

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

VOLUME XXIII

February 1, 1947 — Grand Rapids, Michigan

NUMBER 9

## MEDITATION

### Rachab's Werkend Geloof

*En desgelijks ook Rachab, de hoer, is zij niet uit de werken gerechtvaardigd geweest, als zij de gezondenen heeft ontvangen, en door eenen anderen weg uitgelaten?*

Kan dat geloof zalig maken?

Het geloof, waarvan iemand zegt, dat hij het bezit, zonder dat hij de werken er van openbaart?

Wat nuttigheid toch heeft een dood geloof, dat zonder de werken is, en geen vrucht draagt, dat ook de duivelen bezitten en hen doet sidderen voor het aangezicht van den eenigen en levenden God?

Kan door zulk een geloof iemand gerechtvaardigd worden?

Integendeel, het doet hem geen nut. Het verzwaart slechts zijn oordeel. Het werpt hem slechts dieper in de ellende. Het is een geloof, waarmee hij straks in eeuwige verwoesting stort, en dat hem zelfs in de hel zal bij blijven. Het werpt zich niet op den levenden Christus, Die gestorven is en opgewekt; het leeft niet uit den Christus, en trekt niet uit Zijne volheid genade voor genade; het draagt geen vrucht door Christus, kiest niet voor de partij des levenden Gods tegenover de wereld, doodt niet de oude natuur, en ontvliedt alzoo niet den toekomstigen toorn.

Uit de werken wordt iemand gerechtvaardigd, niet uit een dood geloof.

O, neen, niet *om* zijne werken wordt een mensch gerechtvaardigd voor God; niet *op grond van* zijne werken ontvangt hij vrijspraak van schuld en straf en recht op het eeuwige leven. Tegenover hem, die dat zou beweren, haast de Schrift zich om de waarheid te accentueeren, dat een mensch uit het geloof alleen gerechtvaardigd wordt, zonder de werken der wet.

Maar wel *uit* de werken, *in den weg* der werken, en dan wel van de werken des geloofs.

Daardoor toch kleeft hij den Christus aan, verlaat hij de wereld, doodt hij zijne oude natuur, en vertrouwt hij op God, Die de dooden levend maakt, en de dingen, die niet zijn, roept alsof ze waren.

Van dat levend geloof, dat alleen rechtvaardigt en zalig maakt, gaf Abraham blijk, als hij zijnen zoon Izak offerde op het altaar.

En van datzelfde geloof gaf Rachab een sprekend bewijs, toen zij koos tegen Jericho's wereld voor de partij des levenden Gods.

Bewijs van het levend geloof.

Hongerend naar de gerechtigheid, en verzadiging vindend.

Rechtvaardigend.

Zaligmakend!

Rachab, de hoer!

Maar ook: Rachab, de geweldige, die het koninkrijk der hemelen met geweld nam: met het geweld des geloofs.

Zij toch was rechtens en van nature niet anders dan eene inwoneres en burgeres van Jericho, en leefde het leven dier zondige stad.

En Jericho is de wereld.

Ze was de eerste stad aan deze zijde der Jordaan van eenige beteekenis, een sterke vesting, die uit menschelijk oogpunt schier onneembaar mocht worden geacht. Sterke muren sloten haar in, de geweldigen der wereld werden binnen hare poorten gevonden, bereid om haar tegen elken aanvallenden vijand tot den laatsten man toe te verdedigen. Geestelijk is Jericho de wereld, die in het booze ligt, die tegenover den levenden God staat in zonde en ongerechtigheid; en bovendien de wereld, die de mate der ongerechtigheid heeft volgemaakt, en die op het punt staat door het oordeel Gods te worden getroffen. De machtige, geweldige, Gode vijandige, goddelooze, ondergaande wereld.

Van die wereld was Rachab burgeres, van nature.

Haar leven leefde ze.

Want in Jericho stond ze bekend als de hoer. Wel heeft men getracht aan dit woord eene andere beteeke-

nis te geven. Doch er kan geen twijfel aan bestaan, dat het hier aanduidt eene publieke vrouw, die hare leden in dienst stelde der zonde en vuile zedeloosheid. Met opzet wordt hieraan herinnerd door Jakobus, om aan te duiden, dat ze wel metterdaad tot Jericho behoorde, en persoonlijk deelde in het zondeleven van Jericho's wereld. Immers moet de vraag beantwoord: hoe werd Rachab gerechtvaardigd, en hoe ontvlood ze het dreigend oordeel. Welnu, daarom moet het eerst goed duidelijk zijn, dat ze in zichzelf eene onrechtvaardige was, homogeen met het leven der wereld, verdoemelijk voor God, en op het punt staande om met de wereld onder te gaan.

Toch was Rachab, door genade, een geweldige, die het koninkrijk der hemelen met geweld nam.

Eene heldin des geloofs.

Immers verrichtte zij de werken des geloofs. En in den weg dier werken des geloofs is ze niet beschaamd geworden. Want "door het geloof is Rachab, de hoer, niet omgekomen met de ongehoorzamen, als zij de verspieders met vrede had ontvangen." Heb. 11:31.

Israel kwam tegen Jericho. Het volk Gods had de belofte, en zou uit de hand zijns Gods het beloofde land moeten ontvangen, en de ruste ingaan. Zooals Jericho wezenlijk de wereld is, en de goddelooze wereldmacht vertegenwoordigt, zoo is Israel wezenlijk het koninkrijk Gods, staande als van de partij des levenden Gods, en de zaak van den Zone Gods vertegenwoordigende. Centraal is Israel de Eerstgeborene aller creature, de Gezalfde des Heeren, de Christus, die de erfgenaam der wereld is naar de belofte. Op Hem rustten al de beloften Gods. Hij is de steen, die het trotsche beeld der wereldmacht zal vergruizen. De Knecht des Heeren is Hij, Die in den weg der gerechtigheid uit de hand Zijns Vaders het koninkrijk zal ontvangen, en Zijn eigen rijk op de puinhoopen van de wereldmacht zal oprichten in heerlijkheid.

Zoo stond Rachab voor de keuze.

Aan de overzijde van den Jordaan lagen de leger-scharen van Jehova Sabaoth; aan deze zijde zag ze geweldige machten der wereld.

En Rachab geloofde God!

O, naar het vleesch geoordeeld, moest de keuze wel uitvallen ten gunste van Jericho, zooals immer, naar de maatstaf des vleesch, de wereld de voorkeur moet hebben. Want Israel is klein en nietig in zichzelf. En Jericho is machtig. Dat de stad zou vallen, en Israel de overwinning zou hebben, scheen ondenkbaar.

Doch Rachab had een levend geloof.

Hierop moet allereerst nadruk worden gelegd. Ze was niet meer Rachab, de hoer. God had haar geroepen, en haar naam veranderd in Rachab, de geweldige. Door genade waren de banden der zonde en des doods, die haar omknelden, verbroken, en daarmede ook de banden, die haar verbonden aan de wereld en het leven van Jericho's wereld. Ze heeft reeds genade ontvan-

gen, is reeds gered, en is ook reeds gerechtvaardigd voor God. En door of op grond van geen werken kon ze ooit rechtvaardiger worden. Door dat geloof wierp ze zich onvoorwaardelijk op den levenden God. En in het licht van dat geloof, en van het eigen woord Gods, bezag ze en beoordeelde ze de zaak van den Zone Gods tegenover Jericho's zaak.

Als Rachab, de hoer, had ze zeker voor Jericho gekozen.

Als Rachab, de begenadigde, de geweldige, koos ze voor de zaak van Israel's God.

Hoort haar slechts spreken:

"Ik weet, dat de Heere u dit land gegeven heeft, en dat ulieder verschrikking op ons gevallen is, en dat alle inwoners dezes lands voor ulieder aangezicht gesmolten zijn. Want wij hebben gehoord, dat de Heere de wateren der Schelfzee uitgedroogd heeft voor ulieder aangezicht, toen gij uit Egypte gingt; en wat gijlieden aan de twee koningen der Amoriëten, Sihon en Og, gedaan hebt, die op gene zijde der Jordaan waren, dewelke gijlieden verbannen hebt. Als wij het hoorden, zoo versmolt ons hart, en er bestaat geen moed meer in iemand, vanwege ulieder tegenwoordigheid; want de Heere, ulieder God, is een God boven in den hemel, en beneden op de aarde". . . .

Rachab, de geweldige!

Ze had het woord Gods gehoord.

En ze had het geloofd en omhelsd. Ze geloofde de belofte van den God des Verbonds, trouwde, dat God Zijne belofte zekerlijk zou vervullen, en dat Hij, Die het beloofd had, ook machtig was om het te doen.

En ze begeerde zich te voegen bij de erfgenamen der belofte.

Volkomen afziende van alle macht der menschen en van de geweldigen dezer wereld, als minder dan ijdelheid, wierp zij zich, als een geloofsgeweldige, op den almachtigen God van hemel en aarde.

Ze had gekozen. Ze wilde het koninkrijk der hemelen nemen met geweld.

Rachab, de geweldige!

Heldin des geloofs!

Zoo zal ze van nu aan bekend staan, getuigenis bekomen hebbende door hare werken.

En uit hare werken gerechtvaardigd geweest zijnde!

Rachab, de hoer, ja; maar thans de geweldige. De hoer uit en van zichzelf; de geweldige door het geloof haar uit genade geschonken, toen ze als een eenling uit een ondergaande wereld werd overgezet in het koninkrijk van den Zoon van God liefde.

Zij geloofde God.

Zij omhelsde Gods beloften. En haar geloof was geen dood geloof, maar het levend geloof in den God harer zaligheid, dat in en door de werken openbaar werd.

Immers koos ze partij.

Altijd kiest het geloof partij. Juist daarin onderscheidt het waarachtig, levend geloof zich van een dood geloof. En hier hebt ge juist de diepe gedachte van den brief van Jakobus: alleen een geloof, dat partij kiest voor den God des verbonds, tegen de wereld en de machten der duisternis, tegen de zonde en de lusten des vleesch, dat partij kiest, kome wat wil, ook al moet heel de wereld en het tegenwoordige leven daarbij opgeofferd worden,—alleen zulk een geloof is levend. En alleen in den weg van zulk een geloof worden we gerechtvaardigd. Wat baat het u al, of ge gelooft, dat God een eenig God is, en vriend der wereld blijft? Kan dat geloof u zalig maken? Zult ge, als vriend der wereld, niet een vijand Gods gesteld worden, en met die wereld straks veroordeeld en verdoemd worden?

Rachab geloofde God, en ze koos partij.

Dat is duidelijk uit het feit, dat ze “de gezondenen heeft ontvangen, en door eenen anderen weg uitgelaten.”

Hoe deze verspieters bij Rachab aanlandden, wordt niet vermeld. Zeker is, dat ze kwamen als vrienden Gods, als van de partij des levenden Gods, als vijanden van Jericho, die het op den ondergang der stad gemunt hebben. En zeker is ook, dat Rachab dit alles verstond, dat ze hen als zoodanig ontvangt, verzorgt, beschermt, en hun een veilige ontkoming bereidt.

En daarmee had ze met beslistheid gekozen voor Israel's zaak, en tegen de zaak der wereld.

Want de keuze des geloofs is immer antithetisch. Dat is onvermijdelijk. Niemand kan twee heeren dienen. Noch ook kan, in deze wereld, iemand ooit één heer dienen, zonder dat hij met den anderen heer ook maar iets te maken heeft. Hij zal dan eenen aanhangen, maar daarmee tegelijkertijd den anderen verwerpen; of den eenen haten, maar dan ook den anderen liefhebben. Altijd naar den onvermijdelijken regel der antithese. Wie niet voor is, die is tegen. En wie wel voor is, die is ook tegen. . . . den anderen. Met Rachab was het niet anders. Dat lag reeds in den aard der zaak: wilde ze de zaak van Israels God omhelzen, dan verwierp ze daarmee reeds de zaak der wereld van Jericho. Maar dit werd ook openbaar, toen ook die wereld gezanten zond, en ze partij koos tegen hen en voor Israels verspieters.

Ze zag op de vergelding des loons.

Ze vliedt van den toekomstenden toorn, en zoekt den vrede en het leven bij Israel's God.

Met den God van Israel waagt ze alles.

Want laat ons deze keuze van Rachab, ook wat hare eigene positie in de wereld betrof, niet gering achten. Alles stond immers op het spel. O, zij, die zelf immer op twee gedachten hinken, mogen gaarne wijzen op het feit, dat Rachab zichzelf trachtte te redden, door de toevlucht te nemen tot leugens en bedrog. Ze had op God moeten vertrouwen, en eenvoudig aan de gezanten des

konings de waarheid moeten zeggen. En, och, laat het ons maar aanstonds toestemmen, dat God alle onwaarheid haat, maar daarbij dan ook aanstonds opmerken, dat de Schrift juist op die leugen van Rachab geen nadruk legt, maar juist alleen op haar daad des geloofs.

Ze had alles feil!

De zaak der wereld stond op het spel. Jericho was vervuld met vrees, maar ook en destemeer met haat tegen Israel. De stad wist het doel van Israel's komst, en het ligt in den aard der zaak, dat een wakend oog werd gehouden over alle teekenen van verraad. Niet onwaarschijnlijk is het, dat Rachab, de hoer, die immers haar vroeger leven reeds vaarwel had gezegd, onder verdenking stond. . . .

En ze wordt, uit het oogpunt van de wereld, metterdaad landverrader!

Ze verraaft de zaak der duisternis!

Voor de zaak des Heeren heeft ze haar leven over! Vertrouwende op den God van Israel.

Rachab, de heldin des geloofs!

Uit de werken gerechtvaardigd!

Dat geldt ook van Rachab, de hoer, de geweldige.

Neen, nogmaals zij het gezegd, niet om haar geloof, of op grond van haar geloof; noch ook op grond van de verdienstelijkheid harer werken des geloofs, werd zij gerechtvaardigd.

Het zal nu toch wel duidelijk zijn, dat Jakobus in dien zin geen rechtvaardigmaking uit de werken leert. Door het geloof alleen,—dat is en blijft de leer der Schrift. Maar gij, O, ijdel mensch! gij, die zegt, dat ge geloof hebt, zonder dat ge ook maar de minste vrucht des geloofs in uwe werken openbaart, wilt gij weten, dat het geloof zonder de werken dood is? Let dan op Rachab, de hoer, en zie het dan zelf, dat ze in den weg des werken des geloofs zalig is geworden, en gerechtvaardigd is geweest.

Of is het niet duidelijk, dat ze zonder dat levend geloof, en zonder zijne werken, omgekomen was met de wereld?

Dan toch had ze niet gekozen voor de zaak des levenden Gods. Dan had ze de verspieters niet geherbergd en verborgen. Dan had ze hen niet door een anderen weg doen ontkomen. Dan had ze haar leven in Jericho liefgehad. En dan was ze door het oordeel Gods over Jericho getroffen, en omgekomen.

Nu werd ze behouden, bij Israel ingelijfd, erfgename der belofte!

En zoo is het nog!

[Het levend geloof kiest voor de zake van den Zoon Gods, tegen de wereld, en wordt in dien weg zalig!

Verheerlijkt met Hem!

H. H.

## *The Standard Bearer*

Semi-Monthly, except Monthly in July and August

Published By

The Reformed Free Publishing Association

1463 Ardmore St., S. E.

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

(Subscription Price \$2.50 per year)

Entered as Second Class Mail at Grand Rapids, Michigan.

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## EDITORIALS

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### How History Is Perverted

The following is a clipping from "The Church Herald" of Jan. 10, 1947. It may serve to illustrate how history is perverted when a writer draws upon the sources of hearsay and his own imagination, rather than take the trouble of investigating the facts in the case before he writes:

We like to sing, "Faith of our Fathers Living Still" and praise their loyalty and devotion. Perhaps it is due to our charity that we say but little of the sins and blunders of our fathers. Scripture speaks not only of the fine qualities of the fathers but also of their sins. The phrase "our fathers trusted in thee" appears in the Bible—the phrases, "our fathers have sinned", "the iniquity of their fathers", "our fathers have trespassed", "walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers", "be not like your fathers" are also found in Scripture. Since the Bible speaks of the sins of the fathers it cannot be wrong for us to at least mention their mistakes as well as their sins and even try to undo them if possible.

It is not my purpose to be critical, really, my purpose is to commend. Something happened in a city in Michigan not long ago which suggested to me that sons can undo the blunders and sins of their fathers. About twenty-five years ago there was much agitation in a certain congregation in a Michigan city. A minister was troubling his congregation by preaching about a theological subject—not a great theological subject but the kind that excites one generation and leaves another one cold. The minister put much stress upon three points, what they were I do not know and most likely but few members of the congregation now know. Because of the preaching and the criticism it evoked there were many discussions in the homes of the congregation; some families became divided, some members siding with the minister and others opposing him. Bitter words were spoken, feelings were aroused, quarrels took place and the love of many grew cold. It was said that the teaching of the minister was at odds with what the denomination taught and since he stuck to his three points he was deposed—rightfully or wrongfully I will not judge. I am inclined to think that the royal law of love was not fully kept.

The bulk of the congregation remained loyal to the minister and left the denomination and only a small group remained in the large church building which had housed the congregation. Of course this

trouble was featured in the daily newspaper and received much publicity which did not bring honor to the cause of Christ. The seceding members built a new church building a half block away from two other church buildings where the gospel was preached and a new parsonage was also erected. For twenty-five years this congregation remained independent; the minister preached his doctrines, stressed the three points and the people listened faithfully and attended the services most loyally.

However, a new generation grew up. The older men in the congregation mellowed—age does something to people. One member who confessed that in his youth he had been rather fiery, said “I am beginning to see that the most important matter is to belong to Christ.” Some of the leaders in the secession movement died. The subject which agitated them twenty-five years ago now fails to stir them. The minister was aging and the time came for him to retire. The congregation gave him a substantial sum of money and he retired. Since the congregation was independent there was no minister available who could succeed him. Hence suggestions were made to return to the denomination from which they had seceded and this was finally done. The sons undid the blunder of the fathers.

Upon hearing of the return of this congregation to the denomination from which they came I could not help but ask a few questions. What good came from this church quarrel which divided a congregation and created much bitter feeling for a time? What advantage came from this split to the cause of Protestantism? Was the kingdom benefited? Wounds were made which took time to heal, money was spent unnecessarily for a new church building and parsonage—the old building was large enough to house the whole congregation. That money could have been used in a more constructive way. Could not this division have been avoided? Often behind some church quarrels is a personality problem. Recently a friend told me that a schism took place in his denomination because two bishops could not get along with each other. Sometimes individuals put their own desires and ambitions before the welfare of the kingdom of God.

The above article is written by the Rev. C. P. Dame, pastor of the Second Reformed Church of Kalamazoo, Michigan, under the title: “Undoing the Blunders of the Fathers”. Our readers understand that he refers to what used to be the “Protesting First Christian Reformed Church” of Kalamazoo, Mich., of which the Rev. H. Danhof was pastor, and which recently returned to the denomination of the Christian Reformed Churches, and now bears, somewhat ironically, the name of Grace Christian Reformed Church.

There is hardly a sentence in the above representation of the history of that congregation that is true. Note the following:

The Rev. Dame writes: “About twenty-five years ago there was much agitation in a certain congregation in a Michigan city.” The fact is that, at the time to which the writer refers, there was no agitation in that congregation at all. There was, on the contrary, peace and harmony, and the congregation was flourishing, being built up in the knowledge and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, through the preaching of the Rev. H. Danhof. Had the Rev. Dame written according to simple facts, he would have said: “About twenty-five years ago, outsiders tried to stir up trouble for a certain congregation in a Michigan city, and succeeded only too well.” That is the naked truth.

The author continues: “A minister was troubling his congregation by preaching about a theological subject—not a great theological subject but the kind that excites one generation and leaves another cold”. Every word in this sentence is untruth and slander. The minister did not preach about “a theological subject”, but he proclaimed the full counsel of God, and that, too, very ably. He understood the Scriptures, and instructed his people in the riches of the knowledge of Christ. Nor did he trouble his congregation. As has already been said, others, enemies from without, stirred up trouble for it. Neither is it true that “the theological subject” to which the writer is, evidently, particularly referring, was one “that excites one generation and leaves another cold.” It is true, of course, that the truth in Christ, and the fundamental doctrines of Holy Scripture, that have the deepest interest of God’s people, leave *apostatizing* generations cold. But if the author refers to the generations of the people of God, the history of the Church should have taught him that they are always deeply concerned about the great doctrines of sin and grace, and the sovereignty of God. And these were the doctrines which the minister of that congregation in that Michigan city emphasized.

The author continues: “The minister put much stress upon three points, what they were I do not know and most likely but few members of the congregation now know.” Now, it is certainly strange that the Rev. Dame, who here confesses that he is not acquainted with the “three points” on which he alleges that the minister laid much stress, can nevertheless assure his readers that they were of no account, something that merely excites one generation and leaves another cold. If he is ignorant of the doctrines the Rev. H. Danhof stressed, he certainly is quite incompetent to express judgment upon their value and importance. The Rev. Dame here leaves the impression that he has little use for distinctive doctrine in general. Secondly, the Rev. Dame does not know what he is talking about, as, in fact, he himself virtually confesses, when he writes

that "the minister put much stress upon three points." It is quite evident that the Reverend heard a mere rumor about three points, and concluded that it must be the minister that originated them, and emphasized them on every occasion. Fact is, however, that, at the time to which the writer refers, there were no three points, that the Rev. H. Danhof was not the author of them, still less stressed them; but that the Synod of Kalamazoo, 1924, fabricated them, and that the minister about whom the Rev. Dame is writing refused to subscribe to them.

Consequently, what follows is also a distortion of historical fact. The Rev. Dame writes: "Because of his preaching and the criticism it evoked there were many discussions in the homes of the congregation; some families became divided, some members siding with the minister and others opposing him. Bitter words were spoken, feelings were aroused, quarrels took place and the love of many grew cold. It was said that the teaching of the minister was at odds with what the denomination taught and since he stuck to his three points he was deposed—rightfully or wrongfully I will not judge. I am inclined to think that the royal law of love was not fully kept." All the facts in the case are here distorted. Fact is that, as was said before, outside enemies stirred up trouble, protested against the teachings of the minister, presented the matter to Classis and Synod; that the Synod could not find grounds of condemnation of the minister in the Reformed Standards, as is quite plain from the very language of the Synod as printed in the Acta; that they formulated the "Three Points" without, however, condemning the minister; that, later, the Classis demanded of the minister that he subscribe to the "Three Points," and that, when the minister refused, he and his consistory were deposed. Thus, in the meantime, was trouble and division caused in the congregation. And thus the larger part of the congregation left the denomination of the Christian Reformed Churches with their deposed Consistory and pastor.

These are the facts in the case.

We do not blame the Rev. Dame for not knowing them. But we consider it quite unethical to write about a case without making an attempt to acquaint oneself with the main facts.

And now the rest.

After having related that the congregation thus separated from the Christian Reformed fellowship re-established itself, he tells his readers: "For twenty-five years this congregation remained independent; the minister preached his doctrines, stressed the three points (!! H.H.) and the people listened faithfully and attended the services loyally." Here the Rev. Dame omits a very important part of the history of this congregation, without which he cannot possibly ex-

plain its recent return to the fold of the Christian Reformed Churches.

It is not my desire, nor is it necessary, for our present purpose, to relate this phase of the history of that "congregation in a Michigan city" in detail. Suffice it to say that this church was not, from its beginning, an independent church; that for two years it was connected with several other churches that likewise refused to be put in the strait-jacket of the "Three Points" of 1924; that, when the proper time was come for these churches to organize a classis, the Rev. Danhof and his consistory and congregation, separated themselves from that fellowship, for no reasons that would be considered valid before the tribunal of God, in fact, because of petty and personal jealousy, suspicion, and evil ambition; and that exactly because of this schismatic act, it came to stand alone, and was doomed to die or be swallowed up by some other church.

That, too, is simple history.

And this is the deepest cause of the recent return of that congregation to the denomination of Christian Reformed Churches. Had it not been for that schismatic act of 1926, it would never have returned in the way it did. The Rev. Dame simply draws upon his imagination when he explains that return, in the way in which it took place, from the fact that the fathers, in part died, in part mellowed, while the children were of a different mind from the fathers, and were desirous to undo blunders of the latter.

For, and this is, perhaps, the most serious blunder the Rev. Dame makes in his article: the very subject on which he writes is contrary to fact.

For what was undone by the return of what is now the Grace Christian Reformed Church of Kalamazoo?

Precisely nothing.

Or, how does the Rev. Dame think that, in the Church of Jesus Christ, "blunders" can be undone? In the language of Christian faith, "blunders" such as were committed in 1924 are *sins*, Mr. Dame. And, truly, thanks be to God, in the Church of Christ, blunders or sins can be undone. But only in the way of *righteousness*. God knows of no other way. And the way of righteousness, for the Church, is that of the righteousness of Christ, of redemption and forgiveness. To walk in that way means to repent, and to confess our sins before God and before one another. Another way to undo sins there is not.

Was anything undone when the present Grace Christian Reformed Church returned to the denomination of Christian Reformed Churches?

On the contrary, iniquity was added to iniquity!

Suppose what certainly is not the truth, that this church sinned, when they refused to bend their neck under the yoke of the "Three Points" in 1924, and



that the Christian Reformed Churches had been completely in the right, when they cast them out, and deprived them of their property. In that case, two things would have been necessary to undo things. That congregation, through its consistory, must needs have confessed its sin of schism; and, secondly, in the same way, it must have declared its agreement with the "Three Points" of 1924. Twenty two years ago they were thrown out naked because of their disagreement with those points of doctrine. It stands to reason that only in the way of expressing agreement with the doctrine they rejected in 1924 was a return to the Christian Reformed Churches possible, supposing the latter were right.

Or suppose what most surely is the truth, that the Christian Reformed Churches arbitrarily adopted three points of doctrine that were not in the Reformed Confessions and, besides, contrary to them; that these Churches committed an act of gross injustice when they cast out officebearers and members from their fellowship, deprived them of their church property, and compelled them to stand alone and to start all over again. Would it, then, before the face of Him that judges righteously, not have been required of the Christian Reformed Churches, in order to undo things, to confess their iniquity before the church that returned to them, to retract the "Three Points" and to compensate as much as possible the offended and maltreated congregation for the harm done to them?

And would not a statement in the Church papers, to that effect, have been proper and in order?

Most certainly that would have been the Scriptural and, therefore, the only way, to undo things.

Was this way followed?

Not at all. Neither side confessed any sin; neither side retracted anything; neither side expressed any agreement with any doctrine. The Christian Reformed Churches simply added another congregation to their number, took over the property that congregation had acquired after that same Christian Reformed Church had deprived them of their former church and parsonage, and published nothing but the barest mention of the merger in their papers. And the present Grace Christian Reformed Church was not required to make a confession, nor to declare agreement with the "Three Points".

Did they undo things?

Would to God, Mr. Dame, they had! For then the way would have been opened for two dozen more churches to return! If in the proper way, that is, in the way of the righteousness of Christ, in the way of repentance and forgiveness, the Protestant First Christian Reformed Church had returned to its former fellowship, there would have been joy with the angels in heaven. Now, however, the angels must have blushed and hid their faces in shame, because of the politics

that were played, and the iniquity that was added to iniquity, when the classis of Kalamazoo covered up the sins of the fathers!

God cannot be mocked!

H. H.

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## THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

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### An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

Part Two.

Of Man's Redemption

Lord's Day XXI

5.

The Communion Of Saints. (cont.)

That history is not to be compared to a movement along the spokes of a wheel towards its hub.

It does not present the picture of a number of different churches, equally imperfect in their apprehension of the truth as it is in Christ, but simultaneously approximating it.

On the contrary, it was a development from a definite startingpoint, along a straight line, from which, however, under the influence of the carnal element in the Church, in the course of time, many departed, to follow after their own philosophy, and to establish various denominations and sects.

From the beginning of the new dispensation, the one, holy, catholic Church was built upon the foundation of the prophets and the apostles of which Jesus Christ is the chief corner stone. In the doctrine of the apostles and prophets, as contained in the Holy Scriptures, was clearly indicated the line along which the Church must develop and grow in the knowledge and grace of her Lord. And along this line of revealed truth there was, indeed, development, but always in the face of much opposition by heretics. These heretics did not innocently wander from the path of truth: they were evil men, motivated by the flesh, loving the world, and seeking to seduce the Church from the way of righteousness, and thus to lead her to destruction. Thus the Scriptures always presents them, and ever warns the Church against their seducing influence. The apostle Paul exhorts believers to grow in the knowledge of Christ, "that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." Eph. 4:14. And the apostle Peter warns the Church against false

teachers that shall arise, "who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not." II Pet. 2:1-3.

Hence, the history of the Church is a constant struggle to maintain the truth over against the inventions of evil men. It is the history of progress in the face of opposition, of constant deformation and reformation.

It presents the picture, not of spokes in a wheel, but of one central line of progress from which many lines more or less sharply diverge.

In these divergent lines, one dare not see the true multiformity of the Church of Christ. The lie is never a form of the truth.

It is the sacred calling of every believer to seek and to determine, in the light of Holy Scripture, where the central line of the truth runs, and ever to remain on that line, or to return to it. In other words, it is his most solemn duty, to join himself to the purest manifestation of the Church in the world, and with her to remain.

This does not mean that the believer who takes this calling seriously imagines that no one is saved outside of the particular church in which he has his membership. But it does mean that he abhors all deviations from the truth as it is in Christ, and that he refuses to go along with those that move in the direction of the false church.

Only the truth of Holy Scripture may be his criterion.

Where the Word of God is preached, there is the Church!

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The communion of saints is, of course, reflected in the life of the individual believers in relation to one another. The Catechism speaks of this when it mentions the calling of every one to "know it to be his duty, readily and cheerfully to employ his gifts, for the advantage and salvation of other members."

This means, first of all, that the saint who lives from the faith, and in the consciousness of this communion, will feel himself drawn irresistibly to the assemblies of the people of God, and diligently attend them. This is true, chiefly, with respect to public worship, the gathering of the saints for the purpose of the ministry of the Word and of the Sacraments, and of united prayer and praise. For more than one reason, it is a sad sign when professed Christians leave their pews empty when the Church is assembled for

worship, and when they rather stay home or seek their pleasure elsewhere than to go up to the house of the Lord. But it certainly reveals a most miserable lack of appreciation for the fellowship of the saints. But it also must be applied to all other gatherings of the saints as such, to those especially that are organized for mutual edification in the knowledge of Christ. Especially in view of the fact that the believer must needs live a large part of his life in the world, in which he is a stranger, he longs for the gatherings of the people of God, and seeks them diligently.

Secondly, living in the consciousness of the communion of saints, he will be deeply imbued with a sense of his own individual helplessness and insignificance, and understands that he can have significance only in the fellowship of the body of Christ. Even as in a body all the members are interdependent, and no member has any power or meaning by itself, in separation from the body, so each individual believer can have significance only in connection with, and dependence upon all other members. No member occupies an independent place. No matter how richly he may be endowed with spiritual gifts and talents, though he be a theological giant, a most brilliant preacher, the greatest reformer, still he does not stand and labor alone, but can function only as a member of the body. In the grand oratorio that is sung by the Church to the glory of God in Christ, there are no soloists. The believer who lives from the faith of the communion of saints is no separatist or schismatic. "If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?" I Cor. 12:15, 16. Nor will he exalt himself above the other members, but he will heed the exhortation of the apostle Paul: "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." Phil. 2:3, 4.

And finally, in the consciousness of the communion of saints, all seek to know and to occupy their own place in the whole, to employ their Christ-given gifts of grace for the well-being of the whole, and for the salvation and edification of all the other members. The Church has but one purpose: the glory of God in Christ. To reflect that glory in word and walk is the communal purpose of all the saints. They are of one mind to realize this calling. And in the realization of this calling is implied the salvation and spiritual edification and growth of the members, for if one member suffers the whole body suffers. Hence, no believer lives unto himself. Conscious of the fact that he has nothing that he has not received, he lives in humility before the face of God, not seeking his own glory. Yet again, in a deep sense of his obligation to employ all



his gifts to the realization of the high calling where-with he is called, he will not hide them or bury them in a napkin, but be diligent in the service of his God. And again, knowing that he is not the body, but only one of its members, he will earnestly seek to know and to occupy his own place in the body, in order that in that position he may function to the glory of Christ and to the salvation of his fellow members.

Thus they will "do all things without murmurings and disputings"; and they will be "blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom they shine as lights in the world." Phil. 2:14, 15.

In the exercise of the communion of saints the Church will flourish, the believers will be edified, the saints will rejoice.

For God commands his blessing there!

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## 6.

### The Forgiveness Of Sins.

In the same Lord's Day that treats the subjects of the holy Catholic Church, and the communion of saints, the Catechism explains the tenth article of the Apostolic Confession, that concerning the forgiveness of sins. In answer to the question: "What believest thou concerning the forgiveness of sins?" it teaches us: "That God, for the sake of Christ's satisfaction, will no more remember my sins, neither my corrupt nature, against which I have to struggle all my life long; but will graciously impute to me the righteousness of Christ, that I may never be condemned before the tribunal of God."

It would seem, therefore, that the Catechism, in this connection, would have us treat of the forgiveness of sins only in passing, since it does not even devote a separate Lord's Day to its discussion.

In a separate discussion of the *Apostolicum*, this would not be sufficient. It would not do justice to the place the "forgiveness of sins" occupies in that confession. Besides, the subject itself is of central significance for the faith of the believer, too important to be mentioned only in passing.

In the Apostolic Confession, a separate article is devoted to this subject; and let us note, too, that the article occupies a very significant position.

It stands in the series that constitutes the third part of the Confession, that which speaks of the Holy Ghost and our sanctification. At the head of this third division stands the article: "I believe in the Holy Ghost." And the meaning of this article is not simply to declare that we believe in the third person of the Holy Trinity, but to refer to Him as the Spirit of Christ, that applies to us all the blessings of salva-

tion merited by Christ for His people. All that follows in the Apostolic Confession, therefore, falls under this head. Without the Holy Ghost there would be no connection between the living Christ in all His fulness of spiritual blessings and us. It is in the Spirit that He returns to us, and that He dwells in us to make us partaker of all the spiritual benefits He purchased for us by His death and perfect obedience. Without the Spirit there would be no Church, and no communion of saints, no forgiveness of sins, no resurrection of the dead, and no life everlasting. Now, let us notice, that the article concerning the forgiveness of sins, stands between that about the Church and the communion of saints, on the one hand, and that which speaks of the resurrection of the dead, on the other. This means that, of all the spiritual blessings that are, in this life, bestowed upon the believers, by the Spirit of Christ, only the forgiveness of sins is mentioned in the Apostolic Confession. It is singled out. We understand, of course, that this is not the only spiritual benefit that the saints have in Christ in this life. We might easily enlarge upon this part of the Confession by adding, for instance: "I believe the new birth, the efficacious calling, the gift of faith, eternal righteousness, sanctification, and preservation unto the end." All these gifts, and many other riches of grace, are bestowed upon the Church in the world. But of all these blessings of grace, the *Apostolicum* simply mentions the forgiveness of sins. Evidently, it proceeds from the truth that this one blessing is fundamental, and of basic importance. In the Confession, therefore, the forgiveness of sins occupies a central place.

In a treatise on the Apostolic Confession, therefore, it would be but proper to devote considerable space to this subject.

Yet, the Catechism speaks of it only in passing.

Nor is it difficult to discover the reason for this.

It is true that, in this particular division of the Catechism, it follows the line of the *Apostolicum*, and thus explains the contents of the Christian faith. But the Heidelberg is much more than a treatise on the Confession. It also explains the rest of Christian doctrine and of our Reformed faith. It speaks of sin and misery, of faith itself, of the means of grace, of the law of God, and of prayer. And in the course of its discussion it mentions the forgiveness of sins in different connections. This was inevitable, exactly because this element of Christian faith and doctrine is of central importance.

Moreover, at the end of its discussion of the Apostolic Confession, the Catechism inserts a general question concerning the importance and fruit of believing all that was briefly comprehended in the twelve articles of our holy catholic faith: "But what doth it profit thee now that thou believest all this?" And in answer to this question, it devotes an entire Lord's Day to the

subject of our justification, which includes the forgiveness of sins. It can, therefore, readily be understood that, in the present connection, the Catechism but briefly refers to this important matter, and treats it as an appendix to the doctrine of the Church, and of the communion of saints.

In order to avoid repetition, therefore, we shall have to follow suit.

We may call attention here to especially two matters that are of importance. First of all, to the central significance of this spiritual blessing, as is indicated by the place it occupies in the Confession; and, secondly, to its inseparable connection with the truth concerning the Church and the communion of saints, as is suggested by the fact that the Catechism groups all these subjects together in one Lord's Day.

Its central significance and basic importance, with relation to all the other blessings of salvation, is easily understood. Forgiveness of sins means, according to the Catechism, "that God. . . will no more remember my sins, neither my corrupt nature, against which I have to struggle all my life long."

This means that, as long as we are in this life, and in "the body of this death," our sins rise up against us, and, unless something is done about them, form an impassable barrier between God and us. The situation is not thus, that we sinned in the past, that we were delivered from the power of sin, perfectly and completely, and that now we sin no more. On the contrary, we sinned, we still carry about with us our corrupt nature, and we do sin every day. In that state, it is impossible that any blessings of grace and salvation should be bestowed upon us. And, moreover, in the consciousness of our sins, the sins we have committed and do commit, and of our defiled and corrupt nature, we could not possibly have confidence to approach God to ask Him for His favor. For sin is guilt, worthiness of death, and of the wrath of God. And God is holy and righteous: he can have no fellowship with the sinner in his corruption, nor can He acquit the guilty. All this must be expounded more fully in connection with our discussion of the twenty-third Lord's Day. But even now, in order to see the basic importance of the forgiveness of sin, it must be clearly understood that we are, in ourselves, in the state of sin and guilt, and, therefore, under wrath and condemnation; that, as long as we are in that state before God, we can neither receive nor expect even the smallest token of His favor; and that, therefore, this state must above all be changed, before we can hope for salvation.

This fundamental and radical change is affected by the forgiveness of sins.

It means, so the Catechism explains, "that God. . . will no more remember my sins, neither my corrupt nature, against which I have to struggle all my life."

O, this does not mean that God forgets that we are sinners. This would be quite impossible. But it does mean that He does not remember our sins in His wrath and just condemnation, that He does not reckon them against us, that He does not behold us as mere sinners, but as *redeemed* sinners, that have been perfectly justified, whose sins have been blotted out, and that have fully satisfied for all their sins.

Again, you understand, that this does not presuppose a change *in God* as if He formerly remembered our sins against us, but now holds them against us no more, that He formerly condemned us, but now condemns us no longer. The change is, not in God, but in us, when through faith He translates us from the state of condemnation into that of forgiveness. In God, it means that there always was forgiveness with Him, that He eternally beholds His people, whom He chose in Christ before the foundation of the world, as *redeemed* sinners: whom He did predestinate, them He also justified. Rom. 8:29, 30. Only, when we lay hold upon this marvellous mystery and amazing wonder, by faith, we know and have confidence in God as our Redeemer, and we appropriate the forgiveness of sins.

And once more, this does not mean that God sets aside His righteousness and justice, and acquits the guilty; but it is a revelation of that abundant mercy, according to which He loaded the guilt of our iniquity on His only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and that in Him He realized our righteousness.

H. H.

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## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

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### Saul Without Excuse

The Lord had sent Saul to Samuel to be anointed king over Israel. "Tomorrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin," the Lord had said to His servant, "and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people." That the Lord sent Saul to Samuel means that the entire chain of events by which, unbeknown to himself, Saul was led step by step into Samuel's presence, had been sovereignly designed by God in His counsel and forged into actuality by His providence. The straying of the asses from the estate of their owner; Kish's instructing Saul to seek the lost beasts with the aid of a servant; the conducting of the search in the regions indicated by the text; the suggestion of the servant that the seer be consulted; the loquacious

maidens giving copious information;—all came to pass according to the direction of God. And each preceding event in the chain was casually related to the following. The straying of those asses had called for the search; and because the search was in vain, the servant insisted that the seer be consulted; and as informed by the maidens the two of them hastened into the city and there ran into Samuel. For Saul had to be anointed king. But he meant it not so; but it was in his heart to enquire after some lost property of his father. This motive, too, was of God; and He was using it for the accomplishment of His purpose. All was of the Lord. It was He who sent Saul to Samuel to be appointed captain over the people of Israel; and in anointing him Samuel transacted for God.

That had now to be abundantly proved to Saul, both that the Lord had sent him to Samuel and that in Samuel he truly dealt with the Lord. The question is pertinent why that was necessary. For such was not the way of God with David. Samuel came to Bethlehem, and having anointed David in the midst of his brethren, he returned to Ramah. As far as can be determined from the sacred narrative, not one word had passed between the two. Not one sign was given David to indicate that in anointing him Samuel had followed divine instructions. But Saul, as we shall see, received several such indications. There could be but one reason. David was a believer in God and he loved God's prophet and had faith in him. Hence, he was not in the need of signs to tell him that in pouring upon his head the sacred oil Samuel had acted under the necessity of a divine command. But Saul was an unbeliever. Once in the throne, he would insist in his heart that Samuel was a self-appointed seer and would rule without him and thus without God. Hence he had to be supplied with copious evidence of Samuel's prophetic calling, thus of the fact that Samuel transacted for God in order that Saul in his rebellions and self-will might be without excuse.

Firstly, Samuel bade Saul to go up before him to the high place; "for ye shall eat with me today". Samuel had planned on this—such is plainly the implication of these words—and therefore knew of Saul's coming long before Saul and his servant even had decided to consult Samuel. Hence, the source of that knowledge of Samuel could have been none other than the Lord. Next Samuel told Saul that on the morrow "I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thine heart." Samuel could thus speak only because the thoughts of Saul's heart had been revealed to him by the Lord, who alone knows man's heart. The evidence of the genuineness of Samuel's prophetic calling continued to accumulate. Said Samuel to Saul, "And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found." Samuel had learned all

about those asses from the Lord and not from any man. Then Samuel put to Saul that enigmatical question by which it was revealed to him that the Lord had selected him for the kingship, "And for whom is all that which is desirable in Israel? Is it not for thee and for thy father's house?" By the expression, "all that is desirable in Israel," must doubtless be understood the kingdom as including the kingship, the true Israel according to the election, and even the very soil of Canaan. All would be Saul's but only in the way of his fearing God with all his heart and ruling God's people as His vicar. Saul fearing the Lord, the God-fearing in Israel would serve him in love and thus the kingdom would be his as a gift of Jehovah. But Saul feared not God. Therefore the kingdom was taken from him and bestowed upon David, the man according to God's heart.

Saul plainly perceived the implication of Samuel's enigmatical statement, perceived that the Lord had selected him for the kingship. He replied, "Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin?" As was stated, Saul was in earnest, it may be believed. With a man like him, objections such as he was raising would have real weight.

Instead of answering Saul, Samuel took him and his servant "and brought them into the parlor and made them sit in the chief place among them that were bidden, which were about thirty persons." They were a select number of thirty men of note, who had been invited to the festival, and had taken their places in the room provided for that purpose. Saul was given the uppermost, that is, the chief place as the place of honor. "And Samuel said unto the cook, Bring the portion, which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee." "And the cook took up the shoulder, and that which was upon it, and set it before Saul. And said—namely Samuel said—Behold that which is left! It is set before thee, eat: for unto this time has it been set before thee since I said, I have invited the people." This is a difficult verse. Yet its purpose seems clear. It informed Saul that the piece that was offered was one that had been set aside for him when the feast was in the first stages of preparation or immediately after the invitations had been sent out, thus long before Saul's arrival in the city. That was so much more evidence of Samuel's prophetic foresight. It compelled Saul again to conclude that in Samuel he had to do with one with whom were the secrets of the Lord.

"So Saul did eat with Samuel that day. And when they were come down from the high place into the city, Samuel communed with Saul upon the top of the house." It was at this time that Samuel told Saul all that was in his heart. Of all the evidence of Samuel's prophetic calling thus far given, this perhaps was the

most conclusive. What was in Saul's heart is not revealed to us. It shows that it is not important that we should know. Any attempt on our part to conjecture accurately what was in Saul's heart must end in failure. For only God knows the heart. It would follow from the nature of matters that Saul was occupied in his mind and heart with his elevation to the throne. That much is certain. What Samuel said to Saul is not revealed. It must have referred to the royal dignity, the religious decline of the people, their groaning under the yoke of foreign dominions, the necessity of their return to the Lord, and of a leader with the fear of God in his heart.

After a conversation that could not have been protracted, considering the character of Saul, the three of them—Saul and his servant and Samuel—lay them down to sleep. This certainly is implied in what is next related, "And they arose early: and it came to pass about the spring of the day, that Samuel called Saul to the top of the house, saying, 'Up, that I may send thee away'". Thus the first to awake from sleep and to arise was Samuel. For the narrative continues, "And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel abroad."

It is plain that Samuel had not invited Saul to the sacrificial feast for the express purpose of honoring him. True, he did make Saul sit in the chief place among them that were bidden. But this was simply proper, seeing that Saul was to be king. Yet, Samuel refrained—for what purpose we shall see presently—from disclosing this to the guests and to anyone. The text does not even bring out that Samuel revealed Saul's identity. Yet, he may have. If so, Saul was simply Saul, the son of Kish, a Benjamite, to the other guests. It all goes to show that the real purpose of Samuel's having invited Saul, and prepared for him a place at the festive board and reserved for him the choice piece, was to provide Saul with the indisputable evidence that it was the Lord who had directed his steps to Samuel and that Samuel truly was God's prophet. Saul was now in the possession of that evidence. If soon he would consciously and deliberately deny these things, it would be in the awareness that he sinned against better knowledge.

Now followed the anointing, it having been proved to Saul that Samuel was God's prophet. "As they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us (and he passed on), but stand thou still awhile, that I may show thee the word of God. Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him and said, Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?" Samuel's bidding Saul to stand still a while (Hebrew, today), "that I may shew thee the word of God" must not be taken to mean that the actual anointing was preceded by another prolonged

conversation in which Samuel, as some interpreters have it, for the first time revealed to Saul that he was to be elevated to the throne. Samuel, certainly, had already revealed this to Saul, first by that enigmatical rhetorical question that he had put to Saul, and later in his conversation with him on the roof. It is rather absurd to suppose that now for the first time, after all those transactions, Saul learned from Samuel that he was to be king. If this had not already been told him, what could have been the subject matter of that conversation between the two on the top of the roof? And how, on the basis of such a view, is Saul's reactions to that enigmatical question to be explained? He had replied to it and what he said betokens surprise, amazement. But when Samuel finally took a vial of oil, and poured it upon Saul's head, he held his peace, the reason being, certainly, that he had been prepared for his anointing. Samuel's declaration "I will show thee the word of God" has reference to the actual anointing of Saul and to the words that Samuel thereupon spake to him.

As was said, Samuel refrained from disclosing to the assembled guests that the stranger, whom he had made to occupy the chief place among them was to be the king. Nor did Samuel want the servant of Saul to know. For he instructed Saul to bid the servant to pass on before them; and subsequently Saul is anointed in the servant's absence. No one, except the two directly involved, Samuel and Saul, witnessed that anointing. Hence, no one besides these two knew of it. When again in his place, Saul even refused to tell his inquisitive uncle and this in obedience, it must be, to Samuel's instructions that he tell no one. Saul's anointing, his elevation to the throne, was purposely being kept a secret. Why was this? The answer lies with the three prophecies to which Samuel gave utterance, when he had anointed Saul. For though it is true that in their fulfillment these prophecies formed the signs that were given Saul in confirmation to him that he was now by divine anointing really Israel's king, yet it must not be overlooked that we deal here in the first instance with prophecies. We must therefore have regard to these prophecies.

The first prophecy, verse 2: "When thou art parted from me today," said the seer to Saul, "thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulchre in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah and they will say unto thee, The asses which thou wentest to seek are found: and, thy father hath left the care of the asses, and sorroweth for you, saying, What shall I do for my son?" This was pure prediction; it thus formed that much more evidence to Saul of Samuel's prophetic calling. However, had Saul's anointing become a matter of common knowledge among the people, there would be point to the reasoning—a reasoning that Saul would be certain to have used—that, seeing he was known to have been

elevated to the throne, the behaviour of the men of Samuel's prediction, the deep regard for Saul and Kish that their tiding exhibits, was a strictly normal reaction, that anyone with a knowledge of the facts in the case, would have foreseen and thus could have foretold.

This was especially true of the second prophecy, verse 2, 3: "Then shalt thou go forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Bethel, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine: and they will salute thee, and give thee two loaves of bread; which thou shalt receive of their hands." Seeing that these men were totally ignorant of the high honor that had been bestowed on Saul, their giving him those gifts was a truly remarkable phenomenon. Saul's anointing being known to no one, it formed still another clear and unmistakable indication of Samuel's prophetic calling.

The third prophecy in its fulfillment is no less remarkable in this respect; or perhaps it forms the most telling evidence of all. "And after that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp before them; and they shall prophesy: And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man," verses 5, 6. This prophecy concerns directly God. It sets forth what He will do. He will lay hold on Saul by His Spirit; and Saul will prophecy and be turned into another man. All in all, the evidences to Saul that the secrets of God were with Samuel, were overwhelming. Yet that precisely is what Saul denied. In the face of all the evidence given him, that Samuel was sent of God, Saul was determined to rule without him and thus without God. That was his sin; it marks him a man thoroughly abduate in heart.

As was stated, Samuel's three prophecies in their fulfillment were signs, and as such they only added to the testimony already given Saul that God had directed his footsteps to Samuel and that Samuel was God's prophet. The statement of the two men that the asses had been found doubtless implied a divine mandate to the effect that Saul must detach his thoughts from the common pursuits of life and concentrate on and be wholly consecrated to the duties of the office of king to God's glory and the true advancement of the interests of His people. That the tidings of the two men formed a sign by which God spake to Saul followed from the circumstance that, without their being aware of it, they uttered their tiding by divine direction as was also evident to Saul from the fact that the entire

occurrence in all its detail had been foretold by Samuel.

The sign of the three men on the way to God to Bethel and bestowing on Saul two loaves of bread from their sacrificial gifts had special meaning for him. The law of Moses placed the people of Israel under the obligation of providing in the material necessities of the priests and the Levites. The tenths of all the people's increase belonged to these ministers of God. In the language of the law, it was their everlasting possession from which they could not be deprived with impunity. For Israel's king, however, the law made no provision. But the speech of this sign was to the effect that in future the Lord in His mercy would inspire His people to consecrate the wealth of their land, of which He was absolute owner and which His people held as a trust—they were but stewards in God's house—also to the support of the king.

The third sign was that of Saul's prophesying in the moment of his contacting that procession of prophesying prophets coming down from the high place with the four kinds of musical instruments indicated in the text. The prophesying of Saul had stupendous significance not by itself, to be sure, but as an unmistakable and undeniable sign that the Spirit that qualified for the duties of the office had come upon him and that accordingly he truly was called of Samuel and therefore of God Himself to the office of king. To say that the Spirit came upon him is equivalent to saying that he was called. The one statement is implied in the other. For without exception all who were called received the Spirit. And therefore they also prophesied. Saul prophesied. Thus he could deny that he was called of God only as militating against the testimony of the Spirit in His heart that he had been seated in the throne by God. For that he was called means that in his conscious mind necessity was laid upon him to rule God's people in the fear of God and according to God's Word, and that woe was unto him if he did not so rule. Saul therefore was not his own as king; he was God's. He was not king by his own choice but by the election and command of God. This exactly he denied, once in the throne. For he wanted to be his own master. That was his sin.

Saul, as seized by the Spirit, was "turned into another man. Further on the text reads that God "gave him another heart (Hebrew, *turned* him another heart). According to the Scriptures, the heart is the ethical center of the whole inward life, the point of divergence of all the issues of the inward man. Yet the meaning of the Scripture last quoted is not that Saul underwent a real spiritual-ethical change and renewal of the foundation of his life. The divine working in him was not of such a character that it resulted in his being born again from above. He was and remained a man dead in sin. Nor could the work of the Spirit have consisted in His increating in Saul

new natural powers and talents but rather in the production of a hitherto latent or slumbering side of his being,—latent powers of mind and will. The bashful, unassuming and humble Saul was transformed into a mighty man of valor.

The company of prophets of which the text makes mention was a congregation or union of prophets founded by Samuel and under his direction. These unions were the fruit of Samuel's labors and their bond was the life of faith that his prophesying had awakened. They had gathered on the high place for common worship and prayer. They nourished religious feeling by sacred music. When Saul entered their company they were singing and speaking under the impulse of the Spirit's inspiration to the glory of God. Saul was not able to withstand the influence of their prophesying. The Spirit seized him and he, too, prophesied among them to the amazement of all who knew him there in his place of residence. The text reads, "And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetimes saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?" Are we to make of this that Saul was known in the place where he dwelt as a man in whom there was little or no religion and that this explains the people's amazement. That may be. It is impossible to say just how the surprise of the people is to be interpreted. This much is certain that Saul was not known as a man given to religious exercises.

G. M. O.

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## THROUGH THE AGES

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### The Papal Schism Continued

Pope Gregory having died, the cardinals chose Bartholomew Prignano, who took the name of Urban VI. Urban gained for himself the hostility of the cardinals by his attacks upon their worldliness, and four months later they were demanding his resignation. But, as we saw, Urban would not resign; and the French cardinals elected Robert of Geneva as Pope Clement VII. This, as was remarked, had never before happened. There had been rival popes before but always chosen by opposing parties; but these two popes had been duly elected by the same cardinals. Half of the countries of Europe declared in favor of the Roman pope, Urban VI; the others adhered to Clement VII, who took up his residence in Avignon;

and the papal schism that lasted thirty nine-years (1378-1417) was complete. In Rome, as we saw, this period included the successive reigns of four popes and in Avignon, two, Clement VII and Benedict XIII. The last of the popes of the Roman line was Gregory XII.

It is undoubtedly true that the papal schism was the greatest calamity that could befall this institution. This was openly admitted by Benedict XIII, whose real name was Peter de Luna, and by his rival, Gregory XII the last pope of the Roman line. Both popes decried the schism in their letters to each other. Gregory asserted that he was willing to do all within his power for the sake of healing the schism. He wrote to his rival that each should be willing to abdicate rather than be responsible for the continuance of the breach. With his hand on the New Testament he quoted the words, "he who exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." He promised to step down from his throne, if Benedict follow his example. Benedict, too, in his letters, deplored the schism, which he characterized as detestible, wretched, and dreadful; but he did not accept Gregory's proposal but suggested that the matter be discussed with a view to seeing what could be done. One or both popes might abdicate, he said, if necessary. Both popes, however, were equally unwilling to yield their authority. Though twice deposed, Benedict persisted in asserting his claims to the papal dignity to his dying moment.

Though the papal schism was a scandal, men were at a loss how to terminate it. For the view had firmly embedded itself in men's souls that there was no power on earth to which the papacy was responsible. There were individuals who suggested that a general council be called for the healing of the schism. Konrad of Gelnhausen and Henry of Langenstein were of this conviction, and also Marcellius of Padua. Konrad, in advocating the idea, wrote that the church had two heads, Christ, the heavenly and the pope, the earthy. It is from Christ that the church, which is the body of believers and not the pope and the cardinals, derives its life and power directly and is therefore infallible. Hence under Christ the supreme judicial power in the church is not the pope but the body of believers as assembled in a general council. And to this power the pope is answerable. Identical views were expressed by the others. The idea of a general council made speedy and many converts. The views of Gelnhausen were held by the faculties of the university of Paris. But they were vigorously opposed by the English confessor of Benedict, John Hayton. He called the university of Paris "a daughter Satan, mother of error, sower of sedition, and the pope's defamer," and he declared that the pope was answerable to God only.



In 1394, the university of Paris set forth three methods by which the schism could be healed. Both popes could abdicate, or a commission could be appointed to adjudicate the claims of both popes, or a general council could be called for the settlement of the matter. The ecclesiastics came to see in the council the only hope. Finally, in 1408, the cardinals of both popes were prevailed upon to issue a call for such an assembly in Pisa. There it met in Pisa 1409. Attending it, were cardinals, bishops, heads of the great orders, abbots, doctors of theology and canon law, and the representatives of lay rulers. It was thus an august assembly. The council was the crystallization of a new idea in Church Polity, to wit, the supremacy of the council over the papacy.

The first session was held in March. The first act of the council was its profession of the Holy Trinity and the Catholic Faith, and that every heretic and schismatic will be driven into everlasting desolation by the curse of God to share with the devil and his angels the burnings of hell fire unless he repent and become reconciled to the church. On its eighth session the council declared that it was "a general council representing the whole universal Catholic Church and lawfully and reasonably called together". The cardinals, as instructed by the council now elected Peter Philarges, archbishop of Milan, who assumed the name of Alexander V. This made the situation worse than before. There were now three popes instead of two. Rome, Naples, and many sections of Germany adhered to Gregory XII. Spain, Portugal and Scotland supported Benedict XIII. Alexander V was acknowledged by England and France.

G. M. O.

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## Questions on Church Polity

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Under the above caption The Standard Bearer for January 1, 1947, contains answers to some questions sent in by a brother in Sioux Center, Iowa. His questions were these:

1. What is the character of the jurisdiction of Classis over the Consistory?

My answer: Advisory, not mandatory.

2. What remains of the autonomy of the local church, if according to Art. 79 of the Church Order of Dort, Ministers of the Word, Elders and Deacons, who have committed a public and gross sin, shall be suspended and expelled from their office by preceding sentence of their Consistory *and of the nearest church*; and if,

according to the same article, the ministers shall not be entirely deposed *except by the judgment of the Classis*?

My answer: There is no conflict here at all. I fully explained this.

3. Who deposes Ministers of the Word, the Classis or the Consistory?

My answer: Each Consistory deposes its own Minister.

There was also a fourth question that may be ignored here.

The brother has replied. He writes, "Thanks very much for your answers to my questions. I am agreed with your answer to my first question; but I do not agree with your answer to my third question." Whether the brother agrees with my answer to his second question, he does not say.

In replying I must first of all remark that the brother is woefully inconsistent. Consistency demands that if he agrees with my answer to his first question he must agree with my answers to his second and third question as well. For the three answers are essentially one by a common unifying idea, which is that, according to the Church Order of Dort and our Three Forms of Unity, all key-power is concentrated in the Consistory alone and thus not also in the Classis, the latter being not a consistory but an assembly of delegates from a number of autonomous local churches. If this is true—and according to the Church Order and our Confession, it is true—it follows that the character of the jurisdiction of Classis over the Consistory is advisory and not mandatory; but then it also follows just as well that Art. 79 of the Church Order is not in conflict with the doctrine of the autonomy of the local church but is in full agreement with this doctrine; and that not the Classis but that the Consistory only may depose its Minister of the Word. So the brother must do one of two: either reject or accept all three answers.

In explaining why he disagrees with my answer to his third question, the brother quotes from the "Verklaring van de Kerkenordening" of Joh. Jansen and from "De Kerkelijke Tucht" of Dr. H. Bouwman. Now Jansen and Bouwman were good and competent men. However, with our churches organized on the basis of Dort's Church Order and with our names under our Confession, the teachings of Bouwman or of Jansen or of any other authority on Reformed Church Polity may not have such weight for us that we quote them against our Church Order and our Confession. And that is exactly what the brother does. He quotes Dr. H. Bouwman to the effect that the Classis and the Classis only may depose a minister of the Gospel. (This is actually Bouwman's teaching. On page 267 of his "De Kerkelijke Tucht" appears the

statement, "De afzetting van dienaren des Woords mag alleen geschieden door de Classis.) Now certainly this teaching is in violent conflict with Art. 84 of the Church Order of Dort. I quoted that article. In my articles on the Five Fundamental Principles of Reformed Church Polity—articles that the brother has also read—I proved that this teaching is in conflict with every cardinal article of Dort's Church Order and with the doctrine contained in our Confession as well. Now let the brother or anyone else show *with the Church Order and our official Confession* (not with quotations from this or that writer) that in reality I proved nothing; that my interpretations of the articles of Dort's Church Order are thoroughly wrong and that thus that teaching of Dr. Bouwman is not in conflict with the Church Order, definitely with Art. 84, but in perfect harmony with it. And this the brother does of course not by quoting from this or that writer on Church Polity but by coming with the Church Order itself and with our Confessions. In this way we serve the cause of truth. Of course, the brother can take the stand that Dr. Bouwman, just because he was Dr. Bouwman, must be right. But he must not take that stand. That is a bad stand to take. For then we are blind followers of men. Also the interpretations of Dr. Bouwman and of everyone must be tested by the very articles of Dort's Church Order and by the doctrine contained in our official Confessions. In a following article we will examine the grounds (quoted by the brother) upon which Dr. Bouwman tried to base that teaching of his.

G. M. O.

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## SION'S ZANGEN

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### Den Heere Vroolijk Zingen

Wat een vroolijke klank heeft deze psalm in den aanhef en de eerste verzen? Het is een vroolijke stem die het volk toeroept, toezingt, den Heere te loven. Ook vermenigvuldigt de zanger de redenen waarom we zulks zouden doen. En deze zang eindigt met een waarschuwing, gegrond op een historische gebeurtenis. Verhardt uwe harten niet, gelijk de vaders gedaan hebben.

De psalm is gedicht door David (Hebr. 4:7). Waar ik zoo'n genot van had is de uitdrukking in Hebr. 3:7. Want daar staat eenvoudig: "Daarom, gelijk de Heilige Geest zegt:" en dan volgt een gedeelte van dezen psalm. Ik had daar schik in, want het is een van de bewijzen,

dat Gods Woord door den Heiligen Geest ingegeven is, en daarom zonder fouten is. We gelooven in de onfeilbaarheid van den Bijbel. Wat een genot, dat we iets hebben in deze door de zonde gevloekte wereld, waar we staat op kunnen maken. Alles valt tegen, alles bedriegt en liegt, behalve de Heilige Schrift. Gelijk de Heilige Geest zegt! Inderdaad. En we doen wel er naar te luisteren.

Bij welke gelegenheid dit lied gedicht is weten we niet. Het gezang heeft een nationale klank. Het geheele volk wordt opgewekt om den Heere vroolijk toe te zingen, en het geheele volk wordt gewaarschuwd om zijn hart niet te verharderen, gelijk dit geschiedde in de woestijn.

"Komt laat ons den Heere vroolijk zingen, laat ons juichen den Rotssteen onzes heils!" Ziedaar het verrukkelijke begin!

We mogen gerust zeggen, dat de uitvoering van deze opwekking een wonder is. Den Heere vroolijk zingen? Hier op aarde? Terwijl we nog te midden der duisternis wandelen? Te midden van de slangen, de adderengebroadels, de duivelen? Zingen en psalmzingen in den kuil?

Ja, dat mogen we en dat zullen we ook doen.

Het is eenvoudig een historisch feit, dat Israel zoo gezongen heeft, nog zingt, en zingen zal tot aan de voleinding toe. O, we stemmen het U grif toe, dat onze stem wel eens breekt onder 't zingen, dat we wel eens zingen met tranen, maar zingen doen we en zullen we blijven doen.

Hoe kan het?

Het kan, omdat de Heere Zich geopenbaard heeft aan ons in al Zijn liefde en genade. Hij heeft Zijn aangezicht laten zien. En dat Aangezicht is Jezus Christus, de Heere.

Daar spreekt het volgende vers van, en ik zal het overschrijven: "Laat ons Zijn Aangezicht tegemoet gaan met lof, laat ons Hem juichen met psalmen."

Ziet ge, God DrieEenig kunt ge nooit zien. Hij is God, de Heere, Die in de eeuwigheid, in het Hooge en Verhevene woont, die het ontoegankelijk Licht bewoont en Dien niemand zien kan en leven.

Daarom alles wat ge ooit van God ziet of zien zult is door openbaring. En die openbaring van God is Zijn Aangezicht. Ge ziet Zijn aangezicht in de schepping, in de historie en in Zijn Zoon.

Welnu, dat aangezicht van God is zóó schoon, zóó lieflijk, dat het een lied wakker roept in den oprechte, in den rechtvaardige, in het schepsel, dat in de rechte relatie staat tot dien grooten en vreeselijken God. Daar gaat het hier over.

Laat ons Zijn Aangezicht tegemoet gaan! zegt de dichter. Welnu, in de laatste instantie beteekent dit, dat ge Jezus Christus tegemoet schrijdt, dat ge U opmaakt om naar Jezus te gaan. Indien ge sterk ziet op Jezus, zult ge den DrieEenige God zien!

En staat ge dan in de rechte relatie tot dien God, dan zult ge gaan juichen en vroolijk zingen, dan zult ge steeds dichterbij Zijn Aangezicht gaan staan om uit te breken in lof en prijs en dank!

De juiste relatie, wat is het?

De juiste relatie is, dat ge Hem liefhebt boven alles! Dat ge beseft, dat Hij, de DrieEenige God het een en het alles is voor Uw leven. Dat ge zonder Hem diep ongelukkig zijt, maar dat ge in Hem vindt alles wat ge behoeft voor lichaam en voor ziel, voor tijd en voor eeuwigheid!

Ge kunt er van op aan, dat de zanger zulk een mensch is. David is de man naar Gods hart: op dit oogenblik is hij vlak bij dat Hart. Hij is in de aanvankelijke zaligheid. En nog zingt hij ons toe; nog roept hij ons in dezen psalm toe om te doen, gelijk hij deed op aarde: den Heere loven en prijzen met gejuich en vroolijken zang. Het is de hemel op aarde.

David zal zijn motie motiveeren voor U. Hij zegt het, hij bezingt het in het volgende vers: "Want de Heere is een groot God, ja een groot Koning boven alle goden."

Dat zal eeuwig waar zijn! God is een groot God! Ook zal U bewijs ten over geschonken worden om het te staven. Daar gaat het straks over. Maar hier wordt het U toegeroepen, dat de Heere, de VerbondsGod een groot God is. Geliefden, mijn verstand duizelt als ik hierover nadenk: de grootheid van God. De pure gedachte aan een God die waarlijk God is, het is zoo overweldigend! De nooit gewordene, de vaneeuwigheid Zijnde, de tot in alle eeuwigheid blijvende. Tracht er U een voorstelling van te maken, en Uw verstand zal duizelen. Een God die er altijd geweest is, en al dien tijd (?) was Hij even rijk als Hij nu is en eeuwig zijn zal. Een God die geen grenzen heeft, een Wezen, dat oneindig is in alle Zijne deugden, de Aanbiddelijke die onpeilbare diepten heeft, diepten die vol zijn van al wat lieflijk is en welluidt, diepten die de Heilige Geest opspeurt en doorspeurt om er van te getuigen binnen Zijn Eigen Goddelijk Wezen! Een Wezen, dat Licht heet, dus vol is van alle deugt, schoonheid, stralenbundel van schoonheid en alle aantrekkelijkheid. Een Wezen, dat zingt en jubelt en orgelt van Goddelijke muziek, wegslepend, verrukkelijk, Goddelijk schoon. Het inbegrip van alle harmonie in melodiën, vrede die niet alleen alle verstand te boven gaat, doch een vrede in dat Wezen, gelijk we niet zouden kunnen proeven of smaken, omdat het te overweldigend is. Indien het de hemel is om Zijn Aangezicht te zien, wat is dan dat Goddelijk Hart? Wat zijn de stroomen van Goddelijk leven en lieven en loven, zooals die stroomen door het Oneindige Wezen vlieten? O, God is groot en wij begrijpen Het niet!

Wat onuitsprekelijke dwaasheid dan om tegen dat Wezen te woeden! Men spreekt van de gekroonde dwaasheid, maar hoe zwak is de taal om uit te drukken

het gekke van den zondaar! Beraadslagen tegen den Heere?! De touwen en koorden van God verscheuren en die van zich werpen? Och arme, die in den hemel zit zal lachen! God is zoo onmetelijk groot en geweldig van vermogen! Hoe vreeselijk als die God met ons spot!

Ik vraag U in allen gemoede: heeft David zijn voorstel ondersteund? Want de Heere is een groot God! Is het genoeg? Behoeft ge meer om neer te vallen op Uw aangezicht. plat ter aarde in het stof en om dan van uit het stof te zingen, te juichen, te jubelen, en te zeggen, al galmende: O God! Wat zijt ge groot en geweldig van vermogen! Verstaat ge het nu hoe in de Openbaring van Johannes alles jubelt en het uitschreeuwt vóór den troon: Halleluja?! Zachtjes aan begin ik te verstaan de sprake van Jezus, hoe de steenen zouden beginnen te zingen, zoo de kinderkens ophouden van jubelen.

Een Koning boven alle goden.

Alle goden zijn de hoogten der aarde. Het zijn de tronen en de rechtbanken, de rechters der aarde en alle die in hooge plaatsen zijn. Ge moogt er ook gerust onder rekenen diegenen die veel kracht openbaarden. Onder die goden zijn de Nimrods en de Nebuchadnezers, de Alexanders en de Caesars, de Napoleons en de Hitlers. Dat zijn de goden der aarde.

Maar God is hun Koning.

Dat wil zeggen, dat zij stijl afhankelijk geweest zijn van Hem die alles gedaan heeft, nog doet en eeuwig doen zal naar Zijn vrijmachtig welbehagen. Wat een rustige gedachte! Alles wat er ooit geschied is, was nooit iets anders dan wat die Koning beval. Zongen we niet reeds als kleine kinderen: 't Is trouw al wat Zijn hand beval; het staat op recht en waarheid pal als op onwrikb're steunpilaren! Hij was het immers die verlossing zond? Als ge dan moogt zien, dat die God Uw Vader is die U van eeuwigheid beminde, wat zoudt ge dan vreezen? Ja, dan kan ik het zien, dat er van uit de diepte gezongen worden met juichen en lof. De onderste gevangenis, de striemen en de vijanden, de duivelen en alle machten der hel: wat zijn het anders dan de voetstappen van Hem die alle macht heeft, van Hem die Koning is boven alle goden! Paulus, ik kan er in komen, dat ge gezongen hebt in den stok, met bloed op den rug en schrijnende pijn in Uw arme lichaam. En de gevangenen luisterden.

In twee verzen geeft David U bewijs voor zijn ontzaglijke stelling: de grootheid van den Heere die God is. Luistert: "In wiens hand de diepste plaatsen der aarde zijn, en de hoogten der bergen zijn Zijne. Wiens ook de zee is, want Hij heeft ze gemaakt; en Zijne handen hebben het droge geformeerd."

We zien het, dat David van het mindere opklimt naar het meerdere. Want straks zal hij jubelen van de schapen Zijner hand. O, dat zal veel grooter zijn dan diepten en hoogten, zeën en al het droge van den

aardbol! Het kan ook wel zijn, dat de Heilige Geest gedacht heeft: Ik zal eerst zingen van de dingen die de domme mensch voor oogen heeft. Immers hij duizelt van diepten en hoogten, van zeëen en oceanen. Hij is bang van het bruisen der golven. En straks, als hij onder den indruk is van al die grootheden der schepping, zal Ik, de Heilige Geest, zingen van de schaapjes onder Jezus' hoede! Want, o! de geschiedenis van die schaapjes is veel grooter en geweldiger dan alle kolken en duizelingwekkende hoogten. De geschiedenis van schaapjes brengt ons tot het thema van leven uit de dooden. Dan zullen we moeten stamelen van het opbrengen van Jezus uit de kolken van een eeuwig dood.

Als ik hier lees van de hand des Heeren die onder de diepste plaatsen der aarde zijn, dan moet ik denken aan een professor, veel jaren geleden. De man trachtte ons iets te zeggen aangaande de voorzienigheid Gods. En was toegekomen aan het element in die voorzienigheid, dat we onderhouding noemen. Welnu, zeide hij, toen God de aarde geschapen had, lag zij in het holle van Gods hand, en, met eerbied gesproken, kan God niet wegloopen. Hij moet tot in alle eeuwigheid met die aarde in Zijn hand blijven staan. Een kinderlijke voorstelling, zult ge zeggen. Ja, dat dacht ik ook, maar kunt ge U een betere voorstelling vormen? De Heilige Geest zegt zooiets ook hier: "In wiens hand de diepste plaatsen der aarde zijn!" Het staat er. Men graaft tamelijk diep om de olie te vinden. In de diepste wellen, onder de diepste tunnels ligt de hand van mijn God. Ontzaglijk. En zooals het met de diepten is, zoo is het met de hoogten der bergen, met de oceanen en met de geheele aarde. Hoe groot is God!

Ja, we zijn aangekomen bij de plaatse der aanbidding. De Heilige Geest roept het ons ook toe: "Komt, laat ons aanbidden en nederbukken, laat ons knielen voor den Heere die ons gemaakt heeft!"

We bemerken het, we worden op aarde geoefend om ons hemelsch fatsoenlijk te gedragen als we aan mogen komen tot voor den troon Gods. De Heilige Geest roept ons toe om ons te vernederen. Ook heeft dit niets te maken met onze zonde. Al zouden we nooit gezondigd hebben, dan zouden we nog eeuwig geknield hebben voor God. Zelfs de Engelen Gods bedekken hunne aangezichten als ze naar God zien. Hoeveel te meer wij dan. Onwillekeurig, als we Gods grootheid zien, buigt het hart, het verstand, het lichaam volgt al, Heere! We zullen het doen tot in alle eeuwigheid, want het is goed, het is betamelijk.

Gij hebt ons immers gemaakt?

En die making, die schepping, zullen we ook nooit doorgronden. Het is ook het pronkstuk van alles wat Uwe vingers geformeerd hebben. Er zit iets in het beeld Gods, dat onuitsprekelijk is. Op God gelijken, al is het dan ook maar in creatuurlijke mate. Er is de verbeelding, de diepe gedachten, de reflectie, de over-

leggingen des harten. Indien alles de hand eens Scheppers toont, hoeveel meer de mensch, naar lichaam en vooral naar zijn ziel en geest!

En het schoonste komt dat beeld Gods uit, als hij het Oorspronkelijke ziet, als Hij God ziet, als de HEERE, die eeuwig Zijn verbond zal gedenken. Als hij zien mag, dat hij geschreven, gegraveerd staat in de handpalmen van zijn God!

Dan smelt hij weg in aanbidding, dat wil zeggen, hij zal de deugden Gods bezingen; hij zal ze tabuleeren en één voor één uitspreken met lieflijk gezang, begeleid op het tiensnarig instrument. Hij zal orgelen en een lieflijke melodie doen hooren van de liefde Gods, van de goedertierenheid des Heeren HEEREN.

En hij zal het doen op de knieën. Hij zal goed doen uitkomen, dat hij bewust is, ter eener zijde, van de grootheid Gods; en, ter anderzijde, van zijn eigen nietigheid. Hij zal de fundamenteele les van Jesaja geleerd hebben: Met wien dan zult gij Mij vergelijken, die Mij gelijk zij?

En zoo is er dan een vooruitleven van den hemel op aarde.

Geliefden, zingt, psalmzingt den Heere! Hij is het eeuwig waard, en brengt U zaligheid!

G. V.

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## IN HIS FEAR

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### HOW SHALL I PREPARE MY LESSON?

(continued)

The Sunday School teacher must study the passage upon which his lesson is based. That is the first step in the preparation of his lesson. He must do so not only in order to present the story in its correct light but also in order that he may have an interesting explanation of the lesson for his pupils. He is not there to entertain his pupils, but because he is dealing with children whose attention is easily distracted, he must seek always to hold their attention by presenting the truth in as interesting a way as he possibly can.

*Plan Your Lesson.* Having studied his lesson carefully with that in view he must now plan his lesson. This belongs to a thorough preparation of it. In the careful study of the lesson he will have discovered what the main thought in the lesson is and what the spiritual or practical principles in that story are. If he sees these things, he may be sure that he has studied his lesson with profit, and if he does not see these things, he may also draw the conclusion that he is not through yet with the studying of the lesson. But having dis-

covered the main thought and the spiritual principles involved, he is not yet ready to teach his class. He ought to decide on the way in which he intends to bring that truth to the child while telling him the story. He may make an outline which he takes with him or he must form an outline in his mind and stick to it.

Very important in this respect is the way he begins his explanation. Usually the teachers are guilty of the cut-and-dried introduction to their lesson, "Well, boys and girls, last week we had a lesson on so and so, and now today we will have a lesson about this or that". Every Sunday the lesson is begun just exactly that same way. There is no planning of the lesson behind such an introduction. An introduction to the lesson ought to be just exactly what the word says. It ought to lead the child into the lesson. We ought to strive and spend as much time as we need to get the child's attention in the introduction and to carry him on by our words through the whole explanation of the lesson. Very often, although this must not be overdone, it is a good practice to ask them a question about something on their level which will enable you to bring them to the start of the lesson explanation. A question will arrest their attention. This is even true in the midst of the story when the interest of some is plainly gone. A question, asked, but not with the expectation of an answer by the children, will bring them back to the story.

A word of warning here is also in place. When asking such questions simply to attract attention, it is better not to let those who raise their hands give you the answer. Your problem starts all over again then. After they have spoken, you need to begin again, and you are faced once more with the problem of introducing the lesson. Nor is it a good policy to pay any attention to the hands that are raised during the telling of the story. It is a good sign when hands go up, for it shows that the children are listening to you. But to let them tell you what they have on their hands may be very disastrous as far as the telling of the story is concerned. It may distract the attention of the whole class and bring a halt to the line of the story. It may even throw off your guard and spoil the rest of the explanation. As an example of the disastrous results such a practice may further, the undersigned once gave in to the frantic hand-waving of one of his catechumens during the explanation of the lesson. The story that particular day was about David rehearsing before king Saul how that he could kill Goliath because God had enabled him to kill a lion and a bear and God would now be with him too. One little boy sat there with mouth open listening to the story up to this point. Then up went his hand. It was ignored at first only to be waved more and more frantically. After going on with the story for a little while the undersigned finally gave in and asked him what he had to say. The

result was disastrous for the rest of the story, for all the child wanted to state was that his daddy killed a rabbit. David might have killed a lion and a bear, but he would have us know that his daddy killed a rabbit. The attention of the class from then on was well nigh impossible to restore. The rest of the children were trying to think what their daddies did.

While we are on the subject, it might also be well to suggest that when one or two pupils are not listening but the greater share of the class is, it is wiser not to stop and call these unattentive ones to order, especially if their unattentiveness takes on the form of day-dreaming. To stop and wake them up is to lose the attention also of the rest of the class that was following you.

But we were talking about preparing the lesson and not presenting the lesson. However we ought not to forget that good order is conducive to instruction and where there is not good order in the class, there is little if any possibility of training the rest of the class in the fear of the Lord. In fact to train them in the fear of the Lord they must also be taught to obey. But to return to our line of thought, besides deciding on the way in which the story shall be introduced, the teacher ought even to decide before hand just the words he intends to use and should not leave the choice of words to the thought that comes to him the moment he must begin telling the story. He must be able by those words to catch the attention of his pupils who are wholly unprepared, with few exceptions, for his story. We must not forget that these children come to Sunday School either after having been quiet for over an hour during the morning service and are aching for a little activity, or else they have been playing and throwing snowballs all the way to church. You must get their interest from the start or your chances of getting it at all are very slim.

And once having gotten the attention of the child, you must hold it throughout the entire explanation of the lesson. Plan your lesson according to the ages of the children in your class so that they will be able to follow you. The interesting items that you present in connection with the lesson must not be "over his head" but on his level. You may have to reject certain interesting things you discovered in your study of the lesson for this reason. It might be interesting for you but not for him. Take the time to plan your lesson for your class.

Having chosen a good way to begin your lesson and to catch the attention of the child, plan the rest of the lesson also. You may wish to point out to your children some truth which shows the providence of God, for example. Your story may be that of Philip being sent to the Ethiopian Eunuch. You may want to point out how marvelously God arranged everything so that Philip could teach him about Christ. You may

want to call the attention of your class to the fact that there are 929 chapters in the Old Testament and 39 books, yet God caused him to be reading the one chapter in the Old Testament that most beautifully pictures Christ and His cross. You ought therefore to plan just where in the story you will depart from the bare facts and present this interesting truth. Will you do so when you first tell of this man riding alone in the chariot or after Philip asks him what he is reading? Before you begin to tell the story it ought to be definite in your mind where you intend to do this. You ought to decide beforehand how you will emphasize a certain truth. Do you intend to give examples and illustrations of that fact as it is shown to us in the lives of other believers mentioned in the Bible? Or are you going to take the example of the unbelievers and contrast the deeds of God's people with the actions of these godless ones? The point is that you must not leave all this to the thoughts that come to you on the spur of the moment. Your choice of an example or illustration may miss the point you want to drive home instead of supporting it.

A house is never built without a plan of some kind whether on paper or in the mind of the builder. Neither is a farm run without a plan. When the Sunday School teacher asks for the children of the church to help train them and then receives an affirmative answer from the parents, he ought to prepare himself and his lesson also. He who does this will be inspired by the way the children drink in his words. He who comes unprepared, expecting the children to inspire him, will be disappointed. Children are not a very inspiring audience unless we manage to get down to their level and interest them, and that takes preparation.

What has been said in regard to the introduction of the story and the explanation of it applies also to the bringing to a close of the lesson. The lesson must not be brought to a close hanging in the air so to speak. It must not be allowed to drift away into nothingness so that at the end you are just grasping or even perhaps gasping for a few words and thoughts to stretch the story out to fill in the time. By all means here, when we are dealing with children's minds, when we are through, we ought to stop and not try to stretch the story those last few minutes to fill the time. Enough material should have been prepared in the first place to fill the allotted time. And if we are not able, due to the very story itself—and some of the lessons in a system of lessons sometimes are difficult to present to children for a very lengthy period of time—or if after a diligent search and study we were not able to find enough material, by all means stop regardless of the time.

The point is, here, that we also plan the ending of the story so that we end on a high plane and not with

disjointed thoughts in connection with the lesson. Look for some truth or principle in the story towards which you can build the end of your story. If possible, try to build it around the golden text or memory verse and have this end in mind in the planning of the whole telling of the story. Lead the children up to the truth of the lesson, and then having shown it to them leave it there. Do not go back and rehash the whole thing. Plan how to come to an interesting and fruitful ending.

Once again we have given only a few suggestions with a little explanation of what we mean. Time and space do not allow more thoughts and a further development of the ideas here expressed. We hope that these will be beneficial to those who desire to help the parents train their children in the fear of the Lord.

There are however two things we would add to the above. By all means if it is possible, attend teacher's meetings, come well prepared and attend regularly. This belongs to a good preparation of the lesson. Others will help you by showing you the interesting thoughts they have mined out in their preparation and study. And last but not least, study and prepare the lesson prayerfully. You are about to teach the Word of God to His Covenant children. By all means seek His guidance and grace in prayer while preparing the lesson as well as before explaining it.

J. A. H.

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## FROM HOLY WRIT

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James 1:13: — "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man."

In verse 12 the Church of God is admonished to endure temptation. And the man who endureth temptation is blessed because, when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him. Failure to endure temptation implies, we understand, that we succumb to these forces of evil. Is there anyone, then, who might attempt to justify his surrender to the powers of sin by means of an appeal to God, that he was tempted of the Lord, and that therefore the Lord is actually responsible for his succumbing to temptation? Let that man know that God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man.

The first matter of note in this text is the declaration, that God does not tempt any man. It will not be



necessary to dwell at length on the meaning of temptation. Attention has been directed to this concept in our treatment of the preceding verses. It is evident, however, from verse 14 that the words of this text, verse 13, "when he is tempted", do not merely refer to the fact that the Christian is continually attacked and molested by the forces of sin, either from within or without. To be sure, the child of God is at all times "tempted", urged by the forces of evil to forsake the way of God's covenant and walk in the paths of evil. Besides, this is undoubtedly the teaching of Holy Writ in verses 2-4 of this chapter. But it is evident from verse 14 that this is not the meaning of verse 13. According to the succeeding verse, "every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." Hence, to be tempted, according to verse 13, signifies that sin actually takes hold of my conscious life, that I experience within myself the desire to walk in iniquity. We are tempted, therefore, not merely in the sense that the forces of evil would lead us away, but also because we experience within ourselves the inclination to pursue the path of evil.

In connection with this "being tempted" we read that we are not tempted of God, and that He does not tempt any man. The problem which confronts us in this text is self-evident. On the one hand, how must we harmonize this expression with the sixth petition of our Lord's Prayer, which reads: "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"? This petition evidently implies that we never merely fall into the midst of temptation. Verse 2 exhorts us to count it all joy when this occurs. The petition of the Lord's Prayer clearly teaches us that God somehow controls also our walk of life and that it is He Who therefore casts us into temptations. And, on the other hand, we must continue to maintain the sovereignty of God over all things. The Scriptures abound in expressions which emphasize this teaching. The sins of Joseph's brethren, the cursing of David by Shimei, and the numbering of the people by Joab upon the command of David, although sinful acts as far as these various persons are concerned, are nevertheless also attributed to the living God. The Lord alone is always in supreme command. And this does not merely signify that He controls our actions, that, somehow, the Lord controls and guides all things. But this sovereignty of Jehovah definitely implies not only that He has determined the destiny of every moral creature and indirectly attains unto his goal, but also that He and He alone realizes every man's appointed end. Yet we read in this text: Let no man say when he is tempted that he is tempted of God, for God tempted no man. To be tempted, therefore, is not of Him. What, then, can be the meaning of James?

In the first place I would call attention to the fact that James expresses here a subjective fact. Every

man experiences in his own life the truth of this text. When the child of God finds himself in the midst of temptations, being seduced on every side and urged to forsake the only true God, and he experiences within himself the urge to do evil, he discovers in his own subjective life and consciousness two things. On the one hand he is conscious of the desire to do the wrong. It is not his experience that he is compelled to do that wrong but he is aware of a desire to walk in that particular evil. And, on the other hand, this desire is accompanied by the conviction that this evil is contrary to the will of God. This conviction is present not only in the sphere of the church, where we experience in our consciousness the holiness of God, but also among all men. God does not leave Himself without witness. Man is convicted of the fact that he is in rebellion against the holy will of God. Besides this, Scripture everywhere abounds in the admonition, not that we seek sin, but to flee sin and seek the ways of the Lord.

In the second place, we must bear in mind the viewpoint of this text. To be tempted means, as we have noted, that we are aware of the desire unto evil. That this is not the will of God and that therefore He does not tempt man cannot mean, we understand, that in this respect, as far as our inner life is concerned, He does not sovereignly control the actions of men. God is always in absolute command. The question here is not that of Divine sovereignty. It is purely ethical, spiritual. Temptation presupposes the urge, the desire unto sin. God never tempts, never works sin as desiring it, never urges unto iniquity because He delights in evil. Sin, although it always occurs according to the sovereign counsel of the Lord, always remains the object of man's own sinful desire and choice, whereas Jehovah continuously hates evil and is spiritually far from it. Sovereignly the Lord always operates through the will of man, sovereignly because He worketh all things according to the counsel of His will, but always so that it is man who loves the evil and commits it as the object of his own morally free desire and choice.

This Divine relation to temptation, expressed in the words, "neither tempteth He any man," the holy writer bases upon the fact that "God cannot be tempted." Let us again read the text: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man." The relation between the various parts of the text is clear. God cannot be tempted with evil. Therefore tempteth He no man. Hence, let no man say when he is tempted that He is tempted of God.

The words "cannot be tempted" constitute in the original one word, which, taken by itself, can be interpreted in a two-fold way: "untemptable" and "untempted". If we understand the word in a passive

sense it means: what is not tempted or proved. This, then, could signify, that God has never been tempted. Never did this opportunity occur or present itself. Understanding this word in an active sense, we would give this word an active meaning, as if James means to say that God does not tempt a man. This would involve us in a mere repetition of the last part of the text. The word must be construed passively. Not in the sense, however, that God never has been tempted, but in the sense that the Lord is untemptable. He *cannot* be tempted with evil.

Man is temptable. He is not only surrounded by sin. But he himself is also subject to sin. It is true that the child of God has been called out of darkness into God's marvellous light. But he has but a principle of the new obedience. The powers of evil have therefore a point of contact in our evil nature. The possibility of being tempted is consequently ever present with us. Jesus, too, was tempted. His temptation by the devil was not, of course, a "sham" temptation. He was actually tempted. This, of course, must not be understood as if it were actually possible for the Saviour to sin. It is not true that He could have fallen. Nevertheless, although He was perfectly holy and could not fall, He was, sin-excepted, indeed like unto us. He possessed our human nature as under the curse of sin, weakened because of sin. And in that fearful wilderness His human nature cried for bread. Jesus was not a stoic. Herein lies the reality of His temptation by Satan, although we must bear in mind that Christ, from the beginning unto the end, subjected His human nature perfectly to the will of God, and that, therefore, although hungry, He refused to eat because to do so would have been contrary to the will of His God.

God, however, cannot be tempted with evil. He is untemptable. The possibility of temptation simply does not exist with respect to the Lord. Evil has no point of contact in Him. He is above the possibility of temptation.

For God is light. There is no darkness in Him. God is the sum-total of all good, of all infinite perfections. He is the Absolute and infinite goodness, also consciously, so that the Lord is eternally and perfectly devoted unto Himself. God *is* light. The Lord does not merely possess light. We receive light from God. God has the origin, the uncaused origin, of His infinite perfection within Himself. Hence, Jehovah is the Absolute Light. He is the only Good and can therefore never be devoted unto ought but Himself. Every vibration of the infinite Divine being throbs eternally with light, is in Himself an overflowing Fount of eternal perfections. Consequently, Jehovah is untemptable. Even as in the natural sense filth cannot affect a fountain of water, so God is exalted above every possibility

of temptation. He hates all evil, delights eternally in Himself, lives in an inaccessible light.

Hence, God tempts no man. He is surely the Sovereign Cause of all darkness and evil, the Sovereign Predestinator of all things. He also alone realizes His eternal counsel. However, in that sovereign counsel, and also in the realization of that counsel, He never delights in evil; and whereas temptation is seducement unto sin as delighting therein, God never tempts. Eternally He seeks Himself, has willed sin, but always so that it is the act of sinful men and the object of His own eternal hatred, and that it must serve the eternal glory of His Name.

Finally, let no man therefore say when he is tempted that he is tempted of God. How eager we are to say this! How ready are we to lift the blame off our shoulders and lay it upon the Lord! How ready we are because we love and prefer the ways of evil to the ways of the Lord. Let us remember, however, that God cannot be tempted and that He does not delight in iniquity. This receives further emphasis in the verses that follow. We may conclude now by saying that the living God is a light, is too pure of eyes to behold iniquity, hates all evil. The lust to sin is foreign to the infinitely perfect God. To the contrary, we are tempted when we are drawn of our own lust, and enticed. Lust bringeth forth sin. And because God is holy, sin bringeth forth death.

H. V.

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#### A HUMBLE HEART

I would not ask Thee that my days  
Should flow quite smoothly on and on;  
Lest I should learn to love the world  
Too well, ere all my time is done.

I would not ask Thee that my work  
Should never bring me pain or fear;  
Lest I should learn to work alone  
And never wish Thy presence near.

I would not ask Thee that my friends  
Should always kind and constant be;  
Lest I should learn to lay my faith  
In them alone, and not in thee.

But I would ask a humble heart  
A changeless will to work and wake  
A firm faith in Thy providence,  
The rest—'tis Thine to give or take.

—A. N.

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## PERISCOPE

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### *Barthianism . . . .*

One of the calmest and most fair criticisms of Dr. K. Barth and his theology that has appeared for some time is contained in the following few paragraphs. It was written by the Rev. C. Norman Bartlett, S.T.D., in an article entitled, "The Preacher and Current Trends in Theology", in the January 1947 issue of the *Moody Monthly*.

Usually, if one but so much as mentions the name of Barth or has the courage to quote him, he is in danger of being labelled and classified as a "Modernist". It is, of course, practically impossible to justly evaluate Barth and his school in a brief article. We believe, however, that the author quoted below has succeeded admirably to give a fair presentation of some essential points. As Dr. Bartlett points out, and even the most vigorous opponents of Barth must admit, Dr. Barth has certainly caused the theological world to "sit up, and take notice", and, perhaps, even awakened them from a lethargy. Though this is but a purely negative result it is also but the least that can be said. Here follows the brief review:

"Unquestionably the most influential current of thought in the theological world of today is what is variously known as Barthianism, the theology of crisis, dialecticism, and even existentialism. But by whatever name it is labeled, it is a theology that must be reckoned with and understood by the leaders of our churches.

"Writers on this movement have been too prone to take indefensively extreme positions with regard to it, whether by way of advocacy or condemnation. We who are charged with the responsibilities of spiritual leadership dare not give it our blanket endorsement, for despite its gratifying polemic against some of the pet positions of Modernism, it is steeped in presuppositions no less, albeit perhaps more subtly, subversive of tenets basic to our faith.

"In all fairness it must be said that the Barthians are striking major cords that cannot but awaken a glad response in the hearts of conservatives. They are stressing in no uncertain terms the imperative necessity for an objective revelation. Man in his fallen state is hopelessly incapacitated for discovering God for himself; if man is to know God, God must reveal Himself to man. In the Scriptures we have the record not of what man thinks of God, but of what God thinks of man. The Word of God is absolutely authoritative for faith and practise.

"For the Barthians Jesus Christ is God's personal Word, the super-historical revelation of the Father.

The Jesus of history is valueless and meaningless for faith until He is confessed as the living Christ. Barth even goes so far as to say that liberal theology has given us a Jesus of history at the cost of losing for us the God-Man. Men are saved only by faith in Jesus Christ and not by virtue of anything they themselves have to offer. The doctrine of justification by faith is the center and circumference of Brunner's theological writings.

"There are four things that Barth wishes to bring back to the Church: (1) the lost wonder of God, (2) the lost sense of sin, (3) the lost doctrine of reconciliation, and (4) the lost doctrine of the kingdom of God. The Church should not seek to build the kingdom of God, but to be a place where the Divine Healer comes to lay His hand on the sickness of humanity.

"We turn now from the commendable points of strength in Barthianism to grievous errors and defects that call for adverse criticisms. With all its exaltations of the Word of God, the Barthian view of what constitutes the Word of God is far from orthodox. By the Word of God the Barthians mean not the whole Bible (they swallow the destructive conclusions of higher criticism without batting an eye), but rather those passages in the Bible which God uses to bring a man face to face with Himself. There is in the Bible no static traditional Word of God apart from the acting person of God. In short, the "Word" is a variable within the Word, and not a constant commensurate with the whole Word of God.

"The flaws in the Barthian view of the Bible are not far to seek. Ostensibly magnifying the Scriptures, the crisis theologians are really guilty of substituting a selective Bible for the prescriptive Bible of the reformers. If we cannot take the whole Book as the infallible Word of God, by what principles of selection shall we find the "Word" within the Word?

"No, the Bible is not a sort of glorified spiritual cafeteria where we are at liberty to choose the dishes that happen to strike our fancy while we leave the rest to one side. Men will invariably take what flatters their pride and spurn what flattens it.

"Despite these strictures, however, we do well to heed the injunction of the Barthians that we let the Word speak with authority to us. The question may well be asked by each one of us in the presence of God: 'Do I who warmly contend for the authority of the Word humbly submit to the authority of the Word, not letting what I want the Bible to say to others make me deaf to what it wants to say to me?'

"While heartily subscribing to what Barth and Brunner and other leaders in their school of thought have to say as to the Jesus of history being valueless and meaningless for faith until He is confessed as the living Christ, we cannot but wonder whether they



nave not greatly under-rated the importance of a thoroughly reliable historical revelation. While words apart from a knowledge of their meaning are unintelligible sounds or marks, who will question their indispensability in the transmission of thought? The fact that the verities of our faith are super-historical and can only be spiritually discerned does not do away with the necessity for a revelation in history that can be relied upon as absolutely trustworthy."

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*World Peace and the U. N. O. . . . .*

In quite striking contrast to much of what is being written and said on this subject, even in so-called "Reformed" circles, is the following, from the same source quoted above, and written by Captains (S.A.) George I. Beckstorm in an article entitled: "They Perish".

"It seems that the indigent and deluded world will never concede defeat. A glance backward through the pages of world history will reveal that this entity called human resourcefulness has always claimed a remedy for the ills of humanity.

"At the close of World War I, disarmament was advocated as the positive way to maintain an enduring peace. However, the wheels of so-called human ingenuity continued to revolve through the slush of self-resourcefulness until suddenly World War II exploded the first philosophy, and now we discover that control by force is the recommended solution to this enigma of world amity.

"Today nations great and small are squarely faced with a dilemma of insecurity far greater than at any previous time, because there has been unleashed to mankind that projectile of tremendous fury known as atomic energy.

"Scientists have agreed that the universe could at any moment commit suicide. It has been ascertained that forty million Americans may easily be slaughtered in one air raid.

"Even now as the premonitory specter of World War III is hovering beyond the darkened horizons of this tumultuous globe, we find that "flesh" has once again convened and is formulating new resolutions. We also hear that a new monetary standard is being planned. An equal distribution of consumers' goods, the "Four Freedoms", a fair and just economic system for both labor and capital, hospitalization, education for all, and many more propositions are under consideration. These are to be guaranteed to the peoples of the world so as to provide joy, health, knowledge and the justice of an amicable opportunity for everyone.

"All these wonderful and worthy projects are to be accomplished by the United nations—countries such as Great Britain, who failed to achieve these results in India; Russia, whose past iniquities are too fresh in our minds to need repeating; and the United Nations, whose own daily papers are filled with an almost unbelievable record of alarming discontent between labor and capital, vicious crimes, lasciviousness, malice, and utter disregard for moral and spiritual ethics.

"Yet in the face of all this, and hoping against hope, we entreat, 'Are not these goals possible? Cannot we achieve them?' The reply can only be an emphatic, 'No'. There is no hope of establishing a regenerated world on the basis of an unregenerated humanity.

"The world is unmindful of the fact that it is rushing headlong toward unspeakable chaos. It is amazing, but even more pathetic, that rationalizing multitudes have resorted to one panacea after another, ignoring the wickedness of the human heart."

W. H.

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CLASSIS WEST

will meet, the Lord willing, on the first Wednesday of March, March 5, 1947, in the Rock Valley Protestant Reformed Church. Delegates desiring lodging can contact Rev. P. Vis. All delegates are urged to have with them the Acts of Synod 1945.

Rev. C. Hanko, S. C.

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— W A N T E D —

STANDARD BEARERS

Since it is no longer possible to supply the increasing requests for back numbers from our exhausted stock, the Board urgently requests those who are willing to donate or sell bound volumes or back numbers from Volume 1, Number 1; to Volume 23, Number 1 to contact:

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Grand Rapids, Mich.

Mr. M. Woudenberg  
1042 Worden St., S. E.  
Grand Rapids, Mich.

## Report of Classis East—Convened Jan. 8, 1947 at Grand Rapids, Michigan

This meeting of Classis was held at Fuller Avenue, January 8, 1947.

The opening exercises were conducted by Rev. R. Veldman. After the singing of Psalter No. 132 he reads Psalm 121 and leads with prayer.

The credentials were read and received, showing that all the churches were represented at Classis. Classis then is declared constituted.

Rev. J. D. De Jong is called upon to preside and Rev. R. Veldman officiates as clerk.

The president addresses a word of welcome to Classis. He then asks the delegates who are present at the Classis for the first time to sign the Form of Subscription.

The minutes of the last meeting of Classis are read and approved.

Grand Haven comes to Classis with a request for classical appointments. Classis grants this request and appoints the following committee to draw up a schedule: Rev. G. Lubbers, Rev. B. Kok, and Eldèr I. Korhorn.

A little later in the meeting this committee presented the following schedule, which was adopted by Classis:

Jan. 12,	Rev. G. Lubbers
Jan. 19,	Rev. H. De Wolf
Jan. 26,	Rev. R. Veldman
Feb. 2,	Rev. M. Schipper
Feb. 9,	Rev. J. D. De Jong
Feb. 16,	Rev. W. Hofman
Feb. 23,	Rev. J. A. Heys
Mar. 2,	Rev. M. Gritters
Mar. 9,	Rev. H. Veldman
Mar. 16,	Rev. S. Cammenga
Mar. 23,	Rev. B. Kok.

Classis now decides to ask the consistories the questions of Art. 41 of the Church Order. The questions are answered satisfactorily by the consistories.

The report of the Church Visitors is brief, characteristic of the fact that peace and harmony prevails in the churches and that conditions everywhere are about normal.

Fourth Church had not been visited by the committee. Classis decides to continue the committee so that they can finish their work.

A decision was made by Classis that henceforth the Church Visitors will be elected at the April Classis.

Classis also decides that from now on all overtures for Synod will be brought to the January meeting of Classis.

The following Synodical delegates are elected by Classis:

### MINISTERS

Primi	Secundi
J. D. De Jong	M. Gritters
J. A. Heys	W. Hofman
H. Hoeksema	M. Schipper
H. Veldman	R. Veldman

### ELDERS

Primi	Secundi
D. Jonker	J. Buiter
D. Langeland	R. Ezinga
G. M. Ophoff	A. Peterson
N. Yonker	O. Van Ellen

Rev. W. Hofman was appointed by the chair to thank the ladies for their catering services.

The next meeting of Classis will be held, D. V., the second Wednesday in April at Fuller Ave.

The minutes are read and approved. Upon motion Classis decides to adjourn. After the singing of Psalter No. 326 the chairman closes with thanks to God.

D. JONKER, Stated Clerk.

N. B. — I have sent out Subsidy Request blanks to various consistories. If there are others in need of them then please drop me a card.

D. Jonker,  
1239 Bemis S., S. E.  
Grand Rapids, Michigan.