

THE STANDARD *Bearer* A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XXIII

May 1, 1947 — Grand Rapids, Michigan

NUMBER 15

MEDITATION

De Opgestane Heer Des Huizes

Na dezen openbaarde Jezus Zichzelven wederom den discipelen aan de zee van Tiberias. En Hij openbaarde Zich aldus. Er waren tezamen Simon Petrus, en Thomas, gezegd Didymus, en Nathanaël, die van Kana in Galilea was, en de zonen van Zebedeüs, en twee andere van Zijne discipelen. Simon Petrus zeide tot hen: Ik ga visschen. Zij zeiden tot hem: Wij gaan ook met u. . . etc.

Joh. 21:1-14.

Ik ga visschen!

Wij gaan ook met u!

En in dien nacht vingen zij niets!

Vergeefs op bouwen toegelegd;

Vergeefs, om 't huis voltooid te zien,

Gezwoegd, gezweet, o arbeidslien;

Zoo God Zijn hulp aan 't werk ontzegt.

Vergeefs, o wachters, is uw vlijd,

Zoo God niet zelf de stad bevrijdt.

Na dezen openbaarde Jezus Zichzelven wederom. . .

En Hij openbaarde Zich aldus. . .

Herhaaldelijk openbaarde de opgestane Heiland Zich Zijnen jongeren in de veertig dagen vóór Zijn opvaart ten hemel. Openbaring, of verschijning was het, want immers Hij kwam uit de voor ons onzichtbare heerlijkheid van Zijn opstandingslichaam, om Zich den discipelen te vertoonen, en hen van de werkelijkheid Zijner opstanding getuigen te doen zijn. En elk van deze verschijningen heeft zijn eigen karakter, en zijn eigen doel. Nu eens openbaart Hij zich zus, dan weer zoo. Maria waarschuwt Hij: "Raak mij niet aan!" Tot Thomas richt Hij de uitnoodiging: "Breng

uwen vinger hier, en zie Mijne handen, en bring uwe hand, en steek ze in Mijne zijde." Aan de Emmausgangers openbaart Hij Zich in de breking des broods.

Hier, bij de zee van Tiberias "openbaarde Hij zich aldus."

Dat wil zeggen, we hebben het hier niet te doen met de discipelen, noch met een verhaal van hun ijdel zwoegen den ganschen nacht en van de wondervolle vischvangst, die volgde; maar met eene bepaalde openbaring van den opgestanen Heiland. Tot die openbaring behoort het, dat de jongeren besluiten om te gaan visschen en dat ze den ganschen nacht tevergeefs arbeiden; dat Jezus in den vroegen morgenstond hen roept om het net aan de andere zijde van het schip te werpen; dat ze, zonder Hem te herkennen, Zijn Woord gehoorzamen, en dat ze terstond met een groote vangst gezegend worden; en eindelijk, dat ze, aan den oever gekomen zijnde, alles in gereedheid vinden, om met Jezus het ontbijt te nuttigen.

't Was bij de Galileesche zee.

De discipelen hadden eindelijk gehoor gegeven aan het woord van den Heiland, reeds voor Zijn dood en opstanding tot hen gesproken, en door de engelen in het ledige graf herhaald, dat zij naar Galilea zouden trekken, en dat Hij hun zou voorgaan, om Zich aan hen te vertoonen.

En 't schijnt, dat ze reeds geruimen tijd op Zijn komst hadden gewacht. Dit is althans de derde maal, dat Jezus Zich Zijnen discipelen openbaarde, vs. 14. Hier, in Galilea had Hij Zich dus nog niet aan hen vertoond. Ook krijgen we den indruk, uit het besluit van Petrus, om te gaan visschen, dat aanstonds bijval vindt bij de andere discipelen, dat ze het wachten moe werden, en dat ze, niet zeker van de toekomst, tot hun vroeger beroep terug keeren. En was de band, die hen samenbond als apostelen, niet reeds eenigszins aan 't verbreken? Slechts zeven discipelen waren hier tezamen, en van deze zeven waren slechts vijf apostelen, zooals we wel mogen afleiden uit het feit, dat twee niet met name genoemd worden, en dus behoorden tot den breederen kring der discipelen.

Ik ga visschen!

't Is Petrus, die naar gewoonte het initiatief neemt en de leiding geeft. Juist waar in Galilea de Heiland Zich bij hen zou voegen, had Hij hun blijkbaar niet gezegd. Maar hier, bij de zee van Tiberias, waren ze dikwijls getuige geweest van Zijne wonderen, en hadden ze Zijn Woord gehoord. Bovendien, de omgeving was hun bekend. En woonde hier niet ook nog Zebedeüs, die, schoon zijne zonen geroepen werden om Jezus te volgen, en later zijne vrouw hen blijkbaar gevolgd was om Hem te dienen, bij zijn netten en visschersberoep gebleven was? En was het misschien, dat de discipelen bij hem hun intrek hadden genomen, en dat ze daarom blijkbaar geen moeite hadden, om beslag te leggen op een schip en het noodige visschers gereedschap?

Ik ga visschen!

Petrus spreekt, de man van actie, die leiding geeft. Het is alsof we hem hooren zeggen: "Gij kunt doen wat ge wilt, maar ik wil hier niet langer zitten te wachten: ik ga visschen.

Wij gaan ook met u!

Zij gingen uit en traden terstond in het schip. . . .

En in dien nacht vingen zij niets!

O, wij kunnen wel gaan visschen, maar of we ook vrucht op onzen arbeid zullen zien, ziet, dat ligt niet in onze macht. Ook al zijn we nog zulke bekwame visscherlui, mannen van 't vak, door en door bekend met het terrein, zooals deze discipelen ongetwijfeld waren; en al hebben we ook het beste gereedschap, en kiezen we ook den besten tijd, en arbeiden en zwoegen en wachten ook den ganschen nacht,—daarmee is nog niet gezegd, dat ons een goede vangst verzekerd is.

De visschen in het net te voeren, dat ligt niet in de macht der visschers: het is Gods werk.

Maar in het licht van hetgeen volgt, heeft dit alles toch ook eene verdere, diepere, geestelijke beteekenis. Deze openbaring van den opstanen Heiland ziet vooral op de toekomstige roeping van de jongeren als apostelen, en in hen op de roeping der Kerk in de wereld: de prediking des Woords, de vergadering der gemeente.

O, wij kunnen wel Gods Woord verkondigen, maar de vergadering der Kerk blijft toch in de macht van den Koning Zijner Kerk, den Heer des huizes. Hij vergadert Zijne gemeente door Geest en Woord.

En als Hij niet werkt, wat baat het dan al prediken ook de allerbekwaamste redenaars het zuiverste Evangelie, en al zwoegen ze ook den ganschen nacht?

Dien nacht vingen ze niets!

Aldus openbaarde Hij Zich!

De Heer des huizes!

Hij roept!

Want in den morgenstond staat Hij op den oever.

En, zij het ook, door een vriendelijke, van belangstelling getuigende vraag, Hij wijst er hun met nadruk op, dat al hun arbeid dien nacht gansch tevergeefs is geweest: "Kinderkens! hebt gij niet eenige toespijs?" Of beter, naar den oorspronkelijken vorm der vraag: "Kinderkens! gij hebt niet eenige toespijs, is 't wel?"

De bedoeling is: Gij hebt den ganschen nacht niets gevangen, is 't wel?

"Neen!"

't Antwoord is kort, stug, van teleurstelling en ontevredenheid sprekend. Ach, wij willen immers zoo gaarne "success" zien op ons werk! Zoo gemakkelijk geven we ons over aan den waan, dat *ons* werk Gods werk is, en zijn we bitter teleurgesteld als al onze pogingen op niets uitloopen!

Maar de Heer des huizes staat op den oever. Hij is de Opgestane, Die ook opgevaren is, Die ook ter rechterhand Gods is, Die ook alle macht heeft in hemel en op aarde.

En Hij roept Zijne dienstknechten, Zijne Kerk, naar Zijn wil, tot Zijn werk, op Zijn tijd, en in het door Hem aangewezen veld: "Werpt het net aan de rechterzijde van het schip." En aan die roeping voegt Hij de zekere belofte toe: "en gij zult vinden."

En als Hij roept, dan gehoorzamen Zijne dienstknechten: "Zij wierpen het dan". . . .

Hoe te verklaren, dat de jongeren dezen vreemdeling op zijn woord geloofden en gehoorzaamden? Want dat die man op den oever daar voor hen een vreemdeling was, dat ze hem niet kenden, lijdt geen twijfel. Ook kan dit niet verklaard worden door er op te wijzen, dat het nog zeer vroeg in den morgen was, en dat ze den man op den oever in 't halfdonker nauwelijks konden onderscheiden, want de tekst geeft hiervoor geen grond; noch ook uit den afstand tusschen het schip en den man daar op den oever, want de tekst zegt ons juist, dat ze niet ver van het land waren, slechts ongeveer twee honderd ellen; noch ook uit den subjectieven toestand der jongeren: ze zouden dan zoo vervuld zijn geweest met een gevoel van bittere teleurstelling, dat ze zich niet eens rekenschap gaven, wie deze vreemdeling wel mocht zijn. Dat ze Hem niet kenden, kan alleen daardoor verklaard, dat de Heiland in een den jongeren vreemden vorm aan hen verscheen. Dit blijkt wel overvloedig duidelijk uit het feit, dat ze, ook toen ze bij Hem op den oever waren, door het gezicht der oogen Hem nog niet herkenden. We lezen immers: "En niemand van de discipelen durfde Hem vragen: Wie zijt Gij? wetende, dat het de Heere was."

Niet door het gezicht der oogen, maar door Zijn Woord, en door de vervulling er van in het wonder van de vischvangst, openbaarde de Opgestane Zich ditmaal aan de discipelen.

Immers, straks zouden ze Hem niet meer zien, want Hij zou heengaan tot den Vader. Maar ook dan zou Hij met hen zijn, op de groote wereldzee, door Zijn Woord en Geest, hen roepen tot Zijn werk: de prediking des Evangelies aan alle creatuur, en door Zijn macht hun vrucht doen zien op hunnen arbeid.

Hij roept: werpt het net!

Hij Zelf kiest het veld; het evangelie wordt verkondigd waar Hij het zendt: aan de rechterzijde van het schip.

Hij Zelf belooft en geeft de vrucht: en gij zult vinden. Zij wierpen het dan en konden hetzelfde niet meer trekken van wege de menigte der visschen.

O, zeg nu niet, dat we op deze wijze ons schuldig maken aan een allegoriseeren van den tekst, en dat we aan een eenvoudig verhaal van een wonderlijke vischvangst, en openbaring van den opgestanen Heiland, eene geestelijke beteekenis toekennen, die het niet kan hebben. Had de Heiland niet Zelf Zijne jongeren tot Zijn werk geroepen door van hun toekomstige roeping te spreken in termen van hun aardsch beroep, toen Hij tot twee van hen had gezegd: "Volgt Mij na, en Ik zal u visschers der menschen maken"? Matt. 4:19. En had Hij niet hetzelfde gedaan bij de toepassing van een vorige wonderlijke vischvangst, toen Hij bepaaldelijk tot Simon Petrus had gezegd: "Vrees niet; van nu aan zult Hij menschen vangen"? Luk. 5:10. Hoe zou het dan kunnen worden betwijfeld, dat ook, en vooral thans, waar de jongeren althans momenteel tot hun aardsche bedrijf waren teruggekeerd, de Heiland hen door deze Zelfopenbaring als de opgestane Heer des huizes, op het vlak van hun aardsch bedrijf wilde onderwijzen aangaande hun toekomstige roeping, om Zijne dienstknechten te zijn in de vergadering Zijner Kerk?

Hij roept!

Werpt het net aan de rechterzijde van het schip. . .

En zij gehoorzamen, niet omdat ze op goed geluk af het visschermans advies van dezen vreemdeling wel eens willen probeeren, een kans willen geven, maar omdat Hij het is die roept, en als Hij spreekt, dan is het een woord van gezag, maar ook met macht, dat tot ons komt, en dat door het geloof in gehoorzaamheid wordt opgevolgd. Neen, ze kennen dezen vreemdeling niet, ze zien zeker niet, dat het Jezus is, die daar in den vroegen ochtendstond op den oever staat. Maar Zijne roeping is een woord met macht. Daarvan getuigde immers ook de inhoud van Zijn woord. Deze vreemdeling gaf hun geen visschermans raad. Hij adviseerde niet om het eens aan de rechterzijde van het schip te beproeven. Hij zeide niet, dat het daar gewoonlijk beter visschen was. Hij sprak met volstrekte gewisheid: en gij zult vinden!

En Hij geeft de vrucht!

"Zij wierpen het dan, en konden hetzelfde niet meer trekken van wege de menigte der visschen."

Honderd drie en vijftig groote visschen! En 't net was niet gescheurd! De vrucht was veilig binnen!

En Hij openbaarde Zich aldus!

Hij de Heer des huizes, was opgestaan. En als de opgestane Heer was Hij niet meer bij hen zooals vroeger. Zij zouden Hem niet meer zien.

En toch is Hij bij hen, met ons, met Zijne Kerk tot aan het einde der wereld.

Zonder Hem kunnen ze niets doen. Maar als Hij roept, en hen tot Zijne dienstknechten maakt in Zijn arbeid van de vergadering der Kerk, en zij zich in Zijn dienst stellen, dan is de vrucht zeker!

Ziet, Ik ben met u, door Mijn Woord en Geest!

Ik, de Heer des huizes!

Heerlijk loon!

Als 't werk straks verricht is, Zijn werk, gaan zij, gaan wij in in de vreugde des Heeren!

Zoo verstaan wij althans hetgeen daar in dien vroegen morgen plaats had op de oever der zee.

Het is de Heere! Zoo sprak Johannes bij het zien van de wondervolle vangst op het woord van den op den oever staanden vreemdeling, Johannes, de diepere de intuïtieve, de discipel, dien Jezus liefhad. Maar hij bleef intusschen bij de visschen: er was immers nog werk te doen. Moest niet het net eerst veilig op den oever getrokken worden?

Simon Petrus dan, hoorende, dat het de Heere was, omgordde het opperkleed (want hij was naakt) en wierp zichzelf in de zee. Zoo deed Simon, de impulsieve, de man van actie, die hierdoor tevens openbaarde, hoe diep hij, door de verschijning van den Heiland aan hem alleen, overtuigd geworden was, dat zijne groote zonde hem vergeven was.

En dan: op den oever is Jezus, en alles is gereed! Want: "als zij dan aan het land gegaan waren, zagen zij een kolenvuur liggen, en visch daarop liggen, en brood. . . Jezus dan zeide tot hen: Komt herwaarts, houdt het middag-maal (ontbijt). . . Jezus dan kwam, en nam het brood, en gaf het hun, en den visch desgelijks." O, als 't werk gereed is, Zijn werk, en we hebben de vrucht tot Hem gebracht (immers moesten ze ook van de visschen, die zij gevangen hadden tot Hem brengen!), Zijn vrucht, dan is alles gereed: vuur en visch en brood! Dan noodigt Hij ons om met Hem te eten in Zijn huis, en te ontvangen het loon op onzen arbeid in Zijn dienst! Dan is Hij de gastheer, en zijn wij de gasten, en gaan we in de heerlijkheid van het verbond der vriendschap Gods in!

Aanzitten met Hem in Zijn eeuwig Koninkrijk!

Loon, en toch alles genade! Naar werk, en toch geheel van Hem!

Door Hem verworven. Door Hem geschonken!

Hem alleen de eer!

H. H.

The Standard Bearer

Semi-Monthly, except Monthly in July and August

Published By

The Reformed Free Publishing Association

1463 Ardmore St., S. E.

EDITOR: — Rev. H. Hoeksema.

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

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

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

(Subscription Price \$2.50 per year)

Entered as Second Class Mail at Grand Rapids, Michigan.

— CONTENTS —

MEDITATION:—

DE OPGESTANE HEER DES HUIZES337
Rev. H. Hoeksema.

EDITORIALS:—

OM HET VERBOND340
THE COMING OF DR. SCHILDER343
EXPOSITION OF THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM343
Rev. H. Hoeksema.

JABESH-GILEAD DELIVERED347
CHURCH POLITY349
Rev. G. M. Ophoff.

JEHOVA REGEERT352
Rev. G. Vos.

IN HIS FEAR354
Rev. M. Gritters.

HOLY WRIT356
Rev. G. Lubbers.

PERISCOPE358
Rev. W. Hofman.

EDITORIALS**Om Het Verbond**

Under the above title, the Rev. L. Doekes continues our discussion as follows:

Nu willen wij zien, hoe Ds. H. Hoeksema denkt over het verbond. Ik behoef niet te zeggen, hoe gespannen onze aandacht daarvoor moet zijn. Meer dan ooit zijn wij in den zwaren kerkstrijd weer tot het besef gekomen van wat Gods verbond met ons en onze kinderen voor ons beteekent. De lasterlijke aanklachten van onze tegenstanders versterken ons daarin van week tot week.

We geven het woord aan Ds. Hoeksema, zooals hij zich uitgesproken heeft in zijn boekje: "De geloovigen en hun zaad". Na een scherpe afwijzing van de verbondsopvatting van prof. Heyns hooren we hem zeggen: het verbond Gods is niet een zekere "weg of wijze der zaligheid, waarop God ons de heerlijkheid zou doen deelachtig worden, zooals vele anderen het verbond omschrijven, daardoor feitelijk loochenende het eeuwige van Gods verbond; (het bestaat) ook niet in een zekere overeenkomst tusschen twee partijen, waarbij van weerszijden aan zekere voorwaarden moet worden voldaan, zooals dikwijls de voorstelling is immers, het verbond is Godes en Hij schenkt aan Zijne vrienden alles, wat tot den strijd en het leven des verbonds noodig is); maar in deze levende vriendschapsbetrekking, waardoor God de Heere de souvereine vriend van Zijn volk is en zij de vriend-knechten des Heeren zijn, in Zijne gemeenschap deelende, door genade Zijn leven bezittende en openbarende en Zijn strijd strijdende in het midden der wereld".) Nog duidelijker wordt zijn bedoeling in een volgende uitspraak: "Zoo is dan thans Gods verbond het leven der vriendschap Gods in Christus. In dat verbond zijn geen aanbiedingen en geen voorwaarden. Het verbond is louter Godes. Hij richt Zijn verbond op, Hij verkiest en zaligt" (pag. 51).

Hier hooren we al verschillende uitlatingen, die onze tegenstanders veel vreugde zullen geven. Vooral die uitspraak: "in het verbond zijn geen aanbiedingen en geen voorwaarden" kennen we als een veel gebruikte bewering in synodale strijdschriften. En de beschuldiging, dat de eeuwigheid van Gods verbond feitelijk geloochend wordt, is ook ons niet vreemd!

Verder spreekt ook Ds. Hoeksema over "het verschil tusschen het historisch-uitwendig verbond en zijn geestelijke kern" (59). En na een betoog, dat de leden der kerk met hun kinderen moeten worden aangesproken en behandeld als het volk Gods, heiligen en

geliefden in den Heere, onderscheidt hij "een verkoren kern en een verworpen bolster", en zegt dan: "In dezen zin genomen nu, hebben wij dan ook niet het allerminst bezwaar om te spreken van een uit- en inwendig verbond der genade. Als slechts de organische idee wordt vastgehouden. En als slechts gehandhaafd blijft, dat het geheel van Gods kerk op aarde, van de geloovigen met hun zaad, niet mag worden genoemd en behandeld overeenkomstig den aard van den verworpen bolster, maar moet worden genoemd met den naam van Israel" (68). "Altijd naar den Schriftuurlijke regel, dat het geheel van het organisch bestaan van Gods kerk in de wereld genoemd moet worden en behandeld overeenkomstig het karakter van den uitverkoren kern. En wie het toch anders doet, verongelijkt de gemeente en handelt niet naar Gods Woord" (69).

Maar hoe staat het dan met de belofte des verbonds? Daarover zegt Ds. Hoeksema het volgende: "Als God iets belooft, dan staat het ook rotsvast, dat Hij het beloofde zal schenken. Er is geen verschil in zekerheid tusschen de belofte en de vervulling, tusschen de voorwerpelijke schenking en de onderwerpelijke toepassing. Al wat God belooft, dat doet Hij ook gewisselijk, en wien Hij iets belooft, dien zal Hij het ook zekerlijk doen toekomen" (12). Ds. Hoeksema bestrijdt prof. Heyns, omdat die de belofte "betrekkelijk en voorwaardelijk" heeft genoemd, en omdat deze wel beweerde, dat het wezen des verbonds in de belofte ligt, maar met zijn voorstelling "bepaald den Remonstrantschen kant heenzeilde" (12). We hooren Ds. Hoeksema daarentegen poneeren: "God belooft niet aan ieder hoofd voor hoofd, die behoort tot het zaad des verbonds in den historischen, zichtbaren, uitwendigen zin des woords, dat God zijn God wil zijn en hem zaligen wil. Hij schenkt in den objectieven zin des woords, om met prof. Heyns te spreken, niet aan allen hoofd voor hoofd Zijne zaligheid en de weldaden des verbonds" (12-13). En wat den doop betreft zegt Ds. Hoeksema: "Ook kan de grond voor den kinderdoop niet liggen in een belofte als wezen des verbonds. Dan wordt de vastigheid des verbonds verlegd uit God, die Zijn verbond opricht, in den mensch, die het verbond straks inwilligt, in zijn vrijen wil" (57).

Het verwondert ons dan ook niet, dat we lezen: "Het woord der belofte Gods betrof niet allen, hoofd voor hoofd. En niet een dergenen, wien dat woord wel gold, viel uit" (64). "En nu had het woord der belofte geen betrekking op alle kinderen uit Abraham, doch alleen op het zaad der verkiesing" (65). Van de verworpenen in het verbond wordt gezegd: "Maar nu neemt God, naar Zijn eigen bestel, in Zijn verbond naar den uitwendigen vorm, alle vleeschelijke kinderen op" (75).

Sterk spreekt voor ons de passage over de bondszegelen, de sacramenten: "Het is eenvoudig niet waar,

dat God in den Heiligen Doop iets belooft en verzegelt aan alle gedoopten. Evenmin als dit het geval is met Zijn Woord, met het Evangelie der zaligheid, evenmin is dit waar met betrekking tot de Bondszegelen. In den Heiligen Doop verzegelt de Heere God ten slotte aan niemand iets dan aan degenen, die gelooven. Immers, het is de rechtvaardigheid, die uit het geloof is, die in den Doop en ook in het Avondmaal, wordt verzegeld en bekrachtigd" (86, 87).

Deze citaten zijn genoeg voor ons doel: het verken-
nen van het terrein. Enkele andere kwesties laat ik nu even rusten. Maar de verstandige lezer in Nederland heeft al direct begrepen, dat Ds. Hoeksema zich vaak uitdrukt op een wijze, die volkomen aansluit bij de redeneeringen van onze vervolgers uit het synodale kamp.

Natuurlijk is dat niet de reden, waarom wij met hem van meening verschillen. Die reden ligt hierin, dat wij de genoemde theorie niet terugvinden in de Schrift. Een volgend maal hopen we daarvan aan Ds. Hoeksema rekenschap te geven.

The translation here follows:

Let us see now, how the Rev. H. Hoeksema conceives of the covenant. Needless to say how tense our interest ought to be in this matter. More than ever, in our heavy ecclesiastical struggle, we have come to realize the significance of God's covenant for us and our children. The slanderous indictments of our opponents confirm us in this from week to week.

We will let the Rev. Hoeksema speak, as he expressed himself in his booklet: "Believers and their Seed." After a sharp repudiation of the covenant-view of prof. Heyns, we hear him say: the covenant of God is not a certain "way or mode of salvation, in which God would make us partakers of glory, as several others define the covenant, thereby really denying the eternal nature of the covenant; nor does it consist in a certain agreement between two parties, according to which certain mutual conditions must be fulfilled, as is frequently alleged (for the covenant is of God, and He grants unto His friends whatever is necessary for the life and the battle of the covenant); but in this living friendship-relation, according to which God the Lord is the sovereign friend of His people, and they are the friend-servants of the Lord, enjoying His fellowship, by grace possessing and manifesting His life, and fighting His battle in the midst of the world." Clearer still his meaning becomes from the following statement: "Hence, the covenant of God is the life of God's friendship in

Christ. In this covenant there are no offers and no conditions. The covenant is purely of God. He establishes His covenant, He elects and saves." (p. 51).

Already we hear sundry expressions here that will afford joy to our opponents. Especially the statement: "in the covenant there are no offers and no conditions" is familiar to us as a much employed allegation in synodical controversial writings. And the accusation that the eternal nature of the covenant is really being denied is also not strange to us!

Further, the Rev. Hoeksema also speaks about "the difference between the historical-external covenant and its spiritual essence (kernel)" (59). And after he argued that the members of the Church with their children must be addressed and treated as the people of God, saints and beloved in the Lord, he distinguishes between "an elect kernel and a reprobate shell," and then continues: "In a sense, we have not the least objection to speak of an external and internal covenant of grace. If only we maintain the organic idea. And if only it is maintained that the whole of God's church on earth may not be called and treated agreeably to the nature of the reprobate shell, but must be called by the name of Israel" (68). "Always according to the Scriptural rule that the whole of God's Church, as she exists organically in the world, must be called and treated in harmony with the character of the elect kernel. And whoever deviates from this, does an injustice to the congregation and does not act in conformity with the Word of God" (69).

But what, then, about the promise of the covenant? About this the Rev. Hoeksema has the following to say: "When God promises anything it stands firm as a rock that He will give what was promised. There is no difference in degree of certainty between the promise and its fulfillment, between the objective grant and the subjective application. All that God promises, He also surely accomplishes, and to whomsoever He promises anything He will certainly give it" (12). The Rev. Hoeksema attacks prof. Heyns because he called the promise "relative and conditional," and because he alleged that the essence of the covenant must be found in the promise, but with this notion "definitely moved in the Arminian direction" (12). Over against this we hear the Rev. Hoeksema posit the following: "God does not promise every individual, head for head, that belongs to the covenant in the historical, external, visible sense of the word, that He will be his God, and that He will save him. He does not grant in the objective sense of the word, to speak in terms of prof. Heyns, to all, head for head, His salvation, and the benefits of the covenant" (12-13). And concerning baptism, the Rev. Hoeksema says: "Neither can the ground for infant baptism be

found in the promise as the essence of the covenant. For in that case, the surety of the covenant would be removed from God Who establishes His covenant, to man, who presently agrees to the covenant, to his free will" (57).

Hence, we are not surprised to read: "The word of God's promise did not have reference to all, head for head. And not one of those that was meant by that word, fell out" (64). Of the reprobate in the covenant it is said: "But now God, according to His own good pleasure, receives in the covenant according to its external form, all the carnal children" (75).

Strongly, for us, speaks the passage about the covenant-seals, the sacraments: "It is simply not true that in Holy Baptism God promises and seals some things to all that are baptized. No more than this is the case with His Word, the Gospel of salvation, no more is this true with respect to the seals of the covenant. In last analysis, God, in Holy Baptism, does not promise anything except to those that believe. For it is the righteousness which is by faith which is sealed and confirmed, in Baptism, and also in the Lord's Supper" (86, 87).

These quotations are sufficient for our purpose: reconnaissance of the field. A few other questions I pass by for the time being. But the intelligent reader has already understood that the Rev. Hoeksema expresses himself frequently in a way that completely accords with the argumentations of our persecutors from the synodical camp.

Of course, this is not the reason why we differ with him. The reason is found in the fact that we do not find the above named theory in Scripture. Next time we hope to give account of this to the Rev. Hoeksema.

Just one remark I wish to make.

Deplorable I consider it that the Rev. Doekes, in reading and discussing my booklet, cannot forget his synodical opponents and "persecutors". This may be unavoidable under the present circumstances in the old country, it is regrettable nevertheless. For such a state of mind is not conducive to an objective and unprepossessed discussion of the subject itself.

It might be well, if the Rev. Doekes, in reading and discussing my pamphlet, would constantly bear in mind that it was written some eighteen years ago. It was not written with a view to, in agreement or disagreement with the present "synodicals".

We look forward to the brother's next article.

H. H.

The Coming Of Dr. Schilder

Many of us must have heard a rumor that Dr. Schilder is planning to visit us, and to speak for us in behalf of the cause of the liberated churches in the Netherlands.

There was basis for this rumor. Some time ago undersigned received a cablegram from him to that effect with the addition: "Letter follows". Considerable time elapsed before that letter arrived. When it came, the brother informed me that he intended to come during the summer. I hastened to answer that letter, and to tell him that, if he intended to speak here, the summer period would be the worst to select, since it is well nigh impossible to get an audience in the hot weather. He finally replied that he would try to leave the latter part of August, so that he will be with us, most probably during September and October.

Dr. Schilder knows quite well what is our attitude with respect to their movement, both from a church political and doctrinal viewpoint. He knows that we do not agree with their covenant conception, and that we take the same stand as they church politically. He is assured, too, that in spite of our differences our churches will give him a hearing. He trusts that we still love him, and that we will give him a warm reception. In this, I think, he will not be disappointed. May I suggest that all our churches make arrangements to receive him and let him speak?

(He comes here without any definite assurance of remuneration. It ought not be difficult at all for us to more than pay for his trip (excuse the split infinitive).)

He will, no doubt, be glad to speak for Christian Reformed Churches, too. After all, I still am convinced that they are much closer to the liberated churches doctrinally than we are. Besides, there ought to be enough fairness and open mindedness with them to be willing to hear the other side.

In fact, I am sure that he would enjoy to explain himself, and give all kinds of opportunity for questions and debate, before the faculty of Calvin College and Seminary.

How about it, brethren? Is not this a splendid opportunity to hear the other side?

The Standard Bearer will gladly make arrangements for you.

Or, perhaps, you prefer to make arrangements with him personally?

Write: Prof. Dr. K. Schilder, Vloedijk 14, Kampen, Nederland.

We extend, besides, a hearty invitation to you all to come and hear him in our churches. Reserved seats, as in '39, I am sure, for ministers and professors, if desired.

H. H.

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

Part Two.

Of Man's Redemption

Lord's Day XXII.

3.

The "Millennium" (cont.)

As a vision, therefore, the passage must be interpreted.

This means that a certain apocalyptic truth is here presented by means of different symbols. In the introductory verses of Revelation 20, the symbolism of the vision includes the angel that comes down from heaven, the key and the great chain he has in his hand, the bottomless pit, and the shutting up of satan and the sealing of the pit over his head. Nor can there be any doubt that all this is to be understood symbolically, and, therefore, dare not be interpreted as signifying that the devil shall be literally confined in a pit. For Satan who is a spirit is not, and cannot be bound with a steel chain, locked up by means of a key, and sealed with any physical seal. Nor is it difficult to understand the symbolism of this apocalyptic vision, and to determine what is the idea expressed by it. It means that the devil is bound by the decree of Him that sitteth on the throne, so that he is restrained from accomplishing his purpose.

The question, however, arises: does the passage teach that Satan is completely bound, so that he is doomed to absolute inactivity, or is this idea of the restraint put upon him presented as limited to a certain aspect of his evil purposes? Also this question is plainly answered in the text. And the answer is, without a doubt, that this binding of the devil has respect to a certain field of his activity: it is not complete, but partial. This is plain from the third verse in connection with the eighth. In vs. 3, the purpose of the binding of Satan is designated as being "that he may deceive the nations no more." And in vs. 8, we are more definitely informed that, when he shall be loosed for a little season, he "shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." The general idea of the restraint put upon Satan is, therefore, clearly limited by the text itself in a threefold way. It has respect to his influence, not upon individual men, but upon nations, and that, too, not upon all nations, but upon certain nations that are called

Gog and Magog, and that are described as living on the four corners of the earth, and as being very numerous. In the second place, this restraint upon Satan prevents him from deceiving those nations, as before his being bound he was able to do. And, thirdly, the particular deception from which he is restrained with respect to these nations consists in gathering them for battle against "the camp of the saints and the beloved city."

By these nations, we understand the millions upon millions of peoples that live outside of the pale of nominal Christendom. We read of Gog and Magog in Ezek. 38:2ff and 39:1-16. In that prophecy, Gog is the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, in the land of Magog, and they are presented as a vast horde that sweep down upon Israel from the north, to make a final onslaught upon the people of God. Hailstones, fire, and brimstone from heaven, however, frustrate their evil purpose, and cause their utter destruction. In the passage from Rev. 20, they are simply called Gog and Magog, and are described as living on the four corners of the earth, and as coming for the attack against the camp of the saints from every direction. The restored Israel to whom is the reference in the prophecy of Ezekiel is the same as "the camp of the saints and the beloved city" of Revelation 20. But this is to be understood in the New Testament sense of the word: Israel is restored, and the tabernacle of David is rebuilt, in the gathering of the Church from Jews and Gentiles in the new dispensation. Hence, to the nation of Israel of the old dispensation corresponds the Church visible of the new dispensation, that is, Christendom in its widest sense, in distinction from Paganism. It is represented in the text as situated in the centre of the earth, while around it, outside of the pale of history, are Gog and Magog, the nations that remain pagan as nations, even though also from them some individual elect are gathered into the Church. The distinction made in the text, therefore, is between nominal Christendom and the heathen nations.

With respect to these nations, then, the text teaches that the devil is bound in such a way that he cannot gather them for an attack against the Christian nations, baptized Christendom. In the old dispensation, the nation of Israel was surrounded by the heathen. And the gentile nations, Moab, Ammon, the Philistines, Egypt and Syria, Assyria and Babylon, were constantly pouring out their furious hatred against the people of God, harassing them and threatening them with destruction. Satan gathered them for battle against them. In the new dispensation he can do this no more. He is bound. God's decree restrains him from marshalling the hordes of paganism against historic Christendom. He may, in this period of his restraint, do many other things, both among the nominally Christian nations and among the heathen; he

may still go about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour: he is prevented from deceiving the heathen nations so as to gather them for battle against "the camp of the saints and the beloved city."

2. It would be quite contrary to the current teaching of Scripture, and particularly, to the significance of the numbers in the book of Revelation, to interpret the "thousand years" during which the devil shall thus be restrained as having reference to a literal millennium. Scripture everywhere attaches symbolical significance to certain numbers, such as 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 12, and their different combinations. They represent realities in the kingdom of God. Earthly relations, also in their numbers, are a picture of heavenly relations, of the spiritual realities of God's covenant. To verify this, we but have to remember that our weekly period is a combination of six and one, labor and rest, the toil of the present and the eternal sabbath; that the number seven, in Scripture and, particularly, also in the book of Revelation, occurs frequently as a combination of three and four, the triune God and the world, the perfection of God's covenant of friendship; that the number twelve, as the product of three and four, represents the number of the elect: there are twelve tribes, twelve apostles, twice twelve elders, twelve times twelve thousand servants of God that are sealed, and in the measurement of the New Jerusalem, the number twelve predominates. The number seven, too, abounds in the book of Revelation. On the scheme of this number the whole book is based: there are seven seals to the book that is opened by the Lamb, the seventh seal is revealed in the form of seven trumpets, and the seventh trumpet is dissolved into seven vials of the wrath of God. Christ is presented as walking in the midst of seven golden candlesticks, and the complete picture of the Church in the world is drawn in the sevenfold message, addressed to the seven churches in Asia. The same applies to the number ten and its products. The days of the tribulation of the Church in Smyrna are said to be ten days. The number of the servants of God that are sealed are one hundred and forty four multiplied by ten times ten times ten. The same number appear on Mt. Zion with the Lamb, having the Father's name in their foreheads. The antichristian beast has ten horns. Twelve times one thousand furlongs are the length and breadth and height of the New Jerusalem. And for one thousand years the devil is bound.

From all this it should be evident that the number ten and its products, in the book of Revelation, have a symbolical meaning, and that no one has the right to make an exception of the thousand years in the twentieth chapter to give it a literal interpretation. It is a round number, and signifies completeness. In Scripture it denotes the fulness of the measure of anything, whether of time, of space, or of anything else,

according to the will and decree of God. That, in the decalogue, there are ten commandments expresses that in them the will of God is completely expressed. The ten plagues upon Egypt denote the fulness of God's wrath and judgment. When this number occurs in the third power, as the number one thousand, the idea is expressed that the measure thus denoted is great. The number of the elect saints is complete, but it is also great; hence, they are denoted by the symbol 144000. That Satan is bound one thousand years, therefore, does not denote a literal millennium, but signifies that he will be restrained from deceiving the nations for a complete period of time, determined by the will and decree of the Most High.

To apply all this to the present dispensation, and find the period of one thousand years in the time between the exaltation of Christ and His return on the clouds, is quite in harmony with this interpretation, and would seem to fit the facts of history. The hordes of heathen nations, in the present dispensation, play no part in history, and cannot be gathered for battle against the nominally Christian nations. But shortly before the return of the Lord, they will wake up. The devil will be loosed, and gather those nations for a final battle against what they conceive to be Christendom. And this will be the deception that, while Gog and Magog actually intend at that time to set themselves against Christ and His Church to destroy them, Christendom will actually have been corrupted into anti-Christendom. As in the old dispensation the nations often gathered themselves against Jerusalem to destroy the city of God, not knowing that it was of the Lord, and that He used them to punish the city that had corrupted itself into Sodom and Egypt, so, in the end of the present dispensation, it will also be of the Lord to loose the devil, that he may deceive the nations to attack what they conceive to be Christendom, but which is actually become the kingdom of Antichrist.

3. The reign of the saints with Christ, of which the twentieth chapter of Revelation speaks, vs. 4, does not refer to a reign on earth of saints in their resurrection bodies, from earthly Jerusalem as its capital, but to the reign of the saints in heaven before the resurrection, a reign which is reflected in the fact that the devil is bound, the nations cannot rise against the Church, and Christendom is in power on the earth. For this we have the following grounds:

a. Those that are represented in the text as sitting on thrones, and as exercising judgment, are definitely described as "the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." The thousand years here, evident-

ly, coincide with the period during which the devil is bound, that is, this entire dispensation. That they are here described as those that have suffered from the power of Antichrist, and have been faithful unto death, does not limit them to a certain group of believers of the latter days, for, although the "man of sin" must be revealed in the end of this dispensation in all his power and corruption, Antichrist is always in the world, and believers always refuse to receive the mark. But we must note especially the description of these glorified saints in the words: "the souls of them that were beheaded." This cannot refer to saints after the bodily resurrection, but must denote the departed saints, in glory with Christ in heaven, before the resurrection.

b. The interpretation of the Chiliast, according to which we have here the figure known as "synecdoche", meaning that a part denotes the whole, and, in this case, that "souls" denote the whole man, body and soul, cannot stand. They explain that "souls" often occurs in the Bible in this sense. As we speak of a hundred "sails" meaning so many ships, or a thousand "head" meaning cattle, so the Bible speaks of "souls" denoting men. The "souls" that came with Jacob into Egypt were threescore and ten. Few, that is, eight "souls" were saved in the ark. On the day of Pentecost, about three thousand "souls" were added to the church. And two hundred three score and sixteen "souls" were with Paul in the ship. Gen. 46:27; I Pet. 3:20; Acts 2:41; 27:37. Thus in Rev. 20:4 the expression "the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus" must be interpreted as referring to saints in their resurrection body. However, against this interpretation there are two objections that prove it false beyond a doubt. The first is that, whenever the above mentioned figure is employed, whether in our daily language or in the Bible, uniformly a definite number is connected with it. In fact, without a numeral it cannot be used. We can speak of a hundred head, and of fifty sails, but never do we speak simply of head and of sails. In all the passages referred to above, from Holy Scripture, the same rule is followed. *Seventy* souls came with Jacob into Egypt; *eight* souls were saved in the ark; *three thousand* souls were added to the church; *two hundred and seventy six* souls were with Paul in the ship. In Rev. 20:4, however, no number defines the glorified saints; we simply read: "and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded." The second objection is in the last words of this description: "of them that were beheaded." Now, when we speak of the soul of a person, we do not mean the whole person. And when we speak of the souls of the dead, we refer to those souls after death, in their bodiless state, before the resurrection. The same is true of the expression in Rev. 20:4. What a strange way of referring to persons in their resurrection body

it would be to describe them as "the souls of them that were beheaded"! How much more simple and correct it would have been, in that case, to say: I saw those that had been beheaded." When the fifth seal is opened John beholds "under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God." No one thinks of applying this expression to saints after the resurrection: the context is definitely opposed to this. Rev. 6:9-11. The very same expression occurs in Rev. 20:4. And no one should stretch his imagination to the extent that he conceives of the "souls" mentioned in this passage as referring to the saints that are raised shortly before the millennium, to reign with Christ on the earth.

c. The interpretation that these souls that reign with Christ during the thousand years are the departed saints in glory, before the resurrection, is not contradicted by the statement in the fifth verse: "This is the first resurrection." The pronoun "this" refers back to the statement in vs. 4: "I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus. . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." Hence, in this latter statement we have the answer to the question: what is the first resurrection according to Rev. 20:4, 5? The answer is: The first resurrection is the state of glory of the faithful believers immediately after death, and before the final resurrection. The Bible speaks of the resurrection in more than one sense. Thus, regeneration in its broader sense is referred to as resurrection from the dead, as it actually is, in the words of Jesus: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they shall live." John 5:25. The same resurrection is meant in Eph. 5:14: "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." In Rev. 20:5, however, the "first resurrection" refers to the first entrance into the state of sinless glory immediately after death. A resurrection this is, indeed, for the saints in Christ. In that state they are delivered from sin and death, from the world and its persecution, and they reign victoriously with Christ in heaven. The expression "first resurrection", therefore, does not refer to the resurrection of the saints as a group, that will be raised first, i.e. in distinction from the resurrection of the wicked that will be raised about a thousand years afterward, as the Chiliast has it; but to a *stage* or *degree* of resurrection: the resurrection into the sinless glory of heaven immediately after death will be followed by the resurrection of the body, which is the "second resurrection".

This is in harmony with the meaning of the expression "the second death" that occurs in verses 6 and 14 of this same chapter of Revelation. It is clear from these verses that by "second death" is meant

a stage of death, that stage, namely, that implies the desolation of the wicked when they shall be cast into hell, after the bodily resurrection. Their first death, therefore, is their state of desolation immediately after death, their second death is a further and final stage of death. So "the first resurrection" is the first stage in the resurrection of the saints: their entrance into the house of God immediately after death; "the second resurrection" is their final state of glory, when their bodies shall be raised from the dust of the earth. Hence, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

d. Nor is this explanation of "the first resurrection" gainsaid by an appeal to the first part of vs. 5: "But the rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years were finished." To be sure, by "the rest of the dead" the wicked are meant. The statement, however, that they lived not "until the thousand years were finished" dare not be completed by the addition: "and then they, too, shall live." For, first of all, such an addition is by no means implied or understood in the text, no more than in I Cor. 15: "for he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet," the idea is implied that, after that, Christ shall reign no more. And, secondly, it cannot be said that "the rest of the dead" shall ever live. They shall be called out of their graves, to be sure, and that, too, in the same hour in which the righteous shall be raised, but only unto the resurrection of damnation, not unto the resurrection of life. John 5:28, 29. The text, therefore, simply declares emphatically that the rest of the dead, that is the wicked, have no share in the glory of the first resurrection: already they are in the state of death.

H. H.

APPLICANTS TO OUR THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

Young men who believe that they are called to prepare for the Ministry of God's Word and desire admittance to our Theological School are requested to appear at the next meeting of the Theological School Committee which will be held in the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, on the evening of May 9. Applicants must present a certificate of membership and a recommendation from their consistory and a certificate of health form a reputed physician. For further information if needed, write to our secretary,

Rev. John A. Heys
1551 Wilson Ave., S. W., R. 5
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The Theological School Committee.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

Jabesh-Gilead Delivered

We have taken notice of the wickedness of Nahash, the king of the Ammonites. Invading Gilead, he laid siege to Jabesh east of the Jordan. Feeling certain that they could expect no help from their brethren anywhere—their pessimism was justified; the nation had rejected and forsaken the Lord and therefore it lived in dread of the heathen—the Jabeshites decided to surrender. But what would the Ammonite king do to them once he had them in his hands? The men of Jabesh were afraid, understanding, as they did, that the mercies of the godless are cruel. So they tried to bargain with Nahash. They said to him that if he promised that he would lift the siege and withdraw his troops and peacefully return to his own country, they would own him as their master and pass under his yoke. This is the meaning of their saying to him, "Make a covenant with us and we will serve thee." Nahash was quick to perceive the significance of that proposal. It meant that the tribes of Israel were unwilling to risk going to war with him for the sake of their distressed brethren. The terrible shame of it! That was Nahash's opportunity to make a spectacle of the nation before the eyes of all the world. He resolved to do just that. To achieve his aim he conceived the diabolical idea to put out all the right eyes of the men of Jabesh. Their being compelled to allow him to do that to them—compelled because their brethren refused to come to their rescue—would brand Israel reprobated in the sight of all the nations. It was plainly Nahash's aim to disgrace Israel, to set it forth a people demoralized to the core. For he wanted Israel's God blasphemed. Those eyeless sockets in the faces of the men of Jabesh would betoken better than anything else could that the people of Israel and Israel's God were devoid of every virtue. For they would betoken, would those eyeless sockets, that the Jehovah of the Hebrews was capable of leaving his own devotees in the lurch when they needed Him most, and that His people were capable of a similar enormity. One of two, the Lord lacked either the power or the will to save. That such was Nahash's reasonings is plain from his words, "That I may thrust out your right eyes, and lay it for a reproach—mark you, reproach, scorn, contempt (Hebrew, *cherpah*)—upon all Israel. That ignominious mark, borne by the nation as put upon it by Nahash, would express his utter contempt for the people of Israel and at once justify in the eyes of the nations his low estimation of them. For it would expose them to the world as a nation of

men devoid of every manly virtue.

Doubtless Nahash was delighted that the elders of Jabesh asked for seven days respite that they might send messengers unto all the coasts of Israel with a view to acquainting the tribes with the terrible plight of Jabesh. There was not the faintest doubt in his depraved soul that the messengers would get no response. The appeal for help having gone unheeded, the unwillingness of the nation to come to the rescue of Jabesh would be a proved fact.

As Nahash had anticipated, the grievous message of the elders of Jabesh fell on deaf ears. The people of Israel, held back it must be by fear of Nahash's military might and by indifference to the plight of their brethren, failed to bestir themselves. This is not expressly stated, but it is clearly indicated by Saul's threatening to hew in pieces the oxen of every Israelite that should not come after him and Samuel. Doubtless he was thus compelled to threaten the nation in order to get action. The reluctance of the people is further indicated by the notice that the terror of the Lord fell upon the people as threatened by Saul "and they came out as one man." This cannot mean, as some interpreters have it, that the people recognized the holy and righteous will of their covenant God and were seized by a *wholesome fear* before the Lord which led them to recognize the obligation to fulfil His command revealed through Saul and were thus suddenly lifted up to a new spiritual life before God. Israel at this time was carnal. In asking for a king it had rejected the Lord; and it persistently was refusing to confess this great sin. Besides, according to the Hebrew text it was not the fear (*jaree*) but the terror (*pachad*) of the Lord that fell upon the people, an unwholesome, carnal fright, identical in its nature to the terror by which the wicked will be seized in the day of judgment. It was a terror that the Spirit of God awakened in them, and its object was the Lord and His anointed, king Saul and Samuel. The people were suddenly made to tremble also before Saul, who after his election had returned to his home as unrecognized by the people in his capacity of king, set over them by the Lord. Some had revealed that they despised him in their heart, because they judged that he was devoid of manly virtue, seeing that he hid himself among the stuff. Certainly all but a few were indifferent toward him. The nation was carnal. Its heart was far from God. In despising Saul, the Lord's own gift to His people, it added to its guilt.

When the men of Gibeah, where Saul dwelt, received the tidings of the plight of Jabesh, they were sore distressed for their brethren's sake. "And all the people lifted up their voices and wept". Further than bewailing the lot of their brethren they went not. Coming in from the field, Saul inquired after the cause of the people's grief, and was told the tidings of the

elders of Jabesh. Then we read, "And the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard these tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly." It was not the anger of spiritual love that kindled in Saul's bosom, but the kind of wrath that takes its rise in the flesh and ends in man. Saul was furious beyond words, not because Nahash was striking at God but because the people that he wanted to disgrace were Israelites. Besides, especially the Jabeshites were likely to have a warm place in Saul's heart. For, as was stated, the men of Jabesh had taken no part in that terrible war of the tribes against Benjamin—a war in which Benjamin had suffered near-extinction. That the Jabeshites had taken no part in that war perhaps also explains the weeping of the Gibeonites. These people were Benjamites.

Saul and his men to the number of three hundred and thirty thousand marched against Nahash. And the Lord gave victory for His name's sake. His reputation was at stake here. The people of Israel had rejected Him their invisible redeemer-King, and they were approving that great sin by their persistent impenitence. Could the Lord love and save such a people? That question now had been answered fully. Though the nation deserved to perish at the hands of its enemies, the Lord gave them a human king to save them also out of the hand of Nahash. The battle was fought. The Ammonites were slain. They which remained were scattered, so that two of them were not left together. But the victory was the Lord's. He had risen, and His enemies were scattered. They fled before Him. As smoke is driven away, so He had driven them away. Just because the people of Israel had rejected Him and in consequence thereof were enveloped by the cloud of His anger—they groaned under the oppression of foreign dominions—He gave them a king, His purpose being to deliver them from His own wrath. As to Israel's war with Nahash, the human impulses under which it was fought was not faith in the Lord but the natural, carnal wrath of a human king and the natural dread of a people for this king. For Israel, being carnal could exercise no faith in God. It had rejected Him without repenting. But also the carnal wrath, sympathy and dread of carnal men are in God's hands and are thus included in the things—all things—that work together for good to them that love God, the true Israel, but an Israel by nature dead in sin as well as the others and in that death hating and rejecting God. It was this Israel, the Israel according to the election of grace, that the Lord loved and for whose sake He sent deliverance even by the hand of a carnal Saul and the carnal Israel. He could do that as the hearts of kings and all men are in His hands. This is the truth contained in the notice that the terror of the Lord fell upon the people as threatened by their human king so that they

came out as one man and in that other notice that the "Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings and his anger was kindled greatly."

G. M. O.

CHURCH POLITY

Dr. J. Ridderbos and The 800 Zeros

We saw that Article 79 as interpreted in the light of the Church Order (not in the light of that imaginary handbook), very actually declares that the Consistory *only* shall depose office bearers. Let us now return to Art. 85 (84 of our Revised Church Order) and see that this article sets forth an identical teaching. "No Church shall in any way lord it over other churches, no Minister over other Ministers, No Elder or Deacon over other Elders or Deacons." So the article reads. The fathers of Dort did not insert into the article a clause explaining just what that action is whereby the one church lords it over other churches and one Minister, Elder, or Deacon over other Ministers, Elders, or Deacons. For in this article they were striking at that conception of church government embodied in the Roman hierarchy; and they must have felt certain that this would be understood by all; and so it is. As to the Roman hierarchy, it was (and still is, of course) an imposing structure. Its foundation was the lower clergy, the presbyters or priests and the deacons (who did whatever preaching there was done in those days) of the local churches. Its apex was the pope of Rome. The intermediate officers were the bishops and the archbishops. As to the bishops of lowest rank—there were ranks among them—each had charge of a number of churches over which he ruled as a superior officer with mandatory power—mark you, mandatory power. For this reason historians have given him the name "monarchial bishop". That the Roman bishop was and still is such an officer is simply a fact that no student of Church History denies but that Rev. Gerrit Hoeksema sees fit to cover up. He writes (brochure p. 79), "We must explain the article (84) historically. The Roman Catholic Church presented many sorry examples of the evil to which this article refers. The larger churches lorded it over the smaller churches; the bishops of the larger cities over the bishops of the smaller towns." This is stating only a part of the truth. The reverend should have added, "And the lowest ranking bishops

lorded it over the local churches with their presbyters and deacons."

We must indeed explain the article (84) historically but in doing so we must allow the full light of history to fall upon it. Explaining the article historically, we perceive that its idea is this, "No Consistory shall exalt itself as a superior officer with mandatory power over other consistories and their churches; the ministers, too, shall refrain from this sinful action with respect to their colleagues and likewise the elders and deacons, in order that there be no hierarchy among us." Thus, according to this article, no Consistory may say to a number of other Consistories, "Thou shalt," or, "Thou shalt not," which means that according to this article the character of the jurisdiction of one Consistory over others, and of one Minister over others and of one Elder or Deacon over other Elders and Deacons is *advisory* and not *mandatory*. And this implies, of course, that one Consistory may not extend its key-power over a number of other Consistories to depose any or all of them, should there be need of such action.

That this is indeed the idea of Art. 84 is admitted also by Dr. Ridderbos. He writes (does he not?),

"If the one church appropriates such authority over the other, then that is 'lording it over'; but if the churches assemble in major assemblies, they are rightfully entitled to this power." (Kerkscheuring, p. 23).

The original of this translation is found in The Standard Bearer for April 1. In this excerpt the doctor speaks of "this power". The *power* to which the doctor here has reference is the "mandatory" or "key-power". Otherwise the statement is meaningless. For certainly to make itself guilty of "heerschappij voeren", "lording it over,"—this is the sinful action that Art. 84 forbids—a Consistory must exalt itself as superior officer with mandatory power over a number of other Consistories. There is no other way. No one can conceive of another way. Power in the church is either mandatory as inclusive of key-power or advisory. A third kind of power there is not. And by power I mean right (authority), the right to command and (or) to advise.

Let us now once more get before us the contention of the doctor with regard to Art. 84. As has already been explained in previous writings (and also proved with quotations from the doctor's Kerkscheuring) it is this: that what Art. 84 forbids is simply that a *Consistory* shall refrain from exalting itself as a superior officer with mandatory power over a number of Consistories. Whether also Classis (Synod) shall refrain from this action, the article (84) says nothing. As we have seen, the Schilder group are of a different conviction. They maintain that the prohibition of the

article concerns also the Classis and Synod. As we have seen, they reason this way, "If one Consistory has nothing to say over the other, then also eight hundred Consistories have nothing to say over the one Consistory. For 800 zeros must remain zeros, even as organized, of course. And this precisely is what the doctor (Ridderbos) denies. His contention is that as organized—mark you, as organized,—the 800 zeros have a positive numerical value. Now this, of course, is as untrue as anything can be untrue. 800 zeros can have a positive value only if they be prefixed by a number, by a *one* or *two* or *three*. Besides, zeros spell nothingness and therefore cannot be organized. But Dr. Ridderbos seems to think that they can; for he writes, "And herewith is refuted that whole argument (of the aggrieved) of 'eight hundred times zero is zero.' The doctor certainly is mistaken.

Let us state the matter concretely by speaking in terms of Consistory and Classis (Synod). As was said, a Consistory, any Consistory, is not a superior officer with mandatory power over other Consistories. This is a point that no one disputes. All are agreed that it is the plain teaching of Art. 84, thus agreed that the one Consistory—the *x*—is zero as far as its right to exercise mandatory power over other consistories is concerned. Now, if this is true, if with respect to the other Consistories with their churches, the mandatory power of a Consistory, any Consistory, is zero, then certainly 800 such powerless Consistories are devoid of power to rule over other Consistories (it would be absurd to maintain the contrary, wouldn't it) even as organized in Classis (Synod). Now this precisely is what Dr. Ridderbos denies. His contention is that *as organized into Classis* (mark you, as organized into Classis or Synod the 800 powerless Consistories do have key-power over another Consistory. He maintains, in other words, that as organized, the 800 zeros have a positive numerical value. That this is actually the doctor's conception is plain from the following statement from his Kerkscheuring. "But if the Churches (Consistories) assemble in major assemblies (Classis, Synod) they are entitled to this power."

But certainly, 800 zeros—as zeros, mark you,—cannot be anything else but zeros, even as organized. Certainly, 800 powerless Consistories—powerless in their separate existence with respect to the other Consistories—remain powerless, even as organized. It simply can't be otherwise. Let me illustrate. An Elder has mandatory power over the congregation as the vicar of Christ and the Elder only. Thus as far as mandatory power is concerned the common members are zeros. (Now I trust that no one will misunderstand me in this statement). Let ten common members in the church organize and they are still zeros though organized, that is, in their organized state they are not the Consistory with key-power over

the congregation, the simple reason being that, not being in office, they possess no such power *separately*. To constitute as organized, the Consistory, each of the ten must be an elder with key-power over the church to begin with. For zeros as organized cannot possibly be anything else but a zero. And for this very reason a hundred common citizens of the state of Michigan not in office do not constitute *as organized* the state legislature. And again for this very reason twenty-five consistories in their separate existence devoid of mandatory power with respect to one another, do not *as organized* into Classis constitute an entity with mandatory power over the churches. This is simply impossible; for zeros even *as organized* cannot be anything else but a zero.

Yet, marvellous to say, Dr. Ridderbos maintains that this is very well possible. He insists that a Classis (Synod) is such a strange phenomenon,—an organization of zeros that constitute in their corporate capacity an entity with key-power over the churches, thus an entity with power to rightfully depose office-bearers. But the doctor comes with no argument. All he does is to appeal to Art. 36 of the Church Order. He should not have done that, for thereby he brings the whole Church Order under a cloud and with it the fathers of Dort. As if these fathers were capable of incorporating any such strange teaching in their Church Order!

The Rev. Gerrit Hoeksema also appealed to Art. 36 of the Church Order in support of his theory that Classis (Synod) rightfully deposes office-bearers. But the reverend did more than this. He also came with argument and much of it. For evidently he felt that Art. 36 cannot be used as a proof-text for his theory. It seems that this was not felt by doctor Ridderbos. For all he did was to quote this article. But not so Rev. G. Hoeksema. He came with argument. And from his argument it appears that in contradistinction to Dr. Ridderbos, he perceived, and this must be said to his credit certainly, that 800 zeros even as organized into Classis (Synod) possibly cannot be anything else but a zero. He even affirms this with emphasis as I have proved with citations from his brochure. Here is one of them,

“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 large 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 then can you defend the right of the Classis to depose a Consistory. . . . The question is, what kind of a ‘kerkverband’ has been established? Is it a mere federation? Then deposition of Consistories by

Classis is out of the question.” (Brochure, p. 46).

Notice the expression, “Is it a mere federation?” The question is equivalent to asking, “Is it a mere Classis, that is, a number of local churches federating on the basis of the Church Order? If so, then deposition of Consistory by the Classis (Synod) is out of the question.” Here the reverend affirms with emphasis that 800 zeros even as organized possibly cannot be anything else but a zero. Had the reverend only abided in this light and returned to the Church Order and its teaching, all would have been well. But the sad thing is that he forsook the light when he addressed himself to the impossible task of proving that after all 800 zeros can indeed be made to amount to something more than a zero if we only take care to properly organize the zeros. For the reverend admits and even affirms, again with emphasis, that in their separate existence the consistories indeed have no mandatory power over one another and that therefore the thing to do is to organize them into the major consistories we call Classis and Synod, and that these zeros as so organized do have mandatory power over the local churches. So he says. But as we saw he failed to tell his readers how such a consistorial Classis is to be brought into being, in what way, by what specific act. The reverend went no further than to say that it *must* be done. But what I mean to bring out is that the reverend did not abide in the light.

It also seemed to have dawned on the late Dr. H. Bouwman that 800 zeros even as organized into Classis (Synod) cannot be anything else but a zero. For as we saw in the attempt to prove the crooked thing straight—the thing: deposition of office-bearers by Classis (Synod)—he came with the strange, impossible view 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; but that, when the crisis is past, the key-power reverts to the local Consistories, and the major Consistory is again a common Classis.

In conclusion. Since 800 zeros even as organized cannot be anything else but zero it follows that Art. 84 of the Church Order very actually declares that also Classis (Synod) shall refrain from exalting itself as a superior officer with mandatory power over the Churches to depose their office-bearers, should there be need of this action. It again means that Dr. Ridderbos does the Church Order violence in maintaining that in Art. 36 it vests the Classis (Synod) with this power. For if the Church Order in Art. 84 and in Art. 79 as well declares that Classis (Synod)

shall refrain from the exercise of that power—mandatory,—it follows that the “jurisdiction” (zeggen-schap) of Art. 36 must be advisory as to its character and not mandatory, that thus it is not the teaching of this Article that Classis (Synod) can rightfully depose office-bearers.

It is not so long ago that the divines in the Gereformeerde” churches of the Netherlands were bitterly opposed to the view that, according to the Church Order, Classis (Synod) rightfully deposes office-bearers. Here is the way they expressed themselves,

Dr. H. H. Kuyper, “En dan zij in the eerste plaats opgemerkt, dat een Classis of Synode niet het recht heeft zonder meer om een kerkeraad of een zeker aantal kerkeraadsleden uit hun ambt te zetten. Een dergelijke bisschoppelijke of hiërarchische macht komt aan de meerdere vergaderingen niet toe.”

Translation: And then let it be remarked in the first place that a Classis or Synod does not have the right simply to depose from their office a Consistory or a certain number of consistory members. To such an episcopal and hierarchical power the major assemblies are not entitled. (De Reformatie, April 2, 1926).

And Dr. Van Lonkhuyzen also quotes the late Dr. H. Bouwman to this effect: “Uw vraag of ik ooit in mijn colleges zou gezegd hebben dat een Classis een kerkeraad zou kunnen afzetten, bevreemt me eenigszins. Ik herinner me niet dit ooit te hebben geleerd, en ik zou zeggen dat dit onmogelijk is.”

Translation: “Your question if in my lectures I ever have said that a Classis can depose a Consistory strikes me as somewhat strange. I do not recall ever having taught this. And I would say that this is impossible.”

Yet this same Dr. Bouwman could write not so many years later, “The opinion that major assemblies (Classis and Synod) cannot censure consistory members in the sense of excommunication but only in the sense of severing the denominational bond or tie between them and the recalcitrant consistory, must be rejected as unreformed and at complete variance with what our Reformed synods and our canons (authorities on ecclesiastical law) have taught. (Geref. Kerkrecht, D. 11, Bladz. 73).

The above quotations with the exception of the last one are from the brochure of the Rev. G. Hoeksema. Also the following from this booklet, “The deposition of a consistory was considered a terrible act of hierarchy. . . . the authorities in the Netherlands are changing their views faster than their disciples

here can keep up with them.” This was written some twenty-two years ago.

Why this change of conviction, if a conviction it was? Dr. H. Bouwman stated, did he not, that the opinion that a Classis cannot depose a consistory, is unreformed and at complete variance with older authorities on Church Polity. Didn't he know that when he stated also as professor that, from the point of view of Reformed Church Polity, deposition of office-bearers by Classis is impossible? That the divines across the sea changed their conviction means that now they have to be telling themselves that there was a time that they were in error. Are they so certain that they are not in error today?

As was explained, the bishop in the Roman Catholic Communion was a superior officer with mandatory power over the several churches placed in his charge. According to the construction that Dr. Ridderbos and Rev. G. Hoeksema and others place upon the Church Order, definitely upon Art. 36, the Classis, too, is a superior officer or council with mandatory power over the several local churches delegating to the classical assembly. The Rev. Gerrit Hoeksema affirms this with emphasis. This is the way he expresses himself in his brochure,

“The deeper principle involved in this dispute is whether or no the consistory is subject to the real governing authority of the major assemblies (Classis, Synod)? The latter question we answer in the affirmative. . . . The big question is, who must be obeyed. . . .? It is the Classis and Synod that consistory members promise obedience and always under penalty, in case of refusal, to be suspended. . . . According to this system—the federation idea—a Consistory is not subordinate to Classis at all. “Het bestuur blijft altijd bij de kerkeraad”. Such a Consistory can, of course, impossibly renders itself unworthy of office by refusing obedience to a body to which it is subordinate.”

These sentences from the pen of the reverend show very plainly that in his view the Classis (Synod) is a superior officer or council with mandatory power over the churches. For according to the reverend, the consistories must obey Classis (Synod) and thus are subordinate to them even under penalty, in case of refusal, to be suspended. Will the Rev. G. Hoeksema or Dr. Ridderbos or any of the others make plain the difference between the monarchical bishop of the Roman Catholic Church and their Classis (Synod), make plain the essential difference between that system of Church Government embodied in the Roman hierarchy and their system?

G. M. O.

SION'S ZANGEN

Jehova Regeert

(Psalm 97; Tweede Deel)

Jehova regeert: dat, zoo zagen we, was de hoofdgedachte van dezen kostelijken psalm. Deze psalm is echt theologisch: het draait alles om God en het bezingt Zijn wondere werken.

De hemelen verkondigen Zijne gerechtigheid, en alle volken zien Zijne eer.

Er zijn drie hemelen: eerst het blauwe firmament; dan de sterrenhemel; en ten derde, de hemel der hemelen.

Ik denk, dat dit vers de eerste twee bezingt. Het verband schijnt dit de leeren. Daar gaat het immers over de aarde, de wereld, de eilanden, de bergen, de wolken en de donkerheid. Ook zegt het tweede deel, dat alle volken Zijn eer zien. Welnu, alle volken hebben de derde hemelen nooit gezien. En wij zien die hemelen alleen met het oog des geloofs.

Het is geen gemakkelijke vraag om op te lossen wat dit vers bedoelt te zeggen. We zullen het probeeren.

Misschien doelt de Heilige Geest op het feit, dat de hemelen, dat is het blauwe gewelf en de sterren, met zon en maan, tezamen het goede voor de schepselen werken. Vanuit die hemelen komt veel en veelerlei. Als ik wist wat de geleerden weten, die de hemelen doorvorschot hebben, dan zou ik beter kunnen schrijven over deze dingen. Dit weten we, dat onze dagen en nachten, maanden en jaargetijden, door de hemelen geregeerd worden. En, tweedens, dat warmte en natigheid, groei en vruchtbaarheid ook vanuit de hemelen ons toekomen. Zij zijn de knechten van Jehova die het goede werken voor mensch en beest. In alle landen ziet men gedurig naar die hemelen op. In donkeren nacht tuurt de zeeman naar de sterren; en als men op alle schepen de juiste tijd wil hebben, dan "schiet men de zon", zoo het heet. Maar ook alle landlieden in alle landen zien gedurig naar die hemelen op, en sommigen hunner verbinden de hemellichamen aan het natte, het heete, het vruchtbaar-makende, enz. Ze zien naar den hemel, wrijven zich de handen, en zeggen, welvoldaan: morgen komt er regen!

En het is alles zoo recht, zoo Goddelijk recht!

Wat zouden wij, stakkerds, doen zonder regelmaat van dagen en maanden en jaren en getijden? Wat moesten wij doen, zonder de regen en de verwarmende stralen der zon?

Doch voor ons zit er nog iets dieper in dezen tekst. Als we hier hooren zingen van Gods gerechtigheid in de hemelen, en van de eer Gods in die lichtjaren van het groote heelal, dan denken wij aan de symboliek

der hemelen. Eerst, zien we dan het machtig blauwe van het firmament en fluisteren van de eeuwige trouw Gods. Ook zegt de zon, dat God de zonne der gerechtigheid is, of beter, dat Jezus Christus onze Zon is: Hij zal genade en eere geven! En de maan is de Heilige Schrift, want zij ontvangt al haar licht van de Zon. En als de Zon aan den hemel staat, verbleekt de maan; dan hebben we de maan niet meer van noode. De sterren in menigte vertellen ons van het volk, dat door Gods gerechtigheid schoon zal worden. En heel lang geleden hoorde ik de kinderen zingen: (Heer, ik hoor van rijken zegen! Ze zongen dan van een regen die nederdaalde, en aan 't einde kwam dat klaaglijk vragen: Dropp'len vallen ook van mij, ook op mij! De regen en de zonnestralen zijn de symboliek van de gaven van Gods genade.

Maar, tweedens, zien wij Gods gerechtigheid en eer in de hemelen, omdat zij type zijn van de hemel der hemelen. Zoo die eerste hemelen, namelijk, die der sterren en die van het blauwe firmament, over ons hoofd uitgespannen zijn, zoo zal God over ons hoofd uitspannen dien derde hemel, in den eeuwigheidsdag van Christus Jezus. Dan komt er een aarde, maar óók een hemel waarin pure gerechtigheid woont. Zou de dichter daaraan gedacht hebben bij zijn orgelen?

In elk geval is er een machtige sprake in die hemelen die we nu zien, des daags en des nachts. Wie kan die hemelen zien en niet wegsmelten in aanbidding van Gods gerechtigheid? Elken morgen zien we naar het Oosten, en, ja, daar komt de zon weer. Elken avond zien we weer, en ja, daar gaat ze onder. De geleerden zeggen ons, dat onze kalender op de sterren rust. Ze zeggen óók, dat zij uit kunnen rekenen hoe de hemel er uit zal zien 100 jaren van nu. Ik kan het best gelooven. God is recht: Hij valt nooit tegen. Nooit roept Hij van den hemel: "Ik heb Mij vanmorgen vergist: Mijn zon kwam even te laat op!" Alles is recht: het beantwoordt aan den maatstaf van het waarlijk goede. Die niet aanbidt bij het zien van Gods gerechtigheid in de hemelen is een dwaas.

Daarom volgt hier op: Beschaamd moeten wezen allen die de beelden dienen, die zich op afgoden beroemen; buigt u neder voor Hem, alle gij goden!

Beschaamd worden en zijn is een vreeselijk ding. Eigenlijk is het een voorsmaak van de hel.

Beschaamd wordt men als het niet uitkomt. Zeg, ge hebt op afgoden betrouwt en hen toegeroepen, al roemende: gij zijt mijn god, u zal ik loven, verhogen Uw majesteit! En zeg, dat ge voor God komt die waarlijk God is! Wat een ontgoocheling! Waar zijn Uw goden? Waar is de roem en eer, waar is Uw vrouw en kind, waar is Uw goud en zilver? Het waren alle schimmen, ze hadden geen bestand: ze konden Uw arme ziel nooit redden van het verderf. Met beschaamde kaken zullen staan allen die de afgoden eer aandeden.

Beschaamd, dubbel beschamend, als we geleefd hebben onder het geklank van een boodschap die vanuit de hemel der hemelen kwam. De heidenen zullen beschaamd worden als ze God zien, want Hij zal tot hen zeggen: Mijn kracht en Goddelijkheid was getoond elken dag en elken nacht in den hemel die zich welfde boven Uw arme hoofd; doch gij hebt U gebogen voor hetgeen geen God was. Doch als we gehoord hebben van Hem die op aarde Goddelijke antwoorden gaf, dan zal het een dubbele beschaming zijn.

Daarom: Buigt u neder voor Hem, alle gij goden!

Wie zijn dat? Wie zijn goden? Is er meer dan één God?

Wel neen! Er is één God, maar er is een soort menschen die dien naam van god dragen, doch dan moet ge het met een kleine letter schrijven. Het zijn de menschen die het hoogste menselijke ambt bekleden op aarde. De Bijbel noemt de richters der aarde goden. Daarom zeide de Heere ook tot Mozes: Gij zult een god zijn tot Farao en Aaron zal U zijn tot een profeet.

En waarom?

Omdat er niets hoogers te denken valt op aarde, dan voor zijn broeders te staan en hun rechtzaak te richten. Dat is een vooruitgrijpen op den oordeelsdag.

En dat soort menschen, namelijk de hoogste klasse van menschen worden hier toegeroepen, dat zij buigen moeten! Stelt het U voor: zij die op aarde recht moeten spreken, in Gods naam, zij die Edelachtbaren genaamd worden, moeten goed beseffen, dat zij slechts op die rechterstroom zitten om een plaatje te zijn van Jezus Christus, de Rechter des hemels en der aarde.

En dat de Heere hen aanspreekt en niet de lagere klassen van menschen, ziet op het feit, dat het hier immers gaat over den regeerden Jehovah. En ook hier op, dat indien zij zich moeten buigen, zeker de anderen ingesloten zijn. Ja, zeker, de geheele aarde buige zich voor Hem die op den troon zit en het lam!

Nu is er één volk, dat deze boodschap hoort en ter harte neemt, en dat ééne volk is Sion! Ook moogt ge nu, in het Nieuwe Testament zeggen: de kerk, want Sion is de kerk en de kerk is Sion. Sion's zangen, zijn onze zangen vandaag.

Sion heeft het gehoord en het heeft zich verblijd, en de dochteren van Juda hebben zich verheugd vanwege Uwe oordeelen, o Heere!

Ziedaar Uw rijkdom!

O, als ge slechts hoort naar de sprake Gods, dan is alles wel. Ge moogt dan honger en kommer kennen, ge moogt vervolgd en gehaat worden, ge moogt temidden van ongekende smart den laatsten adem uitblazen: het is goed. Die sprake des Heeren hoort is zalig.

Dit hooren van den tekst is niet maar het bloote opvangen van klanken in het gehoorvlies. O neen. Er zijn er millioenen, beide de heidenen die de woor-

den Gods in de natuur opvingen, en onder de Christenen die het gepredikte Woord hoorden, en toch verloren zijn gegaan.

Maar die hoorden zooals er in den tekst staat, die zijn naar den hemel gegaan. Want er staat, dat zij hoorden en *zich verblijd hebben!* Daaraan kunt ge het kind Gods kennen. Als het van God geboren kind Gods de sprake van Zijn God opvangt, hetzij in de natuur of in de kerk, dan springt hij op van vreugde. Dat Woord is zijn al. Van dat Woord leeft hij en groeit hij; van dat Woord drinkt hij en wordt hij verkwikt. Er wierd een Fontein geopend te Jeruzalem tegen de zonde en de ongerechtigheid en sindsdien zijn zij gaan drinken. En drinkende zijn zij opgesprongen van vreugde. Ja, het zijn de Sionieten en de dochteren van Jeruzalem. Sion is de berg Gods en Jeruzalem is de stad des grooten Konings. Sion is de berg Gods, d.w.z., de verhooging der gezakte en vervloekte aarde. En Jeruzalem is de stad die naar den hemel gegaan is bij de hemelvaart van Jezus. Paulus heeft vele jaren geleden gezegd: zij is ons aller moeder.

Het verblijd zijn en het verheugd worden is vanwege de oordelen Gods, zegt de tekst. Hoe zit dat?

Dat zit zóó: we hadden het immers over de gerechtigheid van den regeerenden Rechter Jehova? Daar zingt deze dichter toch van? Welnu, dezelfde gerechtigheid Gods die vanuit de hemelen roept en die door Sion gehoord wordt, oordeelt de goddeloozen. David had gezondigd, zoo zeide Nathan, voor God en voor de zon. En de verloren zoon zeide: Ik heb gezondigd tegen den hemel en voor U! Overal waar God spreekt, daar wordt de goddeloosheid bestraft. Zelfs Uw maal eten en het kussen waarop ge slaapt zal U verdoemen, als ge in ongerechtigheid leeft. Is het U nooit overkomen, dat ge vanwege wroeging niet eten kondet? Dat alles U tegen was? Dat komt van den oordeelenden God!

Maar als ge recht staat voor God, dan is gerechtigheid en de sprake der gerechtigheid U tot groote blijdschap! Hoe zalig is het volk. . . .!

Want Gij, Heere, zijt de Allerhoogste over de geheele aarde, Gij zijt zeer hoog verheven boven alle goden!

Ziet ge het niet? Ge kunt niet bij God wegllopen! Overal is God *boven U verheven!* Hij is immers de Allerhoogste?

Gaat naar de diepten der aarde: daar ziet ge God!

Beddet ge U in de hel? Ook daar is God!

De diepten der kolken en de hoogten der bergen zijn Zijne.

Er blijft slechts één wijs ding over voor ons te doen: Valt in het stof en aanbidt Hem die leeft tot in alle eeuwigheid. Uw hart zal dan voorts popelen van hemelsche blijdschap. God te mogen prijzen is de hemel!

G. V.

IN HIS FEAR

The Gospel and Our Social Life

Reformed Sociology.

Sociology is the science which deals with the laws and principles that control our relation to the neighbor.

The Bible is no text book on sociology, but Scripture certainly enunciates the laws and principles according to which we must conduct ourselves towards the neighbor, whether in the sphere of marriage, economics, politics or labor and industry.

I would first like to emphasize again that Scripture addresses itself, not to a mankind in general, but to the saints, as they are principally redeemed in Christ and now walk in sanctification.

Then there are principles which underlie this sanctification-process in the midst of this world.

Some Principles.

LOVE.

First of all we have the Second Table of the Law, inseparably joined to the first table.

It comes to them concerning whom God says: "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt out of the house of bondage". Whatever kind of sociology they have in Egypt, however they may conduct themselves in Egypt, you have been delivered out of that bondage and you are become my own private and personal property.

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared". It teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live soberly righteously and godly in this present world.

Thus also the Second Table of the Law comes to us as those who are principally redeemed out of the bondage of sin, and now shall live in the world as saints of the most high God.

And as redeemed saints our lives must move in the direction of sanctification. We are not justified by the deeds of the Law, but we most certainly attain sanctification in the way of the obedience of the Law. Hence then, when Scripture deals with matters which pertain to our social life, its primary purpose is to instruct and to guide the saints concerning their sanctification while they sojourn in this world.

If then we love God, we shall love our neighbor.

Your neighbor is the person with whom you come into constant contact.

You may not hate him, nor do him evil, but you

must do him good all the days of your life here in this world. If he do you evil you may not take revenge, if he curses, you must bless, if he smites you on one cheek you must turn to him the other also. You must seek his welfare, not his downfall.

Such is our sanctification.

If, however, you complain that such conduct on your part would not improve your social or economic situation, Scripture would teach you its sociology by telling you that it is not interested very much in those matters, it IS interested in your sanctification.

To love, always to love, for God's sake to love. Never to hate. Never to take revenge, never to take up arms against a neighbor in order to trample him under your feet. Always to seek your neighbors welfare, even at the expense of your own. A conduct in which greatness is measured in terms of service and unselfishness.

A very other-worldly system of sociology. In terms of dollars and cents it will bring you little success.

Perhaps you would rather go back to Egypt. In Egypt, in the bondage of corruption, man and wife quarrel, they get a divorce and they seek other mates. There they engage in class struggles, they take part in strikes. . . all calculated to improve their social and economic position. Therein, if someone strikes you on your cheek, you hit back with both fists, there, in Egypt, they think only in terms of own advantage, and, with Cain, they kill the man that gets in their way. Perhaps you prefer Egypt and her sociology.

But no, we are delivered from Egypt.

Delivered by the love of God.

And we begin to practise love toward our neighbor.

Reformed sociology begins with love.

How shall we teach you any sociology therefore if you have not the love of God shed abroad in your heart?

MEEKNESS.

In Egypt success is measured in terms of how much power you can wield and how much influence you can bring to bear.

But to us who are redeemed out of Egypt comes the word that the Meek shall inherit the earth.

Nothing seems more ridiculous than meekness, especially in today's economic unrest, will get us anywhere. And it will not, if your goal is to get as much of this world's goods as you can. If our purpose is merely the things of this world, or if it is merely economic improvement we seek, I doubt whether meekness will prove of any advantage. Rather it will make you seem foolish, and your very conduct is liable to invite abuse.

Perhaps you want to go back to Egypt again for your lessons in sociology. There they have a social

science of their own. The man with the biggest mouth, with the most muscle and the most power on his side wins. There pride and selfishness motivate man's conduct.

But no, we have been delivered. We are redeemed. We are saints.

Blessed are the meek.

And cursed are you when you are not meek.

God's precepts on sociology do not form a book along side of many other books. God curses every science and philosophy which man imagines, but He blesses them who walk in His ways.

GODLINESS.

The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared. It teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.

Godliness.

In Egypt they are ungodly. Their so-called culture and refinement is ungodly. Their social relationships are based upon ungodliness. What care they about God, about what God says or what God thinks of their conduct. Their philosophy is that there is no God.

Shall our social conduct be controlled by the philosophy that there is no God?

No, we have been delivered out of the house of bondage. We not only know that God is, we not only reverence and fear Him for what He is, but we also find it our enjoyment to do those things which are well pleasing unto God. That is godliness.

Our Lord, Who went before us out of Egypt (because God called His Son out of Egypt), Himself said repeatedly that He did ALWAYS those things which were pleasing to His Father. That is genuine godliness.

If we should come to the world with this Social Science and read to her a few of these first lessons, what would she do? The question has been answered. Look, yonder stands the Cross of our Lord. He was crucified because He was godly. He was the ONE Person Who was godly, perfectly godly. And because He was godly He was universally rejected of men. The world hath no place for godliness. Which makes it all the more necessary that we teach this godliness in social relationships. And not only must we read them a few lessons of it, we must practise it.

FRIENDS OF CHRIST.

Christ stood in the midst of this world. He said, "I came not of myself, my Father sent me", and again, "I seek not my own glory but the honor of Him that sent Me", and "I speak not of myself, what My Father commanded me, that speak I", and, "I came not to do my own will but the will of Him that sent Me".

Christ most perfectly represented the Cause of God in this world. He sought no other causes. Never, never was He interested in parties or cliques, movements or enterprises of men. He sought not a little cause of His own. He ever championed the Cause of God.

So much so that He was "hated without a cause".

Wherever you see Him, whenever you hear Him He was busy with, as He said, "I do always those things which please the Father".

In championing the Cause of the Father He was willing to lose everything. Because He perfectly represented the Cause of God He was hated, despised, spit upon and buffeted.

His sociology certainly was that He was in this world with no other purpose that to represent and to champion the Cause of His Father.

And why are we here?

If we are here only to seek our own benefit, to bring as much into our pockets as we can, to suck as much enjoyment out of life as ever possible, we are carnal. We live in Egypt. There everyone seeks himself and his own petty cause. Therefore their social life is full of greed, envy and murder, and therefore they claw at each other's throats.

But we have been redeemed through Christ, and having been brought into His Covenant, we realize that our primary calling in this world is not to have a little cause of our own, which we will press to the limit if that seems to become necessary, but that we represent the Cause of God over against this world which denies Him. And pressing that Cause, we be ready to give up all our own causes, if that become necessary.

Difficult lessons? Yes. Yet "His yoke is easy. . ."

(To be continued).

M. G.

IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies Aid of the Holland Protestant Reformed Church wishes to express its sympathy with our fellow-member, Mrs. Wm. Dykstra, since it pleased the Lord to take unto Himself her son,

RONALD

on April 4, 1947, at the age of 10 years. Our prayer is that God may comfort and strengthen the bereaved family.

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."—Romans 8:28.

Mrs. W. Hofman, President

Mrs. M. Jipping, Secretary.

FROM HOLY WRIT

O. T. Quotations in the N. T.

(continuation on Romans 10:5-8)

The question that engaged our attention in our former article at its conclusion ought to be kept rather clearly in mind.

We were interested in the contrast drawn by the apostle Paul in Romans 10:5-8.

What was this sharp and important contrast?

It is the contrast of what "Moses writes" and what is "righteousness which is by faith confesses."

What "Moses writes" is the principle of the law. It is the standard of works; works that a man *must do in order to be saved, to have life*. According to this dealing of God with man, only the man who perfectly keeps all the commandments has life. He who fails in the least falls hopelessly and irrevocably under the curse. For thus "Moses writes": cursed is every one that does not remain in all that is written in the book of the law to do it. Lev. 18:5; Deut. 27:26. Where this law is, this standard of works is applied and maintained there is not hope, there is no way out!

That is one side of the contrast as drawn by Paul.

The other side is the principle of grace. It is the principle of being saved by grace, out of faith, and, even this latter, is not of the believer. It is the gift of God. Here no man shall boast before God. It is the law written in the heart. It is spiritual circumcision, a cutting away of the old and hard heart. It is a turning unto God to love Him alone and to love Him wholly. And that all of sovereignly free grace!

The contrast is, therefore, that of works of man, or the grace of God. It is either-or. If it is out of works it is no more of grace; otherwise work is no more work. And if it be out of grace it is not more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace.

It is the contrast that maintains the truth of the Gospel!

Paul's thesis here is: Salvation is solely of the Lord. It never was anything but this. For Christ is the *end* of the law!

This is the simple, yet, fundamental truth of the Gospel with which we are here dealing. Let us keep this in mind!

* * * *

It is our conviction, that, in Rom. 10:5-8, the Apostle is giving the sense of the Holy Spirit in Deut. 30:12-14. He does not merely give his own free rendering. He gives us the truth of the Gospel, as this

permeated the message of Moses in the land of Moab.

In this passage we also hear, in clear and unmistakable language: Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. The yoke that is easy and the burden that is light are in this passage proclaimed by Moses. Christ is the warp and woof of this passage. Let there be no mistake about that.

Oh, it is true, there are passages, in this message of Moses to Israel, when taken by themselves, which seem to have much more of the thunder of the wrath of God in them, than of saving and redeeming mercy. We have but to call to mind such expressions as "the curse set before thee", chapter 30:1, and "all the curses that are written in this book" to see that Moses indeed also touches upon the reality of the awful curse of the law and of the terror of Sinai's majesty. Indeed, there are elements here which caused even Moses to say: I exceedingly fear and tremble. Heb. 12:21.

He, who is really in doubt about the awful majesty of God's law in this message, of the "curse", which Moses places before Israel, had better read Deut. 27:28 and 28:1ff. It is these curses, that Moses refers to in Deut. 29, when he speaks of "all the curses that are written in this book."

Pray, what are these curses?

We quote as follows: No one when he reads the "words of this curse" shall bless himself in his heart, saying, "I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst. The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and His jealousy shall smoke against that man, and *all the curses that are written* in this book shall lie upon, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven." Chapter 29:19, 20.

Again we read in similar vein, in idem, verses 23-28 as follows: "And that whole land is brimstone and salt burning, that is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, which the Lord overthrew in His anger, and in His wrath! Even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger? Then men shall say. Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers which He made with them when He brought them forth out of the land of Egypt: For they went and served other Gods, and worshipped them, gods whom they knew not, and whom He had not given unto them: And the anger of the Lord was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book".

Certainly, herein we do not hear the joyful sound of the glad gospel-tidings, someone may venture to say!

To this we heartily agree.

But let us not forget, that Moses does not only speak here of the "curse", the curses of the Law written in this book.

Moses here also places the "blessing" before Israel.

Fact is, that this blessing, this positively entering into the Covenant of God, is the very *aim* of Moses' address.

Listen to the following from Moses mouth: "Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives and the stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of wood unto the drawer of water; that thou shouldest enter into Covenant with the Lord thy God, and into His oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day: that He may establish thee today for a people unto himself, and that He may be unto thee a God, as He hath said unto thee, and as He hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob."

"Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath; but with him that standeth here with us this day before the Lord our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day. . . ."

What must we say of this latter quotation?

To begin with, we can say, that this entire exhortation of Moses to Israel, telling them to enter into the Covenant, the Covenant made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, presupposes the *gospel tidings*. Israel must not enter into their own efforts to work the works of the law, but Israel must enter into the work of God's great redemption of Israel and enter into the rest. As heirs of the promise they have the word of Promise, plus the immutable oath of God. Into this they must enter in, in a new obedience of faith and trust.

Surely Israel is told by Moses here *to do* something. They must enter into God's covenant and have fellowship with God, walking in the light as He is in the light.

The question, the real issue is not whether Israel must do something to escape the curse of God's law.

That Israel *must do* something is outside of debate.

But what must *Israel do* according to the Word of God in Deut. 29 and 30?

Must Israel here in being obedient to God's law seek to establish her own righteousness, or must she look for the Promised redemption in the wonder of Grace, which God will, in the fulness of times, work in the dead and resurrection of Jesus Christ?

We answer: most emphatically Israel must do the latter.

Only thus understood can the truth, that Abraham is by virtue of the Promise the heir of the world, come to its own.

For this Paul states the matter in Romans 4:13-15:

"For the promise that he should be the heir of the

world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but *through the righteousness of faith*. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect. Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression."

Here are the two alternatives: law or the Promise!

It is: *wrath* where the Law works!

Moreover, it is: *grace* where faith and the Promise is.

In the light of these observations, it is our conviction, that when Moses calls to mind the "curses that are written in this book" it is not that he would at all suggest the possibility of Israel's fulfilling the law by their own native endeavors.

If this were the case, all we read in the writings of Paul, concerning the righteousness of God without works of law that we have done, would be contradicted here by Moses. The law, mere law without grace, always works wrath. It is always condemnation. The law brings sinful man into hell. It cannot deliver the sinner. The law is weak because of sin. It only and always condemns apart from the Promise, apart from Christ on the Accursed Tree!

What is Moses' purpose, in calling attention to the law?

It is twofold. First of all, Israel of all ages, both in the New Testament and the Old Testament Dispensations, must know, that God always judges every man according to his works. He never lets go of His law. He will surely maintain it. This law of God, as the expression of God's will for our lives, has been clearly revealed to us. The "secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." Deut. 29:29. Of course, it is understood, that *to do all the words of this law*, is not the same as merit salvation by works of law that we have done. But of this we need here say no more. To this we called attention above.

Secondly, Moses calls attention to this law and the doing of it because it is in the keeping of the commandments i.e. in the curse of the law that guilty sinners find redemption. Israel, the whole church of God of all ages, passes through the curses of the law to come to the promise; they must pass through hell to get to heaven. Zion is surely redeemed. She is redeemed through justice. God hath shut up all under sin, under the curse of the law, that there He might show forth the wondrous greatness of His sovereign love and mercy!

Grace in the midst of wrath Moses preaches in Moab's plains.

God is not far from His people under the law.

Grace and mercy dwell at His right hand.

G. L.

PERISCOPE

Write Your Congressmen!!!

Important labor legislation is, or will soon be, before both houses of Congress. Among the provisions of the bill before the House of Representatives will be a clause to ban the "closed shop". It is expected that the Senate Committee will report its measure soon and also include this provision. We believe that all of our readers are or should be, directly or indirectly, interested and concerned in this matter. Therefore, we urge you to write to your Representatives and Senators to encourage them to support these measures; particularly the provision to ban the "closed shop". We believe it is not necessary to point out the evils of this anti-Christian and un-American practise. Our only purpose now is to emphasize the necessity of letting our voice be heard as we have opportunity. A personal letter to your Congressmen stating briefly and precisely the reasons why you favor passage of such legislation is more effective than an hundred form letters. Our Classis and Synods have written; but again, a personal note to your particular Representatives and Senators means a great deal more to them than this formal action of our combined Churches.

At the time of this writing we are not informed as to the number or names of the bills, nor of their detailed provisions. If at all possible mention them by number and name when writing; but the important thing is to WRITE—NOW! Do it individually; in your own words. It need not be a long and formal affair but a simple statement of your views and reasons. This individual approach has been proven to be the most effective. Remember these men are *our* representatives and do take heed to the voice of their constituency. Again, the important thing is to WRITE!

* * * *

A New Publication. . . .

We recently received a little booklet (handy pocket-size) published by our Churches and entitled "The Church Order of the Protestant Reformed Churches". Here follows the brief preface of the booklet which declares its history and purpose:

"In harmony with our mandate of Synod of 1946, we hereby publish *The Church Order of the Protestant Reformed Churches*" which name is (was, W.H.) officially adopted by our Synod of 1944.

"As to the contents of this little book, you will see that it contains more than the title indicates. In harmony with the decisions of the Synods of 1943-1946,

and according to usage in the Reformed Churches, we have also included, first, decisions by our Classis (before we had Synods) and Synods, relative to some articles of the Church Order, which decisions we have placed under the articles to which they refer; second, the Constitutions of the standing committees of Synod; third, Rules and Regulations adopted by Classis and Synods; and, finally, Formulas in use by our churches for various purposes.

"In the beginning of our existence as separate Churches, when the consistories of our churches met under the name of The Combined Consistories, the Church Order of Dordrecht, edition Keegstra and Van Dellen of 1915 (adopted by the Christian Reformed Church in 1914) was adopted. In 1920 the Christian Reformed Church adopted an English translation of the Church Order, which translation was adopted by our Synod of 1944. At our last Synod (1946) however, changes were made as follows: the word "church" was changed to "churches" in article 86, second instance; and the word "consent" was changed to "advice" in articles 76 and 77. The ground for this change was given as follows: 'the choice of the words indicated (that is, the singular "church" and the word "consent") reveals a hierarchical church polity'. We might have added to this ground the observation that, namely, the translation indicated was a corruption of the original Holland edition, instead of a faithful translation.

"And so we have our own published edition of the priceless Church Order of Dordrecht!

"It is our humble prayer that the only King of the Church, our Lord Jesus Christ, bless our use of it unto obedience of love in the praises and adoration of His and our Father above, whose injunction resounds in the churches from age to age: 'Let all things be done decently and in order'. I Cor. 14:40."

THE COMMITTEE OF SYNODS 1945 and 1946:

Rev. Andrew Cammenga
Rev. Gerrit Vos.

We were very much pleased with this little handbook of 83 pages and believe it to be indispensable to all our ministers and consistory members. Nor is its value limited to this particular group but it should find a wide circulation among our people generally. The price of \$1 is within the reach of all—and a bargain for everybody.

We wish to congratulate the committee for its efficient and splendid work. A detailed index to the whole adds immeasurably to the little volume's value. Copies may be procured by writing to the Rev. G. Vos, Edgerton, Minnesota. We have no idea how many have been printed but, undoubtedly, the supply is limited. We would urge you to act soon to assure procur-

ing your copy; bargains such as this are not to be had every day. Please include remittance with your order.

One closing remark. If our memory serves us correctly, it was suggested at the last Synod that this work might be bound in some loose-leaf form to facilitate the addition and inclusion of decisions and supplements as they arise. We believe that this added feature would have been worth the extra cost.

* * * *

Russia. . . .or. . . .The Subtlety of the Devil. . . .

A *Religious News Service* dispatch from Moscow contained the following: "The Communish Party must be 'patient' with church-going members, but it must not cease to 'proclaim itself against religion.' *The Young Bolshevik*, organ of the Central Committee of the Young Communist League, declared here in answer to a local group which asked how it should deal with churchgoers in its ranks.

"The magazine chided the group for having prohibited members from going to church, and said that instead 'it should have patiently explained the harmfulness of religious superstition and helped them to develop a scientific outlook'."

* * * *

u. S. Views U. s.

(Continued from last issue)

"It indeed strikes a Netherlander, that in our own circles, I mean thereby the circles of the reformed people in America, the use of cheek and lip rouge is very general. One finds this to be true not only in Grand Rapids and in other cities but also in the smaller and country areas. It is an almost general and common practise. I interpret this very unsavoury habit, as another expression of the American passion for uniformity. Young girls, still children, of 13 and 14 years old already begin to use it, and they consider themselves very unfortunate if their parents forbid it, since all their young friends use it. It is the almost unlimited power of the daily press that governs also in this instance.

"The advertisements are filled with suggestive propaganda, no romances or unfortunate love affairs, if the lipstick is not of the correct brand or the nail polish is not exactly the right shade. The whole of America is enslaved by the press and its propaganda. A large firm, for example, may picture a whole suite of furniture, include a powerful sales talk, and no one is satisfied until he also is in possession of this mass-product. That again indicates the craving for uni-

formity that reveals itself in all things. We, in the Netherlands, are just the opposite in this respect. Whenever my neighbor builds a house of a particular style, that alone is reason enough for me to choose a radically different architectural form. Our women never enjoy (*vinden het nooit leuk*) to wear exactly the same dress as their friends, and when, perchance, one of our floor-lamps looks like that of one of our friends, it is sufficient reason to immediately put a different shade on ours, in order to suggest a bit of difference at least. (Brother, you still don't know our American women! W.H.). One can understand that this only concerns externalities but it bears deeper results.

Whenever one penetrates a bit deeper into this Americanism, one comes to the conclusion that this spirit of being alike, this craving for uniformity, governs the whole of American life in America. A danger, that is also creeping into the reformed churches. And especially so since the Holland language is definitely being discarded and is no longer understood, read or written by the younger generation.

"There are already churches in the Christian Reformed denomination which, both in respect to liturgy and preaching, are governed entirely by this Americanism. I visited one of these Churches in Grand Rapids. There was found what might be called 'deftige devotie'. (Here follows a description of the order of worship with which most of us are familiar and need not be included, also, since he returns to it again in a later article and in greater detail. W.H.) All of these things would finally be made up for if the sermon were only reformed. In order was an exposition of the Catechism: 'What do you understand by the Communion of Saints?' Beyond this mere statement there was not much said out of, or about the Catechism. The minister made a distinction between 'our' Church and 'the Church'. Our Church is the institute composed of this congregation but 'the Church' was the invisible church. And according to him, the communion of saints meant that latter church. To illustrate this, an emotional picture was drawn of nuns who sat praying in a hospital before a Protestant minister, and more such examples.

"It was on the first Sunday that I heard this 'sermon'. Not until later did I find how broadly and deeply almost the whole Christian Reformed Church in America is infested with this distorted idea of the Church (*kerkbegrip*). The reasoning is as follows: each denomination has a portion of the truth, also among the Baptists and among the Methodists and the Presbyterians, there are many pious Christians. According to this same aspect the expulsion of Rev. Hoeksema and his followers is regarded. Whenever one would argue that in that case, actually however, the keys of the kingdom were applied, one received

a look as though the hearer saw the waters of Niagara streaming from below upward rather than from above downward. Various ministers of the Christian Reformed Church with whom I spoke concerning it, declared without hesitation that they had great respect for Rev. Hoeksema and were sorry that he was expelled, but the action itself they did not consider so serious. (erg-bad, evil, W.H.). Rev. Hoeksema was a child of God and did what he felt he must do; he now has his own church group among the many hundreds of other groups in America, and that's one's privilege (en daar heeft men vrede mee—the end of the matter, peace for all! How true that they so desire to explain it all. But there is no peace in wickedness. W.H.) And the article of the Apostle's Creed: 'I believe in the Communion of Saints' is in this way become a dead letter; having been drafted to meet the desires of selfish flesh. (We hope we caught the sense of the idiomatic expression here. The Holland is as follows: naar de begeerte van eigen vleesch getrokken wissel, op dood spoor gereden. W.H.) This complete article of our confession of faith, which is still read each Sunday in the Christian Reformed Church in America, and to which the entire congregation very piously stands to answer, has in this manner become an abstraction, which is, practically, worthless. For one may well say, and well preach with stirring stories, that the communion of saints embraces all denominations, but in practice they consider all churches as so many grocery-shops and each group seeks to win the customers for 'his' church. At the place where I stay the Christian Reformed Church stands next to the Reformed Church; which has an orthodox minister and a holland congregation. But I have not yet seen any exercise of communion of saints between the two groups.

"One can understand to what a resultant depletion of Church life this must lead. In practise one tears out the most important commandments from the law. That each one, who does not unite himself to the purest manifestation of the Church, perpetrates and serves idolatry (afgodsdienst pleegt), is not understood in America. Each one, may, after all, be saved in his own church. This leads to a lethargy in the church life that works deformation. I see this very clearly in connection with the question of Rev. Hoeksema and his followers. The decrees of the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church regarding the expulsion of this minister, so far as I have been able to go into it, (and I have already asked very many, because I was especially interested in this case), find no response (geen resonans-harmony, W.H.) among the general membership (and not even among various ministers). Men shrug their shoulders about it all and say: 'Too bad that it happened, Rev. Hoeksema is as reformed as can be, what jealousy among our professors and ministers,

etc.' No one considers, however, that this expulsion was an application of the key power."

(To be continued)

W. H.

CALL TO SYNOD

The Consistory of the Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland, Illinois being designated as the calling Church by the last Synod, herewith notifies our Churches that the Synod will meet in South Holland on Wednesday, June 4, 1947. The Pre-Synodical Prayer-Service will be held on Tuesday evening at 7:45, when the Rev. G. Vos, president of the last Synod will deliver the sermon.

L. Bruinsma, Clerk.

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the Creston Protestant Reformed Church hereby wishes to express its sympathy to our fellow elder, P. Visser, in the loss of his brother,

BERT VISSER

who passed away suddenly at Boyden, Iowa. May the Lord our Covenant God comfort the bereaved.

Rev. John D. De Jong, Pres.
Paul Vanden Engel, Clerk.

IN MEMORIAM

The Men's Society of the Holland Protestant Reformed Church wishes to express its heartfelt sympathy with our fellow-member, Mr. Wm. Dykstra, in the loss of his son,

RONALD

at the tender age of 10 years. May the God of all grace comfort and sustain the bereaved family.

"What shall we say then to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"—Romans 8:31, 32..

Rev. W. Hofman, President
M. Jipping, Secretary.

Report of Classis East, Convened April 9, 1947 at Grand Rapids, Michigan

This meeting of Classis was held April 9, 1947 at Fuller Ave. The opening exercises were conducted by Rev. J. De Jong, who presided at the last meeting of Classis. Psalter No. 374 was sung, after which Rev. De Jong read Psalm 135 and led in prayer.

The credentials were read showing that all the churches were represented at Classis. After the credentials were accepted Classis was declared constituted. Rev. S. Cammenga was then called upon to preside while Rev. J. De Jong took down the minutes.

Three elders who were present at Classis for the first time signed the Formula of Subscription.

The stated clerk read the minutes of the previous meeting of Classis. These minutes were approved as read.

The Church Visitors had not yet finished their work, so the committee was continued. They will report at the next meeting of Classis.

A communication of Kalamazoo's consistory was read in which they thanked the Classis for the financial assistance they had received in the past. They also informed the Classis that they are no longer in need of financial assistance. Classis decided to send this notification through to Synod.

The following overture from the same consistory was brought to Classis:

1. To advise our Synod to appoint Rev. H. Hoeksema as full time professor at our Theological School.
2. To advise our Synod to grant Rev. H. Hoeksema one year's leave of absence from our Theological School.

Classis decided to bring this overture to Synod.

Classis further decided to notify our Theological School committee of our decision in this matter.

Grand Haven came with the request for Classical appointments for the next three months. The following brethren were appointed to draw up a schedule for classical appointments. Rev. B. Kok, Elder Wm. Wierenga and Rev. M. Schipper.

Later in the day the committee presented the following schedule, which was adopted by Classis:

April 20 Rev. H. De Wolf, April 27 Rev. J. De Jong, May 4 Rev. R. Veldman, May 11 Rev. M. Schipper, May 18 Rev. W. Hofman, June 1 Rev. M. Gritters, June 8 Rev. B. Kok, June 15 Rev. H. Veldman, June 22 Rev. S. Cammenga, June 29 Rev. J. Heys, July 6 Rev. G. Lubbers.

An instruction from Grand Haven is read asking that Classis afford opportunity for its delegates to express themselves on:

1. The necessity of continuing relief shipments to Christians in the Netherlands.
2. The necessity of favoring Christians in Germany relief.

The decision of the Classis was to advise the consistories to continue sending relief to the Christian in the Netherlands.

There was also a letter from Creston's consistory thanking Classis for financial aid received by them in the past and informing the Classis that further financial aid would no longer be necessary.

Classis also decided to send this information through to Synod.

The consistories of Oak Lawn, Holland and Randolph sent instructions to Classis in re three classical meetings instead of four each year. A motion to do so failed to carry.

Classis decided to recess until 1:30.

Elder R. Bouwman closed the morning session with thanks to God.

The afternoon session was begun with the singing of Psalter No. 345. Rev. G. Lubbers then leads in prayer.

An instruction from Holland was received and adopted: to instruct the Synodical Stated Clerk to inform the various churches in itemized form, of the adopted Synodical assessments, soon after each meeting of Synod.

The requests for Subsidies were as follows: Oak Lawn \$1200.00; Grand Haven \$1000.00 with and \$500.00 without a pastor; and Randolph \$1300.00. Classis recommends to Synod the granting of these requests.

Classis elected the following deputaten ad examina subject to the approval of Synod:

Primi:	Secundi:
Rev. M. Gritters	Rev. G. Lubbers
Rev. J. A. Heys	Rev. M. Schipper
Rev. W. Hofman	Rev. R. Veldman

Rev. M. Gritters was appointed to thank the ladies for their catering services.

The next meeting of Classis will be held in Hudsonville, Wednesday, July 9.

The questions of Art. 41 of the Church Order were satisfactorily answered by the consistories.

The minutes were read and approved. After a motion to adjourn Rev. M. Schipper closes with thanks to God.

D. JONKER, Stated Clerk.