

THE STANDARD

Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XXIII

March 15, 1947 — Grand Rapids, Michigan

NUMBER 12

MEDITATION

In The Darkness

And it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened.

Luke 23:44, 45.

The sixth hour!

High noon it was on Calvary.

Then, those that understood the Scriptures must have recognized a fulfillment of the Word of the Lord, through His servant Amos, and also through others: "I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day."

There was darkness over all the earth. . . .

And the sun was darkened.

Noon at Calvary!

Silence!

The darkness is oppressive, as the heavy hand of God.

Men are filled with fear, those men there that are gathered in groups before the cross, about the Hill of the Skull. Afraid they are, for they know that this darkness is of God, that He is present on Calvary; and He is the terror of men, of wicked men as they are. . . .

Cowed into silence are they now.

In that weird and dreadful darkness they are afraid of their own voice.

O, before the darkness descended they feared not God or men. They spoke loudly. With a blaspheming tongue they spoke. Through foul mouths they belched forth the evil imaginations of their hearts, their furious hatred of the Son of God they had nailed to the accursed tree. They jeered and mocked, and they challenged Him to come down from the cross, to save Him-

self, if He were the Christ, the King of Israel, the Son of God. . . .

Till noon, indeed, it had seemed as if Calvary was *man's* judgment: the word of man was heard there.

Then came the sixth hour, darkness at noonday . . .

And men were struck with fear.

For this darkness was of the Lord, they knew.

He had come from Teman. . . .

In fierce anger. . . .

Silence!

Oppressive stillness!

All the more oppressive because it is accentuated by the groans that penetrate the darkness from the top of the hill.

Even He that hangs on the center cross, in the midst of the two malefactors, refrains from speaking.

O, would He only open His mouth now, and speak! Somehow, it is felt that this darkness is come upon Calvary for His sake, because He is nailed to the tree of shame. Perhaps, if He would, this prophet of Galilee could explain the reason for, the meaning of this night on noonday.

But He, too, is silent now.

Before that dreadful sixth hour had struck He had spoken repeatedly, being concerned, not wholly with His own suffering and agony, but with others. Words of forgiveness, of mercy and love, He had uttered, praying for the transgressors, promising salvation to the penitent, taking final leave from His earthly mother. . . .

Now, however, He has withdrawn Himself from all about Him.

In the darkness, He cannot speak.

God speaks to Him, and He must hear.

Night at noon on Calvary!

And all is quiet!

God's blackout!

For that, in this darkness, God himself had come down on Calvary, there could be no doubt.

The wisdom of the world could not explain this night at noonday. It would have been of no avail to send an embassy from Calvary to the men of learning and science that might be found in Jerusalem, to investigate this strange phenomenon, and to attempt a natural explanation. O, wicked men, when the judgments of God are upon the earth, love to quiet their troubled hearts, and to hide their face from Him that sitteth upon the throne, by seeking a natural interpretation of the phenomena that speak of those judgments. But this darkness at noonday baffled them all.

No sun eclipse was either expected or possible at this time.

Nor, would that have been possible, could such a natural occurrence in the firmament have explained this darkness.

For, first of all, the darkness was first, the eclipse of the sun followed: "And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. . . . and the sun was darkened." It was not the eclipse that caused the darkness, but the darkness that hung an impenetrable veil before the noonday sun. For a few moments, as the darkness spread its horrible wings over Calvary, over the whole land, the sun appeared through the fast thickening gloom like a pale disk,—then it was completely gone.

Besides, no eclipse of the sun could have enveloped the scene in such complete darkness, and that, too, for three long hours, as did this night at noonday.

In Calvary's darkness men stand before the wrathful face of the Judge of heaven and earth.

And there is no escape!

The blackout is His!

The day of the Lord!

Of that day the prophets had spoken before.

And always they had described it as a day of gloom and darkness.

"For the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand; a day of darkness, and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains." Joel 2:1, 2. "The earth shall quake before them: the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining." Joel 2:10. "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come." Joel 2:31. "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining." Joel 3:15.

And that day of the Lord is a day of judgment!

Of judgment, to be sure, upon all the world, but as it must begin at the house of God, at the people of God, at Zion, at the Church.

For God shall judge His people in righteousness!

"The end is come upon my people of Israel; I will not again pass by them any more. . . . The Lord hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of their works. Shall not the land tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwelleth therein? and it shall rise up wholly as a flood; and it shall be cast out and drowned, as by the flood of Egypt. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day." Amos 8:2-9. "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end it is for you? the day of the Lord is darkness, and not light. . . . Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?" Amos 5:19, 20.

That is the meaning of the darkness at noonday.

The day of the Lord is come!

It is the day of wrath, and of vengeance, of fierce anger and of the curse upon all the workers of iniquity.

It is the day when the Lord smites us with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart; when we shall grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness. Deut. 28:29.

That is the meaning of the darkness on Calvary.

God is come for judgment upon His people.

For, mark you well, the darkness is not limited to Calvary and the surrounding country: it is over the whole land. And the land of Israel is meant, for this is the better rendering here of the word that is translated by "earth", as the same word is, in fact, rendered in Matthew 27:45, and in Mark 15:33. Everywhere in the land of Canaan, God's own inheritance, men groped in darkness from the sixth hour until the ninth.

And do not misunderstand this hour.

The darkness is not a mere symbol of what *will* happen, but a sign of what *is* happening there and then! God is come down in His wrath upon the scene of the crucifixion of the Son of God!

He is present in His wrath!

He is judging His people Israel!

He is remembering all their iniquities, and pouring out the vials of His wrath upon them!

It is the day of the Lord!

Astonishing spectacle!

Amazing enough, yea, and terrorizing, is the darkness.

More mysterious, however, yea, utterly perplexing, is what happens in that darkness; or shall we say: what does not occur in that noonday night?

Would we not expect, as we stand on Calvary, that the end of the world is now come upon us, and that we will all be swallowed up in the outer darkness of hell? Is not God here to judge His Church, and all the world with her? Is He, in this awful darkness, not visiting our sins upon our head, and pouring out all the vials of His long restrained wrath upon us? Are we not standing here at the cross of the Son of God, Whom we rejected and filled with reproach, nailed to the accursed tree. Have we not been exposed in all the horrible nakedness of our sin as enmity against God? What else, then, can we expect than that this judgment of God will surely deliver Him, the Son, the only Righteous, from that cross, and damn us into everlasting desolation?

Yet nothing happens!

For three long hours God is pouring out the vials of His wrath over us. . . .

The darkness passes. . . .

And we are not consumed!

How to account for this astonishing mystery?

The answer is all in that center one of the three crosses on the Hill of the Skull.

God is with us, Immanuel! He is with us, at this awful moment, in this day of the Lord, with us in the darkness!

O, He is judging His people, Zion, the Church. He is angry with her because of all her iniquity. He is pouring out the vials of His fierce wrath upon her. For His justice must be satisfied. But that Church He loved! He loved her with a sovereign love, with a love that is first, always first, and therefore immutable. He loved her from before the foundation of the world. And He loves her in His wrath. In His everlasting love He appointed over her a Captain, that might represent her in the hour of judgment, His only begotten Son. . . .

And when the hour of judgment was approaching, in due time, He sent that Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, that He might be with us, under the law, and under the curse, in the darkness. And when the "hour" was come, He went to meet it, on Calvary, in order that He might bear all the iniquity of His people, and safely lead them through the darkness. . . .

God is with us, Immanuel, in the darkness!

And as God from heaven pours out the vials of His anger upon us in the darkness of Calvary, God with us, Immanuel on the cross, receives all the fiery darts of God's wrath, bears the curse, sustains the burden of wrath, obeys in love, bears all our iniquities away, leads us through the darkness. . . .

God in the flesh bearing the wrath of God from above!

That is the paradox, but also the possibility of the cross.

O, do not say that, in the darkness, nothing happens,

that wrath is not poured out, that judgment is not executed. For it happens indeed, but in the soul and body of that Son of God on the cross!

That is Why He is now silent: He hears God in the darkness!

That is why He can no longer attend to others: the sprinkling of the blood of atonement on the mercy seat in the sanctuary above requires all His attention!

That is why He finally cries out: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

That is why the passing of the darkness coincides with that outcry from the depths: the ninth hour!

O, wondrous cross!

Blessed hour of redemption!

Darkness until the ninth hour, then follows the light!

Not in the darkness, but in the bright sunlight that once more flooded the scene on Calvary, and the whole land, did our Lord give up the ghost.

That is indicated already by that little touch of revelation in the gospel according to Matthew: "And straightway one of them *ran*, and took a sponge and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink." How could the man have been *running* unless the darkness was fast being dispelled? But that is also evident from the fact that it was the ninth hour, that is, at the same time that the outcry of desolation was wrung from the Saviour's heart, when the darkness was lifted and the light of the sun appeared once more.

At the moment of that awful outcry Immanuel descended, had descended, into the depth. The last bitter drop of His cup was drunk. He had born all and atoned. No longer was there reason or ground left for the darkness.

The light broke through, and dispelled the darkness.

And hearing the Word of God in the light that had returned, Immanuel responds: "It is finished!"

The judgment is past: there is no condemnation!

The ninth hour is the hour of justification!

Glorious light of righteousness!

H. H.

CLASSIS EAST

of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in regular session, D. V., Wednesday morning at 9 o'clock, April 9, 1947, at Fuller Ave. All matters for the Synod must be brought to this meeting.

D. JONKER, Stated Clerk.

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

Correspondence With The Netherlands

Replying to my remarks of sometime ago under the caption "Smoke Screen?" the Rev. L. Doekes writes, in *De Reformatie* of Feb. 15, 1947, as follows:

LICHT IN DEN MIST

Ds. Hoeksema te Grand Rapids heeft in zijn blad "The Standard Bearer" en in onze "Reformatie" enkele opmerkingen ten beste gegeven over een uitlating in mijn referaat "De oude Strijd" (gehouden op den dag van onze Theologische Hoogeschool).

Met waardeering en dankbaarheid heb ik zijn uitlatingen gelezen. Hij noodigt mij uit tot een openlijke discussie over zijn verbondsbeschouwing, en zegt: "Zulk een discussie zou ten dienste van de waarheid kunnen strekken, en onze onderlinge verstandhouding kunnen bevorderen". Ds. Hoeksema belooft opname en vertaling daarvan in zijn blad. Zijn stuk eindigt met de opmerking: "Het groote verschil tusschen de 'synodalen' en de 'vrijgemaakten' ligt immers daarin, dat de laatsten 'ongebonden' zijn? Dat wil dus zeggen: er is alle ruimte voor broederlijke bespreking van de verbondskwestie."

Inderdaad, Ds. Hoeksema voor zulk een broederlijke bespreking is bij ons alle ruimte, zooals die er ook voor 1942 in onze kerken steeds is geweest. Onze kerken zijn slechts gebonden aan Gods Woord en de drie Formulieren van Eenigheid; in het overige erkennen zij volledige christelijke vrijheid. En dat wij u daarin als geestverwant mogen begroeten, stemt ons tot vreugde. Wij weten, dat het is, zooals u schreef: "Nu kan ik broeder Doekes wel verzekeren, dat wij niet behooren tot degenen, die de 'vrijgemaakten' hebben gesmaad en gebrandmerkt". Wij zijn u dankbaar voor uw kloek protest tegen de in onze kerken opgezeten hiërarchie.

Met toestemming van onzen hoofdredacteur wil ik dan ook graag gebruik maken van de gelegenheid tot de door u gevraagde discussie.

Vooraf is het echter noodig, dat we de kwestie even zuiver stellen. U hebt uw artikel voorzien van het opschrift: "Smoke Screen", Rookgordijn. U nam dien term over uit mijn referaat; en naar aanleiding van mijn voetnoot, waarin ook naar u verwezen werd, zegt u: "Ik word dus ingedeeld bij die 'geestverwanten in het buitenland', die een rookgordijn leggen over de duidelijke beteekenis van Gods verbondsbeloften". Even verder: "Dat 'rookgordijn' zit mij scheef. Het

is juist niet mijn gewoonte om **smoke screens** te leggen over de waarheid".

Dat laatste hebben wij van u inderdaad opgemerkt. En mocht mijn beknopte verwijzing in die voetnoot u onrecht hebben aangedaan, dan wil ik u daarvoor graag mijn verontschuldiging aanbieden. Wij weten zelf uit ervaring maar al te goed, wat het zeggen wil, in een verkeerd daglicht te worden geplaatst!

Toch geloof ik, dat u uit mijn opmerking teveel hebt afgeleid. Letterlijk schreef ik immers: "Over die duidelijke beteekenis van Gods verbondsbeloften is door de synodale theorieën een rookgordijn gelegd. En dienzelfden mist zien we ook in veel uitingen van onze geestverwanten in het buitenland. (Noot:) Zoo b.v. bij Ds. Hoeksema, doch ook bij zijn tegenstanders".

Mijn zegswijze was wat beknopt. Maar er staat alleen dit: over de verbondsbeloften hangt, blijkens allerlei uitingen, ook bij onze geestverwanten in het buitenland (b.v. bij Ds. Hoeksema en bij zijn tegenstanders), nog een nevel, een mist.

En de synodale theorieën hebben dien mist positief als een **rookgordijn** verspreid.

Mijn bedoeling was dus allerm minst, u te krenken door u in denzelfden hoek te zetten met onze felle bestrijders hier in Nederland. Onze hoofdredacteur heeft er al op gewezen, dat er tusschen uw opvatting en de synodale theorieën ten onzent nog heel wat verschil bestaat. Laatstgenoemde theorieën vormen nu een officieel leersysteem, dat geen ingrijpende tegenspraak meer duiden kan. Uw opvatting daarentegen laat volle ruimte voor publieke discussie. Dat is op zichzelf al een weldaad voor het hart.

En daarom is het m.i. ook niet erg, wanneer we als broeders elkanders gedachten overwegen, en dan op sommige punten constateeren: er blijft nog het een en ander in den mist. Dat is geen grievend verwijt, wanneer het maar nader wordt aangetoond. Daarover zijn we het, geloof ik, volkomen eens. Graag wil ik u dan nu nader aanwijzen, op welke punten voor mijn besef uw verbondopvatting nog in den mist verkeert. Dit doe ik te meer, omdat ook in onzen kring nog lang niet alle vragen inzake de verbonds-openbaring tot klaarheid zijn gebracht. Er bestaat geen officieele "vrijgemaakte" leer des verbonds naast en boven de belijdenis.

Na deze positie-bepaling kunnen we nu overgaan tot nadere bespreking van mijn uitlating.

Ik had daarbij uw opvatting op het oog, zooals u die hebt neergelegd in uw uit "The Standard Bearer" gebundelde artikelen onder den titel: "De geloovigen en hun zaad". Deze brochure is ten onzent nog niet algemeen bekend. Een vriendelijke hand bezorgde mij eenigen tijd geleden een exemplaar van den tweeden druk.

Met bijzondere belangstelling nam ik kennis van uw

voorwoord (gedagteekend 21 Febr. 1946). Voor onze lezers citeer ik daaruit het volgende: "Het leek de Zendingscommissie onzer Kerken niet ondienstig, voor al in verband met de tegenwoordige geschillen in Nederland, de hiervolgende verhandeling te laten herdrukken. Men bedenke hierbij, dat deze materie niet geschreven werd met het oog op de kerkelijke ontwikkelingen in het oude vaderland, doch reeds achttien jaren geleden in den vorm van artikelen in de STANDARD BEARER. De tekst werd geheel onveranderd gelaten. Hieraan wil ik nog toevoegen, dat de verspreiding van deze brochure in Nederland niet gemotiveerd wordt door den lust om een hond bij de ooren te grijpen, doch door de begeerte om de waarheid aangaande Gods eeuwig Verbond te dienen."

Nu, kan ik wel verzekeren, dat wij met groote belangstelling van uw bijdrage kennis genomen hebben; vooral, nu in den zwaren kerkstrijd onze oogen verder zijn open gegaan voor den zegen en de Schriftuurlijke beteekenis van Gods verbond met ons en onze kinderen. Wij meenen, dat 'n openlijk verder onderzoek van Gods openbaring daarover niet anders dan nuttig kan zijn voor ons leven in Christus.

Overigens blijft het natuurlijk waar, wat u naar aanleiding van dat "rookgordijn" schrijft: "Het kan immers ook zijn, dat wat iemand ziet als een rookgordijn, moet worden toegeschreven aan een cataract of staar van zijn oog". Ja, dat erkennen wij volmondig. En daarom willen wij graag onze broeders dienen en van hen gediend zijn in het christelijk werk van het wegnemen der splinters uit dat oog. Moge de discussie tusschen u en mij daartoe een vruchtbare bijdrage opleveren!

Nog een opmerking! Uw schrijft ook dit: "Of echter het een of het ander waar is, kan niet uitgemakt worden door Wormser of Pieters, noch ook door onze Belijdenisschriften, die ons nu eenmaal geen duidelijke en volledige verbondsbeschouwing bieden, maar alleen door Gods Woord". Dat is taal naar ons vrijgemaakte hart! Daarom hebben wij ons zoo verzet tegen een synode, die haar armoede aan Schriftbewijzen trachtte te camoufleren door gewelddadige onderdrukking.

De waarheidsdrang van Ds. Hoeksema is ook de onze: waarheid, maar dan uit Gods Woord! Dat is licht in den mist. L. DOEKES.

According to promise, we hereby offer those of our readers that are not sufficiently versed in the Dutch language to follow the Rev. Doekes' remarks a brief translation:

LIGHT IN THE FOG

In "The Standard Bearer" and in our "Reformatie", The Rev. H. Hoeksema of Grand Rapids made a few remarks about an expression in my paper "The Old

Battle", read on the day of our Theological Seminary.

With appreciation and gratitude I read his utterances. He invites me to an open discussion of his covenant conception, and says: "Such a discussion might serve the cause of the truth, and benefit our mutual understanding." The Rev. Hoeksema promises publication and translation of such a discussion in his paper. His article closes with the remark: "For the great difference between the 'synodicals' and the 'liberated' consists in this that the latter are not bound, is it not? That surely must mean: there is plenty of room for a brotherly discussion of the question concerning the covenant.

Indeed, Rev. Hoeksema, with us there is plenty of room for such a brotherly discussion, even as this was always the case in our churches, before 1942. Our churches are bound only by the Word of God and the Three Formulas of Unity; in regard to the rest they acknowledge complete christian liberty. It is a cause of joy to us that in this respect we may hail you as our spiritual kinsman. We are aware that it is as you wrote: 'I may assure brother Doekes that we do not belong to those that reproached and stigmatized the 'liberated'.' We are grateful to you for your resolute protest against the hierarchy that arose in our churches.

With the consent of our editor-in-chief, I gladly make use of the opportunity for the discussion requested by you.

First of all, however, it is necessary to put the question in the right light. You supplied your article with the heading: "Smoke Screen", Rookgordijn. You adopted this term from my treatise; and upon occasion of a footnote in which you also are referred to, you say: "I am, therefore, being classified with those 'spiritual kinsmen abroad' that lay a smoke-screen over the clear significance of God's covenant promises." And a little further: "That 'smokescreen' I cannot swallow. It is not exactly my habit to lay smokescreens over the truth."

This last we did, indeed, notice in your writings. And if my brief reference in that footnote did you an injustice, I gladly offer you my apology. We know too well from experience what it means to be put in a wrong light.

Yet, I believe that you deduced too much from my remark. Literally I wrote: "Over the evident significance of God's covenant promises a smokescreen was laid by the synodical theories. And the same fog we see also in many expressions of our spiritual kinsmen abroad. (Footnote): Thus, e.g. with the Rev. Hoeksema, but also with his opponents."

My mode of expression was somewhat brief. But only this was said: "over the covenant promises there still hangs, as is evident from sundry expressions,

also with our spiritual kinsmen abroad (e.g. with the Rev. Hoeksema and with his opponents) a haze, a mist."

And the synodical theories positively spread this mist as a smokescreen.

My intention, therefore, was not at all to insult you by putting you in the same category with our fierce antagonists here in the Netherlands. Our editor-in-chief already pointed out that there is considerable difference between the synodical theories here and your conception. Those theories now constitute an official doctrinal system, that can no longer tolerate any principal contradiction. Your view, however, leaves full room for public discussion. That alone is already a blessing for the heart.

And, therefore, when as brethren we consider one another's views, it is not such a serious matter if, with regard to certain points, we ascertain: a few things still remain in the fog. This is no grieving indictment, if only it be further demonstrated. On this point, I believe, we are perfectly agreed. And now I will gladly demonstrate in respect to what particular points, before my consciousness, your conception still is hazy. I am the more ready to do this, because also in our circles by no means all questions concerning the covenant-revelation have been clearly solved. An official "liberated" doctrine of the covenant, over and above the confession, does not exist.

After this defining of our position, we can now proceed to a further discussion of what I said.

I had in mind your view as developed in your articles of *The Standard Bearer*, published under the title: "Believers and their Seed." This brochure is here not generally known as yet. Through friendly hand I received sometime ago a copy of the second edition.

With special interest I took cognizance of your foreword (dated Feb. 21, 1946). For our readers I quote from it the following: "To the Mission Committee of our Churches it appeared expedient, especially in connection with the present controversies in the Netherlands, to reprint the treatise that follows here. In this connection, one must bear in mind that this material was not written with a view to the ecclesiastical troubles in the old country, but eighteen years ago in the form of articles in the *Standard Bearer*. The text was left wholly unchanged. To this I will add that the distribution of this brochure in The Netherlands is not motivated by the desire to grab a dog by the ears, but by the desire to serve the truth concerning God's eternal covenant."

Now, I can assure you that with great interest, we took cognizance of your treatise, especially now, in connection with our heavy ecclesiastical struggle,

our eyes were further opened for the blessing and Scriptural significance of God's covenant with us and our children. We are of the opinion that further and open investigation of God's revelation on this point can only be beneficial to our life in Christ.

For the rest, it remains, of course, true, as you write in connection with that "smokescreen": "It is quite impossible, of course, that what someone sees as a smokescreen, must be ascribed to a cataract on his eye." Yes, this we admit wholeheartedly. And, therefore, we gladly serve the brethren, or be served by them, in the christian work of removing the motes out of that eye. May the discussion between you and me yield a rich fruit unto that end!

One more remark! You write also this: "Whether, however, the one or the other is true, cannot be determined by Wormser or Pieters, nor even by our confessional standards, which simply do not offer a clear and complete covenant conception, but only by the Word of God!" That is language after our liberated heart! It is because of this that we have set ourselves against a synod, that tried to camouflage its poverty in respect to Scriptural proof by oppression by main force.

The urge for the truth of the Rev. Hoeksema is also ours: truth, but then out of the Word of God! That is the light in the fog.

Let me close with a few remarks of my own.

First of all, I want to assure the Rev. Doekes that, on our part, the brotherly spirit that pervades his entire article is deeply appreciated. In the mutual confidence that we both want to serve the truth of God and the cause of His covenant, it should be possible, freely and without mincing words, to weigh and discuss one another's *views*, without attacking each other's *person*. And that is what I am looking forward to.

Secondly, we are now from under the smokescreen, but still in the mist. It is not so much because I felt personally offended by the expression of the Rev. Doekes about that smokescreen, as because I felt that a fruitful discussion between us would hardly be possible as long as the smokescreen was supposed to be laid by me, that I reflected on it. I understood the expression in its proper sense, as meaning that I was intentionally covering up the truth of God's promises. I gladly accept the explanation of the Rev. Doekes, even though from an exegetical viewpoint it is quite debatable.

Thirdly, I will wait, of course, till the Rev. Doekes points out just where the mist hangs over my covenant views. In the meantime, there are several points in the covenant conception that, hitherto, has been

advocated by the leaders of the Reformed Churches (Art. 31) that appear hazy to us here in America. I may be permitted to submit some of them to the consideration of the Rev. Doekes.

1. What exactly is the distinction between *promise* and *pledge* (*belofte en toezegging*)? The English *pledge* is, perhaps, not the exact rendering of "toezegging," but I know no better term at present. And with respect to the Dutch terms, the dictionary makes no distinction. Yet, it seems that by the "liberated" writers an important distinction is attached to these terms. Just what is it?

2. Is it your view that the promise of the covenant:

a. Is for all that are baptized unconditionally? If so, does this promise also include that the Holy Ghost "will dwell in us, and sanctify us to be members of Christ, applying unto us that which we have in Christ, namely, the washing away of our sins, and the daily renewing of our lives, till we shall finally be presented without spot or wrinkle among the assembly of the elect in life eternal."? If it does, and God makes this promise to all the children that are baptized, why does He not fulfill His promise to all?

b. Is for all *conditionally*? If so, must the baptized child fulfill and live up to this condition *before* God will fulfill His promise, and apply "that which we have in Christ" to it? If so, how can that child, who is by nature "born in sin, and therefore a child of wrath," and who "cannot enter into the kingdom of God except it be born again," fulfill any condition whatever?

c. Or only for "the children of the promise" who are *counted for the seed*, and that, too, both by God and us?

3. What Scriptural objection do you have to the following:

a. The promise of the gospel is preached promiscuously to all that hear, but is, as to its contents, particular: it is only for those that believe, and, therefore, only for the elect?

b. This same promise, with the same particular contents, is signified in baptism to all the children of believers, yet so that it is a savor of life unto life for the believers, that is, the elect, and a savor of death unto death for the unbelievers, the reprobate, and that, too, quite according to God's counsel, and in harmony with the contents of His promise?

4. Why was Esau, the reprobate, firstborn?

Finally, I hope to send my answers to *De Reformatie*. But if the Rev. L. Doekes does not personally receive our Standard Bearer, and will send me his address, we will be glad to send him a copy regularly.

H. H.

Our Eschatological Age

The times in which we live make the impression on many people of God, who take the Word of God and the promise of the coming of Christ seriously, that they are, in a special sense of the word "eschatological", precursory to the end of all things. More than once, not only in our part of the world, but also, and especially, in the old world, this impression is voiced. I say "impression," for the expectation and hope that the coming of the Lord is near is by no means always the result of a process of reasoning in which the various elements that constitute the special character of our age are carefully compared with the revelation of the Word of God concerning the last days. There is simply something in the age in which we live, and especially in our post-war period, that causes the true Church to look upward, impressed with the nearness of the end of all things. And so, they speak of our times as especially "eschatological."

The question, nevertheless, arises: is this impression justifiable? Can it be shown, in the light of Scripture, that in our day, more than before, there is reason to believe that the final revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, His coming with the clouds, is near?

This question, I think, must be answered in the affirmative.

There are, of course, general reasons, reasons that, in the new dispensation, are always present, why the people of God are justified in living in the consciousness of the nearness of the *parousia*, the coming of the Lord. In fact, the language of Scripture is eschatological throughout. It assures us, in plain words, that the end of all things is near, that we must live as in the *parousia*, and that this is the last hour. The entire new dispensation is essentially eschatological: it carries the message, and leaves the impression that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. That this dispensation is the "last hour" means that the second and final advent is *next*. When a train speeds to its destination, and, on its way, must pass several stations, the passengers begin to look for the end of the journey, and to prepare themselves to leave the train, when the last of those stations is passed. God's train is speeding to the end. Several stations on the way, the flood, Sinai, the captivity, the first coming of Christ, have been passed. The coming of Christ, His death, resurrection, exaltation, the outpouring of the Spirit, was the last event before the end. It is now the last hour. The end of all things is next. All we can now expect is the coming of the Lord. It is always near. The end of the ages is come upon us. The new dispensation is essentially eschatological.

For us this is, of course, true in a special sense. It is evident from the New Testament that the early

Church often lived in the expectation that the Lord might come in the period of their own life-time. Under the stress of persecution and tribulation, the eschatological tension was strong. Yet, even though persecution in the same sense and to the same degree as was the lot of the early believers is not our lot, and though it may appear as if the world is more tolerant to the Christian faith and confession than in those earliest times of Church history, for us it is doubly true that the end of the ages is come, if it were only because of the simple fact that almost two thousand years have elapsed since the apostolic age, and we are surely so much nearer to the end of all things. We are living, not in the beginning, but in the latter part of the "last hour". The impression that the Lord must come soon is quite normal.

But other factors, special elements that characterize specifically the age in which we live, may be mentioned to explain and justify the impression that the coming of the Lord draweth very nigh.

From Scripture we know that certain things must come to pass, and will be realized shortly before the end. To these belong the establishment of the kingdom and dominion of antichrist. We know that this dominion, from its political aspect, will be universal. Antichrist will lord it over the whole earth. For a little while, the space of "one hour," all the nations of the world will subject themselves to him, even the nations that live "at the four corners of the earth." We know, too, that, from its spiritual aspect this antichristian dominion will be characterized by its opposition to all that is called Christian, and that he will oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God. For the believers that are faithful it will be a time of great tribulation. They will be social outcasts. They shall not be able to buy or sell unless they deny Christ, and receive the mark of the beast. Many of them shall be killed by the sword. Moreover, we are given to understand rather clearly that the unity of this antichristian dominion will be broken up by the nations that live on the four corners of the earth, God and Magog, that will rise against the beast and devour it. All this will be preceded and prepared by a great and general apostacy from the Christian faith, for it must needs be from what is known as Christendom that the antichrist will arise.

Knowing these things from the Word of God, it is not surprising that believers live under a strong impression of the nearness of the end and of the coming of the Lord, in the present days.

Several factors contribute to this expectation.

There is, first of all, the well-known fact that, from a purely geographical viewpoint, history has come to an end. No new worlds are to be discovered and exploited. When at the end of the fifteenth century, just before the Reformation, Western civilization had

grown old, the Old World seemed to have reached its end, the Church had become apostate and corrupt, God prepared an extension to the world's history, and a new home for His Church, in the discovery of the New World by Columbus. History could continue. We know quite definitely that this is no more the case. There are no new worlds to be discovered that might provide a new lease on life for the nations of the world. Geographically we have come to the end of history.

Moreover, in the second place, the world has become extremely narrow and small. The nations of the world virtually live on top of one another, which is one of the reasons why wars increase in number, scope, and intensity. It is comparatively but a short time ago that communication between the nations was relatively scarce and very slow. Weeks and months it took, not only to make the trip from the Old World to the New, but also to deliver communications from one part of the world to the other. All this has changed. Through wireless and radio news is flashed from one end of the world to the other faster than, a century ago a message could be delivered from one place in little Holland to another. In a day we cross the big pond. One may eat an early breakfast in London, and take his supper in New York. The world is become very small. Among other things this means that conditions are being prepared for the realization of a universal world-dominion. A hundred, even fifty years ago, it was well-nigh inconceivable that a central world-power, having its capitol say, in Washington, could actually reign over the whole world. Today this is no longer a problem at all. The realization of the antichristian world-dominion, from its political aspect, has come quite within the range of conceivable possibilities.

Again, in the third place, under the stress of the historical situation of the present day, especially after the second world-war, the nations of the world are actually seeking and striving for a solution of their problems in the direction of such a world-federation under one central power. In our small world, with all the nations being neighbors, they realize that their very existence and the continuance of culture and civilization are threatened with destruction, and can,—what with the invention of modern instruments of warfare?—easily be extinguished in a short time, unless they unite for world-peace. The fear of one another, and the desire to save the world and its civilization, drives them to seek safety in world-federation. That such a federation may soon be organized under one head, and that, too, as a definitely antichristian world-state, lies no longer outside of the range of conceivable possibilities.

Add to this the fast growing apostacy from the Christian faith, the appalling ignorance concerning the things of the kingdom of God, the indifference

with respect to things spiritual and eternal, the emphasis on things earthly and carnal, the pursuit of pleasure and amusement,—and the realization of the “man of sin” would appear not to be far distant. If one subtracts from the number of nominal Christians all those that have denied the faith, and have turned the grace of God into lasciviousness, the number of true believers is comparatively very small. Nor does the scourge of God's fierce wrath and judgments, such as lashed the back of the nations in the last two world-wars, make any impression on the consciences of men. In the book of Revelation one reads, as a characteristic of the latter days, that men “did not repent”, when the judgments of God were on the earth. In those days, that is, in days that are emphatically noted by such spiritual hardness and indifference, we are surely living now.

And are we not also living in the days when, according to Scripture, the devil must be loosed for a little while, in order that he may deceive the nations that live on the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog? The nations of the Orient are waking up. The time of colonies is passed. The old country will never again possess the East Indies as before. The mighty colonial empire of Great Britain is tottering on its foundations. All these facts point to the time of the end, and may account for the strong eschatological consciousness and attitude of those believers that earnestly look for the kingdom of God.

And let us not forget that we are moving very fast. The fact that we are living in the age of the machine, of steam and electricity, of streamlined trains, automobiles, and airplanes; of wireless and radio, and of gigantic production, does not only mean that we can accomplish so much more than the men of a few generations ago; it also signifies that we are moving at a much more rapid pace than formerly to the end of all things. “Behold, I come quickly,” the Lord assures us. Always, throughout the new dispensation, this is true; in our own age, this truth is accentuated.

All this does not mean at all that God's people are attempting to express the time of His coming in terms of days or years. But it does mean that, more than in other periods, they live eschatologically, that is, in the consciousness of the nearness of the end, and in the hope of the coming of the Lord. Living as in the *parousia*, they will watch and pray, and be sober lest they be swallowed up by the world, hold fast that which they have, and strive to keep their garments clean, motivated by the hope to be like Him at His coming.

H. H.

Lord, let me through this busy day
 Conduct myself in such a way
 That every one I meet may see
 The Spirit of the Christ in me.

Questions on Church Polity

Dr. H. Bouwman, as we have seen, tried to reason the crooked thing straight—the thing: deposition of office bearers by Classis—by arguing the point that, in a crisis, as when there is need of a power to depose a rebellious consistory, all the consistories transfer their key-power to the Classis (Synod), and thereby bring it into being as a major consistory with key-power to depose office bearers. As was stated, this teaching according to which the major assemblies (Cassis and Synod) are major consistories is also that of Rev. Gerrit Hoeksema and he got it from the late Prof. Heyns. Yet, as was said, there is a difference. With G. Hoeksema and Heyns Classis (Synod) is a permanent consistory. But according to Dr. H. Bouwman, when the crisis is past, the key-power reverts to the local consistories, and the major consistory is again a common Classis.

As was remarked, Bouwman and G. Hoeksema need this doctrine according to which Classis (Synod) is a consistory. Everyone who affirms that Classis can rightfully depose office bearers and at once wants to be known as reformed, needs this doctrine. For Classis cannot rightfully engage in this action except it be a consistory and thus not a Classis. For according to our Church Order and our Confessions all key-power is concentrated in the consistory only. And by insisting that Classis is a consistory, Bouwman and G. Hoeksema admit this. Hence, if the major assembly is a Classis and not a consistory, it cannot depose office bearers. Rev. G. Hoeksema admits this too. He even affirms it with emphasis as I proved with a quotation from his brochure.

This then is the question: is Classis a consistory? And the answer: not according to our Church Order and the Confession. For according to the Church Order and the Confession, a consistory is an ecclesiastical council of office bearers, *each and every one* of which is lawfully chosen by the church, that is, by the one local congregation, brotherhood subject to it. The proof of this is contained in Arts. XXX and XXXI of the Belgic Confession. I quote:

“We believe, that this true church must be governed by that spiritual polity which our Lord has taught us in his word; namely, that there must be ministers or pastors to preach the word of God, and to administer the sacraments; also elders and deacons, who together with the pastors, form the council of the church: . . .” Art. XXXI (quoted in part).

The word *church* in the clause “form the council of the church” denotes the local congregation, brotherhood. This is disputed by no one. Hence, it is not

necessary to argue the point. Even according to the Rev. G. Hoeksema’s exegesis of this article, the word *church* signifies the local congregation. He writes, “Article 30 speaks briefly of the elders and deacons who, together with the pastors, form the council of the church. There the local church is meant.” Brochure, page 39.

Passing on to Art. XXXI, I quote its first sentence,

“We believe that the ministers of God’s Word, and the elders and deacons, ought to be chosen to their respective offices by lawful election by the church, with calling upon the name of the Lord, and in that order which the word of God teacheth.”

Again the local church is meant, certainly. Classis and Synod do not engage in the election of office bearers, ministers, elders, and deacons. This is the task of the local congregation also according to Art. 22 of the Church Order of Dort,

“The elders shall be chosen by the judgment of the Consistory and the Deacons according to the regulations for that purpose established by the Consistory. In pursuance of these regulations, every church shall be at liberty, according to its circumstances, to give the members an opportunity to direct attention to suitable persons, in order that the Consistory may thereupon either present to the congregation for election as many elders as are needed. . . .”

The teaching of the above-cited excerpts is this,

- 1) The ministers or pastors, elders, and deacons constitute the ruling council of the one local congregation.
- 2) This council, as to all of its members, is chosen by lawful election by the *one local congregation* subject to it.

How true it is that, according to the above-cited articles of the Confession and the Church Order, a consistory is an ecclesiastical council each and every member of which is chosen by lawful election of *the one local* brotherhood subject to it. And therefore a Classis is not, according to these articles, a consistory. For according to the Church Order a Classis is an ecclesiastical organization of delegates—ministers and elders, if you will—each of whom is chosen by lawful election not by the sum and total of churches that delegate to the classical assembly and that in their totality constitute one congregation, but only by the one church represented by each. It means that according to the Church Order, Classis is not a consistory. And it also means that Rev. G. Hoeksema (and Dr. Bouwman) loses the argument to the effect that Classis can rightfully depose office bearers. For he says, does he not, that if Classis is not a consistory, deposition of office bearers by Classis is out of the

question. This should settle the matter for everybody, for the brother in Sioux Center, Iowa, and for the Rev. Gerrit Hoeksema, too.

For Rev. G. Hoeksema, however, the matter is not settled. This is certain. He agrees that a *mere* Classis is not a consistory with key-power to depose consistories, and therefore he insists that the several consistories must unite into a larger consistory and that only when this is done can it be maintained that Classis can rightfully depose office bearers. Attend once more to his argument,

“To get combined consistory authority over the combined churches and over each other, you must unite these consistories into a larger whole, into the larger consistories we call Classis and Synod. Then the Classis can ask submission of the individual consistory as a member of the larger body. And only thus can you defend the right of Classis to depose a consistory. . . . the question is, what kind of ‘kerkverband’ has been established? Is it a mere federation? (Notice this question. It is equivalent to asking: What kind of Classis, Synod? a mere Classis? G.M.O.) Then the deposition of a consistory is out of the question. . . . Is it, on the other hand, a real union. . . . then you have a real ethical and ecclesiastical basis for deposition. . . . And the Classis, really nothing less than a large combined consistory, clothed with real governing power as is any consistory, has the right and the duty to proceed with censure.” Brochure, p. 54.

There is but one name for the kind of ecclesiastical organization that the reverend wants brought into being—the name consistorial classis (synod). For as to its organization, the thing that he advocates is a classis, but as to the character of its power—it has power to depose office bearers—it is a consistory, that is, supposed to be one. The imaginings of the reverend raises questions. First, does the Church Order and our Confession know anything about a consistorial classis (synod)? They do not, of course. As far as the Church Order and the Confession are concerned, a consistorial classis (synod) is a nonentity (conceptionally), a figment of the reverend’s own imagination. It will presently appear how very true this is.

Second, there is also this question: How is a consistorial Classis brought into being? In what way? By what specific act? To say, as does the reverend, that “you must unite these consistories into a larger whole, into the larger consistories we call Classis and Synod” is certainly not an answer, so that the question is still with us: how? in what way? Fact is that the reverend gives no answer beyond saying that *it must be done*. Is there an answer? Could the several consistories that delegate to the classical assembly be

united into a consistorial classis? If so, it would have to be done in either of the two following ways. 1) All the churches would have to chose by lawful election one another’s consistories; or 2) All the churches would have to dissolve. Thereupon the large mass of interested persons would congregate in one place and choose them a new consistory. Another way, besides these two, there is not. At least, no one on earth is able to conceive of another way. For, mark you, what must be brought into being is not a Classis, is not a Synod, but verily a consistory. And according to the Church Order and the Confession, a consistory, as to every one of its members, must be lawfully chosen by the brotherhood subject to it. Therefore there is no way by which consistories can unite into a consistorial Classis other than the two ways just presented. But the difficulty is, that, were either of the ways followed, the resultant organization would be not a consistorial classis (synod) but simply one large congregation subject to the newly chosen consistory and including all the members of the several churches that passed out of existence by dissolving. But this would not do at all. For what is needed is not a new and larger congregation, but a consistorial Classis with key-power over churches. However, there is a way—and it is the only way—in which consistories with their respective congregations can unite without involving themselves in the loss of their separte existence, the way, namely, of federating on the basis of the Church Order. However, by pursuing this way the consistories bring themselves into being not as a larger consistory, consistorial Classis, with authority to depose office bearers, but simply as a mere Classis, a mere federation of churches. But this would not do either. For what is needed is a *consistorial* Classis. So the question: can consistories be united into a consistorial Classis, must be answered thus: Not at all. This is absolutely impossible. For the resultant organization is either a common Classis or just a consistory. There is no way by which consistories bring themselves into being as a consistorial Classis. The Church Order and the Confession know of no way. Nobody is able to conceive of a way. If there be anywhere such a person, let him publish the fruits of his effort. It means that the reverend (and the others) still is confronted by the task of explaining how, in the light of the Church Order and the Confession, Classis rightfully can depose consistories. Of course, it ought to be plain now that to attempt to explain this is to try to do the impossible. It cannot be explained; and this is but another way of saying that the teaching according to which Classis rightfully deposes office bearers is as contrary to the Church Order and the Confession as any teaching can be. The last half of Art. XXXI of our Belgic Confession reads,

“As for the ministers of God’s Word, they have

equally the same power and authority wheresoever they are, as they are all ministers of Christ, the only universal bishop, and the only Head of the Church. . . ."

This plainly is meant as a thrust at the Roman hierarchy and thus against all hierarchy. The teaching of the article that precedes is that the "church must be governed by that spiritual polity, which our Lord has taught in His Word; namely, that there must be ministers or pastors to preach the Word of God, and to administer the sacraments; also elders and deacons, who together with the pastors, form the council of the church." The teaching contained in these two excerpts is plainly this: The local church has its council of office bearers through which Christ rules that brotherhood. But not so the churches. The bishop of the churches is not a man (the pope) or men (Classis and Synod) but Christ, "the only universal bishop, and the only head of the church. For the ministers have equally the same power or authority wheresoever they are, as they are all ministers of Christ. Accordingly the one may not set himself up as bishop over the other, or some over the others. An identical teaching is set forth by Art. 84 of the Church Order, "No Church in any way shall lord it over other churches, no minister over other ministers, no elder or deacon over other elders or deacons." And certainly, what the one may not do, the several in combination of Classis may not do.

Rev. G. Hoeksema's reasonings raise still another question. The reverend's brochure—it bears the title, "Can a Classis Depose a Consistory?"—represents an attempt on his part to defend two Christian Reformed Classes—Grand Rapids East and Grand Rapids West. Back in 1924, as is well known, these Classes went to deposing office bearers right and left. The reverend in his brochure strives to justify these Classes in that doing—justify them from the point of view of Reformed Church polity. (How well he succeeded, we have just seen. He did not succeed, but failed miserably). Hence, when the reverend writes (in his brochure), "To get beyond that, to get combined consistory authority over the combined churches and over each other, you must unite these consistories into a large whole, into the larger consistories we call Classis and Synod," he really means to tell his readers precisely this: The Christian Reformed Classes that, back in 1924, engaged in deposition of consistories, office bearers, did right; their action is wholly justifiable from the point of view of Reformed Church polity. For the consistories that delegated to those Classical assemblies were united into a larger consistory, consistorial Classis.

I ask, and certainly every one who reads, asks: but is it true? Were, at the time, those Christian Reformed consistories united into a larger Consistory

with key-power to depose office bearers? The reverend makes mention of the Netherland Synod at Assen—the Synod that deposed Dr. Geelkerken and his consistory. Were the Classes that delegated to this Synod united by lawful election into a consistorial Synod? Was the Netherland Synod that deposed Dr. K. Schilder and Dr. Greydanus a consistorial Synod? All these questions, of course, must be answered in the negative. Those two Christian Reformed Classes were Classes and nothing more. For they were nothing more or less than the major assemblies of a number of churches federating on the basis of the Church Order and delegating to the Classical assembly. And that is what those Classes still are—common, ordinary Classes, and not certainly consistorial Classes. Has anyone ever heard or read about the churches delegating to the Classes Grand Rapids West and Grand Rapids East, choosing by lawful election one another's consistories? Has anyone ever heard or read of those churches dissolving and of the membership congregating in one place and choosing it a new consistory? This, of course, has never happened. I repeat, the two Classes in question are common, ordinary Classes, and they were this at the time they engaged in deposition of office bearers. And the same must be said of the Netherland Synod that deposed Geelkerken and of the Netherland Synod that deposed Schilder and Greydanus, and of all the Reformed Synods and Classes that, through the years of the past, have engaged in that forbidden action. They were common, ordinary Classes and Synods and not consistorial Classes and Synods. And of course, Rev. G. Hoeksema and all those minded as is he in regard to the point at issue, know this to be true. And therefore the reverend is compelled to admit that a Classis cannot rightfully depose office bearers. He, himself, in a sense, has made this as plain as can be. He did so by insisting that, unless the churches, consistories, be united into a larger consistory, consistorial consistory, deposition of office bearers by Classis (Synod) is out of the question. What the reverend should now do, therefore, is to send into the world another brochure, explaining to the churches that he erred dreadfully and that he retracts everything.

Once more, there is no way in which Classis (Synod) brings itself into being as a consistorial Classes (Synod), with power to depose office bearers, except it be the way of Classis (Synod) simply pronouncing itself to be a council of that character. This is the only way. But it is the forbidden way; it is a sinful way. For, as we have seen, according to the Church Order and our Confession, office bearers must be chosen by lawful election by the church subject to them. Hence, when Classis brings itself into being as a ruling power over the churches by a mere pronouncement, it intrudes itself by indecent means and

thereby collides head-on with Art. XXXI of our Belgic Confession. The article contains this sentence, "Therefore every one must take heed, not to intrude himself by indecent means, but is bound to wait till it please God to call him." When a Classis brings itself into being as a ruling power over the churches by a mere pronouncement—and this is precisely what Reformed Classes and Synods have been doing and are still doing—it runs the way of the hierarchy. That is exactly how the pope of Rome got where we find him in the Middle Ages—on a throne in the clouds as the head over all things in church and state. How did he get there? Easily enough. He simply pronounced himself to be a potentate of that exalted position; and men were foolish enough to believe him; and whenever he thundered, they would tremble and stoop down and kiss his toe. Sad to say, through the years of the past, Reformed Synods and Classes have been following and are still following the pope's example. They have been and still are setting themselves up as bishops with key-power over the churches by a mere pronouncement. Of course, it is the only way open to a Classis (Synod) that is determined to get the churches under its heel.

I know, the leaders in Reformed communions here and across the sea tell us that Classis (synod), in setting itself up as bishop with key power over the churchess simply avails itself of a power given it by the Church Order, definitely by Art. 36 of the Church Order, "The Classis has the same jurisdiction over the Consistory as the Particular Synod has over the Classis, and the General Synod over the Particular." The Rev. G. Hoeksema appeals to this article in support of his philosophy. Likewise Dr. H. Bouwman and Prof. Dr. J. Ridderbos of the synodicals. And they all do. But also the reasoning of Dr. Ridderbos brings out only how utterly impossible it is even for the best of minds to prove the thing and to reason it straight: the thing: deposition of office bearers by Classis (synod).

In a following article we hope to attend to the reasoning of Dr. Ridderbos. Certainly this appeal to Art. 36 of the Church Order is vain. As if the Church Order on the one hand should rule that office bearers be chosen by lawful election by the brotherhood subject to it, and on the other hand should give to the Classis the right to set itself up as bishop with key-power over the churches by a mere pronouncement, or, which amounts to the same thing, simply elevate classis to a position of a ruling power over the churches and thus allow it to say to the churches, "I am thy lord, not, it is true, in the way of a lawful election but by virtue of a right given me by the Church Order. As if, in a word, the Church Order brings the churches under the heel of the hierarchy. For that, according to the Church Order and our Confession and the Scriptures is precisely the hierarchy. The hierarchy rules the

brotherhood without being lawfully chosen by it. The hierarchy, it means, imposed himself on the flock from without.

G. M. O.

THROUGH THE AGES

The Renaissance Popes, 1431-1521

(Continued)

Pius II

The dates of his pontificate are 1458-1464. His full name was Aeneas Sylvius de' Piccolomini. As his name indicates, he was an Italian. He was of noble birth, though his parents, who had been banished from Siena, were poor.

Aeneas has been given a place among the successful popes. But he was without principle and a profligate. He had illegitimate children before he became pope. For his love affairs were many. One of his sons was born in Scotland, and the other in Strassburg, by an Englishwoman.

But he was able and versatile. He mastered Greek in Florence. In the thirty years that preceded his elevation to the papal throne, he served successively two cardinals, a bishop and a pope as secretary; travelled in France, and visited England and Scotland. He wrote verses in Latin, and they won for him the appointment of poet-laureate. His doubtful literary achievements included, besides his poems, stories of love and adventure and a "History of Frederick III." He attended the council of Basil. He was a member of one of the four committees, the committee on faith. He had great influence with Frederick III, who, as impressed by his diplomatic skill, appointed him to the chief place in his council.

From 1444 on—he was then in his 39th year—his letters indicate a desire to renounce the world. He wrote to his friends that he had had enough of Venus. His immoral courses had ruined his health and shattered his constitution. Then came his election as pope. Before his election he had to make several promises, including the promise to renew the war against the Turks.

Accordingly, during his entire career as pope, Pius II was occupied with the crusade against the Turks. In the third year of his reign, he ordered the lay princes of his patriarchate to assemble in Mantua. Appearing before the congress, he delivered its opening address, that lasted three hours. He dwelt long on what Christendom had lost to the aggression of the

Turks—the fairest seats such as Antioch, Jerusalem, and Bethlehem. He told the princes that if they cared for their own possessions, their wives, their children and their liberty, their faith in which they were baptized, they must take up arms against the Turks. And indeed, the Turks but recently had planted the crescent on the Acropolis of Athens, and all southern Greece was suffering the horrors of Turkish oppressions. Pius' address was followed by others of equal length. Though the assembly was deeply moved, the princes took no action. For the age of the crusades was past. In his closing days, Pius wrote a letter to Mohammed, in which urged him to embrace Christianity.

Yet in 1464 it seemed as if something was to be attempted. The Turks at least should be held at bay and driven if possible from the soil of their recent conquests. The pope, though ailing and dying, was determined to encourage the defenders of the cross by his presence on the scene of conflict. So he had himself conveyed on a small litter to a promontory in Ancona to watch from this elevation the battle against the infidels. But he died before the commencement of the battle. Among his last words, spoken to a cardinal, were, "pray for me, my son, for I am a sinner. Bid my brethren to continue this holy expedition."

It cannot be denied that in the latter years of his life, Pius' attitude was religious, which some historians regard as insincere and the crusade as inspired by a lust of fame. "There was nothing great in him," says Gregorovius. "Endowed with fascinating gifts, this man of brilliant parts possessed no enthusiasms." Others overlooking the sins of his earlier life, pronounce him one of the most notable popes of the fifteenth century.

Two things of interest still may be told of this pope. The precious relics of the church included also the reputed skull of the apostle Andrew. During the pontificate of Pius II, this prized treasure was brought to Rome by Thomas Palaeologus. The pope was that grateful that he gave Thomas the Golden Rose, a palace in Rome, and a yearly allowance of 6,000 ducats. When tidings were brought to the pope that the bearers of the relic had arrived with their treasure at the gates of Rome, he went out with his cardinals and the Roman clergy to give it welcome. Having knelt before the apostle's skull, he addressed to it words of congratulation on its deliverance from the hands of the Turks to be given a place beside the remains of its brethren.

As the secretary of cardinals and bishops, Pius had defended and advocated the supremacy of the church council over the pope with such vigor that he has been called the forerunner of the Reformation. Once in the papal throne, however, he forsook his former position and pronounced the Roman hierarchy as headed by the pope, a divine institution, and the pope under Christ

the lord of all, including the church councils. And he let it be known that he retracted anything he had said in conflict with these views, and ascribed his former contrary utterance to that lack of insight and understanding characteristic of youthful minds. That even before his own consciousness he was sincere in his retractions does not seem possible.

G. M. O.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

Saul's Public Election

As we have seen, Samuel 10:8-13:8 forms a passage that presents certain difficulties rising from Samuel's command to Saul. This command having been dealt with and these difficulties having been explained and thereby removed, let us take up the thread of the narrative, where we broke off.

Saul had been anointed and charged by Samuel in secret. In addition, the unbelieving king had been provided with a mass of indisputable evidence that Samuel truly was God's prophet and that therefore in him, men, and in particular the king, verily had to do with God.

We now come to the section 10:17-27. Here is related the public election of Saul by the lot of God in the congregation of Israel. It took place in Mizpeh, where Samuel had called together the people unto the Lord for that purpose. It is not correct to say, as some do say, that "here the human factor appears in cooperation with the divine" with Samuel as the intermediary. Firstly, the Lord *alone* through the lot, directed attention to the man of His choice. The text reads here, "And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken. When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken. . . ." This phraseology implies the use of the lot. "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord" (Prov. 16:33). Today, the Lord directs attention to the man of His choice through the agency of the congregation. For the church has attained to spiritual majority. Samuel was active in anointing Saul (in secret), in charging him, in casting the lot in the presence of the congregation, and later in inducting Saul into his office by appropriate ceremonies. The people were active in approbating the Lord's choice. But these actions certainly made Samuel and

the people no factors, cooperating with the Lord. The fallacy of this view is evident when considered in the light of the consideration that Samuel and believing Israel, apart from Christ's grace were fallen men, undone, and lost sinners, that thus as willing servants they were the Lord's workmanship, through whom He accomplished His work. The sole factor here was the Lord. And so, of course, it ever is.

It was the Lord who chose for Israel a king, raised him up, commanded, qualified and sustained him. The king was God's gift to the people. To God alone he was responsible and according to God's word he must reign. His authority was solely God's. Israel's government was not of the people; it was of the Lord.

Saul could have been introduced to the nation as the man of God's choice by secret calling and anointing. But such was not the Lord's will. What had been done in secret had to be verified by a transaction witnessed by the whole nation, in order that there might be no excuse for the doubt that Israel's government, as to the form that it was now made to assume, was truly of God and that the king who sat in the throne was the man of God's choice indeed. There was need of both callings—the secret and the public. Saul himself had need of it. There was now time for the amazement that rose from his consideration that he had been selected for the throne to spend its force in his soul. And there was also time for Samuel to charge him and to provide him with the evidence that he was truly called of God and that in Samuel he verily had to do with the Lord.

Though prepared for his public election, when it finally did take place, Saul was not surprised—that were impossible—but terrified. When the people sought him, he could not be found. They learned from the Lord that he had hidden himself among the baggage. And they ran and fetched him thence. Forcibly, against his will, he was brought into the limelight. And there he stood, in his extreme confusion of soul, towering head and shoulders above all the people. All eyes were upon him now. For Samuel had said, "See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people." And the people shouted, "God save the king." But Saul heard as not hearing. It can be explained. A Benjamite, and one whose family was the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin, was elevated to the throne. Saul's impact with the reality of the thing, filled his soul with dread. For being as he was devoid of true faith, he could not in that hour make God his expectation. He could only lean on self, which he did. And therefore he must needs be afraid. The only confidence he knew of, was confidence in self. And now as in every crisis it forsook him. And the result was that he hid himself among the stuff. That was no indication of true humbleness but of the fear of a man who was wont

to put his trust in the arm of flesh, forsaken in his own mind of flesh.

Before Samuel cast the lot, he again chided the people for wanting a king in the room of the Lord, his purpose being to bring them, instrumentally, to repentance. True, he was about to hearken unto their voice. So the Lord had commanded. It was His will that a king be set over them. So He had decreed. Samuel must hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they had said to him. But the people might not be allowed to conclude therefrom that they had not sinned, and that the Lord had put Samuel in the wrong. They had sinned. And their only salvation lay in the way of their repenting and in their vowing that with their king they would serve the Lord. He told them that *their reason* for the request that a king be set over them, was not valid, did not exist. They wanted a king to deliver them from the oppressions of foreign dominions. But as Israel history loudly testified, the Lord stood ready to do that for them, would they only forsake their abominations and serve their redeemer-God. But that precisely is what they refused to do—be saved by Jehovah in the way of repentance and return to Him. For they were carnal men.

Samuel told them so. Said he to them, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, and of them that oppressed you. And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversaries and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, Nay, but set a king over us."

But the people on this occasion refused to confess their great sin. They hardened their hearts. Samuel therefore proceeded with the election.

G. M. O.

Resolution of Sympathy

The Men's Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church, of Holland Michigan, herewith expresses its sincere and Christian sympathy with one of its members, Mr. John Klaver, in the death of his mother,

MRS. PETER KLAVER

May the God of all grace comfort and sustain the bereaved and grant a sufficient measure of His Spirit to walk in His way.

W. Hofman, President.

M. Jipping, Secretary.

NOTE:—We regret that this notice was delayed due to lack of space.

SION'S ZANGEN

Een Nieuw Lied Den Heere!

(Psalm 96; Tweede Deed)

We hebben gezien en gehoord, dat er een nieuw lied den Heere gezongen wordt; een lied, dat de schoonste openbaring van Jehovah bezingt. Het is nieuw, omdat het zong van Jezus Christus, den Verlosser der zielen.

We waren toegekomen aan het vers, dat de grootheid, de vreeselijkheid van den Heere bezingt tegenover die malle afgoden. De zanger had georgeld van Gods grootheid en zeide: "maar de Heere is vreeselijk boven alle goden!"

En hij zal U het bewijs leveren, en dat is vers 5. Luistert!

"Want alle de goden der heidenen zijn afgoden, maar de Heere heeft de hemelen gemaakt!"

Het eigenaardige van een afgod is, dat het eenvoudig niet bestaat. Afgod komt van *ongod* en dat is *geen* god. Ze zijn er niet. Ze bestaan alleen maar in het verziekte brein der goddelooze volkeren. En ze hebben die afgoden in hun brein en hart wakker geroepen, omdat zij noodwendiglijk een god moeten hebben. Ze zijn geschapen naar Gods beeld en Zijne gelijkenis. En dat zit hun zóó diep in het wezen gegrift, dat zij zonder god het niet kunnen stellen. Welnu, dan maakt men zijn eigen god. Er staat, dat *alle* de goden der heidenen afgoden zijn. Dus er zijn er genoeg. Ach ja, er zijn millioenen van afgoden. Ook zijn ze niet uitgestorven met de wilde volkeren die langzamerhand beschaafd geworden zijn. Onze afgoden zijn slechts verfijnd, meer geraffineerd geworden. Er zijn ontelbare vuile en vieze afgoden in het verziekte brein der menschen.

En omdat de afgoden eenvoudig niet bestaan, kunnen zij ook niets teweegbrengen. Ze zijn stom en stil. Jesaja heeft hen geteekend en—gelachen. En als men waarlijk vroom is, dan lacht men met Jesaja mee—doch huivert ook. Huivert, want men beseft, dat men zelf geneigd is om afgoden te fabriceeren.

Hoe ontzaglijk, echter, is God die waarlijk God is. De zanger zal God bewijzen: Hij heeft de hemelen gemaakt!

Hebt ge bemerkt, dat de zanger met voorbedachten rade het schoonste van Gods scheppingswerk uitkiest om zijn God te bewijzen? Hij maakte de hemelen. Ja, hij maakte ook de aarde. Evenwel, de aarde is ook de werkplaats van den mensch. Ook is de aarde slechts Gods voetstoel. Doch de hemelen zijn de Troon Gods. Zij zijn majestieus en grootsch. Daar vindt ge geen spoor van menschen handen.

Ja, God heeft de hemelen gemaakt.

Einstein heeft getracht om het heelal te verstaan. Het is ettelijke jaren geleden, dat hij zijn boek schreef over allerlei betrekkingen, en daaronder ook een nieuwe theorie over het heelal. En zijn theorie moet zoo wonderlijk zijn, dat de geheele wetenschappelijke wereld zich heeft verwonderd.

En toch, ik zou willen zeggen: Einstein, de stakkerd!

In plaats van driest in de hemelen te staren vanaf zijn vreemd gestoelte in de sterrenkijkerij, met de vooropgezette goddelooze God-ontkenning en God-verzaking, moest die man uitroepen bij het eerste blikken door het geslepen glas: O God, Gij zijt groot, want Gij hebt de hemelen gemaakt!

Ook behoeft men het vergrootglas niet om in de hemelen Gods werk te zien. Men moet wel stom, dom en doof zijn voor Goddelijke spraak, als men het zelfgetuigenis van den hemel niet hoort en ziet. De hemelen vertellen Gods eer, en het uitspansel verkondigt Zijner handen werk! Als Einstein daar nu eens mee begon, hoe heerlijk kon het einde van dien man dan zijn. Dan zou hij ons heerlijke dingen *van God* kunnen vertellen, wanneer hij terugkwam van de steile hoogten der bergen in Californië, waar men van uit de bergen opblijkt naar de starren.

De zanger van mijn lied is zeer waarschijnlijk geen sterrenkijker geweest, ten minste niet in den wetenschappelijken zin van dat woord. Die dingen behoorden meer bij de Chaldeërs. Chaldeër en sterrenkijker waren zoowat synoniem. Maar toch heeft die man meer gezien in de hemelen, dan alle sterrekijkers die God loochenen. Luistert maar naar hem: "Majesteit en heerlijkheid zijn voor Zijn aangezicht, sterkte en sieraad in Zijn heiligdom."

Hij vond, allereerst, majesteit en heerlijkheid.

Majesteit is datgene wat uitsteekt, uitzwelt, U tegemoet komt, zoo maar in het oog valt, vanwege zijn schoonheid en heerlijkheid. Om de idee van dit eigenaardige Hebreeuwsche woord U duidelijk te toonen, moet ge denken aan sommige drukletters die boven het papier uitsteken. In 't Engelsch noemt men dat "embossed". Soms ziet ge zulk "embossed" werk in bloemen op 't papier. In 't Hollandsch noemt ge zulk werk: relief en gedreven werk (zooals in zilverwerk). En er is een bijvoeglijk naamwoord in de Hollandsche taal die deze gedachte letterlijk weergeeft, namelijk, *uitstekend*. Welnu, dat is de idee van *majesteit*. Het is die deugt van den Drieënigen God, waardoor Zijn handenwerk uitsteekt, U in Zijn heerlijkheid tegemoet treedt, en duidelijk laat zien, dat het van Zijn hand en hart afkomstig is.

En dat doet de hemel.

Doch de zanger zegt er meer van.

De hemelen leerden hem ook, dat sterkte en sieraad in Zijn heiligdom zijn. En dat kan men *zoo maar* niet zien. Daarvoor moet men Gods verklaring hebben.

Ziet ge, de hemelen die gezien worden hebben iets in zich, dat de hemel der hemelen verraadt. De hemelen die gezien worden zijn figuur en beeld van de hemelen die niet gezien worden. Daarom kan de zinger opklimmen van de majesteit der hemelen die gezien worden tot het sieraad en de kracht der hemelen die niet gezien worden. Om het nu zeer eenvoudig te zeggen: De blauwe hemel doet ons denken aan Gods heiligdom.

En dat heiligdom is waar God woont. Daar gevoelt God Zich thuis.

Op aarde is er een plaatje van geweest. Het was die plaats die afgescheiden was in den tempel Gods achter het voorhangsel.

Achter dat voorhangsel waren vreeselijke dingen. Ik weet niet of de Hoogepriester éénmaal des jaars ook het gesprende bloed later weer van het verzoendeksel afgewasschen heeft. Indien niet, dan was er gedurende gedachtenis van de bloeddruppels die daar jaar en dag op dat deksel van de arke des verbonds lagen. En dat zijn vreeselijke dingen.

De zanger zegt *sterkte en sieraad*. Dat zal waar zijn. Het bloed is sterk en lieflijk. Later sprak Jesaja van dat bloed, zonder het te noemen. Hij jubelde van het sieraad, dat Gods volk gegeven zou worden voor hun asch.

Er is sterkte in het heiligdom des Heeren. Och arme, wat zal ik daar van zeggen? De kracht van het heiligdom is zóó sterk, dat het leven, Goddelijk, hemelsch, eeuwig en glorieus leven, bracht uit den eeuwiggen dood. Paulus spreekt er van in Efeze 1. Hij getuigt van "de uitnemende grootheid Zijner kracht. . . naar de werking der sterkte Zijner macht, die Hij gewrocht heeft in Christus, als Hij Hem uit de dooden heeft opgewekt en Hem heeft gezet tot Zijne rechterhand in den hemel verre boven alle overheid en macht en kracht en heerschappij, en allen naam die genaamd wordt niet alleen in deze wereld, maar ook in de toekomstige." Er is kracht, bovenmenselijke, Goddelijke kracht in het Bloed van het heiligdom. Die kracht vernieuwt het aardijk met een jeugd die eeuwig is. Zij brengt de dooden tot het eeuwige leven en troont hen tot in eeuwigheid. Die kracht scheurt U los uit de klauwen Satans en legt U in de armen Gods.

Ook is er sieraad in dat heiligdom Gods.

Het sieraad is schoonheid, versiersel, lieflijkheid. Sieraad is datgene wat bij het gewone bijgevoegd en toegevoegd wordt. Sieraad tooit de schoone bruid. Welnu, het is de heerlijkheid van het volk boven de schoonheid van Adam en Eva in het paradijs. Het is de schoonheid van Christus Jezus die aan de Bruid gegeven wordt, opdat zij weer met een schoonheid pralen moge, en nu tot in eeuwigheid. Want wij zien Jezus, met eer en heerlijkheid gekroond, verre boven alle schoonheid des hemels. En die schoonheid van Christus wordt U om niets geschonken. O, ja, het heiligdom Gods

is sterk en lieflijk. Hier moogt ge het halleluja zingen.

Wel mag er op volgen: "Geef den Heere, gij geslachten der volken, geeft den Heere eer en sterkte; geeft den Heere de eer Zijns naams, brengt offer en komt in Zijne voorhoven!"

We zullen wel doen om het te doen, om het te doen tot in eeuwigheid.

De vraag rijst: maar hoe kunnen de geslachten der volken den Heere eer en sterkte geven? De Heere heeft alles: waar is er eenig lieflijks, dat Hij niet alreede heeft?

Het antwoord kan niet moeilijk zijn, als ge slechts zeer nederig wilt zijn. Het zit zóó: God geeft U eerst eer en sterkte, en dan keert ge tot Hem weder en geeft het terug in lof, zang en aanbidding. Zóó loopt de lijn. We zingen er van: "Van Wien het volk zijn sterkte heeft!" En ook: "Hij is de kracht van hunne kracht!"

Let er ook op, dat degenen die Hem eer en sterkte geven "geslachten" zijn en dat zij "volken" zijn. Daar zit iets schoons in, dat we niet over het hoofd mogen zien. Een geslacht is een eenheid van vader en zijn kinderen. En een volk is een eenheid van geslachten die samen wonen, met één aard, één bloed en één uniek karakter. En het schoone in die gedachte is dit, dat God niet te hooi en te gras werkt. Hij werkt in geslachten en volken. Het herinnert ons aan Zijn verbond, dat in de geslachten en volken openbaar wordt. Het schoone is dit: vader en moeder bliezen de laatste adem uit, terwijl ze met hun brekend oog twee dingen zien: ze zien God die hen naar den hemel wenkt en ze zien hun liefhebbende kinderen die schreien bij het sterfbed, doch ze schreien tot God. De kennis des Heeren loopt in de lijn der opeenvolgende geslachten.

Welnu, die geslachten zullen drie dingen doen.

Eerst moeten ze den Naam bestudeeren. En indien ze de kracht des Heiligen Geestes en de wijsheid van het Woord bezitten, dan zien ze dien Naam overal. De Naam des Heeren is Zijn Zelf-openbaring. En die openbaring omringt en doordringt hen. De geheele schepping is de openbaring van den Naam. Evenwel, de schoonste openbaring van den Naam is in Jezus van Nazareth. En nog nauwer gezien: het Kruis van Golgotha. En wanneer ge den Naam bestudeerd hebt, dan zult ge terstond tot Hem terugkeeren en Hem geven de eer van dien Naam. Ge zult jubelen van zielsverrukking bij het zien van het schoonste van dien Naam. En dat, zoo zagen we, is Christus Jezus, het Lam van God.

Tweedens, ge zult offer brengen.

Neen, we slachten geen lammeren meer en tortelduiven. Dat is eeuwig uit. Want de duive Gods is geslacht. Er blijft echter één offer voor Gods volk. Paulus moet U hier weer onderwijzen. "Ik bid U dan, broeders, door de ontfermingen Gods, dat gij Uwe lichamen stelt tot eene levende, heilige en Gode welbe-

hagelijke offerande, welke is Uw redelijke Godsdienst!" Behoef ik hier méér bij te zeggen? Neen, want wanneer ge den Naam zaagt, zoo zult ge doen als Mozes. Van hem staat geschreven, dat zoodra de Heere Zijn naam uitriep, terwijl hij in de rots stond, hij zich haastte en liep en knielde en aanbad. Dat was zijn, en is Uw offerande den Heere.

Derdens, ge zult in Zijn voorhoven komen.

Om het nu eens kinderlijk eenvoudig en toch o zoo waar te zeggen: ge moet naar de kerk komen! Ik stem toe, dat het *te* eenvoudig klinkt, en toch zou ik het kun-verdedigen. Ik weet wel, dat er duizenden van menschen naar de kerk komen, die toch verloren gaan. Ik weet ook, dat vele van Gods kinderen naar de kerk gingen bij tijd en wijle uit gewoonte en sleur. En toch herhaal ik het: God wil, dat we naar de kerk zullen komen. Let echter hier op: ik zeg: ge moet naar de kerk komen. En dan wilde ik wel, dat ge de zwaarte van die eenvoudig woorden wildet zien. De kerk is het voorhof des Heeren. Het is het voorportaal des hemels. Zóó bedoel ik het begrip *kerk*. En zoo ook met het *naar de kerk komen!* Elke kerkgang moet als 't ware een hemelvaart zijn. Gaat tot Zijn poorten in met lof! Met lofzang in Zijn heilig hof! Herinnert ge U niet, hoe ge met honger en dorst, met hunkerend verlangen in Uw bank gingt zitten? Herinnert ge U niet die oogenblikken van ongekende vreugde in dat Huis toen ge hoordet zingen en jubelen van Hem die de Liefhebber der zielen is? Zóó bedoel ik het, en zóó is de meening des Geestes hier: "komt in Zijne voorhoven". En zóó kan niemand het doen dan *het volk*.

Dat dit de gedachte en eigenlijk het voornaamste is van de drie geboden in het voorgaande vers, wordt duidelijker als ge het volgende vers leest. Het is dit: "Aanbidt den Heere in de heerlijkheid des heilighdoms, schrikt voor Zijn aangezicht, gij gansche aarde!"

Het is dezelfde gedachte aan het einde van het vorige vers, doch de Heere verzwaarde Zijn gebod. Ja, komt in Zijn voorhof met een voorbedachten raad en met een voorbedacht lied. Aanbidt Hem! Aanbidden is mooier dan bidden. Bidden doen we op aarde. Soms wordt bidden smeeiken. Vooral als de vijand ons dreigt op te slokken. Doch als ge aanbidt, dan is er geen vijand die U benauwt. Als ge aanbidt, dan hebt ge Uzelf en de Satan uit het oog verloren, want dan zijt ge alleen met God bezig. Aanbidden is het opsommen en uitroepen van al de deugden des Heeren. Wilt ge een voorbeeld van aanbidding? Gaat dan met mij naar Psalm 145:8: "Genadig en barmhartig is de Heere, lankmoedig en groot van goedertierenheid." Dat is aanbidden. De Heere verblijdt Zich als Hij U hoort aanbidden. Een flauw beeld ziet ge ervan, als Uw kind naar U toekomt en zegt: Moeder, ik heb U lief, want U zijt zoo goed voor mij! Vader, ik bemin U, want gij zorgt voor mij! Geliefden, God beminne U!

G. V.

IN HIS FEAR

Searching The Scriptures

(Continued)

Our Confessions, A Valuable Guide

In our societies, organized for the purpose of studying the Word of God, the after-recess program is very often quite a problem. We are all agreed without a doubt that the after-recess program is not and should not be intended for mere entertainment. The purpose of this program as well as the study of God's Word in the first part of our meetings should be to build one another in the faith.

Our Confessions, which we may find conveniently located in the back part of our Psalters provide us with a wealth of material for after-recess discussions. How many readers of these lines have actually read the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dordrecht through from beginning to end? How many have made any study whatsoever of any part of these works? The Heidelberg Catechism which is the third of the three confessions which we have accepted as churches is much better known unto us since we hear a portion of God's Word explained to us from its viewpoint each Sabbath in our Divine services. But the Confession of faith and the Canons are for the greater share of us an unexplored mine of treasures. Most of us have at best a very vague idea of what these confessions contain. Yet they give expression to what we believe is the truth of the Word of God. And they certainly afford our societies an abundance of material which can be profitably discussed and guide us into our study of the Scriptures.

In the Belgic or Netherlands Confession you have thirty seven articles which deal with the truth as the Church in ages past through its search of the Scriptures was led by the Spirit to behold and believe. As a society we can profitably examine these expressions of our forefathers and benefit tremendously from five chapters which together provide us with fifty nine articles wherein the truth is positively expressed and thirty four articles which are directed at specific false doctrines. Here is material for years of society discussion. If indeed one such article can even be treated in one evening without doing injustice to it, then no society which sets out to study these confessions need complain that it has nothing fresh to study since it was but last year that they studied the Netherlands Confession or the Canons. In fact it would not at all even be without profit that we become better acquainted with our church order, and any

society which one year studied the Netherlands Confession, the Canons the following season and the Church Order, which also may be found in the back part of our Psalters, the third year, will indeed after three years still find plenty of interesting discussion the following year to return to the Netherlands Confession. Personally we do not see how any Society which really makes an honest attempt to discuss these confessions can finish any one of them in a one year period.

It becomes advisable that we study these confessions together in our societies for the reasons we presented in the last installment of this department. Our study of them will be systematic; we are not so apt to let one or two go and pass by others because they are too difficult or else because we think that the doctrine contained in a certain article is so well known to us that we have nothing new to learn from it, and gathered with others who have studied that same article we may benefit from their remarks and explanations in regard to what is taught in the articles of these confessions. This makes the discussion of these things very beneficial for us. And our societies are just the place for such discussion.

Recently the undersigned was informed that there are congregations outside the circle of our churches which having three services each Sabbath make a practice in the third service to read one of the articles of our Netherlands Confession or of the Canons of Dordrecht. In the first two services, even as is done in our churches, The Law and the so called Apostolic Creed are read. There is surely no danger in having these articles read to us on the Sabbath, but how much more profitable is a discussion of these things together as a society? A natural result of attentively listening to the reading of these articles of our confession will be that questions arise in our mind. And if we are interested in the things spiritual, we will also want to have an answer to these questions. We will want to study the article itself more carefully so as to arrive at a proper understanding of what the author had in mind when he wrote it, and we will above all want to be able to see that the teachings of that article are indeed the truth of God's Word. This is especially the case with that greatly discussed thirty sixth article of the Netherlands Confession. The footnote in your Psalter edition of it will make plain to you that this article has been the object of debate even by Reformed Synods since the time it was first accepted. Simply now to have this article read from the pulpit to us would certainly send us home with the impression that our churches teach something quite different from what we in our Protestant Reformed Churches hear in the preaching of the Word. In fact this may perhaps be said of all Reformed Churches in our land. Does any Reformed church in our land teach that our

government is appointed by God that it "may remove and prevent all idolatry and false worship?" You see here is a nice thing not to cast around in your own mind and go home from church thinking to yourself and asking yourself, "Is that really what our churches believe to be the plain teaching of God's Word?", but it is an interesting subject to discuss together in society. Nor is this the only article that will cause questions to rise in the mind of the careful reader. And if you yourself do not see any questions immediately in the article, in your society there will always be others who will see them for you and be instrumental in opening your eyes to deeper and richer things. Reading these articles is a very worthwhile thing, but how much more profit is there not in a brotherly discussion of these things as men of one faith?

Let us remember however that they are but guides in this instance to our searching of the Scriptures. We may not and must not place these confessions on the same level with the Word of God. They are far from infallible, which fact becomes plain when one reads that thirty sixth article of the Netherlands Confession. We cannot prove any point of doctrine simply by quoting these confessions, and for ourselves we may not be satisfied that things which we find in these confessions which are new to us are the truth of God's Word without investigating the matter ourselves. Indeed we are not all theologians who can wrestle with these deep dogmatic problems and delve into the intricacies of these problems. But if any point of doctrine troubles us, we certainly ought to search the Scriptures as the people of Berea did when Paul spoke to them of Christ. We ought to have that much interest in the truth, and we ought to know as clearly as possible what the churches wherein we have a name and a place teach. For we ought to desire to know as much as we possibly can of the God of our salvation so that we may grow in that fear of the Lord which consists in reverence and awe before Him and so that we may praise Him for His glory.

Our study of these confessions, of course, must not have for its purpose the attempt to find fault with the expression of our fathers in regard to these doctrines of which they write. Such an approach to our confessions will in no way profit us at all. We may not despise these confessions. Even though they are the work of man and not to be placed on the same level with the Word of God, we must not forget that ever since the time of the Apostles the Spirit has not left the Church but rather leads the Church into further and further development of the truth. Christ did not leave us comfortless but sent the Spirit of Truth Who leads us into all the truth. Even though men individually are not guided infallibly in their teachings and writings so that we do not today have an authority on the truth in the same sense that the Apostles were

such authorities, the Spirit does infallibly lead the Church of Christ into the truth. The Spirit has led the Church so that today we have a further development of the truth then let us say the Church had it in the third and fourth centuries after Christ's ascension to heaven. We may not despise then what God has given to us through our fathers in the land beyond the sea in ages past. Even though we, because the Spirit is still leading the Church further into the truth, can see things even clearer than our forefathers so that we can detect errors in what they put forth as that which they believed, we ought to approach these things into which the Spirit led the Church in the past with a sense of thankfulness and deep appreciation to God that we may have these things for our instruction and for guides into the study of His Word. If some of the rungs are missing in a ladder, you are prevented from climbing higher until you first put new ones in place of those that are gone. And if we break out of the ladder these rungs which lead us to a higher and richer insight of the truth of God's Word and go and stand on that ladder where are the rungs of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, we must first put in these rungs which would make higher climbing possible. We ought to be thankful that God has led the Church to the high point where she stood when she by His grace made and accepted these confessions. Rather than to break down the rungs upon which we stand, let us set ourselves firmly upon them and searching the Scriptures seek to attain to a higher and richer insight into the truth. And let us do so also in our society life by using these confessions as guides.

The Church in the future will be led even more deeply into the truth by the Spirit, but the individual also needs to be led more and more deeply into that which the Church as a whole has seen and confesses. How many of our members see the truth as beautifully as it is expressed in our confessions? If you never read them, you surely do not. If you study them, you will see them even more deeply.

These conditions are the result of the searching of the Scriptures by our forefathers being spurred on by the heresies which were running wild in their day. Studying these confessions, comparing them with the Scriptures, we are guided by them in our search of the Word of God.

Understand, of course, that when we have been speaking of searching the Scriptures, we do not mean that we have to look to find what in the Word of God is the truth and what is not. The Word of God is not in the Bible in that sense that we have to search out what is God's Word and what is man's. By searching the Scriptures we mean that we read them, compare passages and seek not to find the truth in the Scriptures but to seek a deeper insight into the truth. In that sense it is too that the confessions of which we

have been writing are valuable guides into searching the Scriptures. Through their study in the light of God's Word we will arrive at a deeper insight into the truth. Here also the words of Christ apply, "Seek and ye shall find."

J. A. H.

FROM HOLY WRIT

James 1:18: — "Of His own will begat He us with the Word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures."

In the verses 13-16 we are taught that the Lord cannot be tempted with evil and therefore tempteth no man. The Lord is too pure of eyes to behold iniquity. Sin is far from Him. Therefore the wages of sin is death; sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. This thought is further confirmed by James in verse 17 which sets forth the unchangeable goodness and perfection of the Lord. Also verse 18 emphasizes the same principle. Instead of advocating that the sinner when tempted is tempted of God and that God therefore delighteth in evil, James proclaims here that we have been begotten by the Word of truth, in order that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. We must walk holily. And this calling to be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures is further set forth in several admonitions that follow.

Of immediate interest is the expression, "Begat He us with the Word of truth." The intense struggle of comparative recent date, which revolved about the question whether regeneration must be considered mediate or immediate, is known to many of our readers. Immediate regeneration refers, then, to this work of God as occurring without the means of the preaching of the gospel—it simply precedes all external means. Mediate regeneration, on the other hand, maintained that this work of God is mediate, occurs through the means of the preaching of the gospel. The advocates of this latter conception realized, to be sure, that the external means did not regenerate, but they maintained that this work of God was always accompanied by the preaching of the gospel. They appealed, besides other passages of the Scriptures, to passages such as James 1:18 and I Peter 1:23, where we read: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever."

In general we may remark that this intense conflict was undoubtedly based to a large extent on misunderstanding. The appeal to I Peter 1:23 is surely not happily chosen. It is true that we read there of re-

generation ("being born again") and that in connection with the living and eternally abiding Word of God. But we also read there of the "incorruptible seed" out of which this regeneration occurs and upon which this regeneration follows. This incorruptible seed is surely regeneration. Moreover, we must bear in mind that Scripture's use of the word "regeneration" does not always apply to this conception in that strict sense of the word as referring to the work of God within our heart. The Word of God also speaks of regeneration as including our conscious life and therefore our conversion. This regeneration continues day by day, may be identified with a continuous conversion, and is undoubtedly meant in I Peter 1:23.

What, now, does James mean when he speaks of our being begotten by the Word of truth? The Word of truth in this passage surely refers to the written Word of God, the Holy Scriptures and the preaching of those Scriptures. In I Cor. 4:15 the apostle speaks literally of having begotten the Corinthians through the gospel. In Eph. 1:13 the Word of truth is literally identified with the gospel of our salvation. In this latter passage Paul therefore speaks of the gospel as the "Word of truth". And, as far as the immediate context of this text is concerned, passages such as verses 19, 22-25 establish beyond dispute that James is referring in this chapter to the written Word of God, the Divine Scriptures. This also defines the meaning of "being begotten" in this text. James here refers to our conscious rebirth. Even as the birth of a child refers to that moment when it first beholds the light of day, so this text is speaking of our conscious rebirth, when God's child is called consciously out of sin and death and darkness into the light of God's everlasting Kingdom.

He begat us, we read, with the Word of truth. Why are the Scriptures called the "Word of truth"? Truth we may define as the presentation of the reality. God is the Reality. He is the Absolute Good, Who alone *is*, and therefore worthy by the creature of all praise and adoration. Christ Jesus is the Truth. He is that as the eternal Son of God in the Trinity, because He is the Expressed Image of the Father and therefore the eternal Revelation of the Truth. But He is also the Truth as the Mediator. His life was always a complete presentation of the Reality. Fact is, He loved God, always revealed God, manifested the Father, the absolute Reality. And Christ also merited that truth for us, in order that we, too, may be inducted into God's everlasting covenant and thereby once more reveal the Reality and be in harmony with the alone blessed God. The Scriptures are the Word of Truth because they are the infallible record of that truth which exists in God, and in Christ, and is realized by Christ for us and within us.

We have been begotten with or by that Word of

truth. We understand, of course, that this begetting occurs only through the work of the Holy Spirit. It is not only the immediate work of God, within our hearts, which is the work of the Holy Spirit. But also the bringing forth of a conscious child of God is the exclusive work of the Spirit. He alone enables us to hear and see and taste the blessedness of the Kingdom of heaven. However, He begets by the means of the Word of truth. Our spiritual knowledge of grace is the work of the Holy Spirit, but it is the Word of God which gives content to that knowledge. To be begotten by the Word of truth signifies, therefore, that the Holy Spirit avails Himself of the Scriptures to lead us consciously into the light of God's eternal covenant.

James further declares that "He begat us with the Word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures." We read literally: "He begat us. . . for to be, or unto a kind of firstfruits of His creatures." The meaning of this "for to be" or "unto" is plain. When I say that someone is being trained to be a teacher, I mean that the purpose but also the result of this training is his becoming a teacher. The same thought is implied in this text. The purpose and the result, the objective, of our being begotten is that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

What is the meaning of the expression "firstfruits of His creatures"? We read literally of a "certain firstfruit". This expression, translated in the English, "a kind of firstfruit", signifies that God's people, having been begotten, have become like unto a firstfruit, such as occurred frequently in the Old Dispensation. James therefore declares that there is a similarity between this people of God and these firstfruits of the Old Testament. What is this point of similarity? According to some, James is speaking unto the believers of his day. Those believers, in distinction from the church, which must be gathered in the future, are called a firstfruit. This interpretation, however, is in error. In the first place, although it is true that, strictly speaking, James is addressing the church of his day, we must remember that what he here declares of God's people (that they are begotten with the Word of truth) is applicable to the people of God throughout the ages. Secondly, this interpretation fails to do justice to the expression "of His creatures". "Creatures" is a word which refers to all creation. The meaning of this expression is not difficult to see. The symbolism of the firstfruit occurs repeatedly in the Old Dispensation. When, in the Old Dispensation, Israel's precious crop had begun to ripen as on Pentecost, a firstfruit was taken from that crop and presented unto the Lord. That firstfruit was a part of the harvest. Thereby the pious Israelite declared that he was receiving the entire harvest from the Lord and was dedicating it unto the Lord. Also God's people are a certain firstfruit, a part of the full harvest, a glorious guarantee that the full

harvest will presently be realized.

This firstfruit of James 1:18 surely refers to the people of the Lord of all ages. The realization of this firstfruit is the guarantee of the entire harvest. The entire creature will presently share in the blessed renewal of all things. Of course, the reprobates are excluded. But we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth until now, awaiting the manifestation of the sons of God, and that it, too, will share in the glorious liberty of the people of God. However, this full harvest will not be realized until the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. All creation groaneth. But the church of God is being begotten again. They receive in their hearts the principle of that eternal liberty. They are a firstfruit of that heavenly harvest. And presently God's church will be perfected and all creation will share in that eternal salvation.

This firstfruit is the objective of our being begotten. It is surely the fruit of this work of the Spirit through the Word of truth. As such a firstfruit we are dedicated to God in the midst of this world. We have been called by God's Spirit and Word, out of the darkness of sin into the light of God's covenant. Yea, that we are a firstfruit, and that therefore our deliverance is but a beginning of the realization of God's marvellous plan of redemption, we know through the Word of truth. But this firstfruit is also God's purpose. We have been begotten also, so we read, in order that we should be as a firstfruit. Even as in the Old Dispensation such a firstfruit was dedicated unto the Lord, we, too, must be dedicated unto Him. God called us out of darkness into His marvellous light in order that we should also walk as such. We have been called into holiness and liberty. Let us therefore be holy as God is holy, and walk in the freedom wherewith the Lord has made us free.

This work of God takes place, according to the text, "of His own will". The word "will" of this text appears also in Eph. 1:11. There we read that the Lord works all things after the counsel of His own will. The word translated "counsel" in Eph. 1:11 is the same word which is translated "will" in James 1:18. When we read in Eph. 1:11 that God works all things after the counsel of His will, the meaning is that God's will, God's sovereign good pleasure, is the eternal origin of His counsel. The "will" of our text is God's counsel as it embraces all things. To be begotten of His own "will" implies, therefore, that our rebirth has its eternal source in the sovereign Lord Himself.

And this, too, is Divine good pleasure, that we should be begotten unto a firstfruit of His creatures. The natural is first, then the Spiritual; first the earthy, then the heavenly. God sovereignly decreeds that we should be a kind of firstfruit. God sovereignly decrees, therefore, the order of the natural first and thereupon the spiritual; He sovereignly willed to save us, and,

with us, all things in the way of sin and grace, in order that we should forever be unto the praise of the glory of His grace in Jesus Christ our Lord.

H. V.

PERISCOPE

Correspondence . . .

We received a letter reflecting on the remarks we made concerning the *Banner's* Meditation department and its author. We take the opportunity to answer it here. The letter read in part as follows:

Dear Brother:

Reading, Periscope, in the Standard Bearer of Feb. 15. . . . I notice your note of surprise . . . that there is very seldom a voice of protest raised . . .

Will you kindly inform me where such a voice of protest or rebellion can be raised?

Do you imagine that the *Banner* would and dares to place anything written by a layman, or even a clergyman, attacking the . . . glorious lies of the Three Points? Could such a thing be published in *De Wachter*? The undersigned has letters from the editors absolutely prohibiting him to say aught against the doctrine of error as Synodically formulated in the Three Points.

Of this doctrine, as an Aurora Borealis of the North Pole shimmering upon the ice fields of the Christian Reformed Churches, anybody ought to know that this humanistic doctrine is Synodically elevated above the simple and insignificant Word of the Living God. How do you expect then that anyone could protest against this doctrinal error which is built upon Arminianism?

But that does not mean that all of us pass up such foolishness. Neen, God is mijn getuige dat ik altijd protesteer tegen dat ongeloof en bijgeloof onzer dagen, passeerende onder de schoon klinkende klanken van: Het Goed Dat de Goddelooze Doet Voor God, enz.; zooals ik het hoor op de kansel en in *De Wachter* en *Banner*. Ik protesteer, maar altijd in de form van critische brieven aan de persoon zelve.

There are many more like me who would protest against such preachings and writings but there is no opportunity. I thought it might do you good to know, that even though they may not be heard, protests are raised within the walls of Zion.

w. s. Jacob H. Hoekstra.

We would answer the brother:

1. First of all, we wish to publicly thank him for his interest in the *Standard Bearer* and our department in it. He belongs to the few who are willing, at least, to view both sides of the matters of difference that separate us. For this we are thankful and wish that there were more *subscribers* to the *Standard Bearer* (perhaps, there are many *readers*) in the Christian Reformed Churches. It is also evident that he belongs to those who do raise their voice and, hence, though these are seldom heard, our article was no reflection on him.

2. We agree that it is a sad and disheartening situation when the papers are no longer open for discussion. We should have a "free" press; especially within the Church. We might add here that it strikes us as rather strange that discussion should be suppressed on just this subject. It leaves the impression of ulterior motives and no desire to develop the theory of "common grace"; which, by the way, is just as much a decree of Synod as the formulation of the Three Points. Perhaps, Synod should begin censuring its constituency for this negligence. It is especially strange that the papers are closed to this subject in view of the excuse that is given. It is declared that Synod has spoken, let it suffice. However, the same is true of many other subjects which are still being discussed, e.g., the union question, amusements, divorce, etc. This latter freedom of discussion is commendable while the former lack of it is deplorable.

3. In the third place, since the situation is what it is the only thing we can suggest to the brother is that he continue as he has. Even though he *cannot* (he certainly *may*) but if he is illegally prohibited from formal protest his voice is still a witness and a testimony. This, it seems to me, is his only recourse.

4. Finally, it should be added, that in such a situation the call is to come out of her and join one's self to that Church, which according to one's convictions, is the purest manifestation of the Kingdom of Heaven. Circumstances may prohibit but that is clearly the last step in the proper direction.

Church Merger

One of the most hotly debated and widely publicized plans for union that we have yet run across, is the proposed merger of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. (usually referred to as the Northern Presbyterian Church) with the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. (usually referred to as the Southern Presbyterian Church). The union of these two groups is an attempt to heal the breach that developed during the Civil War was occasioned by the slavery question. At that time the Southern group separated and has been independent ever since. One can find the pro's and con's, mostly con, of this proposal debated in the *Southern Presbyterian Journal*. Although the *Journal*

is an independent and free organ, having no official connection with the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. (Southern), it wields a potent influence in the Southern Church. This naturally follows from the fact that its editors, contributors and board members are either ministers or influential laymen of the Southern Church.

The *Journal* is violently opposed to the merger. As the time for the decision draws near one can find two or three articles in each issue opposing the movement. The proposal for union will come before the General Assembly of the Southern Church on May 31, of this year. In its various articles the *Journal* has attacked the proposal from all sides; doctrinal, church political, and practical. Doctrinally the Northern Church is definitely liberal—modern—while the Southern Church is attempting to maintain orthodoxy and move towards reform. Though at present the Southern Church is a member of the Federal Council of Churches, the question of severance of relations with this federation will also come before the General Assembly, since there is much dissatisfaction concerning its affiliation with the Federal Council. The *Journal* also strongly advocates breaking this tie. It has been pointed out time and again that the Southern Church would lose its voice if the merger were consummated since the Northern group is much larger and would control the General Assembly. Many interesting graphs have been used to point out, in opposition to the union, that the offerings for various causes as well as the total giving are much greater in the Southern Church, per capita.

We let the *Journal* speak for itself on some of these matters. Quotations are from the issue of March 1, 1947:

"In a day when assaults on evangelical Christianity are coming from many sources, the verities of the Christian Faith need to be stated and restated. To say that Christianity is simply Christ, as some do, is to be guilty of an over-simplification. If we mean the historic Christ, the pre-existent Christ, the Christ of the Bible and the One Who shed His blood on Calvary for our sins, Who arose from the dead, Who ascended into heaven and Who is coming again; then Christianity is Christ.

"But it is a tragic fact that there have arisen in the Church those who deny the essential doctrines about Christ while extolling His life and example. . . .

"We have opposed present proposed plans of union because we believe our Church has a work and a witness which would in large measure be submerged and lost if union should be consummated.

"We have opposed the Federal Council because we distrust its leadership and think they are using the influence gained by our membership in the Council to promote schemes inimical to the best interests of the Church and our nation."



Here is a note which accompanied a graph indicating that the Southern Church gave more per capita than the Northern Church: "It is said that you can judge a man's interest in any cause by the way he puts his money into it. Is it not reasonable to assume that the average member of the Northern Church is not as interested in promoting the cause of Christ as is the average member of our Southern Church? And if we merge with the U. S. A. Church will not the program of our Southern Church (which we are now supporting more liberally than they are supporting theirs) suffer as a result of such a merger?"

The Other Side Speaks

An interesting side-light on the above question, in which the other side speaks, we found in the *Presbyterian Guardian* (Orthodox Presbyterian) of Feb. 25, 1947. It reads as follows: "Writing in *The Presbyterian* for February 8th, the Rev. Clarence E. Macartney, well known Presbyterian U. S. A. minister of Pittsburgh included this statement: 'I am not sure that if I were a member of the Presbyterian Church U. S. (South) I would vote for a union with the Presbyterian Church U. S. A. because of the greater degree of doctrinal decline and general Laodiceanism in the Presbyterian Church U. S. A. However, as a minister of the Presbyterian Church U. S. A., in common with all our ministers, I suppose, I would gladly welcome the return of the Presbyterian Church U.S. to the mother Church.' In other words, if Macartney was the lamb, he wouldn't like to be swallowed by the wolf, but being on the wolf's side, he'd be glad to swallow the lamb."

In respect to the rather "cute" comment that the *Guardian* makes at the close of its quotation it will be interesting to follow proceedings and watch the outcome. We are rather confident that even though the Lamb may be shorn she will not be swallowed. To substantiate this prediction we quote again from the same issue of the *Journal* referred to above. Under the title "Union or Disunion?", the Rev. H. Tucker Graham, D.D., makes this closing observation: "But as there 'will always be an England behind the White Cliffs of Dover,' so will there always be a Southern Presbyterian Church. Hence, it is crystal clear that those who are promoting union are unconsciously fostering disunion as well as much bitterness and heart-rending."

Zionism

The Rev. D. E. Bosma, of the German Reformed Church, writing in the *Witness*, of which he is the editor, makes some pertinent observations about this topic of which we hear so much in our day. In the issue of February, 1947, he writes under the title "Zionist Atheism" as follows: "Dr. Paul Hutchinson, managing editor of *The Christian Century*, after a

recent tour of Palestine, declares: 'Most Zionists are violently anti-religion and all are entirely secularist in philosophy and outlook. Only 900 out of 28,700 communal inhabitants in Palestine are avowedly religious, the rest are either vocally atheistic or utterly indifferent to the claims of religion. Palestinian atheism is represented by the able and enthusiastic young teacher who told me how in the communal schools they go about inculcating the love of Israel while making sure that the minds of the communal children are not contaminated or confused by hearing the word "God".' He writes that he is 'personally convinced of the inevitability of a struggle between the old Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv, the modern all-Jewish city which has grown up outside with its modernistic buildings, its Jewish agency, its federation of labor, its Marxism and its absorption of western materialism'.

"This declaration of Dr. Hutchinson gives a frank and open view of Zionism, for which many well-meaning Christians were and still are sufficiently enthused to offer their shekels. They are supporting atheistic Jewish communism which is even now causing the British protectorate no end of troubles and blood-letting. Zionism is but one of the multitudinous heads of the modern atheistic communal monstrosity."

W. H.

— W A N T E D —

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