

THE STANDARD

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MEDITATION

All Of Him

Wherefore David blessed the Lord before all the congregation of Israel: and David said, Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel, our father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.

I Chron. 29:10-15.

All of Him, none of self!

This confession is essential to real thanksgiving.

O, it is easy to rejoice in an abundance of things, of earthly bounties, of food and drink, of health and strength, of position and honor, of might and power, of victory and peace, and to confuse such carnal joy with the real joy of gratitude. . . .

It is quite conceivable that, on Thanksgiving Day, we exalt ourselves in sinful pride, boast in the things we possess and enjoy, attribute them in our deepest heart to our own ingenuity and efforts, thus boast in our own worthiness, while, perhaps, we acknowledge that the Lord came in to assist and to crown our worthy efforts, and thus, imagining that we can remunerate

the Lord of all for all His benefits, bring to Him the sacrifice of the wicked, and become abominable in the sight of Him, Whose is the earth, and the fulness thereof, the world, and they that dwell therein.

Thanksgiving does, indeed, imply joy and gladness of heart, but not in the abundance of earthly things, but in God Who is really GOD, the Lord of all, Who reigneth in the heavens above and on the earth beneath, Who doeth all things well; Who is, moreover, the God of our salvation in Christ Jesus our Lord, Who forgiveth all our iniquities, Who healeth all our diseases, and from Whose fatherly hand we receive all things, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, health and sickness, joy and sorrow, life and death, and Who causes all things to work for our salvation.

To give thanks means, to be sure, that we point to blessings received, and that we count them one by one, but not so that we exclude from these benefits anything that we received from the hand of our heavenly Father in this valley of death, so that we speak of "many things to be thankful for" while we know not what to do with those experiences that were contrary to our earthly desires; but so that we consider all things, by faith, and in the light of His promise, as gifts of His grace, for the which He is to be praised and adored.

It means that we praise Him and glorify His holy name because of the abundance of His mercy over us, but again, not in the vain imagination that by doing so we add anything to His glory, and oblige Him to us, but in the deep sense that even our thanksgiving and praise is a gift of grace, an unspeakably great privilege which He bestows upon us, and for the which we owe Him thanks.

And thus it implies that we deeply humble ourselves before Him, Who is God, the Lord, and acknowledge that we are wholly unworthy of all His benefits.

To acknowledge Him as God alone, and to prostrate ourselves in adoration before His throne, — that is thanksgiving.

All of Him, none of self!

None of self!

That is the deep note that pervades the praise of David in the thanksgiving we quoted above this meditation.

The king of Israel is old, and his days are well-nigh fulfilled. Yet a little while, and he will be gathered to his fathers.

Still he is concerned about the house of God he had so strongly desired to build in Jerusalem, but which work had been taken out of his hands by the Word of God through the prophet, and assigned to his son that would succeed him on the throne of Israel.

However, having set his affection on the house of God, he had collected a huge store of materials, in order that, in the days of his son, the work of building God's temple might proceed without delay, gold, and silver, and brass, and iron, and marble, and precious stones, and wood, in abundance. And of his own personal possessions he had added to this store, three thousand talents of gold, and seven thousand talents of refined silver.

And now the people had joined him, and had offered willingly for this cause of the Lord's house.

For this the king's heart overflows with joy in the Lord, and with praise to the God of Israel.

For he recognizes in this willing offering, his own, and that of the people, the grace of God over them.

There is in it none of self.

There is nothing to boast. Even of this pure joy of giving willingly, and with a perfect heart, they were unworthy.

"But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days are on the earth as a shadow, and there is none abiding."

Who are we?

Let us translate this profoundly humble acknowledgement of the king in terms of our own thanksgiving: "Who are we that we should be able to praise and glorify Thee, O Lord, so willingly, and bring our gratitude to Thee with joy of heart? For it is all of Thee! The things we receive from Thy fatherly hand, the knowledge that it is from Thee as our gracious God in Christ our Lord that we receive them, the assurance that all that Thou doest is well done, and that Thou causest all things to work together for good to them that love Thee, our joy and peace, as well our willingness to offer up our praise and thanksgiving unto Thy holy name,—it is all of thee!"

The blessings we count are thine!

The grace to remember them, and to praise Thee for them, is Thine!

And who are we?

Strangers and sojourners in the land!

As strangers in the land, we possess nothing. As

sojourners, that tarry but for a day, we have a right to nothing. Our day is as a shadow, for we have sinned, and we move about in the midst of death; there is none abiding.

Who are we?

What else are we than guilty and corrupt sinners, that are in ourselves worthy of death and damnation, unworthy and wholly incapable of the joy of offering up praise and adoration to the Most High, exiles from the house of God?

O, in all our thanksgiving there is none of self!

It is all of the God of our salvation, Who revealed Himself to us in the face of His Son Jesus Christ as our Reconciler and Redeemer; Who blotted out all our iniquities through the blood of the cross; and Who, by the power of His wondrous grace, drew us out of the mire of sin into the glory of His fellowship, and called us out of darkness into the marvellous light of His tabernacle, in which we rejoice in Him, and praise His holy name with thanksgiving!

None of self: none but sin and guilt and corruption!

None of self: not even our praise and adoration of His holy name. It is His gift to us.

O Lord, who are we?

All of Him!

And, therefore, unto Him!

To acknowledge this in our hearts, and to declare this before His face with holy reverence,—that is thanksgiving.

For, remember: He is God.

He is not a man that you should recompense Him for all His benefits. He is the absolutely self-sufficient Lord of heaven and earth. His are all things. All the gold and silver, the cattle on a thousand hills, you yourselves, your body and your soul, your mind and your will, all your power and talents, are His. And He is infinitely glorious, and perfectly blessed in Himself.

What, then, would you give Him, or do for Him?

Ever He is the Giver, never the Receiver.

The overflowing Fountain of Good is He, and we can approach Him only to drink from that Fount.

What, then, shall we render unto the Lord for all His benefits? Nothing, but then, absolutely nothing! How else, then, shall we bring the offering of our praise and thanksgiving to Him than by humbly and reverently acknowledging that He is all?

So does the king in his beautiful hymn of praise.

He simply exalts the name of the Lord.

"Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; and thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and Thou art exalted as head over all. Both riches and honor

come of Thee, and Thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all."

All of Him!

That is the keynote of this beautiful ascription of praise to the Most High. And that must needs be the sole theme of our thanksgiving to Him, of Whom, and through Whom, and unto Whom are all things!

Nor is such praise a mere abstraction, an ascription of glory to some unknown God, which we have learned by heart, but which has very little real and concrete meaning for our conscious life. On the contrary, it implies that we know the name of the Lord, as He revealed it unto us, and that, by faith, we have seen the revelation of that name as it concerns us, so that we know whereof we speak, and are impelled to prostrate ourselves before Him, in order to express what lives in our hearts of the glory of that name, and ascribe to Him blessedness, and greatness, and power, and glory, and victory, and majesty, and dominion, and exaltation over all.

Does not the king speak of the *name*, the glorious name of God?

"Now, therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name!"

The glorious name of God!

But what else does it mean than that He has revealed Himself to us in all the glory of infinite might and dominion, and majesty and greatness, and grace and mercy, and righteousness and truth, so that we may, indeed, know Him, and ascribe glory to His holy name? What else does it mean than that He made Himself known, not only as our Creator, Who calls the things that are not as if they were; but also and above all, as our Redeemer, Who loves us with an everlasting love, Who revealed His love and the mighty power of His grace to us in the face of Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son in the flesh, crucified and slain, and raised on the third day; as the One that blotted out all our iniquities, that clothes us with an everlasting righteousness, and that purposes to lead us to the everlasting glory of His heavenly tabernacle?

His glorious name!

What else does it mean than that we now behold all things in the light of that glorious revelation of himself in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord, whom He raised from the dead?

Do we not know Him, as we behold His glory in the face of Jesus, as the One that created all things with a view to the heavenly commonwealth of His eternal kingdom, in which Christ will be fully revealed as the firstborn of every creature, having the preeminence over all?

Contemplating His revelation in the name of Jesus, are we not assured that He governs all things with a view to the realization of His everlasting tabernacle,

the full manifestation of all the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the final glorification of His beloved Church in Him?

The glorious name of our God!

And do we not see all our present way, through this valley of death, all our experiences in this world, all that comes to us by His fatherly hand, in the light of that glorious name, joy but also sorrow, prosperity but also adversity, riches but also poverty, health but also sickness, life but also death; and are we not assured that all these things are ours, blessings of His grace to us, and that must all work together for our salvation?

Now, therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name!

For that thy name of salvation is near, thy wondrous works declare!

We thank thee!

To thank the Most High presupposes a joyful consciousness of having been blessed, of having received benefits, nothing but good things from Him. It means that we point them out. This is picturesquely expressed in the Hebrew original. It means "to throw out the hand," to point to something, to indicate blessings we received, to call attention to them as revelations of the goodness and glory of the Lord our God.

And thus we may praise Him.

We praise Him, because in all things we received out of His hand we recognize His glorious name, His power, His everlasting love and mercy over us, His wisdom, the wonder of His marvellous grace in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We praise Him by glorifying His virtues, as revealed in all His benefits.

And by declaring His glory to Him, and to men!

All of Him!

Joy in the Lord!

Such is the gladness of true thanksgiving.

And this rejoicing is possible only in the conscious acknowledgement that we are nothing, and that God is all.

Notice that this is, indeed, the essence and ground of the joy and gladness of the king and of the people, as expressed in this inspired praise and thanksgiving: "Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy." They rejoiced in the Lord, for they were glad because of the grace bestowed upon them to offer willingly unto the Lord their God!

It is the joy of the experience that the God of our salvation is our God for Christ's sake!

The joy of the consciousness that we drink from the Fountain of good!

It is a joy, pure and undefiled.

And enduring forever!

H. H.

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— CONTENTS —

MEDITATION:—

ALL OF HIM	97
Rev. H. Hoeksema.	

EDITORIALS:—

THREE POINTS AND FOUR	100
EXPOSITION OF THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM	102
Rev. H. Hoeksema.	
THE DEMAND OF THE PEOPLE AFTER A KING	105
THE TRANSFER OF THE PAPACY TO AVIGNON	109
Rev. G. M. Ophoff.	
CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION	110
Rev. M. Gritters.	
KOM, O GOD DER WRAKEN!	112
Rev. G. Vos.	
FROM HOLY WRIT	114
Rev. H. Veldman.	
PERISCOPE (The Conference)	116
Rev. W. Hofman.	

EDITORIALS**Three Points And Four**

With reference to what the Synod of Utrecht declared concerning God's attitude and relation to the wicked and reprobate in this world, we conclude, therefore:

1. That in the main issue, viz., the alleged grace of God to the reprobate in the preaching of the gospel, conceived as a well-meant offer of salvation to all that hear it, the Synod tacitly differed from the first of the three points adopted in 1924, by the Synod of Kalamazoo. In Utrecht they were well aware that this grace of God in the preaching of the gospel is the very heart of the "First Point". That they did not adopt it can hardly be regarded as unintentional. We conclude that the Netherland theologians were more Reformed than those of Kalamazoo.

2. That the declaration of the Synod of Utrecht concerning God's attitude to and dealings with the reprobate wicked in this world is too vague and ambiguous to serve as an officially accepted dogma of the Church that is supposed to be binding upon all its officebearers and members. It is difficult to understand why the Synod of Utrecht felt the need of declaring anything at all upon a matter that was so evidently in its undeveloped stage, unless it may be supposed that it felt itself obliged to support and express a measure of agreement with the Christian Reformed Church(es) here, in which case it made a bad job of it.

3. That we, as Protestant Reformed Churches, would no more subscribe to this declaration than to the First Point of Kalamazoo of 1924, if it were only because of its ambiguity and lack of clear conceptions.

But let us now turn our attention to the second and third declarations of the Synod of Utrecht on the matter of "common grace". These deal with the natural man, and are comparable to the second and third points of Kalamazoo, 1924. We quote them (translation ours):

"2. That He also left to man small remnants of his original creation-gifts, and some light of nature, even though this is entirely insufficient unto salvation, and man, even in things natural and civil, does not use this light aright. (Netherland Cong. Art. 14; Canons of Dordt, III, IV, 4);

"That these remnants and benefits must serve, not only to render man without excuse, but also to bridle the course (working through) of sin temporarily, and to cause that possibilities, given in the original creation, may still be developed in the sinful world."

On the same matter the Synod of Kalamazoo, 1924 expressed itself as follows:

2. "Regarding the second point, touching the restraint of sin in the life of the individual man and of society in general, Synod declares that, according to Scripture and the Confession there is such a restraint of sin. This is evident from the Scripture passages that were quoted, and from the Netherland Confession, Artt. 13, and 36, which teach that God, by a general operation of His Spirit, without renewing the heart, restrains the unbridled manifestation of sin, so that life in human society remains possible; while the citations from Reformed authors of the most flourishing period of Reformed theology prove, moreover, that our fathers from of old maintained this view.

"3. Regarding the third point, touching the performance of so-called civic righteousness by the unregenerate, Synod declares that, according to Scripture and the Confessions, the unregenerate, though incapable of doing any spiritual good (Canons of Dordt, III, IV, 3), are able to perform such civic good. This is evident from the Scripture passages quoted, and from the Canons of Dordt, III, IV, 4, and from the Netherland Confession, Art. 36, which teach that God, without renewing the heart, exercises such an influence upon man that he is enabled to do civic good; while it is, moreover, evident from the citations made from the Reformed writers of the most flourishing period of Reformed theology that our fathers from of old maintained this view."

Let us, first of all, compare these two sets of declarations.

There is very little similarity between them.

In fact, the only point of similarity must be found in this, that both speak of a restraint or bridling (*beteugeling*) of sin, although, even on this point, they quite radically differ as to the nature of this restraint, its cause, and its effect.

For the rest, the two declarations differ in every respect. Let us note the following important points of difference:

1. The declaration by the Synod of Utrecht proceeds from the remnants and natural light left to man after the fall. These are the subjects of its pronouncement. Of these it says something. The second and third points of Kalamazoo, however, deal with the matter of the restraint of sin. In this they take their point of departure. And concerning this subject they attempt to declare something. This is important, for by choosing as their subject the remnants left to man after the fall, the theologians of Utrecht were in a position to take their standpoint in the Confessions: they do, indeed speak of these remnants; while, by speaking of the restraint of sin, in the sense in which they do, the theologians of Kalamazoo at once left the basis of the Confessions: they do not speak of such a

restraint at all.

2. The declarations of Utrecht ascribe the "bridling" or restraint of the "working through" of sin to the remnants and natural lights of fallen man; the declarations of Kalamazoo boldly ascribe this restraint of sin to an operation of the Holy Spirit, and to an influence of God, and with equal boldness simply declare that such an operation of the Spirit of God is taught in the Confessions. This, too, is important, because: (1) the Synod of Kalamazoo thus declared that there are positive operations for good in the natural man, apart from regeneration; and (2) thereby denied the complete depravity of the sinner as he actually exists in this world. The Synod of Utrecht wisely refrained from speaking so boldly.

3. The declarations of Kalamazoo speak of the good that sinners do, through an influence of God upon them; but the declarations of Utrecht do not speak of this good at all. They are content to speak of the bridling or restraint of sin, caused by the remnants and the natural light that are left to fallen man.

4. The declarations of Utrecht are honest enough to remind us that the Canons teach that the natural man does not use his remnants and natural light aright, even in things natural and civil, although they should have proceeded a step farther, and also have stated that the sinner wholly pollutes this natural light, and holds it in unrighteousness, for the same article of the Canons states this also. The Synod of Kalamazoo, however, not knowing what to do with these statements of the Canons, and surely not being able to use them in support for their alleged good that sinners do by an operation of the Spirit upon them, omitted them entirely, and quoted only the first part of Canons III, IV, 4. This can hardly be ascribed to an oversight on their part, of course, but rather reveals that they were quite conscious of the fact that this last part of article 4 of Canons III, IV quite condemned their doctrine about the good that sinners do.

5. The declarations of Utrecht refrain from trying to find support in the Confessions, when they interpret the remnants and natural light, left to the natural man, as serving the purpose of restraining sin; but the declarations of Kalamazoo boldly refer to the Confessions, without any ground or sense, for their doctrine that sin is restrained by an operation of the Holy Spirit.

6. The declarations of Utrecht have a remote reference to the Kuyperian theory that, through the power of common grace, God carries out His original creation ordinance, when they declare that the remnants left to man after the fall, "cause that possibilities, given in the original creation, may still be developed in the sinful world." The declarations of Kalamazoo have nothing at all that pertains to this view of Kuyper.

On the whole, therefore, we may say that the de-

clarations of Utrecht are much more sober than those of Kalamazoo; and the latter are much worse than the former.

Certain it is, that although the theologians of the Netherlands were well acquainted with the doctrine that had been adopted in 1924, by the Synod of Kalamazoo, and with the controversy about this doctrine, they did not at all support their sister church, though, probably, this was their original purpose.

Nor can it be said, that the two sets of declarations supplement each other, or that those of Kalamazoo are, at least, implied in those of Utrecht. If the restraint of sin is to be ascribed to the remnants of natural light, left to man after the fall, it cannot be ascribed to a special operation of the Holy Spirit. The theory of A. Kuyper Sr., which the Synod of Kalamazoo attempted to establish as an official dogma of the Church, is that sin is to be compared to a dose of parish green, which our first parents swallowed, and that common grace is the antidote, that caused them to vomit out this poison, or, at least, part of it. Hence, man is not so depraved as he might have been without this antidote. Somehow there is in him a remnant of original goodness. But this is quite different from the view that the natural man has some remnants of his original creation-gifts, and of natural light.

We can only conclude that the Synod of Utrecht could not see eye to eye with that of Kalamazoo.

But how to judge of the declarations of Utrecht considered by themselves?

As to point 2, one can very well subscribe to it, as far as it goes. For it declares nothing more than what is literally in the Confessions.

And although it may be considered a virtue that a Synod adheres literally to the Confessions of the Church, rather than, in a round about way formulating points that have nothing to do with the Confessions, to introduce false doctrine into the Church, as did the Synod of Kalamazoo; yet, one wonders why the Synod of Utrecht considered it necessary to make such a declaration, as contained in its second point under *Common Grace*, at all. It certainly expresses nothing new, nor does it bring an old truth to further development, or shed light upon an established truth.

In fact, the original form of this truth, as it is expressed in Canons III, IV, 4, is to be preferred above that adopted by the Synod of Utrecht. Instead of saying: "all this is entirely insufficient unto salvation, and man, even in things natural and civil, does not use this light aright," the Canons declare: "But *so far* is this light of nature from being sufficient to bring him to a saving knowledge of God, and to true conversion, that *he is incapable* of using it aright even in things natural and civil."

This is much stronger.

There is a marked difference between saying that a man does not use the natural light aright, and saying that he is *incapable* of doing so.

H. H.

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

Part Two.

Of Man's Redemption

Lord's Day XXI

3.

The Gathering of the Church (cont.)

As well might we present the work of creation as being the product of the cooperation between God and man, as to give any credit to man for the marvelous work of gathering the Church of Christ out of the whole human race.

The Church is not a human society that comes into existence by the free will and choice of its members, and which you may either join or refuse to join. Nor is it a school of philosophy, the disciples and adherents of which imbibe and follow the teachings of a great thinker. It cannot be compared to a mighty religious movement, such as Mohammedanism, or Confucianism, initiated by some influential personality or religious fanatic, who died long ago, but whose followers are still inspired by his precepts and example. The Church is something far different. It is the living body of the living Christ, the Son of God in the flesh, Who died and rose again, Who is exalted into the highest heavens, clothed with all authority and power in heaven and on earth, and Who now gathers unto Himself His Church, and builds the house of God. The Church therefore does not come into existence by the work of men that join the Church or organize it; it is not even the product of preachers that persuade men to become church-members; it is not the result of the combined efforts of God and man; it is the wonder-work of grace, which God alone accomplishes through Jesus Christ our Lord by His Spirit and Word.

Hence, the Church is gathered out of and separated from the whole human race as the congregation of saints, through the divine calling. The Greek word used in Scripture to denote the Church is *ekklesia*, the gathering of those that are called out. And throughout, the Holy Scriptures teach us that the Church

comes into being through the calling of God, by His Spirit and Word. Concerning the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, the prophet declares: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." Hos. 11:1. Through Isaiah, the Lord proclaims: "But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed thee, O Israel, fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name: thou art mine." And again: "Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; Even every one that is called by my name." Isaiah 43:1, 5-7. And again: "Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee and not cast thee away." Isaiah 41:9. Picturing Judah as a child born of heathen parents, cast out into the open field, and cared for by none, the Word of God through Ezekiel declares: "And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live." Ezek. 16:6.

In the New Testament this divine calling of the Church is always emphasized. In the epistles of Paul the congregation of believers is addressed as the communion of those that are *called* to be saints. Rom. 1:7; I Cor. 1:2. Inseparably uniting the Church of the old and new dispensation, the apostle Paul writes: "Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles. As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there they shall be called the children of the living God." Rom. 9:24-26. To the church of Corinth the apostle writes: "God is faithful, by whom ye were called into the fellowship of his son Jesus Christ our Lord." I Cor. 1:9. He marvels that the Galatians are so soon removed from him that called them into the grace of Christ, Gal. 1:6; and he writes to the Thessalonians that God called them by the gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, II Thess. 2:13. The church is gathered out of the world through the divine calling: "Wherefore, come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." II Cor. 6:17. And again, the Word of God calls; "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Eph. 5:14. For "the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." John 5:25. And Christ must gather all His sheep, not only from the Jews, but also from

the Gentiles; and when He does, "they shall hear his voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." John 10:16. In all these passages Scripture plainly teaches that it is through the divine calling that the Church is gathered out of the whole human race.

This calling is of God, through Christ, by His Spirit and Word, and through the preaching of the Gospel.

It is of God, and, therefore, it is a powerful calling, efficacious, accomplishing that which it speaks and unto which it is sent forth. Man's word is vain and powerless, even though it proclaims the gospel. It may be ever so persuasive and forceful, but it can never bring one soul out of darkness into the light; it is incapable to add even one member to the body of Christ. He calls the things that are not as if they were, and He quickens the dead. When He speaks: "Let there be light," there is light. When He addresses the Church as she is in her blood, and says "Live," she lives. By His Word, the guilty are justified, the polluted are made holy, the darkness is transformed into the light, the dead are raised; the holy catholic Church is gathered out of the corrupt, damnable, and dead human race.

This divine calling, whereby the Church is gathered out of the world, is realized through Jesus Christ our Lord. Always God speaks through His Son. The worlds are formed by the divine Word of God. However, in that Word of God as it comes to us through creation and providence, there is no hope, for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven over all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. Through that Word the holy catholic Church could never be called out of the world. And people who, in self-willed piety and religiousness, pretend that they prefer to listen to the Word of God in nature, rather than seek the preaching of the gospel through the Church, can do so only in their folly, and to their own damnation. For it is not in nature that the Word of God unto salvation is heard. God calls His Church through Christ. And Christ is the Son of God in the flesh, who revealed the Father, Who died for our sins, Who was raised for our justification, Who merited for His Church all the blessings of salvation, Who is exalted at the right hand of God, Who has received the promise of the Holy Spirit, and through Whose Word and Spirit God gathers His Church out of the corrupt human race. We may, therefore, also express it thus: the Son of God in the flesh, our exalted Lord Jesus Christ, speaks the Word of the divine calling, whereby the Church is gathered out of the world. When He speaks to you, you hear the voice of Jesus, calling and gathering the sheep the Father gave Him. His is the mighty Word of the God of your salvation, whereby you are called out of darkness into light, out of death into life, out of the natural fellowship of the guilty and sinful human race

into the fellowship of His body, the communion of saints. And this Word you hear, when Christ Himself speaks to you efficaciously by His Spirit.

This is what the Catechism means when it instructs us that the Son of God by His Spirit and Word gathers unto Himself a Church chosen unto everlasting life.

However, this divine calling reaches us through the preaching of the gospel. Do not for a moment imagine that here, at last, the gathering of the Church becomes the work of man. For, first of all, the gospel is not ours but Christ's. It is His Word. He revealed it. In fact, He is the gospel. And it is always He that speaks it. Nor does this change when He causes that gospel to be proclaimed unto us, and delivers its contents to His people in the Holy Scriptures: without His own Spirit and Word the Bible could never have been. And again, the work of gathering His Church does not become dependent on man, when the Lord commissions and calls prophets, apostles and evangelists to proclaim His Word; or when He instituted His Church, and gives unto her pastors and teachers, that through them the Church may preach the gospel unto all nations. For without Him there could be no preaching. It is He that calls and prepares the preachers; it is He that sends them whithersoever He will; and it is He that speaks through their preaching by His Spirit to gather His Church. Hence, even though it be through the instrumentality of the preaching of the gospel, the Church is always gathered, not by men, but by Christ, the Son of God, through His Spirit and Word.

This divine calling is heard throughout the ages, and the Church is gathered from the beginning even unto the end of the world.

We dare not object to this that before the fulness of time Christ was not yet, and that, therefore, He could not gather His Church from the human race during the old dispensation. For although in time Christ had not yet been revealed, in God's eternal counsel the Son of God had been anointed the Head of His Church before the foundation of the world. And in the days of the old dispensation He functioned and revealed Himself, and sent forth His Word by His Spirit, as the Christ that was to come. It was through Christ that God sent forth the Word of the gospel in Paradise, immediately after the fall, and began to gather His Church in our first parents. It was through Christ that Enoch proclaimed the day of the Lord, and that Noah became a preacher of righteousness. And was it not through Christ that Abraham was called out of Ur and Haran? And do not the Scriptures teach us that God, purposing to justify the heathen through faith, "preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed?" Gal. 3:8. Did not Abraham long to see His

day? Did he not, together with all the Old Testament saints, die in faith, "not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off?" Heb. 11:13. Was it not through Christ that God called His Son out of Egypt, and was not Christ leading His Church all through the desert, so that He was the spiritual rock that followed them, and out of which Israel drank? Is not Christ the end of the law, revealed in all the shadows of the old dispensation? And did not all the prophets speak by the Spirit of Christ that was in them? Does He not Himself declare that all through the old dispensation He was gathering Jerusalem's children as a hen gathereth her chicks?

And in the fulness of time He came, and the gospel was realized in His incarnation, death, resurrection, and exaltation into glory. Still He speaks by His Spirit and Word. He commissioned His apostles, and in them the Church, to preach the gospel to every creature, and gave them the promise that He would be with them even unto the end of the world. He, the exalted Lord, through His Spirit and Word, still speaks through the preaching of the gospel, and gathers His Church from every nation and tongue and tribe, and will do so until the last one of His brethren shall have come unto Mount Zion, the city of the living God.

To this we must add that in this world Christ gathers His Church in the line of continued generations. When He establishes His Church in the world, He does not gather certain individuals arbitrarily and at random, but He calls the families, and continues His Church in their generations. Thus it was in the old dispensation. He gathered His Church in the line of Adam, Seth, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, according to the Word of His promise: "I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." Gen. 17:7. And the same truth is proclaimed by Peter in the dawn of the new dispensation: "For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts 2:39.

The result is that on earth the Church is the gathering of believers and their children, baptized in the name of the triune God. And it is incumbent upon the Church in each generation to preserve the truth of the gospel, and to deliver it to the next: the children of the Church must be instructed in the fear of the Lord. The result is, too, that the Church on earth, is never pure, for they are not all Israel that are of Israel. The carnal seed ever springs up among the spiritual seed of the Church to corrupt it. It is from this carnal seed that the false church develops and the final great apostasy will arise, that will be precursory to the ultimate revelation of the man of sin, the son of per-

dition, the Antichrist. Hence, the Church is always called to watch and pray, and put on the whole armor of God, that she may be able to stand in the evil day. Doing this she may be of good cheer, for she is founded upon the rock which is Christ, and the gates of hell cannot overwhelm her. The Son of God, Who gathers His Church, also defends her by His great power, and will surely preserve her even unto the end.

This Church, the Catechism instructs us, is gathered from the beginning even unto the end of the world.

Ever since God visited our fallen parents in Paradise, and Himself revealed the gospel unto them in the Protevangel: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel"; even unto the days of the final manifestation of the man of sin, the Church is called, by the Spirit and Word of the Son of God, out of the whole human race, even though, for a period, she is found almost exclusively in the nation of Israel.

In fact, from a higher viewpoint, we may even say that the formation of the Church goes back to creation, and that the temptation by Satan and the fall of Adam and Eve are subservient to the purpose of God to bring the Christ into the world, and to gather unto Himself a Church chosen unto everlasting life.

This confession, that the Church is gathered from the beginning to the end of the world, stands opposed to the view of those, who present the Church as an interim, as the body of Christ in distinction from the kingdom-people of Israel, that is gathered from the day of Pentecost until the fulness of the Gentiles shall have been gathered in.

In view of what was said on this point in the chapter "The Meaning of Pentecost," and considering that more must be said on this important question in our discussion of infant baptism, we need not dwell at length on it now.

Only one observation we wish to make here.

It is this, that those who insist that Israel is a separate people, and that the promises made to them in the Old Testament must be understood as having reference to that nation alone, and not to the Church, refuse to read the Old Testament in the light of the New, and to interpret the Bible in its own light.

When we teach that Israel is the Church, and that the latter is the true and only Israel of God, we do not expose ourselves to the indictment of false allegorization or spiritualization of Scripture, but we simply adopt the Bible's own method of interpretation.

The truth of this might be demonstrated from many passages of Holy Writ. But let it be sufficient,

in this connection, to refer to just one that quite proves the point. I have in mind Hos. 1:10, 11 in comparison with Rom. 9:24-26. In the former passage we read: "Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God. Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel." When this passage is read in its own light, it simply speaks of the old covenant people, more particularly of the ten tribes. To them, because of their apostacy from Jehovah, it was said: "Ye are not my people." But they shall be restored, and they shall be called the sons of the living God. United they shall be with Judah under one head. And the glory of their restoration shall be great.

But a clear commentary upon this Old Testament passage we have in Rom. 9:24-26. There we read: "Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles. As he hath said in Osee, I will call them my people which were not my people; and her beloved which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God."

H. H.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

The Demand Of The People After A King

As we have seen, great things had been accomplished through Samuel, his prayers and prophesyings. Eli's wicked sons had been destroyed, the gods of the heathen put away, the Philistines discomfited, and the people of Israel delivered in the way of repentance and return to the Lord. Having thus overcome, Samuel judged Israel, going from year to year in circuit to Bethel and Gilgal and Mizpah. Having thus been engaged perhaps for some fifteen years, he on a day was paid a visit by the elders of Israel, who came to him in Ramah. Their request was that he make them a king to judge them like all the nations. Why should they be asking for a king? The reasons they gave were that Samuel was old and that his sons

walked not in his ways. It was true what they said. Samuel was old. And he had made his two sons judges over Israel as his assistants—his two sons, Joel, the firstborn, and Abiah. It was also true that these sons walked not in his ways. They turned aside after lucre, and took bribes and perverted justice. Such is the testimony of the sacred writer. And the elders were holding Samuel responsible for the crimes of his sons. They held it against him that he continued them in office. He should have deposed them long ago. The text at chapter 12:3 indicates that there were whispering among them that Samuel might even be a partner to their crimes. So the elders told him that the thing for him to do was to resign with his sons to make room for a king. Being old, he had served his usefulness; and his sons were a bad influence.

Samuel did not reply to the elders immediately. Doubtless he could not. For the request was evil and thus to a man like Samuel too soul-disturbing, especially its implications. (The thing was evil in Samuel's eyes, chapter 8:6). What they told him about his sons he doubtless had heard before; and it is a good conjecture that he had taken them severely to task and would have discharged them had he not felt certain that they were mending their ways. But it is not likely that they had altogether ceased to offend, so that the elders could justly say to him that his sons walked not in his ways. Painfully aware that they might be speaking the truth about them and holding himself responsible for their misrule, he was doubtless too mortified and dispirited to frame a proper reply at that moment. Judges who like his sons turned aside for lucre, the elders did well to reject. He found no fault with them on that score. He would not have continued his sons in office had he known the truth about them. He was not that kind of a saint. With him there was no respect of persons. But his hearing the elders reject also him must have wounded his soul, cut deep into his heart and filled his soul with misgivings.

Having dismissed the elders without tendering them a reply, Samuel unburdened his soul in prayer to God. The prayer is not revealed to us; but the Lord's reply forms the index to its substance, especially the statement, "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." Samuel was not sufficiently mindful of this. He imagined that they had actually rejected not the Lord, but him, Samuel — rejected him on account of his age but especially on account of the atrocities of his sons. Being the kind of a man he was, he must have been accusing himself before God for having brought on that crisis through his continuing those unprincipled sons in office; and telling the Lord that it was his, Samuel's, fault that they were now insisting that he resign and make them a king. Thinking on

the matter, he was grief-stricken and his heart was troubled. For their clamouring for a king was evil in his sight, and the thought that the fault lay with him, was too painful for words.

But the Lord, who knows man's heart, assuaged Samuel's grief by revealing to him that he had misjudged those elders. "They have not rejected thee but they have rejected me. . . ." It means that Samuel must not blame himself alone for their doing; that his age and the misrule of his sons had little to do with it. It may seem at the first reading of this reply that the Lord speaks here in riddles. For the fact of the matter is that the elders had spoken not one word against the Lord, but had concentrated solely on the age of Samuel and the misrule of his sons as the cause of their dissatisfaction. Taking them at their word, we are shut up to the view that what they wanted is not the abdication of the Lord at all but solely the removal of Samuel and his sons. It is Samuel and his evil brood that they reject not certainly God. For these elders, so it seems, are pious men. They ask for the removal of corrupt judges and thus are interested in righteous government. Can it be true of such men that they want not the Lord? The Lord's reply to Samuel contains still another statement that may perplex us, "*And the Lord said unto Samuel, hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee*—thus make them a king—for they have not rejected thee, but me have they rejected. . . ." So then *just because* they rejected not Samuel but the Lord, Samuel must do as they requested. So the Lord commanded. At first glance, this mandate, too, may prove perplexing. However, the Lord's reply will be understood if thoughtfully attended to. What the Lord meant by saying that they had rejected not Samuel but Him is, that what they basically were interested in was ridding themselves not of old, discrepant and corrupt judges in Israel, but of Jehovah their king. Assuredly, they had rejected Samuel, and the Lord meant not to deny it. But the point to the Lord's reply is, that they had not rejected Samuel for the reasons they gave, which were that he was old and that his sons took bribes and perverted judgment, and that Samuel had continued these miscreants in office instead of discharging them. In saying that they objected to Samuel on these grounds, they were pretending. Their real objection to him—an objection that they, to be sure, did not dare voice—was that he, as judge, would not walk with them in their sins, bless them in their iniquity, and pray for their deliverance with them prostrated at the shrine of Baal. These were the actual reasons of their coming to him with the request that he resign with his sons to make room for a king to judge them in his stead. Samuel was of the party of God, the champion of His cause before men. Hence, ridding themselves

of Samuel, they rid themselves of the Lord; and to rid themselves of the Lord, they must rid themselves of Samuel; for Samuel and the Lord were one. This being true, their insistence that Samuel resign was at bottom a request that he rid them of God through his ridding them of himself, and that he thereupon make them a King in the room of the Lord and Samuel.

It is then so very true what the Lord said, "They have not rejected thee (that is, rejected thee on account of thy age and the misrule of thy sons) but me have they rejected (and therefore also thee in that thou and I are one). The truth of the Lord's reply is born out by their exaggerations. They said to Samuel that he was old, meaning that his age had disqualified him for the duties of his office. But they were making too much of that. At the time there still was in store for Samuel twenty years of active service. He had yet to anoint two kings—Saul and David—and to guide the destinies of the nation during the reign of the first. Thus his natural force was still far from being spent at that juncture. He was still the competent judge of yore, physically strong and vital despite his years, and mentally as keen, alert, and penetrating as ever. That was Samuel at the time the elders in Israel came to tell him that he was old, too old, and that therefore the thing for him to do was to resign and make them a king to judge them like all the nations. That was the man of whom they wanted to rid themselves—a man who, as their judge, feared God and eschewed evil and at whose heart the interests of God's covenant lay very close, a man through whose fervent and effectual prayer they had but recently been delivered from the terrible oppression of a Philistine dominion, a man who could not be bribed, whom no one had even dared attempt to bribe. For the integrity of the man, his hatred of corruption, the way he was wont to denounce and condemn sin in high places, was known to all so that his fear was upon all. He was the very horses and chariots of Israel. Did they not want to realize this? How dared these elders complain to Samuel or to anyone else for that matter about the perversions of Samuel's sons as if they, these elders themselves, were lovers of truth and justice and interested for God's sake in righteous government, if they were resolved among themselves that a judge of Samuel's virtue, competency, and achievements—by faith he had overcome the world there in Canaan—abdicate in order to make room for a king to judge them like all the nations! What hypocrites those elders were!

And yet, Samuel's two unprincipled sons, these sons in office perverting judgment, raises perplexing questions. Had Samuel's preoccupation with the manifold duties of his office, through the years of the past, resulted in his neglecting the religious training of his

sons? This is too unlikely. Though he may not have been with them as much as he had liked, he had not ceased to instruct, admonish, and exhort them in their youth. And being the kind of a man that he was, he had all along set them the best of examples. There is also the question whether he was aware of the evil doings of his sons as his assistants in his office of judgeship. It may be that what they told him about his sons, formed a report of events of which he was completely ignorant. However unlikely this view, no statement occurs in the sacred narrative forbidding its adoption. It is significant that in his reply to Samuel's prayer, the Lord made no mention of Samuel's sons, except by implication. What this indicates is not that they were being falsely accused of men but that, for a reason unrevealed, the Lord was not blaming Samuel for their conduct. Certain it is that if Samuel was condoning sin in high places, just because these places were being occupied by his own flesh and blood, the Lord would no more have spared him than he had Eli.

Though the elders as the representatives of the people, had rejected Jehovah their king, they felt that they could not do without a king and with reason. It was the age of the judges in which every man did that which was right in his own eyes. There was no order. It had long given way to chaos and discord, carnal self-will, licentiousness, and passion. The national bond had relaxed and the nation assumed the form of several independent and rival kingdoms. It was on account of the prevalence of these conditions that the elders wanted a king to rule over the nation. But they did not desire the kind of a king the Lord by the mouth of Moses said they might have, a king "whom the Lord should choose", one who "when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom. . . . writes him a copy of the law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites that it may be with him and that he may read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of the law and those statutes, to do them: that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children, in the midst of Israel" (Deut. 17:15-20). In a word, they did not want a king of the party of God, with the fear of God in his heart, and bringing the nation under the yoke of God's law. Their wanting such a king would have been equivalent to their wanting Jehovah. But Jehovah they had rejected. What they wanted is a man strong and capable, a leader of men, a god among his fellows, in whom men of common clay naturally put their confidence, thus a man supremely qualified to free them from the results of their apostacy,—which was war, oppression, chaos and passion,—as one willing to serve

with them in Baal's temple. What they wanted is victory, freedom, and prosperity and peace without truth and righteousness, heaven without God. The kind of king for which they asked is one who would give them these things without placing them under the necessity of eschewing evil and fearing God.

"And the Lord said unto Samuel, Harken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee."

Mark the statement, "So do they also unto thee." They afforded the Lord and Samuel a like treatment and this of necessity as the Lord and Samuel were one. *And just because* they have rejected the Lord and Samuel his servant, Samuel must do as they requested; hearken unto their voice. So the Lord commanded. The implied meaning of the mandate is not that had they loved the Lord, Samuel would have been commanded to turn down their request. Had they feared God, they would not at all have asked for a king. But the question remains how it must be explained that Samuel must make them a king *because they rejected the Lord*. The explanation is this. The Lord was Israel's king, and the instruments through which He exercised His rule were adequate. After the death of Joshua there subsisted in the nation a government which is indicated by the name "elders". They were not chosen by the people but were the born princes and representatives of the people. Their task was to preside and to watch over the general interests of the nation and so to continue the rule of Moses and Joshua. For settlement of matters of general concern, they congregated in the central point of the land, which in the time of the judges was Shechem. They formed a high council in Israel which in great crisis such as war could confer its authority on a single individual. But it was not a law-making body, for Israel's sole legislator was God. His laws he had communicated to the nation by Moses, and the elders were in duty bound to act by the existing legislation as supplemented, in all matters of public importance, by the will of God as revealed through the instrumentality of the "Breastplate of Judgment" or Urim and Thummim. As this device could be directly consulted solely by the highpriest, the finally decisive word of God could be had only from this dignitary, who thus, in a sense, came to take the place of Moses in the assemblies of the nation.

Besides the council of elders as headed by the highpriest, the nation had also its judges which according to the commandment of Moses (Deut. 16:18) the people chose for themselves in all the gates through-

out the tribes. If the task of the council of elders was to watch over the general interests of the nation, that of the judges was to determine, in the light of Moses' laws, questions of dispute in contests of law between individuals.

To the Levites, as assistants to the priests, were given the task of teaching the nation the law. The purpose of the appointment of the cities of refuge was to prevent the shedding of innocent blood. Certainly, the nation was in the possession of all the necessary institutions for righteous administration, maintenance of order and preservation of national unity, so that there was no need of a king other than Jehovah, if only the nation feared God and kept His covenant. Then the Lord would have commanded His blessings upon them in the city and in the fields, in the fruit of their body and the fruit of the ground and in the fruit of their cattle. Then he would have caused their enemies that rose up against them to be smitten before their face and to come out against them one way and to flee before them seven ways, Deut. 28:2ff. It means that the conditions in Israel that called for a king—such conditions as war, oppression, lawlessness, carnal self-will, licentiousness—resulted from the nation's unwillingness to be one by a common faith in the Lord, from the people's indisposition to serve God and keep His covenant. The carnal Israel did not want peace and prosperity from the hand of God on the condition that they be his people wholly consecrated to him. If life and property and freedom from oppression could be had only in the way of obedience to the Lord, they preferred death to life. In the light of these observations, we can understand the Lord's mandate to Samuel, "Harken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee *for they have rejected me*." The Lord had determined that Israel should have a king. Yet the conditions that called for a king resulted, as was explained, from their unwillingness to serve God; and their request for a king rose from their unwillingness to be saved and prospered by God in the way of their serving Him. It was thus in reply to a deeply sinful asking, that the Lord gave Israel a king; but so did he advance the cause of His kingdom and covenant, namely through the unbelief and apostasy of the carnal Israel.

Though Samuel must hearken unto the voice of the people, he must not fail "to protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them." As the request was deeply sinful, it had to be protested. The king that Samuel set forth in his protest was plainly an oriental despot, a heathen ruler, a godless man and thus a cruel tyrant, who regarded his subjects as existing for himself and treated them as such. This was really the kind of a king for which the people had asked. For their request had been that Samuel make them a king in

the room of the Lord and Samuel, that he thus set over them a tyrant, fearing God nor man. "This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you," said Samuel to the people, and then went on to tell them what he would claim from his subjects, according to the custom of heathen rulers. For example, "He will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. . . . And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give them to his officers, and his servants. . . . And ye shall be his servants." These words include all that is said before; the loss of all their freedoms and with reason. It was with their eyes on the kings of other nations that the people had demanded a king. What they asked for they would receive. And they shall cry out in that day because "of your kings which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day." But the people would not repent. "Nay", said they, but we will have a king over us; that we may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles."

G. M. O.

THROUGH THE AGES

The Transfer of the Papacy To Avignon

As was seen, king Philip IV of France was the first ruler to defy the pope without either being destroyed or even once humiliated. It shows, as was said, that the peoples of Europe and in particular the people of France were losing much of their dread for the pope's thunderings. His spiritual weapons no longer availed. The people of France therefore dared to support their king in his warfare with the pope.

Nothing more is indicative of this change of attitude than the literary attacks upon the papacy at this time. The Holy Roman Empire was declared antiquated and the states of Europe was said to be sovereign within their own boundaries. The arguments for the independent and sovereign states were derived from reason, Aristotle and the Scriptures. Three propositions were advanced. 1) The monarchy is necessary. 2) The monarchy is the possession of the people. 3) God bestowed it directly upon the Romans, and it did not come through the mediation of the papacy. The argument runs as follows. An impartial arbiter is necessary to society and only a monarchy that is universal, and independent, and sovereign can be impartial. The blessings of such a monarchy are peace

and liberty, God's greatest gift to man. The noblest people are the Romans deserving of the right to rule. This right was given by Christ himself. By consenting to be born under Augustus and to suffer under Tiberius brought Himself under Roman jurisdiction. It was witnessed to by the church when Paul said to Festus, "I stand at Ceasar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged." The two governing agents indispensable to society are the pope and the emperor. The supremacy in temporal affairs belongs exclusively to the emperor. His task is to give men guidance to life eternal in agreement with the truths of revelation. But the emperor should revere the pope with a reverence that a first-born son pays to his father.

But the theory of the temporal power of the papacy also had its defenders. There was the tract of Aegidius Romanus, 1247-1316. It sets forth the following teachings. The pope judges all things and is judged by no man. To the pope belongs full power. This power is measureless, numberless and without weight. All Christians are subject to it. The pope is superior to all laws and infallible in matters of religion. Like the sea he fills all vessels, like the sun he sends his rays into all things. The priesthood was first in order of time, royalty second. Nimrod followed Abel and Noah. The militant church can have but one source of power, one supreme government, one head to whom belongs all power. This is the pope of Rome. God immediately appointed the priesthood and the papacy. Early kingdoms were either established by the priesthood or had their origin in usurpation, robbery, or other forms of violence. The state is the means through which the church works. As such it is necessary. The church may possess all worldly goods. Cities were given the Levites. The church controls all temporal goods. The pope rules all temporal affairs as the soul rules the body. The right to the possession of a single acre of ground is only by the permission of the church.

Another defender of the papacy was Henry of Cassaloci, who died in 1312. His tract begins with the words of Matt. 27:18, "All power is given to me," that is to the pope. The emperor cannot function without papal consecration. Christ said, "My kingdom is not of this world," but what He meant is that the world refused to obey Him. Though Christ said, "render to Caesar the things which are Caesar's," He was under no obligation to give tribute to the emperor; and this applies also to the children of the kingdom of God. They are free on the ground of Matt. 27:26. Henry attempted to found the theory of papal supremacy in temporal affairs on the Scriptures, the fathers, and reason. God at first ruled through Noah, the patriarchs, Melchizedec, and Moses. They were priests and kings at the same time. Moses punished Pharaoh. Both swords were carried by Christ. He drove out the money changers and wore the crown of thorns. He

received power to judge the world. The same power was delegated to Peter and his successors. The state bears to the church the relation of the moon to the sun, and whatever power the emperor has is given him by the pope.

The writers who denied the pope's right to temporal authority over the nation were mainly jurists. There is the tract known as the Twofold Prerogative. The tract distinguishes between two functions, the spiritual and the temporal. The pope has full power only in the spiritual realm. The spiritual and temporal functions are not united in the one person. This is evident from Christ's refusal of the office of king and from the law of Moses forbidding the Levites to hold temporal possessions, worldly property. The civil power is independent of the spiritual. But both powers are of God. The same position is taken in another tract. Moses was a temporal ruler and Aaron was priest. Both had their own offices. The church is one in Christ. He established the two powers, spiritual and temporal. The pope's weapons are the spiritual ones. Christ had no worldly jurisdiction and the pope should understand this. The popes place in the church is that of representative of the whole body of believers. He is not their lord. He is subject to the church, by whom he can be called to account. The emperor may depose the pope.

In these tracts the attack was only against the claims of the papacy to the temporal supremacy over the kings of the earth. His spiritual authority was not denied. The state is supreme in its sphere and likewise the church. Both receive their authority from God.

The transfer of the Papacy of Avignon. In 1305 Clement V was elected pope. This Clement was a Frenchman who never went to Rome. He chose Avignon, a city in France, as his residence. Here the popes remained for more than seventy years. The period is known as the Babylonian captivity of the papacy. It included seven popes, all Frenchmen. This absence from Rome did the papal system much harm. The papacy threatened to become a French institution. The morals of the papacy during its residence in Avignon became notorious throughout Europe. The household of the pope took on the appearance of a worldly court. It was torn by strife and dark schemes of all kinds. It was noted for its sensuality. Bribery and Simony were much practiced. It was crowded with money changers. Petrarch called it "the sink of every vice, the haunt of all iniquities, a third Babylon, the Babylon of the West, the fountain of all afflictions, the refuge of wrath, the school of errors, a temple of lies, the awful prison, hell on earth."

During this period the condition in Rome was deplorable. Rome had been the queen of cities. It was visited by throngs of pilgrims. It was loved by all

the church. Rome was now turned into a city of confusion. It was now the city of strife between leaders who strove with one another for the mastery in municipal affairs. No longer visited by pilgrims, it lost its source of income and became poor. Its population diminished. In 1300 it numbered less than 20,000. The city had no commerce at this time. The churches became roofless. Cattle ate grass at the altars of the Latern and St. Peter's. There was a stoppage of all art.

Northern Italy was torn by anarchy. Bands of robbers crossed the country. The officials in the church had to buy their freedom from violence. It seemed as if Italy was turning into a desolate waste. And the city of Rome became a den of robbers unfit for human habitation.

As to Avignon, it lies 450 miles east of Paris. It was purchased by Clement V from Naples for 10,000 gold florens. It remained a papal city till the French revolution. The Italian bishops pressed Clement to return to Rome, but he refused. Living in Avignon, the pope was in the power of the king of France, Philip IV. Philip who imposed the terms on which Clement V received his crown. He had to undo all the Boniface had done in his warfare with Philip. The king also ordered the destruction of the Templar Order, and Clement, in obedience to Philip, ordered the persecution of these knights wherever they might be found. The charges preferred were heresy and worshipping idols and moral indecency. The members were accused of holding meetings with the devil, who appeared in a black cat. Many of the men admitted the accusation under extreme torture. The Templars nowhere had friends. All were opposed to them. In Paris many of them died under torture and hundreds perished in prisons. They were tried in most all the countries of Europe.

G. M. O.

IN HIS FEAR

Christian Instruction

We said in our previous article that Christian instruction must be God-centered and covenant-directed, that is, the teaching must be of such quality that it serves to prepare our children to take the place which the Covenant assigns to them.

We would call that then the Center of all instruction, the hub where all the spokes make contact, the point around which everything revolves. Let this out and you get a disintegrated curriculum, an unorganized series of subjects in our schools, but have that center

and all the subjects are integrated into one grand unity.

To keep that center is then our continual calling.

To keep that center is extremely difficult.

We are all prone to off-center activities. The best of us are by nature self-centered, creature-centered, and man- and world-centered. We must continually repent of this and turn from it. If we will retain true christian instruction we must be vigilant.

Off-Center.

The present Christian school system reveals sometimes a certain tendency which I fear is off-center. I repeat, we are all off-center so much in our lives that it hardly behooves us to look at others to see how they fare. But yet, when certain tendencies reveal themselves it is well that we take notice of them, discuss and test them.

We refer especially to the tendency today to evaluate Christian instruction in terms of the social and political service it can render to the attainment of a democratic state, or how it can function to lead America back to God. The danger is that the instruction instead of being covenant-centered becomes social-centered.

To be more specific let me cite examples of the above mentioned tendency.

In the Christian School Annual 1943, we may read as follows: "The Christian day school stands as a spiritual bulwark and base of supplies in the midst of history's fiercest and most destructive war". (p. 72). A little further we read, "The Christian School is a bulwark against the demoralizing influences of war". (p. 72), and continues with the statement that America needs leadership, and, "for the supply of that kind of leadership we can hopefully look to our Christian schools". (p. 76). Certainly we appreciate what we have in this country, and we are not insensible to the chaos and confusion which we experience at present, but the above given approach makes our outlook very nationalistic, it tempts us as party of the antithesis and endangers the truth that we seek a better, that is, an heavenly country. Of course, the writer believes that too, but it is not mentioned. Besides, do you think Jesus and the Apostles wanted the saints to look hopefully to them for the attainment of a Jewish national state? Wasn't it that "hopeful outlook" which Jesus repeatedly condemned, and wasn't He finally crucified because He would not comply with the hopeful outlook?

In that same annual, p. 79 we find a quote which reads as follows: "Culture belongs to Common Grace and is the result of the creative will of God. Culture is a task God has assigned to human society in order that it may achieve the evolution for which it has been

created". The article then proceeds to give government a place in this evolution and asserts that democracy needs christian schools. In comment on this expression we remark that Scripture plainly tells us what evolution human society will achieve, and one look at our present world will convince us of the same. We shall have no part in this evolution and if this evolution is the fruit of common grace, grace is indeed a corrupt root. But on the other hand, the evolution for which it was created (to borrow that term for just a moment) is reached through Christ, over the cross and will be reached by the church via the way of world catastrophe and judgment. All this because sin entered into the world. But one notices that the statement re-appears that democracy needs Christian schools. Again the nationalistic outlook. Again we tempt ourselves to give the type of leadership a democracy wants instead of setting ourselves to the task of giving our children the type of instruction which the covenant requires. For my part I am convinced that our christian men may and can function in high places (provided they do not forswear themselves by joining the Lodge or the Union) but to imagine that the presence of a christian there will improve our national state of affairs is to forget what relation exists between light and darkness.

In that same Annual, p. 84, we read, "The cause is after all much bigger than just the christian schools. It is the cause of a democracy and of the Kingdom. Either one of which is well worth fighting for". And in interpretation of this statement the article continues to tell us that the scope of christian instruction goes "beyond winning the war to winning the peace." Again the national-political flavor. It is dangerous to identify so closely a democracy and the Kingdom, unless the writer secretly hopes that Christian instruction may bring us a theocratic state upon earth. And that the christian schools must serve to win the war and win the peace threatens to convert our schools into political machines, whose service is primarily national.

In the Annual of 1940, p. 39, we read, "Christlikeness is the supreme need of the hour if civilization is to survive". This statement is repeated on p. 41 and continues to show that christian schools foster Christlikeness. Here christian schools are in the service of civilization, whatever this may mean. What civilization, for instance? This is all so vague, to say the least.

Repeatedly we find christian education advertized as being more true to genuine democracy than the public schools. Or we find christian instruction advertized as the power which must assist in bringing our youth to Christ and through them to bring America back to God.

In a recent editorial of the Home and School Maga-

zine (October 1946, p. 14) we read, "The avowed aim of christian education is to develop christian character, prepare the child for constructive christian citizenship and useful occupation". And then continues to show that we must produce christian citizens for democratic living and attain that by democratic leadership in our schools. Place next to this the avowed aim of christian instruction as expressed in the Baptism Form and we feel the difference.

Dr. Machen in his book, "The Christian School the Hope of America" has probably summed up this tendency when he says that the christian schools are "like precious salt, that checks the ravishes of decay" and then holds up the christian schools as nurseries of democracy where we shall be liberated from the totalitarian state and have freedom". (p. 17).

Resumé

We by no means infer from the above quotations that all the emphasis is on this social or national aspect. We read, for instance, in the 1945 Annual, p. 91, as follows, "We are opposed to the world. And the world is opposed to us. The lines between us will become ever more clearly defined as time brings the principles of both sides to their logical development and outworking". But even in this passage and article the "lines" are not clearly drawn, the antithesis is hinted at but very vaguely.

But we said, the tendency is there. We could produce countless other quotations to bear this out. But this is sufficient.

The tendency there is to make things vague, foggy and unclear. The tendency to becloud the real issues. The danger of making an apology for our existence. We read precious little of the antithesis, of election and reprobation, of the Covenant. The antithesis sometimes seems to lie between democracy and totalitarianism instead of between God's people and the world, between light and darkness, between election and reprobation.

And this is off center.

Have we become ashamed to be fools (I Cor. 3:18)? Paul tells us, "We are fools for Christ's sake". That is our position as christian schools, in the eyes of the world. When we go about instructing our children and thus go about building upon the foundation of God's Word, we become spectacles to the world, to angels and to men (I Cor. 4:9).

We do not make fools out of ourselves, we are fools for Christ's sake. But we must never be ashamed of this or apologize for it. When we instruct our children to reveal themselves in this world as of God's Party, as God's friend-servants, when we educate them to live and walk in Christ, when we teach them to seek the better country. . . . in the eyes of the world we are fools and our children will be fools.

Since the worldly wise press us from all sides and

since we loathe being fools in such a wise world, we are in danger of going off center when we give covenant instruction. God be merciful to us and let us chastise ourselves with the whip of His Word.

(To be Continued) M. G.

SION'S ZANGEN

Kom, O God Der Wraken!

(Psalm 94; Tweede Deel)

De vorige maal toen we stilhielden bij dezen psalm, hebben we er iets van gezien, iets van de vreeselijke wrake Gods. Want God toornt alle dagen over de goddeloozen.

Het laatste vers, dat we behandelden, bevatte een beschrijving der dwazen die Gods volk aanranden en denken, dat ze zulks doen kunnen zonder de rechtvaardige straffen Gods te ontvangen.

Nu komt er een schreeuw uit het geprangde hart van den zinger Israels: O Heere, zij verbrijzelen Uw volk, en zij verdrukken Uw erfdeel.

Wat zou de reden wezen, dat het goddelooze volk het zoo verzien heeft op des Heeren arme volk? Het antwoord is gemakkelijk: omdat ze God openbaren in hun leven. Indien ge slechts van hetzelfde alloy waart als dat der wereld, zou de wereld U liefhebben, doch omdat ge den Heere God openbaart in Uw handel en wandel, in Uw lied en belijdenis, in Uw gansche leven, daarom haat U de wereld.

En zoo wordt Gods volk verbrijzeld en verdrukt.

Ik mag U er zeker wel aan herinneren, dat ook onze verbrijzeling en verdrukking, sinds 1924, van dezelfde gehalte is. O zeker, men ondervindt die verbrijzeling ook in de kerk van Christus. De wereld binnen de poorten der kerk is van dezelfde natuur als de wereld buiten de kerk. Omdat de leeraren Danhof, Hoeksema en Ophoff op zeer duidelijke wijze den Heere God openbaarden, daarom werden ze vertrapt. Hun stem, hun belijdenis, hun getuigen van God was zuiverder dan de rest, en daarom werden ze uit de plaatstelijke kerk, uit het instituut der kerk uitgebannen. Ik zeide: plaatstelijke kerk, ook noemde ik het instituut der kerk. Daar moet ge om denken. Die mannen zijn niet uit de kerk van Christus gebannen. Dat kan niet. Christus neemt op in die kerk en wien door Christus opgenomen is in de kerk, die blijft er in tot in alle eeuwigheid.

Maar die verbrijzeling en verdrukking is tot het welzijn der kerk. Als het alles voorbij is dan zegt dat volk: 't Is goed voor mij verdrukt te zijn geweest!

De weduwe en den vreemdeling dooden zij, en zij vermoorden de weezen, en zeggen: De Heere ziet het niet, en de God Jakobs merkt het niet!

Het wil mij voorkomen, dat in deze beschrijving van het onheilige werk der goddeloozen, dieper geblikt moet dan net maar de oppervlakte. Dit vers bedoelt meer te zeggen, dan het goddelooze volk weduwen, vreemdelingen en weezen vermoordt. Ik denk, dat ge hier te doen hebt met een verdere beschrijving van Gods volk. Gods volk zijn die weduwen, vreemdelingen en weezen. En in de tweede plaats, zien we hier weer de Christus Gods. Hij is de Wees bij uitneemendheid. Niemand heeft ooit zoo geleden als de vreemdeling, de weduwe en de wees als Christus Jezus. Het was Zijn bangste klacht, dat God Hem verlaten had. God verbergde Zich. Let op het tweede lid van den tekst: de goddeloozen zeggen immers: God ziet het niet! Hij merkt het niet! Denkt aan Golgotha en de massa rondom dat kruis als ge deze verzen leest. Gods kind werd daar verbrijzeld en verdrukt, en het scheen of er geen God in den hemel was om deze snoode daad te belletten.

En dan begint de kerk te klagen tot God. Juist zooals Christus geklaagd heeft: Waarom, o, waarom?!

Dan klaagt de kerk: Sta op, Heere! Weer weder om Uws naams wil!

En dan gaat de kerk de goddeloozen toespreken en beprediken gelijk Noach, de prediker der gerechtigheid. Aanmerkt, gij onvernunftigen onder het volk; en gij dwazen, wanneer zult gij verstandig worden?

Een onvernunftig mensch verstaat niet: ze zijn dwaas. Een dwaas verstaat de dingen niet, wat ze eigenlijk zijn. Hij ziet ook niet het verband en de relatie aller dingen, hoe ze allen vast zitten en leiden tot God. Hij gebruikt daarom dan ook de schepping averechts verkeerd: hij gebruikt de dingen en de relaties der dingen tot zijn eigen genot en lof en prijs, terwijl hij juist het tegenovergestelde moest doen, namelijk, hij moest de dingen en relaties gebruiken tot den lof en glorie Gods. Dan ware hij wijs. Nu is hij onvernunftig en dwaas.

De kerk zal het den goddeloozen ook redelijk voor oogen stellen. Dat vindt ge in de volgende verzen: Zoude die het oor plant, niet hooren, zoude die het oog formeert niet aanschouwen? Zoude die de heidenen tuchtigt, niet straffen, Hij die den mensch wetenschap leert?

Deze verzen doen mij denken aan sommige der zoogenaamde bewijzen voor het bestaan van God. Als de zanger den mensch bestudeert, dan komt hij tot de conclusie: er is een God. De mensch hoort en ziet, dus God hoort en ziet ook. En toch is er een groot verschil. De zanger gaat uit van het bestaan

Gods. Hij bewijst niet dat er een God is hier. Maar Hij bewijst dat de God die voor Hem levendig bestaat, hoort en ziet.

Wat een mooi argument hebben we hier! Hoe dwaas is de gedachte, dat God niet zou zien en hooren, terwijl Hij een schepsel formeert, hetwelk die schoone gaven heeft.

En ja, de Heere leert den mensch wetenschap, zodat hij nooit te verontschuldigen zal zijn in den dag der groote straffen. Want we moeten er wel aan denken, dat alle zonden een willend zich keeren is tegen God. God sprak luide in de schepping. Hij sprak nog luider in Zijn Woord. Doch de goddeloozen stoppen hun ooren en rennen snellijk tot hun verderf.

De Heere weet de gedachten des menschen, dat ze ijdelheid zijn.

Ziedaar de grootste zonde. En een zonde die meest over het hoofd gezien wordt.

Als men spreekt van zonde, dan wordt er meestal gedacht aan roof en moord en dronkenschap en dergelijke vergrijpen. Evenwel, de zonde, de groote zonde die het meest gezondigd wordt is ijdelheid. Er wordt hier een woord gebruikt, dat beteekent een zucht, een ademtucht. Het is een woord, dat gebruikt wordt met het woord *niets en niet*. Gedenkt aan Jesaja in hoofdstuk 40, waar hij zegt: een niet en ijdelheid.

Het is de gestalte van den natuurlijken mensch waardoor hij goddeloos is. Alle zijn gedachten zijn als een niet en ijdelheid. Inplaats dan dat zijn gedachten, alle zijn gedachten vol zijn van God en Goddelijke zaken, is hij vervuld met dingen en gedachten die ijdel, niets zijn. Daartegenover staat het leven van een Engel Gods en de rechtvaardigen. In den hemel is men altijd met God bezig, en dat is goed. Dat is hemelsch goed. Hier op aarde is het een strijd om aan God te denken. Daarom beluisteren we dien onuitsprekelijke klacht in den twee-en-veertigsten psalm: 'k Denk aan U, o God, in 't klagen! En toch, we denken aan God, al is het dan ook, dat we zoo klagend en schreiend doen. De goddeloozen echter denken niet aan God. Dat is hun grootste zonde. Ziet ge nu niet, dat dit het is, dat hen goddeloos doet zijn. Ze denken aan God niet, hun gedachten zijn bezig met datgene wat niets is en ijdelheid, gelijk aan een ademtucht. Ze denken aan zichzelf, de wereld rondom hen, aan genot voor zichzelf en hun kornuiten. Maar aan God, neen, aan Hem denken ze niet. Totdat ze plotseling voor Zijn aangezicht komen te staan en door Zijn handen gegrepen worden. Vreeselijk zal het zijn te vallen in de handen van den levendigen God!

Luistert nu eens naar de beschrijving van de Godzaligen, dat wil zeggen, naar het volk, dat vol is van God! Welgelukzalig is de man, O Heere! dien Gij tuchtigt, en dien Gij leert uit Uwe wet!

Ja, mijn broeder, zeker, mijn zuster, dat hebben

we: we hebben de tuchtiging des Allerhoogsten, en de onderwijzing van Zijn wet. Ik mag hier wel even zingen van het eeuwige Halleluja!

Die tuchtiging is als we verbrijzeld worden, verdrukt worden door de goddeloozen. Ge moet daarom nooit nijdig worden op den dwazen man, die er schik in heeft om Gods volk te trijteren. Die zijn er, o ja, die zijn er. Ze zijn ook in de kerk, zooals ik hierboven aanhaalde. Wie zijn het die Jezus het ergste geplaagd hebben? Ja, ge hebt gelijk, het waren de menschen van de kerk, de overpriesters en de schriftgeleerden, de wetgeleerden en Farizëers, de Hoogepriester Kajafas en zijn schoonvader Annas. Die hebben Gods Kind meer geplaagd en geslagen, dan de heidenen. En zoo is het in alle eeuwen en overal.

Maar Gods volk wreekt zich niet. Ze weten dat God er achter zit. Toen dan ook David geplaagd werd door Simei, zeide hij: God heeft tot hem gezegd: vloek David!

Het is een zegen om door God getuchtigd te worden. Het leidt ons terug naar God. Het brengt ons van wegen der zonde. Het leert ons onze zonde kennen, berouwen en beweenen. Het brengt ons schreiend tot God.

Ook wordt dat volk geleerd uit Zijn wet. En dat is de hemel, daar boven bij God. En dat is dan ook de hemel hier op aarde. O, dat leeren uit die wet: hoe heerlijk!

Die wet is beschreven in slechts een woord, het lieflijkste woord uit Gods Eigen woordenboek. Dat ééne Woord is LIEFDE!

De Wet God is de liefde, het is een afschijnsel van Gods Eigen volmaakte, goddelijke Wezen!

De Wet God leert ons lief te hebben. De Wet roept het ons toe van oogenblik tot oogenblik: Hebt Mij lief en Uw naaste om Mijns Naams wil! Er is niets heerlijker dan de Wet die Hij den sterv'ling zet 't binnenst ingewand! De wet vervuld is Christus. Het is immers Christus Die Zijn Vader zóó beminde, dat Hij den eeuwigen dood inging. Hij heeft God intensief bemind; Hij beminde ook Zijne naaste. Voor Zijn volk is Hij gestorven, voor hen heeft Hij gezwogen tot in de vreeselijke eeuwigheden om hen te zaligen, om hen den Vader voor te stellen als een reine liefhebbende maagd, de Bruid van Christus, van God.

Laat U dan leeren uit de wet! Zet U nooit tegen die wet. Die wet is alles, is het uiteindelijke leven voor het Aangezicht van God!

Een ware Wetgeleerde is daarom een Liefhebber der zielen! Het is een mensch die God bemint boven alles en zijn naaste om Gods wil. Het zijn de kinderen Gods. Want God mint Zichzelf met een Goddelijke, reine liefde.

Wreekt U daarom niet, beminden! Wanneer ge

getuchtigd wordt, wreekt U niet! Het is U God en Vader die er achter zit. Hij leert U in die tuchtiging uit de Wet. Die U voorging is Jezus. Nooit is iemand getuchtigd zooals Hij. En in het bitterst uur heeft Hij gebeden voor Zijn folteraars. Hij liet U een voorbeeld na. Voor U om te volgen. Wandelt dan in Zijn voetstappen. Schrei Uw smart tot God. Hij zal het alles vergelden. Doch wreekt U niet. Maakt plaats voor den toorn Gods.

De Wreker staat voor de deur.

Doch leert in dit alles lief te hebben.

De Goddelijke, reine, aanbiddelijke Liefde Gods is de vervulling der wet! Het is Jezus Christus voor U en door U!

G. V.

FROM HOLY WRIT

James 1:6-8. — "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways."

In verse 5 James exhorts the church of God to ask wisdom of the Lord. This wisdom shall be given her for the Lord giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not. In verses 6-8, introduced by the word "but", the holy writer sharply calls our attention to the indispensable requirement for the prayer for wisdom, namely, that we ask in faith. That we must ask this wisdom of God is plain. Wisdom is not merely a matter of the head, of the intellect. If it were, we could acquire it merely by attending school and in the measure that we diligently apply ourselves to our studies. Wisdom, however, is spiritual. And inasmuch as it is a spiritual matter it must be granted us continuously which implies that we must constantly ask it of the Lord. Besides, we are by nature not wise but foolish. We are of the earth earthy, not only physically but also spiritually. By nature we hate God and love sin and the things of this world. The child of God, who has become wise in principle, and is therefore fully aware of the foolishness which characterizes him as he is by nature and continues to remain with him until the day of his death, understands fully the words of James: Let him ask for wisdom of God and it shall be given him.

However, we must ask in faith. The word "but" serves to bring out a sharp distinction. Not all who pray for wisdom shall receive it of the Lord. We must pray in faith. The word "but" forcibly reminds us

of the fact that faith is an absolutely necessary requisite for our prayer for and receiving of wisdom.

James speaks in verse 6 of "a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed", and in verse 8 of "a double-minded man who is unstable in all his ways." We understand that these two expressions refer to each other. The one is a figure of the other. A wavering person, one that doubts, is, according to James, a double minded person. And even as a wave of the sea is driven with the wind and tossed, so also such a doubleminded man is unstable, unsteady in all his ways. Literally we do not read, "A double minded man *is* unstable in all his ways", but, "A double minded unstable in all his ways." In other words, this man who asks not in faith is that double minded man who is unstable in all his ways. This double minded man must not think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.

First of all, James speaks in this portion of Holy Writ of a double minded man, verse 8. Wavering or doubting is contrasted in this text with faith. According to James, therefore, anyone who doubts is really a double minded man. The expression "double minded" of verse 8 means literally "two-souled." A double minded man has two souls. Fundamentally, we understand, this is impossible. It is true that there are two opposing forces in the child of God, the operation of light and that of darkness. Romans 7 clearly teaches us this truth. But this does not render a man "two-souled." The child of God shall cleave to the one and hate the other. This is principally always his struggle. Loving in principle not only some but all the commandments of the Lord, he must continually cope with the forces of evil and darkness which remain in him until the day of his death. What is possible, however, is that one may try to serve two masters, would fain cleave to both, and in that sense have two souls, would personally live from two principles. Such an one appears, then, to have two hearts, two centers, two minds, two wills. He always sees double, hears double, seeks double. He would love the light but also the darkness, grace but also sin, righteousness but also unrighteousness, Christ but also Belial, God but also Mammon. Such a person would be a friend of God but also of the world. He attends Divine service regularly, participates in all congregational activities, but also seems to enjoy himself in the midst of the world. This double minded man is in a very pitiable condition. He may be a child of God who has wandered far from the path of God's covenant, and he has indeed wandered far from the way of God's covenant and precepts. He may also be one who never knew the grace of God, but, belonging to the church of God according to her development in the midst of the world, merely appears as a child of God and apparently walks from two principles of life.

This man is unstable in all his ways. He is as a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. In his walk he is unsteady, tossed to and fro, does the most unheard of things. He is at home apparently among the children of the living God but seems to feel himself equally at home among those who know not the fear of the Lord. He never pursues a steady course, one never knows what he will do, whether he will turn to the right or to the left. He is a spiritual drunkard.

Our present time is characterized by many of these spiritual drunkards. On the one hand, they are spiritual, extraordinarily spiritual. They can almost always be recognized by their exceptional piety. None is more regular at church attendance and none is more faithful in the performance of their church duties and obligations. They can be exceptionally jealous for mission work, would save the world if possible, although they are not always particularly concerned with deplorable conditions at home, such as ignorance concerning the truth of God's Word. On the other hand, these people are also worldly. You probably imagine them to be very pious and are amazed to find them in the very midst of the world. They are spiritual drunkards. James likens them unto a wave of the sea as it is driven and tossed to and fro. You never know what to expect of these double minded persons. They would live from two opposing principles of life.

Such an one, writes James, must not think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. One might ask the question whether these persons actually pray for wisdom, or how it can be possible that they pray for wisdom. Fact is, these double minded men also pray for wisdom. They, too, appear in the assemblies of the people of God or pray because of custom or habit. It is also customary for them to open and close with prayer at their meals (of course, in their own homes), and to close with prayer when asked to do so at public meetings, such as school or church gatherings. And they pray for wisdom. Of course! They would not dare to mention anything else in their prayer. They pray, then, that they may be the people of the living God and conduct themselves accordingly in the midst of the world. They ask the Lord for His grace and Spirit to fight the good fight of faith even unto the end, to reject Egypt and the glories of Egypt for the heavenly treasures which are above. They ask the Lord to bless them in the day which lies ahead and they implore His mercy in order that they may walk as children of the light in the midst of a world which lieth in sin and darkness. We always pray for these things, also the double minded man. He would not dare to mention anything else in his petitions.

Such a petitioner will receive nothing. We must ask in faith, writes James, nothing wavering or doubt-

ing. A doubter is a double minded man and vice versa. First of all, he really doubts whether he earnestly desires what he asks. The word that is translated "wavering" means literally "to be at variance, in conflict with oneself." These doubters pray for wisdom, for the fear of God, that the Lord may lead them not into temptation, that they may be His party here below. But in their prayer they are actually at variance with themselves. They are afraid that the Lord will grant them the things they request. They probably consider it convenient to be able to do both: be the party of the living God and seek the things which are below. In reality they are of the world. And it is a fact that they really seek the world. They pray for wisdom but actually they do not desire it. Hence, they are at variance with themselves. Secondly, they doubt that God will give them their request and know that their prayer will not receive an answer. Also in this respect they differ with themselves. They petition the Lord to give them His grace. But in their hearts they realize that their prayer is mockery and that Jehovah does not listen to their supplication.

Such a man, writes James, will not receive anything of the Lord. Of course not. Jehovah will not be mocked. He delighteth not in hypocrisy and iniquity. He is far from such prayers. And it is really a terrible thing to pray the Lord for His guidance and blessing when one has determined to seek the things which are below. This is a terrible thing not only because we then are hypocritical in our prayer. But it is surely terrible to ask the holy and righteous God to accompany us in such ways of evil and ask His blessing to be upon us in paths of sin. It is the evil of tempting God, to entice Jehovah that He forsake His holiness and walk with us in the way of iniquity and sin.

We must ask in faith. Faith is the living, spiritual bond which unites us with God in Christ Jesus. By faith we are united with Christ and become one plant with Him. And by faith, which is the Spiritual knowledge and a hearty confidence, we also draw our spiritual life's sap out of the Christ, and so live out of Him. To pray in faith means that we pray in the sphere of faith. This implies that our prayers must be rooted in faith and that we therefore actually seek and desire the things we petition. United with Christ and having been called out of darkness into God's marvellous light we will desire wisdom, that spiritual fruit of grace whereby we seek the things above and view the present in the light of the hereafter. Such a prayer will also be in harmony with the will of God. It will be delivered of all worldly and carnal lusts, will seek the glory of the living God, and will be concentrated in the desire to be the party of the Most High and that according to our place and calling which Jehovah has sovereignly willed for us in the midst of

the world. In that faith we must stand. Prompted by that faith we must pray. This prayer will be heard and the Lord will grant us wisdom. For He giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not.

H. V.

PERISCOPE

The Conference

Fourth Session

The Rev. J. De Jong led us in the opening exercises on Thursday morning. The speaker at this session was the Rev. R. D. Steubbe, pastor of the Reformed Church in the U. S., at Garner, Iowa. Rev. Steubbe had been assigned the subject: "The Distinguishing Marks of the Church".

Resumé of Lecture

"In developing our subject we take our focal point from the words of the Apostle Paul, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his, and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." Since 'the Lord knoweth them that are His' the Church is Holy; set apart unto God. That Holy Church is also Catholic as confessed in the Apostle's Creed and expounded in question and answer 54 of our Heidelberg Catechism. It is Catholic rather than universal for it is from the beginning to the end of the world as well as universal in extent; that is, it is universal in two directions.

"Through that Holy Catholic Church God chooses to prevent the truth from perishing in the world. Hence, God gave to her very distinguishing marks. Her duty is to watch closely and keep herself distinct through these marks, since Satan always attacks her. These distinguishing marks are the Word and the Sacraments. Where you find the Word, in its entirety, preached and heard, and the Sacraments administered according to the institution of Christ, there you find the Church. The Word must not only be preached but heard, i.e. believed. Where it is not preached and believed you have no Church. These marks of the Word and the Sacraments cannot exist without bearing fruit and prospering by the blessing of God.

"The purpose of the Word is to make distinction between Jerusalem and Babylon. The hearing of God's Word is the criterion for membership in Jerusalem—the Church. Hence, that Word preached and believed must be the Word of God and not of man,

That Word is described as a two-edged sword. In this description its destructive and cutting power is emphasized. It makes separation. That Word, as such, is a spiritual weapon. Christ used it, during His temptation of Satan in the wilderness, to destroy the devil. Jesus had no physical weapons; He used the sword of the Spirit. The Word is the sword which the Spirit uses to work in the heart. It is the weapon by which Christ conquered and gives us the victory.

"That Word of God is also a power. The Scriptures reveal the power of the Word of God. At creation God spoke His Word and the power of the Word was revealed in creation. Again in Jonah 2:10 we read: 'And the Lord spake unto the fish and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land'. God spoke and that which He spoke came to pass. His Word is a power.

"God has given that Word unto His Church. In the Church He has appointed ministers and teachers to edify the Church through His Word. Their task is to proclaim the Word of God and administer the Sacraments. The following reasons may be adduced why God uses men for this task. In the first place, God thereby declares His condescension to us. In the second place, we are thereby trained in true humility. And finally, this binds us to each other in mutual charity.

"God has also instituted the Sacraments in His Church as a distinguishing mark. There is no Sacrament apart from God. He has given us Sacraments that we may draw near to Him and be assured of our salvation. That which He promises in His Word He seals to us in the Sacraments. The Sacraments seal the promise of the Word. There is no seal if there is nothing to seal. Hence, there is no Sacrament without the Word.

"The Sacraments are a special gift unto the Church to assure her of salvation. They must not be omitted. They go hand in hand with the Word. The promise of the Word is that we are cleansed from our sins. This promise is sealed to us in baptism. As the Word must be preached in its entirety so also the Sacraments must be administered according to the Word; as instituted in Scripture. Where the Word is proclaimed and the Sacraments administered, there you find the Church. These are her distinguishing marks.

"We might also add to this the mark of exercise of the key-power in Christian discipline but this comes under the Word. Preaching and discipline belong to the proclamation of the Word. Discipline can only be according to the Word."

Discussion

The Rev. H. Veldman—"Must we limit discipline to the preaching or is it to be exercised in the way of excommunication?"

The Rev. Stuebbe—"Not without the Word. There must be a sin against the Word. There is no excommunication with the Word."

The Rev. W. Korn—"The Fathers said in connection with preaching: 'Preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God'."

The Rev. Stuebbe—"I believe that is correct. The Bible as it lies here is the Word of God."

The Rev. G. Lubbers—"The speaker placed discipline under the preaching and so considers two earmarks of the Church. Others only have one—the preaching. I believe there is no essential difference. But I have a question. The speaker said the Word must be heard, i.e. believed. Is there ever such a thing in preaching of the Word that it 'goes in one ear and out the other'; or does it always enter the consciousness of those who hear?"

The Rev. Stuebbe—"I believe the latter is correct. It is a savor of life unto life or of death unto death. It is always effective. The Holy Spirit is always active in the Word—unto life or death."

The Rev. J. Howerzyl—"Are the two marks—the preaching and the sacraments—co-equal in importance?"

The Rev. Stuebbe—"Yes, I believe they are."

The Rev. J. De Jong—"The term 'Word' is used in various ways. The Word is given to the Church; the Word of Scripture; the Preached Word; the Logos; the Word of creation; the Word as a power or destructive force, etc. I would like a little more light. How must we distinguish between these, since as a distinguishing mark we have the preached Word? What is the distinction between the creative Word; the Word of God's providence, the Word as a power unto salvation, etc.?"

The Rev. Stuebbe—"That the Word is a power unto salvation was omitted in the paper."

The Rev. J. De Jong—"What is the difference when God speaks to the fish to vomit out Jonah and when the Church declares the Word of God? The Church doesn't have that power. What is the relation between the Creative Word and the Word that the Church speaks?"

The Rev. Stuebbe—"It is the same Word. The Word of God is the Word of God. It is the same Word that Christ had and which God spoke. The relation is the same then, to a certain extent. The Church has the same power against the Devil with that Word as Christ had. The Church can only stand by the power of God's Word. The Church does not have the creative Word but as the Word is preached that

which is proclaimed occurs. The destructive power of the Word proclaimed by the Church is the same as Christ had in the wilderness."

The Rev. J. Blankespoor—"The speaker said that the purpose of the marks is to distinguish Jerusalem from Babylon, the true from the false. Did the speaker mean that it distinguishes between the righteous and the wicked. What does the word 'distinguishing' mean in the topic?"

The Rev. Stuebbe—"Those marks which set apart the Body of Christ so that we may recognize the Church. That which makes it separate, set apart, holy."

The Rev. W. Korn—"Are all baptized in Christ and do all who are baptized put on Christ according as we read: 'For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.' Gal. 3:27?"

The Rev. Stuebbe—"Are all in the covenant? No."

The Rev. H. Hoeksema—"Note that the text reads into Christ."

The Rev. A. Cammenga—"Since all Churches preach from Scripture and preach Christ, what must be the criterion for pure preaching?"

The Rev. Stuebbe—"We cannot go into that. In all visible Churches where the Word is preached and believed and where the Sacraments are instituted, that's where the Church is. It makes no difference where we go as long as the Word is proclaimed and the Sacraments administered."

The Rev. L. Vermeer—"I was glad that the speaker added the mark of Christian discipline. Isn't it true that not of the sacraments but of the Word we read that it is a power of God unto salvation? Hence, is not the Word more important; the chief means of grace? The Word begets us, according to James 1. We never read this of the sacraments. How can we conceive of them as co-equal?"

The Rev. Stuebbe—"What would you think of a man that believed the Word and never partook of the sacraments? Is it enough that the Word is preached only? My answer is no."

The Rev. W. Hofman—"Have both the Word and sacraments been ordained for the same purpose. Do the sacraments produce faith?"

The Rev. Stuebbe—"No, the sacraments strengthen our faith."

The Rev. H. Veldman—"What do you consider to be the false Church and its marks?"

The Rev. Stuebbe—"The exact opposite; where the

Word is not preached fully and the sacraments are not administered."

The Rev. J. Howerzyl—"If the two are co-equal shouldn't we have the Sacraments every week?"

The Rev. Stuebbe—"I believe we should."

The Rev. P. Boer—"The Baptists deny the Sacraments. Isn't it impossible to belong there?"

The Rev. Stuebbe—"That would follow from what I said."

The Rev. W. Hofman—"Is there a difference in degree of purity among Churches? Is there a more pure Church or several with the same degree of purity?"

The Rev. Stuebbe—"Yes, there is a difference."

From the Audience—"The Sacraments are not dead symbols but they teach, according to the Catechism. They teach and seal. There is no essential difference between the preaching and the Sacraments."

The Rev. A. Petter—"If the question of purity is relative, when does the false begin and the true end? When does the relative standard cease so that we find no Church at all? How far must we go before we find no Church?"

The Rev. Stuebbe—"We cannot go down at all. We must stay at the top. The minute you take away one tittle or iota you cease. We believe there are denominations which come close to the truth but no separate denomination is a completely true and perfect Church."

The Rev. G. Lubbers—"Much is said of the relationship between the Word and the Sacraments. The speaker gives them equal importance. Yet we see that they are not equal in our spiritual life. Are they equal in normative value?"

The Rev. Stuebbe—"They should have equal normative value. In the Church where the Word is preached and the Sacraments are administered they are equal in normative value. The Word is the norm but the Word is not complete without the Sacraments."

The Rev. J. Blankespoor—"If the administration of the Sacraments is one of the distinguishing marks of the Church how can it be if many Churches have them? What is the difference?"

The Rev. Stuebbe—"Calvin writes in the 'Institutes', book 4, that the Roman Catholic Church still has a bit of the distinguishing marks of the Church since they still have baptism."

The Rev. H. Hoeksema—"There are several questions here and since the subject is of importance we should come to some conclusions. In the first place,

why should there be marks of the Church? The Church is essentially invisible but through her marks one may ascertain where that Church is in the world. They are certain signs by which it may be determined that the Church is distinct from all other bodies in the world. In the second place, they are *distinguishing* marks. By them we may ascertain the true Church from its departure or false Church so that everyone is called upon to join the purest manifestation of the Church. In the third place, our Confessions point out that there are 3 distinguishing marks: the preaching of the Word, the administration of the Sacraments and the exercise of Christian discipline. It is a striking fact that the distinguishing marks are not the attributes of the Church, viz., holiness, catholicity and apostolicity, but that they are identical with the means of grace, including even Christian discipline. Why are not the attributes but rather the means of grace selected as the distinguishing marks?"

"To understand the selection and the marks themselves we must proceed from the fact that the Church is the Body of Christ. Therefore, the Church is only where Christ is; only where it pleases Christ to be do you find the Church. You cannot make a Church. Christ establishes His Church and there where He establishes His Church, Christ is, and blesses her with all spiritual blessings.

"The question then is how do you determine where, among the gatherings in this world, Christ is? Christ is where His Word is, and where Christ is there is His Word for Christ speaks through His Word. He establishes the Church by His Word and Spirit. Where He has thus established His Church He speaks to her through the preacher. And where He speaks, i.e. *Christ*, there is the Church. He must speak, not the preacher. And when Christ speaks there is the Church. Hence, if we can determine where Christ speaks, there we shall find the Church.

Where does Christ speak? Not simply where the Bible is or where it is read. You cannot see the Word of God or Christ. Preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God, if you give the right definition of preaching. Where that Word is preached there Christ is but you cannot see Christ. We must hear Christ through the ministry of preaching. And Christ speaks where His Word is purely preached, i.e. only where it is proclaimed according to the Scripture. The conclusion is that *the* distinguishing mark of the Church is the preaching of the Word. Where Christ speaks through His Word, there is the Church. Nothing can be compared to the preaching of the Word and essentially also the administration of the Sacraments and the exercise of Christian discipline are preaching of the Word.

"What is preaching? Preaching is the proclamation of the content of the Gospel, as revealed in the

Holy Scriptures, by the Church institute through her called ministers. It is the speaking of Christ through the audible proclamation of the Gospel by the instituted Church through the ministry. It is not merely the exposition of the Bible. We must hear CHRIST! If Christ does not speak then there is no preaching. Preaching is the ministry of the Word of God. It is the Word of God which He speaks through Christ.

"How shall we determine if we have that preaching? In the first place, it must be official ministry; there must be a man standing in that office instituted by Christ. He must be called of Christ. In the second place, the one in that office must abide strictly to the criterion of Scripture. It must be the pure preaching. Where you have the instituted ministry and the pure preaching, Christ is with the office. Where that occurs you have the true Church and where it is not you have no Church. Christ does not speak except through Scripture and not officially except through the instituted ministry.

"What is the relation between that preaching and the other marks of the Church? The relation is such that in the Sacraments you also have the Word which Christ speaks through the instituted signs and seals as administered by the Church. The essence of the Sacraments is the Word of Christ. If Christ does not say, by His Spirit, 'Take eat' etc. you have nothing more than a natural eating of bread and wine. The Host at the table is Christ Himself and He speaks through the signs to the believers. The Word of God is also the essence of the Sacraments. Christ can only baptize *into* His name. Christ causes the Sacrament to be effective by His mighty Word. Without the Word of Christ they have no meaning and without the spoken word they have no meaning for us. In that sense they are subordinate to the preaching. They derive their meaning and contents from the Word. For that reason you have no Sacrament without the Word; the Word is preached even at the administration of the Sacraments. The Sacraments are subservient to the Word.

"What about the Keys of Christian Discipline? The main Key is the preaching of the Word. In fact, there is no other Key. Even personal discipline is preaching of the Word. The difference is that it is private and personal rather than public and general. Christ has given the Key power to the Church. How is that possible? It does not mean that Christ has delivered the Key power *over* the Church but that the instituted Church has the promise of Christ that where His Word is preached *He* will use that Word as a Key power to shut and open. That is true also of personal discipline, even of excommunication. When it is said 'we declare you outside the Church of God and fellowship with Christ', that means that Christ



will bind this declaration upon the consciousness of the sinner. Christ will apply it to his conscience.

"Finally, what is the false Church? The false Church is that which corrupts the Word and Sacraments, casts out the faithful and protects the wicked. We must bear in mind the rule that everyone is called to join himself to the purest Church. Hence, *I* must be able to say that the Protestant Reformed Churches are the purest. That is my conviction. Everyone must be, in his own consciousness, convinced that he belongs to the purest Church and if he does not, he helps along the progress toward the false Church. If there is any heresy in the Church to which he belongs, and he protests but cannot get anywhere, and is able to join a purer manifestation, he must do so or become guilty of cooperating in evil and helping to bring the anti-Christ and false Church. There may be inconsistency and imperfections within the purest manifestation, since we do not reach perfection here. Nor is it a question of going to heaven or not but of our calling and responsibility; and that is clear."

The Rev. J. De Jong—"It was said that Christ speaks the Word and then you have the essence of the Sacrament. If Christ does not so speak do we not have that essence? We know, for example, that all baptized children are not saved. Does this make their baptism a mere formality?"

The Rev. H. Hoeksema—"The means of grace are always means. Christ always operates in the Word and Sacraments; as a savor of life unto life or of death unto death. The Sacraments are never anything by themselves; neither the Word."

The Rev. H. Veldman—"We speak of one false Church and all kinds of pure Churches; not all equally pure but in a relative sense. Would it not be better to speak of one pure Church and all kinds of false Churches; false in the sense that they have officially forsaken the marks of the true Church?"

The Rev. A. Petter—"As far as we are aware, today we have the purest manifestation of the Truth. But we are fallible and tomorrow may change the picture. Can we say that now we are the purest, but that this may be altered in the future?"

The Rev. H. Hoeksema—"We cannot take that position in the light of Scripture. In Revelation 2 and 3 the presentation is not to reveal how far the Churches have gone in the false direction but is a presentation of the true Church with its defects. We have there the defective Church in the world that must always reform. The Church at Pergamos was defective in discipline; Sardis had a name that she lived and was dead; etc. Nevertheless all are called

to repent. The Church is always there. If it is false there is no use preaching to it. The Church is there but she must convert herself."

W. H.

During one of the earlier sessions of the Conference an invitation had been received from the Reformed Churches of Sutton, Nebraska, to meet there in 1947. A committee had been appointed to consider this and various other matters. At the close of the Wednesday afternoon session, this committee reported and advised as follows:

1. That we hold another Conference in 1947.
2. That the choice of theme be left to the Conference Committee.
3. That the Revs. W. Korn and G. Vos be retained as Conference Committee.
4. That the following be appointed as speakers for the next Conference: The Revs. P. De Boer, C. H. H. H. Hoeksema, from the Protestant Reformed Churches and the Revs. W. Korn and K. J. Stuebbe from the Reformed Church in the U. S.
5. That we accept the invitation of Sutton and hold the Conference the week following the fall session of Classis West of our Churches.
6. That the Rev. A. Cammenga be appointed as Conference president for the ensuing year.

These suggestions were adopted by the Conference.

W. H.

DEDICATED.

O Lord, thy heavenly grace impart,
And fix my frail, inconstant heart;
Henceforth my chief desire shall be,
To dedicate myself to thee.

Whate'er pursuits my time employ,
One thought shall fill my heart with joy:
That silent, secret thought shall be,
That all my hopes are fixed on thee.

Thy glorious eye pervadeth space;
Thy presence, Lord, fills every place;
And whatsoe'er my lot may be,
Still shall my spirit cleave to thee.

Renouncing every worldly thing,
And safe beneath thy spreading wing;
My sweetest thought henceforth shall be
That all I want I find in thee.