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MEDITATION

Vervulling

En als de dag van het pinksterfeest vervuld werd, waren zij allen eendrachtelijk bijeen.

En zij werden allen vervuld met den Heiligen Geest. . . .

Hand 2:1, 4.

Vervulling!

Dat is, in één woord, de beteekenis van pinksteren.

Als de dag van het pinksterfeest vervuld werd, of vervuld was, vervult God Zijne belofte.

O, zeker, ook kerstfeest is vervulling. Het is het begin, en het beginsel, van de vervulling van de belofte des heils. De vleeschwoording des Woords is het wonder der wonderen, het centrale heilsfeit, zonder hetwelk alle andere heilsfeiten eenvoudig ondenkbaar zijn. Als de Zoon Gods ons vleesch en bloed heeft aangenomen, is de belofte in beginsel vervuld. Daarom zingt dan ook op kerstfeest de gemeente:

God had hun, tot hun troost, gemeld,
Hoe Zijn gena ons redden zou
Van onzer haat'ren wreed geweld;
Nu blijkt Zijn onverwrik'bre trouw;
Nu toont Hij Zijn barmhartigheid,
Van ouds den vaad'ren toegezeid;
En dat Hij wil gedenken
Aan 't heilverbond, aan dien gestaafden eed,
Dien Hij weker aan Abram deed,
Aan Zijn verbond, dat van geen wank'len weet.

Maar pinksteren is de vervulling van de vervulling. Het heil is verwerkelijk. De Zoon heeft onder ons getabernakeld, heeft ons den Vader geopenbaard, heeft onze zonden gedragen op het hout, is waarlijk opge-

staan, opgevaren in de hoogte, heeft de gevangenis gevankelijk weggevoerd, is verhoogd aan de rechterhand des Vaders, en heeft voor Zijne gemeente de fonteynen des levenden waters geopend, opdat wij uit Hem zouden ontvangen ook genade voor genade! Het Lam Gods is geslacht, en heeft de zonde de wereld weggedragen. Er is voldoening en verzoening met God, vergeving der zonden, rechtvaardigmaking, kindschap Gods, eeuwig leven. Er is een fontein van heil, van Goddelijke liefde, genade, barmhartigheid, kennis en wijsheid, gemeenschap der vriendschap, geloof, hoop, blijdschap en zaligheid, vrede en eeuwige heerlijkheid. En het is alles in den God onzer volkomene zaligheid, geopenbaard in Jezus Christus, den Eeniggeborene, God uit God in ons vleesch, Die overgeleverd werd om onze zonden, en opgewekt om onze rechtvaardigmaking, Die ten hemel opvoer vol eer, in 't binnenste heiligdom inging, en alle macht heeft ontvangen in hemel en op aarde. . . .

Christus de Heer!

In Hem is al ons heil!

Maar dat die Fontein des heils geopend wordt, en haar onuitsprekelijk rijke en heerlijke weldaden, als stroomen des levenden waters, in de gemeente uitstort, —dat is de beteekenis van pinksteren.

Het is de vervulling der vervulling!

Op den pinksterdag mag Gods kerk in de wereld met recht zingen:

Dit is de dag, de roem der dagen,
Dien Israels God geheilgd heeft;
Laat ons verheugd, van zorg ontslagen,
Hem roemen, die ons blijdschap geeft.

En ze mag, in de hope van zekere verhooring, het gebed opzenden tot den troon der genade:

Och Heer, geef thans Uw zegeningen;
Och Heer, geef heil op dezen dag;
Och, dat men op deez' eerstelingen
En rijken oogst van voorspoed zag.

Pinksteren: feest van den vollen oogst!

Dag der eerstelingen des Geestes!
 Vervulling!

Ze waren eendrachtelijk bijeen:

Van dezen dag der eerstelingen, ofschoon niet met aanwijzing van datum en ure, had de Heiland tot hen gesproken.

Hij had er van gewaagd, dat Hij wel heen zou gaan tot den Vader, maar dat Hij hen geen wezen laten zou. Den Trooster zou Hij hun zenden, Die hen in alle waarheid zou leiden, in Wien Hijzelf weder tot hen zou komen, en Die bij hen zou blijven in der eeuwigheid.

Tevens had Hij hen geboden, "dat zij van Jeruzalem niet scheiden zouden, maar verwachten de belofte des Vaders," die ze van Hem gehoord hadden. En nogmaals had Hij hun verzekerd, dat ze gedoopt zouden worden met den Heiligen Geest, "niet lang na deze dagen." De kracht des Heiligen Geestes zouden ze ontvangen, en in die kracht zouden ze Zijne getuigen zijn, "zoo te Jeruzalem, als in geheel Judea en Samaria, en tot aan het uiterste der aarde."

Daarna was Hij van hen opgenomen in den hemel, en ze hadden Hem niet meer gezien.

En ze hadden gewacht, tien dagen nu, in Jeruzalem, naar het woord van den Heiland, gewacht en verwacht, "eendrachtelijk volhardende in het bidden en smeeken."

En nu was het pinksterfeest vervuld!

Was, in den weg van hun gebed, hunne verwachting van de vervulling der belofte, thans misschien gespannen? Leefde er in hunne harten misschien de stellige hope, dat het Gode zou behagen om juist op dit feest der eerstelingen hen deelgenooten te maken van de eerstelingen des Geestes? 't Zou niet onmogelijk zijn. God de Heere, zij wisten het, doet immers alles op tijd. Er is, daarvan waren ze wel verzekerd, orde in al Gods werk. Lang na des Heilands opvaart kon het immers niet zijn, dat zij de belofte des Geestes ontvangen zouden. Ze zouden immers, eerst nadat ze de kracht des Geestes ontvangen hadden, getuigen kunnen worden? En had de Heiland niet Zelf hun de verzekering gegeven, dat ze niet lang zouden hebben te wachten op de vervulling der belofte?

En de dag van het pinksterfeest was vervuld!

Was er niet voor al Gods werk een tijd, eene ure? In de volheid des tijds had God Zijn Zoon gezonden; er was eene bepaalde "ure" geweest voor het lijden en sterven van hun Heiland, en dikwijls had Hij van die ure gesproken. 't Was geweest de "ure" van het paaschfeest, daags nadat het lam geslacht en gegeten werd. Eene ure was er geweest voor Zijne opstanding: altijd had de Heiland gesproken van Zijne opstanding ten derden dage, daags nadat de rijpe schoof, de eerste-

ling van den graanoogst, voor het aangezicht des Heeren bewogen werd. En was het ook thans niet zulk eene volheid des tijds? Tien dagen waren verlopen sedert de Heiland van hen werd opgenomen in den hemel, en tien is immers eene volheid des tijds, naar de mate door God Zelf bepaald. Zeven maal zeven dagen waren voorbij gegaan, sedert de Heiland was opgewekt als de eersteling dergenen, die ontslapen zijn. En is zeven niet symbool van Gods verbond, van Zijn ingaan in de ruste, van de vervulling der belofte?

Leefde er misschien iets van dit alles in de harten dergenen, die daar op den pinksterdag, of in de vervulling van dien dag, eendrachtelijk bijeen waren?

En, o, bovendien was het immers ook pinksterfeest, dat vervuld was. En evenals paaschfeest was ook dit feest een feest der eerstelingen. Israel was Gods verbondsvolk, en was geroepen met alles voor het aangezicht van zijn verbonds-God te leven en te wandelen. Het woonde in een verbondsland, en de opbrengsten van het land ontving het als verbondsweldaden uit de hand des Heeren zijns Gods. In de erkenning daarvan moest het zijn eerstelingen van den oogst den Heere brengen. Zoo op paschen, het begin van den graanoogst. O, zeker, dan gedacht, in de offerande en het eten des lams, het volk ook aan de wonderlijke verlossing, die God teweeg gebracht had, toen Hij hen uit het diensthuis had uitgeleid. Maar op datzelfde feest ontving het ook de eerstelingen van den graanoogst uit de hand van zijnen God, en bracht het, met dankerkentenis, eer het nog den sikkel in het goudvolgende graan sloeg, de rijpe schoof voor het aangezicht des Heeren. Maar zoo was ook pinksteren een feest der eerstelingen. De graanoogst was binnen gehaald, en de brooden der eerstelingen werden in Gods huis gebracht op dien dag.

Was de opgestane Heiland niet de vervulling van het type in de eersteling van de paaschschoof?

En moest nu ook het feest der eerstelingen van den vollen oogst niet type blijken te zijn van de eerstelingen des Geestes?

Neen, zij, die daar in Jeruzalem, op de vervulling der belofte wachtten, waren zich zeker van dit alles niet bewust. Ze hebben het niet kunnen beredeneeren.

Maar was toch, ook al gaven ze zich van dit alles geen nauwkeurige rekenschap, hun verwachting thans niet bijzonder gespannen?

Hoe dit zij, feit is, dat het feest der weken, type was van het blijvende pinksterfeest der kerk.

Als de dag van het pinksterfeest vervuld was, moest het werkelijke pinksteren aanvangen.

Zeker, ook reeds omdat juist op dien dag Joden en Jodengenooten uit alle oorden naar Jeruzalem stroomden: de Geest werd immers uitgestort op alle vleesch?

Maar ook omdat op dien dag de werkelijke eerstelingen, de eerstelingen des Geestes, werden uitgestort in de gemeente.

't Oude pinksterfeest had een einde.
't Nieuwe ving aan!
Vervulling!

Eendrachtelijk waren ze bijeen.

Hoevelen daar op dien doorluchtigen dag vergaderd waren, wordt ons niet vermeld.

Het eerste hoofdstuk van ditzelfde boek der Handelingen, verhaalt van de apostelen, met de vrouwen, en Maria, de moeder van Jezus, en met Zijne broederen. Hun aantal schijnt zich te hebben vermeerderd, want toen Petrus in hun midden opstond om te pleiten voor het verkiezen van een apostel in de plaats van Judas, was er eene schare bijeen van omtrent honderd en twintig personen. Dezelfde groep zal ook op den pinksterdag samen zijn geweest, misschien nog met enkelen vermeerderd.

't Aantal is niet van beteekenis: straks wast de schare aan tot duizenden.

Van meer gewicht is, dat het de Kerk was, die, onder leiding van de apostelen, daar vergaderd was.

Ach, niemand in de groote "kerk" van Israel dacht nog aan die kleine, afgescheiden groep van mannen en vrouwen, discipelen van Jezus van Nazareth, die daar in alle stilte in de opperzaal te Jeruzalem hun vergaderingen hielden. Ze gevoelden zich zeker wel erg veracht en hopeloos verloren, zal men hebben gemeend, nu ze verlaten waren van hun leider, die bovendien ook nog door de "kerk" was gevonnist en afgestraft! Toch was daar nu de Kerk! Niet meer door Kajafas of Annas en het Sanhedrin, niet meer door priesterschaar en tempel, door altaar en offerande, maar door die kleine, en verachte, afgescheiden groep discipelen, die in de opperzaal te Jeruzalem vergaderd waren, en die misschien op dezen dag der dagen zich in de ure van het morgengebed gezamenlijk naar den tempel hadden begeven, en daar in een der zalen vergaderd waren,—door hen werd de Kerk vertegenwoordigd. Zij waren de kern Israels!

Vrees niet, klein kuddeke!

In die Kerk, en niet alleen in de apostelen, neemt op dezen dag de Geest Zijn intrek!

Eendachtelijk waren ze bijeen.

Eén van hart, en één van zin!

Ze waren saamgesnoerd door de belofte! Eén volk was het, want ze hadden één Meester, Die wel gedood was in het vleesch, maar Die ook opgewekt was, en die als hun levende Heere voor hunne oogen was opgevaren in den hemel. Eén verwachting hadden ze, de hope op de wederkomst van den Heere Zelf, want Hij had hun beloofd, dat Hij weder tot hen zou komen. Naar de vervulling dier belofte zagen ze uit, de verwachting er van vervulde aller harten en zinnen, en eendrachtelijke

lijk stortten ze hunne harten uit in gebed en smeeking om de vervulling der belofte, de komst des Geestes.

Eendrachtelijk waren ze bijeen, temeer, omdat ze als de kern der Kerk, als discipelen van den verachten en gehaten Jezus van Nazareth, zich wel bewust moesten zijn geweest van de scheiding tusschen hen en hun broederen naar het vleesch.

In hen werd de lijn der Kerk doorgetrokken, voortgezet.

Eendrachtelijk waren ze bijeen.

Eén in Jezus!

Vervulling!

Want als de dag van het pinksterfeest vervuld was, werden zij allen vervuld met den Heiligen Geest!

Hij kwam, de Geest van Christus, in de teekenen van een geluid als van een geweldig gedrevenen wind, en van verdeelde tongen als van vuur; maar Hij kwam in hunne harten, en vervulde hen, geheel en al, tot den laatste toe dergenen, die bijeen gekomen waren.

Zij waren zich van Zijne komst bewust, niet slechts door de uitwendig waarneembare teekenen, die van die komst getuigden, maar bovenal ook door hunne inwendige ervaring, door de plotselinge verandering, die het inkomen van dien Geest in hun leven tot stand bracht, door de volheid des heils, die door dezen Geest hun werd medegedeeld.

Want de tempel des levenden Gods was in hen gerealiseerd!

Hij toch is de Geest van God, de derde Persoon der Goddelijke Drievuldigheid, God uit God, den Zoon en den Vader evangelijk. Hij is de Geest des Zoons, Die van den Vader tot den Zoon uitgaat, om van den Zoon tot den Vader weder te keeren. Hij is de Geest van Christus, aan Hem beloofd als Hoofd der gemeente, Hem geschonken bij Zijne verhooging, door Hem uitgestort in Zijne Kerk, opdat Hij Zelf in haar zou wonen, en met haar het Verbond der vriendschap Gods zou bevestigen en volmaken, haar vervullende met alle geestelijke zegening; de Geest der wijsheid en der kennis, de Trooster, de Advocaat, de Geest des levens der heiligmaking, der aanneming tot kinderen. . . .

Hij vervulde allen!

Intrek nemende in hunne harten, beheerscht Hij geheel hun leven!

En Hij is gekomen om eeuwiglijk bij hen te blijven, en in hen te wonen!

Op dien doorluchtigen dag van het feest der eerstelingen nam Hij intrek in de Kerk, en sedert dien heeft Hij haar nooit meer verlaten!

Hij is het, die alles in allen vervult.

De Geest van den Bruidegom in de Bruid!

Roepend om de eindelijke vervulling. . . .

Kom, Heere Jezus!

H. H.

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EDITORIALS

Labor Laws and The Unions

At the time of this writing, labor bills have been passed by both the house of representatives and the senate in Washington, the bill that was passed by the senate being the more lenient of the two. The activities and practices of the labor unions and their leaders, in recent years, that were condoned by the New Deal, and enjoyed the protection of the Wagner Act, finally resulted in a *reductio ad absurdum*, especially in the attempt of Mr. Lewis to defy the very government of our country, and opened the eyes of the public to the fact that no single social group can possibly have the right so exclusively to seek its own advantage that it becomes a menace to society in general. The result is that several states have already passed laws that inhibit this ambition of the unions, and aim to keep their activities within proper limits. And our congress in Washington has been considering this same matter for some time. The result is that both houses now have passed restrictive labor laws.

The bill passed by the senate, which is the weaker of the two, would render illegal jurisdictional strikes and secondary boycotts, outlaw the closed shop, restrain the unions from coercing workers, require financial reports of the unions and make them subject to lawsuits, and deny the right of collective bargaining to those unions whose officers are Communists or communist sympathizers.

Our people especially, who cannot in conscience before God ally themselves with the so-called neutral unions, and become party to their practices of force and violence, are deeply interested in the final outcome of this attempt of congress to rectify matters in the field of industry and labor.

Some time ago, therefore, when the above mentioned legislation was pending, the Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids sent the following missive to representative Bartel Jonkman and senator Arthur Vanden Berg:

The Hon.

Dear Sir:—

The Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, begs to bring to your attention the following matter, and kindly request that you give it your serious consideration.

The matter about which we address you in this communication is that of the closed shop and its attendant evils. Twice before, in 1941 and 1946, our

Churches, through their Synod, have brought this matter to the attention of our President and of the Congress. However, with a view to the more general interest and attention this matter has gained, especially in recent months, and with a view to pending labor legislation, the above named Consistory considered it an opportune time to bring their views and requests to you once again.

We as a Consistory, and our Protestant Reformed people in general, believe that, before God and under the Constitution of our land, the Congress is in duty bound to pass such legislation as will make it possible for all the citizens of our country to pursue their calling, secure a job, and make an honest living, without being hampered in this pursuit by any individual, group of individuals, or organization of individual citizens, and without being in any way under compulsion to become members of such organizations or groups against their will. This implies that, according to our conviction, it is the duty of the Congress to outlaw the closed shop and all attempts at force and violence that are calculated to compel our citizens to join the existing unions.

It is a matter of common knowledge that we are fast moving in the direction of complete unionization of all labor. Nor need we inform you that one of the means,—indeed, the most effective one,—whereby the unions have sought and still do seek to attain this desired end, is the closed shop. The result is that, for those who cannot agree with the principles and methods of the existing unions, and who, for conscience' sake must refuse to join them, it has become, and is becoming more and more difficult to find a job or position in order to provide for themselves and for their families. More and more the situation develops that one confronts the alternative of permitting himself to be coerced into membership of the union against the dictates of his conscience, or to be expelled from his proper place in the field of labor.

The Protestant Reformed Churches are opposed to membership in the existing unions upon the following grounds: 1. They are based on the principle of the class-struggle, dividing society into two opposing camps, those of capital and labor, each seeking its own interests in opposition to the other, and causing constant strife and turmoil. We believe that this principle is contrary to the Word of God, and to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2. They are actuated, evidently, by purely materialistic motives and purposes, contrary to the injunction of the Gospel that we shall seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness first, trusting that all things shall be added unto us. 3. They frequently defy authority, and take the law in their own hands, in conflict with the Word of God which bids us honor those that are in authority over us. 4. They seek their own end by means of force and

coercion, which is contrary, not only to the spirit and principles of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, but also violates every sound principle of democratic government. According to the latter, it certainly cannot be permitted any particular group or society, large or small, majority or minority, to lord it over another group; but it belongs to the calling of representative government to seek the wellbeing and protect the liberties of all its citizens.

These being our sacred convictions, it will not be difficult to understand that we refuse to join the existing unions. It should also be evident that, under the Constitution, we have a perfect right to these convictions, and that no group of citizens or organization can have the right to interfere with our liberty to act and live in accordance with these convictions. Nor is there any need of demonstrating that the closed shop and its accompanying evils are calculated to render the proper exercise of this freedom impossible.

It is, dear Sir, therefore, with an appeal to the Word of God, and to the Constitution of our land, that we approach you with the urgent request, in the pending legislation, to use your God-given position and all your influence to stamp out this evil, which not only threatens to deprive millions of citizens of their freedom, but also strikes at the very foundations of true democratic government.

We are, dear Sir, with due respect,

Yours sincerely,
The Consistory of
First Protestant Reformed Church
of Grand Rapids, Mich.

H. Hoeksema, president
S. De Young, Clerk.

What the outcome will be cannot be determined at the present time. It is but natural, and something that could be expected, that the unions and their leaders are vehemently opposed to any legislation that limits what they consider their rights. They threaten that, by their united vote of some twenty million, they will oust those congressmen that set themselves "against labor". With a view to "anti-labor legislation", the American Federation of Labor is planning to fight its constitutionality. William Green claims that such legislation violates the thirteenth amendment of the Constitution, prohibiting involuntary servitude. Before a convention of the AFL's Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship Clerks in Cincinnati, he made the statement: "A person's labor is that person's property. He can do with his labor what he wishes; he can render it or he can withhold it."

It will be evident that Mr. Green missed the point entirely. The question is not whether a person's labor is his property which he can withhold or sell, but whether a powerful combination of workers can have the right to prevent others by main force from rendering their labor, and whether they can be allowed so to withhold their labor that they endanger the well-being of the entire country.

Mr. Green also threatened that, in the 1948 elections, "twenty million union members and their families will march to the polls and vote against their enemies and for their friends."

Will our lawmakers in Washington let themselves be intimidated by such threats?

We hope not.

Both the bills, that passed by the house and the one by the senate, had the support of more than two-thirds majority. They now go to conference. After that, it is up to President Truman, and if he should veto the final bill, the question is whether congress can override the veto.

Whatever the outcome, however, we know that the hearts of presidents and congressmen are in the Lord's hand like the rivers of water: He turns them whithersoever He will. And although we certainly hope that, through the final legislation our position in the industrial world may be eased, and we may have freedom to work without interference by the unions, we are confident that God's way is the best way, and that He will preserve His people in the midst of the world, even unto the end.

H. H.

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

Part Two.

Of Man's Redemption

Lord's Day XXII.

4.

Eternal Life (cont.)

Also from this aspect, life in the creature is but the reflection of life in God, Who is its Creator and Source. For He is the Triune. He is one in being and nature, in mind and will, in holiness and righteousness, in knowledge and wisdom, and in all His infinite perfections. Nor is He a mere power: He is a personal God. And the Scriptures reveal Him to us as three in persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. These divine

Persons subsist in the one divine Being, and they stand in relation of perfect harmony to one another. The Father generates the Son, the Son is generated by the Father, the Spirit is breathed forth and proceeds from the Father and the Son. They are one in being and nature, yet personally distinct. The Father knows and loves the Son, in infinite perfection, in the Spirit; the Son knows and loves the Father, in the Spirit; the Spirit knows and loves the Father, through the Son, in Himself, and He "searches the depths of God." Thus the three persons of the Holy Trinity live in eternal harmony and perfect fellowship with one another. There is no separation or disunity, no disharmony or conflict, in God. He is a covenant God, and lives the life of perfect friendship.

It has pleased God to reveal this life, in the highest degree in man.

For man, life is not the same as for the lower creature, the plant and the animal.

To be sure, as a living soul, he also lives a physical, and a psychical life. He reacts upon the world about him. He sees and hears, He tastes, and touches, and smells. He perceives, and interprets the world in which he lives, and constantly he adjusts himself to his environment. And he lives in relation to his fellow-men. Yet, this is not all. He also lives in a conscious relation to God. Thus he was originally created. God formed him out of the dust of the ground, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, made him an intellectual and volitional creature, a being that was adapted to bear and to reflect the very image of God. And with this image of God he was endowed. He was created with perfect knowledge, in order that his mind might react in love upon the revelation of the mind of God; with uprightness of will, in order that, in all his volitional life, he might be in harmony with the will of God, and have his delight in the keeping of His commandments; and with spotless holiness, so that all his desires and inclinations were consecrated to the living God. Thus he acted and lived, in the midst of the earthly creation, and with all things, in harmony with the triune God. He was made a covenant creature, and lived a covenant life. To know and love his God with all his heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, and to serve Him as His friend; and thus to taste that the Lord is good,—that was the life of man.

But if life for man, who was created after the image of God, is the fellowship of friendship with the Most High, it is evident that eternal life cannot be conceived as an endless extension of our present existence.

Our present earthly life is not real life, but death.

For by nature we are alienated from the living God, objects of His wrath and condemnation, enemies of the ever blessed One. Our mind is darkened so that we are devoid of the true knowledge of God, and

we love the lie. Our will is perverse, our heart is corrupt, our whole nature is polluted. If life, to speak in terms of the philosopher we quoted above, is the constant adaptation of man's inner nature to Him Who is the only good, and the overflowing fountain of all good, the sinner who stands in opposition and rebellion against God, certainly lies in the midst of death. Our present existence *ad infinitum* is not eternal life, but perpetual death.

But neither may eternal life, in the Scriptural sense of the word, be presented or conceived as a perpetuation of Adam's life in the state of righteousness. Adam did, indeed, have true life. And if he had not sinned he would have continued in the state of life he enjoyed in paradise. But his life was not the same as that higher state of bliss which the Bible calls eternal life. Nor would it have been possible for him to attain to this most glorious state, even though he had never sinned.

Eternal life is qualitatively different from all other life, also from the life of Adam in the state of rectitude.

It is, first of all, life that has its source in, and reaches us from the incarnated Son of God. That incarnation is the central realization of the heavenly tabernacle, of God's eternal covenant. For it is the most intimate union between God and man. In Christ, the Son of God, the second Person of the Holy Trinity, God of God, the Word, the express image of His substance, is revealed in human nature, lives in us and with us. This is a profound mystery. But so much is clear from Scripture that eternal life is conditioned by and has its source in Christ, the Son of God in human nature. He is the life and the resurrection, John 11:25; the way, and the truth, and the life, John 14:6; in Him the life was manifested, and He is the revelation of that eternal life, which was with the Father, I John 1:2; He is the true God and life eternal, I John 5:20. Eternal life, therefore, is the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ, Whom God has sent, that is, it is the knowledge of God which we have in and through Jesus Christ. John 17:3. When the Word was made flesh, the first witnesses beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14. And He declared, as the only begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, the invisible God, Whom no one hath seen at any time. John 1:18. This higher knowledge, this greatest revelation of the living God, the first man Adam did not have, nor could he ever attain to it. Eternal life is that knowledge of and fellowship with God that is rooted in the incarnation, and is bestowed upon us through the Spirit of the Son of God. It is the real and most intimate fellowship of which the Lord speaks in His sacerdotal prayer: "That they may all be one; as thou, Father art in me, and I in thee,

that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." John 17:21-24.

Adam was of the earth, earthy. God's revelation to him, through the things that are made, was never more than a reflection of His face. In Christ, the Son of God in human nature, Who is the image of the invisible God, we shall see Him face to face, and know even as we are known. I Cor. 13:12. He that hath seen Him, hath seen the Father. John 14:9.

Moreover, eternal life is resurrection life: it lies on the other side of death. It is victory over death. It may safely be said that, except through the deep and dark way of sin and death, this higher goal of bliss that is called eternal life could never be attained. We do not morbidly beatify and extol the fall of Adam, as, in fact, it has been done, as if it were a good in itself. On our part, there is nothing but sin and shame in that fall of our first father in paradise, a cause for deep humiliation and repentance. For we wantonly despised the riches of the knowledge of God, and trampled His covenant under foot, choosing rather to be allied with the devil, and to follow his lie, than to walk in the light of God's blessed favor. But on God's part, there is only the revelation of His marvellous wisdom and power in this fall of the first man Adam. For he chose this way, because He had provided some better thing for us. Even though the guilt and responsibility of the fall remains wholly man's, it cannot be doubted for a moment that also the fall of Adam was quite according to the counsel of the Most High. His purpose must be realized, and sin and death are subservient to that purpose. That purpose was the realization of His everlasting covenant of friendship with His people in Christ.

In Romans 11:11, the apostle asks the question with respect to the Jews that apostatized: "Have they stumbled that they should fall?" In the light of the context, it is very evident that the meaning of this question is: "Was their fall the positive and ultimate purpose of God?" And the apostle replies: "God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy." The same question might be asked with a view to God's purpose with the fall of the first man Adam: "Did he fall merely in order that he should sink away into sin and death?" And the answer is also similar to that in the eleventh chapter of the Romans: "God forbid; He had a positive purpose that must be realized: that eternal life in the heavenly tabernacle of God might come unto the elect."

God's way is always in the sea!

He makes impossible situations, in order that He may reveal Himself in all the glory of His power: the things that are impossible with man are possible with God. He creates the darkness, in order that He may cause the light to shine in the darkness, and may be known as the One in Whom there is no darkness at all. According to His counsel, and certainly by His all-controlling power and government, the first man Adam falls, in order that Christ, the image of the invisible God, and the firstborn of every creature may come. In the way of sin and death, and of all the suffering of this present time, He chooses His way, in order that, through that way, He may become known in all His glorious power, and wisdom, and knowledge; in His unchangeable righteousness and justice, in His boundless love, abundant mercy, everlasting grace and lovingkindness, and His power to save.

The knowledge of God, as the God of our salvation, unto Whom we cry from the depths of sin and death, and the fellowship with Him, is eternal life.

That highest knowledge, that most intimate fellowship, that fullest experience of the glory and goodness of the Lord, was not possible in the first paradise, on this side of death: it could be attained only through the dark way of sin and death. Eternal life is life through death. It is resurrection-life.

Adam knew the love of God as it was revealed in all the goodness of creation: he did not know the love of God in that depth of blessedness and in that unchangeable faithfulness that is revealed in the death of the Son of God. In the state of rectitude, man tasted the grace of God positively, as His favor: he did not know the depth of that grace as it is revealed in redemption, even the forgiveness of sins. He knew and tasted that God is merciful, for he was encompassed with divine blessings, but the abundant mercy revealed in the wonder of deliverance, whereby God saves us from the power of sin, the curse, and death, to raise us to the highest possible blessedness of heavenly glory in His tabernacle,—this he could not possibly know. He certainly knew God in His great power, knowledge, and wisdom, for the things that are made loudly declared them unto him: but he could not possibly know the mighty power of God revealed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and in His exaltation in heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; nor could he be cognizant of that unsearchable wisdom and knowledge of God, by which He makes the very powers of darkness, of sin and death, subservient to His purpose of salvation and glory in Christ.

Eternal life is resurrection-life: it could only be attained through the death and resurrection of the Son

of God. When God chose the deep way of sin and death, He made it at once impossible for man, of himself, so to walk in that way that he would reach life eternal. God Himself must walk in that way. Only His Son could become the first begotten of the dead. Hence, He came to us, in our guilt and damnation, in our misery and death, when He sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin. In that Son, the God of our salvation, the Head of the Church, walked all the way of righteousness and justice, of wrath and death and hell, in order to atone for sin, and obtain for us everlasting righteousness. He walked the way of death, and through death, into the resurrection, and becomes the revelation of the God of our salvation in all the abundance of His power and might, of His wisdom and knowledge, of His righteousness and holiness, of the riches of His grace and mercy, and everlasting, unchangeable love.

And when that God of our salvation, our Lord Jesus Christ, makes His dwelling with us, calls us out of darkness into the light of life, instructs us by His Spirit and Word in the true knowledge of God as revealed in Him,—then we have eternal life.

It is the life that is based on the everlasting righteousness of God in Christ; that, therefore, is found only in the way of death and resurrection of the Son of God; that is wrought in our hearts by the indwelling Spirit of Christ; and that consists in the knowledge of and fellowship with God as He is revealed in all the glory of His blessed virtues in the face of Jesus Christ.

That life is *everlasting*, it can never be lost, exactly because it has its root in the incarnation of the Son of God.

Just as the union of the human and the divine natures in the Person of the Son of God can never be broken or subverted, so the fellowship of God with us in Him is everlasting.

The beginning of this everlasting life believers in Christ have and enjoy even now, in this life.

The Catechism refers to this in the words: "since I now feel in my heart the beginning of eternal joy." This "feeling" must not be understood in a vague, mystical, pietistic sense of the word, as if it merely consisted in some "sweet fellowship" or "good times with the Lord." To be sure, the believer, even in this life, enjoys such moments of special nearness to the Lord in Christ, when on the wings of prayer and meditation, his soul is drawn upward, above things mundane, into the blessed sphere of the sanctuary of God. Yet, even apart from such moments, whence he must needs return to things earthy, and to the common level of his life and struggle as a believer in this world, he certainly experiences the joy of eternal life, the beginning of it, in his heart. For he possesses the principle of that life: he that believeth on the Son

hath everlasting life. He is reborn through the Spirit of Christ. He is raised from the dead. In Christ, he is set in heavenly places. And of this new life he is conscious by faith. He "feels in his heart the beginning of eternal joy," when he lays hold on the mercy and grace of God in the forgiveness of sin; when he is assured that, though all things, within and without, testify against him, he is righteous before God; when the Spirit of adoption assures him of his sonship, and he cries Abba, Father; when he hates sin, has his delight in the precepts of his God, and longs for the final deliverance from the body of this death; and when he looks forward in hope, rooted in the love of God that is shed abroad in his heart, to the final adoption and justification, the redemption of his body.

True, all this is only a beginning.

Even the experience and consciousness of this "beginning of eternal joy" is not always equally clear and vivid. In fact, there are times in the life of the believer when this "feeling" is not or hardly present. Yet, its reality cannot be doubted. Scripture everywhere teaches us that the believer in Christ does, indeed, have, and also experience, this beginning of eternal life and its joy. And the believer will enjoy the blessedness and peace of it, according as he earnestly walks in the way of sanctification, fights against sin, and has his delight in keeping the precepts of his God.

Yet, more than a beginning, and, in fact, relatively speaking, only a small beginning, this "feeling of eternal joy" never becomes in this life. It is a struggle, a fighting, a "groaning" joy. It is opposed and oppressed by the motions of sin in our members, by the world in which we live, and even by things earthy. For "ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of our body." Rom. 8:23. And "we that are in this tabernacle do groan: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." II Cor. 5:4. We do have life, but in the midst of death; we lay hold on perfect righteousness, but in the midst of unrighteousness; we have been raised from the dead, yet we live this resurrection-life in our mortal body; we are set in heavenly places with Christ, yet we are encumbered with the constant experience of things earthy.

We enjoy the beginning of eternal life in a tension, the tension of hope.

But this hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts.

The beginning of eternal life we now enjoy will be translated into the fulness of joy in the tabernacle of God.

It will advance into the state of spiritual perfec-

tion after death, when the earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved, and we shall inherit the house of God, eternal in the heavens.

But it will not reach its final perfection of glory, until all the saints in Christ, all the elect of God, shall have been gathered, our bodies shall have put off corruption and mortality, and shall have put on incorruption and immortality, the new heavens and the new earth shall have been created, and the tabernacle of God shall be with men forever.

And, to be sure, that new creation itself will be beautiful and glorious, for all things therein will be united in Christ as their head.

But the essence of all the blessedness and glory of that new world will, nevertheless, be the perfected fellowship of friendship with the living God in Christ. Everywhere in that new world we shall see Christ, and, in Him, the Father. We shall see Him face to face. All our knowledge will then be theology, in the highest sense of the word. This is life eternal, to know Thee, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent!

Of that glory we can only form a faint conception as long as we are in this life.

For, as the Catechism reminds us, that perfect salvation belongs to the things "which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive."

But when it shall be revealed, all of that eternal life will be concentrated upon the everlasting praise of God, of Whom, and through Whom, and unto Whom are all things.

To Him be the glory forever!

H. H.

ANNIVERSARY

On June 15, 1947, our dear parents,

Mr. and Mrs. HARM WUSTMAN

hope to celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary.

We are indeed thankful to our heavenly Father who spared them for us these many years, and Who through them provided us with our Christian home. Our prayer is that the Lord may bless them graciously in the coming years.

Their grateful children:

Mr. and Mrs. Russell Smallegan

John

June

Vivian

Theron

Byron Center, Mich.

CHURCH POLITY

Dr. Ridderbos and Article 31

This article (of the Church Order) reads:

"If anyone complain that he has been wronged by the decision of a minor assembly, he shall have the right to appear to a major ecclesiastical assembly, and whatever may be agreed upon by a majority of vote shall be considered settled and binding, unless it be proved to conflict with the Word of God or with the articles of the Church Order, as long as they are not changed by a general synod."

Let us first of all concentrate on this article and determine exactly what it says and what it does not say. First in order is a definition of the terms of the article.

Minor Assembly. If the broadest ecclesiastical assembly in a communion of churches is synod, the minor assemblies are consistory and classis. If the broader major assembly were an ecumenical synod, formed of delegates of all the Reformed denomination of churches the world over, the minor assemblies would be consistory, classis, synod. Thus if the minor assembly by which anyone complains that he has been wronged be consistory, the major assembly to which he may appeal his case is classis. If classis offend, the case goes to synod and to the ecumenical synod, if the offender be synod. A case originating in the consistory could be appealed from one major assembly to another until it finally reached the ecumenical synod or council.

The one complaining that he has been wronged. This one may be any of the following: a common member in the church; an officebearer, minister of the gospel, elder, or deacon, a consistory, a number of consistories and this number might be large. There are, of course, still other possibilities.

Respecting the classical and synodical decisions, the article stipulates the following and the following only:

1. Classical and synodical decisions that cannot be proved to be in conflict with the Word of God shall be considered settled and binding.

2. Classical and synodical decisions that can be proved to conflict with the Word of God shall be considered null and void. Such decisions shall be rejected.

Let us now have regard to the issue that the article (31) raises, attending first of all to the doctor's statement of it. He writes (Kerkscheuring p. 21):

"Wat artikel 13 betreft, we weten dat de bezwaarden zich er op beroepen, dat volgens dit

artikel het door de meerderheid goedgevondene wel voor vast en bondig gehouden moet worden, maar dat hieraan is toegevoegd: Tenzij dat het bewezen worde te strijden tegen het Woord Gods, of tegen de Kerkenordening.

"De vraag is nu: aan wien moet men dit bewijzen?"

"Wij zeggen: natuurlijk aan de kerkelijke vergadering, die hierover te oordeelen heeft. Wie bezwaren heeft tegen een genomen besluit, moet den kerkelijken weg bewandelen, d.w.z. zijn bezwaren inbrengen bij de bevoegde kerkelijke vergadering. Deze is verplicht hem aan te hooren, en hem gelegenheid te geven, zijn bewijs te leveren, dat zijn besluit in strijd is met Schrift of Kerkenordening; en indien zij dit bewijs niet kan weerleggen, dan moet zij het besluit herroepen of nietig verklaren. Maar zoolang dit niet is geschied, moet men zich, zoo men in de kerk of het kerkverband wil blijven, naar het genomen besluit voegen.

"Daarintegen zeggen de bezwaarden (the Schilder group): Neen, het is voldoende, als ik het voor *mijzelf* bewezen heb. Dus elk, die voor zichzelf overtuigd is, dat een kerkelijk besluit in strijd is met Gods Woord of de Kerkenordening, zou dit besluit ter zijde kunnen leggen, en rustig in de kerk kunnen blijven, in het volle bezit van de rechten, die hij als kerklid of als ambtsdrager bezit.

"Het is duidelijk dat dit de bedoeling van het artikel niet kan zijn. Het bindend karakter der kerkelijke besluiten zou volkomen denkbeeldig worden; elk, die zeide: ik kan bewijzen, dat het in strijd is met Gods Woord of met the K. O., zou vrij uitgaan; en er zijn menschen, die met zulk zeggen *zeer* spoedig klaar staan, zoodra een besluit niet met hun inzicht of wenschen strookt."

Translation.

"As far as art. 31 is concerned, we know that the aggrieved (Schilder group) appeal to the fact that whatever may be agreed upon by a majority of vote shall be considered settled and binding, but that to this is added: unless it be proved to conflict with the Word of God and with the articles of the Church Order.

"The question is now: To whom must this be proved?"

"We (Dr. Ridderbos and the rest, G.M.O.) say: naturally to the ecclesiastical assemblies (classis, synod, ecumenical synod. G.M.O.) whose task it is to judge such things. Anyone objecting to a decision that had been made (by those assemblies) must submit his grievances to the qualified ecclesiastical assemblies) and the latter are in duty bound to give him (the appellant) a hearing

and also the opportunity to furnish proof that the decision militates against the Scriptures and the Church Order. And if the assembly is not able to refute that proof, it is in duty bound to retract or rescind the decision. But as long as this has not been done, they (common members and officebearers in the churches) will have to comply with the decision, if they wish to remain in the church or the denomination.

"The aggrieved, on the contrary, say: nay, it is sufficient if I for myself consider it proved. Thus, anyone who for himself is persuaded that the ecclesiastical decision conflicts with the Word of God or the Church Order, could repudiate the decision, and remain in the church without being disturbed and in full possession of his rights that he as common member or officebearer possesses.

"It is plain that this cannot be the purpose of the article. The binding character of ecclesiastical decisions would become wholly illusional; anyone who said: I can prove, that it is in conflict with the Word of God or with the Church Order, would be free. And there are people who stand ready with such talk, the moment a decision does not tally with their insight or desires."

First of all a remark in general. It would be real difficult for anyone not knowing what it is all about, to learn from the above excerpt from the doctor's pen just what is the issue in the dispute that art. 31 of the Church Order has occasioned. The doctor's sentences are even misleading. Take this one statement, "Thus anyone who for himself is persuaded that the ecclesiastical decision conflicts with the Word of God or the Church Order, could repudiate the decision and remain in the church without being disturbed and in full possession of his rights that he as a common member or officebearer possesses." Could remain in the church how long? Permanently? and this though the churches on their major assemblies maintained the contested decision after having given the appellant all the opportunity he asked to prove the decision unscriptural? This is not the stand of those who differ with the doctor as to the correct interpretation of the article in question. The doctor does not say that it is and yet he does first by his failure to set limits to the clause, "could remain in the church without being disturbed," and secondly by the statement that the binding character of ecclesiastical decisions would be wholly illusional. This latter would be true only if the common members, officebearers, or entire consistories were permitted *permanently* to refuse to be bound by ecclesiastical and synodical decisions deemed unscriptural, though unable to prove them to be of such a character to the satisfaction of the churches on their major assemblies.

Just what is the issue in the dispute?

To be clear on the issue, we must know what is not the issue.

The issue is not whether a classical or synodical decision may be rejected on the alleged ground of its being in conflict with the Word of God without the aggrieved one being compelled to *make an attempt* to prove the decision unscriptural also to the satisfaction of the churches on their major assemblies. This is a solemn duty certainly. For refusing to be bound by a decision of a major assembly is not a small matter, as it implies that the aggrieved is persuaded that the decision militates against the Scriptures. Hence, if the aggrieved one will take no action, if he does not protest and at the same time persists in refusing to be bound by the decision, his consistory, if he be a common member or officebearer, may have to take action against him. If a consistory should so behave, the classis might have to refuse for the time being to receive its delegates on the classical assembly. (Classis would have no right to depose that consistory).

The issue, once more, is not whether the churches must allow, let us say, a consistory to persist indefinitely in pronouncing a classical or synodical decision unscriptural and on this ground to refuse to be bound by it, after they, the churches, even once and again have treated that consistory's protest on their major assemblies without being convinced of the error of their decision. The churches may expect of such a consistory that it now be still and comply, and they may expel it from their fellowship (but not depose it) if it refuse to comply.

What then is the issue? It can best be stated in connection with an imaginary concrete case. An officebearer studies the decisions of his last classis, and it becomes his settled conviction that one of the decisions conflicts with the Word of God. His task is now to put forth an effort to prove the decision unscriptural also to the classis on its next meeting. Now the issue is this: May that officebearer (according to the Church Order) in the meantime, while awaiting the opportunity to present his proof on the floor of the next classis, refuse to be bound by that unscriptural decision (unscriptural according to his own persuasions), that is, reject it for himself without being deposed from office by the classis for doing so; and secondly, may this officebearer, or let us say, consistory, even after the classis examining its proof was not convinced, continue to reject that decision without being deposed by the classis. This, precisely, is the issue.

Now to this the doctor and Rev. G. Hoeksema and the rest of the reply: That officebearer, while awaiting the opportunity to present his proof on the floor of the next classis, may not reject that unscriptural decision—unscriptural according to his convictions—

without being deposed from office. He must be deposed if, while awaiting the opportunity to present his proof on the floor of the next classis, he refuses to be bound by that decision. For the decisions of the major assemblies must *always* be obeyed, always. No member in the church, be he common member or officebearer may reject a classical or synodical decision ever without first having gained the permission of sovereign classis (synod). If he dares to do so, classis must depose him from office. Hence, the sole right of that officebearer (or common members) is to protest the decision, that is, put forth an effort to prove it unscriptural to the classis (synod) on its next meeting. If the classis is convinced, it declares the decision null and void, and then, and not before does it cease to bind that officebearer, consistory or common member. And, of course, that officebearer must certainly comply or be deposed after classis (synod) having examined the proof, was not convinced.

Now this is actually the teaching of the doctor on art. 31 of the Church Order. Why didn't the doctor *in plain language* lay his teachings before the "gemeente leden", bringing out the real issue?

It is plain how the doctor and the others read art. 31 (of the Church Order), namely, as follows: And whatever may be agreed upon by a majority of vote, that is, whatever the major assembly (classis, synod, or even the ecumenical council) decides by a majority of vote, shall be considered settled and binding, that is, must be obeyed, until (mark you *until*, the article has *unless*) it be proved to the major assembly (classis, synod) to conflict with the Word of God." It is plain that this interpretation or reading of the article 31 and that other teaching that classis (synod) is that supreme judicial power in the churches deposing officebearers are so closely integrated that the two stand and fall together. For it stands to reason that if common members and officebearers may reject classical and synodical decisions without these decisions first being declared null and void by the major assemblies—if in other words, common members and officebearers have the right to reject classical and synodical decisions without first gaining permission of the major assemblies to reject them—it is sheer folly to say that the local congregations are subject to classis (synod) and that therefore classis (synod) rightfully deposes consistories.

But, some will say, let it be true that a consistory need not first gain the permission of classis (synod) to reject a classical (synodical) decision, the fact remains that the consistory is in duty bound to attempt to prove the decision unscriptural to classis (synod) and that if classis is not convinced, the consistory must comply. This latter "if classis is not convinced, the consistory must comply" is not true if what is meant thereby is that classis (synod) can rightfully depose

the consistory for not complying. And here again we touch upon the heart of the matter. The exponents of the hierarchy insist that if the consistory refuses to comply, the classis rightfully deposes it. So the doctor in those lines from his pen that I quoted. "Thus anyone," so reads one of those lines, "who for himself is persuaded that the ecclesiastical decision conflicts with the Word of God or the Church Order, could repudiate the decision, and remain in the church without being disturbed and in full possession of his rights that he as common member or officebearer possesses." This, he means to say, is impossible. A consistory, that rejects a classical decision, must be deposed. This is wholly in line with his theory that the local churches are subject to the classis (synod).

Let us now show that if article 31 had to be interpreted as the doctor (and all the rest of them) interpret the article, it would be self-destructive, and that such a thing as a reformed federation of churches assembling at regular intervals in classis and synod would be quite impossible. But let us first notice that the exponents of the hierarchy, in order to make the article (31) say what they wanted it to say, had to change the article as to the form of its words. In its last section the article reads, "and whatsoever may be agreed upon by a majority of vote shall be considered settled and binding, *unless* mark you *unless* (so the article reads) it be proved to conflict with the Word of God. . . ." But the exponents of the hierarchy have removed that word *unless* and placed in the room thereof the word *until*—it be proved (to the major assembly) to conflict with the Word of God. They did so, not, of course, black on white, but in their minds. And when they go to explaining the article they reason as if the article read *until* instead of *unless*. Not only this, but the exponents of the hierarchy, interpreting the article (31) as they do, would reduce it to a collection of nonsensical phrases before their own consciousness, should they not in their minds remove the word *unless* and place in the room thereof the word *until*. For then they would be reading, "And whatever may be agreed upon by a majority of vote, that is, whatever the major assembly (classis, synod) decides by a majority of vote, shall be considered settled and binding (also immediately, of course) unless it be proved to the major assembly (classis, synod) on its next meeting (which may be next month, of course, or even next year) to conflict with the Word of God. Now that this does not make sense can be made plain by an illustration. A mother says to her son of eight years, "I insist that you obey me in the matter of going to town with me now and hereafter unless you can make it plain to your father when he returns next month (the good man is on a journey) that what I demand of you (she wants the lad to go to town with her that very moment) is unjust." Now this doesn't

make sense, does it? It's not necessary that I pause to make this plain, is it? So the fact that we reduce the article 31 to nonsense, if we read into it what the exponents of the hierarchy read into it, without our changing the article as to the form of its words (removing the word *unless* and placing in the room thereof the word *until*) alone is conclusive proof that the way they (the doctor and the others) interpret the article is as wrong as anything can be wrong.

And to this proof still another proof can be added and much of it.

I said that if the article (31) would have to be interpreted as the doctor and all the rest of them are interpreting the article, it would be self-destructive. As we saw, according to the exponents of the hierarchy, though it has become the settled conviction of that officebearer that the classical (or synodical) decision is in conflict with the Word of God, he must nevertheless allow himself to be bound by it, until the major assembly on its next meeting sets him free. But that officebearer may not wait with rejecting the decision. He is in duty bound before God to reject the decision immediately, seeing that it has become his conviction that the decision militates against the Scriptures. For God must be obeyed rather than men. That aggrieved officebearer does that very thing. It being impossible for him to obey man—the sovereign classis (synod)—he rejects the article, openly repudiates it. The wrath of the classis (synod) now kindles, and it deposes the man. According to Dr. Ridderbos, the man did well. Says the Doctor:

“Natuurlijk is waar, dat men (hetzij als persoon, hetzij als kerkeraad) zich niet mag onderwerpen aan een besluit, waarvan men de stellige overtuiging heeft, dat het met God's Woord in strijd is. Maar dat is een andere zaak. Dan spreekt men over hetgeen zulk een persoon of kerkeraad in laatste instantie aan God verschuldigd is; *en dat kan met zich brengen, dat hij zijn ambt moet neerleggen of zelfs de gemeenschap der kerk verbreken.*” (Italics mine. G.M.O.)

Translation:

“Naturally it is true that they—members in the church—(be it as person or as consistory member) may not subject themselves to decisions of which they are persuaded that they militate against the Word of God. But this is a different matter (why it is a different matter is a conundrum. G.M.O.) Then we speak of things that such a person or consistory member in the final instance owes God; *and that may require that he lay down his office or even break with the fellowship of the church.*”

Article 31 of the Church Order, with all this philosophy read into it, actually tells us this:

“If any one complain that he has been wronged by a minor assembly—let us say, consistory—he shall have the right to appeal to a major assembly—this would have to be classis. And whatever may be agreed upon by a majority of vote shall be considered settled and binding—shall be obeyed by the appellant also. But if the appellant is not satisfied with the decision of classis, if it is his persuasion that it militates against the Word of God so that he wants to appeal the case to synod, he must for God's sake reject the decision and endure being deposed from office and break with the fellowship of the church.”

It is plain that, so construed, the article says two contrary things and thereby destroys itself. The article as so construed, says,

1. The appellant shall have the right to appeal his case from classis to synod.

2. The appellant, whereas he may not under any circumstances subject himself to a classical decision of which he is persuaded that it militates against the Word of God, must endure being deposed and break with the fellowship of the church. Now how can the appellant have the right to appeal his case from classis to synod, if he *must* reject the classical decision for God's sake and endure being deposed and break with the fellowship of the church. This, of course, is impossible.

Finally, the article 31, construed as the exponents of the hierarchy construe it, makes impossible such a thing as a reformed confederation of churches assembling at regular intervals in classis and synod. I will make this plain in a following article, and also give the correct and only possible interpretation of article 31.

G. M. O.

SION'S ZANGEN

Een Psalm

(Psalm 98)

Dit is de eenigste psalm in den bundel die zulk een sober opschrift heeft: een psalm, meer niet. Waarom weten we niet.

Een psalm is de uitdrukking van lof en prijs den Heere. Ons geheele leven behoorde een psalm te zijn, Gode gewijd.

Psalm 98 is een der psalmen dien gaarne door Gods volk gezongen wordt. Vooral het laatste vers is zeer gewild. En geen wonder: daarin wordt de komst van

den Heere bezongen, zooals Hij komen zal ten oordeel en tot bevrijding van het arme volk.

Zingt den Heere een nieuw lied!

Door den geheelen psalm heen wordt den heerlijks-ten naam van God gebruikt: Heere! En de eenigste keer, dat de naam God genoemd wordt, ziet ge Zijn heil er aan verbonden: "het heil onzes Gods."

Die naam Heere, in onzen Bijbel met hoofdletters, is Zijn verbondsnaam. Die naam vertelt ons, dat Hij de Onveranderlijke is. Bij Hem is geen verandering noch schaduw van omkeering. Heeft Hij U lief, dan zijt ge zekerlijk gelukkig. Dan gedenkt Hij altoos aan U in gena, om Zijn goedheid eer te geven. De HEERE, de Ik zal zijn die Ik zijn zal! de eeuwig Zijnde, die in het onveranderlijke, Goddelijke Heden woont. O, als Hij U bemint, dan zijt ge zalig, al is het dan ook, dat ge voor tijd en wijle in lompen gehuld, vol met zweeren, aan den poort des rijken ligt.

Welnu, zingt dien Heere een nieuw lied!

Wat dat nieuwe lied mag zijn? Is het niet genoeg om den Heere eenvoudig weg te zingen? Waarom moet het een nieuw gezang zijn? Is eenig gezang, wat dan ook, niet genoeg?

O neen.

Het moet een nieuw gezang zijn. Het oude lied heeft voor eeuwig uit.

Wat het oude lied dan is? Ik zal het U zeggen. Het oude lied is het lied hetwelk in het Paradijs Gods door Adam en Eva den Heere God toegezongen is. Dat oude lied was ook mooi. Adam en Eva, als de priester en priesteres Gods, stonden in het oude Paradijs met hun aangezicht naar God gekeerd en kwinkelerden van diep geluk. Zij kenden Hem die hen geschapen had en wisten Hem een God te zijn van wonderde deugden. Zij hadden gehoord van die deugden vanuit Zijn Eigen mond, en voorts vingen zij de wel-luidende klanken van het koor dier woorden Gods op uit de duizende stemmen van de aarde en hare volheid. Alles zong in die eerste dagen van geluk en blijdschap in God. Het was een schoon lied. Vorm en kleur, geluid en alle beweging was kommentaar op de zelfopenbaring Gods. Alles getuigde van Zijn groote goedheid en schoonheid. Adam wist het heel wel.

En toch, dat lied is oud en in de verdwijning. Eigenlijk moogt ge dat lied niet meer zingen. Dat oude lied heeft uit.

De oude, de eerste Adam is gevallen. En zijn lied is verstomd. Zijn priesterschap heeft hij verspeeld. Door een vreeselijk spel der zonde. Hij kan het niet meer, maar hij mag het ook niet meer. Dat was juist Kain's zonde. Hij wilde het oude lied zingen. Hij wilde niets weten van de radicale verandering die er gekomen was door de zonde. Hij wilde juist zooals vader en moeder weleer, de aarde den Heere wijden. O, ik weet het wel, dat er van dat wijden van de aarde óók niets kwam, maar formeel wilde hij hetzelfde doen

als Adam en Eva gedaan hadden vóór den zondeval. Hij wilde den Heere dienen maar zonder Bloed! En dat was gruwelijk.

Neen, de Heere heeft gezorgd voor een nieuw lied.

De Heere die voortijds en op velerlei wijze tot onze eerste vader en moeder sprak door de woorden der geschapene dingen, heeft na den val tot Adam en Eva gesproken door BLOED! God slachtte een lam en bedekte hen met de vellen. En God was de eerste Offeraar van het onschuldige Offer. En God heeft dat eerste offer verklaard. Hij sprak van het ZAAD der vrouw. De kop van den leugenaar zou vermorzeld!

Toen is Adam gaan zingen, en Eva heeft bevend het refrein van dat gezang overgenomen. Voorts hebben ze gezongen uit den treure. Maar het was een geheel nieuw lied. Eerst zongen ze van berg en dal en van het groene kruid. Eerst getuigden ze van de groote liefde Gods, want, zoo zongen ze, Hij zorgt voor ons, ons gevende spijs en vroolijkheid in den hof van Eden, doch nu smelt Adam weg in aanbidding terwijl hij zingt van een liefde die eigenlijk niet te vergelijken is met de liefde die hij eerst smaakte en bezong in de rustige dagen in Eden. Nu zingt hij van een liefde die zóó lieflijk is, dat we tot in der eeuwen eeuwigheid hare schoonheid en aantrekkelijkheid niet zullen kunnen benaderen. Tracht het! Kunt gij mij de hoogte, de breedte, de diepte en de lengte van de liefde Gods in Christus vertellen? Kunt ge er bij, dat God zelf naar omneer komt om de zonde en de schuld voor ons te betalen? Tegen Hem hebben we gezondigd en de prijs der zonde kunnen we tot in eeuwigheid niet betalen: het is het dragen en het is het verteerd worden van den toorn Gods. Welnu, Hij komt neer in Jezus en Hij zal het voor U doen! Als ge daar van gaat zingen, dan vraag ik U: kunt ge het vergelijken met een gezang voor de gave van de vruchten der boomen in het Eden? Als ge een wijle gestaan hebt bij het vreeselijke kruis en in den donker geluisterd hebt naar dien schreeuw van Messias, en als ge dan naar God hoort die dat Kruis en dien Zoon voor U verklaart, zoo vraag ik U: zult ge ooit klaar komen met Uw lieflijken zang? Neen, natuurlijk niet. Ik hoor Uw jubel al: Ik zal eeuwig zingen van Gods goedertierenheer! Ja, mijn broeder, dat gaat ietwat dieper dan het gezang vanwege de blauwe lucht en het bruisen der zee.

En als ge dan nog blijft vragen om bewijs, dan moet ge verder lezen in den psalm: Zingt den Heere een nieuw lied, *Want Hij heeft wonderen gedaan!* Welnu, ik heb U immers van het wonder van Gods genade verhaald? Het centrale wonder is dit: God, die naar Zijn gerechtigheid en heiligheid en waarheid ons moest wegwerpen met een eeuwige wegwerping, die God breekt door de vlammen der hel heen en gaat voor ons staan in het lieflijke Aangezicht van Zijn Zoon, Jezus Christus. Mozes zingt zachtken van de eeuwige armen die onder ons zijn. Welnu, die

eeuwige armen zijn Zijn wonder, die armen zijn Zijn Zoon, Jezus Christus, die als de ARMEN GODS, naar de hel gaat om ons op te halen. En ons gevonden hebbende, neemt Hij ons op Zijn schouder en draagt ons naar Huis! O, ik kan er in komen, dat men zingt: Veilig in Jezus armen. Het is een couplet van het nieuwe lied!

Luistert nu, en we zullen zien waarvan deze psalm verder zingt: "Zijne rechterhand en de arm Zijner heiligheid heeft Hem heil gegeven!"

Wat hier staat is een verdere verklaring van die wonderen.

Ik heb vroeger nooit kunnen begrijpen, dat Jesaja zeggen kan: Sion zal door recht verlost worden! Het was moeite in mijn oogen voor vele jaren. Ik had oude grootvaders in mijn prilste jeugd gehoord, en die zeiden altijd: Als de Heere naar recht zou handelen met ons, dan waren we voor eeuwig verloren! En nu las ik later, toen ik leerde lezen: Sion zal door recht verlost worden! Hoe kan dat? Rijmt dat?

Ja, dat rijmt; dat rijmt eeuwiglijk.

De zelfde zaak hebt ge hier in de nadere verklaring van de wonderen. De rechterhand Gods staat voor het recht en de macht, en de zonger haalt er ook de heiligheid bij. We worden verlost vanuit de hel der verdoemden vanwege het recht en de heiligheid Gods.

Hoe zit dat?

O, indien er niets meer gebeurd ware dan de zonde van Adam en Eva, dan zouden dat recht en die heiligheid Gods ons eenvoudig weg verdelgd hebben. Want God kan Zichzelf niet verloochenen. Hij kan niet één zonde door de vingers zien. Al is de zonde nog zoo klein (!), die zoogenaamde kleine zonde eischt de hel voor eeuwig.

Maar er is meer gebeurd.

De Heere God heeft ons zoo liefgehad, dat Hij Zelf naar de hel gegaan is voor ons. En daar in de hel heeft God Zijn Eigen recht en heiligheid en waarheid genoeg gedaan. Ik weet wel, dat Hij dat deed in de menselijke natuur, omdat die menselijke natuur gezondigd had, maar vergeet maar nooit, dat gij in elk geval niet behoefde verdoemd te worden. Jezus droeg Uw verdoemenis weg. En Hij deed dat in den weg van God's Eigen recht en gerechtigheid. Ja, nu zie ik het: Wij worden door recht verlost. Maar dat vreeselijke, en toch zoo hemelsch schoone recht, werd thuisgezocht in Jezus!

Dat recht en die heiligheid die hun werk deden aan Jezus, heeft God heil gegeven, zegt de tekst.

Wat dat heil dan is? Wat wil het zeggen, dat ik heil ontvang?

Het is dit.

Als ge heil van God ontvangt, dan zijn Uw schulden weg. Dan kunt ge voorts naar den hemel blikken en niet bevreesd te zijn, dat Hij U zal slaan met Zijn

bliksemen. Dan behoeft ge niet bang te zijn om te sterven, want dan stuurt Hij Zijn engelen om U af te halen van deze gevloekte aarde. Dan, aangekomen in den hemel, zult ge het glimlachen van God zien ten uwent. En de glimlach van God is weer Jezus. Hij is Zijn vriendelijk aangezicht, dat vroolijkheid en licht geeft voor alle oprechte harten.

Tweedens, als ge heil ontvangt om Jezus' wil, dan gaat Uw zonde ook weg, dat wil zeggen, op den duur. Eerst gaat het wel langzaam, doch straks bij het ontslapen, dan verliest ge het zondige lichaam des doods, en dat is veel meer net maar Uw vleeschelijk lichaam. Dat houdt in den geheelen ouden mensch.

Derdens, het heil onzes Gods in Jezus houdt ook in dat ge verandering van klimaat krijgt. Ge gaat dan naar den hemel, en dan worden de hemelingen Uw vrienden en metgezellen. Ge hebt hen al voor jaren bemind, doch dan zult ge zien. Als daar zijn: Adam, David, Johannes, Petrus, en de andere millioenen. En met hen de Engelen Gods. Zij zijn alle Uwe.

Vierdens, en dat is de hoofdzaak: ge zult dan God aanschouwen in gerechtigheid. In het Aangezicht van Jezus Christus den Heere. En als ge dan voor den troon staat en dat Aangezicht zult zien, dan zal Uw blijdschap onbepaald, door 't liefdelicht dat van Zijn aan'zicht straalt, ten hoogste toppunt stijgen! Heil Gode blijde psalmen aan!

En, let wel, heil voor U vandaag is, dat ge moogt lijden en strijden om Zijns Naams wil. Vergeet dat niet! De discipelen waren blijde, dat zij waardig geacht werden om voor Zijn naam smaadheid en smart te lijden. Dat is de bedeeeling des heils hier op aarde in het midden van wilde beesten.

En dat heil heeft God bekendgemaakt. God heeft Zijn gerechtigheid geopenbaard voor de oogen der heidenen! Dat is de volgende strophe in dit lied.

Dat zal waar zijn! Dat zal eeuwig waar zijn!

Als dat niet waar was, dan zat ik hier niet te schrijven met een popelend hart. Dat komt van de bekendmaking Gods.

Hij maakte het bekend in het Paradijs.

Hij heeft het gepredikt door de profeten.

Hij liet het zien in dat hoopje steenen en zand van Abel's altaar. Dat hoopje zand en steenen is wezenlijk hetzelfde als de tempel van Salomo. Beide zijn zij de verhooging van de aarde. De aarde verhoogd tot in den hemel toe. Dat is het heil Gods.

Hij heeft het getoond in den stroom van het onschuldig bloed der offeranden.

Luide werd het verkondigd door land en volk, stad en tempel, door koning, profeet en priester, en alle schaduwen en typen van het Oude Verbond.

En eindelijk heeft God het getoond door Zijn Zoon te zenden in de volheid des tijds.

En die Zoon sprak. En Zijn woorden maakte bekend het heil onzes Gods.

Hij heeft dat gedaan onder de heidenen.

Springt nu maar op van vreugde, want hier hoort ge van vreugdevolle dingen. Hier hoort ge van Gods werk in Willebrod en Bonifacius. Van de uitgezonden naar den heiden. Uw voorouders en mijn voorouders bogen zich in de wouden van Noord-Europa voor het stome beeld. Doch de Heere verkondigde Zijn heil. Toen heeft Uw vader geloofd en Uw moeder heeft zich voor God die waarlijk God is gebogen.

Vreeselijk is het om geen acht te slaan op die openbaring Gods.

Maar wij hebben het gezien en wij hebben het antwoord gegeven dat door God geeischd werd. En daarom? Omdat Hij heil ook gemaakt heeft in ons diepe hart. Daar wederbaarde Hij ons en bleef de koesterende stralen van Zijn liefde-licht zenden in onze duistere ziel.

Toen geloofde wij en zongen.

We zongen het nieuwe lied. Vanwege de nieuwe blijken van Zijn gunst.

En we zullen blijven zingen tot in der eeuwigheid.
G. V.

IN HIS FEAR

The Gospel and Our Social Life

Reformed Sociology Applied

I do not believe that the social evils of this world can be cured. Instead I believe that Scripture teaches us that the world socially and in every way involves itself ever more deeply in the curse of the righteous God. While we contemplate our social calling in this world we must not overlook what God's Word teaches us, especially in the Book of Ecclesiastes, more particularly about the crooked which cannot be made straight.

If we look back over history we get a picture as follows: A series of evils arise; there comes a clash, a crash, temporary chaos, then everything settles down. But if you hasten thither with the measuring rod of faith, you will find that the world has slipped to a lower level. It stands at that level for a while. Another series of evils arises, there comes a clash, a crash, another temporary chaos, and after everything has settled down you will find that the world has slipped to a new low. And so on until it settles finally into the perplexity of which Scripture speaks, and in which it is overtaken by the final, righteous judgment.

Somewhat like a bull-dozer in the valley, leveling off the mounds and carrying away the dirt, but the valley floor drops lower with each leveling-off process. A war is such a leveling-off process. Each period of prosperity and each period of succeeding depression is such a process.

All this does not however mean that we sit in our chair in a tower smugly to watch it. By no means. For in the first place we as Christians must beware that we do not ourselves contribute to these ills. The world writhes in convulsions, but, brother, are you one of the contributing causes thereof? The earth totters under the weight of greed, lust and bloodshed, are we wilfully adding to this weight? In how far are we, as farmers, as laborers, merchants and salesmen, in how far are we co-responsible for the things which have come upon the world? Certainly we do not wilfully add to this world's ills, do we? But, besides that, we have a positive calling in this world. We, who know the right way, haven't we a great responsibility to practice it, so others also may see the right way? Who can interpret the Word of God like the christian, and who can interpret history like the christian? Therefore we are of all men in a position to say: this is the way, walk ye in it. Ye are the light of the world, said Jesus. . . . a city set upon an hill. Certainly also in things social we are prophets of the Most High, and with Daniel of old, stand at the king's court to interpret what is happening. And dare to be a Daniel!

A Few Suggestions.

If we will walk in sanctification also when it comes to the details of social life there is nothing quite so important as to be well acquainted with the Word of God. I know, Scripture is not a dictionary in which you can find social problems and behind them you find the answers. But Scripture is the Word of God and that Word covers all of life. Hence all of us, but not the least those who are confronted with certain social situations ought to be well acquainted with Scripture as a whole. It is not sufficient to know certain texts, we should know Scripture as a whole.

How valuable such acquaintance with Scripture is we can perhaps show you by means of a few illustrations and references.

There are many passages in the Word of God which simply speak for themselves and as such give very evident information and direction. One of those you find in Jer. 22:13, where we read, "Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong, that useth his neighbor's service without wages and giveth him not for his work." Certainly our christian employer should be very conscious of this Word of God. Many a house has been built and

many chambers furnished out of the wages which employers have kept back from their laborers. Scripture does not command what wages must be given the workmen, but Paul in I Cor. 10:24 says: "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's", i.e. be solicitous of the welfare of the other. His spiritual, but also his temporal welfare. Isn't that the Golden Rule applied to the employer-employee relationship? The employer is not concerned about the welfare of his employees if, shortly, he himself has earned enough to set up houses and buy real estate, while his workman lives in a hovel and can scarcely keep himself and his family alive. He who would build a house on the increase of his business, has the perfect right to do so; but he should certainly want his employee to be able also to build a house, however cheap a house it may be, out of the increase of the business in which he labors. Let this general rule determine the wages he gives his help.

The employee on the other hand must likewise "seek not every man his own but also another's". They must intend the welfare of their employer no less than their own. Wherefore, "let him that stole, steal no more, but rather let him work", and he that worketh do it," not with eye-service as men pleasers, but with good will doing service". To steal from your employer by loafing, to ruin his business by doing poor work, to assume communistic or socialistic attitude toward him, or to destroy his business by organized strike and picket action, is contrary to the Word of God. And what fellowship hath Christ with Belial, i.e. if you belong to the union of Christ's body, how can you also belong to a union of that which is opposed to Christ's Word?

I want to show you still another method of applying God's Word.

In Deut. 25:4 we read, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn". An unimportant little statement, sandwiched between the thousands of Old Testament laws you might say. But, behold, Paul understands that although God cares for the oxen, this is written for our sakes. And on the basis of such a seemingly unimportant thing as this Paul is able to determine that "they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel" and ever after it this has been held as a hard and fast rule. Do you see how great a matter is determined by a seemingly unimportant passage from the Word of God? If so great a matter can be determined from so apparently trivial a passage, cannot our trivial things be determined by the Word of God also?

Or take the following. In Ps. 24 we read, "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof". Just a statement of fact you might say. But on the basis of this fact Paul settles the question between Jew and

Gentile touching the eating of things offered to idols.

Or the following: In Gen. 1 we read that God made them male and female and the two were one flesh. When the matter of divorce comes up Jesus simply refers them to the fact that "from the beginning it was not so". Hence they who engage in divorce go contrary to what it was from the beginning and have therefore left the straight line which God drew in His Word. On the basis of this departure from what it was in the beginning, Jesus says: "whoso marrieth her that is put away doth commit adultery".

So we could go on, but suffice it to show that the important thing in our social living is that we be filled with the Word of God. It was given us "for the regulation, foundation and confirmation of our faith" (Belg. Conf., Art. V). And if we are concerned about sanctified and victorious living God saith: This is my beloved Son HEAR YE HIM.

Conclusion.

Ye are my friends, says Jesus, if ye do what I command you. Certainly if the Covenant is a relationship of friendship between God and us, we shall rise up in this world as friends of God. We speak of the Covenant in the church, in the home and in the school, but let us add to it now this fourth dimension, the covenant in the social life. Friends of God in our social living. Friends of God in the relationship of marriage, in our relationship toward the authorities, in our relation toward the employer and employee.

First then we must be filled with the Spirit. Let us not be full of wine, says Paul, because in wine there is excuse. Let us not be full of lust and greed, nor be full of class struggle, but let us be full of the Spirit of Christ.

Being full of that Spirit, let us know what is the will of the Lord, let us acquaint ourselves fully with the will of the Lord as it has been made known to us in the Holy Word. If and when we are confronted with certain social problems, let our first concern be: what saith the Lord. If it cannot become plain to you what the Lord saith, seek the advice of other brethren in the Lord, perhaps they can assist you in understanding what the will of the Lord is.

And if we are full of that Spirit of Christ we shall not only have objective acquaintance with what the will of the Lord is, but we shall also be able to walk in that will.

Redeeming the time because the days are evil.

May we have abundant grace. If we lack ought, let us seek it with Him Who is able and willing to make all grace abound toward us.

M. G.

FROM HOLY WRIT

O. T. Quotations in the N. T.

(Eph. 4:8-12; Psalm 68:18)

When we were students in our Theological Seminary, our professors would continually stress the importance of keeping in mind that the Bible is no Dogmatics. The Holy Scriptures indeed, thus it was stressed, were the only source of dogmatics, to be sure. But this did not constitute them a dogmatics pure and simple.

It is well to bear this fundamental truth concerning the Word of God in mind also in this study of "Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament."

When the apostle Paul speaks of the great article of faith, the ascension of Christ to the right hand of the Father, he does not merely speak of an abstract dogma, that means nothing for our daily life as children of God. To the contrary, all these truths in general, and the ascension of Christ in particular, is presented by the apostle as being intensely practical.

That Jesus ascended to heaven is to our advantage as believers. Of this advantage as well as of the high calling connected with it the apostle writes in this fourth chapter of his letter to the Ephesians. Of this we hope to see more presently.

The great profit of Christ's ascension is not merely something for the church as a whole. It is a profit for each member in the Body of Christ. Each receives grace from Christ befitting his particular place and station in life and in the Church. None is overlooked. The individual saint has value before God, is precious in God's sight both in life and in death.

Of this the apostle speaks in Ephesians 4:7 where we read "Now unto each one of us has been given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ."

This care that Christ exhibits for His people is therefore intensely personal. And, what is remarkable in this passage in Ephesians 4 is, that the apostle makes such a special point of the care that the Ascended Lord has for each individual believer. And as remarkable as it is, so comforting it is also.

To prove this point of the care of the risen and glorified Lord for each member in that great multitude of the Saints, the apostle Paul quotes from Psalm 68:18. And, lest it be overlooked, this passage is the end of all contradiction on this score. Without doubt, when Paul makes this quotation from this well-known Psalm, the tacit implication is that this Psalm teaches that Christ does not only give gifts to His Church, but

that this Psalm also teaches that each believer receives grace from Christ.

We repeat, according to Paul, Psalm 68:18 teaches that Christ cares for each individual believer; the Shepherd does not forget one of those whom the Father has given to Him, but He will bring them all to the fold and will go in and out before them, and feed them in green pastures!

That is the intensely practical truth which the apostle is here teaching.

And to verify this giving of gifts, which is an activity of the Crucified and Risen Lord, Paul appeals to Psalm 68:18. In effect he says to us, turn to your Bible and read Psalm 68:18 and there you will read: "When He ascended on high, he led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men."

Perfectly clear, isn't it?

Don't say too soon that this is perfectly evident? For if you do, you may later discover that you did not read Psalm 68:18 carefully.

But what is the difficulty? Is there a discrepancy here? If so, what is it?

Let us place 68:18 next to Ephesians 4:8. The respective passages here follow.

Psalm 68:18: "*Thou* hast ascended on high, *thou* hast led captivity captive; *thou* hast received gifts from men" (amongst men).

Paul quotes this in Ephesians 4:8 as follows:

"When *he* ascended up on high, *he* led captivity captive and *gave* gifts unto men".

What do we notice, when we compare the exact wording of these two Scripture passages? It strikes our attention, that Paul, in quoting Psalm 68:18 in Ephesians 4:8 has made a change in the text. He has made a rather important and fear-reaching change. The drastic change is that instead of reading "*received* gifts" we now have "*gave* gifts". And, we also notice that instead of the second person "*Thou*" in Psalm 68:18 we here have the third person "*He*".

The question arises, when we consider this change of the wording, whether Paul changed the sense of the text, the sense of the Holy Spirit as meant in Psalm 68:18 when he quotes as he does in Ephesians 4:8? This question, as might be expected, has received a great deal of attention already in the christian church. Men of every age, from the times of the early church fathers till this present day, have sought to give an answer to this question. Each one, who has answered the question, or, at least, attempted to give a solution to the problem proceeded from a definite critical or dogmatic bias. This, from the very nature of the case, could not be different. Paul is no longer in our midst. Him we cannot interrogate; we cannot ask the writer of the letter to the Ephesians just what

prompted him to give this rendering to Psalm 68. Therefore, each and every one in attempting to answer the question of this change in quotations, must needs study the text in question. In doing so he will always proceed from a definite bias; in large measure the point of departure and procedure will determine the solution to this question.

We will, in this investigation, also proceed from definite presuppositions.

The first matter, that we accept as established is, that we here are dealing with the Word of God's revelation. In this passage, we very definitely have the unfolding of the Mystery of God's will in the death and resurrection of Christ and in His exaltation at the Father's right hand. Ultimately, we are here not dealing with the word of Paul, but with the Word of God.

Implied in the former paragraph, namely, that we are here dealing with the Word of God's revelation to Paul, is, that we do not purpose to seek to establish, whether Paul actually understood the sense of, the general struction and intent of Psalm 68. We believe, that the great apostle of Christ to the Gentiles did give us the sense of the Spirit of Christ, as this permeates the typical-prophetical 68th Psalm. Pray, why should we doubt Paul's understanding of this Old Testament Scripture, which he quotes? Who are we to set up ourselves as competent judges above this apostle. Rather than to assume such a critical and proud attitude in this matter, we should place ourselves humbly and eagerly at his feet.

Surely, that is our place.

If we possessed only this great epistle of Paul to the Ephesians, and had not other great letters from his hand, such would be the case. Does Paul himself not call our attention to this fact? Whose understanding of the Mystery of Christ measures up to his? Who has received grace as Paul did to understand the Mystery of God's will in Christ Jesus His Son? Thus we read in chapter 3:2-11: "If you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward; how that by revelation (according to the standard of uncovering the sense, the meaning, G.L.) He made known unto me the Mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge of the mystery of Christ) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, namely, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel: whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given me by the effectual working of His power. Unto me who am less than the least of all, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to

make all to see what is the fellowship of this Mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, Who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intend that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose, which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord!"

Who, upon reading this most marvelous passage from the apostle's pen, a passage that becomes the more marvelous the oftener one reflectively reads it, would still dare to assume a critical attitude toward Paul. Surely, it is a great privilege and responsibility to listen to what this preacher on the "riches of Christ", the "manifold wisdom of God" has to proclaim. Do not the very angels, who ever behold the face of God, learn to see "the manifold wisdom of God" in the Church of Christ, which wisdom Paul preaches—preaches even in this quotation from Psalm 68:18? We will, therefore, only attempt to learn from Paul that Psalm 68:18 speaks of the tender care of the Shepherd for each individual sheep of the fold; for thus is the sense of Paul here in Ephesians 4:8.

However, this does not mean that we do not have the right or the duty to attempt to give account of this change of quotation in the light of the Word of God. We must do more, to be sure, than merely say: "What Paul says is true; hence, there is no need of investigation and study." On the contrary, we have a very real calling to attempt to understand this change.

In attempting to understand this quotation we will have to give account of two matters particularly. The first is, how in the light of Psalm 68 in its entirety and verse 18 in particular Paul could possibly change the term "take gifts" into "give gifts". Is their anything in the Psalm that would suggest this rendering? The second matter that clamors for an answer is, whether due to the coming of the Son of God in the flesh, suffering and dying on the cross, and being raised to God's right hand, Paul did not by the Spirit of the Risen Lord see *explicitly* in this Psalm what was very really *implicitly* present.

We believe that an affirmative answer to both of these propositions will not only give us the answer to this knotty question of quotation here, but it will also aid us in grasping with all the saints what is the length and breadth, the height and depth of the love of God in Christ Jesus that surpasses all knowledge.

This is a matter of great importance. This matter thus becomes for us more than a matter of academic study. It will be a matter of the heavenly Father's wondrous love manifested in His Son to us.

We will consider, D. V., these two propositions in the next issue.

G. I.

PERISCOPE

Mennonite Migrations

Great lovers of rural life with its comparative simplicity are the various branches of Mennonites. The stricter groups, as for example the Amish, are particularly careful about keeping themselves free from all entanglements with the world as much as possible. Just recently a group of Amish Reformed folk in Indiana decided to move to Tennessee to escape worldly influences. Unable to maintain their own high schools, and compelled by Indiana law to keep their children in school until they are sixteen years of age, this Amish group is migrating to Tennessee to keep their children out of the public schools because of the ill effects of their worldly influence.

From Germany and Holland, 2,300 Mennonites arrived recently in South America seeking a new home and freedom in Paraguay. Their migration was arranged and financed by Mennonites in the United States and Canada, who hope during the next few years to help 10,000 of their fellow-believers out of the distresses of post-war Europe. But the difficulties of the emigrants did not cease with their arrival in the Western Hemisphere. Half of the company of migrants were able to reach their destination in Paraguay, but the rest were halted by the revolution in Paraguay, and compelled to remain, for the time being, at Buenos Aires.

In the history of religious migrations—which never seems to end—the Mennonites have done more than their share of travelling, and have endured their share of hardship. Their vigorous, and sometimes distorted, anti-worldliness has accentuated their troubles. Deep-seated loyalty to convictions is not disturbed by oppression and hardship.—P. Van Tuinen, in *The Banner*.

Postwar France

Some time ago we presented a brief article on the Protestant Church in France. Interesting and further light on the general and ecclesiastical picture in France today is contained in the following. It is an excerpt from an article written by Robert W. Root, CCORR Correspondent which appeared in *The Banner* of May 16, 1947. Mr. Root writes of a conversation which he had with a French Protestant minister while travelling from Switzerland to France.

"This pastor, who is in the Reformed Church, and I got to talking about moral problems. He said the first American soldiers who had come through his city were well-behaved, but that the French were less enthusiastic about those in his city now. As when the Germans had occupied, there is some illegitimacy also

today. He spoke with gratification of the fact that several French departments have outlawed prostitution since the war, and the Church is resisting the fight of organized vice to have a licensed system again. On the liquor question he said that there is more drunkenness in France than many think, that it had been a problem even in his own parish.

The Reformed Church is the largest Protestant denomination of France and corresponds in Calvinist doctrine and organization to the Presbyterians in America. His is the sole Protestant church in his community, which is largely Catholic. But informed Catholics admit that Catholicism is weak, he said, for many Catholics are that only on paper. The problem of French Protestantism is like that of American churches — getting more than about one-quarter of those on the rolls to attend services. Because of the low birth rate, young Protestant leaders know they must spread the gospel to others to survive, he added, but it is hard to get ordinary people in the congregation steamed up about "evangelization." In most concrete terms, his problem is serving a parish which extends about 20 miles north and south. He said he does not see how he will do the job by bicycle over pitted roads. If somehow he could get a car, it would be a great aid.

The pastor expressed his concern about the competition which Communists give the church. Sometimes the Christians and the Communists find they are allies in social welfare struggles, such as in the battle against prostitution, he said. But with a program which they picture as heaven on earth, the Communists offer a materialistic faith which many Frenchmen seize upon instead of religious faith.

Notwithstanding, I got the impression from talking with him that French Protestantism understood its strength and weaknesses and was having some success in injecting new life into French religion. So I was not prepared for the quick drench of pessimism or optimism that I then got, depending on your viewpoint. When I asked whether he did not think Protestantism in France was proving equal to the situation, he replied that he did not and that in his mind the struggle of Christianization was being overwhelmed by the evil of the world. This, he added, seemed to him a sign that the second coming of Christ is near at hand."

* * * *

Clipping The News. . . .

Religious Liberty In Poland.

The day following my arrival in Poland, I was cordially received by the Polish government's director of religion. I found him exceedingly sympathetic toward evangelical work, particularly the project for opening

a Polish Bible institute in Warsaw similar to the Russian Bible institutes already established in Toronto, Canada, and Rosario, Argentina. For, you see, Poland is now open for the preaching of the gospel and the distribution of gospel literature. New work, too, may be organized and one has permission to travel from village to village, and city to city with the gospel.

The first postwar conference of evangelical Christians met in Warsaw in October. Fifty-nine representatives came from different sections of Poland, braving all sorts of transportation problems. It was my privilege at this conference to meet many of the missionaries we used to support before the war. Many of them fell on my shoulders and wept for joy to think that we could meet once again.—Peter Deyneka. *The Moody Monthly*.

Southern Baptists vs. Federal Aid.

The Southern Baptist convention, protesting what it described as a "threat to the future of all public schools," went on record Friday against acceptance of federal aid by church-sponsored schools.

The convention, attended by 7,900 persons from 19 states, unanimously adopted a resolution warning all Baptist schools and other institutions against accepting grants of money from the government for any purpose on the grounds it weakened what it termed the traditional wall between the church and the state.

Also adopted by the convention was a resolution deploring the recent supreme court decision which upheld, 5 to 4, a New Jersey case for use of federal funds to help pay the cost of transporting children to and from parochial schools.—A.P.

Methodists vs. Catholicism.

The Methodist National Council of Bishops has accused the Catholic church of denying religious freedom to protestants in "Catholic-controlled lands."

The bishops in a report adopted at their annual meeting, referred specifically to Argentina, where they said "law now requires the teaching of the Roman Catholic religion even in the schools of Protestant churches."

"The situation in Italy and Spain denies to Protestants the religious freedom which Protestants in the United States desire Roman Catholics to enjoy," the bishops said.

The report asked removal of the President's personal representative to the Vatican and opposed alleged Catholic overtures for public support of church education.—U.P. Dispatch.

Netherland War Casualties

The Hague—(ANETA)—The war cost the Netherlands a total of 265,000 human lives, mostly as the result of murder and mistreatment by the Germans,

authoritative sources reported here.

Chief victims were Holland's Jews, of whom 114,000 out of a total of 140,000 were deliberately slaughtered or died as the result of ill treatment.

About 11,000 political prisoners lost their lives in the same manner, in addition to about 2,000 persons executed officially by the German occupation authorities, while 34,000 of the Netherlands taken to Germany as forced laborers are known to be dead.

Approximately 25,000 persons died while prisoners of the Japanese, and 22,000 of starvation in Holland in the "hunger winter" of 1944-45.

Military casualties were about 4,000 in the army and 2,600 in the navy.

In addition, 90,000 of all categories are listed as missing. Virtually all hope that any of these still survive has been abandoned.

Still Wars and Rumors.

A.P.—Three Youngish officers, their identities known only to a select few in the army top bracket, are trying to visualize what war will be like 25 years from now.

They will attempt a reasonable guess on the fantastic means of destruction science may devise and then they will give Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower a picture of the command problems involved. The chief of staff let it be known he is isolating the officers from the war department's regular operation and planning staff.

Taking orders from no one the three will think in terms of the future.

The study group's research goes everywhere, Eisenhower says, "since everything effects war." Behind this statement was the implication of improved atomic weapons, germ warfare and means to inflict unheard of mass destruction.

* * * *

u. S. Views U. s.

(Continued from last issue)

"We noticed the great danger to which the reformed church in America is subject, the depletion of a Reformed Theology. Acceptance of the religiosity of Americanism begins with "Jesus saves" and results in a departure from dogmatic fundamentals.

"In many American Churches, which I attended, one can find these symptoms present. Sometimes it is revealed in the little things, as for example, in the lack of Bibles in the pews. Each is supplied with a large hymn book but very seldom does one find a Bible available to follow the Scripture reading. In many Church, moreover, the preaching has also lost the essential Reformed character. The text serves merely as a "kapstok" upon which one hangs whatever he has to say. Up until now I have heard nothing

but what we call 'exemplarishe' sermons; in which the proper meaning of the text content is hardly discernible. What is said has a good purpose; the evils of Church life are decried in very sharp terms but the Word does not come to its right because the content of the Word is not brought. The text serves merely as a stepping-stone to allow one to say what he desires to say. This naturally removes the emphasis from the Word. It is the minister that says something, not the Word itself that speaks to the Congregation. It is no WORD service anymore. A result is that the Congregation suffers from lack of spiritual nourishment and this lack is reflected in the discussions of the members. There is an alarming ignorance in the spheres of "kerk-begrip", exegesis, dogmatics, etc. The discussions in the men's societies are superficial. They speak rather broadly about the text without seeing the Scripture.

"It is also a great defect of American reformed life that one no longer studies. I made it a special point to ask, in the several homes in which I stayed, whether there were any books in the house and if so what kind. On this point I always experienced a feeling of thankfulness for my own land as I thought how much different it is in our country in this respect. I often thought of the visit I had last summer in a simple fisher's cottage in Spakenburg, whose bookcase was filled with theological works. The complete "korte verklaring" was included and the great standard works of our Reformed theologians were not lacking. And that these were used was evident from the conversation I had with this man. And this situation is not an exception in the Netherlands but is the rule amongst those who are active in the Church.

"In America they do not buy books. The daily paper, that is completely at the disposition of the world, and the "neutral" magazines, weeklies, etc. are avidly read. One meets with them in every home. This is the reading matter from which proceeds a deadly influence on the younger generation in that the antithesis is no longer discerned. And he who yet strives to live the antithesis in America is considered a kill-joy.

"Another great danger that defrauds the reformed churches in America is the increasing power with which the spiritual americanism influences the members of these churches. This is the result of mixed marriages, in-comers from other church groups and a general deflection among her own members.

"As I make the acquaintance of more individuals, —members of the Christian Reformed Church—I am more and more struck with the fact that there is among these every 'wind of doctrine'. In a comparatively small congregation I found adherents of 'The thousand-year reign'; another that was convinced of the theory of 'soul-sleep', an adherent of arminianism. There was also a member who had come under the

influence of a new sect, that had just begun, and as all sects in America, quickly gained followers."

Here Mr. Van Spronsen describes at great length the "Kingdom" movement. Undoubtedly, the brother was in California when he wrote this as any American would guess, even if he didn't know. That which he describes is another of the many "wild schemes" which are always coming out of California and with which we in America are so often amused and annoyed. At this point we wish to add a bit of criticism of the brother's writings. To an American many of his observations would be simply humorously interesting if it were not for the fact that he is writing to the public in the Netherlands, most of whom will accept his descriptions as being an authentic and generally prevailing condition in *Reformed* Churches. We maintain, with him, that wherever conditions exist, such as he describes, these Churches or individuals have lost their *Reformed* character, though they may still bear that name. But we do not agree that this is a fair characterization of prevailing conditions in *Reformed* circles. The basic error Mr. Van Spronsen makes is that he sees a few extreme instances and considers them to be the norm and so applies them. Such sweeping statements as, for example, "all the houses are the same in America", "in America they do not study", "they do not buy books in America", etc. Give his readers distorted impressions of both spheres —social and *religious*. They may be the brother's impressions, but he should not set them down as general facts. The influence and tendency to world-conformity (not Americanism, as v.S. characterizes it) is no more severe here than in his own country. Nor, do we believe, according to all reports and writings from the Netherlands, do we as *Reformed* churches in America do a poorer job of maintaining our distinction in this struggle than the *Reformed* church anywhere else in the world; including the Netherlands. We appreciate much of what Mr. Van Spronsen writes but maintain that the situation is not peculiar to America nor due to a spirit of conformity to Americanism but is the age-old struggle of the Church everywhere against world-conformity; ever increasing in intensity as the end draws near. Perhaps, along these lines we will make a few remarks as we continue to quote Mr. Van Spronsen.

W. H.

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.

Conference Data

We presume that all our readers are acquainted with the fact that the ministers of the Protestant Reformed Churches and the ministers of the Reformed Church in the U. S. have had several conferences in years past. The fact of this matter has been advertized repeatedly. The members of both churches have also contributed financially for this worthy venture.

The last Conference was held at Hull, Iowa, and the conference for this year will be held at Sutton, Nebr.

The undersigned brethren have been appointed by the 1946 conference to take care of matters for the 1947 Conference. And at this time we would acquaint you with the work we have accomplished, and we will also render our financial report to date.

At our last conference the following invitation appeared on the table, and I quote: "To the Conference in session at Hull, Iowa, October 1-3, 1946:—The Hope and Emmanuel Reformed Churches of Sutton, Nebr. herewith extend a joint invitation to the Conference to meet in Sutton, Nebraska in the year of our Lord 1947. (w.s. Rev. Calvin Stuebbe and Rev. U. Zogg)."

The conference at Hull, while in session, appointed a committee to serve us with a report and advice regarding a possible future conference, speakers, chairman for the conference of 1947, conference committee, etc. This committee rendered the following report which was unanimously adopted; and I quote again: "1. The committee took action to consider the question of the advisability of another conference in 1947. And the (present) conference is very strongly encouraged to meet in conference again next year, 1947; 2. In regard to the theme for the conference of 1947 the committee suggests the conference to leave the topic to the Conference Committee; 3. The committee recommends to the conference to continue the present conference committee, the Revs. William Korn and Gerrit Vos; 4. We recommend the following speakers for the 1947 conference: the Revs. H. Hoeksema, C. Hanko, and P. De Boer of the Protestant Reformed Churches, and the Revs. Dr. K. J. Stuebbe and Wm. Korn of the Reformed Churches in the U. S.; 5. We recommend that the conference accept the invitation from the Sutton churches for the place of meeting of the 1947 conference, and the time to be the week after the Fall Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches; 6. And, finally, we recommend that the Rev. A. Cammenga be chosen to be our President for next year's meeting at Sutton, Nebraska."

As said before, the Conference at Hull adopted this report and advice in full.

At first the date for the Sutton Conference would have been September 30, October 1 and 2, but since

the March Classis West decided to meet the first Wednesday in September 1947 instead of the last Wednesday, the Sutton Conference will now be held from Tuesday evening, 7:30, until Thursday evening at 5:00 that is, from September 9 to September 11, 1947.

Your conference committee met at Menno, South Dakota, January 20 of this year and made certain decisions; and here they are.

First, we considered the five suggestions we received for a possible topic from three brethren; and we decided to choose the theme: The Law. And under this main theme, we have the following sub-divisions: The Idea of the Law; The Law and the First Adam; The Law and the Gentiles; Christ under the Law; and: The Law and the Christian.

Second, we drew up the following program:

Tuesday, P. M., September 9, 1947

P. M.

- 7:30 Opening exercises and address: the President, Rev. A. Cammenga.
- 8:00 Lecture: *The Idea Of The Law*, Rev. H. Hoeksema.
- 9:00 Discussion.
- 9:45 Closing: Rev. Robert Stuebbe.

Wednesday, September 10, 1947

A. M.

- 9:00 Opening Exercises: Rev. U. Zogg.
- 9:30 *The Law and the First Adam*, Dr. K. J. Stuebbe.
- 10:30 Recess, 15 minutes.
- 10:45 Discussion, and if possible, business.
- 11:45 Closing: Rev. B. Kok.

P. M.

- 2:00 Opening Exercises: Rev. J. De Jong.
- 2:30 *The Law and the Gentiles*, Rev. P. De Boer.
- 3:30 Recess.
- 3:45 Discussion.
- 4:45 Closing, Rev. W. Grassmann.

Thursday, September 11, 1947

A. M.

- 9:00 Opening Exercises: Rev. D. E. Bosma.
- 9:30 *Christ Under The Law*, Rev. W. E. Korn.
- 10:30 Recess.
- 10:45 Discussion.
- 11:45 Closing, Rev. W. Hofman.

P. M.

- 1:30 Opening Exercises: Rev. J. Howerzyl.
- 2:00 *The Law and The Christian*, Rev. C. Hanko.
- 3:00 Recess.
- 3:15 Discussion.
- 4:15 Business.
- 5:00 Closing, Rev. H. Hoeksema.

Third, the Rev. G. Vos was instructed to write to the five brethren who were chosen to address the

Sutton Conference and acquaint them with our choice of the themes, and also their individual sub-scheme on which they were to speak. (This was done by Rev. Vos January 22, 1947; and the 5 brethren evidently accepted their assignment, since they did not refuse).

Fourth, we decided to request collections in all our churches, of both the Protestant Reformed and the Reformed Church in the U.S., the proceeds to be sent, for the Protestant Reformed Churches to Rev. G. Vos at Edgerton, Minnesota and for the Reformed Churches in the U. S., to Rev. W. Korn, Menno, South Dakota.

Fifth, the conference committee was to meet again the 2nd Monday in February in order to further decide on whatever is necessary for the Sutton meeting. (This meeting was not held due to various circumstances, among which the ill-health of brother Korn.)

Lastly, we decided to publish our financial report and state of the finances as of this date, in Concordia, The Standard Bearer, The Witness, and Die Gemeindeblatt.

And here follows the financial report as of today. A mimeographed financial report was submitted and accepted at the Hull Conference of 1946, where we showed a balance of \$193.24.

Financial Statement

of receipts and disbursements of the 1946 Conference between the ministers and students of the Protestant Reformed Churches and the Reformed Church in the U. S., held at Hull, Iowa, October 1-3, 1946.

RECEIPTS:

October 1, 1946, balance on hand	193.24
Collections from the following churches:	
Randolph, Wisconsin	10.64
Redlands, California	32.80
Doon, Iowa	8.08
Oak Lawn, Illinois	13.13
Rock Valley, Iowa	9.10
Orange City, Iowa	6.37
Hull, Iowa	27.32
Bellflower, California	13.40
Hope, Michigan	16.51
First Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan	250.00
Fourth Church, Grand Rapids, Mich.	28.68
Holland, Michigan	21.18
Pella, Iowa	15.28
Edgerton, Minnesota	15.35
Kalamazoo, Michigan	17.91
Sioux Center, Iowa	9.88
Manhattan, Montana	29.81
Creston Church, Grand Rapids, Mich.	17.41
South Holland, Illinois	30.01
Grand Haven, Michigan	5.45
Hudsonville, Michigan	42.00
The Reformed Church in the U. S.	200.00

Rev. E. Buehrer, Green Bay, Wisconsin	10.00
Collections at Conference	83.95
TOTAL RECEIPTS:	\$1108.18

DISBURSEMENTS:

October 4, 1947, Bank Service	\$.85
October 1-3, 1947, Travel Expense, delegates....	609.66
October 3, 1947, Catering at Hull, Iowa	142.23
January 20 and 22, 1947:	
Travel Expense, Stationery and postage	14.49
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	\$767.23
May 10, 1947, Cash on hand	\$ 340.95

As soon as possible after the Conference at Hull, Iowa, in 1946, we put \$300.00 of the balance on a Certificate of Deposit, drawing 1% interest, and the other \$40.95 is on a checking deposit.

And now a final word.

By all means, let us all come to the Conference at Sutton, Nebraska. These conferences are a wonderful stimulus for all of us. Let us constantly remember that the glorious life of the Kingdom of God is tasted only in the communion with the Body of Christ. No one is sufficient unto himself. If we cut ourselves off from the communion with the brethren we become stagnant. At our conferences you will hear wonderful lectures, stimulating discussions, and the usual contact with one another. No one can attend these gatherings and go home unchanged. Be sure to come!

And let all our consistories take note of this kind request which we now make again: please, collect for the coming conference. Even though we have a nice balance left in the treasury, let us remember that the next conference will be much more expensive. And let our people remember that when your minister is enriched at such meetings, the spiritual benefits are also tasted by you. See you at Sutton, D. V.!

The Conference Committee:

Revs. Wm. Korn and G. Vos.

ANNIVERSARY

On Saturday, May 31, 1947, our beloved parents

Mr. and Mrs. WILLIAM WIERENGA

hope to commemorate their 25th wedding anniversary.

That our Heavenly Father may continue to bless and keep them for each other and for us is the earnest prayer of their grateful children.

Mr. and Mrs. Louis Wierenga

Martha

Bernice

87th St. and Ridgeland Ave.

Oak Lawn, Illinois.