the world. In Christ believers are more than conquerors, even in the midst of the battle. Nor is the Church in heaven completely glorified and victorious. For the last enemy, that is death, must still be overcome, and shall not be overcome until the last "moment", when the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible. But it is true that those that have gone before have escaped from tribulation, that they are clothed with perfect



righteousness, and that they enjoy a heavenly fellowship with God in Christ, which the Church on earth does not yet know. For the rest, we may remark that also the saints in heaven shall not be saved and enter into the final perfection without us. That perfection cannot be realized until the last of the saints shall have been called, and the body of Christ shall be complete; until the saints shall have been perfected, body and soul, through the resurrection of the dead; and until the new heavens and earth shall have been formed, the New Jerusalem shall have descended from heaven upon the new earth, and the tabernacle of God shall be with God forever.

Until that final moment, then, also the glorified Church in heaven has a history. We can readily understand this when, in the light of Scripture, we compare the state of the Church in glory of the new dispensation with that of the old. Abel was, as far as we know, the first saint that entered into glory. But he was there alone. There were no other saints. Gradually, as the Church was gathered on earth, and through death passed into the Church in heaven, the latter increased in numbers, in fellowship, and in blessedness. But even so, Christ was not yet, neither with the Church on earth, nor among the saints in heaven. The promise had not yet been realized. The blood of atonement was not yet shed. We get the impression from Scripture that the "accuser of the brethren" still had access to heaven, to accuse them day and night before God. And it was not until Christ had come, had been crucified, and raised from the dead, to enter into the heavenly glory, that the accuser of the brethren was cast down, and the Church in glory saw the realization of the promise. The ascension of Christ was a glorious day for the Church in heaven. And even now the number of the heavenly throng is constantly increased, and with us they look for the day when all the saints shall have been gathered in, and the "moment" of their final redemption shall arrive.

This gathering of the Church from the beginning of the world to the end, from every nation and tongue and tribe, is a great wonderwork of God in history. It is not too much to say that it is even more marvellous than the work of God in creation. O, indeed, the work of God in creating all things is amazing. It lies wholly beyond the scope of our comprehension. By it God stands revealed to us as God Almighty, the absolute Lord, Who calls the things that are not as if they were. But consider now His work of gathering the Church out of the whole human race, and you will admit that it is even more marvellous still. In creating the world, He reveals Himself as the One that calls the things that are not as if they were; in gathering the Church, He becomes known to us as the One that quickens the dead. For the Church is gath-

ered out of material that is completely unfit. The human race, out of which the Church is gathered, is guilty and damnable, object of the holy wrath of God; the Church is the communion of the justified, the perfectly righteous, the object of God's everlasting love. The human race is polluted and defiled; the Church is the fellowship of perfect saints, without spot or wrinkle. The human race stands in enmity against God, and its members refuse to glorify Him and to give Him thanks, stand in rebellion against Him, curse and profane His holy name; the Church is a royal priesthood, wholly consecrated to God, offering up spiritual sacrifices of praise and adoration to the God of her salvation. The human race lies in the midst of death; the Church is the living body of Christ, filled with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. Yet, the one is gathered out of the other! The Church is not an utterly new creation, called out of nothing, but the company of those that are gathered out of the old race, transformed by the wonder of grace. How marvellous, then, is that wonderwork of God whereby He gathers His Church out of the whole human race! It is the calling of light out of darkness, of righteousness out of damnableness, of incorruption out of corruption: it is the resurrection of the dead!

The Catechism does well, therefore, to ascribe this work of gathering the Church out of the whole human race as exclusively the work of God: the Son of God, by His Spirit and Word, gathers, defends, and preserves unto himself a church chosen unto everlasting life.

How utterly impossible it is that man should have a share in this work of calling the Church, or that he should cooperate with God in the building of His holy temple!

And how sinfully absurd and preposterous it is to conceive of the Church as something that comes into existence by the will and through the efforts of man!

H. H.

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#### IN MEMORIAM

Whereas it has pleased our Heavenly Father to take unto Himself our fellow Society member,

PETER JOHNSON

the Men's Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church at Kalamazoo, wishes hereby to extend its sympathy to the bereaved family.

H. Veldman, Pres.

D. Langeland, Sec'y.

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## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

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### The Tabernacle of Shiloh Forsaken

Though the people of Israel had put away their idols and were again serving the Lord, the Ark of God was not restored to the tabernacle of Shiloh; it continued to abide in the house of Abinadab many decades, definitely until David had it removed into a tent that he, himself, had pitched for it on Mt. Zion. This tent was not the tabernacle of Shiloh, the one constructed by Moses in the wilderness. The reason that the Ark was not removed to Shiloh's tabernacle is that this tabernacle had been permanently abandoned by the Lord. We read of this in Ps. 78: The people of Israel, having provoked the Lord to anger with their high places, the Lord, says this psalm, "forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh." Samuel and the faithful in Israel were aware of this certainly. They perceived, as taught by the Lord, that He was not to return to Shiloh's tabernacle and that therefore it was His will that the Ark abide in Kirjathjearim, until He order it removed to a new sanctuary, that he would construct for it. As the judgments of God in consequence of the profanation of the sacrifices by the sons of Eli had removed the Ark from Shiloh's tabernacle, the people of Israel would not dare to return the Ark to this sanctuary on their own authority. What is more, though the people of Israel had put away their idols and were again serving the Lord only, they still felt, and now more than ever, seeing that they had repented and were thus filled with a lively sense of their unworthiness, that they could not stand before this holy Lord God. The Lord's slaying the men of Bethshemesh to the number of 50,070, on account of their unholy bearing toward the Ark, had made a deep and abiding impression upon the people.

The Lord had thus rejected not alone the law-opposing priesthood of Eli and his race, but the very tabernacle in connection with which this priesthood had functioned and was still functioning as well. For Eli's house was not immediately deposed from office. Up to Solomon's time, descendants of Eli were high priests and this in connection with Shiloh's tabernacle. But all was permanently forsaken of God—Shiloh's tabernacle, its priests and its service performed by its priests. And the clear evidence of this was the Lord's refraining from ordering the Ark removed to Shiloh's sanctuary. It is not unlikely therefore, that, with the Ark of God in Kirjathjearim and with the high priests of that day under the ban of God, they being of the house of Eli, all the sacrifices connected with Shiloh's tabernacle were largely discontinued. For Eli's house

together with the tabernacle in which this house had served and continued to serve until thrust out of office by Solomon, had been disgraced, brought under a cloud by the terrible prophecies that had been spoken against it—prophecies known to all Israel and that already had gone into partial fulfillment. It is a good conjecture therefore that this house and the sanctuary in which it still served was already being forsaken in Samuel's day. For the nation would naturally recoil from having high priests, under the ban of God, making atonement for its accumulative sins on the great day of atonement. Besides, with the Ark of Kirjathjearim, this particular atonement could not even be made, as it required that the blood of the slain victim be carried into the holiest place and sprinkled on the mercy seat of the Ark.

That already in Samuel's day Shiloh's tabernacle was being forsaken is a view supported further by Samuel's doing according to which he built an altar in Ramah, his place of residence where he judged Israel, I Sam. 7:17. This doing of Samuel had no little significance. It meant that Ramah, definitely Samuel's altar, was now a chief place of worship in Israel, and that therefore Shiloh's tabernacle and everything connected with it—priesthood, altar, and service—had been abandoned by God and was now also being abandoned by His people. That this is no idle conjecture is plain from the text at I Kings 3:2, "Only the people sacrificed in high places, because there was no house built unto the Lord." Such is here the testimony of the sacred writer and this despite the fact that at the time the tabernacle, the one constructed by Moses in the desert, was in Gibeon. Instead of appearing with their animal sacrifices in Gibeon, the people sacrificed in the high places. As we shall see, there is ground in the sacred text for the view that at this time and for several decades previous to this time—it was in the days of the beginning of Solomon's reign—there was not an organized priesthood connected with the tabernacle through which the people could sacrifice. Such also may be the implication of the text at I Kings 3:4. For though the temple was not yet built, there was the tabernacle in Gibeon.

The view that the tabernacle had been abandoned by the nation does not militate against the text at II Chron. 1:3, where we read, "So Solomon, and all the congregation with him, went to the high place that was at Gibeon, for there was the tabernacle of the congregation of God, which Moses the servant of the Lord had made for it in the wilderness. But the Ark of God had David brought up from Kirjathjearim to the place which David had prepared for it: for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem. Moreover, the brazen altar, that Bezaleel the son of Hur had made, he put before the tabernacle of the Lord: and Solomon

and the congregation sought after it. And Solomon went up thither to the brazen altar before the Lord, which was at the tabernacle of the congregation, and offered a thousand burnt offerings upon it. And in that night God appeared unto Solomon."

This whole passage leaves the impression that what it speaks of is an extraordinary event, to wit, the re-establishing of public worship at the tabernacle that for a long time had been suspended. We should mark the following. The passage asserts that the tabernacle was at Gibeon. This is an indirect statement to the effect that it was no longer at Nob, the city of priests. The first book of Samuel reveals the reason of the removal of the tabernacle from Nob to Gibeon. All but one of the priests in Nob had been slain by Saul. This massacre would have made an end of the worship in connection with the tabernacle, had there been such a service, which is doubtful. Such a worship could not be resumed until the priesthood had been reorganized. And this reorganization did not take place until after the completion of the building of the temple. The passage asserts that while the worship in Gibeon was in progress, the Ark of God was in Jerusalem. The thrust of this assertion is that the worship going on in Gibeon was characterized by radical abnormality because of the absence of the Ark. Finally the passage tells us that Solomon put the brazen altar before the tabernacle of the Lord. Thus it was restored to its proper place, which for a long time, such is doubtless the implication, it had not occupied. But the nation now had need of that altar, for with its new king it was seeking after God, and the altar was the meeting place between God and His people. A thousand burnt offerings were offered; and the Lord smelled a sweet savor and appeared unto Solomon that night. So he and his people did find the Lord there at that altar, though it was put before a tabernacle—the tabernacle of Shiloh—that God had forsaken. This is precisely the point that the sacred writer argues, when he says, "*But the Ark of God had David brought up from Kirjathjearim to the place that David had prepared for it. . . . Moreover the brazen altar he—Solomon—put before the tabernacle of the Lord.*" This assembly of the nation through its leaders at Gibeon before the face of the Lord must have been the first of its kind after the extirpation of the priesthood of Nob, or even after the capture of the Ark by the Philistines.

There is also the question whether Samuel (and Saul) David and Solomon performed priestly offices. This is the common view. Let us attend to the Scripture passages that bear on the matter. There are the instructions of Samuel to Saul at I Sam. 10:8, "And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal: and behold, I will come down to thee, to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices." When the people of Israel, as-

sembled in Mizpah, were being threatened by the Philistines and in their great terror pressed Samuel not to cease to pray for them, "Samuel", so we read, "took a suckling lamb, and offered a burnt offering wholly unto the Lord," I Sam. 7:8, 9. Disregarding Samuel's instructions, "Saul said, Bring hither a burnt-offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering. And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; . . . And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said . . . I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering. And Samuel said, Thou hast done foolishly. . . ." I Sam. 13. Having brought in the Ark, and set it in its place in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it, "David offered burnt offerings, and peace offerings before the Lord," I Sam. 6:17. Going up to the brazen altar before the Lord in Gibeon, Solomon "offered a thousand burnt offerings upon it," II Chron. 1:3. These Scripture passages seem to answer our question unequivocally and this in the affirmative. They state that Samuel, Saul, David, and Solomon offered sacrifices and thus performed priestly offices. But these passages do not settle the matter. There are other scriptures to be considered. At I Kings 3:2 we are told that "the people sacrificed in the high places", the reason being that "there was no house built unto the Lord." At II Chron. 5:6 it is asserted that "King Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel that were assembled unto him before the Ark—the occasion was the dedication of the temple—sacrificed sheep and oxen, which could not be told nor numbered for multitude." Thus if the statement "Samuel, Saul offered sacrifices" can only mean that they performed strictly priestly functions, that is, performed duties that belonged to the office of the Levitical priesthood, it shall have to be maintained that, on the occasion of the dedication of the temple, all the people performed priestly offices. For of the people, too, it is stated that they sacrificed sheep and oxen that could not be told for multitude. Yet certainly this cannot be. But in Samuel's day the priesthood was disorganized and therefore it is not unlikely that, at least on some occasions, he did perform strictly priestly offices. But nothing is certain here. Yet this much does seem certain, namely, that the direction and furtherance of matters of religious life was in the hand of Samuel and not in the hand of the highpriest, and that thus the institutional-personal uniting point of religious life and service of Israel was Samuel. This seems clearly indicated by the words of the maidens to Saul, "For the people will not eat until he—Samuel—come, because he doth bless the sacrifices; and afterwards they eat that is bidden," I Sam. 9:13. The officiating dignitary at this sacrifice was plainly Samuel. Certain it is that with the people sacrificing in the high

places instead of in the court of the tabernacle, the direction of religious life was not in the hands of the high priest. As to Saul, his full guilt can be maintained, even though it be denied that he performed strictly priestly functions. For his sacrifice at Gilgal was brought at his command and by his direction. As to Samuel, it is difficult to see that the calling where-with he was called by the Lord required the performance of strictly priestly offices; and the same is true of the calling of David and Solomon. That it is said of the people that they sacrificed, despite their performing no priestly functions, can be explained. 1. The animal sacrifice was the gift of the worshipping Israelite. 2. He and not the priest slew the victim. 3. It was for his sins that the victim shed its blood. 4. Through the action with the victim—its choice parts were placed upon the altar and consumed by fire—the believing worshipper gave utterance to his faith. But the priest made atonement for his sins, which consisted in his presenting the shed blood of the victim before the face of God by striking it upon the horns of the altar.

As to the whereabouts of Shiloh's tabernacle in those days, Scripture reveals that it was removed from Shiloh to Nob and thence to Gibeon, I Sam. 21:6; I Kings 3:4; II Chron. 1:3. But whether at Shiloh, Nob, or Gibeon, it remained Shiloh's tabernacle rejected of God; and over its priesthood—Eli's house and the house of his father—the wrath of God continued to be revealed through the years in fulfillment of Samuel's prophecy that Israel might know that sacrifices without obedience is iniquity.

## Eli's Father's House

We must now concentrate on the two terms "Eli's house", and "Eli's father's house" and determine the scope of the operation of divine wrath in the offspring of Ithamar in punishment of its sins. The distinction "Eli's house", and "Eli's father's house" is contained in the doleful message of the unnamed prophet to Eli, "Behold the days come that He—the Lord—will cut off thine arm and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house," I Sam. 2:31. Aaron had four sons, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. Nadab and Abihu were killed by the Lord for their having offered strange fire on God's altar. They had no offspring, I Chron. 24:2. There were thus two priestly houses in Israel, and only two, Eleazar's and that of Ithamar. After the death of Aaron, the high priestly office was filled by Eleazar, but was later transferred, for a reason not revealed, from his house to that of Ithamar. We are now ready to deal with the term, "Eli's father's house". This

house, as the context of the above-cited scripture and other related scripture passages indicate, was a race of high priests descended in a line from Ithamar to the last male offspring of Eli. From Eli's son on—Eli was a descendant of Ithamar—this race would be Eli's house. And as Eli's father's house and the house of Eli were segments of the same genealogical line, the arm of Eli's father's house was cut off through the cutting off of the arm of the house of Eli. So, doubtless are we to understand the divine communication of the "man of God" to Eli, "I had said indeed that thy house and the house of thy father should walk before me ever: but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me; . . . Behold the days shall come that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house. . . ." As was said, the arm of a house or family is its power, strength. God would cut off the arm of Eli's house, its strength, by removing through death all its members in the flower of their manhood. Thus spake the unnamed prophet to Eli, "There shall not be an old man in thy house."

However, there is ground in the Scriptures for the view that "Eli's father's house" included not merely the genealogical line of high priests that proceeded from Ithamar but Ithamar's whole offspring as well—his offspring contemporary with Eli and in active service in Shiloh under Eli's jurisdiction, and later on his offspring contemporary with Eli's grandson, the high priest Ahimelech and in active service in Nob under Ahimelech's jurisdiction. If this view is correct, and doubtless it is, as we presently shall see, the curse of God was operative not only in Eli's descendants but also in Eli's brethren, descendants of Ithamar, contemporary with Eli and serving God's altars in Shiloh under his oversight. As was said, there is ground for this view in the scriptures. I Chron. 24:4 states that "there were more chief men found of the sons of Eleazar than of the sons of Ithamar. . . . Among the sons of Eleazar there were sixteen chief men of the house of their fathers, and eight among the sons of Ithamar according to the house of their fathers." According to this passage there were eight more chief men among the descendants of Eleazar then living, than among the offspring of Ithamar. This doubtless indicates that the total number of Ithamar's living offspring was remarkably small in comparison at the time. If this interpretation of these figures is correct, and doubtless it is, we have here in this text a good ground for the view that the curse of God, spoken over Eli's house, was operative in the whole offspring of Ithamar contemporaneous with Eli, and in all the descendants of this offspring and thus not merely in the seed of Eli. Looking into the Scriptures, we plainly see that curse operative through the years in that wider circle also. The first to fall was Eli. Next his two sons were overthrown on the same day

that Eli died. Then the Philistines came to Shiloh—the Philistines, flushed with their victories over Israel's armies and over Israel's God, so they thought. And they killed many priests there in Shiloh, all descendants of Ithamar, as we shall prove, serving under Eli. We learn of this massacre of priests from Ps. 78. Stating that the Lord forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, on account of Israel's sins, the psalmist goes on to relate the other calamities that befell the nation at that time, also that "their priests fell by the sword." The reference here is not merely to the fall of the two sons of Eli, but to the slaughter of a large number of priests, as is indicated by the character of the statement, which is general and impersonal.

The next slaughter among these priests—offspring of Ithamar—was by Saul in his frenzy. We read of this in I Sam. 22. The tabernacle at the time was at Nob. Thither the wrath of the Philistines had driven the high priest and his brethren in service—the house of Ithamar. And they had taken the tabernacle with them. Fleeing from the wrath of Saul, David came to this city, inhabited solely by the house of Ithamar, as appears from the sequence, and was given some bread by the high priest Ahimelech. Hearing of it, Saul was furious. He summoned the high priest and his colleagues into his presence to answer to the charge of conspiring against the king. Eighty five of their number obeyed the summons and all were slain. Then Saul or perhaps Doeg went to Nob, the city of priests, and smote there everything that breathed—"men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen and asses and sheep." All the slain priests were descended from Ithamar. This is indicated by the statement that "Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the Priest—highpriest—the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests that were in Nob." As was stated, Ahimelech was the grandson of Eli and thus the offspring of Ithamar, and likewise all the priests of Nob, being as they were the house of Ahimelech's father. All these priests were slain to a man with the exception of Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech. He escaped the slaughter and sought safety with David. These divine visitations over the house of Eli's father leave but little room for doubting the correctness of the view that the curse of God operated also in that wider circle of Ithamar's seed. It would have to be considered rather remarkable, if it had been otherwise. For this would needs have to imply that of all Eli's colleagues in active service in Shiloh, and there must have been several of them, common priests, only the two sons of Eli were profane men. Now this is not likely. But it may be considered certain that all the rest of those priests, members of the house of Eli's father, exposed themselves to the wrath of God, if not by doing the very things that the two sons of Eli did, then by assuming toward their atrocities Eli's lax and indifferent atti-

tude. These sons were not being condemned by the public opinion of Shiloh, the city of priests. They were not being restrained by Eli nor by his colleagues. Not one priest in that city of priests frowned upon their doing. They were permitted to do with Israel's sacrifices as they pleased so far as that body of priests in Shiloh was concerned. Therefore did the curse of God, pronounced upon Eli and his house, work also in the house of his father. Also the increase of this house was dying in the flower of their age.

As was said, this state of things must have been a cause of grief to the faithful in Israel. They knew and saw before their eyes that the high priests—sons of Eli—were laboring under the curse of God, as also the house of Eli's father. They perceived that the Lord had rejected this priesthood, as He refused to return to the holiest place of the tabernacle in which this priesthood was serving. There was no organized priesthood after the fall of Eli, certainly not after the slaying of the high priest Ahimelech, the grandson of Eli, and of the other priests of Nob. But the Lord had given His people a promise whereby to live. He had said to His people by the mouth of the "man of God": And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and he shall walk before my anointed forever," I Sam. 2:35. This prophecy implied that the house of Eli and the house of Eli's father would be ejected from the office of priest. It implied, did this prophecy, the virtual ejection of Eli's house and of the house of his father from the office of priest in the very moment that this prophecy was uttered; and this prophecy was known to all Israel. Yet at I Chron. 18:16 Ahimelech, the son of Abiathar, the great grandson of Eli is mentioned as sharing with Zadok the position of high priest at the close of David's reign. Thus at this time the house of Eli had not yet been thrust out from being priest. This can be explained. Though the Lord had let it be known by the mouth of the unnamed prophet that according to His counsel, the house of Eli was to be deposed, He had not commanded its deposition. Nor do we read anywhere of the giving of such a command. Yet was this house thrust out from the office of priest. It eventually fell through its own wickedness in the person of Abiathar and his son Ahimelech. When David was old and stricken in years, Abiathar supported Adonijah, who wanted to be king. Solomon was crowned, and now Adonijah again began to plot, his aim once more being to seize the kingdom for himself; and Abiathar again was among his followers. Summoning him into his presence, the king told him that he had made himself worthy of death and ordered him to his own fields, I Kings 2:26. And the comment of the sacred writer reads, "So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the Lord; that he might fulfill the word of

the Lord, which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh," verse 27.

The "faithful priest" now appeared. This priest was Zadok, the offspring of Eleazar, who now was installed as sole highpriest. The fall of Abiathar may have involved the fall of the whole house of Eli's father. As was stated in a former article, the Zadokite family continued in an unbroken line to Christ. It means that the Lord built this priest a house indeed. But the final fulfillment of the promise of a "faithful priest" was Christ. He did according to that which was in God's heart and mind perfectly. Him God build a sure house—the church—which He purchased by His own blood.

G. M. O.

## THROUGH THE AGES

### King Philip IV of France and Pope Boniface VIII

As we saw, the long struggle for temporal power between Germany's emperors and Rome's popes came to an end. But the struggle continued. And it was the same old struggle. All that changed was the field of conflict and the contestants. As we will see, that field was now France, and the contestants the King of France, Philip IV, and Pope Boniface (1294-1303).

The separate history of France began with the partition of Verdun in 843. As has already been explained, Charles the Great, who succeeded his father Pepin in 768, brought under his rule all Western Europe and thereby established the Roman Germanic or the so-called Holy Roman Empire. But the mighty empire of Charles went the way of all the kingdoms of the great conquerors of the ages preceding. It fell apart soon after Charles' death. By the Treaty of Verdun, France and the nucleus of Germany were given to Louis, one of the three surviving sons of Charles, and thus began in 843 the separate history of France. Towards the close of the century, in 987, the first of the Capetian dynasty came to the throne. His name was Hugh Capet. The line that proceeded from him included fourteen kings, whose joint reigns lasted three hundred and forty-one years (987-1328). Included was also Philip IV, the dates of whose reign are 1285-1314. The first of these kings had little actual power. The real rulers at that time were the counts and dukes of the several principalities or states of which France was formed. Each did much as he pleased

in his own domain and paid lip service to the king. But by the time of Philip IV and Boniface VIII, France had become one of the most consolidated and powerful kingdoms in Europe. By the influence of the crusades, the power of the nobles had been broken and was now concentrated in the crown. Germany, on the other hand, was still a loose federation of pretty states, united under the supremacy of a ruler, who, as was stated, bore the title of emperor but who had no actual power, and who therefore was powerless to suppress the incessant wars between the German princes and the cities and the discord of the lower nobility. Germany being a house divided against itself, the emperor could offer no resistance to the pope's encroachments. But with Philip IV it was different. As the ruler of a united and powerful kingdom, and as heading a people who, like the rest of the peoples of Europe, was fast losing its dread for the thunderings of the papacy, Philip was more than a match for the pope.

Not that Philip was a good king. A French chronicler describes his character in this language, "A certain king of France, also named Philip, eaten up by the fever of avarice and cupidity." When Philip acceded to the throne, he was seventeen years of age. They called him "The Fair" then, for he was a youth of uncommon beauty. And in a crisis he was brave, too. Besides, he was determined in the execution of his plans and as intelligent in the contrivance thereof but just as unscrupulous. He was cruel against his enemies and kept no faith with his subjects, for whose rights he was filled with a scandalous contempt. But he stood for an independent France, as over against a France ruled from out of Rome by the long arms of the papacy, the bishops and archbishops of the Roman hierarchy. He had been nine years king when Boniface VIII became pope. During that time he had greatly diminished the power of the church in civil functions. He had removed the clergy from judicial posts and had put the administration of civil affairs in the hands of laymen. Besides, he had raised the taxes on the enormous amount of real estate acquired by the church through the centuries of the past. With this monarch the history of modern France begins.

Coelestine V, the pious pope who abdicated and returned to his solitude, was succeeded by this Boniface VIII. Boniface had all the defects of Philip the Fair, but less of his ability. Petrarch and Dante, two great poets of Italy, ascribe to him a similar character. "He was," says Petrarch, "an inexorable sovereign (was this pope), whom it was very hard to break by force and impossible to bend by humility and caresses." And Dante puts him with Pope Nicholas III in hell. He makes Nickolas address to him the following greeting, "Already art thou here and proudly upstanding, O Boniface? Hast thou so soon been sated with that wealth for which thou didst not fear to deceive that



fair dame (the church) whom afterwards thou didst so disastrously govern?" Boniface VIII, too, laid claims to supreme magisterial power over the kings of the earth, over every temporal power, being of human creation,—claims which he laid down in a long bull to the king. "God", said he, "hath established us—the popes—above kings and kingdoms by imposing upon us, in virtue of the apostolic office, the duty of plucking away, destroying, dispersing, building up and planting in His name and according to his doctrine; to the end that, in tending the flock of the Lord, we may strengthen the weak, heal the sick. . . . Let none, then, dear son, persuade thee that thou hast no superior, and that thou art not subject to the sovereign head of the ecclesiastical hierarchy; for he who so thinketh is beside himself; and if he obstinately affirm such a thing, he is an infidel and hath no place any longer in the fold of the good shepherd. . . . We would have thee to know that thou art subject unto us in all things spiritual and temporal." A papal decree of November 18, 1302 declared, "There be two swords, the temporal and the spiritual; both are in the power of the church, but one is held by the church herself, the other by kings, only with the assent and by the sufferance of the sovereign pontiff."

Such being the imaginings of Boniface VIII, it was unavoidable that these two absolute sovereigns—Philip the Fair and this pope—come to a deadly clash—unavoidable as each claimed for himself the kingdom of France. The first clash occurred the year following Boniface's elevation to the papal throne. Philip the Fair was at war with Edward I, king of England, and imposed upon the clergy a fresh tax of two tenths,—the clergy who jointly possessed one half of all the landed property in the kingdom. It was a vast domain in which the Roman hierarchy, through its bishops, performed all the offices of lay rulers and this, according to the papacy, as vassal of the pope of Rome. Several bishops refused to pay the tax and addressed a protest to the pope in which they compared the king to Pharaoh. Boniface issued a bull, addressed to the king, in which he set forth as a principle that churches and ecclesiastics could not be taxed save with the permission of the sovereign pontiff and that "all lay rulers, including the king, who should violate this principle and all ecclesiastics who should lend themselves to such violations would by this mere fact incur excommunication and would be incapable of release therefrom, unless by special decision of the pope." Philip was angry. He made the pope feel his wrath by forbidding the export of money from France, thus cutting off the revenues of the pope. A year thereafter the pope reconsidered his action and authorized the collection of the tax that had been voted by the French bishops with the exception of those who had protested. In addition the pope conceded the right of the king to tax the

French clergy with their consent. It was a victory for Philip.

Peace prevailed between the two sovereigns but not for long. The pope had recently created a new bishopric at Pampiers to which he appointed Bernard de Saisset, an abbot of St. Antoine in that city. Besides, he made Bernard his permanent official representative at the court of Philip. That was an unjudicious act on the part of the pope. For Bernard was a foe to the dominion of the French kings in France and known as such. It had been reported to Philip that he had persistently labored to incite rebellion against the king in the south of France. Arriving in Paris, Bernard was summoned before the king to answer to the charge of treason. Though he denied everything, he was jailed. Philip demanded that the pope give an order that Bernard be put to death as a sacrifice to God in the way of justice. To this the pope replied, "We do bid thy majesty," he wrote to the king, "to give this bishop free leave to depart and come to us, for we desire his presence. We do warn thee. . . . not to offend the Divine Majesty or the dignity of the Apostolic See, lest we be forced to employ some other remedy."

Philip replied by gathering together his subjects—clergy, nobles and commons—to deliberate on the matter with him. This body is regarded in French history as the first "States General". It now appeared that the king had on his side the whole nation. For all three estates—clergy, nobles, and commons—wrote separately to Rome, protesting against the pope's claims in matters temporal. That was the handwriting on the wall. But the pope had not the wisdom to read it. He replied with a bull in which he reiterated in boldest language the papal claims to supremacy over civil rulers. Philip answered by convoking a new assembly, where a number of absurdly false charges were lodged against the pope. An appeal was made for a general church council before which the pope might be tried. The king sent his jurist, William Nogaret, to Rome to compel the pope to authorize the council. Nogaret collected a force and made the pope his prisoner in Anagni. A few days thereafter, he was freed by the people of Anagni. A month later he died.

As we have seen, several strong rulers of preceding ages had defied the pope. But Philip IV is the first ruler who did so without either being destroyed or even once humiliated. The reason is obvious. The peoples of Europe and in particular the people of France, had lost much of their dread for the pope's thunderings; his spiritual weapons—excommunication and the interdict—no longer availed. The people of France therefore dared to support their king in his warfare with the pope. Historians are all agreed on this. It could not well be otherwise, for the thing is too obvious. It is simply a fact. But there is yet this question: Why were men losing their dread for the

pope's thunderings at this time? One may ponder long this question and present various reasons without giving the right answer, if he ends not with saying, "God took that fear from men and made their hearts stout against the pope." God is the only final answer to all the questions that history raises.

G. M. O.

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## SION'S ZANGEN

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### Kom, O God Der Wraken!

(Psalm 94)

Dit is een psalm vol van vreeselijkheden!

Het is een psalm die een gebed vertolkt om wraak over de goddeloozen, die het recht altijd verkeerd hebben.

Een psalm ook, waarin blijkt, dat de rechtvaardige zich sterkt in zijn God, wanneer de goddeloozen hem met hun ongerechtigheid benauwen.

Een psalm vol leering voor het arme, verdrukte volk van God.

De aanhef isforsch, krachtig. De aanhef toont, dat wat er volgt een smeeken, een roepen is tot God. Alle gebed is niet gelijk. Soms gaat het bidden over in roepen, het smeeken in schreeuwen tot God. Nu, zoo is het hier. Het feit, dat de dichter tweemaal hetzelfde zegt, versterkt die gedachte.

O God der wraken! O Heere, God der wraken! verschijn blinkende.

Ik noemde de inhoud des psalms vreeselijk, en terecht. Als het alleen deze aanhef was, dan was zulk zeggen gerechtvaardigd. Als het gaan zal over het feit, dat God de God der wraken is (in het meer-voud ook nog) dan wordt het benauwd. Benauwd zal het dan ook zijn voor de goddeloozen.

Ziet ge, de Heere God zal het zien, zoeken en vergelden.

Het is goed, dat we nadruk leggen op den inhoud van dezen psalm. Zoo vaak denken, spreken en handelen we, alsof er geen oordeelsdag komt. Dan klaagt Gods volk over de hardheid en goddeloosheid der goddeloozen. Dan schreit men vanwege onrecht, dat we moeten lijden. Men vloekte ons, men verstiet ons, men deed ons diep lijden en schreien. En dan klimt de angstige gedachte in het hart: Zou God het zien?

Dat mag niet. God is God. Dat bedoelt ook, dat elke kromme gedachte, elk krom woord en elke kromme daad vergolden wordt. We mogen niet vergeten, dat God zeide door Jesaja: Al wat krom is zal recht gemaakt worden.

Welnu, deze psalmist gaat er van uit, dat de God der wraken er is, dat Hij straks komen zal; ja, hij wil, dat de Heere dien tijd verhaasten zal! Kom Heere, God der wraken!

Wraak is die werking van den DrieEenigen God, waardoor Hij alle goddeloosheid bezoekt en vergeldt, zoodat de goddeloozen het aan lichaam en ziel ervaren, dat de Heere God Zich handhaaft door hen te verdoemen, te verwerpen, verjaagd, verstrooid te doen zuchten.

Die dingen nu zijn vast in Gods Raad. God ziet en beleeft het nu al, dat de goddeloozen in buitenste duisternis weenen en tandenknersen. Juist zooals Hij U ziet in Zijn handpalmen, zoodat de muren van het verkoren Jeruzalem steeds voor Hem zijn, zoo ziet Hij ook de poel die brandt van vuur en sulfur, met al die daar eeuwig zullen lijden. Dat is zuivere Theologie. God handhaaft Zichzelf en alle Zijne deugden. Daarom is er een hel. De Hel is het bewijs dat God goed is.

Doch er is een zucht in Gods volk om hetgene, dat vast in Gods Raad is, ook te zien. Daarom die harts-tochtelijke bede: God der wraken, verschijn blinkende. Let er op, de bede gaat om het *verschijnen* van God. En dat Hij verschijne blinkende.

Het verschijnen van God is hetzelfde als *openbaring*. God oordeelt altijd en alles. Doch het wordt niet gezien nog. En daar haken we naar.

En zeg nu niet, dat Gods volk wraakgierig is. Neen, maar ze hebben God lief; en dat is het zelfde zeggen, als dat zij het recht en de gerechtigheid be-minnen. Daarom verlangen zij naar de vervulling van de Schelfzee. Daar zongen de kinderen Israels, omdat God het paard en de rijder in de zee verslonden had. En dat tafereel bij de Schelfzee wordt *vervuld*, als men de kristallijnen zee zal zien voor Gods troon, een zee die met het vuur van Gods gerechtigheid ge-vlamd is. Dan zal het gezang van Mozes en het Lam vervuld worden. Daarom smeekt de zanger hier.

God is een Heere der wraken. Dat is het meer-voud. Ik denk, dat dit ziet op de uitgieting van Gods toorn. Dat zullen golven en baren zijn van vreeselijke onlust des Almachtigen. Vraagt het aan de verdoemden, en zij zullen het U verklaren. Ze werden van alle kant aangegrepen; van binnen en van buiten, in geest, ziel en lichaam, overal zijn de vreeselijke *handen* Gods, die ter wrake kwam. Het is het meer-voud van intensiviteit.

Dat zal een openbaring zijn van *blinkende* majes-teit! Als ge een stil, vredig schouwspel ziet, zooals de weide, waar de koeien grazen in zoele zomertijd, dan ziet ge de verschijning van God. Alles in Godsopenbaring. Doch er is een groot verschil hoe God Zich doet zien. Het gezicht van God als Hij komt om te richten zal vreeselijk zijn. Dan komt Hij blinkende. De dichter van den acht-en-zestigsten psalm bezingt

dezelfde idee. Mooier op rijm gezet dan dezen psalm. Gij zult hen, daar G' in glans verschijnt, als rook en damp, die ras verdwijnt, verdrijven en doen dolen! O, die glans van God als Hij komt, als Hij komt om te richten! Geen wonder, dat Paulus zegt: Vreeselijk zal het zijn om te vallen in de handen van den levendigen God!

Daar moet ge om bidden, neen, smeeiken!

Vraagt het aan deze hoerachtige eeuw; vraagt het aan de doctoren en professoren die bazelen van gemeene gratie, wilt ge? Vraagt het aan professor Hepp. Ge behoeft het niet meer te vragen aan die gestorven zijn. In hun leven bazelden ze van een reine liefde Gods waarmede Hij de verworpenen beminde; volgens hen, toch, tierde God van goedheid over de goddeloozen. De arme stakkerds wisten niet wat ze zeiden. God is God. Hij is degene die in de eeuwigheid woont. De hel der verdoemden is altijd bij Hem. Al loopen die menschen voor een paar jaar los in Zijn schepping, God ziet hen van ver met gramschap aan. Hij ziet hun waan: die trotsche zielen. O neen, zegt professor Hepp, o neen! Gij ziet hen niet aan, o God met groote gramschap! Gij hebt hen lief, zij het dan ook maar voor de korte stonde tusschen hun wieg en hun graf. De groote geleerde, arme dwaze man! Hij moest beter weten.

Vraagt het aan deze eeuw: het beste wat de kerk U toonen kan is een beschouwing van den verworpene die al lang verworpen is in den hemel. Die beschouwing van den goddelooze wordt bespot door de Engelen Gods. Die wezens weten beter. Ja, het beste wat de kerk U toonen kan is de gemeene gratie. Ge zult zeggen: de Protestantsche Kerken hebben de goede beschouwing; en: zij zijn het beste wat de kerk toont. En dan is mijn antwoord: we tellen niet mee! Dat wil zeggen: niet op aarde.

We zullen voorts moeten wachten, totdat deze psalm door God beantwoordt. Dit gebed wordt nagebeden door Gods volk en het zal ook verhoord worden. Slechts dit nog: wacht dan, ja, wacht, verlaat U op den Heer.

Gij Rechter der aarde, verhef U! Breng vergelding weder over de hoovaardigen!

Het gaat hier over vergelding over de hoovaardigen.

Hoovaardige menschen zijn echte duivelskinderen. De verzoeking des duivels is hoogmoed. De duivel schijnt het verzien te hebben op den troon God. Hij wilde van den beginne den Heere van Zijn troon stooten, en hij erop. Dat zien we in die teksten die spreken van de zonde Satans, alswel in de verzoeking van Eva. Hij wilde hun ook niets maken, dat het eten van den verboden vrucht hun gelijk zou maken aan God. Ook zien we het in de profetie van den mensch der zonde.

Die zal immers in den tempel zitten en prediken, dat hij God is.

Een hoovaardig mensch is een duivelskind. Daar verheft men zich boven hetgeen men behoorde te zijn. Een nederig mensch is een mensch die zijn plaats kent, ziet en inneemt.

Die hoovaardigen hebben het vooral verzien op de kinderen Gods. Dat volk moet van de aarde verdelgd worden. Hebt ge er wel eens op gelet, dat alle dictators het volk Gods bizonder haten? Zelfs de Joden, de verachte Joden werden vervolgd door Hitler. Hij wist niet, dat de Heere de Joden als natie verworpen had. Dat alleen de verkoren Joden zalig worden.

Welnu, de bidder vraagt of God wil komen om de hoovaardigen onder de vergelding te brengen. Eigenlijk hebt ge in dit vers hetzelfde als in het eerste, doch in andere woorden.

Hoe lang zullen de goddeloozen, o Heere! hoe lang zullen de goddeloozen van vreugd opspringen, uitgieten, hard spreken, alle werkers der ongerechtigheid zich beroemen?

Ja, dat is een bange klacht, een klacht die we eerder opvingen uit het Woord van God. Wie heeft nooit gezucht bij het lezen van: Hoe lange, Heere! Of: Waarom zoudt Gij slapen, Heere, ontwaak! Ja, het schijnt of God slaapt. Men vloekt en tiert en tandenknarst zijn woede tegen God en Zijn Gezalfde—en de Heere komt niet! Wacht dan, ja wacht! De Heere is niet traag, gelijk sommigen het traagheid achten, maar Hij is lankmoedig over ons, over Gods volk, niet wilende, dat eenigen van dat volk verloren gaan, maar dat ze allen tot bekeering mogen komen. Daarom komt God nog niet. Evenwel, blijft bidden om Zijn komst. Hij wil het.

Leest nu de beschrijving van die hoovaardigen, en beeft.

Zij springen op van vreugde.

Dat zal waar zijn. Ge moet nooit zeggen, dat de goddeloozen geen genot hebben, want dat hebben ze wel. Ze hebben geen *waar* genot, maar wel genot van een zekere soort. Ze vierten hun lusten en smakken met de tong: ze springen en dansen van vreugde. Ze schaterlachen en roepen het uit luidkeels, dat hun genot vermenigvuldigd wierd.

Maar benijdt hun niet.

Nu springen ze op van vreugde en gij schreit van ellende en smart. Ge vindt Uw bestraffing alle morgens. Straks zult ge, waar ge met tranen gezaaid hebt, lachen, brengende de schoven.

Ze gieten woorden uit, ze spreken harde woorden. Herinnert ge U Henoch? Judas schrijft van hem en zijn profetie. Het is best mogelijk dat de huidige zanger ook aan hem gedacht heeft. Henoch heeft geprofe-

teerd van die goddelooze zondaars die "harde woorden tegen Hem gesproken hebben". Ja, die harde woorden! Hebt ge er wel eens op gelet, dat als wij woorden spreken tegen God, en dat doen we, dan durven we niet "hard" te spreken? Doch de goddelooze heeft alles wat maar zou streven naar godsvrucht den rug toegedraaid, en hij durft wel hard tegen God te spreken. Dat is zijn namelooze smart. Want God heeft het gehoord. En deze bede wordt verhoord.

En als ze gesproken hebben, dan beroemen zich de werkers der ongerechtigheid. Dat is hun hemel op aarde. Ze hebben hun uur. Maar benijdt hen niet. Hun hemel is zuur in zijn wezen en de duur is kort. De mensch mag wel roemen, doch alleen in God. Eigen roem stinkt, zegt het spreekwoord. Jammer, dat de auteur er niet één woord bij gemaakt heeft. Hij moest eigenlijk gezegd hebben: Eigen roem stinkt Gode. God walgt van een mensch die het alles verdraaide. Inplaats van in God te roemen, roemde hij in zijn ongerechtigheid. En dat roept alles om wraak.

En het komt.

Het komt ontzaglijk snel.

Voor al nu. De Heere is dit gebed aan 't verhooren. De wrake is aan de deur. De deur is aan 't opengaan.

Men heeft een commissie gevormd voor de Atoombom.

Die commissie opent niet met gebed. Het zijn hoovaardige menschen. Ze kennen God niet.

Maar ze beginnen toch iets te beseffen van een God die wreekt. Ze worden bang van het "Ding" dat God hun in het brein gaf. Ze zijn bang van de gave Gods in de Atoombom. Ze vertrouwen het niet heel goed. Ze weten, dat ze het Ding straks toch gaan gebruiken. En dan?

Dan komt God: Hij komt ook door dat ding om gericht te houden met Zijn tienduizenden van Engelen!

Ja, de Wreker staat voor de deur.

Maar gij behoeft niet bang te zijn. Want die Wreker is Uw Vader in Christus Jezus.

En ge hebt toch gebeden om Zijn komst?

Denkt hier eens over na: beseft gij allen die dit leest, dat het uitvinden van de Atoombom een groote stap is naar het Einde aller Dingen?

't Kan best wezen, dat de eindelijke uitwerking van de gevreesde "chain-reaction" het goddelooze mensdom eensklaps voor den grooten witten troon brengt. En dan zal God zeggen: Hoe komt ge hier?

Dan zal er een groote stilte zijn. Alle mond, ook der hoovaardigen, werd gestopt.

Doch ik hoor vele stemmen die een nieuw lied zingen!

G. V.

## IN HIS FEAR

### Christian Instruction

*Off-Center.*

Whenever there is a center there is also an off-center. As in our own lives there is the danger of living off-center, so our christian instruction is often in danger of being off-center. That is, something else than God, His Covenant and the Man of God receives the emphasis.

Sometimes the tendency is to the right, sometimes to the left of center.

The question is therefore not, what place can we procure for our children in this world or how can we educate them so that they may take that place which we assign to them.

God assigns them their place in this world.

The place assigned them is defined by the Covenant in which they were baptized. And in order that they may take that place their instruction must root in the fear of God, be God-centered and covenant directed.

*Instruction by Covenant Assignment.*

When the Baptism Form makes mention of the covenant assignment, namely, that these children daily follow Him, bear their cross, live in all righteousness, etc., it precedes this with the mention of a pious and religious instruction. Scripture also speaks of instruction in righteousness as the requisite for the man of God, thoroughly furnished.

Hence, the covenant assigns the place which our children must take in this world, and the God of the Covenant gives us Christian instruction, in the home, in the church, but also in the day school to the end that our children may be able to take this place and thus the covenant continue from generation to generation.

*Dangers.*

There is the danger among us, in home and school as well as in the church, that we ignore or lose sight of this covenant assignment and consequently administer instruction at random. Behind all our instruction must lie covenant consciousness, but we are always in danger of departing therefrom and giving education as if there were no covenant and we were free to assign as we please. That is a very real danger. Instruction in the public schools follows this line. We have precious few text-books (if any) that embrace this aim. Oft times we ourselves are so little covenant conscious, and the result is that we lose sight of the covenant.

Then there is the danger of going off on a tangent and making assignments of our own. Perhaps we have a little of the dictator spirit when we administer instruction. It might be that we conceive of the place

our children ought to hold as that of being good citizens of this country, perhaps we think of them as future rebuilders of a wrecked world order, or it is possible we think of them as future business men and women, whose place in this world is to be a success, and even perhaps we assign them a place of national or civic importance. Each time we are thinking in terms of the place our children ought to take in this world. And each time we give them instruction according to that assignment. There lies a very real danger.

But we must remember that as soon as we dictate an assignment we tread on very dangerous ground. God assigns them their very own place in this world. Failing to instruct them according thereto is bound to have disastrous results. Suppose the government assigned a young man to the quartermaster division, but suppose that the training personnel ignored this and instead gave the young man training in paratrooping; the poor man will be ill prepared when the time comes that he must be called into action, and the government will surely punish the trainers for their presumptuous conduct. It is quite that same way in the matter of instruction, as far as our duty in this matter is concerned.

After the days of Joshua, we read, "There arose another generation after them that knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel". It was a generation assigned to the task of warring the Lord's warfare in the land of Canaan, but when the time came for warfare this generation was totally unfit.

Again we read, in Psalm 78:9 of the children of Ephraim, being armed and carrying bows (they had the equipment at least) but they turned back in the day of battle.

We believe that the God Who establishes His Covenant and makes assignment, also fits our children to assume that place. Indeed! But God has given us the means of Christian instruction and calls upon us to use that means. If we are serious, we will use that means and use it unto the end which God has designated. We must trust in God, we may not tempt Him.

#### *The Assigned Place.*

But what then is the place unto which God assigns our children?

In the main their place in this world is this: to reveal themselves as members of God's Party. Their place is not to adjust themselves to certain existing conditions, nor adapt themselves to certain popular notions. Their place is not to serve the benefit of this or that cause, this or that nation, this or that party. Their place is first and last to reveal themselves as Party of the Living God. It is not a question of what *Reveal them-* the world would like to see us become, *selves as of* or what any part of that world would *God's Party.* like us to be, it is a matter of covenant

assignment. From the Ephrates to the Nile, from the lion's dens to the court of Ahasuerus, God wanted the world to see Israel as a peculiar people. Abraham journeyed from Haran to Canaan and from Canaan to Egypt, along Sodom and Gomorrah, and everywhere the world had to see him as the Party of the Living God. So it is with the assignment which we and our children have. Wherever they eventually have their legitimate calling of business, there they have their place and there they must confess the Lord and reveal themselves as His property.

Their place, moreover, is to be strangers in this world. Which does not mean that they must follow the anabaptistic error of world-flight, but which does mean that the things they seek must be heavenly and not earthy. So urgent is this calling that Jesus *Strangers in* one time told a man to let the dead bury *the world.* the dead. Even if the dead therefore have to be left unburied, that were better than that we did not follow the Lord through this world. We are strangers here and pilgrims, wherefore the world knoweth us not. She cannot understand us when we refuse to fix our attention upon the mundane things as she does. We cannot make common cause with the world. They settle down and claim that they have found or will find what they seek, we on the other hand assert that we have here no abiding city but seek one to come.

Scripture exhorts us, saying, "Abide ye in Him". Ah, that is our place. In the world, indeed, but In CHRIST in the world. Elsewhere this same thing is defined thus, "walk in the light". Our place and the place of our children is, in Christ, in the light. What place must they take in this world? This place, "in Christ". That is to confess the truth as we have it in Scripture, never to forsake it but to follow the *Abide in* Lamb whithersoever He goeth. Their *Him.* place is in the light, always in the light, always there where, if the Word of God shines upon them and their works, it is evident that they belong just there. They may be in business, they may pursue a gainful calling, they may enter a profession, but all this while they walk in the light. Wherefore they must avoid darkness. They must fight against sin, Satan and his whole dominion. They must yield their place in business rather than their place in Christ. In spite of stress or duress, in spite of popular opinion they must abide in Christ. If their place in Christ makes their place in the world too small, even then to be faithful. That is their assigned place.

Peter speaks of the Christians as servants of God. That is our place. Not servants of greed or lust, of labor or capital, of nations, parties or movements, but first and last servants of God. If Peter speaks of Christians as servants of God, certainly the Christian

*Servants of the Lord.* school must instructa them in this service. As servants of God they shall be subject to the authorities, wives be subject to their husbands, husbands be subject unto Christ; servants subject to their masters, and masters mindful of their Master. Doing the will of God from the heart and seeking the welfare of God's Cause throughout their days in this world.

### Conclusion

We repeat once more, if such is their covenant assigned place is it not very evident that the instruction which we give our children in home and the school, must serve to prepare them to take that place. They have no other place. If they grow up in the covenant but are unfit for the place the covenant assigns them, they are complete misfits and they do damage to the Cause.

Paul said one time, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith".

May our covenant instruction be such that we and our children after us may repeat these words of Paul and we and our house serve the Lord.

(To be Continued) M. G.

## FROM HOLY WRIT

James 1:5 — "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

The connection between verse 5 and the preceding is not difficult to understand. James proceeds in his epistle from the church's position and calling in the midst of the world. A very tactful and realistic approach, indeed! The church is called by the Lord to be the party of the living God in a world which lieth in darkness. He exhorts the people of God to rejoice in the midst of their temptations because their faith, having been tried and having withstood and survived the test, works patience. Only, patience must have her perfect work. We must be patient unto the end. In order that we may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

However, to be the friend and party of God in the midst of affliction and persecution, to rejoice when we fall into divers temptations and be patient unto the end, we must possess and exercise the art of Christian wisdom. To this truth our attention is called in the verses 5-8. Notice the beautiful tact of James in verse 5. We do not read, "Ye all lack wisdom", but, "If any of you lack wisdom. . . ." The holy writer does not mean to imply that there might be some in the church

who do not lack wisdom. He is rather supposing this fact and he does so because of the general condition of the church in the midst of the world. "Surely", he means to say, "in the light of the condition of the church here below, you all, more or less, lack and therefore need wisdom." And, lacking wisdom, we shall, of course, ask it of God. The form of the expression, however, "If any of you lack wisdom", reveals the tact of the writer of this epistle.

What is wisdom? This, we understand, constitutes the main thought in this Word of God. Generally speaking, we may define wisdom as the faculty of making the best use of knowledge. Wisdom must not be identified with mere knowledge. It is generally known and accepted among men that a learned man is not necessarily a wise man. One can have enjoyed extensive learning in the various sciences, be acquainted with the sun and stars in the heavens and the life of man and animals and plants, and yet lack wisdom. Neither must we confuse wisdom with acumen, the power of penetration. We may then be quick to learn, be quick to perceive, to sense men's purposes and aims. A man may reveal this ability, e.g., in a game of chess or in the field of politics.

Wisdom, generally speaking, is the ability to adapt the best means unto the best end. It is essentially not theoretic but practical. Wisdom, therefore, implies an understanding of the relative value of things. The end must be known. Things must be understood in their proper relation to each other and as such properly evaluated. And understanding things in their proper relation to each other, wisdom acts accordingly and adapts the best means unto the best end. The figure of the wise and foolish builder in Matt. 7:24-27 is an outstanding illustration of the virtue of wisdom. Each man resolves to build a home. That is the end they have in view. Unto that end the best means must be employed and all things must be considered. We must surely build that house in such a way that the best means are used unto the realization of our purpose. We must therefore take into full consideration the storms and the wind and the rain. A foolish man builds upon sand, the wise man erects his house upon rock.

To rejoice in the midst of temptations we need wisdom, the spiritual wisdom of the Scriptures. The contrast of wisdom is foolishness. A spiritually foolish man is not an ignorant man. Knowledge does not guarantee wisdom. To be sure, knowledge of the Word of God must not be minimized. Yet, without grace all our knowledge of the Scriptures will have but one fruit and that is to verify the truth that foolishness is not ignorance and that the more we know the more clearly our foolishness will be revealed. Spiritual foolishness is deeply spiritual, is the wilful denial and rejection of the reality. The Reality proceeds from the basic truth



that God is the only Good. He is the only Good in Himself inasmuch as He is the Light and in Him is no darkness. And He is also that absolute Good consciously. Eternally He knows Himself, loves Himself, wills and seeks Himself. Consequently, the Lord is also the only Good for man. Man's joy and peace lie only in fellowship with God, in the blessed assurance, not only that he loves God, but also and fundamentally that God loves him. For the Lord loves and seeks Himself. Estrangement from His fellowship and love must therefore be the invariable result of sin. And by nature we are such sinners and objects of wrath. The Reality, besides proceeding from the basic truth that God alone is Good, also proclaims Christ as the only way of salvation. His is the only Name under heaven by which man can be saved. And He saves, we understand, by His cross and Word and Spirit. *Finally*, the Reality also speaks of the ultimate end of all things. Old things will pass away. All things will be made new. The earthy shall be replaced by the heavenly. And we shall have new heavens and a new earth where righteousness shall dwell.

Foolishness is the wilful denial and rejection of this reality. It certainly must not be confused with ignorance concerning it. It is impossible that we are fully acquainted with the Scriptures and that we entertain a fully Reformed conception of the truth. But to be foolish means that we do not recognize these truths spiritually. Foolishness does not reason, is not rooted in the intellect. It is spiritual, spontaneous, rooted in the heart. It hates God, loves the world and sin and the things which are below, hates the Christ. Instead of seeking the best end by making use of the best means, man is spiritually a fool, rejects the good, is gathering for himself death instead of life, eternal agony instead of everlasting joy and peace.

From this we may quickly conclude the correct implication of wisdom which we must ask of God. To be wise does not necessarily mean that we possess much learning, although a truly wise will increase in wisdom in the measure that he is acquainted with the Scriptures. Wisdom is that spiritual fruit of the grace of God, whereby we strive after the one all-important, alone-existing good, the glory of God's name, and press all things into our service to acquire it. Wisdom is therefore rooted in the fear of the Lord. This the Scriptures literally teach us. A wise man loves God. In that love he sees and knows his sin and longs for God as a hart panteth after the water brooks. And, knowing his sin, loving God, he seeks the fellowship of God, through Christ, already in this life, and has his sights set upon the heavenly city which has foundations. Wisdom therefore evaluates all things properly, seeks the eternal end, the crown of victory, and would walk here below with the joyful assurance that all things work together for our good.

How truly necessary is this wisdom in the midst of temptations! It is for this reason that James exhorts the church of God to acquire it. Fact is, the way of the Christian is a hard way. He must suffer afflictions and persecutions in the midst of the world. And always he must contend with his own flesh. The child of God is therefore inclined to be impatient. It is difficult always to see things in the light of the future, to reject Mammon for God, the world for heaven, joy for sorrow, fellowship with the world for the hatred and enmity of that world. We must therefore seek wisdom, in order that we may be able to regard the service of God sweeter than all honey, and that we may be able to view all things patiently in the light of the eternal future, always be able to reject the glories of Egypt and to endure the sufferings here below in order that we may receive the crown of victory.

James writes that we must ask wisdom. The word, translated "ask", emphasizes in the original the element of submissiveness and suppliantness, is the word constantly used for the seeking of the inferior from the superior. This word implies, on the one hand, a personal conviction of one's own foolishness and helplessness to become wise, and on the other hand a recognition of God as the only source of wisdom.

The prayer to the Lord for wisdom is assured of an answer, according to verse 5, because "The Lord giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not." Literally we read here: Let him ask of the giving God to all men liberally. The word "giving", therefore, appears before God. It receives the emphasis. God does not merely give. The Lord is a giving God. Giving characterizes God. Of course. Only giving *can* characterize the Lord. God cannot receive because there is nothing which is not His. All things belong to Jehovah. God cannot therefore be a receiving God. The very fact that He is God implies that He is a giving God. And this giving is a liberal giving because "He giveth liberally to all men." This does not necessarily refer to all humanity, head for head. But it does mean that, confined to the elect, the Lord gives to all. He has no favorites. He does not respect persons. He giveth liberally to all men.

God gives liberally. God gives. Only God can give wisdom. He alone is the source of wisdom. Therefore we must go to God. Moreover, He giveth "liberally". This word means literally "simply". The Lord gives simply, merely for the sake of giving. This is not true of us. We give, but for the sake of self, and at interest. We give and expect something in return. God, however, gives and seeks nothing in return. And this is indeed for us a matter of profound gratitude, for what would we be able to give unto the Lord?

It is for this reason that "He upbraideth not." Jehovah never upbraids, reproaches, blames or scolds us. We do. We will probably begin to upbraid and

reproach a person if he repeatedly asks us for a gift. We will remind him of the fact that it was very recent that he had asked us and that we had given him his request. But the Lord never rebukes, never reproaches us. He never tires of listening to our prayers and giving unto us our petitions. We can never approach the Father of all mercies too often. He is always ready to receive use. This is, indeed, an unspeakably blessed assurance. We have no wisdom in ourselves. God never wearies of our prayers. He is always ready to help. Let us therefore at all times ask of Him wisdom that we may continue to seek the things which are above.

H. V.

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## PERISCOPE

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### The Conference

#### *Third Session. . . .*

The Wednesday afternoon meeting of the Conference was opened by the Rev. G. M. Ophoff. He introduced the speaker, the Rev. E. Buehrer of green Bay-Wisconsin. Rev. Buehrer further developed the theme of the Conference "The Church" in his lecture on the topic: "The Commission of the Church".

#### *Resumé of Lecture. . . .*

"The Church is the body of God's elect gathered from all ages and nations, redeemed by the atoning blood of Christ and gathered by Christ through His Word and Spirit. To that Church has been given a commission. It is her's alone and no other organization can accomplish it. To commission, means to appoint and authorize to the accomplishment of a task or duty. It implies the following elements: first, a person who appoints and authorizes, secondly, a duty that is to be performed, and finally, a party authorized to perform that duty.

"Our subject deals with the duty which the Church has been commissioned to perform. In connection with this subject we will speak first, of what that duty is, and secondly, how it can be performed by the Church.

"If we were to infer from the Church as we see her today what her duty is we would arrive at strange conclusions. Observation of the Church as we see her would lead us to conclude that her task is to make the world better or to usher in the brotherhood of man. Further, that in the accomplishment of this duty she is to use the pulpit and social life. Since this is the modern emphasis we also have the present trend of unionism among the various organizations, as an effort to accomplish what is commonly agreed to be her call-

ing. It is evident, therefore, that the commission of the Church cannot be inferred from observation of her life in the midst of the world.

"The Scripture alone can be our guide and give us the duty of the Church. Here we find very clear and definite passages that delineate her duty. 'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.' Matt. 28:19-20. 'And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.' Mark 16:15-16. 'But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.' Acts 1:8. 'And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.' Matt. 16:18, 19.

"The passage from Matthew 28 usually receives the wrong emphasis. The passage reads: 'Go ye therefore, and *teach* all nations. . . .' More correctly this should read: 'and disciple all nations'. The emphasis is not on the going but on the preaching; to teach and train for discipleship. Mark adds this thought: 'and preach the gospel', and this agrees again with John 17:20, 'Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word'. The duty of the Church, therefore, is to testify of Christ. And this commission embraces all nations; all mankind.

In these passages we also have the charge to baptize. After the main charge of training to discipleship is added the commission to baptize. This commission emphasizes the truth of the Trinity since he who is baptized, is baptized into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The teaching, therefore, must have the truth of the Trinity as its heart, and must have this goal in mind. This commission is universal in scope. To it must be added the exercise of Christian Discipline. To carry out this commission, the Church has been given three means, therefore: the Word, the Sacraments, and Christian discipline.

"God has entrusted His Word to believers to carry out their commission. They receive His Word as the infallible Word of God; the only rule of faith and life. Further, among believers God has established a definite economy for the dispensation of His Word. He has appointed apostles and prophets, (these were special offices and are no more) evangelists, pastors and

teachers. By these, though not exclusively, the Gospel is proclaimed. This Gospel is the Gospel of reconciliation. And of this Gospel they must never be ashamed but proclaim it as the power of God unto salvation. Hence, they are to be engaged in two activities, preaching and catechization. This demands a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures and absolute loyalty to it. The commission authorizes the only means of the One Gospel and demands absolute fidelity to that Word of God.

"It is through the preaching of the Word that God gathers His Church. But though God gathers His Church through His Word and Spirit, we cannot know the immediate end of the preaching. Whether our preaching will be successful or not we do not know. However, the Word does not return void. Sometimes, it seems to us, we have an unfruitful task. Again, at other times, we may see much positive fruit of the preaching as, for example, Peter's preaching on the day of Pentecost.

"What is the purpose of the proclamation of the Gospel? Since God has eternally decreed election of a people, to what purpose is preaching and catechization? The answer is that God may be glorified by the revelation of the mighty power of His Word and Spirit. The elect are not gathered without means. Not only is His election, but also the means whereby God calls His own unto Himself, the revelation of His glory. Through His Word and Spirit God works in the hearts of His own the conviction of sin, moves them to confession and repentance and justifies them. Through it all they glorify His grace. The Church has been given this commission that God may be glorified in His elect Church. Through that Church He preserves the pure doctrine and true confession. That does not mean that God needs the Church to preserve the Truth, but that it has pleased Him to preserve the Truth in and through a true Church.

"God also equips those whom He calls. He gives men gifts and moves them to use these gifts for the accomplishment of the commission of the Church. By gifts all things are here included—money, talents, as well as qualifications for special offices. The gifts of all the members; and these are not usually the great men of this world. Yet, true christian leaders are found only in God's true Church, no matter how small she may be.

"Plus the positive preaching, warning also belongs to the commission of the Church. Paul exhorted the elders of Ephesus to take heed to all the flock. She must be warned and guarded in respect to enemies which will assault her.

"Besides the preaching of the Word, Christ has ordained and instituted the Holy Sacraments and Christian discipline. The administration of these belongs to the commission of the Church. They must be

observed and administered according to the Word of God. The practice of Christian discipline is expounded in our Heidelberg Catechism under a discussion of the Keys of the Kingdom in questions and answers 83 through 85.

"How is the Church qualified to perform her duty or commission? In Acts 1 we read that the Apostles will receive power after the Holy Ghost is come. It is clear that her duties cannot be performed by man with the innate abilities of his nature. The Holy Spirit prepares and qualifies those whom God calls. The Holy Spirit alone works in the Saints, fitting them to labor and perform their duties.

"How do we explain Christ's presence with the Church along with the agency of the Spirit? How must we understand the Resurrected Christ's position as Head and King of the Church in connection with the instrumentality of the Spirit as Comforter? Two answers present the same truth. In the first place, the Lord Jesus as Mediator applies all His blessings to the Church by the Spirit through the Word. In the second place, the exalted Christ works in the Church likewise by His Spirit through His Word. Christ's presence is not to be explained by the ubiquity of His human nature but through His Spirit He dwells with His Church.

"This presence of Christ, in the Spirit, involves gracious privileges. He performs, through the Church two functions: she is a Holy Society and a Missionary Institute. As a Holy Society she is a unity by virtue of the common Spirit. As such she gathers for worship and edification of the Saints, her members. They are One by virtue of the indwelling Spirit of the Lord. As a Missionary Institute she is the instrument of Christ by the Spirit for the ingathering of the elect and the propagation of the true faith. To perform these tasks God calls ministers of Christ who preach the Gospel as commissioned by the Church. Here again God gives gifts and offices that are needed. The Spirit always operates through the Word and where the Word is preached, there is the Spirit.

"How can the Church perform the work she is called to do? In the first place, we must remember that the Church is not the product of men. The Church is of God. She is gathered by the Son of God, through His Word and Spirit. In the second place, in the Church God has appointed officers whom He qualifies by His Spirit. He gives unto them gifts, which are the fruit of the Spirit, whereby the Church is equipped for her work. By this economy the Church performs the duties laid upon her."

#### DISCUSSION:

*The Rev. K. Korn:* "At the time of the flood, Noah was saved and his immediate household. Was he the minister?"



*The Rev. E. Buehrer:* "We read that Noah was a preacher of righteousness. Only his household was saved."

*The Rev. G. Lubbers:* "Did the speaker have in mind the Church as Institute or as we believe her to be the Communion of Saints? Does the commission concern the Church as Institute or Organism?"

*The Rev. E. Buehrer:* "The Church is God's elect people of which Christ is the Head."

*The Rev. W. Korn:* "Judas Iscariot was outside of Christ. Did he have a commission to preach?"

*The Rev. G. Lubbers:* "Jesus said: The Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Did Jesus recognize them as having the commission of the Church? He meant that they represented the authority of Moses and that we should do according to their words not their works. Baalim spoke the Word of God, he blessed Israel, yet he perished. He was not a child of God. In the New Testament dispensation ministers who do not believe may yet be used to the edification of the Church. Is their authority official? Is it the duty of the institute to preach?"

*The Rev. E. Buehrer:* "The Spirit is not poured out like you pour out coffee. You cannot talk of things spiritual outside of believers. We must distinguish between charismatic and general gifts."

*The Rev. H. Hoeksema:* "Is the institute an apparatus given to the body to help her fulfill her commission, and can the body then fulfill this commission through a reprobate? In other words, the question is whether the commission belongs to the Church as organism or as institute, and in the second place, can anyone serve the institute who is not in the body?"

*The Rev. R. Veldman:* "In as much as Christ gathers His Church by His Word and Spirit it is possible that a man in the ministry may be a reprobate but outwardly walks an upright life. Such a man can be used by God."

*The Rev. G. M. Ophoff:* "The commission does not come to the teaching ministry apart from the body, but to the body. But the body cannot execute its task through everyone; only through those called. Not all those in the body are vested with office."

*The Rev. A. Petter:* "The Bible indicates that there is an organic relation between the living Church and the work of the offices. Thus seven were appointed for the ministry of the poor. The need of the offices grows out of the organic life of the Church."

*The Rev. H. Hoeksema:* "Rev. Ophoff is correct. The commission of the Church does not come to the institute apart from the Church. The Body of Christ receives the commission. But the Church cannot exercise it without the institute, so Christ gave the institute that the Church through the institute exercises her commission. The Church is gathered by the Spirit through the Word but reprobates are gathered at the same time, even as candidates for the institute. Judas,

for example, was called and sent out to preach with the rest of the Apostles. It is possible, therefore, that for a time a reprobate may occupy an office and, as long as he holds himself to the Word, God may use him to build the Church."

*The Rev. J. De Jong:* "In the first place, I appreciate the approach of Rev. Buehrer. In connection with the commission of the Church, in our day and even in so-called Reformed circles, some emphasize the 'Winning of Souls' and others 'Witnessing for Christ'. We understand that 'winning souls' is beside the point and we should not have that idea, but should we not emphasize the idea of witnessing?"

*The Rev. C. Hanko:* "Did Rev. Buehrer say that he would limit the commission to the preaching to all nations? Or does it also include preaching the Word in the organized Church or Congregation? Does the commission include this ministry of the Word?"

*The Rev. E. Buehrer:* "I covered that under the head of the Church as a Holy Society meeting for worship and edification."

*The Rev. W. Korn:* "What is the difference between pastors and evangelists? Why are the latter omitted in Reformed Churches?"

*The Rev. G. Lubbers:* "Does the Church have a calling to attempt to better conditions in the world? Are we called, for example, to help clean up the towns in which we live, as much as possible? In a town, for example, in which there is no theatre, is it our duty to write and speak of its dangers and harm? Is this the voice of witness and part of our calling?"

*The Rev. E. Buehrer:* "The general body of believers receive gifts for common benefit."

*The Rev. H. Hoeksema:* "Rev. Lubbers proceeds from the assumption that the theatre is *per se* wrong and he must preach against it. Is this correct?"

*The Rev. P. De Boer:* "Is it part of the task of the Church to work for moral improvement? The Rev. Buehrer stated that this is the idea of the Modern Church and condemned it."

*The Rev. H. Veldman:* "What is the difference between missionary work and personal witnessing for Christ?"

*The Rev. E. Buehrer:* "The difference is the field of labor."

*The Rev. H. Veldman:* "Since the Church is commissioned to preach the Gospel, can only the minister perform this or anyone? May anyone preach the Gospel or the institute only?"

*The Rev. E. Buehrer:* "The Gospel is proclaimed though not exclusively, by pastors and teachers."

*The Rev. H. Veldman:* "What is the meaning of 'though not exclusively'?"

*The Rev. W. Korn:* "They speak *ex officio*."  
(To be continued)