

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

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## MEDITATION

### Into Heaven Itself

*For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.*

*Heb. 9:24.*

For. . . .

Shadows belong with shadows: the way of shadows is sufficient to lead into the shadowy pattern.

Reality belongs with reality: the way of reality alone is capable of leading into the true sanctuary.

True, also in the days of the shadows there was a sanctuary. And because it was a sanctuary, it must be purified, for nothing is pure among men in this sinful world of itself: there is no sanctuary of God with us. Nor is there another way to purify things, and thus to prepare a sanctuary, than by blood: for without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. And so, also the sanctuary of the shadows was purified with blood. "For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, Saying, this is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry". . . .

"It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these". . .  
Shadows with shadows. . . .

The blood of calves and of goats purifies the patterns of holy things.

But realities with Reality. . . .

It was necessary that the heavenly things themselves were purified with better sacrifices than these.

Nothing less than His own blood, the better sacrifice, might Christ bring.

*For* He did not enter into the sanctuary of the shadows.

But into heaven itself!

Into heaven itself!

And this is contrasted to entering into "the holy places made with hands, the figures of the true."

The original for "holy places" is simply "the holies". And the reference is, evidently, to the holy of holies of the earthly tabernacle and temple. For the same expression is used in the eighth verse of this same chapter, where it is properly rendered by "the holiest of all." And again, that this is the proper meaning of the expression in verse eight is evident from its connection with the seventh verse, where this same "holies" is called "the second," and, finally, with the third verse: "And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all," where the original has "the holies of holies."

The entire sanctuary of the old dispensation was holy, because it was the sanctuary of Jehovah, His dwelling place, where everything was exclusively consecrated to His covenant with His people, and to His service.

Holy was the outer court, with its altar of burnt-offering.

Holy was "the first tabernacle," the holy place, where stood the golden altar of incense, the golden candlestick, and the table of shewbread.

But most holy was the "second tabernacle," behind the veil. To it all the rest of the earthly sanctuary pointed. From that "holiest of all" the whole of the temple and tabernacle derived its meaning. Without it there was no sanctuary. All the service of the tabernacle was performed with a view to that holiest of all. It alone gave meaning to the sacrifices. Because of it,

the incense burnt upon the golden altar, the light of the golden lamp, the loaves on the table of shewbread, as well as the blood that was sprinkled on the horns of the altar in the outer court, had their significance. For there, in the holiest of all, stood the ark of the covenant, with its mercy seat; there was the Shekinah, that wonderful symbol of the Presence; there God dwelled between the cherubim.

Into that holiest of all the high priest entered, once a year, to sprinkle the blood of atonement upon the mercy seat before the face of God!

However, this "holiest of all" was made with hands!

By this, that it was made with hands, it was chiefly characterized. And this means that it was purely local, limited, material, temporal, perishable. It was not spiritual, though it witnessed of spiritual realities; it was not universal, though it looked forward to all-embracing things; it was not for all the people, even though for them the high priest entered with the blood of atonement; it was not eternal, though it was a picture of the eternal covenant of God with His people; it was not everlasting, the veil could be rent, the sanctuary could be destroyed, even though it pointed to the everlasting tabernacle of God with men. . . .

It was not reality itself.

Plainly it testified that the way into the real sanctuary was not yet made manifest.

Even the high priest, though he entered into the holiest with the blood of atonement, could not abide within the veil. Only for a moment might he remain, sufficiently long to serve the shadows, then he, too, must retreat again, back into the court. And every year he must enter anew to repeat the atonement of reconciliation, for himself and all the people.

But Christ entered into heaven itself!

Not into the holiest made with hands, local, limited, material, temporal, perishable, the figure of the true, did He enter.

In fact, He never entered at all into that holiest. Into it, He had no access. For our Lord was not of the tribe of Levi, still less of the house of Aaron. Into the earthly sanctuary He might not enter. In the holies made with hands, He had no right to minister. . . .

He entered into the Reality that was foreshadowed by the sanctuary made with hands.

Into heaven itself!

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Into heaven!

And that means here: into the real Holiest!

It signifies that, as the old dispensational high priest, once a year, entered into the holiest, where

God dwelled in a figure, so Christ entered into the very presence of God.

For that is the meaning of heaven, its very essence!

O, to be sure, heaven is not a mere idea. It is not to be so spiritualized that there is nothing left of it. It is a place, a part of God's creation. It is "above", although its distance from us dare not be measured in millions of miles. It is the place where the angels dwell, and where are the saints that have gone before, whither also Christ, in His glorified human nature ascended.

He entered into that place on the fortieth day after His resurrection from the dead.

From Mount Olivet, in the sight of His disciples, He departed from them, into heaven. They knew that He had finally departed from them, and that, for a time, they would see Him no more. Repeatedly, during those wonderful forty days after He had risen from the dead, He appeared to them, only to disappear again. For He was with them no more as before His death and resurrection. Yet, during those forty days, they always expected to see Him again, after every appearance. But on that fortieth day, He led them to the Mount of Olives, and "while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight." And heavenly messengers explained to them, as they stood gazing up into heaven, that "this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." They knew that He had departed, from earth into heaven, and that here they would see Him no more.

The ascension means that the Son of God, in human nature, Who had come into the flesh, and descended into the nethermost parts of the earth, had departed from our world, to enter into another abode, the highest heavens.

From one place, Mount Olivet, He moved to another place, the place of heavenly glory.

Yet, after all due emphasis is placed upon the reality of heaven, and the truth of Jesus' local ascension into glory, it must be emphasized no less that the text here refers to heaven, not from the viewpoint of its being the place of glory in the outward sense of the word, but rather from the aspect of its spiritual idea and essence. It is the original of that of which the earthly tabernacle was but the figure; the reality of which the sanctuary made with hands was but the figure. It is the dwelling place of God, the highest possible realization of the covenant of friendship. In heaven is God's face. There is His Presence. Even as the earthly sanctuary, made with hands, was but an imperfect, local, material, temporal, and perishable figure of the true holiest; so heaven is its perfect, all-embracing, spiritual, everlasting, and imperishable realization. Heaven means that God dwells with us, that He causes us to know Him as we are known, to see

Him face to face, to enter into His secret fellowship, into the most intimate communion with the God of our salvation. It is the house of the Father!

It is the heavenly perfection of God's eternal covenant of friendship: the tabernacle of God with men!

The true and real holiest of all it is, where the beauty of the Lord is beheld in all its glory, and where the pleasures are enjoyed that are at His right hand.

In that heavenly glory, that highest and most intimate fellowship with the Holy One, that center of communion and worship, Christ entered.

He, the Son of man, God's only Begotten, entered there in our glorified human nature.

For Christ is not entered into the holiest made with hands. . . .

But into heaven itself!

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He entered!

And to be sure, the moment of that entrance was that of His ascension on the fortieth day after His resurrection.

But that final ascension was but the end of the way that led into that House of God, that holiest of all.

On the great day of atonement, the way of the high priest into the inner sanctuary led from the outer court and the altar of burnt-offering, into the holy place with its golden altar of incense, and thence into the inner sanctuary, behind the veil, with its ark of the covenant, and the mercy seat. And the way into the sanctuary was sprinkled with blood: upon the horns of the great altar in the court, on the horns of the altar of incense, and finally, upon the mercy seat, before the face of God.

Thus it was in the days of shadows.

To enter into the sanctuary made with hands, the blood of shadows, of calves and goats, was sufficient.

Shadows with shadows!

Thus also Christ: He travelled all the way, and sprinkled the way into the sanctuary with blood, not with the blood of calves and goats, for He entered not into the holiest made with hands, but with the better, the perfect sacrifice of His own precious blood.

Realities with Reality!

Another way into the holiest there was not.

As far as we are concerned, the way into the House of God was closed, and we were doomed to wander as exiles, alienated from the covenant, in the misery of our sin and death. For God is righteous and just, and holiness adorns His house. Fellowship with Him in the sphere of sin and corruption is impossible. And we had wantonly made our departure from His house, despising its beauty and fellowship, when we rejected

the Word of our God to give heed to the lie of the devil. Nor could we ever return. Guilty we are and worthy of death. Instead of being the objects of God's blessed favor, we are under the burden of His wrath. He condemns us to death. And in death we lie. Darkened in our minds, perverse of will, impure and unholy in all our desires and inclinations. Heaven, the house of God, is closed unto us, nor could we ever effect an entrance into the holiest.

Hence, there was no other way for Christ to enter into the sanctuary than that of the better sacrifice of His own blood.

For He is our High Priest, by divine ordination, representing us, and acting in our behalf before God, to lead us, His guilty and sinful people, into that blessed fellowship of God's covenant that is the very essence of heaven.

And so He came, and travelled all the way!

He assumed our flesh and blood, He the eternal Son of God. He took our position, entered into our state, the state of guilt and condemnation, He, the guiltless One, Who knew no sin. Our sin and condemnation He carried to and upon the accursed tree, and there He shed His lifeblood, thus bringing the perfect sacrifice.

Thus He entered into heaven itself.

Along the blood-sprinkled way!

The way of perfect obedience!

---

In the Presence of God!

In heaven is the highest Self-revelation of God, His face!

And there, before that Face, in that immediate Presence, Christ now appears, is manifest.

He is manifest there, constantly, everlastingly, in all the fulness of His significance, as the Son of God in the flesh, as the High Priest of those whom the Father gave Him, as the Anointed, Who fulfilled the will of the Father concerning the redemption of the elect, as the One that shed His lifeblood for His own, that was obedient unto death, yea, unto the death of the cross, and Who blotted out the guilt of sin, and obtained perfect and eternal righteousness for His people with God. . . .

As such He appears.

For us, that is, in our stead, but also in our behalf.

For in His appearance, He is our Intercessor, pleading our cause, that we, too, may follow Him into the sanctuary, along the way He sprinkled with His own blood, to receive forgiveness and righteousness, and to enter into the fellowship of God's covenant!

To dwell in His house forever!

Satisfied with His likeness!

H. H.

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**EDITORIALS****About The Closed Shop With A Loophole**

We received the following contribution.

Rev. Herman Hoeksema,  
Editor of The Standard Bearer.

Dear Brother,

Will you allow me to reply briefly to your editorial "A Closed Shop With A Loophole" in the April 1 issue of your paper? A few words of explanation will do much to clarify the situation I'm sure.

There's a history back of this union shop contract with Hekman's that ought to be known. The C.L.A. in 1945 fought A.F.L. attempts to force all Hekman employees into one of its unions through interference with the Company's business. That organization did not have one member in the plant, and the employees had no desire to join it. In spite of the fact that it had no right to demand a contract so long as it did not represent a majority of the employees that organization persisted in its interference and boycotts. The C.L.A. fought it through its organizations among the employees. If it had not done that the Hekman plant would today be a closed A.F.L. plant, without a "loophole" even for conscientious objectors.

The C. L. A. succeeded in gaining bargaining rights in the plant, through certifications as the bargaining agent for all the employees by the National Labor Relations Board, in January, 1946. A contract was subsequently negotiated, which gave the employees substantial wage increases, etc. It was an open shop contract. During a whole year the C.L.A. did all it could to persuade those who were not members to join. But, about 40% simply ignored it, although admitting that the union had benefited them greatly. Only a few of that large number had conscientious objections. The others were plainly unwilling to pay dues, or just simply too "ornery".

We were faced with this danger: that if we allowed such a large number to continue as they were doing our organization would in time disintegrate. That is self-evident. When 40% are receiving the same benefits and privileges as the others, without assuming any responsibility, that will eventually lead to loss of membership among the others, and before long we would not have a majority and the result would be loss of bargaining rights. Not only would the C.L.A. lose but the employees would be in danger again of being forced into an unchristian organization. So long as the C.L.A. has legal bargaining power that will not happen.

What were we to do? Were we to allow a minority of employees, who refused to assume proper responsibility, to destroy what we had built up with extreme difficulty, and by doing so place the majority as well as the shortsighted minority again in the danger of a forced unchristian affiliation? We faced that question, and we decided that we were justified in asking for a union-shop contract, with a provision making exceptions of conscientious objectors. The latter we will always tolerate. But we felt that we did not have to tolerate those who simply ignored us for no good reason whatever, and who by their refusal to assume social and group responsibility were a menace to the future welfare of themselves and all the others. The Company appreciated our position and agreed to the present policy.

The C.L.A. by doing that has not changed any position. It has always taken the stand that conscientious objectors to membership in *any* union ought to be left alone, provided they give proof of acting in good faith, and that those who object to membership in a *certain* union only, but can join another with a clear conscience, ought to join the other to give proof of acting in good faith. We have always urged other unions to adopt that policy. We have opposed the absolute closed shop in which workers are given no alternative whatsoever, and we shall continue to do that. You, Mr. Editor, have no right to state that the purpose of the C.L.A. in this act is to force out of employment those who *cannot* join it. The purpose is, to constrain those who *will* not accept proper responsibility toward fellow-employees, without any good reason, and to preserve the union in the promotion of the welfare of all concerned.

And, is it fair to give the impression in your article that the C.L.A. is going down, step by step, as you do? You state, "First, the article acknowledging the sovereignty of God had to be eliminated from the Constitution, in order to obtain the status of a bona fide union", etc. That surprised me. I appeared at a meeting of the Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, upon its invitation, in the Fall of 1942. At that meeting I thoroughly explained that in Washington they objected to the expression of a religious dogma in the C.L.A. Constitution, since that might lead to discrimination on the basis of failure to subscribe to a definite religious tenet. By substituting for the clause that dealt with the Kingship of Christ and the sovereignty of God the simple statement: "The Christian Labor Association bases its program and activities on the Christian principles of social justice as taught in the Bible," that objection would be removed. You, Rev. Hoeksema, at that time, in the presence of some fifteen men, stated that you did not see that it made any difference, that the substitute statement would naturally include acknowledge-

ment of the sovereignty of God, and that you did not think it weakened our position. We fully agreed, and the C.L.A. has always held to that. Now you bring up that change as a reflection on the C.L.A. That is something I cannot understand. It is very unfair.

I shall not go into the strike question. The C. L. A. did not change its position on that either. It maintained the position it has held from the beginning. In regard to your charge that Christian workers will draw the conclusion that they might as well join the C.I.O. or the A.F.L. I wish to say that then they are blind. The C.L.A. *does* recognize the authority of God and His Word, absolutely, and will not knowingly violate any Divine commandment or precept. Instead of hatred and violence it promotes good will and peace. It has never set up employees against their employers. It seeks that only which is in accordance with Biblical principles of justice. And withal, by operating as a bona fide union, it gives protection to Christian workers who cannot join the so-called neutral unions. The difference between C.L.A. and other unions is so great that anyone can observe it. Ask members of those other unions. They ridicule the C.L.A. and say that it is not a real labor organization at all, according to their standards.

Finally, I would like to make a bold charge, since you also are not afraid to make them against us. It is this: that so long as the Protestant Reformed Church allows employers among its members to sign closed shop contracts—without any loopholes—and such employers can remain in good standing, the Protestant Reformed Church upholds the closed shop, and you have no right to criticize the C.L.A. for entering upon a contract that is not strictly closed shop, in which the sincere objections of those who cannot join are honored. Suppose that the C.L.A. would enter upon a closed shop contract with an employer who is a member of the Protestant Reformed Church. You would criticize us, but the employer would be upheld. What kind of consistency would that be? The C.L.A. would not enter upon a real closed shop contract, but you allow members of the Church to do so and remain in good standing.

Joseph Gritter, Secretary,  
Christian Labor Association.

#### Remarks:

1. In as far as Mr. Gritter in the above communication attempts to defend the "closed shop with a loophole," he makes a poor job of it. Principally, he does not defend it at all, but rather apologizes for it. Circumstances forced them to take the step. The C.L.A. was faced with "this danger: that if we allowed such a large number to continue as they were doing our organization would in time disintegrate. When 40% are receiving the same benefits and privileges as

the others, without assuming any responsibility, that will eventually lead to loss of membership among the others, and before long we would not have a majority and the result would be loss of bargaining rights. Not only would the C.L.A. lose but the employees would be in danger again of being forced into an unchristian organization. So long as the C.L.A. has legal bargaining power that will not happen."

Now this whole argument is based on the utility principle. The end justifies the means. The C.L.A. wants power. It needs membership. If it cannot attain that end in the proper way, by the voluntary consent of those that join, it will use force. It assumes authority over the consciences of the workers. It does not have such authority, in fact, it has no authority at all. But in order to gain or keep bargaining power, it will use that method of compulsion nevertheless. It invents the closed shop with a loophole. This does, indeed, *explain* how the C.L.A. came to take this step, but it does not justify it. In order to put up a true defense Mr. Gritter must explain how the C.L.A. can possibly have the God-given authority to determine what kind of men shall work in a certain shop, and to bar all others. Let me add that the worldly union argues exactly along the same lines as Mr. Gritter in favor of its closed shop.

How Mr. Gritter and the C.L.A. really live from this utility principle becomes evident when he writes that "the employees would be in danger again of being forced into an unchristian organization." This statement is true only on the basis of the utility argument: "I must live, hence I must join a worldly union if there is no way out." But the Christian is free. Living by faith, he is free. He cannot be forced. He overcomes the world, even though he must suffer.

2. On the same unchristian and unbiblical principle the strike is based. The union judges that certain wages or working conditions are unjust. The employer disagrees. The union acts upon its own judgment and wants to force the employer to grant its demands. Hence, it strikes, i.e., it refuses to work while holding on to the job. And by picketing it tries to prevent others from taking the places of its striking members. That is violence.

3. Mr. Gritter refers to a meeting he attended of our Consistory, and leaves the impression that there I approved what I now condemn; the fact that the C.L.A. eliminated from its Constitution the clause concerning the sovereignty of God. Now, it is always unfair to quote from a verbal conversation of which there is nothing black on white, especially if such conversation was conducted years ago, as in this case. I do not recall the statement Mr. Gritter attributes to me. I do not believe that I ever made it. Surely, Mr. Gritter's word alone is not good enough to make it stand. On the whole, I am sure, Mr. Gritter left a

bad impression with my Consistory that evening in trying to defend the compromising methods of the C.L.A. in general. A statement such as Mr. Gritter ascribes to me hardly fits in with the general trend of that discussion.

4. In the last paragraph of the above contribution Mr. Gritter seems to think that he can justify the action of the C.L.A. by slinging mud at the Protestant Reformed Churches. Feeling his own weakness, he tries to call attention to the faults of others. But let me remind Mr. Gritter, first of all, that even if his remarks were correct, which they are not, it would have nothing to do with my discussion of the compromising methods of the C.L.A. since the Standard Bearer is a free paper, that cannot be bullied into silence. And, secondly, let Mr. Gritter, please, prove his remarks which I consider as belonging to the mud-slinging category. What he must prove, of course, is that such cases as he refers to, if they exist or have existed in the Protestant Reformed Church, are not labored with, but are officially approved by the Consistory that has jurisdiction over them.

May I, in closing, suggest that Mr. Gritter, if he desires to continue this discussion, do so in the *Christian Labor Herald*, and at the same time publish the above remarks on my part?

H. H.

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## THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

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### An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

Part Two.  
Of Man's Redemption

Lord's Day XXII.

3.

The Millennium (concluded).

4. To our objections against the idea of a millennium during which Christ is supposed to reign with His people on this earth, with His throne in Jerusalem, we may finally add the incongruity of the conception. This incongruity is twofold.

The first concerns the irreconcilable conflict that must needs express itself, in such a state as the millennium is supposed to be, between the ethically perfect condition of Christ and His risen saints and this sinful world. Whatever may be the conception one may try to form of the wonderful reign of peace in the millennium, sin still prevails and has dominion in



that glorious kingdom. Men are still dead in sin. Nor can the mere fact that the devil is bound, even if the explanation that he is completely put out of action were correct, be considered sufficient reason for the assumption that sin will not reveal and express itself. Besides, the last enemy, death, has not been destroyed. In that millennium, men suffer and die. What is more, at the close of this millennium, there are still the hordes of Gog and Magog, the nations that live on the four corners of the earth, and they will come up against the camp of the saints, that is, against the earthly Jerusalem, where the glorified and risen Lord reigns with His resurrected saints. In the midst, therefore, of a world in which sin and death still reign, and nations gather themselves for war against Christ and His saints, the latter are supposed to live and enjoy an era of perfect bliss. It is quite safe to say that such an incongruous relation is impossible to conceive; that it is quite contrary to all Scripture teaches us about the future state of the saints with Christ, which will be one of perfect blessedness in the new Jerusalem; and that there is nothing in the idea of such a millennium that can arouse a note of longing in the hoping heart of the believer. The prospect that, after having been delivered from the flesh, from all sin and death, he will have to return to this earth in which sin and death will surround him on all sides, cannot be attractive to the saint in Christ. He will inherit the earth, to be sure, but it will be the new earth under the new heaven, in which righteousness shall dwell. He will have the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, but it will be the heavenly country, for which all the saints longed, and in which there will be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying. For it they long, and it alone is the ultimate object of their hope.

The second incongruity arises from the contrast between the natural or psychical and the spiritual, between the earthy and the heavenly. The saints that are supposed to reign with Christ in the millennium are risen believers. They have their resurrection body. That body, so the Scriptures teach us in I Cor. 15:42ff. is not "natural" or "psychical", it is not an earthy body of flesh and blood; but it is a spiritual body, that shall bear the image of the heavenly. With and in that body, the saints are alleged to dwell in an earthly Jerusalem, and to live and reign in this earth. But Scripture teaches us that this can never be. To our present, earthy body belongs our entire earthy existence in this world. In it we could not possibly inherit the kingdom of heaven. For that kingdom is spiritual and heavenly. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," the Scriptures teach us in I Cor. 15:50. But the reverse is equally true: the spiritual and heavenly body of the risen saints cannot inherit an earthly millennium. In their resurrection bodies there would be no contact between them and an earthly Jerusalem.

How true this is must be evident from the appearances of the Lord to His disciples during those marvellous forty days between His resurrection and His ascension. He is no longer earthy. No longer does He live in real contact with earthy things as before His death. He is seen occasionally, but only because He manifests Himself to His disciples. And the same would be true in a millennium. The incongruity between the natural and the spiritual, the earthy and the heavenly, renders the very idea of a millennium absurd and unscriptural.

And, finally, in view of the foregoing it becomes an utter absurdity, not only, but also an insult to, and a denial of the glory of Christ to even entertain for a moment the possibility that nations would conceive of the idea to rise up in war against Him and His saints in their glorified state and resurrection bodies. An utter absurdity such a notion is, because "flesh and blood" could never wage war against the saints in their heavenly and spiritual bodies of the resurrection. For, then, death and suffering exists no more. No weapons of steel could even touch them. No atomic bomb would have the slightest effect on them. They are incorruptible and immortal. Unless they have the power to manifest themselves, as Christ did during the forty days before His ascension, no enemy could possibly discover or reach them. And an insult to the glorified Christ, in fact, a denial of His glory such a notion is, because the actual glory of Him, Who is exalted at the right hand of God, and Who is the image of the invisible God, is such that the wicked tremble at His sight. In the days of His flesh, in the state of His humiliation, men could, indeed, conceive of the idea of taking hold of Him to kill Him; and even then a flash of His glory was sufficient to lay them prostrate before Him in the dust. But no man or nation will ever be able to conceive of the absurdity to rise against the risen Lord and His glorified saints.

We conclude, therefore, that the period of the thousand years in the twentieth chapter of the book of Revelation refers to the present dispensation, from the exaltation of our Lord to almost the end of this age; that during this time, while the departed saints reign with Christ in heaven, the devil is restrained from marshalling the hordes of heathendom against the Church in the world; that, towards the end, he will be loosed for a little season, when he will go forth to deceive those nations to rise against what is known to them as Christendom, but which, except for the spiritual remnant, will then have become Antichristendom. For this great and final world struggle we must look.

And we believe that the Lord will come on the clouds of heaven, not to establish a millennium on earth, but to usher in the everlasting kingdom of heaven, raise the dead, appear in judgment, make all

things new, and reign with His glorified saints forever in the New Jerusalem, in which God's tabernacle will be with men.

And that will be the perfect realization of the hope of all the saints!

#### 4.

#### Eternal Life.

The final state of salvation in Christ Scripture denotes by the term eternal life. It denotes this ultimate state of glory and bliss both intrinsically, as to its inner nature and essence, and extrinsically, as to its outward sphere and manifestation.

It is the opposite of eternal punishment, for "these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into eternal life." Matt. 25:46. The reward it is for those that have forsaken all for Christ's sake, for they shall "receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting." Luke 18:30. Through the death of the Son of man it is attained, for "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." And in bestowing this gift of eternal life upon us through the death of His Son, God reveals His love to the world, "for God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:15, 16. It is a present reality, as well as a future state, for "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 3:36. Christ is the bread of this life; He is the living bread, and "if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. . . . Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6:48ff. It is the blessing the Good Shepherd bestows upon the sheep the Father gave Him: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." John 10:27, 28. To those whom the Father gave Him Christ has the power to give this eternal life, John 17:2; and the intrinsic nature of this life is knowledge of God in Christ, for "this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." John 17:3. It is the fruit of grace, for "as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteous-

ness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 5:21. And it is the gift of God: "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 6:21. The apostles are the direct witnesses of this life, for John testifies: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;—For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, and was manifested unto us." I John 1:1, 2. It is the sum and substance of the promise of God, for "this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life." I John 2:25. That life is in His Son, and that, through the Son, He will give us eternal life, is the very testimony God gave concerning that Son, for "this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. (He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." I John 5:11-13. In fact, Christ *is* the life, for Christ (Himself declares: "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." I John 5:20.

Very frequently, therefore, the Bible speaks of this eternal life of which the last article of the *Apostolicum* speaks.

It is both a present reality in the believers, and a future state of glory. It is a life that has its source, its fountain in God, and that reaches us only through Jesus Christ, the Son of God come into flesh. In order to obtain and possess this life in us, we must, therefore, have fellowship with God through Christ. We must dwell in Him, and He in us, by faith. It is, therefore, wholly the gift of grace. And its essence is this, that we know God and Jesus Christ Whom God has sent.

Several questions arise here that we must attempt to answer.

What is life in general?

What, more specifically, is life for man in distinction from the life of other creatures.

And what is this eternal life? Is it merely life without end, or is there something that distinguishes it from all other life, even from the life Adam possessed in the state of rectitude?

Perhaps, we had better not attempt to offer a comprehensive definition of life. Life is a profound mystery. Worldly philosophy has defined it as "the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external



relations.”\* But, even though there is truth in this formal definition of life, it is quite deficient. For, first of all, it does not even touch upon the real nature of life, but merely describes it from the viewpoint of its manifestation and activity; and, secondly, it does not even mention the Fountain and Author of all life, God. For the agnostic philosopher, God is the Unknowable. His knowledge, therefore, is confined to this world, to the things that are seen and handled. And so, he defines life, not as a relation of the creature to God, nor from the viewpoint of that relation, but merely as a correspondence between the creature and his environment, man and the world of his experience.

Now, the word of God does not offer us definitions of life. The nearest approach to such a definition, particularly of that highest form of life that is called life eternal, we find in John 17:3: eternal life is to know God in Christ.

Nevertheless, in the light of Scripture, we may certainly say something about life.

Life is a principle of free energy, of active force. Living is action. To live is to act. Activity is the expression of life.

This is true, in deepest sense, of God. God, according to Scripture, is the living God. And whenever, in the Bible, God is thus presented, the idea that He is, in Himself, an active God, and reveals Himself as such, appears on the foreground, and receives all the emphasis. He is the living God in distinction from idols. They are the work of men, and are altogether vanity; they can neither see, nor hear, nor speak. “But the Lord is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath shall the earth tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation.” Jer. 10:3-10. At Mount Sinai, Israel recognized Him as the living God, for they heard His voice, and saw that God talked with man. Deut. 5:24. They witnessed how He divided the waters of Jordan before their feet, and drove out for them the nations from the land He had promised them, and in all this they know Him as the living God. Josh. 3:10. God has life in Himself. And that surely means that He is infinite energy, pure activity. He never slumbers or sleeps. He is eternally active with His whole Being: hears and sees, will and knows, loves and hates. His holiness is not a cold virtue, it is a living flame, a consuming fire. His righteousness is not an attribute that occasionally reveals itself in action, it is an energetic, ever active power. His mercy is ever fervent, His lovingkindness is forever ardent. All that is in God is eternally and infinitely active. For He is the living God.

And as God is not only the living God in Himself, but also, by His quickening Spirit, the Fountain and

Author of all life, and there is no life apart from Him, we may certainly infer that life, also in the creature, is a principle of free energy. And as such it reveals itself in the plant and in the animal, and, in the highest sense, in man.

But life is more.

Life is harmony.

It presupposes relationship, harmonious relationship, and to live is to act properly and normally in that relationship. Life cannot exist in solitude. Always it is some kind of fellowship. This fellowship may be the reaction of any living creature in relation to the world about it; or it may be the reciprocal reaction of two living beings upon each other; or it may be the living communion between two personal, rational, and moral beings, or, finally, it may be the harmonious relation, action and reaction, between the living God and the rational creature. Always life is a principle according to which a being or person reacts and responds harmoniously upon and to another being or person. Thus we speak of the living plant, because, by virtue of an inner energy, it constantly adapts itself to, and reacts upon, the soil in which it is rooted, the air which it breathes, the rain and the sunshine which it absorbs and assimilates. Man's body reacts upon the world about him. To it he is adapted. With his physical existence he stands in harmonious relationship to the physical world about him. And in that relationship he moves and acts: he inhales the air as the breath of his life, assimilates food for his nourishment, and reacts upon the world of his experience, through his senses of sight and hearing, of touch and taste and smell. Thus we speak of man's social life, pertaining to his reaction upon his fellowmen, in various relationships of life; of his intellectual and volitional life; and of his spiritual life: the reaction of his heart and mind and soul and all his strength in relation to God. Always life presupposes certain relationships, and reveals itself in the normal action and reaction of the living beings in those relations.

H. H.

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### 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.

\* H. Spencer, *First Principle*, p. 70.

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## CHURCH POLITY

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### Dr. Ridderbos and Art. 79 Once More

Statements occur in my previous writing (under the caption: Dr. Ridderbos and the 800 Zeros), that I wish further to explain, that there may be no misunderstanding. I wrote, "Power in the church is either mandatory or advisory. A third kind of power there is not. And by power I mean right (authority) to command or advise." And this also, "An elder in the church has mandatory power over the congregation as the vicar of Christ."

Now certainly it is only the Word of Christ that commands the flock, so that only insofar that the ruling and teaching ministry in the church identifies itself with the Word does it rightfully command the flock. "Thou shalt not steal," is a commandment of Christ to His church. As the official proclinator of this word on the meetings for public worship, the ruling and teaching ministry command the flock, yet not this ministry but *the commandment* as sanctified to the hearts of the believers by Christ's Spirit. As divorced from the word—the word of Christ, the sole king of the church—and as imposing its own mind and will upon the flock of God, the aforesaid ministry is a wolf in sheep's clothing and must be deposed.

And for this very reason the Classis (Synod) has not mandatory (key) power over the churches. For it is the word (of Christ) that commands the flock; and Christ has not vested the Classis (Synod) with the authority to officially administer to the churches the word. Therefore Classis (Synod) can only advise.

Secondly, the offices in the church are Christ's institutions. They who fill them are His selections. Servants of Christ are they, whom He calls and sends through His church. They rule by an authority with which He *vests* them. And it is He who qualifies them for the work of the Ministry to which they are called by His word as administered to them by the church and as sanctified to their hearts by His Spirit.

Further, an organization of non-office-bearing members of the church would not be a Consistory. In order to constitute the Consistory, the persons organized must be office-bearers to begin with. For zeros even as organized remain zeros. And for this very reason, as was pointed out, 800 consistories in their separate existence, devoid of mandatory power with respect to one another do not *as organized* into a classis (Synod) constitute an ecclesiastical council with mandatory power over the churches. This, as was explained. Dr. Ridderbos seems not to understand this. For he presents the view that 800 zeros *as organized*

*constitute* a positive numerical value for no other reason than that they are organized; that, in other words, 800 consistories, though devoid of mandatory power with respect to one another, constitute *as organized* into Classis (Synod) an entity with the right to depose office-bearers, thus constitute an ecclesiastical council with key-power over the churches for no other reason than that they are organized. This being impossible, Art. 84 of the Church Order must indeed also concern Classis (Synod) and thus teach that Classis, too, as well as the Consistory, any consistory, shall refrain from exalting itself as a superior officer with key-power over the Churches.

Certainly the Church Order and the Confession forbid Classis (Synod) to depose officebearers. To see how true this is we need only to consider that deposition of officebearers is Christian discipline and that the latter together with the preaching of the Gospel are the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, that is, key-power. It has become clear certainly that the Church Order and the Confession deposit this power in the Consistory only and not also in the Classis (Synod). If so, the Classis, according to the Church Order, cannot rightfully depose office bearers. There is even more proof of this than I have thus far brought forth. And this proof is Art. 79 of the Church Order, an article with which I already dealt but to which I must return for that proof. Let us once more get the article before us:

"When ministers of the Divine Word, elders or deacons, have committed any public, gross sin, which is a disgrace to the church, or worthy of punishment by the authorities, the elders and deacons shall immediately by preceding sentence of the consistory thereof and of the nearest church, be suspended or expelled from their office, but the Ministers shall only be suspended. Whether these shall be entirely deposed from office, shall be subject to the judgment of Classis, with the advice of the delegates of the (particular) Synod mentioned in Article 11.

We must have before us for our present argument also Art. 36:

"The Classis has the same jurisdiction over the Consistory as the particular Synod has over the Classis and the general Synod over the particular".

Now as we have seen, the contention of the doctor (Ridderbos) with respect to the Synod of Dort in connection with the Church Order is this: Though the Synod of Dort did not provide the churches with a *written* handbook on the Church Order explaining its dark and equivocal articles, it nevertheless did speak its mind on the Church Order. It did so not

by the written word, it is true, but by an action according to which it deposed a number of Arminian ministers. By this doing the Synod of Dort revealed to us that its purpose in framing Article 79 was not to tell us in this article who may depose office bearers—Classis (Synod) or the Consistory—but simply to tell us that the Consistory may not engage in that action without the help of the neighboring church and that, if the offender be a minister of the Gospel, it may go no further than suspension.

Such is the contention of the doctor. But the doctor did not complete his baseless conjecture (for a baseless conjecture it is, as I have proved). The doctor should have added that by deposing those Arminian ministers the Synod of Dort revealed to us also just what it meant by Art. 36 of the Church Order, namely, that Classis (Synod) has mandatory (and thus not merely advisory) power over the local churches and therefore can rightfully depose their office bearers, if there be need of such action. The doctor should have added further that by its deposing those Arminian ministers, the Dort Synod verily declared that under Christ the supreme judicial power in the church is not the Consistory but the Classis (Synod) and that therefore, in deposing officebearers, the consistory as the obedient servant of the Classis (Synod) merely does what it is told to do by its master, the Classis; that thus in deposing officebearers the consistory merely functions as an executive committee of the Classis (Synod).

So the doctor would have written, had he completed his conjecture. Why did the doctor refrain from completing his conjecture? Can it be that he was afraid that, should he have done so, he would have opened the eyes of the “Gemeente leden” to the thoroughly unreformed character of his views (his views, not those of the Synod of Dort, of course. I will furnish additional proof of this presently). If so, the doctor showed less courage than Rev. Gerrit Hoeksema. For he held back nothing in this respect. He comes out plainly for the view that the real governing authority in the church is not the consistory but Classis and Synod. This is the way he expresses himself:

“Now, then, we contend that by all these admissions they have already subjected the Consistory to the real governing authority of Classis and Synod. And the question *who* must actually depose becomes a question of minor importance.

“The deeper question is, *who must be obeyed*? Let us use a striking, almost bizarre illustration to drive home the point. Let us suppose the impossible, namely, that in this age of religious freedom our Formula of Subscription reads as follows: ‘Being ready always cheerfully to submit to the judgment of *the state*, under penalty, in

case of refusal, to be by that very fact suspended from office’. Surely all would agree that such a Form would put the Consistory in subjection to the state. It would no longer be free. Obedience to the state would be one of the duties of office. And, if someone would defend such a proposed Form by saying, ‘but it isn’t the state that actually deposes, some other body must do that,’ we would immediately answer that that wouldn’t really change matters any. If we must obey the state at all times, if through disobedience we become unworthy of office, and if the state can even decide *when* we must be deposed, and if then some other body *must* act accordingly and depose us, then it is really the state that is supreme, and not the consistory nor the body that actually deposes. The big question is, who must be obeyed, and whom do we promise to obey.

“Now to return to the world of actual facts, it is to Classis and Synod that Consistory members promise obedience (and always) under penalty, in case of refusal, to be suspended. That decides the issue.” (Brochure p. 58). So far the Reverend.

Notice the sentence (contained in the above excerpt), “If we must obey the state (that is, the Classis and Synod, G.M.O.) at all times, if through disobedience we become unworthy of office, and if the state (Classis) can even decide *when* we must be deposed, and if then some other body *must* act accordingly and depose us, then it is really the state (that is the Classis and Synod, G.M.O.) that is supreme and not the consistory or the body that actually deposes.” Here it is taught as plain as the sun in the heavens, that under Christ the supreme judicial power in the church is not the consistory but the Classis (Synod) and that in deposing officebearers the consistory functions merely as the obedient servant of the Classis. And the view is that also of the doctor and of all the others minded as is he. And this of necessity. For if the jurisdiction of Classis over the consistory is mandatory as to its character—and this is the doctor’s view—then certainly the Classis is the superior of the consistory, and if so, it cannot be otherwise but that the consistory deposes officebearers only as the servant of the Classis (Synod).

We see, then, what is the real issue and how it should be stated to be seen in all is horrible and even terrible implications. To merely ask, as does the Rev. G. Hoeksema (the question forms the title of his brochure), “Can a Classis depose a Consistory,” is not sufficient. The issue should be stated thus: Who under Christ is the supreme judicial authority in the churches deposing officebearers, the consistory or the Classis? And to this the exponents of the hierarchy—Rev. G.

Hoeksema and Dr. Ridderbos and the rest of them reply: The supreme authority in the churches depositing officebearers is the Classis (Synod) and not the consistory. The consistory engages in that action only when and because the Classis (Synod) so demands, permits or allows, thus engages in that action merely as an executive committee of Classis (Synod).

As we have just seen, this is the way Rev. G. Hoeksema expresses himself in his brochure. In a negative sense the reverend did the cause of Reformed Church Polity a real service when he sent that brochure of his into the world. For in that booklet he makes it so very plain that what he and the doctor and the rest of them want for the churches is the hierarchy pure and simple, so that it is not necessary that anybody be deceived by their writings and utterances.

Classis (Synod), like the pope of Rome in the Roman Catholic communion, the supreme judicial authority in the churches, and in that capacity depositing officebearers? The consistory engaging in that action when and only because this authority (Classis, Synod) so demands, permits or allows? Is this the teaching that the fathers of Dort laid down in their Church Order? It is not certainly. This I have already proved with the Church Order. But here is more proof and perhaps of all the proof thus far given the most conclusive. Elders and deacons, who have committed a gross sin, says Art. 79 of the Church Order, shall immediately by preceding sentence of the consistory thereof and of the nearest church be suspended or expelled from office.

Now if under Christ the Classis (Synod) were that supreme judicial authority in the churches; if, as Rev. G. Hoeksema and Dr. Ridderbos and the rest of them maintain, the consistory must obey the Classis (Synod) at all times; if Classis (Synod) decides when officebearers must be deposed and if then the consistory must act accordingly, so that it is Classis (Synod) that is supreme and not the consistory that deposes (as Rev. G. Hoeksema tells us in just these words); if, in other words, the consistory in deposing elders and deacons functions merely as an executive committee of the Classis (Synod), so that it is not really the consistory that deposes but the Classis (Synod) through the Consistory its servant,—should not the article (79) require that the consistory gain the permission of Classis (Synod) to suspend and depose the offending elder or deacon? It should, certainly. Yet the article requires nothing of the kind; it does not even stipulate that whether the offending elder or deacon shall be entirely deposed shall be subject to the judgment of Classis (Synod). The article excludes the Classis (Synod) entirely; it gives to the Classis no voice in the matter at all.

Thus, so far from the truth it is that, according to the Church Order, the Classis (Synod) is the supreme

judicial authority in the churches, deposing in that capacity offending elders and deacons, that actually according to Art. 79 the very opposite is true. According to this article, not Classis (Synod) but the consistory under Christ is that supreme authority. For when the question is one of suspension and deposition of elders or deacons, Classis and Synod, according to that article, have absolutely nothing to say, must keep hands off and be still. Such being the necessity under which the article places Classis and Synod, when the question is one of suspension and deposition of elders and deacons, it follows that Classis (Synod) must refrain from deposing elders and deacons in any capacity, thus also in the capacity even of executive committee of the consistory. It means that the Church Order deposits the key-power solely in the consistory. Isn't it amazing how some divines, doctors, and professors, yea, even some laymen, sad to say (like the brother in Sioux Center, Iowa, for example) read the Church Order and what they can imagine to be finding in it!

I am not overlooking the fact that, in case the offender be a minister of the gospel, the article (79) requires that "whether these shall be entirely deposed from office, shall be subject to the Classis, with the advice of the delegates of the (particular) Synod mentioned in Article 11." But we must notice that the Article does not state that whether these (the offending ministers) shall be suspended shall be subject to the judgment of Classis (Synod). When the question is still one of the minister's suspension, Classis and Synod, so the article rules, have absolutely no voice in the matter. What is more, as suspension is first in order of time, it is the consistory that determines whether classis is going to act at all; and the only action that the article allows Classis and Synod, in the event the Consistory does suspend its minister, is that of serving the consistory with advice. How contrary then to the stipulations of Art. 79 is the view that in deposing even a minister of the gospel the consistory functions merely as an executive committee of a sovereign Classis and Synod. How obvious that the very contrary is true, thus obvious that, according to the article in question, not the Classis but the consistory is that supreme power (under Christ), and that the sole task of the Classis is not certainly to depose officebearers but merely to serve the Classis with advice. Certainly, if the Classis, according to Art. 36 is such a supreme judicial authority over the consistories, it must be admitted that the Church Order itself so limits and diminishes that authority as actually to destroy it, which is equivalent to saying that it cannot be the purpose of Art. 36 to exalt Classis and Synod to a supreme judicial power above the churches.

But there is more to say. That according to Art. 79 Classis and Synod have absolutely nothing to say

when the question is one of suspension and deposition of an elder or deacon, must mean certainly that the fathers of Dort would have violated no principle of truth had they adopted an identical rule for the suspension and deposition of ministers of the Gospel. The reason that they didn't is that in a sense the ministers of the gospel in contradistinction to elders and deacons belong to all the churches. The ministers are trained in a school founded and maintained by all the churches and any church may call him. Hence, the churches, federating, as they do, on the basis of the Church Order, are agreed amongst themselves that "whether these (the offending ministers) shall be entirely deposed from office, shall be subject to the judgment of the Classis" with the advice of the synodical delegates.

G. M. O.

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## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

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### Restoring The Kingdom

The Lord having delivered His people out of the hand of Nahash, Samuel said to the people, "Come, let us go down to Gilgal and repair (the Hebrew verb is *chadash* in the *piel*) the kingdom there." The kingdom, its typical-symbolical dispensation, was the Lord's tabernacling with His people in the earthly Canaan and their fellowshiping with God in His holy temple; it was their being blessed by the Lord their God in the way of their covenant fidelity in the city and in the field; it was the Lord's blessing the fruit of their body, and the fruit of their ground and the fruit of their cattle and their basket and store; it, the kingdom, was the Lord's smiting their enemies before the face and His establishing them an holy people unto Himself. This kingdom they had destroyed by all their rebellions and whoredoms and recently by their rejection of the Lord in their demanding that a king be set over them. The curse of God was stalking the land now. It was operating in their cities and fields and had made all their enemies to triumph over them. And the Ark of the covenant and the tabernacle were separated; for the Lord had forsaken the tabernacle of Shiloh and given his strength in the enemy's hand. Verily, they had destroyed the kingdom by all their abominations. But the Lord would not forsake His people, the Israel according to the election of grace. In token of the character of His mercy upon them—it is everlasting—He set a king over them, who had just triumphed over Nahash. But the victory was the Lord's. Let them now go to Gilgal, as Samuel said,

and acknowledge and confess their sins in true contrition of heart, particularly their sin of demanding that a king be set over them. And let them vow that henceforth they will serve the Lord with all their hearts. Then they again would be blessed in all their ways and the kingdom that they had destroyed by their wickedness would be repaired by the Lord Himself in the way of their repentance—His work in them. For repairing the kingdom was His work, not theirs. What they had destroyed the Lord alone could restore. But as repentance was their responsibility, Samuel could admonish them as he did.

But the people were in no mood to repent. Coming to Gilgal they made Saul king before the Lord, that is, whereas Saul's election and anointing already had taken place, they now installed him in his office by appropriate ceremonies, and thereby pronounced him king. This action of theirs would have been a step in the right direction, had it been a fruit worthy of repentance. But evidently it wasn't. Doubtless they were worshipping a man—the man Saul—now that by his victory over Nahash he to their mind had proved that he was every inch a king. They also sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the Lord. But to what purpose was their sacrifices to the Lord if their hearts were far from Him? Obedience is better than sacrifice, and for men unreconciled to God as they were, weeping is better than rejoicing. Yet "there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly."

The narrative does not state that Samuel rejoiced with them. It couldn't be that he did. For as appears from the sequel, their great sin was weighing too heavily on his soul for him to rejoice with them. They had been destroying the kingdom; they had rejected the Lord and had not repented; and therefore, in making Saul king and in sacrificing and rejoicing they were walking in a vain show. These transactions having been completed, they doubtless were waiting for Samuel to dismiss them that they might return to their respective places. But what about their unconfessed abominations? Had God no place in all their thoughts? It seemed not. But Samuel, to be sure, was differently disposed. He couldn't let them go without taking up with them the matter of their wickedness. Their obduracy of heart boded only evil for the future. They had asked for a king; that sin must be confessed, and the people must re-dedicate themselves to God or perish as a nation.

However in his discourse to them he first was occupied with his own career and with that of his two sons. "Behold," he said to them, "I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said to me, and have made a king over you. And now behold, the king walketh before you: and I am old and greyheaded; and behold my sons are with you (and my sons, behold! they are with you). And I have walked before you

from my childhood unto this day. Behold, here I am. Witness against me before the Lord and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or from whose hand have I received a bribe to blind my eyes therewith (that I should hide my eyes at him). And I will restore it you." At no time had Samuel lived the life of a private member of the theocracy. From his childhood he had been in a conspicuous position before his people first as assistant to Eli, then as prophet and finally as prophet and judge in Israel. Hence, his entire span of life was an open book that could be read by all. They might scrutinize his public career and should they discover dark spots thereupon, let them declare it. Samuel, to be sure, was aware and the people were aware that he was blameless. His saying to them: "and I will restore it (the bribe, ox or ass that he may have taken) is therefore significant. Certainly, by this statement, he was not admitting that he had walked or even might have been walking in those sins as judge. He knew and so did they all know that no one could point an accusing finger at him. Still, he was not assuming a "holier than thou" attitude toward the people. He had gathered with them before the Lord to restore the kingdom. "Come, let us go to Gilgal and restore the kingdom there," he had said to them. That, as was explained, could only be done in the way of their acknowledging and confessing before the Lord their sins. If he as their judge had offended, let them reveal it, and he would be the first among them to confess. But let their witness be true. For the Lord before whose face they stood would punish a false witness. Thus did Samuel admonish them in his integrity.

He also made mention of his two sons, "And my sons, behold! they are with you." These sons had not been walking in the way of their father. The sacred narrator lodges heavy charges against them, stating that they had been turning aside after lucre, taken bribes, and perverting justice. Samuel refrained therefore from asking with respect to these sons, "Whose ox or ass have my sons taken?" These questions the seer put with reference to himself only. And rightly so, for in his mouth and as asked with reference to himself, they were declarations of his blamelessness as their judge. But these sons had offended. Samuel was not disposed to deny their guilt. To the contrary, by saying, "And my sons, behold! they are with you," he was submitting their careers to the scrutiny of the people as well as his own. (It is too clearly wrong to suggest, as some interpreters do, that a tinge of mortified feeling at the rejection of himself and his family, mixed with a desire to recommend his sons to the favor and good will of the nation lay at the bottom of this mention of them and even colored his entire discourse.)

But there is still this question: Just what was the purpose of this self-justification of the seer? Rightly considered not the seer himself but the people justify him, declare him blameless as judge. They replied, "Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought out of any man's hand." This exactly is what he wanted to hear them say not because he was absorbed in himself but because he wanted them to eliminate him as a reason of their asking for a king in order that with himself out of the way he might go on to shut them up to the conclusion that the only reason of their asking for a king was that they desired not that the Lord reign over them. And he hoped that as confronted by the real motive of their vile doing, they would acknowledge and confess that they had sinned. This explains his saying to them, "The Lord is witness against you, and his anointed is witness against you this day that you have not found ought in my hand." Should they want to reverse their testimony, when they perceived that the argument was going against them, let them consider, Samuel wanted them to understand, that the Lord had heard their witness and would not hold them guiltless should they for a carnal reason overturn it by a contrary witness.

The people had pronounced Samuel blameless as judge. But their reply betokened impatience with the seer. Plainly they would say to him, "True, thou hast not defrauded or oppressed us. But thou well knowest that this was not our complaint at the time we come to thee asking that thou set a king over us to fight our battles and to deliver us out of the hand of our adversaries under whose oppressions we groan. Our complaint was that thou art old, meaning that on account of thy age thou shouldest step aside to make room for younger blood equal to that task. We needed a king.

Samuel discerned the thrust of their reply and he was ready with an answer. Said he to them, "The Lord who appointed Moses and Aaron and who brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt. Now, therefore stand forth, that I may reason with you before the Lord of all the righteous acts of the Lord, which he did to you and to your fathers." If he wanted to reason with them about such matters, they could not well refuse him their audience. They were attentive therefore as he continued, "When Jacob came into Egypt, and your fathers cried unto the Lord, then the Lord sent Moses and Aaron, and they brought your fathers out of Egypt and made them dwell in this place. And they forgot the Lord their God, and he sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the host of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab, and they fought against them. And they cried unto the Lord and said, We have sinned because we have forsaken the



Lord and have served Baalim and Ashtaroth, but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies and we will serve thee. And the Lord sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and ye dwelt safe. But when ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, ye said unto me, Nay, but a king shall reign over us, when the Lord your God was your king."

The point to Samuel's argument is easily discerned. Through all the years of Israel's national existence the Lord had proved Himself faithful. Not once had He turned a deaf ear to the cry of the fathers for deliverance out of the hand of the oppressors. But more must be said. Those cries had proceeded from fathers who over and over had forgotten the Lord, thus came from people who deserved to be oppressed and pressed into everlasting desolation on account of their rejection of their Maker and Redeemer—the Lord God of Israel. And those oppressions, according to Samuel's discourse, were not co-incidental; nor did they come only by the will of Philistines and Ammonites, but they came by the sovereign will of the Lord—when they forgot the Lord, *He* sold them. . . . and were therefore so many revelations of God's wrath over all the unrighteousness of the fathers, clouds of God's anger enveloping the fathers on account of their abominations, righteous judgments of God indicating that the fathers had sinned, but also indicating the Lord's power to save—He sold them—from His own wrath in answer to cries worked in the fathers by Himself in His great love for His people—the Israel according to the election of grace.

What a wonderful God, king invisible, Israel had. How wonderfully righteous and merciful! How wonderfully able and willing to save His ill-deserving people out of all their troubles—the troubles of sin—in the way of true contrition of heart.

Yet when the people saw that Nahash the king of the Ammonites came against them, they said to Samuel, Nay; but a king shall reign over us. . . ." How amazing! They knew that Nahash was raised up and sent by the Lord to smite them for their sins and that therefore their sole and great need was not a human king but grace to repent in order that they might live and not perish by the hand of Nahash, the rod of God's anger. Their history told them that, and also that in the way of their repentance the Lord without fail would save them out of the hand of all their foes. But they had said, "Nay". Why had they said "Nay"? There could be but one possible answer. They did not want the Lord to reign over them, the reason being that He would save them only in the way of their forsaking their wickedness and turning to their redeemer-God to serve Him with all their hearts. That they were unwilling to do, because they loved their

idols. They said therefore that a king should reign over them indeed, one agreeing to fight their battles without placing them under the necessity of forsaking their Baalims and even willing to serve with them in Baal's temple. Thus they had spoken in that vein. The amazing sinfulness of sin!

Samuel continued his discourse in this vein: They might behold now the king whom they had chosen. The Lord had set a king over them. If they would serve the Lord, and obey His voice, they and their king, it would be well with them. But if they would not obey His voice but would rebel against His commandments, the Lord would be against them as He was against their fathers.

Here Samuel paused, it seems. If the task of converting men were that of the human preacher, there should have been many conversions in Samuel's audience there in Gilgal. For he had presented a powerful argument. There was no escaping the conclusion that they had sinned in asking for a king. But the people seemed unmoved. At least they were silent. Nowhere in that vast audience went up the cry, "We have sinned." They were men hard of heart. The stubbornness of the people vexed Samuel's soul, it would seem, and his anger kindled. In his indignation he resorted to extraordinary means in order that the people might be brought to acknowledging their sin. Lifting up his voice once again, he said to them, "Now therefore stand and see this great thing which the Lord will do before your eyes. Is it not wheat harvest today? I will call upon the Lord, and He shall send thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking for a king."

"Samuel called unto the Lord, and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day." Doubtless the storm was extraordinarily severe. This together with the unusualness of rain in that season formed the strongest testimony that the Lord was thundering upon them in answer to Samuel's prayer and in confirmation of his witness that they had sinned, and would perish if they repented not. The Lord laid that testimony on their hearts with the result that they were seized with a great fear of the Lord and of Samuel. And all the people said to Samuel, "Pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins, this evil to ask for a king." That it was two years ago that they had demanded that a king be set over them, that during all that time Samuel once and again had exhorted them to repent, that they had to be terrorized by God's thunder into acknowledging and confessing their sin, provokes the question whether they now were truly sorry for their sin. It is not likely that they were. They feared for their life. The form of the words of their petition also is to be noticed. They said to Samuel, "Pray for thy servants

unto the Lord *thy* God." This could be taken as a confession on their part that the Lord was not *their* God. As terrified by the plagues of God, Pharaoh, too, had acknowledged his sin in the audience of Moses and Aaron. And Pharaoh was reprobated. Then, too, the thunder, like the earthquake is the revelation and the sign of the wrath of God's hatred of the wicked. Both signify that the doom of the ungodly is pending.

Yet, this, to be sure, is not denying the presence in the land of Canaan of the Israel according to the election of grace. Samuel's audience must have included representatives also of this Israel, men who, by the grace of God, were truly penitent. For while the Lord was terrifying that audience by His thunderings He at once by the mouth of Samuel spoke a word of comfort and encouragement that He could have been directing only to the true Israel. "And Samuel said to the people, Fear not: ye have done all this great wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your hearts. And turn ye not aside: for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit or deliver; for they are vain. For the Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people. Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way. Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your hearts: for consider how great things he has done for you. But if ye do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king."

"The Lord will not forsake his people." This statement could have reference to the true Israel only. These the Lord would make His people in Christ. These He would bless in the way of the prayers that would continue to rise in Samuel's soul for the people. "God forbid," said the seer to them, "that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you. . . ." He might not cease praying for God's elect! These words of the prophet are significant also for another reason. They expose as false the view according to which the seer's discourse was inspired by an anger that was kindled in his soul by his consideration of the ill-treatment that the people had afforded him and his family. The kind of anger that Samuel's discourse betokens takes not its rise in sinful flesh; for it is the anger of holiness. The final section of Samuel's discourse had meaning also for the carnal, unbelieving, and impenitent Israel. It told them that as pursuing to the end the way of sin and unbelief they would perish by the hand of God. And it would leave them in the day of trouble without excuse, would this discourse of the seer; for it commanded them to repent and it told them that the Lord is gracious unto his ill-deserving but penitent people, for whom He had done and would continue to do great things.

G. M. O.

## SION'S ZANGEN

### Jehova Regeert

(Psalm 97; Slot)

Dit is de psalm waar de hooge regeering van Jehova bezongen wordt. Hij regeert; Hij is de eenige Koning des hemels en der aarde.

Hij regeert ook in het hart van Zijn volk. Dit wordt ons beschreven in het vers waar we ditmaal beginnen moeten: "Gij liefhebbers des Heeren, haat het kwade!"

Wat schoone naam wordt voor het volk des Heeren: liefhebbers des Heeren! Daar zit veel in. Het is ook het ééne element, hetwelk de kinderen Gods van de kinderen Satans onderscheidt. Veel en velerlei kan het booze volk hebben. De Heilige Schrift zegt zelfs, dat sommigen hunner "verlicht geweest zijn, en de hemelsche gaven gesmaakt hebben, en des Heiligen Geestes deelachtig geworden zijn, en gesmaakt hebben het goede Woord Gods en de krachten der toekomstende eeuw". En toch werden zij afvallig en in een toestand waarin ze niet konden worden, naardien zij "zichzelven den Zoon Gods wederom krusigen en openlijk te schande maken". Zij hebben veel gehad, doch ge leest hier niet, dat zij liefhebbers des Heeren waren. In I Cor. 13 leest ge ook, dat men veel kan hebben en toch niet anders zijn dan klinkend metaal of luidende schel. Maar ook daar: ze hadden de liefde niet. De liefde is het ééne element dat onderscheid maakt.

Gij liefhebbers des Heeren! Wat schoone naam. De liefde Gods is de liefde waarmede God Zichzelven bemint. En als die liefde in U woont, zijt ge Zijn kind. Dan aardt ge naar Uw Vader. De liefde is de Eigennaam Gods. God is Liefde. En de Liefde is God.

Wat houdt die liefde in?

Het is niet gemakkelijk om de inhoud van liefde te bepalen. Doch dit kunnen we wel zeggen: die God bemint zal alles geven, overgeven, lijden, voor die liefde. God is hem alles. Neemt gerust goed en bloed hem af: hij zal die liefde behouden. Die liefde is hem meer dan het leven zelf. Laat ons luisteren naar des Heeren Woord hetwelk die liefde beschrijft: "Vele wateren zouden deze liefde niet kunnen uit blusschen, ja, de rivieren zouden ze niet verdrinken: al gaf iemand al het goed van zijn huis voor deze liefde, men zoude hem ten eenenmale verachten!" Hooglied 8:7.

De liefde Gods die in het hart van Gods volk woont is de hand die volmaakten tezamen snoert. Ze wordt slechts aangetroffen in de sfeer der volmaaktheid. O, zult ge zeggen, dan hebben wij op aarde die liefde zeker niet, want we zijn verre van volmaakt. Wel, ik heb eenvoudig weergegeven wat Gods Woord zegt van

de liefde Gods. In Coll. 3:14 staat: "En boven dit alles doet áán de liefde, dewelke is de band der volmaakt-*heid*." Hoe ter wereld zullen wij die band der *volmaakt-*heid** ervaren? Hier in dit tranendal, waar al Gods kinderen klagen over hunne zonde en verdorven-*heid*? Ja, dat kan.

Om dit goed te zien moet ge luisteren naar de beschrijving van Gods kind, zooals ge die vindt in de brieven van Johannes. Daar zegt hij: "Een iegelijk die uit God geboren is, die doet de zonde niet; want zijn zaad blijft in hem, en hij kan niet zondigen; want hij is uit God geboren." Dat is I Joh. 3:9. En in Joh. 5:18 staat: "Wij weten, dat een iegelijk die uit God geboren is, niet zondigt; maar die uit God geboren is, bewaart zichzelf en de booze vat hem niet." Ook zegt Paulus: "Indien ik hetgene doe dat ik niet wil, zoo doe ik nu hetzelfde niet meer, maar de zonde die in mij woont." Ten slotte, vinden we ook in Filipp. 3:15: "Zoovelen dan als wij volmaakt zijn, laat ons dit gevoelen. . . ." Teksten waar geleerd wordt, dat er iets in Gods volk ligt, dat onzondig en volmaakt is. Ik weet wel, dat wij hier zeer voorzichtig moeten zijn, en vooral niet leeren, dat Gods volk uit twee personen bestaat, die voor elkaar geen beteekenis hebben. Want dat zou een gruwelijke ketterij zijn; en ook leiden tot meerdere zonde en vergoelijken van de zonde. Neen, het kind Gods is één persoon en heeft slechts één leven. Er zijn geen twee ikken in hem, de ééne de vrome mensch en de andere ik de kwade mensch. Gods kind is één peroon.

Wat dan?

Dit: er is een beginsel des eeuwigen levens in hem, en van dat beginsel des eeuwigen levens in ons kan gezegd, dat het onzondig en volmaakt is. Het is hetzelfde als elders in Gods Woord genoemd wordt: den nieuwen mensch in Christus Jezus. Er is geen twijfel aan, dat Jezus dat nieuwe beginsel voor oogen had toen Hij zeide: Zalig zijn de *reinen van hart*! Door de nieuwe, hemelsche geboorte ontvangen wij immers een vleeschen hart? En ge kunt ook wel eenvoudig bij den tekst blijven waarover we het hebben: ge wordt eenvoudig genoemd: Liefhebbers des Heeren!

Wat is dan het verband tusschen die liefhebbers des Heeren en hun zonde die ze toch elken dag bedrijven? En dan zouden we het zóó willen voorstellen: Indien de persoon des menschen zich verbindt aan het nieuwe beginsel dan roept hij uit: Gij zijt mijn God! Dan bedrijft hij gerechtigheid. Doch als die persoon leeft en spreekt en denkt en handelt uit de "bewegingen der zonde die in ons zijn," namelijk, de oude *habitas*, heb-*belijkheid* om te zondigen, dan bedrijven we ongerechtig-*heid*. En dan belijdt de persoon van Gods kind die zonde in den nieuwen mensch. Het is altijd de nieuwe mensch in Christus Jezus die last heeft van de zonde en die zonde voor Gods aangezicht beweent. Dan zegt hij niet: O, het is slechts de oude natuur die zich moet

uitzondigen en daar is toch niets aan te veranderen! Maar dan zegt hij: Heere, *ik heb gezondigd en gedaan wat kwaad is in Uwe oogen*! Hij beseft, dat al de zonde die hij bedrijft *zijn eigen* zonde zijn en dat hij er aansprakelijk voor is. En verre van de zonde te vergoelijken, bindt hij den strijd aan tegen de zonde en doodt hij zijn leden die op de aarde zijn.

Nu is er nog ééne zaak die we voor den aandacht moeten hebben in die diepe probleem. En het is dit: niemand denke, dat het kwade en het goede in Gods kind op één lijn liggen. Dat ze beiden even sterk zijn en beiden zichzelf even sterk doen gelden. Goddank dat het zóó niet is! Want wij zijn meer dan overwinnaars. Al is het dat wij dagelijks diep zondigen, dit is de werkelijkheid: HET NIEUWE ELEMENT WINT HET ALTIJD! Ge kunt het ook zóó zeggen: De nieuwe mensch geeft altijd den toon aan, is het sterkste in den verlost, en daarom hebben we dan ook altoos de overwinning.

Ge zult vragen om bewijs, en dat is goed. Het onomstootelijke bewijs vindt ge in het hoofdstuk waaruit we een tekst aanhaalden zooeven. Ik verwijs U naar Romeinen 7. Daar staat, dat, hoewel ik het kwade doe, ik het toch haat. Let er op: ik haat het kwade! Daarin hebt ge den triumfkreet van Gods volk. (Hoe kan het anders? Hij is een liefhebber van God! En dat liefhebben van God *is het diepste in zijn wezen*! Dieper dan God liefhebben kan het niet bij hem in zijn diepste hart. De geheele redeneering van Romeinen komt juist hier op neer, dat hoewel ik de zonde doe, ik toch de overwinnaar ben op de zonde, want ik doe die zonde al klagende en al lijdende en al weennende. Ik bewijs daarmee, dat ik de zonde haat en de gerechtigheid lief heb.

Ziet ge nu, hoe schoon het tweede gelid van den tekst bij het eerste past? De psalm zegt: Gij liefhebbers des Heeren, haat het kwade! Het is even "natuurlijk" voor Gods kind om de zonde te haten, als het natuurlijk is voor een visch om te zwemmen!

Ik zou hier nog ééne opmerking ter onderwijzing willen bijvoegen. Ik hoor zoo nu en dan spreken van "boezemzonde". In het licht, echter, van Gods Woord is boezemzonde een onding voor Gods volk. Boezemzonde beteekent, dat er een zonde is die ge liefhebt, hartstochtelijk bemint. Nu moet ge wel verstaan, dat die, Goddank!, niet waar is. Dat kan met genade eenvoudig niet bestaan. Wat met dien term bedoeld wordt is wel duidelijk. Het is dit: er zijn zonden die ge gedurig doet, waar ge veel last van hebt, die ge, naar het schijnt, niet kwijt kunt. Elk kind van God heeft zijn eigen eigenaardige zwakheden, gebreken, zonden. Welnu, noemt die nooit meer boezemzonden, want dat is een beleediging voor God die U kocht en het is ook de leugen. Er is geen zonde die Gods volk bemint. Ik kan nog één stap verder gaan: die zooge-

naamde boezemzonde haat ge het felst. Als er ooit één oogenblik zou zijn, dat wij de zonde zouden beminnen, dan zouden we daardoor bewijzen, dat het werk van Gods genade in ons niet aanwezig is. Onderzoekt U en ge zult het zien, dat ge *alle* zonden haat. Het is omdat ge God liefhebt, omdat de liefde Gods in Uwe harten uitgestort is door den Heiligen Geest die ons is gegeven.

En nu verder.

Als ge U zóó openbaart: de zonde hatend, omdat gij God bemint, dan zullen de gevolgen niet uitblijven. Dan krijgt ge vijanden. Dan komen de goddeloozen met hoopen. Denkt aan Daniël. De liefde Gods die in Uw binnenste woont openbaarde zich in het haten van het kwade. Ge openbaardet zulks door Uw aangezicht, Uw woorden en Uw werken. Welnu, dan gaat men U haten en vervolgen. Dan gaat men van U vliegen en bedriegen, lasteren en lagen leggen. En dan komen straks ook de handen die zich naar U uitstrekken. Zoo komt Paulus in het gevang.

Doch geen nood. De psalm zegt: Hij bewaart de zielen Zijner gunstgenooten, Hij redt ze uit der goddeloozen hand.

Betekent dat, dat ge nooit zult lijden en weenen?

Och neen.

De eeuwen der historie zijn roodgeverwd met het bloed der martelaren. Ze hadden God lief; bewezen het; en bogen zich in smarten vooraleer ze hun laatsten adem uitbliezen. Velen "hebben bespottingen en geeselingen geleden, en ook banden en gevangenis; zijn gesteenigd geworden, in stukken gezaagd, verzocht, door het zwaard ter dood gebracht, hebben gewandeld zijnde (welker de wereld niet waardig was), hebben in woestijnen gedood en op bergen en in spelonken en in de hollen der aarde."

Hoe werden ze dan bewaard en gered?

Dat zit zóó: er staat dat God hun *zielen* bewaart!

In al die smarten zijn we meer dan overwinnaars, want het geeseltuig helpt ons ter heiligmaking. Het bloed en de tranen mede ten goede. Bewijs? Paulus zong in de gevangenis met het bloed op zijn rug. Ook bad hij.

Ergens elders zeide God: Hij liet niemand toe hen te onderdrukken! Hier hebt ge dezelfde zaak. Niemand van Gods volk werd werkelijk verdrukt. Hoe meer ze geslagen werden, hoe meer ze opbloeden in hun liefdeleven voor God. Hallelujah!

Hier is Uw leven, Gods volk: Licht en vroolijkheid wordt U gezaaid door God. Zij zijn Uw pad hier op aarde. Licht is het inbegrip van alle deugd en vroolijkheid is die toestand wanneer al Uw behoeften vervuld zijn. En het verband tusschen de twee zinsdeelen is dit: Uw eenige ware behoefte is het Licht, dat is, de deugd. Als ge de deugd Gods ontvangt, dan proeft ge waarlijk vroolijkheid. Daar zingt men blij met dankbre psalmen!

En het wordt U gezaaid: het is Uw pad hier door de stikdonkere duisternissen. Wilt ge het dieper bestudeeren, ga dan naar Gods Woord. Het is immers Uw licht om 't donker op te klaren. Dan zult ge met Paulus zingen in het vunzig kerkerhol. Dominees Overduin en Knoop zullen het U vertellen. Ze maakten er kennis mee: meer dan wij. Ook waren er veel meer der zulken in Buchenwald en Dachau. Daar was immers de hemel; al was het dan ook als in een theater. Ze hebben er Godsvrucht geleerd.

Er blijft voorts slechts één ding voor U over. Ge begint er hier mede en ge zult voortgaan in sneller tempo en in zoeter akkoorden later in den hemel: Verblijdt U in den Heere en spreekt lof ter gedachtenis van Zijn onuitsprekelijk schoone heiligheid.

Er is niets schooner hier op aarde dan een vroom mensch. We hebben ze lief. Want in hun vroomheid zien we de herkomst. Alle heiligheid des levens stoelt op de heiligheid Gods. Ze *is* die heiligheid.

Ik zag nooit Jozef en David: doch ik heb ze beiden lief.

Vraagt ge mij waarom? Dan is het antwoord: omdat ze beiden op onderscheidene wijze de onuitsprekelijk schoone heiligheid Gods openbaarden.

Ja, ja, ik weet het wel: hun zonden staan er ook. Maar zij beweenden hun zonden. Leest de onbeschrijfelijk schoone psalmen Davids. Ze leeren ons te klagen vanwege onze zonden.

Verblijdt U in de Bron van heiligheid en alle deugd.

En spreekt lof van God, beroemt U in Zijn heiligen Naam.

Het is immers de hemel op aarde!?

G. V.

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## IN HIS FEAR

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### The Gospel and Our Social Life

#### *Scripture's Sociology*

Scripture's primary interest is spiritual.

Scripture insists that we shall deal righteously with our fellowman, treat him with respect and in the fear of God. In short, we shall love our neighbor.

I believe it may truly be said that Scripture is not much interested in how well you fare economically or financially. With us this is often the primary thing, and no wonder, because we are of the earth, earthy and carnal.

In I Cor. 7:20-22 we find Paul saying: "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he is called. Art thou called, being a slave, care not for it, but if thou mayest be free, use that rather". You would

have expected perhaps that Paul would condemn slavery, but he does not do that. Neither however does he uphold it. Paul simply says that sanctification and victorious living is possible in either slavery or freedom. If victorious living and sanctification were impossible under slavery Paul would have condemned it. But not so. If you can be a free man, use it, but if a slave, serve the Lord thus. But Paul is not much interested in one or the other, his interest is that we all walk as "in the Lord", and each in his own calling.

Likewise when Paul sends Onesimus, the slave, back to Philemon the master from whom he had fled. Paul admonishes Philemon to treat him as a brother. But Onesimus goes back to his servile task. Isn't Paul interested in putting a stop to slavery? Certainly, if Philemon fears the Lord cruel slavery will cease. But Onesimus must go back to his master. Slavery or freedom is not important, what IS important is that we fear the Lord and serve Him wherever we have our calling.

And the soldiers came to John the Baptist saying: what must we do? John said: keep on being soldiers, it isn't sinful, but do not do what soldiers generally do. Do not put fear into men. And how about the wages? The wages are pretty low. Says John: be content with your wages.

Then there is that man who came to Jesus and said: Master, my brother refuses to give me my rightful share of the inheritance, speak to my brother about this. Certainly this is an important matter. But notice that Jesus is not interested in this aspect of it. He says: Who hath made me a judge and divider over you? Then Jesus rebukes the man and applies to him and his like the parable of the Rich Fool. Behind the request for his share in the inheritance (which in itself could be perfectly all right) lay a covetous heart, and Jesus passes by the matter of dollars and cents and penetrates into the spiritual things.

And there is that brother going to court with brother (I Cor. 6) which Paul forbids. Paul is not interested in devising ways and means of getting the man his dollars, then Paul would perhaps have ordered him to get the best lawyer in town. But says Paul: "Why do ye not rather take wrong?" It were better you allowed yourself to be defrauded than in covetousness to drag your brother to court merely to get some money. Paul was not interested in attaining the material goal, he wants to know what is behind this court procedure.

James, what about those rich farmers whose harvests we have reaped and they have kept back our pay. What shall we do? What union shall we join to get what is coming to us? James says: be patient brethren. . . . don't run ahead of the Lord. He shares your withheld wages crying for punishment, the Lord will take care of His Cause.

Is not this the ever present danger that while we presume to be fighting against social unrighteousness and agitating against it, we ourselves contribute to this social evil by living out of covetousness. At the root of our economic misery lies covetousness, wrath, lust and greed. From this stems our class struggle, and from class struggle proceeds more covetousness, wrath and greed. Such is the vicious circle. Hence it is against these evils that Scripture warns us.

If therefore we are mere carnal creatures, interested first and only in temporal matters, the sociology of Scripture is very shocking, for it approaches each one of us as a potential contributor to the already terrific social misery which we see round about us.

Only if we live out of regeneration and seek to please God, yea and are spiritually minded will we be in a fit frame of mind to apply God's precepts to our social life.

By approaching our social problems and seeking a remedy for them in any other way than the way of obedient and sanctified living only increases our problems, and joins us to the ranks of those who convert this present world into a chaos of emulation and strife.

### *Our Weapons are Spiritual.*

Living as we do in the midst of an evil world, and having need of our daily bread, we shall have to have recourse to various weapons.

Observe the weapons which the flesh uses. Their weapons are altogether carnal, even if sometimes they gloss them over with a thin coat of christian veneer. We all know which weapons she uses. In the home they use threatenings and divorce; in economics they use deceit and fraud; in labor and industry they use strikes and picketings together with all manner of force. The employers use their capital, the employees use force.

But our weapons are spiritual, says Paul.

Our enemies are not first composed of flesh and blood, but they are spiritual powers of wickedness.

Our weapon is first of all the Word of God. Both when we are tempted from within or oppressed from without. We do indeed have certain rights and privileges, the which if any man take from us he sins grievously and ranks himself with Cain. We do have rights and we do have privileges. No man may take them from us. But there come times that we must yield one or more of them. We can if need be yield them. But we can never yield the Word of God. Men may ultimately take away from us our rights and privileges, so that finally we can neither buy nor sell because of the injustice against the saints, but men can never take away from us the Word of God.

When Jotham stood alone against the Antichrist Abimelech, he had neither armies nor weapons, but he threw the Word of God at Abimelech, and later a woman dropped a stone upon his head, and killed him. Thus the Word of God, the curse which Jotham had spoken, overcame him.

Our weapon is the Word of God.

One may say: people do not care about the Word of God, it is not an effective weapon. Pray, what other weapon has He given us?

Together with the Word of God we have prayer. When Hezekiah looked out one morning and saw Jerusalem besieged by Sanecherib, and letters came, Hezekiah went to God, and laid his letters and his cause before the face of God.

And I assure you that if we move prayerfully we move very carefully.

Faith is the victory.

Implicit faith that God cares.

#### *Our Cause Victorious.*

Christ most perfectly championed the Cause of God. In doing this He lost even his garment and hung naked upon the cross. . . . but knowing that He had the victory.

How can we escape the revealed truth that if we perfectly champion the Cause of God we shall finally find ourselves in a position in which we can neither buy nor sell, unless we cease being spiritual.

Our social science leads not to a utopia but to ever tightening battle lines, and to a condition in which if the Son of God did not suddenly come upon the clouds of judgment, the Church of God would go down to utter defeat. But the Captain of our faith, in Whose hands lies our cause, will return, to shake the wicked forever out of the earth, to purify it by fire and present a new heaven and a new earth to the meek. In this world righteousness dwells.

Our cause is victorious.

But we are saved in hope.

We ought to consider all these things when we live and walk amid the social realities of this present day.

Next time a few things about applied sociology.

M. G.

#### CONSISTORIES, ATTENTION!

Those desiring pulpit supply by students during the summer should send their requests *as early as possible* to Homer C. Hoeksema, 618 Paris Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan. Requests will be filled in the order in which they come in.

Rev. H. Hoeksema, Rector.

## FROM HOLY WRIT

### O. T. Quotations in the N. T.

(Conclusion on Rom. 10:5-8; Deut. 30:12, 13)

Strange though it may sound to us, it is nevertheless the clear teaching of Holy Writ, that Israel must pass through the curses of the law to obtain the promised blessing.

Israel, the church of God, must pass through death and hell to get to heaven.

Such is the very evident implication of such a passage of Holy Writ, as Romans 11:31, where we read: "For God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that He might be *merciful* to all". And, again, also this sense is very clear in Galatians 3:22, which reads: "For the Scripture hath shut up all things under sin, that the promise which is out of the faith of Jesus Christ might be to all them who believe".

Now, what bearing does this have on our discussion of Paul's quotation?

We should bear in mind, that, in this *quotation* in Romans 10:5-8, the fundamental question is whether Paul's interpretation is the real sense of Deut. 29 and 30. It is our position, as was evident in former articles that the apostle gives us the true sense of the Holy Spirit of Christ in Deut. 30:12, 13, in his quotation.

If this be the case, then we should also be able to give account of this from the rest of the Holy Scriptures. In this we find great support from Gal. 3:22. Paul says: "the Scripture" has shut up all things under sin. This means that the fact of all things being *under sin*, does not merely appear from a *few isolated passages*, but that he who understands the Word of God will see this throughout the Scriptures. You can begin at Moses and proceed through all the prophets, but always the "Scripture" teaches that all things are under sin.

Is there then no mercy? Is there then no way out of this divine corral of the law; are we so hemmed in by the law, that we can never escape its curse and malediction?

No, God forbid!

The Lord, our God, is very near in His gracious presence among His people. He has a righteousness. He has prepared and manifested His righteousness. Is His name not the Lord, our *righteousness*?!

God is in Christ. He is Immanuel, God-with-us! As such He Himself in our flesh comes and fulfills the law in our stead, in our behalf, and merits for us life, the right to sonship. The law was, indeed, given of God through Moses, but grace and truth become a reality through Jesus Christ. John 1:17. He is the



Lamb of God that taketh away by His mighty arm, the sins of the world. He it is that shows unto us, explains to us God, whom no man hath seen. Does Jesus not tell Phillip at the Lord's Supper in the upper room: He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father? And does not God come to stand before us in all the beauty of His wondrous grace, and assure us in our hearts, that he, who receives this grace, will never desire ought else. Those drinking of this water will never more thirst. He is the true Bread sent down from heaven by the Father.

It is to this wonderful gift of God that the apostle Paul speaks in Rom. 10:6-8, when he introduces the confession of the "righteousness of faith".

It should not be difficult to understand this central truth of the gospel.

Let us try to understand this. In doing so there are a few questions that need to be answered.

There is first of all the question what Paul means with "the righteousness of faith confesses". What is this "righteousness of faith"? How can this "righteousness" make a confession, and that, too, such a jubilant one?

Oh, but do you not understand that this "righteousness" is the sum-total of all that God has prepared for the salvation of the guilty and damn-worthy sinner? It is, indeed, wholly *God's* righteousness. He has realized it in the death of His Son on the Cross. There our guilt of sin was paid, the right to sonship or adoption merited, and Christ became for us righteousness, sanctification and complete redemption.

This righteousness God imputes to the guilty sinner. The sinner has kept none of God's commandments, yea, he has forfeited all through his transgressions. He is a hater of God and His law. And now God deals with the sinner, in this righteousness, as though he had never sinned but as if he had kept all the commandments of God. So gloriously wonderful is righteousness, that even though our conscience accuse us, God so imputes this righteousness to us, so that we may say: I know that my sins are all forgiven me, they are all washed away.

Yet, this is not all there is to this righteousness.

This righteousness is also instilled into the heart of God's people. There are many expressions in the Bible to represent this truth. Sometimes it is called living unto God by the faith of the Son of God, Gal. 2:19, 20; it is the placing of our members as servants unto righteousness, so that we no more are under the dominion of sin. In short, he who possesses this righteousness is a new creature, old things have passed away and all things have become new.

This righteousness is a new and transforming power. It lifts one out of sin and death, and actually caused its possessor to have his conversation in heaven.

It gives hope to those in despair, rest for the weary, water for the thirsty. And he who possesses it desires nothing better. One thing he knows; he was blind but now he sees. Before receiving this righteousness he was darkness, but now he is light in the Lord.

Such is the righteousness of God in its redeemed and transforming power. And it is all in Christ, who is the end of the law.

Always this righteousness is called the righteousness of *faith*.

Also this is a matter that calls for illucidation. Why is it always associated with faith? What is this *faith*? This faith is God's sovereign gift of grace whereby He ingrafts the dead by elect sinner into Christ and into all His benefits. By means of this faith the sinner becomes the actual recipient of the benefits in Christ, i.e. of the righteousness of God in Christ. Because we receive this righteousness *through* faith, by *means* of faith in Christ, this righteousness is called "the righteousness of faith."

Let us not mistake this faith to be mere *historical* faith. He who merely assents to the historical truths of the Holy Scriptures does not yet believe in the Scriptural sense of the term. One may very well believe the historical fact that Jesus was born from the virgin Mary and that He rose again the third day from the dead, and that He ascended to heaven. He may know this very well, yea, so well, that he can instruct others in the truth of the gospel, and still not *possess* this all by faith. Just as one can, for instance, very well know what elements water is composed of, can know all the possible usages of water without ever bathing in it, or drink it and enjoy its benefits, so also one can know all about Christ without yet believing in Him and obtain the righteousness that is in Him. He who believes in Christ and confesses that God has raised Him from the dead, confesses from the heart that Jesus is Lord, does not merely know all about Jesus, but knows Christ Himself. Him, the living Lord, the Christ in all His blessings and benefits of salvation the believer knows!

He who knows Christ by faith obtains by this faith righteousness. For Him it is a joyful and blessed experience. So real is it to Him, that He jealously keeps the truth of this salvation ever before him. As He experiences this righteousness by faith this righteousness controls his tongue and heart. And thus the righteousness of faith *confesses*!

It *confesses*!

It has a speech. It believes, and therefore, speaks.

And what does it say? The apostle casts its speech into a negative form, quoting Moses. The believing heart, drinking from the fulness in Christ, the fulness of grace and truth says: Do not say who shall descend into hell, into the abyss! Do not say this because this

is finished. Christ has descended thither! He has performed the uttermost! To the very bitter death on the Cross, and His descension into hell.

Thus speaks the believing heart as to the death of Christ. And, again, faith speaks also as to Christ's ascension. It says: "Do not say: who shall ascend into heaven." That would be denying Christ's victory, His passing through the heavens as the first-fruits, the First-born of all creatures.

Nay, do not speak so foolishly, says this righteousness in the heart of every believer.

The believer, righteousness in the believer's heart, the praises that God has there prepared (Himself says: The Word is nigh thee; it is even in thy mouth and in thy heart. Oh, it is in the mouth. From the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. The tree is good, hence also the fruit is good. Living waters spring forth from the good well of the soul of him who possesses this righteousness by faith.

Thus the righteousness of faith sings:

My song forever shall record,  
The tender mercies of the Lord;  
Thy faithfulness will I proclaim,  
And every age shall know Thy Name.

Thus we sing in the Lord; sing a new song to Jehovah, for the wonders He has wrought. Thus did Israel sing. They sang of "Mery and of Justice"!

For God's righteousness was very near. It was near to them in their heart and mouth when they entered into the tabernacle. There were the sacrifices, the altar, the whole ceremonial, typical institution pointing to the atonement that Christ had wrought, Christ was for them the end of the law. In Him they hoped and trusted, and had peace for their soul, and had a sacrifice of praise upon their lips.

And thus, even though the yoke was hard and the burden heavy of the law, Israel saw before their eyes the dying Christ, their peace. The covenant into which Israel entered was ratified with blood. And this blood proclaimed: Salvation by grace, through the faith in the Promise, which would be realized through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Indeed, Christ is the end of the law. He is the end of the law for everyone *believing*!

The righteousness of faith speaks; it speaks *thus*! It says: Jesus, my Lord!

Thus it spoke in Moab's plains.

And today the righteousness of faith still speaks thus. For Christ is the end of the law for every believer in the Old Testament Dispensation and in the New Testament Dispensation.

Is He not the same yesterday, today and forever?!

G. L.

## PERISCOPE

*Russia. . . .*

The following is a *United Press* dispatch which appeared in the *Holland Evening Sentinel* recently. It was written by R. H. Shackford, veteran *United Press* diplomatic correspondent. Mr. Shackford has just returned from covering the Big Four foreign ministers conference at Moscow and is writing a series of articles portraying background glimpses of Soviet Russia. From the following it becomes apparent that even Russia is discovering it cannot disregard God's laws with impunity.

"Religion. . . is the opium of the people."

Those words of Karl Marx are chiseled in red sandstone on the wall of the Lenin museum on Red Square. Moscow's masses pass beneath them.

While hundreds of Moscovites partake of the "opium" each Sunday at Greek Orthodox church services, their numbers are comparatively small. The largest turnout is on Easter and Christmas. Even on those religious holidays, the number is small in relation to the population of Moscow.

Twenty-five years of anti-religious propaganda in the Soviet Union has done its work among the younger generation.

The Soviet government abandoned its frontal attack on religion during the war and allowed restricted reopening of churches under state supervision.

Communist propaganda now is aimed at youngsters in an effort to lead them away from religious doctrine.

Marriages in churches are still permitted, but to be recognized as legal there must also be a civil ceremony and registration.

Communist party leaders encourage large families. But occasionally they wage a campaign against teenage marriages which have been commonplace throughout Russia's history. My 17-year-old courier in Moscow, for example was the mother of two children.

Divorce used to be easy. Now the government discourages it and makes it difficult for a man and wife to separate legally.

Morality, duty to family and children, and bourgeois harlotry are favorite subjects of current Soviet publications. Aiming at the younger generation, they now quote Lenin at length to prove he opposed "free love". Young Soviets are told:

'Lenin opposed bourgeois prejudices in relation to women and family. . . . Lenin emphasized the value of proletarian marriage which is based on deep feeling of love and mutual respect. . . . communism does not preach esthetic renunciation of love; it does not crush gladness and vigor which love brings with it. But our

morality condemns bourgeois desire for pleasure and forgetfulness of public duty. . . .

Drastic tightening of divorce procedure accompanied wartime abandonment of the anti-religious campaigns and the postwar campaign against bourgeois immorality."

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*Clipping The News. . . .*

#### New Chinese Testament.

A translation of the New Testament directly from the original Greek into Chinese has been completed by Lu Chenchung, research fellow in the School of Religion at Yenching University in Peiping, China.

This is said to be the first attempt to transfer the original Greek into Chinese without going through the medium of another language. It is, therefore, said to be free from a number of inaccuracies and ambiguities which are contained in the present Chinese Bible.—*World Outlook*.

#### Conversion of Hindus Prohibited.

A law forbidding conversion of a Hindu to Christianity has been passed by Serjuga State, in the central provinces of India. Not only natives but missionaries are threatened with fines and imprisonment. The fact of the matter is that the native rajahs have always been under the control of Hindu priests, and missionaries have never been allowed to enter this small, backward jungle state. All native Christians who have drifted in from surrounding areas have been severely persecuted and driven out of the state.—*Global Missions*.

#### Canadian Presbyterian Minister Resigns.

The Rev. Perry F. Rockwood, Presbyterian minister since 1944 in Truro, N. S., has resigned his pulpit and withdrawn from the Presbyterian Church in Canada, following a unanimous decision of his Presbytery finding him guilty of following "divisive" tactics in the work in his own congregation and in his outspoken criticism of his denomination.

Last fall Mr. Rockwood preached a series of sermons on the Roman Catholic Church, in which he discussed not only the beliefs and practices of that church, but also the Canadian Protestant-Romanist issue. In certain sections of Canada, notably Quebec province, the dominant part of the population is Romanist. Rockwood charged that Roman Catholicism was responsible for the political isolation of Quebec, for the economic backwardness of its people, for its illiteracy, poor health, and superstitions. He also charged that Protestantism, including the Presbyterians, was allowing this Romanist influence to increase, and was in a sense

cooperating with it. (He referred to the activities of the Canadian Protestant Council of Churches, of which the Presbyterian Church is a member, in flirting with prominent Roman Catholics.

In another series of sermons on "What is Wrong with the Protestant Church?" Mr. Rockwood described the church as being "sick unto death" doctrinally, educationally, and ecumenically. In these sermons he gave special attention to the Presbyterian branch of Protestantism. Among other things, he attacked the colleges in Montreal and Toronto, where the Bible is constantly being attacked and criticized. He declared that students from these colleges entering the Presbyterian ministry are advised to employ the device of "mental reservation" when taking their ordination vows.

It was inevitable that a young minister taking this strong stand in an established church, would find a certain division among his congregation. The congregation of the church in Truro was divided, but apparently during the period of Rockwood's ministry it grew in size, and many young people were added. New mission stations were started in two places in the city, and the church activities were greatly increased.

In January the Presbytery in which the church is located appointed a committee to investigate the situation in Truro, and the committee finally came in with a report charging Rockwood with various types of divisive activity. Formal charges against him were filed by the moderator of the Presbytery, the Rev. Frank Lawson, and the trial was held early in March. The outcome was a unanimous conviction, though apparently a compromise was offered. Mr. Rockwood was told he might remain in the good graces of the Presbytery if he would withdraw from sale all unsold copies of his printed sermons (some five thousand copies of the series on the Protestant Church had been printed and sold), refrain from printing any more sermons undermining confidence in the Presbyterian Church in Canada, refrain from publicity in the press, and show due humility and repentance for statements made against fellow ministers and try to understand and approve the policies of the Canadian Church.

Mr. Rockwood refused to submit to these demands. Instead he announced that he was withdrawing from the Church and would open an independent work in Truro.—*The Presbyterian Guardian*.

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*u. S. Views U. s.*

(Continued from last issue)

Continuing, Mr. Van Spronsen points out the difficulties which face us in America in the attempt to maintain a pure Church. He remarks that America is



the "melting pot" of the nations and that the various elements soon become amalgamated and americanized. "It is amazing", he writes, "to see how soon the children of immigrants become acclimated in America. Most of them are ashamed of their ancestry and have an aversion for the fact that the mother tongue is still spoken in the family circle. By way of reaction they very quickly become American, especially in respect to language. And now that the American regulations have practically closed the door to immigration. . . . the old languages are fast disappearing. There are, therefore, only a very few Reformed Churches in America that still have holland services.

"This is all a matter of course and but natural. But the great danger in it all is that not only do the languages die out but also the essential attributes of the Church disappear and are transformed into a sort of religious-churchly americanism, with a conformity that finally leaves no room for an essential reformed character. . . . one does not see the CHURCH any more. The Christian Reformed Church is conceived of as just one of the many denominations, by the youth of America, and they find it good that "their" Church be conformed to other American Churches in as many respects as possible. . . ."

Mr. Van Spronsen remarks that this tendency is also evident from the form of the services as revealed in the order of worship, which, he claims, has become so Americanized that it has lost its Reformed character. He continues: "I have lying before me a bulletin of one of the Christian Reformed Churches in Grand Rapids in which such a service is presented. Whenever one enters a church he finds such a bulletin and can consult it to know what will take place. There are several good points. Of the quiet devotion, for example, that is the rule in these services, we in the Netherlands can well take a lesson. But the whole design of this type of service bears an American imprint in which the Reformed note is being lost. First we are informed what shall be played on the organ before the service, this is to be followed by silent prayer. Song, congregation standing, Invocation, congregation standing, Salutation, congregation standing, Reading of the Law and the Summary, Confession of Sin, Penitential Psalm, No. 101, Assurance of Pardon, Apostles' Creed, recited by minister and congregation; all of which takes place while the congregation stands. Song, congregation seated, General Prayer, Offering and Song, Offertory Prayer and Response from the Organ, Scripture Lesson, Sermon, Closing Prayer, Song, Benediction, Postlude.

"This worship is also characterized by the fact that many more hymns are sung than Psalms. In various services, which I attended, there were many more hymns sung than Psalms and their is quite a wide variety of hymns. The Psalter Hymnal. . . . contains

327 numbers which are rhymed Psalms, while No.'s 328 through 468 are the hymns; many of which are beautiful both in tune and content. But it stands to reason that these songs can never take the place of the Psalms. These are inspired by the Holy Spirit and must continue to hold first place.

With this form of worship the preaching appears to be rather squeezed-in. The sermons are short; more in the nature of an address than a preaching of the Word. The whole is so americanized that the youth see no distinction between Reformed worship and other services.

"The concept Church is befogged, and whenever a minister concerns himself with this subject, unconscious of Art. 28 of our Confession of Faith concerning the Church and of the 21st Lord's Day of our Catechism, it stand to reason that the young American generation develops a concept of pluriformity in which the true conception of the Church is lost.

"It is only this development—in the wrong direction—that makes it possible to explain that many find it so easy to acquiesce in the deposition and expulsion of such an one as Rev. Hoeksema. Even ministers, with whom I spoke, told me frankly that they deplored the fact but they were able to acquiesce since they saw no actual principle difference between the one Church group and the other. It is but a matter of the "visible" church, they said, we all remain members of the one invisible church.

"In the same way the ecclesiastical difficulties in the Netherlands are attempted to be passed off as mere trifles. When I spoke of the schism in the Netherlands to a small private gathering, at which also several ministers were present, it was told me by one of them that essentially the Synod had only deposed Prof. Schilder but had not wished to express any exercise of discipline. When I explained that the deposition was based on Art. 80 of the Church Order it seemed not to make much difference to the brother. Only when I went a bit deeper into the case and spoke of the character of this expression of discipline by pointing out that Art. 80 lists the gross sins which make an individual worthy of deposition, and that the Synodical gathering had prayed for the conversion of "the sinner" and had advised the Churches to do the same, did they begin to understand that there was something wrong here.

"The true concept of Church is fast disappearing in America but we should not be too harsh with them in this their struggle against Americanism, especially as we remember that the Synodical Reformed Churches in the Netherlands commit the same error while so close to the sources and without being troubled with the American influence of conformity."

(To be continued)

W. H.