

THE STANDARD

Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XXIII

June 15, 1947 — Grand Rapids, Michigan

NUMBER 18

MEDITATION

Fellowship In The Gospel

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.

Phil. 1:3-5.

Beautiful testimony!

Every remembrance of you is that you are united in the fellowship of the gospel, and that, too, constantly, without fail, from the first day until now!

Beautiful, and blessed, too, this testimony is all the more, because it was, to be sure, Paul, the prisoner in Rome, that thus expressed his appreciation of the spiritual well-being of his beloved church in Philippi; but then, Paul, the Apostle, illuminated and directed by the Spirit of Christ, who, even in this epistle, wrote to them, not the word of man, but the Word of God!

How blessed, to hear from the Lord of His Church the word of commendation: "You are constantly united in the fellowship of the gospel!"

United in the gospel!

For this must be the meaning of the apostle's words. They do not signify, as some would have it, that the believers of Philippi maintained fellowship with the apostle, and evinced this fellowship in the lively interest they showed in the furtherance of the gospel, and in the aid they sent to the apostle in his bonds. Nor do they convey merely the idea that they had fellowship with the gospel, meaning that the gospel had been preached unto them, and that they had embraced it by a living faith, and now stood in a living relationship to that gospel. But it refers to the communion they had with one another, a fellowship that was, as to its char-

acter and principle, wholly determined by the gospel of Jesus Christ!

In the gospel this fellowship had its root!

The communion they had with one another was not a mere natural fellowship, determined by blood relationship, or by natural friendship, affinity in character, business associations, or the like: it was a purely spiritual fellowship, the nature of which was wholly dominated by the gospel.

United they were in the gospel.

The gospel is not of this world. It concerns the things which eye hath not seen, neither ear heard, nor have ever been conceived in the heart of man. It is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the incarnated Son of God, Who revealed the Father, Who died on the cross, Who rose on the third day, Who ascended into the inner sanctuary, and is exalted at the right hand of the Most High, 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. And because the very heart and essence of the gospel is Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, therefore, it is good news about the promise. For He is the fulfillment of that promise. The gospel proclaims the promise of God as it is fulfilled in Christ: that in Him the tabernacle of God is with men, that His blood is the sealing of the everlasting covenant, that in His resurrection righteousness and eternal life have been brought to light, that with Him we are set in heavenly places, and that He is Lord forever! It is the proclamation of the sure and immutable promise of God, that He will dwell in us by His Spirit, and apply unto us all we have objectively in Christ, the forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness, the adoption unto children and heirs, faith, hope, love, life, the incorruptible, and undefilable inheritance that fadeth never away!

Jesus Christ!

In that gospel, or, literally, *into* that gospel they had fellowship with one another!

There was a common bond that united them, a common fellowship in the sphere of which they had their

walk and conversation. They had a common mind, a common life, a common love, common desires and aspirations, a common aim and purpose. And this commonness revealed itself in their actual life, in word and deed, in confession and walk. This communion was a fellowship *into* the gospel. It sprang from a common source, it grew upon a common root: the gospel of Jesus Christ. That gospel had struck root into the hearts of all alike, and from thence it controlled and dominated all the issues of life. By that gospel their minds were enlightened, and filled with a knowledge and wisdom that was not of this world; by it their will was governed, and all their desires were directed and concentrated on the things of the kingdom of God, the things that were above, and the furtherance of the gospel was the aim of all. In the gospel they loved one another. Worthy of the gospel they walked, as children of light. Of the gospel they spoke, and all their speech and walk was a manifestation of the power of the gospel.

Fellowship in the gospel!

All the more marked this fellowship in the gospel was because, by it, they had been separated from the world. A deep spiritual chasm had been struck, when the gospel had been implanted in their hearts, between them and the world that lieth in darkness. It had placed them in a position of spiritual antithesis to the world in which once they had their walk and conversation. And because the world hated them, their own fellowship became all the more intimate and firm.

It was a fellowship of light in darkness, of righteousness in unrighteousness, of life in the midst of death. . . .

A fellowship, whose antithesis operated even in their own flesh, but which had been victorious even until now.

A fellowship, that had its source in the indwelling Christ!

A fellowship, for that very reason, by faith in Him!

Every remembrance of you speaks of this fellowship!

Glorious testimony, indeed!

Can we hear it?

Until now. . . .

From the first day until the present!

Constant, without backsliding, had been this fellowship in the gospel on the part of the Philippians.

And that makes this testimony all the more beautiful and remarkable.

O, the fact that their fellowship in the gospel had been firm and pure and fervent on that "first day" and for a little while afterwards, when they first had heard and embraced the glad tidings of salvation, that was quite normal, and nothing specially noteworthy.

That is usually the case.

In that early period of their calling, and their conversion to the faith of Jesus, spiritual life would be bright, hope would be firm, love ardent, and a strong zeal for the furtherance of the gospel would actuate them in their walk and conversation. They would live in their first love, and the new experience of the wonder of God's grace would fill them with gladness and joy. Besides, in that early period, the congregation would be purest in membership, only those that had a living part with the Lord would join them. Tares had not yet been sown among the wheat, weeds had not yet sprung up in the garden of God. All were new creatures in Christ Jesus, old things had passed away, all things had become new. Their fellowship with one another in the gospel was all the more strong and intimate because of their separation from the world, and the antithesis with the world would be an incentive to them to seek and to realize that fellowship in Christ.

It is beautiful springtime for the Church of Christ.

Alas, how soon this often changes!

Before long it becomes evident that believers are still in the flesh, that the motions of sin are still in their members, that it is a fight to maintain their fellowship in the gospel, and that, in this struggle, faith does not always have the victory. The flesh asserts itself, the ardor of the first love is chilled, earthly cares and worldly lusts disrupt the communion of saints, the Spirit is grieved, zeal for the cause of Christ wanes, and the antithesis between the Church and the world is being obliterated. Besides, the carnal seed enters from without, and springs up from within, discipline grows lax, and the fellowship in the gospel suffers.

On how high a spiritual level flourished the fellowship in the gospel in the early Church in Jerusalem, when they had all things in common, and believers continued daily with one accord in the temple, breaking bread from house to house, and eating their meat with gladness and singleness of heart! Yet, how cruelly the disruption of this beautiful fellowship was manifested when Ananias and Sapphira committed their lie against the Holy Ghost! !

How beautiful was the manifestation of the fellowship of the gospel in the Church of Ephesus when, in Miletus, Paul spoke his parting words to its elders. Yet, how soon afterwards the Lord rebuked that congregation because it had not kept its first love!

Not so with the Church of Philippi at the time when the apostle wrote this epistle to them.

Their fellowship in the gospel had been constant!
From the first day even until now!

Constantly they had manifested that the truth of the gospel united them in a firm bond of fellowship.

Their faith was strong, their hope was bright, their love was ardent, their zeal was unabated.

Well may their spiritual state provoke us to holy jealousy!

Beautiful grace of God!

Thanks be to God!

None of self, all of Him!

For it is He that worketh within us to will and to do in behalf of His good pleasure.

Of this the apostle is not oblivious as he gives witness to the Philippian believers of their constant fellowship in the gospel.

The testimony is part of a thanksgiving, and of a prayer which the apostle sends to the throne of grace in their behalf, with joy: "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy."

O, yes, with joy!

There is joy, pure joy, in the hearts of believers when they live in the strong consciousness of their fellowship in the gospel. They love Jerusalem. Of Jerusalem they are citizens, and they seek her good. They have the love of God in Christ in their hearts. Hence, to see God's Church prosper, to see her children walk in the light, and thus be manifestations of the glorious grace in the Beloved, individually, and in their fellowship with one another,—that is their greatest joy.

Joy there is, especially, in the hearts of those that are called to be watchmen on Jerusalem's walls, that preach the gospel to her children that have the oversight over the flock.

And of these, the apostle was chief.

(His calling it was to herald the cause of Christ in the dark world of heathendom, to watch over the Church wherever it came to manifestation, to warn them against the wolves that always lurked about the flock of Christ to destroy them. His was the care of all the churches. On his heart he bore them. If they were tempted, he suffered; if they apostatized from the faith, he was grieved: they were his "little children" whom he loved, and "of whom he would travail in birth again until Christ be formed in them.")

How deeply he rejoiced when he saw the Church prosper!

And so, while he made request for them all with joy, he gave thanks to God for their fellowship in the gospel.

Only in the light of this thanksgiving dare this testimony concerning their constant fellowship in the gospel be given them, and only as a cause for their own thanksgiving dare it be received by them.

Our flesh is deceitful. In times of spiritual prosperity, it might easily tempt us to boast, to take the credit to ourselves, to imagine that we are making ourselves worthy of the grace of God, to compare ourselves with others, assume the attitude of "holier than thou," and thus to exalt ourselves in our pride. And what is more abominable than spiritual pride and conceit?

Yet, we have nothing to boast!

Sinners we are, enemies of God by nature, and enemies of the truth of the gospel. Nothing we have that we have not received. By grace are we saved!

And pure grace it is, not only that we embrace the gospel, but also that we may continue in the fellowship that has its root in it.

Let no flesh, then, glory in His presence!

It is all of the God of our salvation.

Thanks be to Him!

Confident request!

With joy, the Apostle prays for them!

Prays, no doubt, for a fulness of spiritual blessings in heavenly places on them all.

Prays that their faith may continue still, and be strengthened and confirmed, that they may continue still, and increase in the knowledge of grace of the Lord Jesus, that their love may abound, their hope may be confirmed, their zeal may continue unabated, that more and more their whole walk and conversation may be dominated by, and be a manifestation of that fellowship in the gospel.

And notice, how general this prayer of the Apostle is, in behalf of them: always, in every prayer of mine, for you all. . . .

With joy!

Joy, because the Apostle is quite confident that his prayer for this Church, and for them all, is not in vain. It is being heard. For what else is the joy of prayer? It is not a prayer with a heavy heart, but with the joy of confidence.

Their fellowship in the gospel is proof to him of God's grace resting on them.

And it is a ground of assurance that his request for them is heard!

Blessed fellowship in the gospel!

H. H.

The Standard Bearer

Semi-Monthly, except Monthly in July and August

Published By

The Reformed Free Publishing Association
1463 Ardmore St., S. E.

EDITOR: — Rev. H. Hoeksema.

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

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

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

(Subscription Price \$2.50 per year)

Entered as Second Class Mail at Grand Rapids, Michigan.

— CONTENTS —

MEDITATION:—

FELLOWSHIP IN THE GOSPEL409
Rev. H. Hoeksema.

EDITORIALS:—

PLEASE, "STRIJDENDE KERK"!412
EXPOSITION OF THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM415
Rev. H. Hoeksema.

DR. RIDDERBOS AND ARTICLE 31418
JONATHAN'S VENTURE OF FAITH422
SAUL'S GOING TO GILGAL423
Rev. G. M. Ophoff.

EEN PSALM424
Rev. G. Vos.

IN HIS FEAR426
Rev. J. A. Heys

FROM HOLY WRIT428
Rev. G. Lubbers.

PERISCOPE430
Rev. W. Hofman.

EDITORIALS

Please, "Strijdende Kerk"!

Our readers have, perhaps, been wondering why, in the last few numbers of *The Standard Bearer*, they found no continuation of the discussion by the Rev. L. Doekes of our "De Geloovigen en Hun Zaad." If so, the answer is simple: in the last five or six issues of *De Reformatie* our brother in the old country did not continue his discussion.

The reason for this delay we know not.

As soon as he resumes his discussion we will publish it.

In the meantime, "De Geloovigen en Hun Zaad" appears to have been read rather generally. It also has been the subject of discussion in some papers published by the "synodicals." While we are waiting for further word from the Rev. Doekes, it may be interesting to take note of their criticism and observe how it was received, and what use was made of it there.

First of all, we call the attention of our readers to what "De Strijdende Kerk" did with our booklet. "De Strijdende Kerk" (The Church Militant) is the name of a semi-monthly publication, that is devoted particularly to opposition against the liberated churches. At the head of the paper, above its name, we read the announcement: "Dit blad wordt gedeeltelijk gratis verspreid," i.e., "This paper is distributed, partly, free of charge." It is evident, therefore, that it is chiefly used for propaganda, and means to be read even by those that would, probably, not subscribe to it.

On this we have no criticism.

But we definitely do not like the use this paper made of my booklet "De Geloovigen en Hun Zaad."

In Vol. 2, Nos. 29 and 30, it simply cited long passages from said booklet with the evident purpose to let the liberated brethren know that also in "Amerika" they find no support.

The articles appear under a big headline: DS. HOEKSEMA CONTRA PROF. HEYNS.

The editor introduces them as follows:

"Achtien jaar geleden werd in Amerika een strijd gevoerd door Ds. H. Hoeksema onder meer tegen prof. Heyns. Ds. Hoeksema, die ook ernstige bezwaren had tegen de veronderstelde wedergeboorte van Dr. Kuiper, richtte zich tegen prof. Heyns.

"Deze artikelen zijn thans herdrukt en in brochurevorm verschenen onder den titel: 'De Geloovigen en Hun Zaad.'

"Zeer leerzaam voor bezwaarden en niet bezwaarden is de aanval van ds. Hoeksema op prof. Heyns.

"Zij laat ons zien hoe ook elders over de strijd-vragen van vandaag geworsteld is, en waar het zich alles afspeelt in een land, ver van het onze in een tijd, die door 18 jaar van ons geschieden is, kunnen wij dit lezen, zonder door persoonlijke sympathieën of antipathieën geprikkeld te worden.

"Wij geven gaarne het woord aan Ds. Hoeksema."

Let me translate this introduction for our readers that cannot read Dutch:

"Eighteen years ago, the Rev. Hoeksema was involved in a controversy with (literally: waged a battle against) prof. Heyns, among others. The Rev. Hoeksema, who also had serious objections against the doctrine of presumed regeneration, directed himself against prof. Heyns.

"These articles are now in reprint, and have appeared in the form of a brochure under the title: 'Believers and their Seed.'

"Very instructive both for those that are aggrieved and for those that are not aggrieved is the attack of the Rev. Hoeksema upon Prof. Heyns.

"It shows us how also elsewhere men struggled with the controversial questions of today; and seeing that this struggle took place in a far distant land, and in a time separated from our own by eighteen years, we can read this without being irritated by personal sympathies or antipathies.

"We gladly let the Rev. Hoeksema speak."

And then follows nothing but a long citation from my booklet, in which I make plain that the covenant view of the former Prof. Heyns is Pelagian.

In connection with this, I kindly and urgently request "De Strijdende Kerk" to publish the following article of mine in reply to theirs (The reader may find the translation immediately following):

Please, "Strijdende Kerk".

Geachte redakteur!

Wil U zoo vriendelijk zijn, om het volgende over te nemen in Uw blad? Het is eene reflectie op een paar artikelen, die verschenen in "De Strijdende Kerk" van 9 and 23 Nov. 1946. 't Is wel een beetje laat voor replek, maar dit is grootendeels buiten mijn schuld. Had U mij die nummers van Uw blad, waarin de bewuste artikelen verschenen, aanstonds toegezonden, ik zou er ongetwijfeld terstond op hebben gereflecteerd. Dit had ik zeker mogen verwachten, temeer daar Uw blad immers gedeeltelijk gratis wordt verspreid. Nu hoorde ik echter van anderen in het oude vaderland, dat er uit mijn brochure "De Geloovigen en Hun Zaad" in Uw blad breed werd geciteerd. 'k Heb daarop, via ons blad, verzocht om exemplaren van de nummers waarin

die aanhalingen voorkwamen, doch zonder gevolg. Eindelijk kreeg ik de boven genoemde nummers van "De Strijdende Kerk" toch in handen, door een vriend van me in Kalamazoo, Mich. Dit ter verklaring van dit late schrijven mijnerzijds.

Nu heb ik, geachte redakteur, hoegenaamd geen bezwaar er tegen, dat U uit mijn brochure citeert. Maar wel gaat mijn protest tegen het eenzijdige van die aanhaling, waardoor mijn brochure in dienst wordt gesteld van Uwe oppositie-propaganda tegen de vrijgemaakten. Dit was inderdaad mogelijk, omdat ik het met de verbondsbeschouwing, die algemeen door hun leiders wordt gepresteerd, niet eens ben, en omdat ik die beschouwing indirekt in mijn brochure bestrijd. Maar dat was niet de bedoeling van mijn schrijven, zooals ik duidelijk in mijn *Voorwoord* te kennen geef. Mag ik U en Uwe lezers daarom op het volgende attent maken:

1. Eerlijkheidshalve had U mij in Uw inleidend woord aan Uwe lezers moeten voorstellen, niet als iemand, wiens woord in officieel kerkelijken zin voor U van gewicht kan zijn, maar als een ketter, die juist om den strijd, dien hij streed, en waarvan U gewag maakt, door de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken ten onzent, Uwe zusterkerken, ben uitgeworpen. Uw artikelen laten thans den indruk, dat er iemand van beteekenis aan het woord is. U zult mij toestemmen, dat ze een geheel anderen indruk hadden gelaten, als U b.v. geschreven had: "Laat ons eens zien, wat een ketter uit Amerika, die door onze zusterkerken om zijne beschouwing werd uitgeworpen, over de verbondsbeschouwing van de vrijgemaakten te zeggen heeft."

2. U had er aan kunnen toevoegen, dat die verbondsbeschouwing van prof. Heyns destijds schering en inslag was in de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken alhier, en met officieele goedkeuring voor jaren aan de Theologische School dier Kerken werd onderwezen. En deze beschouwing vindt nog altijd zeer vele aanhangers in die Kerken, in weerwil van het feit, dat men in den laatsten tijd de voorstelling geeft, dat de theorie der veronderstelde wedergeboorte door haar wordt voorgestaan.

3. Bovendien had U er ook aan moeten toevoegen, dat Uwe kerken het ook niet met mijne verbondsbeschouwing eens zijn, zooals U wel duidelijk moet geworden zijn uit mijne brochure. Wat naar mijne innige overtuiging de zuivere en scherpe Gereformeerde lijn is, werd ook door Uwe Synode van Sneek-Utrecht en later niet getrokken. Toch is die antithetisch-organische lijn, toegepast op de ontwikkeling van Gods Verbond in de lijn der geslachten, de duidelijke leer der Heilige Schrift. Als het niet beneden Uwe kerkelijke waardigheid is, geachte redakteur, om deze dingen met een ketter te bespreken, zou ik gaarne, om der waarheid wille, zulk eene bespreking met U voeren in

Uw blad en het onze. Doch daarover gaat het thans niet. Om eenzijdigheid te vermijden, en niet den indruk te laten, dat het U eigenlijk te doen was om door mijn brochure een aanval te doen op de vrijgemaakten, had U ook deze zijde aan Uwe lezers moeten voorstellen.

4. Mag ik hieraan ook nog toevoegen, dat het mij zeer diep heeft gegriefd, dat de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, waarin ook ik ben geboren en getogen, zóó vaneen gereten werden; dat ik, uit kerkrechtelijk oogpunt de schuld van deze scheuring, geheel moet werpen op de "synodalen"; dat de *Standard Bearer* van het begin af heeft gewaarschuwd voor het heilloos spoor, dat destijds door Dr. Hepp c.s. en spoedig daarna door de Synode van Amsterdam, 1936, werd ingeslagen; en dat ik geloof, dat het tot heil der Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland zou zijn, als Uwe kerken van harte schuld beleden van de hierarchische handelingen door de breedere vergaderingen verricht, om dan samen, in liefde en vrede, de verbondskwestie in vrije bespreking te trachten op te lossen?

Mijnheer de redakteur, ik vertrouw, dat U niet zult weigeren het bovenstaande in Uw blad op te nemen. Laat mij U verzekeren, dat, ofschoon ik wel officieel een ketter ben, ik de Gereformeerde waarheid liefheb en altijd gestreefd heb en nog streef voor het heil der Gereformeerde Kerken.

Met dank voor de plaatsing.

H. Hoeksema.

Translation:

Please, "Strijdende Kerk".

Will you be so kind as to publish the following in your paper? It is a reflection on a couple of articles that appeared in "De Strijdende Kerk" of Nov. 9 and 23, 1946. True, it is somewhat late for a reply, but this is largely without my fault. If you had sent me a copy of the issues of your paper in which said articles appeared, I would have reflected on them immediately. I had a right to expect this, the more so since your paper is, in part, distributed free of charge. As it is, I heard from others in the old country that your paper quoted elaborately from my brochure "De Geloovigen en Hun Zaad." Through our paper, I thereupon asked for a copy of those numbers of your paper in which these quotations occurred, but without result. Finally, I received the above mentioned issues of "De Strijdende Kerk" through the kindness of a friend of mine in Kalamazoo, Mich. This may explain why this my writing is somewhat belated.

Now, Mr. Editor, I do not object to your quoting from my brochure. But I do protest against the one-sidedness of those quotations, whereby my brochure is pressed into the service of your opposition-propaganda

against the liberated churches. This was, indeed, possible, because I do not agree with the covenant-view generally maintained by the leaders of those churches, and because I indirectly oppose that view in my brochure. But that was not the intention of that booklet, as I plainly indicated in my *Foreword*. May I therefore, call your attention to the following:

1. For the sake of honesty, you should have introduced me to your readers, not as one whose word could be of importance to you in an official, ecclesiastical sense, but as a heretic, who was cast out by the Christian Reformed Churches here, your sister-churches, exactly because of the battle he waged, and of which you make mention. Your articles now leave the impression that you are quoting a man of importance. You will agree that they would have left an entirely different impression, if you had, e.g., written: "Let us see what a heretic from America, that was cast out by our sister-churches because of his views, has to say about the covenant-view of the liberated churches."

2. You might have added that the covenant-view of Prof. Heyns was, at the time, generally accepted and proclaimed in the Christian Reformed Churches here, and was, with official approbation, taught at the Seminary of those Churches. And this view still has many adherents in those Churches, in spite of the fact that, recently, they allege that they maintain the theory of presumed regeneration.

3. Besides, you should have added that your Churches also disagree with my view of the covenant, as must have become clear to you from my brochure. That which, according to my profound conviction, is the pure and definite Reformed line, was not drawn by your Synod of Sneek-Utrecht, and later, either. Yet, the antithetical-organic line, applied to the development of God's covenant in the line of regeneration, is clearly taught in Holy Writ. If it be not beneath your ecclesiastical dignity, esteemed Editor, to discuss these matters with a heretic, I would gladly, for the sake of the truth, conduct such a discussion, in your paper and ours. But that is not the question at present. To avoid onesidedness, and in order not to leave the impression that your real purpose was to launch an attack on the liberated churches, you should have presented this side of the case to your readers also.

4. May I add to this that I am deeply grieved that the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands, in which I, too, was born and brought up, were thus torn apart; that, from a Church-political viewpoint, I must put the blame for this schism entirely on the "synodicals;" that the *Standard Bearer* from the beginning sounded a note of warning against the pernicious path chosen, at the time, by Dr. Hepp, c.s., and soon after, by the Synod of Amsterdam, 1936; and that I believe that it would be salutary for the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, if your Churches would heartily confess

the sin of their hierarchical actions committed by their broader gatherings, in order then, together, in love and peace, to attempt to solve the problem of the covenant in free discussion.

Mr. Editor, I trust that you will not refuse to publish the above in your paper. Let me assure you that, though I am, indeed, officially a heretic, I love the Reformed truth, and have always contended and still do contend for the well-being of the Reformed Churches.

With thanks for placing this article,

H. Hoeksema.

The above speaks for itself.

H. H.

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

Part Two.

Of Man's Redemption

Lord's Day XXIII

Q. 59. But what doth it profit thee now that thou believest all this?

A. That I am righteous before God, and an heir of eternal life.

Q. 60. How art thou righteous before God?

A. Only by a true faith in Jesus Christ; so that, though my conscience accuse me, that I have grossly transgressed all the commandments of God, and kept none of them, and am still inclined to all evil; notwithstanding, God, without any merit of mine, but only of mere grace, grants and imputes to me, the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ; even so, as if I never had had, nor committed any sin: yea, as if I had fully accomplished all that obedience which Christ has accomplished for me; inasmuch as I embrace such benefit with a believing heart.

Q. 61. Why sayest thou that thou art righteous by faith only?

A. Not that I am acceptable to God on account of the worthiness of my faith; but because only the satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ, is my righteousness before God; and that I cannot receive and apply the same to myself any other way than by faith only.

I.

The Idea Of Justification By Faith.

The translation of this Lord's Day is substantially correct.

The first question is a translation of the German: "Was hilft es dir aber nun, wenn du diesz alles glaubest?" i.e., "What does it help thee now, when thou believest all this?" The clause: "that I have grossly transgressed all the commandments of God, and kept none of them," is, in the original: "dasz ich wider alle Gebote Gottes schwerlich gesündigt, und derselben keines je gehalten habe," which is, literally: "that I have grievously sinned against all the commandments of God, and have never kept any of them." The last part of the sixtieth answer: "inasmuch as I embrace such benefit which with a believing heart," is the rendering of: "wenn ich allein solche Wohlt hat mit gläubigen annehme," which means: "if only I accept such benefit with a believing heart." And the clause "and apply the same to myself" in the last part of the sixty-first answer, is, in the original: "und mir zueignen kann," i.e.: "and appropriate the same."

What does it profit thee now, what does it help thee, of what avail is it to thee, sinner, who hast forfeited the favor of God, and art worthy of wrath and condemnation; who knowest of no way out in thyself, and who art, nevertheless, in quest of a way whereby thou mayest be restored to God's favor,—of what benefit is to thee in this particular quest, that thou believest all this?

Such is the meaning of the question whereby the Catechism introduces the doctrine of justification by faith.

Thou believest all this, that is, all that God has revealed in His Word, all that is briefly comprehended in the articles of the Christian faith, the meaning of which has been expounded in the preceding Lord's Days. Of this doctrine thou hast true spiritual knowledge, personal, experiential, so that thou, from the heart consentest to its truth; and in the God of salvation revealed in that Word, and confessed in those articles, thou puttest all thy trust.

Now, then, what is the fruit of this faith, with a view to thy quest for peace, and restoration to the grace of God?

This approach reminds us of Luther's profound spiritual struggle in his search for righteousness and peace, which he failed to find in the way of the works prescribed by the Romish church, but which entered into his soul when the truth that "the righteous shall live by faith" dawned upon him, and was embraced by him in faith.

It reminds us, too, that the Catechism expounds the truth of Holy Writ, not as a mere matter of doctrine, but from a practical, experiential point of view, as it is appropriated by a true and living faith. We remember at this point that the Catechism introduces the whole system of doctrine with the question: "What is thy only comfort in life and in death?" It is quite in line with this spiritually practical viewpoint that the

Catechism approaches the doctrine of justification, and that, too, at the conclusion of its discussion of the contents of the Christian faith, with the question: "Was hilft es dir aber nun?"

And quite to the point is the answer: "That I am righteous before God."

For, though there are many benefits of faith, if we must have a brief, central, and fundamental answer to the question: "was hilft es dir?" the answer of the Catechism is the only proper one: "that I am righteous before God."

Just as the guilt of our sin lies at the basis of all our misery and death, so our justification is fundamental with relation to all the benefits we have by faith in Christ. It is first, basic; it is the key to the door of the fulness of grace. God loves the righteous, He hates the wicked. His favor is upon the just, He is filled with wrath against all the workers of iniquity. If, then, I am to be delivered from misery, and restored to God's favor, I must be righteous; God Himself must pronounce the verdict of my justification. And unless I can lay hold upon this verdict of God, I cannot appropriate unto myself any of the blessings of salvation in Christ.

I am righteous before God, and. . . . I am heir of eternal life.

These two belong together, they are inseparably related, just as these two are inseparable: I am guilty before God. . . . and worthy of everlasting death and desolation.

It is, therefore, of great importance for the spiritual life of the believer, for his peace of heart, for his growth in grace, that he clearly understands this marvelous truth, and fully appropriates it. He must understand that he must be righteous *first*, that his righteousness must be *perfect*, before he can be an heir to all other blessings of salvation; he must see clearly that this righteousness which he needs is not in himself, but is wholly outside of him, in Christ; he must apprehend that the verdict of God, declaring him wholly and perfectly righteous, does not rest in, has nothing to do with, what he is in himself, but is an imputed righteousness.

The moment he seeks the ground, or any part of the ground, for the verdict of God declaring him righteous, in himself, in his own goodness or good works, he forfeits his peace with God. But in the measure that he clearly understands that this verdict of the Judge of heaven and earth justifies the ungodly, and has its basis outside of himself, in the ever perfect righteousness of Christ, he has access to all the blessings of salvation.

This truth of justification thru imputation, appropriated by faith, is certainly the teaching of Holy Writ.

Psalm thirty two, in its first two verses, beatifies the man "whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin

is covered. . . . "the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Of Abraham we read: "And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness." Gen. 15:6. The New Testament refers to both these passages of the Old Testament to repudiate the idea of righteousness by works, in Rom. 4:1-8: "What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he that whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." This righteousness is wholly of God. He is its Author. He conceived of it, He realized it in Christ, He imputes it to us, and He bestows it upon us by faith. It is a gift of grace. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Rom. 3:20-24. Hence, "a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Rom. 3:28.

And this is the teaching of all Scripture.

But what is the idea of this grace of justification?

It has an objective and a subjective aspect. Objectively, it is the act of God whereby He declares the guilty sinner perfectly righteous; subjectively, it is the application of this justifying verdict of the sinner, and its appropriation by faith.

Justification, therefore, is a forensic idea. And it is of prime importance that we clearly understand this. The righteousness that is ours in justification, and upon which we lay hold by faith, is not an *infused*, but an *imputed* righteousness. It effects our *state*, it does not change our inner, spiritual, ethical *condition*. It is not the same as sanctification. Nor is the latter first, and the basis of our justification. We are not justified because we are sanctified. On the contrary, justification precedes sanctification, and it is the juridical ground for all the blessings of salvation that follow.

To understand this grace of justification, it is important that we bear in mind the distinction between our state and our actual condition.

Our state is our legal position according to the sentence of the judge, while our condition denotes our actual ethical character.

Even in human life and relationships, there may be a difference between a man's state and his condition. Think, for instance, of the example of an immigrant into this country from the Netherlands. When he steps ashore in the new country he is a Hollander in every respect, both according to his state and according to his condition. Legally, he is a subject of the Netherland government; before the American law, he is no citizen, and has no citizen's rights and privileges. Such is his state. And as to his condition, you can tell by his very appearance that he is a foreigner. Dutch blood flows in his veins, he is characterized by Dutch habits, and his speech reveals that he is a Hollander. But after he has been settled in the land of his choice for some time, he applies for his naturalization papers, and obtains them. He is now an American citizen. His state has been changed. He is still a Hollander as to his condition, even though he may have adapted himself more or less to his new environment, and may speak the American language more or less fluently. But although, according to his actual condition, he is still a Hollander, his legal status has changed, so that he is no longer a subject under the government of the old country, but has obtained citizen's rights and privileges under the law of the country of his adoption.

Suppose further that after having lived as a citizen in this country for some time, he is indicted for murder. Let us suppose that he is falsely accused: he did not commit the murder. Nevertheless, circumstantial evidence is so overwhelmingly against him, that the jury returns a verdict of guilty, and the judge sentences him to imprisonment for life. Again his state has changed. He was free and righteous before the law of the land, but now, in virtue of the condemning sentence of the judge, his status is that of a criminal. His condition is not altered. He is not actually a malefactor. He is still righteous. But in spite of this, he is now in the state of a guilty man.

Now, justification is the act of God whereby He changes the state of the guilty sinner into that of perfect righteousness, by His own sovereign declaration.

Of and in himself, the sinner is not righteous, but guilty, corrupt, worthy of damnation. He is such according to both his state and his condition.

Righteousness is to be right, and that, too, according to the sentence of the Judge of heaven and earth. And to be right is to be in perfect harmony with the law of God, which requires of us that we shall love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength. A righteous man is one that is in harmony with the law of God in his inner being and nature, his heart, his mind,

his will, and all his desires and inclinations; and in his outward life, in all his walk and conversation, so that he has never spoken one word, or committed one act contrary to God's law, but was always perfectly motivated by the love of God. When God compares him with the perfect criterion of His holy law, he declares that there is complete harmony between him and that law.

Such a man is perfectly righteous, in his state, his legal position, as determined by the sentence of the Judge, and in his inner condition.

Moreover, in such a case, the verdict of the Judge is based on the man's condition: he has no sin, and he never committed sin.

However, in justification, *the sinner* is declared righteous: God justifies the *ungodly*! In the moment of justification, man does not appear as righteous, but as guilty, before the tribunal of God. He has sinned. In paradise, in the state of rectitude, man was righteous, both as to his state and as to his condition. He was endowed with righteousness by His Creator. But he did not regard his excellent position. He fell. He rebelled against the living God. The result was that, as to his state, he became guilty, worthy of condemnation and death, proper object of the wrath of God; and, as to his condition, he became corrupt, darkened in his understanding, perverse of will, obdurate in all his inclinations, polluted in all his desires. And as such, let it be emphasized, he appears in the moment of justification. He does, in that moment, not stand before the tribunal of God, in the capacity of a man that *was* a sinner, but that is now changed, so that his *past* sins are pardoned, and he may be declared righteous on the basis of his improved condition, but as one that *is* ungodly. And now, that sinner, that is wholly worthy of condemnation in himself, that is guilty because of Adam's transgression, that is corrupt in heart, an enemy of God, that is damnable, too, because of the actual sins he has committed, and that still sins, and keeps none of the commandments of God; the sinner, moreover, that has the condemning sentence of God in his own conscience, and who is quite without any plea,—that ungodly man God declares perfectly righteous in the moment of justification.

Mark you well, God *declares* him righteous.

In justification, He does not change the sinner's condition: He translates him from the *state* of a sinner, in which he has no rights or claim to any privileges, in which he is worthy of eternal death, into the *state* of a righteous man, in which he is worthy of eternal life.

That is the wonder of justification.

Just in this way this wonder must be presented, paradoxical though it appears, if we are to enjoy its blessedness, and have peace with God as sinners.

Not for one moment may our regeneration or sancti-

cation enter into the consideration of this marvellous wonder of grace.

It is true, of course, that when this grace of God is applied to us, and we lay hold on it by a true and living faith, which God implants in our hearts (about which later), we have already been renewed, we confess our sins, we humble ourselves before God, and we earnestly seek forgiveness and righteousness in Christ. But this may never be understood in such a way, as if this renewal in principle, this faith, and this longing for and seeking after righteousness, enters in as a ground or reason for our justification before the tribunal of God.

Always, in justification, we appear as damnable sinners in ourselves, before the judgment seat of God.

This is beautifully expressed in the sixteenth answer of the Catechism.

Notice, that the believer is here declaring: "Though my conscience accuse me, that I have grossly transgressed all the commandments of God, and have kept none of them, and am still inclined to all evil." . . .

Such is the sinner, as he is justified by God!

His conscience accuses him, as he stands before the Judge of heaven and earth. And do not ignore the fact that this conscience, too, is of God, and that the sentence, the accusing and condemning verdict of that conscience is God's own handwriting! It is his awareness of God's sentence over him as he is in himself. Well, then, of what does that conscience accuse him? Of past sins? Yes, indeed, and that, too, of nothing but sin. Always he sinned. None of God's commandments he kept. Always he transgressed all of them. But is this all? By no means. As he stands before the tribunal of God to be judged, he is "still inclined to all evil." Still there is no good in him. Inclined to *all evil* he is. In other words, while he is awaiting sentence, he stands before the tribunal of God with a corrupt nature, and continuing in his sin!

And yet, the Judge of heaven and earth pronounces him righteous!

Justification is the wonder of grace whereby the guilty, corrupt, and damnable sinner is pronounced righteous, and worthy of eternal life!

H. H.

NOTICE!

The Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches, in session June 6, 1947, at South Holland, Illinois, having examined the brethren H. C. Hoeksema, E. Knott and G. Vanden Berg, declare them to be candidates for the Holy Ministry of the Word and the Sacraments, and announces that they are eligible to receive a call four weeks from the above mentioned date.

D. Jonker, Stated Clerk.

CHURCH POLITY

Dr. Ridderbos and Article 31

In our last article under the above caption we were occupied with Article 31 in connection with the doctor's interpretation of it. Let us get the article before us once more:

"If anyone complain that he has been wronged by the decision of a minor assembly, he shall have the right to appeal to a major ecclesiastical assembly, and whatever may be agreed upon by a majority 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."

In my previous writing I first of all explained the article as such. To that word of explanation should have been added that, as to the form of its words the article 31 in the sentence, "and whatever may be agreed upon by majority of vote shall be considered settled and binding, unless it be proved to conflict with the word of God. . . ." covers only such classical and synodical decisions that are made for the settlement of cases that come to the major assemblies by way of appeal but that nevertheless the sentence is made to apply to all the decisions of the major assemblies. The point is that this is not wrong as the principle is the same.

Next we had regard to the real issue in the dispute that has been occasioned by the art. 31, attending first of all to the doctor's statement of it. It was made plain that the doctor, instead of setting forth the real issue, hides the issue behind a screen of misleading statements. I then stated the issue after making clear what is not the issue in the present dispute. As we saw, the issue or question is this: May an office-bearer (entire consistory or common member) without being deposed refuse to be bound by a classical (synodical) decision which he deems unscriptural, while he is engaged in protesting the decision on the major assemblies?

Now to this, as we saw, the doctor and Rev. G. Hoeksema and the rest of them reply: That office-bearer must be deposed certainly. For no member in the church, be he office-bearer or common member, may and shall reject classical or synodical decisions without first having gained the permission of sovereign classis (synod), so that even while protesting the decision he must do so as submitting to it. The sole right of that office-bearer is to protest the decision, and if the classis (synod) is convinced, it declares the decision null and void, and then and not before does it cease to bind that office-bearer (or common member).

This, according to the doctor and the others, is what the article requires. Thus it became plain how the exponents of the hierarchy read article 31, namely, as follows: If anyone, let us say, an elder in the church, complains that he has been wronged by the decision of a minor assembly, let us say his own 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 by all *immediately* and henceforth—thus also by anyone whose settled conviction it is that the classical decision is unscriptural—unless anyone aggrieved by the decision proves it unscriptural *to the classis on its next meeting* or to the coming synod, if the aggrieved one fails to convince classis and appeals to synod.

As was pointed out, the article as so interpreted, is reduced to nonsense and this for the simple reason that it is sheer folly to say that an aggrieved one must allow himself to be bound by a classical decision also immediately of course *unless* he is able to prove the decision unscriptural to a coming classis or synod. And therefore in order to save the article with their ideas read into it from being reduced to nonsense, the doctor and the others must necessarily change it as to the form of its words, which they also do by removing the word *unless* and placing in the room thereof the word *until*. Dr. Ridderbos is guilty of this as was shown. He writes, does he not, "And if the assembly (classis or synod) is not able to refute that proof (of the aggrieved) it is in duty bound to retract or rescind the decision. But *as long as*—mark you, as long as, that is, until—this has not been done, they (the aggrieved) will have to comply with the decision, if they wish to remain in the church or the denomination."

It was also shown that the article 31, with the doctor's theory read into it, is in conflict with itself, is thus self-destructive. Let us see however true this is by stating the article with the doctor's theories read into it and with the lines that set forth this theory underscored:

"If anyone complain that he has been wronged by the decision of a minor assembly—consistory, let us say—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 vote of classis shall be considered settled and binding, unless it be proved to conflict with the word of God; that is to say, unless there be an aggrieved one persuaded that the decision conflicts with the word of God; *providing he submit to the decision, while protesting it—in the event he refuses, he shall be deposed and expelled from the church*,—the aggrieved one shall have the right to appeal to synod and to attempt to prove the classical decision unscriptural to the satisfaction

of this assembly. If he succeeds therein synod shall declare the decision null and void; *then and not before shall the decision cease to be binding on the aggrieved, and of course on all the members of the church. Thus, if the aggrieved one does not succeed in convincing synod, the decision continues to bind him; and if he refuses to submit, he shall be deposed, if an office-bearer, and expelled from the church.*

This is the article 31 with the doctor's theories read into it; it is thus the article as the doctor himself interprets and paraphrases it. We next must take notice of the fact that the article, also of course as the doctor interprets it, has to do with the appellant in the church, thus with one who is persuaded that one or the other of the ecclesiastical assemblies—consistory, classis, synod, acumenical synod—made an unscriptural decision. Now the bounden calling, duty, of the appellant is in obedience to God to refuse to submit to the decision deemed by him unscriptural—refuse to submit to it immediately, without delay, thus even while or before he has opportunity to exercise his right of appeal. The doctor, too, admits this. He even affirms it with emphasis. Says he, "Naturally it is true that they—the members of Christ's 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." It is indeed always the calling of the appellant to refuse to submit to ecclesiastical decisions of which he is persuaded that they conflict with the word of God." What bearing has this on art. 31 as interpreted by the doctor? Precisely this that it throws the article in conflict with itself and thereby destroys it. For if the appellant is always under the divine necessity of refusing to submit to ecclesiastical decisions deemed unscriptural, the major assembly, according to the doctor's interpretation of the article, must depose him and exclude him from the fellowship of the churches even before he has opportunity to exercise his right of appeal. For the article 31, with the doctor's theories read into it declares in one of its clauses, "If the appellant refuses to submit to the decision that he protests, he shall be deposed." It means that art. 31, with the doctor's theories read into it, is, as to its real meaning and import, a combination of contrary statements and therefore self-destructive. These contrary statements are:

1. The appellant shall have the right to appeal to a major assembly.

2. The appellant shall *not* have the right to appeal to a major assembly. This latter, it is plain, follows from the fact that, whereas it is always the duty of the appellant to refuse to submit to the protested decision in obedience to God, the classis, according to the doctor's interpretation of the article, must depose him and

thus deprive him of his right of appeal. We herewith have presented another reason why the doctor's interpretation of the art. 31 is as wrong as anything can be wrong.

There is still more proof of this. The article, with the doctor's theories read into it, destroys not alone the article 31 but with it, and this of necessity, the appellant's right of appeal as well. For if the appellant is always under the divine necessity of refusing to be bound by an ecclesiastical decision deemed unscriptural from the very moment that it becomes his settled conviction that the decision partakes of this character, and if the major assembly on this account must refuse to give him a hearing, depose him from his office, and expel him from the fellowship of the churches, his right of appeal, it stands to reason, is gone.

There is still more proof that the doctor's interpretation of art. 31 is as wrong as anything can be wrong. To read the doctor's theories into the article 31 is verily to convert it into a thing that mocks with the appellant in the churches. For on the one hand it guarantees him the right to appeal to a major assembly while on the other hand it declares that he shall be deposed and expelled from the church in the very moment that in obedience to God rejects the decision that he wants to protest.

There is still more proof that the doctor's interpretation of art. 31 is as wrong as anything can be wrong. With the doctor's theories read into the art. 31, such a thing as a federation of churches assembling at regular intervals in classis and synod is neither permissible nor possible. Let me make this plain. As was stated the aggrieved one may be any of the following: a common member in the church, many common members, an office-bearer, a consistory, many office-bearers and many consistories. The major assembly to which appeal must be made may be a classis or a synod; it may also be an ecumenical synod of twenty five, a few more or less, ecclesiastics representing thousands of common members, thousands of office-bearers and consistories whose number also runs into the thousands. This fallible ecumenical makes an unscriptural doctrinal decision. What can those thousands of common members and thousands of office-bearers and thousands of consistories do about it? All they can do about it, according to the doctor's interpretation of art. 31, is immediately to submit to the decision and thereby commit a great sin against God, if they want to protest; or they can reject the decision and endure being deposed and expelled from the fellowship of the church. But since they cannot do the former, they do the latter. For the ecumenical council must be obeyed, and therefore not until this body of twenty five ecclesiastics declares the decision null and void, does it cease to bind the thousands

and thousands of members, the thousands of office-bearers and the thousands of consistories. Is it possible for anyone to conceive of a more horrible and and dreadful brand of popery than we here see in operation? Yet it is this species of church polity that Dr. Ridderbos and how many more doctors, professors, and devines in reformed communions I don't know—is passing off on the "gemeente leden" as the only truly reformed; and in defence of it the Rev. Gerrit Hoeksema sent into the word a brochure of some hundred pages; yes, and the late Prof. Heyns was allowed to teach that hideous thing in the seminary of the Christian Reformed Churches for years and years. How is it possible! And this polity the fathers of Dort are said to have laid down in their Church Order and, so they say, can be defended with the Confession. Don't they understand, can't they see that the only one able and worthy to occupy that high place to which that ecumenical council of recent date has exalted itself is our Lord Jesus Christ? This precisely is what our Confession means to tell us in the thirty-first of its thirty-seven articles, by saying, "As for the ministers of God's Word, they have equally the same power and authority wherever they are, as they are all ministers of Christ, *the only universal bishop, and the only head of the Church*".

Allow me now to restate in their order the eight reasons why the doctor's interpretation of art. 31 is as wrong as anything can be wrong.

1. It reduces the article 31 to nonsense.
2. It destroys the article by throwing it into conflict with itself.
3. It destroys the appellant's right of appeal.
4. It converts the article into a thing that mocks with the appellant in the church of Christ.
5. It makes wholly impermissible and impossible from an ethical-spiritual point of view such a thing as a federation of churches assembling in classis and synod.
6. It requires that the appellant, to retain his right of appeal, commit a great sin against God,—the sin of obeying men rather than God.
7. It allows the right of appeal to those only willing to commit this sin.
8. It brings into being the most horrible and dreadful type of popery conceivable.

These five statements are true. And the argument they summarize is irrefutable.

This brings us to the question: just what is the right interpretation of art. 31. There are two possible interpretations of the article and only two. Seeing that the doctor's interpretation of the article is utterly impossible, we are shut up to the other of the two. Here it is:

If anyone complain that he has been wronged by the decision of a minor assembly—consistory, let us

say—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 of classis shall be considered binding, unless there be an aggrieved one (or aggrieved, plural. It makes no difference) persuaded that the decision (of classis) conflicts with the Word of God. That one shall not submit to the decision but reject it and appeal to the next broadest assembly—synod—and attempt to prove the decision unscriptural to this assembly—synod. (And we may add) and if the appellant does not succeed therein, synod has the right not to depose him (assuming that he be an office-bearer) but to advise his consistory to admonish him to comply.

What now is there to say for this interpretation? There is everything to say for it. Allow me to state its virtues.

1. It is not nonsense but superbly good sense.
2. It is not contradictory and thus self-destructive but together with the rest of the articles of the Church Order it forms an harmonious body of ecclesiastical rules.
3. It does not destroy the appellant's right of appeal but truly guarantees him this right.
4. It does not convert the art. 31 into a thing that mocks with the appellant in the churches but it honors him for what he is, a believer with the unction of the Spirit, a priest and king in Christ unto God.
5. It makes wholly permissible in a spiritual-ethical point of view such a thing as a federation of churches assembling in classis and synod.
6. It is not just another brand of horrible popery but truly biblical and reformed.

And these statements, too, are true, as ought to be plain in the light of what has been presented above. But let us take notice just why this interpretation possesses these virtues. The reason is that it is free of the theories that the doctor and all the rest of them read into the article 31—these theories, that the appellant shall submit to the decision while he protests it or be deposed and thereby lose his right of appeal—and further that it rules that the aggrieved shall not submit to the decision deemed unscriptural by him but shall have the right to reject it until and while he is occupied with proving it unscriptural to the broader ecclesiastical assemblies. This—that the appellant shall reject the decision deemed unscriptural by him without delay is, also according to the doctor, of course, a necessity under which God places the appellant. For, certainly, God wants His people to obey Him rather than men, in this case a fallible and erring classis and synod. Only, the doctor maintains that with this divine necessity the article 31 has absolutely nothing to do as appears from the following lines from his pen:

“Naturally, it is true that they—members of

Christ's Church (be it as person or as consistory) 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.* (Italics, 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. *But this is a matter with which the article has nothing to do.* Maar daar gaat het hier niet over, in the doctor's own words). For the article concludes by stating: or with the articles of the Church Order. And it cannot be said of the Church Order that we may never submit to something that, to our mind conflicts with it. *From that it appears that the article (31) speaks of something else, among other things of that which shall be valid in the church. . .*

We must understand the doctor well. The point to his argument is this: Believers must certainly obey God rather than men, but article 31 says nothing about this. The sole requirement of this article is that the members of Christ's Church obey classis and synod and submit themselves to their decisions. This is the thrust to the doctor's argument, however strange and unbelievable this may sound. As if the will of God that he be obeyed rather than men can be excluded from any relation in life, can thus be excluded from this article.

Of course, the doctor again is wrong. That God must be obeyed more than man, that the members of Christ's Church must reject ecclesiastical decision deemed by them unscriptural is precisely one of the requirements of this article, the other one being that ecclesiastical decisions that cannot be proved unscriptural shall be considered settled and binding. This can be easily proved and proved absolutely. And here is the proof:

- 1). The very phraseology of the article tells us that the requirement is contained in it.
- 2). Its either leaving that requirement in the article or destroying it together with the appellant's right of appeal.

A closing remark or two. There is a reason, of course, why the doctor wants that requirement out of the article—the requirement or necessity under which God places His people, namely that they obey Him rather than men, a fallible and erring classis (synod). The article, with this requirement in it, spells the complete collapse of his popish system of church government, the fundamental tenet of which is that classis (synod) rightfully deposes office-bearers. Hence, to prove that the requirement is actually contained in the article is to prove that entire polity of the doctor fictitious, a vile invention of man. Well, that requirement is in the article. This can be proved and be made

as plain as the sun in the heavens. This will be done in the next article.

There is also this question: Have the doctor and the others no argument with which to counter the argument presented in this writing in support of the proposition that the way they read article 31 is wrong. Rev. G. Hoeksema has more than one such counter argument. But, as we shall see, they are not true. They are worthless, necessarily so of their interpretation of article 31 is utterly impossible.

G. M. O.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

Jonathan's Venture Of Faith.

So have the people of Israel, as admonished by Samuel and terrified by the Lord's thunder, finally confessed their great sin of asking that a king be set over them. Concluding that they were about to be consumed by God's anger, they cried to Samuel beseeching him that he pray for them that they die not. The seer told them that they had nothing to fear if only they would serve the Lord with all their hearts.

Samuel having finished his discourse to the people, Saul now came forward. He chose him three thousand men of Israel and this for purposes of war, as is plain from the sequel. For the narrator goes on to relate that the king stationed two thousand in Michmash in Mount Bethel under his own command and that one thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah. This is followed by the notice, "And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that were in Gibeah." It was a permanent body of warlike men formed into a well disciplined army that Saul at that time brought into being; it was a standing military organization of choice and goodly men, who like Saul himself towered head and shoulders above the crowd. This is evident. In carrying out his purpose, Saul did not ask for volunteers, but he *chose* him three thousand men. . . . and: "the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent." And at chap. 14:25 the narrative reads: "and when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him." Saul had a passion for strong and brave men; and in these men he put his trust.

At this time the people of Israel were hopelessly in bondage to the Philistines. As appears from the narrative at chapter 13:5, the military might of the Philistines was tremendous. Gathering together to engage the people of Israel in war, they came with "thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the seashore in multi-

tude". Further, the Philistines had deprived the Israelites of arms; for there was no smith found in all the land. The Philistines had destroyed the smithies—for they said, "lest the Hebrews make them swords and spears." Only the implements that were needed for the cultivation of the soil were allowed them—to sharpen which they must go to the Philistines. The result was that "there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan; but with Saul and with Jonathan there were found." Thus the entire force with Saul and Jonathan was unprovided with arms.

The people had demanded that a human king be set over them to deliver them from the oppressions of the dominions of their adversaries, and this because they did not want the Lord to reign over them, the reason being that He would save them only in the way of their forsaking their wickedness and turning to their redeemer God to serve Him with all their hearts. But this they were unwilling to do, because they loved their idols. So the Lord gave them their way. They now had their king. But what was their king doing for them in this crisis? Nothing at all. Saul naturally was a brave man. But in that terrible hour his courage failed him utterly. He was conscious of being only a man. And being devoid of trust in God and thus being unable to arm himself with the truth that the victory is the Lord's, and that therefore faith in this Lord—the Lord God of Israel—overcometh the world, he sat still there in Michmash, afraid to bestir himself. Let the people now perceive that their only hope was God, and as so perceiving, let them return to the Lord and in true contrition of heart confess their great sin of rejecting Him. For if the Lord did not work, their bondage needs would be without end.

The Lord did work through Jonathan his chosen instrument and workmanship. What Saul lacked, Jonathan, who here is mentioned for the first time, possessed as a gift of God—he possessed a living faith in God. While Saul sat still, Jonathan advanced against that Philistine garrison in Geba. Whether he went alone or in company with some or all of his soldiers is not stated. This much is revealed: he was the only armed warrior among them. But he was unafraid. The history of the Lord's dealings with his people through the years of the past told him that without fail the victory went to the few trusting in God in fulfillment of His promise, "And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. And five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put to flight ten thousand (Lev. 26:7-8) and one man of you shall chase a thousand." (Josh. 23:10). Israel's victories on the battlefield were wonders of grace wrought by the God of grace in behalf of the Israel according to the election of grace. And Jonathan believed in wonders but

Saul did not. Therefore he sat still there in Michmash with his two thousand valiant men. Jonathan's faith was rewarded. He "smote the garrison of the Philistines in Geba." The defeat was total. For the word "smote" from its military use and from the context means slaughter. The garrison to a man was annihilated. The Lord had done wondrously for His people.

As Jonathan's victory was but the prelude to an even greater wonder that the Lord would work—a greater wonder: the decisive defeat of the Philistines that was soon to follow—the sacred writer does not pause to go into the detail of the first military blow. Some in the attempt to explain this blow come with the suggestion that Jonathan's movements may have been concealed from the Philistine garrison by the nature of the ground, or may have been so sudden as to be like a surprise. Even so, the fact remains that God had given victory. One who has visited the spot explains Jonathan's venture and Saul's inaction by saying that the attention of the Philistine garrison was naturally directed to Saul's force at Michmash, which was very near them on the north; and that thus Jonathan, who was several miles distant on the southwest, could more easily effect a surprise. This may well be; but the only explanation of Jonathan's action and of Saul's inaction was that the latter put his confidence in the arm of flesh and that the former trusted in God and was standing firm in the faith that His is the victory.

From the point of view of nature, Jonathan had done a thing amazingly foolish. The Philistines would hear of the disaster by which their garrison at Geba had been overtaken. Soon they would be on the march not alone for purposes of terrible revenge but also because they would realize that the attack upon their garrison in Geba was the signal for a general revolt and that therefore there was need of speedy military action against Israel. And the people of Israel were unarmed. And the military might of the Philistines was great. But it mattered not for the Lord would fight for His people.

G. M. O.

Saul's Going To Gilgal

Saul in Michmash with his three thousand strong and valiant men now realized that he instantly must bestir himself or suffer the loss of all his prestige. Thus now he was compelled to act by the concurrence of circumstances. The choice was no longer his. So "he blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, let the Hebrews hear," hear the summons to rally about their king in Gilgal for war with the Philistines. The people responded to that call not under the impulse of faith but because they concluded that it was

their only hope of survival as a nation. For they also heard, in all likelihood from the trumpeters, that Saul had smitten a garrison of Philistines, and that Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines. Hence, this time it was not necessary for Saul to threaten to slay their oxen in order to get action. But what could *they* accomplish in the way of saving themselves from the adversary who was thirsting after their blood! The Philistines had deprived them of arms; for there was no smith found in all the land.

The trumpeters, if they were the ones to communicate the dreadful news—dreadful to the people—ascribed Jonathan's heroic deed to Saul, the reason being that Saul was commander-in-chief of the army; or did they purposely hold the truth under because they thought it wise and expedient to exalt Saul in the eyes of the people in that dreadful crisis?

Saul, too, went to Gilgal—for there he had called the people together after him—infulfilment of the prophetic command of Samuel uttered in his audience perhaps as long as two years ago on the day of his secret anointing, "And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal" (10:8). Thus Saul's going to Gilgal at this time was more evidence that Samuel's prophetic commands to him verily had originated in God. That now again was being proved to him in a remarkable way by the fact that he went to Gilgal, not because he had so calculated or so desired, but, only because circumstances, as shaped by the Lord, were compelling him. Thus, how abundant the proof that it had been not Samuel but the Lord who, on that day of his secret anointing, had placed him under the prophetic command that "thou shalt go down to Gilgal; and, behold I will come down to thee, to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: seven day shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do." There at Gilgal this word of God, through Saul's own conscience, will confront him with the demand that, under the constraint of a living and implicit faith in God, he obey. Such was the Lord's will. For Saul must be revealed in all his latent unbelief and rebellion, in order that God's people might perceive how utterly unfit he was for the high office with which he was vested and disqualified for the duties thereof—his task was to save God's ill-deserving people from all the troubles of their sin—in order that, as so perceiving they might understand that the king to save them had to be not what Saul was—a self-absorbed and self-seeking man, a sinful human trusting even in the great crisis of his career in the arm of flesh—but had to be what Saul was not—a man according to God's own heart, making the Lord his expectation always. So perceiving and understanding, God's people would be led to David, yea to Christ. This was the Lord's purpose.

G. M. O.

SION'S ZANGEN

Een Psalm

(Psalm 98; Tweede Deel)

Deze psalm is eschatologisch, d.w.z., hij bezingt het komen van den Heere op de wolken des hemels. Doch hij zingt ook van de wonderdaden des Heeren die Hij wrocht in Sion.

We hebben gehoord het gezang van den dichter aangaande de wonderen die Hij gedaan heeft in Christus Jezus en hoe Hij die wonderen getoond heeft voor de oogen der heidenen.

Nu gaan we verder.

“Hij is gedachtig geweest aan Zijne goedertierenheid einden der aarde hebben gezien het heil onzes Gods.” heid en aan Zijne waarheid aan het huis Israels, en alle

Dat moet vreemd geklonken hebben in dagen toen dit lied eerst voorgedragen en gezongen werd. Niet het eerste deel, maar het tweede deel van den psalm klinkt vreemd. Het zag vooruit. Vandaag hebben we de vervulling ervan gezien, doch toen nog niet. Ziet ge, de profeten stonden in het volle licht. En toen zij in de verten der tijden de vervulling van Gods beloften zagen, hebben ze gezongen alsof het alreede geschied was. Hetzelfde vindt ge, b.v., bij Jesaja in zijn wonderschoone drie-en-vijftigste hoofdstuk. Daar klinkt het ook alsof Christus alreeds gekruist is. En zoo is het ook hier. Dat noemt men het profetisch verleden.

Hij heeft gedacht aan zijne goedertierenheid.

Lieflijke deugd van goedertierenheid. Het is de deugd van God waarin alles in Hem dringt en zucht om Zijn volk wel te doen. Daar tiert God in Zijn goedheid over hen.

Hij is gedachtig geweest aan die deugd. Hij denkt er altijd aan. Meer zelfs, Hij denkt eraan van eeuwigheid tot in eeuwigheid. Alles, letterlijk alles, wat God over Zijn volk brengt is loutere en klare goedertierenheid. Het mag ons zoo niet aanvoelen, het mag zelfs ons ongenoegen opwekken, wanneer we evenwel gegund worden om de dingen die over ons komen te zien in het licht van Gods eeuwige liefde, dan worden we stil, dan ervaren we de stilte zelfs der aanbidding.

Die goedertierenheid, zooals we haar nu zien, nadat het licht van het Nieuwe Testament er op gevallen is, is eigenlijk de openbaring Gods in het aangezicht van Jezus Christus. Hij is het hoogste Goed, hetwelk wij ooit ontvingen of ontvangen zullen. Hij is Gods Eigen Hart van liefde. Alle deugden vinden hare hoogste vervulling in Christus Jezus den Heere. Zoo is het ook met die andere deugd die hier genoemd werd. God heeft ook gedacht aan Zijne waarheid. Dat is ook in laatster instantie Jezus Christus. Dat zeide Hij im-

mers? Ik ben de weg, de waarheid en het leven.

Waarheid is uitdrukking van die deugd die de ware verhoudingen ons toonen. De leugen is de kromme, slangachtige lijn. En Christus is het deugdenbeeld van God ook hier, als Hij de lijnen die wij scheef trokken weer recht trekt. Al kostte het Hem de onuitsprekelijke smarten des eeuwigen doods. Waarlijk, wij worden door de waarheid vrijgemaakt, om weer op rechte, lijnrechte paden naar den Heere te wandelen.

Welnu, de Heere was gdachtig geweest aan die deugden aan Israel.

De Heere verheerlijkt die deugd der goedertierenheid en der waarheid niet aan de wereld. Dat wil men U tegenwoordig wel iets maken, doch het is de leugen, Het Evangelie van God is altijd particular. Zoo ook hier. Het gaat hier ook weer, om Israel.

Wie Israel dan wel mag zijn?

Israel is Jakob, de zoon van Izak, de zoon van Abraham, het kind des verbonds Gods. Het is degene die met God worstelde en zich tegenover God en mensch vorstelijk gedroeg.

Het is ook het volk Israels, doch dan moet ge onderscheiden tusschen het vleeschelijk en het geestelijk Israel. De uitverkorenen hebben de weldaden der goedertierenheid en der waarheid genoten en niemand meer. De anderen, al heetten zij ook Israel in vleeschelijken zin, hebben niets ontvangen, niets positiefs: ze zijn verhard geworden. O ja, ze hebben wel de woorden gehoord en ook de daden Gods gezien. Doch hun hooren en zien was niet gemengd met het geloof, die wondere gave Gods, en daarom deed het hun geen nut. De anderen wel. Zij hoorden met het hart, omdat de Heere hun een geestelijk oor gaf. Toen hebben ze gelet op zoo groote zaligheid als er uitgedrukt ligt in Gods goedertierenheid en waarheid aan Israel.

En, eindelijk, Israel is ook de kerk. Dat zegt Paulus. En ook Petrus. Petrus schreef zijn brieven aan de verstrooide twaalf stammen. En dat zijn de kinderen Gods der Nieuwe bedeeing. Doch Paulus gaat nog verder. Hij zegt immers, dat die is niet een Jood, die het in 't openbaar is, noch die is de besnijdenis, die het in 't openbaar, in het vleesch is: maar die is een Jood, die het in 't verborgen is; en de besnijdenis des harten, in den geest, niet in de letter.” En tot de Galatiërs zegt hij: “En indien gij van Christus zijt, zoo zijt ge dan Abraham's zaad, en naar de beloftenis erfgenamen.” En tegen de Christenen uit de Heidenen zegt hij in den brief aan de Efeziërs: “Zoo zijt ge dan niet meer vreemdelingen en bijwoners, maar medeburgers der heiligen en huisgenoten Gods,” waar hij eerst tegen dezelfde menschen gezegd had: “(gij zijt) vervreemd van het burgerschap Israels.” En zij waren vervreemd van het burgerschap Israels omdat zij zonder Christus waren. Dus we mogen dit concludeeren, dat indien wij in Christus zijn, dan zijn wij ook Israel, Zion, de burgerschap der

heiligen van het Oude Verbond en huisgenoten van God Zelf.

Aan dat volk heeft God gedacht in Zijn groote goedertierenheid en waarheid. En dat denken is gekristalliseerd toen Hij Zijn Zoon zond en deed lijden en sterven aan het kruis van Golgotha.

Ja, en alle einden der aarde hebben gezien het heil onzes Gods.

Dat is bijna ten volle vervuld. Tot aan de verstgelegenen der zee zal het straks gepredikt worden. Het loopt naar het einde. Vooral nu de radio uitgevonden is. Het zal niet lang meer duren en het Evangelie zal gepredikt zijn aan alle volken, natiën en tongen. En dan zal het einde komen.

Juicht den Heere, gij gansche aarde, roept uit van vreugde en zingt vroolijk en psalmzingt!

En waarom?

Het antwoord wordt ons gegeven in het laatste vers: want Hij komt om te richten!

En ge begrijpt, dat deze vroolijkheid die geboden is ook verbonden zit aan datgene wat vooraf ging. Men zal zingen, psalmzingen en vreugde bedrijven, omdat Hij komt die heil wrocht na leed. Men zal toejuichen de komst van Hem die Zijn volk beminde met een eeuwige liefde, en die in den tijd die liefde openbaarde aan het kruis van Golgotha. Die Wel-doener is ook Degene die komt om te richten. En omdat Hij goed is, zal dat gericht zijn naar recht en rechtmatigheid.

O, er is zoo ontzettend veel geleden vanwege kromzichtigheid en onrecht. Er is veel geoordeeld. Men ging zelfs zoover om van motiveering te spreken. Men heeft fijngesponnen weefsels getoond om toch maar den indruk te geven van objectiviteit en waarheid. Maar er zat geen waarheid in. Wij zijn valsch van nature.

Wij oordeelen wel, maar wij oordeelen een kwaad oordeel. Om veel en velerlei.

Soms zijn we bang voor den mensch en vreezen wraak die genomen zal worden op een rechtvaardige uitspraak.

Het kan soms ook gebeuren, dat wij het recht verkrachten om vuil gewin, hetzij in geld of in andere beloonigen.

Soms verdraaien we het recht uit sympathie voor den een of uit antipathie tegen een ander.

Soms uit pure kwaadheid, boosheid en lust tot kwellen.

Alles roept om een oordeel, dat recht is. Snikkende, zich krommende van smart, zijn ze gestorven, die nog eenmaal omhoog zagen, naar Hem die alles zag, en ze hebben hunne belagers en hunne valsche rechters aangeklaagd. Ze gingen in hooger beroep.

En terecht. Het is het hoogste beroep en ook het laatste. Er is geen appél op die uitspraak. Ik denk zelfs dat men het niet wenschen zal. Alle menschen

en duivelen zullen het schoone van die uitspraak zien. Er zal iets finaal uit klinken, hetwelk niet kan roepen om iets anders. De uitspraak is God Zelf. Hij zal door Zijn Geest in het hart van elken duivel en elken boozen mensch zeggen: EN ZOO IS HET! En de boozen zullen bevend het AMEN! uitspreken.

En dit gericht zal komen over alles wat geschied is. Geen wonder, dat Johannes op Patmos een *grooten* troon zag. Het is een groot gericht van uit elk oogpunt. Doch ook vanwege de ontzaglijke omvang van dit oordeel. Alle duivelen en menschen, goede en kwade, komen in dit gericht. Alle boeken worden geopend. Voor elk mensch een boek, en voor elke duivel een boek.

En de kleinste gebeurtenis, de volle historie staat in die boeken opgeschreven. En het wordt alles geopenbaard. Tot de diepste roerselen der motieven toe. De harten worden eenvoudig binnenst buiten gekeerd.

Paulus zeide, dat wij allen geopenbaard moeten worden voor de rechterstoel van Christus, opdat een iegelijk wegdrage hetgeen door het lichaam geschiedt, naardat hij gedaan heeft, hetzij goed, hetzij kwaad.

Maar hoe zal de aarde (en daar worden toch menschen mee bedoeld) dan juichen en vroolijkheid bedrijven? Hoe zullen wij van vreugde opspringen bij de boodschap dat de Heere komt om te oordeelen met rechtmatigheid? Men zou het toch besterven van schrik en angst bij het hooren van zulk een onderzoek en zulk een dag die alles aan 't licht zal brengen?

Ik moet hier twee dingen zeggen.

Eerst, Israel zal zingen om dien dag, omdat zij weten, dat alle zonde en schuld die aan hen kleefde, weg is, voor eeuwig weg! De zonden zijn geworpen en een oceaan van eeuwige vergetelheid. O neen, God heeft hen niet door de vingers gezien. Dat doet God nooit. Alle zonden moeten betaald worden. Doch hier zit het hem: de zonde en schuld is door Jezus betaald in Zijn lijden en sterven, en in Zijn vervullen van alle gerechtigheid voor de Zijnen, Hem geschonken van den Vader.

Tweedens, dat volk ontving gerechtigheid in het hart, door wedergeboorte en bekeering. En door de liefde Gods leerden zij om het goede lief te hebben en het kwade te haten. En daarom zijn ze blij, dat er eindelijk dan toch eens een dag zal komen, wanneer het recht zal zegevieren.

De goddelooze kan het aanzien, dat het recht wankelt op de straten. Hij kan er zelfs een handje mee helpen. Er zijn menschen die schik hebben in onrecht en er zich op beroemen om de dingen scheef te zetten. Dat is echt duivelsch.

Maar het kind Gods, het Israel der eeuwen heeft lang den Heere verwacht. Zij hebben het recht lief om Godswil.

Aan dien honger zal God voldoen.

Hij gaat zeker komen. Het schijnt wel, alsof we de eerste klanken der bazuinen al hooren. En alsof we het uitgieten van Zijn fiolen al zien kunnen.

De Rechter staat voor de deur.

Ge moet nog een weinig wachten.

En terwijl ge wacht, recht doen en het onkreukbare der gerechtigheid beminnen.

Ge kunt dien trek, die geestelijk *habitas* bewijzen door te doen, wat de Heilige Geest U hier beveelt. Zingt vroolijk van den dag van Christus. Maakt psalmen en zingt ze van den dag dat God komt in Christus om te richten, de wereld in gerechtigheid.

Laat gerust de stroomen vroolijk zingen, al klappende met de handen naar omhoog ! Want Hij moet komen van om hoog.

Laat het gebergte opspringen van vreugde en steeds huppelen voor het oog des Heeren.

Er is voor een langen, o zoo langen tijd, wreed geweld geweest. Maar straks niet meer. Dan heeft het eeuwig uit.

Er zal maar één ding regeeren. En dat ééne is de rechtmatigheid van Gods gerechtigheid.

En dan komt de hemel.

En de hemel is om al maar te staren in het Oog van Hem die op den grooten witten troon zit.

En het Lam. Hij kocht mij los van het kromme en gaf mij den vrede!

Ik kan het nooit vergelden. Doch ik zal zingen, zingen!

G. V.

IN HIS FEAR

Living In His Fear

That the readers of these lines are children of God, we firmly believe. The unbeliever finds no delight in the things spiritual and looks elsewhere for his reading material. As children of God the readers of these lines then also confesses that they fear the Lord.

Yet we live in a world of superficiality and of great temptation and in a time when the material things are increasingly crowding out our spiritual activities. We so easily assume the habits of the world and practice their evil works. We so easily let the world set our styles and determine our behaviour in a hundred different ways. The speech and way of speaking of the world soon becomes ours, and the antithetical, distinctive life of the fear of the Lord is almost lost. We fear the Lord, indeed. But we hardly find time to practice it. The fear of the Lord is our confession,

but is it our life? Are we living it? Is our fear of the Lord anything or very much more than a knowledge with the head? Is it simply a knowledge of the truth which leaves us cold and indifferent, or is it a knowledge which is manifested by all that we practice?

It is reported that a very daring man once walked across the deep chasm of the Niagara River at Niagara Falls on a wire cable that was stretched across this chasm. Not only did he walk across on this wire cable, but so it is said, this man with a perfect sense of balance and "nerves of steel" pushed a wheelbarrow across ahead of him. Having completed the round trip before the eyes of a mystified audience, he asked of those who had witnessed the feat how many of them believed that he could do it again, this time pushing a man ahead of him in that wheelbarrow. Hands went up all around showing that the owners believed that he could do this. But when he asked for a volunteer to come and ride in that wheelbarrow, not a man came forward. That kind of faith they did not have. Is that somewhat of a picture of our fear of the Lord? We believe in Him. We say that we trust Him for all things material and spiritual. We confess Him to be our God and Saviour. Yes, but are we living in His fear? Is our walk of life such that others plainly see that we fear the Lord?

The child of God does live in His fear. The beginning of that new life is small, but there most assuredly is a beginning in every regenerated child of God. Since it is present in all the readers of these lines, we would like to call their attention to this matter of living in His fear. In this new series of articles to appear under the general heading of "In His Fear", we would like to pen down a few scattered thoughts in regard to living in His fear with the hope that it may spur us on to a sanctified walk and recall to our minds things that have to do with the fear of the Lord which so easily escape our attention as we are swept along with the current of this present age which is a very evil one.

Betrayed by our speech.

In this first installment dealing with living in His fear we would like to call your attention to the fact that our speech very definitely betrays us. It shows very clearly whether we are living in His fear or not. You are aware of the fact that Peter's speech betrayed him in the palace of the high priest. When he denied Christ and insisted that he was not one of His disciples, he was told that his speech betrayed him as one out of Galilee. Here of course it was not the contents of his speech that revealed his true relationship to Christ. It was the form of his speech. It was the way he pronounced his words. If you will, it was his brogue. One's way of speaking does betray one

and indicates either his nationality or the section of the country in which he lives.

The same is true of the contents of our speech in the spiritual sense. The contents of our speech will reveal whether we are living in the fear of the Lord and to what degree we are. Our speech will reveal whether we are citizens of the kingdom of heaven or not and how loyal we are as such citizens. Our speech shows what is in our hearts and minds, and therefore our speech very definitely betrays us and reveals whether we are living in the fear of the Lord or not and to what degree.

Thus taking the name of the Lord our God in vain betrays one as not living in the fear of the Lord need hardly be remarked. It is a clear violation of the expressed will of God and surely manifests no fear of reverence and respect at all.

Yet how much is there not of this taking of God's name in vain to be found also among us? Daily papers, magazines and even radio programs are full of it. We hear it so often and read it so frequently that it almost finds a place in our way of thinking and expressing ourselves. Sometimes this is the case to a very great degree. Or else we invent similar sounds that begin with the same letter or letters. "Gee, Gosh, Golly" fall off our lips as necessary words to emphasize our statements. Our very attempt to impress others with our veracity by the use of such expressions is an admission that at least at times our words are not trustworthy. Similarly we find the need of "Christmas" or "Christopher". Then there are those words which refer to God's attributes used in expressions such as "Holy smoke", "Good gracious" and the like.

These are not pleasing in God's sight. These as well as the more bold use of the name of God literally shows disrespect and irreverence rather than the fear of the Lord. He who fears the Lord will use His name very delicately. He who fears the Lord stands in awe before Him. He will not misuse that name, nor will he invent all kinds of ways to duplicate the sins of the world with similarly sounding words. You who are reading these lines, does your speech in this respect betray you?

But it was not our intention to write about the violation of the Third Commandment at this time. We have other speech in mind which betrays the old man of sin within us and which is not showing the reverence due His name. We so easily borrow the speech of the world and many expressions which we would call "atheistic expressions" find their place in our daily speech. We speak of "luck" and "being lucky". We speak of "Providence" and "Nature" when we are speaking of works which the Lord Whom we fear has performed. In the same way we speak of "accidents" and of unavoidable accidents. Now it is to be conceded of course that Jesus Himself speaks of "chance" as in

Luke 10:31 in the well known parable of the Merciful Samaritan. Likewise is it true that the word "accident" can have favourable connotation. But only too frequently does our speech in regard to that work of God which we call an accident reveal that we do not see the hand of God in it and that for us it is simply something unavoidable or something that just happened. This is even more plainly manifested in our speech wherein we speak of "luck" or our being "lucky". There is no such thing as "luck". All things come to us according to the decree of God. Even our substitution of the word "fortunate" in the place of "lucky" does not really give expression to the fear of the Lord. We seem so afraid or loathsome to recognize God and His works. Is it because we do not really recognize these things as His work, or is it that we are afraid before others to confess His name and our faith in Him? At any rate whichever is the case such speech betrays one as not living in the fear of the Lord in that act of his.

He who fears the Lord has deep respect for Him. He stands in awe before the Lord and every work of the Lord which he beholds, whether it be in the sphere of the spiritual things he receives from God and sees about him or whether it be in the material things of this earth where God shows His hand, power and wisdom, he who fears the Lord sees God's glory therein. And living in God's fear he will praise Him for these works. To attribute the works of God to a blind Providence, to an impersonal Nature, to luck or any other thing is to show disrespect for the Lord Who has done these things. He who has been spared through some dreadful disaster or peril of one kind or another, if he is living in the fear of the Lord, will not declare how lucky he was. After the pattern of the saints of old who lived in God's fear, he will speak of God's goodness and mercy. The very least he can say and still utter the speech of the fear of the Lord is to declare that God has seen fit to spare him from this peril. There is no fear of the Lord expressed in the statement that one is "lucky". There is no fear in such an expression such as this, "nature provides a solution for the problems of creation." The fear of the Lord speaks His praises also before the world in spite of the mockery it will suffer.

Then there is also what we would call "filthy" speech. Such speech is to be found only too often right in the home before the children. We mean by filthy speech what the world calls "dirty, immoral speech." That there is filthy speech found in the mouth of the world is to be understood. The heart of the world is filthy. That it is in the heart of the church is due to the fact that the old man of sin is with us till death. But he who fears the Lord will fight against it and keep a close watch of his tongue.

Such speech does not belong on the tongue of those

that fear the Lord. They stand in awe before Him. They are eager to be pleasing in His sight with thought and word and deed. It is their desire to bring their children up in His fear and that the words of their mouths and the meditation of their hearts may be acceptable to God. In homes where there is filthy talking, where filthy jokes are told before the children and where the tongue is not used to speak God's praises the parents must not be surprised if they find their children in later life practicing immoral deeds. Let the parent live in the fear of the Lord and set an example by *all* their speech for their children to follow.

There is one other form of speech which we would have you consider with us in this first installment. It is the matter of the Christian Greeting. When those that fear the Lord, members of one family, fellow citizens of the kingdom of heaven, fellow members of the one body of Christ meet one another or take leave of one another, there is nothing unique as a rule, and the speech used in these instances is identical to that of those who do not fear the Lord. Paul in his many epistles gives us a very different admonition. He declares for example in Philippians 4:21: "Salute every saint in Christ Jesus". The "God be with you" of the parting salutation of the Quakers which does express the fear of the Lord has today contracted into "Good Bye" and is and can be used by the church and world alike. Surely this is not what Paul meant when to the Philippians but also to the church at Colosse and Thessalonica he said, "Salute all the saints" or when he wrote to the Thessalonians, "Greet one another with a holy kiss". It may be noticed that Paul speaks of an "holy kiss". He plainly differentiates between the greeting and salutation of the world and that of those who fear the Lord. Should not our speech reveal that all our trust is in the Lord, that we expect His blessing and wish it upon all His saints? Should our farewell not always be, "The Lord Bless You", or some similar expression which expresses our fear of the Lord? What does your speech reveal? Does it reveal your fear of the Lord?

J. A. H.

IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies Aid Society of the First Prot. Ref. Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, hereby wishes to express their sincere sympathy in the death of one of their faithful members;

MRS. RICHARD VAN DELLEN

May the Lord comfort the bereaved family and give them grace, to believe that He doeth all things well.

Ladies Aid Society

Mrs. H. Hoeksema, Pres.

Mrs. A. Van Tuinen, Sec'y.

FROM HOLY WRIT

O. T. Quotations in the N. T.

(Eph. 4:8-12; Ps. 68:19 concluded)

The first question, therefore, to engage our attention is: what is there in Psalm 68:18 that warrants Paul in changing "*received gifts*" into "*gave gifts*"?

If our assumption is correct that Paul has infallibly grasped the sense of this passage in writing "*gave*" instead of "*received*" this ought to become clear to us from a study of Psalm 68 itself. It seems to us that a brief study of this Psalm is in order.

In general it can be said that in this Psalm the poet is recounting the mighty victories and triumphs of Israel over all her enemies. These victories, however, the psalmist does not ascribe to the prowess of Israel in battle, but solely to the Lord who arises to her defense and thus scatters the foes.

The keynote of this Psalm is undoubtedly expressed in the first verse, which reads: "Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered before Him: let them also that hate Him flee before Him. . . . But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God; yea, let them exceedingly rejoice."

This great victory of the Lord over all the enemies of Himself and of His covenant people finds its climatic description and magnification in the 18th verse, the verse quoted by Paul in Ephesians 4:8. God has, according to the psalmist, perfected the overthrow of the enemies, and come to make His abode among His saints in "ascending on high and receiving gifts from men; yea, for the rebellious that He might dwell among them."

Many have been the attempts to ascertain the Old Testament event, recorded in the Scriptures, to which the psalmist here refers. Among expositors there is no unanimity; great is the divergence of opinion. Some would have David here speaking of the signal victory over the Syrians and Ammonites, when the Ark was brought back in triumph to Jerusalem. I Chron. 19:10-19. Others insist that the "ascending on high" refers to the translation of the Ark from the house of Obed-Edom to Mt. Zion, and that with this every part in the Psalm would harmonize. II Sam. 6:8. Again, others find in this Psalm fragments of the song of Moses, spoken at the occasion of Israel's marching after the Ark of the Covenant and led by the Cloud in the desert, and also, parts of, or at least, the sentiments of the Song of Deborah (Numbers 10:35; Judges 5).

How are we to judge of this?

It seems to us, that we need not busy ourselves too much to seek the one particular victory of God in His people over the enemies. It is enough to keep in mind that the events here spoken of are, indeed, historical. They happened. Added to this, we should constantly bear in mind that the description of the Lord's victories are portrayed to us in poetic strains. The language does not permit us to ascertain to any degree of certainly the particular historical reference.

For us it is enough that we see the general thrust of this Psalm. We will then see that what the Holy Spirit wrote in Psalm 68 is the general underlying principle that is true in every particular case of Israel's victories over the enemies.

As far as the particular passage in Psalm 68:18 is concerned we believe that the clearest exhibition of this principle may be noticed in the removal of the Ark from the house of Obed-Edom to Mt. Zion by David. We believe that back of this ascension of the Ark under David lies the Captivity of the Ark by the Philistines at the battle of Aphek under Hophni and Phinehas, the two wicked sons of the High Priest, Eli. I Samuel 4-6.

In favor of this historical reference is the following in the Psalm: 1. That this Psalm is attributed to the authorship of David. It is called: "A psalm or song of David." Now it was under David that the Ark was brought to its resting place in Zion. 2. That in this case of the capture of the Ark it was in "Captivity". To this dark and seemingly hopeless period the text seems to refer. That the Ark ascended implies that it has first descended. To this we may add, that it seems quite certain that the Psalm does allude to the "ascension" of the Ark as the symbol of the *gracious* presence of God. That the Ark did go out with Israel into the fray, into battle is evident from II Samuel 11:11. Besides, such was ideally the intent of the Ark. When Israel marched in the desert the Ark, carried by the priests went before them. Thus it was also in passing over Jordan over against Jericho under Joshua, the son of Nun. And we all know the biblical account of the place that the presence of the Ark took in the capture of the city of Jericho.

3. Further, it should be noted, that the very words of Psalm 68:1, quoted earlier in this essay, are the ones that Moses spoke when the Priest would pick up the Ark in their migration in the desert. Thus we read in Numbers 10:35: "And it came to pass, when the Ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before Thee. And when it rested, he said, Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel."

4. In the light of the foregoing threefold considerations it would seem, that this Psalm refers to the time of David's bringing the ark of the covenant into Zion. In so doing "captivity was taken captive." The

seeming defeat of Israel and Israel's God proves to be the everlasting victory. And we read that at this occasion David indeed *gave* gifts unto men. We read: "And he dealt among all the people, even among the whole multitude of Israel, as well to the women as men, to every one a cake of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine". II Samuel 6:19.

David indeed gave gifts unto men.

And the Lord, God, did so in him.

At least that was the positive design of God in taking captivity captive, in overthrowing the armies of the Philistines and lowering them to the earth.

Hence, when the psalmist here speaks of "receiving gifts" from men, it is quite evident that the wording must be viewed as having something full and expansive in it. Indeed, the Lord received gifts, Israel rides on the heights of the enemies. God does not merely wish to destroy, but by the wonder of grace, represented in this very Ark of the mercy-seat, He wishes to bless. He wishes to dwell amongst His people as Jehovah, as God. He wills to show Himself to be the one who is both able (God) and willing in faithfulness (Jehovah). Thus He is mindful of His people as a tender Shepherd of His flock. Not one is forgotten. In so redeeming Israel in the very presence of the Ark, God reveals Himself as the God of justice and of mercy. It is the triumph of the righteous cause of God in His people in Zion.

Such is evidently the import of this passage. Thus it is explained by Paul in Ephesians 4:8.

However, there is a difference between the "taking captivity captive" in Psalm 38 and that referred to in Ephesians.

In the latter passage we have the real presence of God in His Son in the flesh; in the former we have God revealed in the shadows and types, in the mercy-seat of the earthly tabernacle and the priesthood of Aaron.

This is a tremendous difference.

In the latter times God has spoken unto us through His Son. In His Son God has come to dwell amongst us, His people. He, the Son, has assumed the flesh and blood of the children. He has made Himself of no reputation. Willingly He came to be the "Captive"! He is buffeted, spit upon, contradicted of men, a man of sorrows. Never was anyone so completely captive, and so willingly a bondman as He. He entered into the "lower parts of the earth", i.e., he entered into all the relationships of us the children under the curse of the law and under the law of death. Indeed, he descended, as never the ark in Eli's day could. Truly here one must say: Ichabod! the glory has departed from Israel.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate; he was crucified, dead and buried.

Lower than He none has ever descended!

Yet, the grave and the pains of death could not hold Him. He arose from the dead, and He ascended on high.

And this ascension on high was into the city of David. Oh, to be sure, he did not ascend into the earthly city of David in the land of Palestine, but into the heavenly city which has foundations, whose Builder and maker is God. Into this city He entered passing through the heavens. Above all the heavens He ascended.

Surely, in so doing all the enemies of God's people are destroyed. For He must reign until He hath put all things under His feet. Is He not the King-Priest, a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

And what a gracious High Priest!

For all the needs of the whole church He cares. He gives, graciously gives gifts unto men.

In Him is the fulness of wisdom, righteousness, holiness and complete redemption. With this wisdom and knowledge all must be filled till all arrive unto the perfect manhood, the full stature in Him. And this is all gift. It is His loving care for each member of the Body of which He is the Head.

Very concretely these gifts of knowledge, of doctrine and reproof come to us through the teaching ministry. Christ's death and ascension have made the preaching of the gospel a reality. And through this preaching all collectively and each individually receives the full measure of the gift of Christ.

Each, therefore, receives His allotted portion. And this portion must by every joint that supplieth in the Body be used to the advantage of all.

Thus the Lord, the glorified Jesus receives a form in us. Ascension in the highest heavens begins to be realized in our lives. God, the Lord, thus comes to dwell among His people.

Thus one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one body.

And one God who is above all, through all and in all!

G. L.

PERISCOPE

De Gereformeerde Kerken. (O.A. 31 K.O.) Statistics:

We recently received the 1947 Yearbook of these Churches in the Netherlands and pass on to our readers some of the figures.

RECAPITULATION

Classis	No. of Churches	Ministers	Vacant	Souls	Conf. Members
Groningen	42	29	16	19196	10221
Friesland	28	12	14	4926	2447
Drente	25	14	10	5459	2752
Overijssel-Geld.	56	32	30	24007	12573
Utrecht	21	15	9	8785	4596

Noord-Holland	23	12	8	4362	2287
Zuid-Holland	56	36	17	16178	8442
Zeeland-Noord- Brabant-Limburg	18	13	6	4398	2291
Total—1946	269	163	110	87311	45609
Total—1946	216	135	89	77303	40729

These Churches maintain their own Theological Seminary in Kampen with five full-time professors and three "lectoren". Eighty-five students are enrolled for the regular seminary work while twenty-eight more are taking graduate work leading to the doctor's degree.

* * * *

v. S. Views U. s.

(Continued from last issue)

In order to attempt to catch up with Mr. Van Spronsen we will devote most of our space to his writings. From what he writes below it is evident that if he lived in this country the brother would be a "fan" of Dr. Brady. Mr. Van Spronsen states that the Churches in America do not seem to have the strength to withstand the influence of Americanism but that, on the contrary, there is a tendency to compromise. "The early baptism of infants, for example," he writes, "I have not found in America. One finds here the practice that is in vogue in the Ned. Herv. Kerk—that of stipulated baptismal days. Once a month or whenever a sufficient number of infants have accumulated baptism is administered. And whenever one asks the reason why they wait so long he receives the stereotyped answer: The mother must also be present since she has the most to do with the bringing-up of the child. A situation which arose in one of the Chr. Ref. Churches and concerning which I recently heard, demonstrates the difficulties which they face here in this connection. Without exception, the babies in America, are born in the hospitals, at the expense of the family life according to my judgment, but the doctors simply refuse to help at home. Now it seems that one of the newest American fads is that all male babies must be circumcised as a prophylactic measure. And for the sake of hygiene *doet men in Amerika alles*; and whenever the one mother begins something, the others follow immediately. Now there was one baby which became very sick following this operation and consequently this necessitated a postponement of baptism and, hence, also the other babies simply had to wait.

"Because of similar pernicious circumstances there is no longer any possibility of a pure covenant concept.

"Here also one misses the positive leadership of the Ref. Church not merely concerns the "three points"

religious press and that of those who have been called to give this leadership.

"One of the problems that is still a warm issue here is the question of the baptism of adopted children. The government places children of parents whose name, for one reason or another, cannot be revealed. Any one can adopt such a child. Now there are childless families that have taken advantage of this and even though nothing is known of such a child many would yet have them baptized. Even though the child was born entirely outside of the sphere of the Covenant they maintain that through mere adoption it becomes a covenant child and thus has a right to its baptism. The Synod (Chr. Ref. Church, W.H.) took a positive position on this question but later, when criticism arose, it left it to the judgment of each local Church.

"That in the sphere of the covenant the "may" is at the same time a "must" and the "must", likewise, also contains a "may" they do not understand, it seems. In this manner the idea of the covenant is disappearing among the people. And, according to my prediction, it is just this point that will come up in the future.

"Church and Covenant are the two fundamental articles of the confession with which the Churches in America must busy themselves if they are to maintain their essential character overagainst the American sect-spirit. Without the security of these two fundamental articles of confession the Churches face the danger of being swallowed up and conformed to become one with the many denominations; perhaps still maintaining their own "Christian society life" in which they seek each others well-being and treat one another as "nice people" and add charm to the daily life with a cheery "keep smiling" attitude—concerning which we may well take a lesson—but according to which the Church as the Body of Christ has lost the strength of her high calling and hence can have no future.

"A great lack among the reformed people in America is the absence of their own Christian daily press. If one desire to keep up with the news he is forced to subscribe to the so-called neutral papers. And these papers consider it their task to be filled with whatever is sensational, interesting or whatever else, according to the opinion of the editor, the public will read. One will seldom find a pure, objective and fundamental article. The papers are filled with scandals of murder, bank robberies, accidents, burglaries, divorce and suicide. Each day a huge paper is delivered to the home, containing an amount of paper that would make any Netherlands publishers mouth to water. The portion that is not used by the editors is taken up with advertizing of which there are many pages full. And the mass of people devour it all, even though there is very little good reading matter.

"It is true that in reformed circles they are sup-

posedly skeptical of the content of this daily press. They read the paper because there is nothing else and they desire to keep up with the course of events. But whenever one discusses the national and international affairs, both in political and social spheres it becomes evident, nevertheless, that their opinions have been formed under the influence of the press."

As an example of this Mr. Van Spronsen points to the current opinion in America that the Netherlands East Indies should be given their independence. He claims that the press in America has distorted the issues and that we Americans blindly follow. Overagainst this he brings strong arguments for the continuance of Dutch dominion in the Indies. He concludes as follows: "And I believe that the greatest fault lies with the so-called neutral press that has influenced the hearts and minds. It is high time that reformed brethren in America begin to publish a paper of their own. . . . they are sufficiently numerous to publish a fine paper."

In his next article Mr. Van Spronsen returns to discuss our expulsion from the Christian Reformed Church. He takes his starting point from a review of "The Power of the Cross", written by the Rev. H. Hoeksema and reviewed by the Rev. Keegstra in *De Wachter* of March 11.

"The editor (Rev. Keegstra) urges that this book be read. He declares that this book, dealing with the suffering of the Lord, takes a first place in American literature on this theme. And in contrast to the "arminianism" that is presented in so many books he writes: 'We welcome this book which makes clear that our Reformed teaching of atonement is grounded in the Scripture and is developed in the texts herein treated. May our people never tire of hearing sermons and obtaining books in which the Scriptural truth of atonement is unfolded. . . .'

"The Rev. Hoeksema can be satisfied with this judgment. It establishes what we wrote previously, viz., that one can be expelled from the Church in America because it is declared that his preaching is not Reformed and leads to error, while at the same time the books that are published by him who is expelled, receive a warm welcome and are declared to be the best that appear. Rev. Hoeksema is well appreciated in the circles of the Christian Reformed Church provided that they do not have to commune with him at one Lord's Supper. One feels that here is something that does not jibe. In response to this the following has been remarked: Yes, but Rev. Hoeksema was deposed for deflection on the question of "common grace"; for the rest he is surely reformed.

"I had the privilege of hearing several sermons in the Prot. Ref. Churches and also the opportunity to read much of their literature and I receive the conviction between the Prot. Ref. Churches and the Chr.

but cuts much deeper. A book of the Rev. Hoeksema such as "The Power of the Cross" cannot be separated from his opinions concerning "common grace", and whenever one in the Chr. Ref. circle warmly endorses this book as being purely Reformed he denounces the expressions of Synod (and hence, all those who have conformed to them) which deposed Rev. Hoeksema. Rev. Hoeksema and those with him have their eyes open to the dangers which beset the reformed churches in America. And above all to the danger of Arminianism concerning which the Rev. Keegstra wrote in the review referred to above. Rev. Hoeksema has drawn a sharp antithesis between Church and world and whoever speaks of the "three points" without considering this background does not understand much of the difference between Rev. Hoeksema and the Synod that expelled him. The protest of Rev. Hoeksema concerned and still concerns the whole world and life view of many of those who, though they are still called reformed, are far removed from the Reformed truth, as I pointed out in a previous article. I can better understand the prayer of Rev. Keegstra: 'may our people never tire of hearing sermons and procuring books in which the complete Scriptural truth of atonement is developed' as I become better acquainted with what goes on in reformed circles. The "three points" are also pertinent to 'the complete Scriptural truth of atonement' and already twenty and more years ago the Rev. Hoeksema cautioned against the dangers against which Rev. Keegstra warns in his book review. And his (Rev. H. H.) warning against these was not only negative reaction but also positive. I believe, therefore, that the expulsion of the Rev. Hoeksema and his followers, apart from being unscriptural, was also at the expense of the further development of the Chr. Ref. Church in America. They attempted to stifle a voice which cannot be missed in reformed Church life in America, and that now this voice still sounds outside the walls one wonders if they will listen to it; after twenty years in which people were deprived from hearing that voice within the Christian Reformed Church?

As far as I have looked about and made the acquaintance of the Prot. Ref. Churches this denomination maintains in all its manifestations as Church, the purest Reformed element that came out of the Netherlands. I heard nothing in speech or sermon of the "three points" anymore; that period has passed. But their whole world and life view is in striking contrast to that which I discovered in the Chr. Ref. Church in general. Their services of Divine worship are nearly the same as most of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and, hence, remain as a guardian against the American influence to which so many of the Chr. Ref. Churches have succumbed. The service of the Word is positively Reformed and the Catechism is

preached not only in name but also in content. Rev. Doezeema, in Bellflower, was just beginning the Catechism again and as an introduction to this series this young minister chose to preach from the first eight verses of Psalm 78. He pointed out from this portion the reasons why the Catechism should be preached in our Churches. It was thoroughly Reformed and I felt completely at home here. And so it was also in the exposition of the Scripture. Again in Redlands I found that the Rev. De Boer preaches the Word in the full sense of the term. There was no trace of an American influence. The Word of God was unfolded for the congregation in its essential meaning. And these comparatively youthful ministers are the students of the Rev. Hoeksema.

The better acquainted I became in these Churches the better I can understand that so many in the Chr. Ref. Church could say: 'They should never have deposed Rev. Hoeksema, it was a mistake. . . .' This was told to me not only by lay-members but also by ministers.

"But this designation of it all as a "mistake" is evidence again of the superficial concept of what the Church is. A "mistake" can be smoothed over in many ways, as for example, after the manner of the Rev. Keegstra who calls attention to the thoroughly Reformed books which Rev. Hoeksema writes and advises his fellow members in the Chr. Ref. Church to study them. But can one, when he considers the consequences, so easily soothe his conscience? The question of the Holy Communion is a consideration. If Rev. Hoeksema 'preaches an atonement that is based upon Scripture,' and Rev. Keegstra writes, must such an one be deprived of sitting at the same Table of the Lord until they are together in heaven? The word "mistake" is easy to say and convenient to use to soothe the conscience. And it is already more than 20 years ago that it all happened, don't you see. . . .? But I believe that it is more American than Scriptural to speak of a "mistake". The Word of God does not speak of "mistakes" but sins, and sins do not age. I believe that the voice of Rev. Hoeksema cannot be silenced in the American Church world because the Lord has given them a place there. Can't the brethren of the Chr. Ref. Church see the connection between the Synod of 1924 and all the various problems that arise today? Problems of all sorts for which they have no answer. And that's the reason for the welcome which the voice of Rev. Hoeksema finds with the editor of *De Wachter*. There are already too many voices in the American reformed world which no longer sound a reformed note. But if a voice is "welcome", give it the place to which it has a right so that people that still know the sound may hear it."

Thank you, Brother Van Spronsen!

W. H.