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MEDITATION

Striving For The Faith Of The Gospel

Only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving for the faith of the gospel: And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.

Phil. 1:27, 28.

Only. . . .

This one thing must be emphasized now, at once, and always!

The apostle had confidence that he would abide in the flesh for their sake, and that he would continue with them all, for their furtherance and joy of faith.

He would see them again, that their rejoicing might be more abundant in Jesus Christ by His coming to them again.

Only, after all, this is not the most important matter. The question whether he would abide in the flesh and come unto them again, whether they would see him, and speak to him face to face, or never meet him again in this world, is of relative significance. O, it was not without meaning for the Philippians. That the apostle would abide in the flesh was surely more needful for them. How edifying was his instruction, how powerful his word, how encouraging his consolation, how strengthening his very presence! Yet, this was not the chief question.

Only, strive for the faith of the gospel!

There is only one requirement for the Church of

Christ in the world. She has only one calling, and all other things are secondary and subservient to it: that they so walk that they realize the manifestation of the glory of Christ, that their conversation is worthy of the gospel, that they strive for the faith of the gospel. This is the main thought of this whole passage. For the faith of the gospel the Church must strive. That is her only concern. She need be concerned about nothing else. And to realize this sole and unique calling she must walk as becometh the gospel which they profess, must be united in unity of spirit and of mind, and must not be afraid of those that oppose.

Only. . . .

Whether I am present or absent.

Let me hear of your affairs, that ye are so united, and so strive for the faith of the gospel.

For, in fulfilling this calling, the Church is not dependent upon a man, not even upon the presence of an apostle, but on Christ only.

Stand, therefore, and realize your calling!

In the midst of a hostile world.

Without fear!

Striving for the faith.

For the faith of the gospel.

The gospel is the promise, and the promise is Christ, and the faith of the gospel is the truth concerning Christ, as it is believed by the Church and confessed by her in the midst of the world that lieth in darkness.

Christ as the revelation of the God of our salvation,—that is the gospel. Christ, the Anointed, Who is ordained from before the foundation of the world to be Lord of all; the firstborn of every creature, unto Whom and for Whom, and through Whom, all things were made; and the firstbegotten of the dead, the head of the Church; Lord in His own rights because He is the only begotten Son of God. and Lord of all things.

by divine ordination, because He fought the battle and overcame, He suffered and was obedient even unto death,—that is the gospel. Christ *for* us, Who assumed human flesh and appeared in the form of a servant, Who revealed unto us the Father in word and work, Who shed His lifeblood for His own on the accursed tree, making atonement for our sin, and Who was raised to glory, exalted at the right hand of God, the Lord of lords, and King of kings,—that is the gospel. Christ *in* us, Who received the promise of the Holy Ghost, and in the Spirit returned unto us, that He may dwell in us, make us partaker of His own life, and of all the blessings of salvation,—that is the gospel. And Christ through us, Who is the vine while we are the branches, Who bears fruit in us, and we through Him, that we may walk in all the good works God prepared for us. . . .

Christ, the whole Christ, in all His riches, as the revelation of the God of our salvation. . . .

Christ as the sole Lord, ruling by His Word and Spirit in and over His own, and ruling over the world by His power. . . .

Christ, unto Whom every knee must bow, in heaven, earth, and hell, and Whom every tongue must confess to be the Lord, to the glory of God the Father. . . .

Christ, in Whom alone I trust for my salvation, excluding and rejecting every other; in Whom I have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins, and eternal life.

Christ, to Whom I belong with body and soul, for time and eternity, Whom I acknowledge as Lord over my existence and life in this world, over my body and over my soul, over my thoughts and all my desires, over my talents and powers, my wealth and my possessions, my wife and my children, my position in the world, in the Church, in the State, in shop and office, over all my walk and conversation. . . .

That is the gospel!

And the faith of the gospel is not the same as our faith in the gospel; the expression is not to be understood in the subjective sense of the word: it rather denotes the truth of the gospel as it is appropriated by the faith of the Church, expressed and confessed by her in the midst of a hostile world, and maintained by her over against all opposition. Just as we speak of the Reformed Churches, so the text speaks of the Gospel Faith; meaning its truth as, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, it is known and believed, appropriated and confessed by the Church. Hence, to strive for the faith of the gospel, is to contend for all the fulness of the Redeemer of Christ, the Son of God, the Lord of all, the Redeemer of His people, the Heir of all things!

For that faith, the Church must strive!

Such is her high, her chief calling.

The faith of the gospel she must preserve in all its purity, for unto her it has been entrusted. The riches

of that faith she must display. That faith she is called to proclaim, in her own midst, preaching the gospel of Christ, and instructing the generations to come in its glorious mysteries of salvation. The banner of that faith she must unfurl in the midst of the world, and that, too, among all nations, even unto the ends of the earth. That faith she is called to confess in word and deed, everywhere, and in all relationships of life. And all this must needs assume the form of strife. For the faith of the gospel she must contend, for the world hates and opposes it. It will gainsay it, attempt to corrupt it, to silence the voice of the Church. False teachers will ever attempt to creep in unawares and to destroy the faith of the gospel by their pernicious lies. Shame and reproach will be heaped upon the defenders of that faith. A place will be denied them in the world. Hence, in proclaiming and confessing the faith of the gospel the Church must expect opposition.

Striving for the faith of the gospel!

For that strife she must ever be prepared, putting on the whole armor of God.

Like athletes in the contests of the Grecian games, she must exert all her efforts, concentrate all her powers in order to have the victory in this strife.

Strive she must *together*, unitedly.

Standing together in the fellowship of the gospel, they must not strive with one another, but together stand opposed to the world of darkness, and as one man contend for the faith.

Proclaiming the Christ of the gospel, and confessing that He alone is Lord.

Fighting the good fight of faith.

Even unto the end!

Only!

Walk worthy of the gospel!

Let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ!

And stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel!

Also in the sphere of things spiritual, yea, there more than anywhere else, all things are inseparably related and connected. How shall the Church strive for the faith of the gospel, if her members walk not worthy of the gospel? And how shall she contend for that faith unitedly, unless she stand fast in one spirit, and be of one mind?

Walk as becometh the gospel!

Ah, how otherwise shall you be in a position to contend for its faith? Would you strive for the faith which you deny at every step you take on life's path? O, you may contend for a philosophy of man, for the

wisdom of the world, by word of mouth, without even making an attempt to realize that philosophy in your own life. A mere theory it is to you, a matter of intellectual pastime. But the gospel is the promise, and the promise is Christ, and the faith of the gospel is not a matter of the head, but of the heart; it is not a philosophy, but the living truth of God; it is not an intellectual theory, it is a *faith*!

It demands your heart and all its issues!

To appropriate that faith means that you know it as you know nothing else, with your whole being and existence; that you put all your confidence in it, that you rely on it in life and in death, and that you esteem the riches of which it speaks more glorious than anything and everything the world can offer. The faith of the gospel demands your life! It requires of you that you stand in the covenant of God in Christ, that you love Him with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul, with all your strength; that you forsake the world, crucify your old nature, and walk in a new and holy life.

That is the implication of a walk worthy of the gospel.

It is a walk that does not put that gospel to shame.

It means that you walk as a people that have been brought under the power, under the complete domination of the faith of that gospel, that are called out of the world, redeemed and delivered from sin, sanctified unto the God of your salvation.

Walking thus, and then only, you will be in a position to contend for the faith of the gospel.

Your conversation being worthy of the gospel, you will maintain the unity of the spirit and of the mind, in which you may strive together, in unison, as one man, for the faith of the gospel.

For then you walk in the Spirit.

The one spirit of the Church is the Spirit of Christ. He dwells in Christ as the Head, in the Church as His body, in the individual believers only in fellowship with that body.

To stand fast in one spirit implies that you are all partakers of that one Spirit of Christ, that He dwells in you, and works in you all one mind, one will, one purpose, one desire: the mind and will of Christ, the purpose to strive for the faith of the gospel, the desire to be more and more conformed according to the image of the Christ that is the sum and substance of that faith.

Stand fast in one spirit, that Spirit!

Walking worthy of the gospel!

O, this, too, stands inseparably connected with all that precedes.

If you do not walk worthy of the gospel, and stand fast in the oneness of the Spirit of Christ, there is neither sense nor reason in this exhortation to be fearless over against your adversaries. For, then your striving for the faith of the gospel is vain and powerless, and the adversaries of the faith will leave you alone. You are a friend of the world, and know nothing of the battle of Jehovah, the suffering of Christ and its fellowship, the joy of being without fear though a host should rise against you.

But walk now as becometh the gospel of Christ, confess Him as your Lord and adorn this confession by a walk worthy of the gospel, forsake the world and be a friend of God, stand fast in one spirit, being dominated by and living in the sphere of the Spirit of Christ, and so strive for the faith of the gospel,—and your adversaries will arise on every side. They will arise in greater number, and with more determined opposition, as the coming of the Lord draws near, and the man of sin is being revealed in all the horror of his iniquity. They will arise against you according as you contend for the faith.

But you will then be in a position to hear this word: in nothing be terrified.

You will not fear!

For in this opposition you will see a double, an antithetical token, a divine sign, a Word of God to you.

To them, to the adversaries, this opposition will be an evident token, and that, too, from God, of their sure perdition. They oppose your walk as it becometh the gospel, they hate you for striving for the faith of the gospel. Their hatred and their opposition are their own condemnation. As sons of perdition they become manifest. To you this same opposition is a token of salvation. The hatred of the devil is to you a sign that his dominion is destroyed, and that you belong to the God of your salvation. The victory is yours. Eternal glory awaits you.

And it is all of God!

He places the adversary on your way to create the double sign!

Your faithfulness is His grace; the opposition of the adversary is His trial!

Be not terrified at all! Fight the good fight without fear!

The victory is yours!

H. H.

NOTICE

Never fear!
In nothing be terrified by your adversaries!

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EDITORIALS

Correspondence With The Netherlands

We received the following article from the Rev. L. Doekes:

WAT IS DE BELOFTE?

(Antwoord aan Ds. Hoeksema)

Hier komt dan het beloofde vervolg van ons antwoord aan Ds. Hoeksema.

Wekenlang is dit uitgebleven. Een haastige scribent maakte er al zijn beklag over, dat wij blijkbaar niet verder op de zaak wilden ingaan. En ook het "Geref. Weekblad" toonde zich benieuwd naar het uitblijvende gedeelte van onze artikelen.

Laat ik de schrijvers en lezers geruststellen: het is mij een dankbare taak, de bespreking te mogen voortzetten. Die dankbaarheid is in een nieuw stadium gekomen door de tusschentijdsche ontvangst van de concrete vragen van Ds. Hoeksema. Wel heb ik naar aanleiding daarvan een gedeelte van de reeds ingezonden copie teruggevraagd. Ik had namelijk juist de hand kunnen leggen op een serie brochures over de scheuring in Amerika, en de resultaten van mijn verder onderzoek leken mij zoo de moeite waard, dat ik ze al was begonnen te verwerken in een meer uitvoerige bespreking van heel den samenhang der in Amerika en hier in den kerkstrijd aan de orde gekomen kwesties. Om maar één punt als voorbeeld te noemen: de frappante overeenkomst tusschen de methode, waarop men in Amerika van synodewege heeft gewerkt met de daar in 1924 aangenomen leerformule (de "Drie Punten") om sommige ambtsdragers uit te bannen en andere ongemoeid te laten! Maar dit blijft nu even rusten, om vooreerst alle aandacht te geven aan de concreet geformuleerde vragen van Ds. Hoeksema. Intusschen heeft dat "overschakelen" mij temidden van alle andere beslommeringen in ons vrijgemaakte noodbedwongen weer oponthoud bezorgd. En de haastige critici mogen best weten, dat wij predikanten, als wij ons werk serieus opnemen, nog wel iets meer te doen hebben dan geregeld artikelen te schrijven voor de pers.

En nu ter zake. Aan het slot van zijn door mij gewaardeerden brief (zie "De Reformatie" van 12 April j.l.) zijn de vragen te vinden, waarop hij een duidelijk antwoord van ons begeert.

De eerste vraag was deze: "Welke onderscheiding maakt men ten Uwent tusschen *belofte* en *toezegging*?"

Op die vraag kan ik misschien het best antwoorden

met een gedeelte uit de bekende "Verklaring van gevoelen", in November 1943 overgelegd door de bezwaarde predikanten S. O. Los, H. Meulink, Joh. H. Rietberg, R. Schippers, M. B. Van 't Veer en F. De Vries. Daarin staat op de eerste bladzijde:

"Van ganscher harte gelooven en belijden wij, dat God trouw is in Zijn toezeggingen ook aan en omtrent het zaad des verbonds, en in het daaraan gestand doen.

Van ganscher harte gelooven en belijden wij, dat Gods belofte *onvoorwaardelijk* is in dien zin, dat God hun, wien deze belofte toekomt, niet het verrichten van een bepaald werk of het komen in een bepaalde gesteldheid als voorwaarde stelt, waaraan door hen eerst moet worden voldaan, vóór God het woord Zijner belofte aan hen begint te vervullen.

Maar terwijl wij dit van harte en vóór alles gelooven en belijden, gelooven en belijden we *evenzeer*, dat Gods verbondsbelofte, waarvan Christus de inhoud is, *gesproken* wordt en dus niet alleen *toezegging*, doch ook zeer bepaald *toezegging* is."

Uit deze passage kan Ds. Hoeksema zien, hoe een groep van vooraanstaande bezwaarden in dit stuk de woorden "belofte" en "toezegging" afwisselend gebruiken zonder een nadere onderscheiding. Ook in wat verder van onzen kant is gepubliceerd, herinner ik mij een dergelijke onderscheiding niet. Mogelijk heeft Ds. Hoeksema haar aangetroffen in een geschrift van onze zijde; dan willen we graag een vingerwijzing van hem ontvangen.

Wat ik mij wel herinner is dit: dat de niet-vrijgemaakte ds. J. G. Woelderink eens gewezen heeft op het onderscheid tusschen belofte en profetie, tusschen toe-zegging en voor-zegging. In navolging daarvan is die onderscheiding ook wel eens door vrijgemaakten naar voren gebracht, om daarmee aan te geven, dat de synodale theorie de verbondsbelofte denatureerde tot een goddelijke mededeeling of voorzegging van heil aan dezen en dien uitverkorene; een eenvoudige mededeeling van "onvervreemdbaar heil", "waarvan de vrucht hun niet kan ontgaan" (Praeadvies, pag. 55); of zooals het op pag. 53 van het praeadvies werd beredeneerd: "in verbond en sacrament zegt God tot den uitverkorene of geloovige: 'Ik ben uw God (d.i. uw heils-God) voor eeuwig.' Hier staat vast, dat de aangesprokene het heil zal ontvangen, ja, in beginsel (tegelijk met het Godswoord) reeds ontvangen heeft; en dat dit niet meer afhankelijk is van eenige conditie, waarvan het Godswoord het onzeker zou laten, of ze wel of niet zal worden vervuld. In dezen zin, dus in tegenstelling met de algemeene aanbieding des heils, heeft de Toelichting gesproken van de onvoorwaardelijke heilsbelofte aan de uitverkorenen".

Wat dus de eerste vraag van Ds. Hoeksema betreft, is het antwoord vrij gemakkelijk: bij mijn weten wordt van onze zijde geen wezenlijk onderscheid gezien tusschen "belofte" en "toezegging".

De tweede vraag raakt rechtstreeks het groote nunt.

waarover de strijd hier zoo fel is ontbrand, en dat ook het verschil in zienswijze tusschen Ds. Hoeksema en ons beheerscht. Omdat het hier op nauwkeurigheid aankomt, herhalen we de vraag nog even woordelijk:

"In betrekking tot de belofte des verbonds, is het Uwe beschouwing: a. Dat zij voor alle gedoopten onvoorwaardelijk geldt? Indien ja, houdt deze belofte ook in, dat de Heilige Geest 'in ons wonen, en ons tot lidmaten van Christus heiligen wil.' (en wat daar volgt in het Doopsformulier, L. D.)? Indien ja, waarom vervult God dan Zijne belofte niet aan alle gedoopten?

b. Dat zij voor alle gedoopten is, maar dan voorwaardelijk? Indien ja, moet dan het gedoopte kind die voorwaarde vervullen, *eer* God Zijne belofte aan hem wil vervullen, en aan dat kind wil 'toeëigenen hetgeen het in Christus heeft'? Indien ja, hoe kan dat kind, dat van nature in zonden ontvangen en geboren is, en een kind des toorns, die voorwaarde of ook maar eenige voorwaarde vervullen?

c. Of dat zij voor de kinderen der belofte is (naar Rom. 9), die voor het zaad gerekend worden? Naar mijn overtuiging kan goede exegese van heel het verband in Rom. 9 slechts tot de conclusie leiden, dat met 'kinderen der belofte' het geestelijk of uitverkoren zaad bedoeld is. Ik ben nog altijd bereid dit te verdedigen, ook nadat ik gelezen heb, wat ten Uwent hierover is geschreven in den laatsten tijd."

Dit is dan de tweede vraag van Ds. Hoeksema. Jammer genoeg moet ik juist hier het artikel afbreken. Maar nu kunnen we ons op het antwoord des te beter voorbereiden.

L. DOEKES.

Here follows the translation:

WHAT IS THE PROMISE?

(Reply to the Rev. Hoeksema)

Here, then, comes the promised continuation of my reply to the Rev. Hoeksema.

For weeks this was postponed. A hasty writer already complained that we, evidently, did not intend to go into the matter any further. And also the "Geref. Weekblad" (Reformed Weekly) revealed some inquisitiveness concerning the remaining part of our articles.

Let me set the hearts of the writers and readers at rest: a grateful task it is to me to continue the discussion. This gratitude entered upon a new stage through the questions of the Rev. Hoeksema which, in the meantime, I received. The receipt of these questions did, indeed, cause me to request the return of part of the copy I had already sent in. For I had just been able to lay my hand on a series of brochures about the schism in America and the results of my

further investigation appeared to be so important to me, that I had already begun to incorporate them into a more elaborate discussion of the questions, raised both here and in America, in their proper connection. To mention, for instance, only one point: the striking agreement between the method followed by synod, in America, in the adoption of the "Three Points" in 1924, to expel some officebearers while leaving others unmolested! But this must wait now for the time being in order to concentrate all our attention upon the concrete questions of the Rev. Hoeksema. However, this alteration in the set-up, in connection with all other cares in our liberated church-life, became necessarily the cause of new delay. And our hasty critics may well know that we ministers, if we take our work seriously, have something else to do besides writing articles for the press.

But to come to the point. At the close of his letter, which I appreciate, (c.f. "De Reformatie of April 12) the questions may be found to the which he desires a clear answer from us.

The first question is this: "What distinction do you make between promise (*belofte*) and pledge (*toezegging*)?"

This question can, probably, best be answered by quoting a part of the well-known declaration of Sentiment," presented in Nov. 1943, by the aggrieved ministers S. O. Los, H. Meulink, Joh. H. Rietberg, R. Schippers, M. B. Van 't Veer and F. De Vries. There we read on the first page:

"With all our heart we believe and confess that God is faithful in His pledges (*toezeggingen*) also to and about the seed of the covenant, and in the keeping of the same.

"With all our heart we believe and confess that God's promise (*belofte*) is *unconditional* in this sense, that God does not require of those unto whom is the promise the performance of a certain work, or the entering into a certain disposition, as a condition which they first must fulfill *before* God begins to realize to them the word of His promise.

"But while we believe and confess all this, with all our heart, and before all things, we believe and confess no less, that God's covenant-promise of which Christ is the content, is *spoken*, and, therefore, is not only a pledge, but also definitely a declaration."

(Here we may well interrupt our translation to add a word of explanation. The Dutch here makes a play upon the word *toezegging* for which I know no exact equivalent in English, surely no equivalent that would lend itself to the same play. It is a compound verb, the first part of which, "toe", rather emphasizes that a pledge or promise is given *to someone*, the second, "zegging" that it is *spoken*, and must be heard and received. It is evident that the authors intended to emphasize the fact that the covenant promise is spoken to all, but that only those that hear it and receive it or

accept it, are heirs of the promise. Let us now continue our translation:)

From this passage, the Rev. Hoeksema will see how a group of leading men among the aggrieved on this point, use the terms promise and pledge promiscuously without further distinction. Also in that which has been further published on our part I do not recall any such distinction. It is possible that the Rev. Hoeksema met with it in some writing from our side; if so, we will be glad to have him suggest where.

I do, indeed, recall that the non-liberated Rev. J. G. Woelderink once pointed out the distinction between promise and prophecy, between pledging to and prediction. Following this example, the liberated, too, sometimes brought this distinction to the fore, in order to indicate that the synodical theory corrupted the covenant promise into a divine communication or prediction of salvation to this or that elect; a simple communication of "an irrevocably sure salvation", "of the fruit of which they cannot be deprived" (Pre-advice, p. 55): or, as it is argued on p. 53 of the Pre-advice: "in covenant and sacrament God declares to the elect or believers: 'I am thy God (i.e. the God of thy salvation) for ever.' Here it is established that the addressee shall receive salvation, yea, in principle (simultaneously with the Word of God) has already received it; and that this is no longer contingent upon any condition, concerning which the Word of God would leave it uncertain whether or not it is to be fulfilled. In this sense, therefore, in contrast with the general offer of salvation, the Elucidation spoke of the unconditional promise of salvation to the elect."

With respect to the first question of the Rev. Hoeksema, therefore, the answer is easy: according to my knowledge no essential distinction is seen, on our part, between "promise" and "pledge".

The *second* question concerns directly the important point about which the fire of controversy was started here so furiously, and which also dominates the difference in view between the Rev. Hoeksema and us. Because all depends here on conciseness, we here repeat the question verbally:

"Is it your view that the promise of the covenant:

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

b. Is it for all *conditionally*? If so, must the baptized child fulfill and live up to this condition *before* God will fulfill His promise, and apply "that which we have in Christ" to it? If so, how can that child,

who is by nature 'born in sin, and therefore a child of wrath', and who 'cannot enter the kingdom of God except it be born again', fulfill any condition whatever?

c. Or only for 'the children of the promise' who *are counted for the seed*, and that, too, both by God and us? (Rom. 9). In my conviction, sound exegesis of the entire context in Rom. 9 can only lead to the conclusion, that by 'children of the promise' the spiritual or elect seed is meant. I am still ready to defend this position, also after I have read what has been written on your part about this passage recently."

This, then, is the second question of the Rev. Hoeksema. Too bad that I must break off my article at this point. But now we can prepare ourselves all the better for the answer.

Thus far the translation.

There is one point in the article of the Rev. Doekes on which I must reflect at once. It concerns the question whether anything in the writings of the liberated occasioned my question concerning the alleged distinction between promise and pledge, *belofte* and *toezegging*.

I am sorry that, for the present, I lack the time to peruse once again the abundant material that was sent me after the close of the war, and that is related to this question. I am writing this in a great hurry, because I am about to leave Grand Rapids for the far West, and I like to publish this article of the Rev. Doekes in the earliest possible issue of our paper.

Let me say this about it, that I sometimes received the impression from the writings of the liberated that they prefer the term "toezegging" *the spoken pledge* to the term "belofte" or promise, because it more readily lends itself to express the idea of a conditional promise. And the quotation which the Rev. Doekes makes above from the "Declaration of Sentiment" rather strengthens me in that conviction.

I believe that I can even now, more or less offhand, explain how I received this impression.

I refer to *De Reformatie*, Vol. 22, No. 12, where Dr. Schilder criticizes the following synodical declaration:

"In the promise, He witnesses not only that whosoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but He also pledges the Holy Spirit (*zegt Hij ook den Heiligen Geest toe*), Who works faith whereby He makes us partakers of Christ and all His benefits."

Prof. Schilder complains that the synod failed to make sharp and correct distinctions, especially with respect to the meaning of the term promise.

And then he writes (I translate):

"Here, the contents of the promise is supposed to be indicated in the words: *whosoever believeth in the Son hath eternal life*.

"But is this a *promise*?

"O, if there were no debate, and no learned or seemingly learned reports were handed in, and the air were still pure, and the relation were still honest, we should probably call this sentence a *promise*, with the greatest of pleasure.

"But now things are being debated, now there is expulsion and things are sharply accentuated, *now* we say: against the background of all this God and men grieving misery, we can only note that the problem of the promise is here being avoided, even though the word 'promise' is mentioned.

"For, strictly speaking, the citation is no *promise*, but a *dogmatic truth*.' . . .

"The difference is felt at once when the beginning of the quoted expression is compared with the rest. The latter declares that the Lord pledges the Holy Ghost ("toe-zegt"). To whom? To him who already believes? I say: yes, for such a one needs the Spirit, every day, to remain steadfast, and to be reborn through faith (art. 24 Confession). But that is supposedly not the meaning here. We all think, in this connection, of the children (Lord's Day 27, qu. 74). To the children, i.e. to John and Mary, and to every N.N., each time one by one, it is said: 'to you, N.N., the Holy Ghost that works faith is pledged (toegezegd). There, not the *general* 'whosoever', but the *individual*: you, N.N. is used."

Prof. Schilder then calls attention to a distinction which the fathers made between promise and *pollicitation*. Now, a pollicitation is a promise without mutuality, i.e. a promise that has not been accepted by the party to whom it is made. It is, therefore, an *unconditional* promise. And Prof. Schilder himself writes in this connection: "The whole question of conditional or unconditional promise of salvation is connected with this."

From all this, and also from other passages in the writings of the liberated, in connection, too, with the distinction they make between "bequest" (*schenking*) and "giving in possession" (*in bezit stellen*), I received the impression that they made a distinction between "promise" and "pledge", *belofte* and *toezegging*. The promise (*belofte*) is a general statement, addressed to no one in particular: "Whosoever believeth in the Son hath eternal life"; the pledge (*toezegging*) is the promise as addressed to particular individuals. The promise is limited to believers, the elect; the pledge (*toezegging*) is for all that are baptized. Accordingly, the promise is unconditional, the pledge (*toezegging*) is conditional.

This impression is strengthened by what I read in *De Reformatie*, Vol. 22, No. 15: "In other words, to ALL legally baptized children regeneration is PLEDGED (TOEGEZEGD) and the Holy Ghost is PLEDGED (TOEGEZEGD). And justification PLEDGED (TOEGEZEGD). Just as it is PLEDGED (TOEGEZEGD)

to them that the Father will provide them with every good thing, and will avert all evil, or turn it to their profit. But these pledges are conditional."

In view of all this, I must repeat my question to the Rev. Doekes, but now in this form:

Although you use promise and pledge (*belofte* and *toezegging*) promiscuously often, yet, when a distinction must be made, that distinction is as follows:

a. The promise is the unconditional, general statement to the believers or the elect: they that believe in the Son have life, and similar statements in Scripture.

b. The pledge (*toezegging*) is the conditional promise addressed to all baptized children.

Is this my impression correct?

And, secondly, when the liberated use the terms promise and pledge, *belofte* and *toezegging*, promiscuously, do they not always ascribe to *promise* (*belofte*) the meaning of *the spoken pledge addressed to concrete individuals*?

Finally, does not the Bible ever speak of the promise of God as the unconditional assurance of salvation to the elect?

H. H.

Question Hour *

1. Our first question really consists of three parts, but since they are all related and concern the same subject, we will read the whole question at once. Here it is:

a. Please, explain John 3:16.

b. How are we to reconcile this text with the exhortation: "Love not the world"?

c. In how many ways is the term "world" used in Scripture?

Answer:

We feel at once that all these questions really concentrate around the last. If we answer it, we have the key to the answer to the other two questions. This third question we will, therefore, attempt to answer first.

In answering this question, we will limit ourselves to the word *world* as it occurs in the original of John 3:16, which is the word *cosmos*. There are other words for world in the original, but they need not concern us now.

The general meaning of the word *cosmos* is harmony, orderly arrangement, beauty. Our word cosmetics is derived from it. It is used to denote the created universe, all creatures in heaven and on earth,

as an organic whole, from the viewpoint of its order and harmony.

This fundamental denotation is, probably, never entirely absent from the word as it occurs in the Bible, although it has different connotations. Frequently, the word refers especially to the world of men, to mankind or a part of it. But since man is intimately related to the world outside of him, and stands at the head of the universe as we know it, moreover, lives and develops in and through that universe, the word "world", even when it has special reference to men, does not exclude the universe, still less has in view men individually, but rather denotes mankind as it is organically related to and connected with the whole outside world.

Bearing this in mind, we find that the word sometimes denotes the whole of reprobate, wicked men, as they lie in darkness, and subject all things in their universe to their sinful mind and will, and employ them in the service of sin. It is in this sense that the Saviour uses the word in John 17:9, where we read: "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine."

Closely related to this meaning of the word, yet with a different shade of meaning, is the word *world* as it occurs in the text to which our inquirer refers in the second question: "Love not the world." When sinful men react upon the world, and use all things therein in the service of sin, the result is a certain form of life, a sinful and corrupt order of things. In a sense it may be said that the wicked create their own world, a world of evil things, in which everything is adapted to the satisfaction of divers, sinful lusts and pleasures. Think, for instance, of that world as it is full of adultery, the world of adulterous literature, pictures, movies, dances, speech, and gestures. To this the Bible refers when it warns us: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." I John 2:15, 16. Love of the world, of the universe and the things therein, apart from God, is lust, and results in corruption.

Now, the same word "cosmos" is used in Scripture to denote the totality of the elect as an organic whole, but again in connection with the whole universe. We must remember that, in the elect, God does not save a few or many individual men, but the real organism of the race. Comparing the race to a tree, we may say that the real tree is saved, the lost are the branches that are cut off. The real organism of the human race is saved as the body of Christ. Moreover, not only the elect, also the universe, God's creation, is saved, and will be glorified in the new creation. It is

* Radio program over WMUS, June 1, 1947.

to this whole world of God's elect and all things in Christ that John 3:16 refers. For it is the object of the love of God, and it will surely be saved.

In the light of all this, it will be plain that the word "world" dare not be translated by "all men". This is never the meaning, least of all in John 3:16, although it is often interpreted as if it meant just this. Surely, it must be self-evident that the *world* in John 3:16 is surely saved, since what God loves cannot be lost; and that "world" in this passage cannot include that other "world" for which the Saviour declares that He does not pray. It is the world in Christ, as God conceived it in His counsel, and as it shall once be revealed in all its beauty and glory in the new creation, where the tabernacle of God will be with men.

2. The second question reads as follows: Will this very earth be our future heavenly home, after the final judgment? II Pet. 3:13.

Answer:

The Bible certainly teaches us that, after the resurrection, God's people shall dwell on the earth. "For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth." Ps. 37:9. And again: "For such as are blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and they that be cursed of him shall be cut off." Ps. 37:22. And so the Lord Jesus teaches us: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." Matt. 5:5. Correctly, however, the question refers to II Pet. 3:13 as its Scriptural basis. There we read: "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." The earth in its present form the righteous shall not inherit, neither could they in their resurrection bodies. The present world shall pass away: "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." II Pet. 3:10. And John on Patmos "saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea." Rev. 21:1.

Just how this new earth will be, and how we must conceive of the creature that will then be delivered from the bondage of the corruption, according to Rom. 8:19-22, we do not know. Certain it is that heaven and earth will then be united: dwelling on the earth, we shall inherit the entire heavenly kingdom. It will be a creation that shall be wholly conformed to the glory of Christ, its head, and a fit dwellingplace for the glorified saints in their resurrection-bodies. Righteousness and peace shall reign there, and the tabernacle of God shall then be with men.

Here is the next question:

3. How can we harmonize the text in Matthew 10:34, where we read: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace but a sword," with the text in John 3:17: "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."?

Answer:

Our questioner sees an apparent contradiction between these two passages. If the Son of God came to save the world, how can He say that He did not come to send peace on the earth, but a sword? There is, however, no real contradiction here. This will become plain if we consider the following:

1. There is no other way for the salvation of the world than that of the righteousness of God. This righteousness, i.e. salvation from the guilt and from the power of sin, God prepared for us in Christ, through His death and resurrection. This is the way of salvation that is preached by the gospel. It is the way of repentance and faith.

2. By nature, we hate this gospel of the righteousness of God in Christ. We do not want to repent. We love the darkness rather than the light. We are enemies of the cross of Christ. It is only through God's sovereign grace that we humble ourselves, repent of sin, seek forgiveness, and flee to Christ for refuge. Now, since not all men are saved, but the grace of God follows the line of election, the result is that the gospel causes separation, and a deep-rooted spiritual difference between men, that causes strife and contention. It is the antithesis between light and darkness, between the Church and the kingdom of this world, that is brought to manifestation.

3. It is to this "sword" that the Lord refers in Matthew 10:34. This is evident from the context. In the verses following this text we find that the Saviour explains this "sword" which He came to bring on the earth. There we read: "For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." vss. 35-37. It is clear, then, that the Lord, when He speaks of the sword which He is come to send on the earth, refers to the deep spiritual separation and conflict that will be caused by the gospel and for His name's sake.

4. Thus understood, there is no contradiction but perfect harmony between the passages referred to by our inquirer. In fact, we may put it this way: because the Son of God is come to save the world, He came to bring a sword on the earth.

4. The next question calls our attention to a passage from the Old Testament. Here it is: "In I Kings 2 Solomon tells Bathsheba that he will not deny her request. Yet, when she asks him to let Abishag be given to Adonijah for his wife, he uses this as an occasion to kill Adonijah. What was the motive, and was he justified in his action?"

Answer:

Let us try to recall the historical circumstances to which this question has reference. Adonijah had conspired with Joab and Abiathar to succeed David on the throne, although he knew that Solomon was the divinely appointed successor. The conspiracy failed. Solomon was anointed king. Adonijah feared for his life, begged for mercy, and was pardoned by Solomon on condition that he would show himself a worthy man. But the king had added: "If wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die." I Kings 1:52. Now this same Adonijah had requested Bathsheba to present his petition to Solomon that Abishag be given him to wife. Abishag, we recall, was the damsel they had found for David to nourish him in his old age and although the king had no intercourse with her, she was regarded as his concubine. To ask for David's concubine was, in the eyes of the people, tantamount to claiming the throne. The request of Adonijah, therefore, was proof that he was still conspiring against Solomon, with the aid and counsel, perhaps, of Joab and Abiathar. Now, the king's mother did not see through the evil designs of Adonijah, and when she brings his request to the king, she calls it a "small petition". This "small petition" Solomon promises to grant her. When, however, Solomon has become acquainted with the contents of this supposedly "small petition", had recognized its evil design, he withdraws his promise, and swears that Adonijah shall die, a sentence that was immediately executed. In this, the king was certainly justified, since he was the king ordained of God to sit on David's throne, and as such had the calling to punish all rebels as enemies of Jehovah.

5. The next question is closely related to the previous one, and refers to the same period of Old Testament history. It reads as follows: "In the same chapter we read of David's charging Solomon to punish Joab for his sinful deeds during David's reign. Why did David defer to inflict punishment personally, and did he retain Joab in his service throughout his lifetime for utilitarian purposes only?"

Answer:

Yes, perhaps, we may say that David was motivated by utilitarian considerations, when he failed to inflict the proper punishment on Joab for his crimes. Twice

Joab had made himself worthy of death. Twice he had killed a general in time of peace, first Abner, then Amasa. Now, at the time these killings took place, David must have felt himself too weak to inflict proper punishment upon so mighty and influential a man as Joab. When the first crime was committed he had but just ascended to the throne; the second took place immediately after the rebellion of Absalom had been quelled. Nevertheless, it surely was David's calling to punish these crimes, and I do not consider it justifiable that he failed in doing so personally, and charged Solomon with the execution.

6. The next question is rather of a doctrinal nature. Here it is: "Did Christ suffer in both His human and divine natures? If so, how?"

Answer:

The answer to the first of this double question will eliminate the necessity of answering the second: Christ did not suffer in His divine nature, but only in the human nature, body and soul. The infinitely perfect divine nature is not subject to suffering and death.

This answers the question. But a word or two of further explanation might not be superfluous. Christ is the Person of the Son of God in two natures: the human and the divine nature. He is not two persons, but one. But this one, divine Person, subsists in two natures. In His divine nature He is very God, co-equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit, infinite and eternal. In that nature Christ, the Son of God, is eternally in the bosom of the Father, also when, according to the human nature, He is on earth, suffers and dies on the cross. We must not say, therefore, that Christ suffered in His divine and human nature both, but that the person of the Son of God suffered and died, was raised and exalted, in the human nature only.

7. The following question is concerned with a profound problem, which we can never completely fathom: "From whom does Satan derive his evil power? What effect, if any, has this on the doctrine of salvation?"

Answer:

In answering this question, we must, I think, stress the following points:

First, that Satan's evil nature does not have its origin in God, Who is a light, and there is no darkness in Him at all. He was created a good and glorious spirit. But he stumbled over his pride, and became the personification of wickedness. Yet, this fall of

Satan took place under God's all-controlling providence, and must serve His purpose.

Secondly, that Satan, being a creature, still receives all his power from God. God does not have to fight the devil in his opposition to the Most High. If God would not sustain him, he would exist no more. All the power Satan uses in the attempt to accomplish his evil purposes, he receives constantly from God. Moreover, though he neither thinks nor intends to serve God's purpose, God so controls all his activities that he can do nothing else.

Thirdly, the significance of this truth for the doctrine of salvation is exactly, that the devil, in spite of himself, must serve God's purpose of salvation. Satan and his host can never prevail against the Church, nor even harm her. The very powers of darkness are under Christ's dominion, and must work together for good, though they do not mean it, for them that love God.

8. With the next question we turn directly to Scripture once more. Here it is: "How do you explain the latter portion of Mark 2:17: 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance'?"

Answer:

We must consider the context of this passage. The Pharisees and scribes criticized the Lord because He sat at meat with publicans and sinners. It is in answer to them that the Lord said: "They that art whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." By this answer the Saviour made plain, first of all, that he did not eat with publicans and sinners as their fellow, but as their healer and saviour; and, secondly, He indicated the deep reason why they, the Pharisees and the scribes, had no fellowship with, or need of Him. They were the whole, that needed no physician; the righteous, that needed no repentance; not really, of course, but in their own estimation. As self-righteous they were ever excluded from the scope of Jesus' call to repentance, and from His salvation.

9. We probably have time for one more question. It is this: "How do you explain the saying of Jesus in Mark 2:27: 'The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath'?"

Answer:

This passage, too, must be read in the context. Again it was the Pharisees that were criticizing Jesus for allowing His disciples to pluck ears of corn on the sabbath. Though they omitted the weightier matters

of the law, they so emphasized the negative and legal aspect of the sabbath, that it had become an unbearable burden, rather than a blessing. In this particular case, evidently, they judged that the disciples had to go hungry rather than violate the purely ceremonial aspect of the sabbathic law. It is to this that the Lord replies: "The sabbath is made for man, not man for the sabbath." It is not the mere negative and legal side of the sabbath that must be emphasized, but rather the positive element of the worship of and fellowship with God. If the former is emphasized, man will be a slave of the sabbath, groaning under a burden of law that fills him with fear; if the latter, the sabbath will be a means to cause man to grow in sanctification, and to give him a foretaste of the eternal sabbath. Unto this it is intended.

H. H.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

Saul's Disobedience

As was stated, the people of Israel, as admonished by Samuel and subsequently as terrified by the Lord's thunderings, finally confessed their great sin of asking that a king be set over them. Samuel having finished his discourse to the people, Saul now came forward. He chose him three thousand men of Israel for purposes of war; and, as was proved, in these men he put his trust.

At this time the people of Israel were hopelessly in bondage to the Philistines, as we saw. The military might of the Philistines was tremendous (chap. 13:5). And the people of Israel were unarmed, the Philistines having destroyed all their smithies,—for they said, "lest the Hebrews make themselves swords and spears." Only the implements that were needed for the cultivation of the soil were allowed them—to sharpen which they had to go to the Philistines. The result was that "there was neither sword nor spear found in the land 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, so we remarked, 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 them with

all their hearts. The Lord had given them their way. They now had their king. But what was their king doing for them in this crisis? Nothing at all. Though naturally a brave man, in that terrible crisis his courage failed him utterly. 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 the Lord—the Lord God of Israel—overcometh the world, he sat still there in Michmash, afraid to bestir himself. The people's only hope was the God whom they had rejected. He must work, or their bondage needs would be without end.

The Lord did work, so we saw, through Jonathan His chosen instrument and workmanship. What Saul lacked, Jonathan 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 and smote it. The defeat was total. The garrison to a man was annihilated.

The unbelieving Saul now bestirred himself not by choice but as compelled by force of circumstances. The Philistines naturally 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 was the signal for a general revolt and that therefore there was need on their part for speedy military action against Israel. Saul did two things (chap. 13:4, 5). With his three thousand "strong and valiant men" he immediately took up his position in Gilgal. Though this is not explicitly stated, it is the necessary implication of various statements occurring in the text. Secondly, "Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear," that is, at the command of the king, trumpeters went forth to summon the people to war by the peal of their instruments understood by all. This call to arms was supplemented by what the trumpeters said, namely, that "Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines, that in consequence thereof Israel was held in abomination with the Philistines," and that therefore the people—every man able to bear arms—must hasten to Gilgal, where Saul would be awaiting their coming. So were the people "called together after Saul to Gilgal". To this movement of Israel the Philistines replied by gathering themselves together "to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude." The large army of the Philistines pitched in Michmash in front of Bethaven. It was the same place where Saul had been encamped. Devoid of trust in the Lord and therefore fearing the military might of the adversary, the king had abandoned this position and betaken himself with his three thousand men to Gilgal, behind the steep slopes of the hills in the plain that extends to the Jordan. But his plight was still

hopeless, humanly speaking. The Philistines could be expected to advance from Michmash into the Gilgal plain; and the people were unarmed. Mindful of their predicament, the men of Israel were sore afraid. Devoid of faith in God and at once aware that their king could do nothing for them, they fled to the caves, thickets, rocks, high places and pits of that region and hid themselves therein. Many went over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, it would not do for him to seek safety in flight. For he was the king. So he remained in Gilgal. With him were but six hundred trembling men of war (chap. 13:7-15). All the rest had fled during the course of the seven days that had elapsed since Saul's arrival in Gilgal. The king now did the forbidden thing. Commanding that a burnt offering and a peace offering be brought him, he offered the burnt offering. The doing went contrary to the command of God under which Samuel had placed the king on the day that he had anointed him, "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 days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do." The violation of this command was a great sin. Though Saul would continue to reign for several years, his "kingdom would not continue". No son of his would succeed him in the throne.

Though Saul was justly retributed—necessarily so, as with God there is no injustice, be it that this is not always clear to reason. But God's people live by faith—at first glance it may appear that his offence was trivial and the punishment therefore much too severe. A hasty appraisal of the attending circumstances may find us concluding even that Saul was driven to disobey (though that of course was impossible); or we may find it difficult to explain that the king had sinned at all. For seemingly Saul's excuses were valid. Said Samuel to the king, "What hast thou done?" He replied, "Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves at Michmash; therefore said I, the Philistines will come down upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the Lord: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering." Also according to the testimony of the sacred writer (verse 8) Saul did tarry "seven days, according to the set time that the seer had appointed." It must be admitted that at first glance Saul's defence was impregnable. But actually the king's reasoning was spurious. It must have been. For Samuel in the name of the Lord declared him guilty of disobeying the divine command; and the language used by the seer does not at all indicate that also to his mind he was really the cause of Saul's doing, and that therefore he was holding himself co-responsible. Yet, this precisely was the contention of Saul, namely, that the seer had compelled him to take mat-

ters in his own hand. To this sentiment he gave expression in the words, "Because thou camest not within the days appointed. . . . I forced myself therefore and offered a burnt offering." Strictly, this statement of Saul—"thou camest not within the days appointed"—must have been false. For had the seer come after the expiration of the seven days, he thereby would have invalidated his command to the king and thus freed him from the obligation of obeying it. But what then are we to do with the testimony of the sacred writer, "And he—Saul—tarried seven days. . . but Samuel came not to Gilgal." We must take notice that the testimony is not to the effect that Saul tarried seven *full* days and that thus the seer came after these days had *fully* come. It is unquestionably true, therefore, that what happened is that though the last of the appointed days had come and was well advanced the seer came not to Gilgal, that therefore the king, as consumed by the impatience of unbelief did the forbidden thing, and that while he was thus occupied Samuel appeared perhaps as the day was drawing to a close but thus had not yet fully come. This tells us how the words of Samuel—seven days shalt thou wait until I come unto thee—are to be understood. Not, "I will come to thee on one of the seven days. If necessary, wait therefore until these days have come," not, "When these days—the seven—have fully come, then, on some hour of the eighth day, I will come unto thee;" but, "wait seven days. During the course of the last of these days—the seventh—I will come unto thee." This interpretation gives to the command a rich meaning, as seven was a sacred number that as such, signified God's covenant with His people.

We must further take notice of the fact that it was a double command that Samuel had imposed upon Saul. These commands were: 1) "Seven days shalt thou wait until I come to thee to offer burnt offerings; 2) Seven days shalt thou wait until I come to thee to show thee what thou shalt do." The command under 2) receives explicit statement in the text; and that Saul was commanded by the seer to refrain from sacrificing is proved by the fact that it was held against him that he did so.

There is also this question: Just what was Saul's sin? According to one interpretation it was this: that he, himself, ordered the priest, who is assumed to have been present, to sacrifice the offering instead of waiting for Samuel to command the priest. Thus Saul's sin according to this view, was not that he *personally* sacrificed but that he took charge of the sacrifice in Samuel's stead, who, as he was but a common Levite (and he was that) could no more sacrifice than Saul—such is the view—except, of course, through the agency of a priest.

Then there is the interpretation according to which Saul himself verily did sacrifice, and thereby collided with the command according to which he should have

waited for the seer to perform that function. This certainly is the only acceptable interpretation of the passages involved. The notice, "And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offering. And he offered the burnt offering," is a notice to the effect that the king, himself, sacrificed. The passage contains not the slightest indication that the offering was sacrificed through the agency of a priest. But there is still this question: how might *Samuel* sacrifice, if he was but a common Levite? This is no difficulty. The seer everywhere appears as performing priestly functions. We must consider that the times were still abnormal. The priesthood that during the reign of the judges had fallen into disrepute had still to be restored. The high priest was not functioning, could not function, as the ark and the tabernacle were still separated. Various passages compel us to conclude that the acting high priest of that day was Samuel.

So, then, Samuel was not alone prophet but also priest, not according to the law of Moses but by a special appointment of God. This is one of the things that must be taken into consideration and be borne in mind, if we are to understand Saul's sin as to its true character; the other thing being that the burnt and the peace offering (as well as the sin- and the trespass offering) were symbolical-typical transactions that like our sacraments set forth the work of Christ—His atoning the sins of His people by His suffering and dying on the cross, and His entering in once into the Holy place by His own blood, obtaining eternal redemption; that, therefore the *place* of the sacrifice of these offerings was the very house of God, the temple of the Lord, where the believing worshippers stood before God's face, beheld the beauties of the Lord in His temple and tasted that He was good by His testimony in their hearts that they were His beloved people, saved from all their sins by the atonement of Christ symbolized by the shed blood of these offerings on the horns of the altar. The burnt offering lay in its entirety on the altar in a state of consumption by fire as the token of the perfect consecration of Christ and of God's people in Christ. This was the special feature of the burnt offering. The peace offering was the only sacrifice by blood, the flesh of which was eaten by the worshipper, the common Israelite. Symbolized was the covenant fellowship of God and His people in Christ.

We perceive now the thrust of Samuel's command to Saul. It is this: I will come down unto thee to Gilgal and build the altar of the God of Israel's salvation, who alone can save. Make thou this God thy expectation and seek Him there at His altar in the blood of the atonement, imploring His pardoning grace, His victory and His power for thy warfare, and learn from Him by me, His prophet, what thou shalt do.

But the seventh day had come, and Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from Saul.

All but six hundred of the men of Israel had fled. Saul concluded that he was desperately in the need of altar, priest, and sacrifice for the purpose of making supplication unto the Lord and for the purpose of arresting the dispersion of the people. So he appointed himself priest, built an altar, and sacrificed a burnt-offering and worshipped there in that temple of his own making and furnishing, thus worshipped in the temple of an idol, of a god of his own imagining.

The dreadfulness of Saul's disobedience is obvious. He rejected God's house and all that pertaineth thereto—the God of Israel who dwelt there, God's altar and priest and blood of atonement, God's fellowship, favor, and help and God's prophet and thus also God's directing word as spoken by Samuel. As rejecting God's house, he worshipped in the temple of an idol, prostrated himself before its shrine, and sacrificed the Lord's offerings upon its altar.

That this was Saul's sin is plain. Saul waited not for Samuel; and Samuel was God's prophet and priest. Saul thus waited not for God, the Lord God of Israel, for His atonement, salvation, fellowship and word. But we must not make light of Saul's predicament. The people were scattered from him. All but a handful had fled; and these were without arms. Saul was thus without an army to oppose the Philistine hords, should they come down upon him to Gilgal. And he was sore afraid. And no wonder. His plight was truly terrifying. From the point of view of nature it was hopeless. What was Saul to do? What could he have done, what would he have been allowed to do, had the Philistines attacked? Verily this: In true contrition of heart cast himself upon the Lord's mercy and cry to God to deliver him and His people out of the hands of the Philistine for His name's sake. And without fail, the Lord, in His unmerited and sovereign love of His ill-deserving but chosen people would have heard and answered that cry, had the Philistines come down upon Saul to Gilgal. Samuel had instructed him to refrain from sacrificing the burnt and the peace offerings; but he had not forbidden him to pray. But this Saul could not will truly to do. He was not a praying man. For he was devoid of faith and he knew not God in love. But aside from this, Saul had God's promise that the Philistines would not trouble him during the seven days that he awaited Samuel's coming. And this promise was implicit in the seer's command to him, "Thou shalt wait seven days until I come unto thee to show thee what thou shalt do." And implicit in this command was the promise that, in the way of obedience he would triumph gloriously over the Philistines. So there was no excuse for Saul's sacrificing the burnt offering.

The statement was just made that Saul was not a praying man. But is the statement true, one will ask. Said Saul not, "The Philistines will come down upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto

the Lord. . . ." meaning that it was the very thing that he all along had wanted to do but that he had restrained himself on account of the command? And when he had tarried seven days, did he not that very thing—make supplication unto the Lord? Not really. What he did was verily this: he attempted to induce God by his gift—the burnt offering—to come to his aid in that dreadful hour, as if God were a deity whose wrath must be warded off and whose favor must be won by gifts and bribes; and as if the burnt offering were such a bribe instead of an instrument for the expression of true faith like our sacraments. Saul's supplication was not true prayer. His conception of God was pagan. He prayed to an idol. That the burnt offerings and the rest of the offering were useful to Saul simply as a means for ingratiating himself with God is proved by the fact of his postponing his supplication until he had forced himself to sacrifice contrary to the seer's command. That of this foolishness he was guilty is evident from the language of the defence that he put up for himself in the audience of Samuel.

But this pagan conception of God was not the only idol that Saul was supplicating. Doubtless it was also on account of the fearful and unarmed people of Israel that he sacrificed. In all likelihood he hoped that as a result of his sacrificing their fears would be calmed and those who had fled would be encouraged to return to him. Thus it was also to those fearful ones that he made supplication that they stay by him in that crisis. The sight of those fleeing men terrified him beyond words. For he trusted not in the Lord but in idols and in the arm of flesh. But the men of Israel continued fearful. The spectacle of their unbelieving and disobedient king, going through the motions of making supplication unto the Lord, did not, to be sure, calm their fears and encourage them to return to him.

Let us understand well that what was required of Saul. As threatened by a mighty foe that had established itself in Michmash, and whose ranks were daily growing, and with his own people in flight, Saul had to wait for the Lord, for His word, and to continue waiting for Him, while Israel's armies dwindled until all that remained of them was six hundred fearful, unarmed and thus helpless men, and this as believing that in reward of his obedience God would give victory, however impossible this might seem from the view of nature. Of this implicit faith in God and absolute obedience to His will the captain over God's people had to be capable. But Saul had not that faith. He was not capable of that obedience. He was unbelieving. He was disobedient. He trusted in the idle, in whose temple he also worshipped. And therefore in the words of Samuel, "thy kingdom shall not continue." How could it? Certainly, the kingdom of a king who trusted not in God, refused to live by His word, wor-

shipped in the temple of an idol, and was priest to the arm of flesh, the Lord could not establish. Such kingdoms are anti-God. They must be destroyed. But, so Samuel continued, "the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over His people. . . ." This man was David, yet not David either. For he was but a common mortal, by nature as unbelieving and disobedient as Saul. This man was Christ. He trusted in God perfectly, and therefore God also delivered Him, and His people in Him. He was obedient unto death, even unto the death of the cross. Therefore God also mightily exalted Him and gave Him a name above every name, and established His kingdom forever.

There is yet a word to say about Saul's reactions to his own disobedience. No sooner had he made an end of sacrificing the burnt offering than Samuel appeared. Saul now behaved as though he had done no wickedness. Boldly he went out to meet Samuel in order to pay the seer his respects. The ring of his salutation was calculated to bespeak an untroubled conscience. But Samuel did not allow himself to be disarmed. Ignoring Saul's greeting, he said to him, "What hast thou done?" Doubtless irked by thus being taken to task, Saul confronted Samuel with a mass of seemingly irrefutable argument. And also the point to this argument was that he had done no wickedness. And what did Samuel say in reply? Going straight to the heart of the matter, he said to the king what he had not as much as touched upon in that it was fatal to his argument—he said, "Thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, hast thus rejected the only way—the way of obedience—in which Israel's king enjoys God's favor, has the victory and sees his kingdom established. Saul had chosen the way of disobedience, which was the way of death, misery, and final destruction to every king in Israel who walked therein. Saul had done foolishly indeed. The people had remained scattered from him despite his sacrificing; and besides he now had God against him—God whose favor is life, and who alone could establish Saul's kingdom. What would an army have availed him in that crisis with God against him? And what would it have mattered if the people had scattered from him to a man with him choosing the way of obedience and thus choosing God? The victory would still be his. And then his entreating the face of God by the blood of a forbidden sacrifice and thus in rejection of God, His priest and prophet and atonement and word! What horrible folly. Could the Lord be expected to hear and answer such a cry?

But Saul doubtless spake the truth when he said, "And I forced myself therefore and offered a burnt offering." It must have required effort on the part of Saul to overcome the restraint of the voice of his accusing conscience, while in the act of making up his

mind to set aside Samuel's command. For he well knew that Samuel was the Lord's prophet and that the seer had charged him in God's name. This had been proved to him over and over. Hence, he was without excuse.

G. M. O.

SION'S ZANGEN

De Driewerf Heilige

(Psalm 99; Tweede Deel)

De laatste maal, dat we stilstonden bij dezen psalm, zagen we, dat Gods volk opgeroepen wordt om den grooten en vreeselijken Naam van God te loven, omdat Hij heilig is. De Naam, dat is, de openbaring van Gods wonderlijke Wezen, is heilig: alles roept ons toe in dien Naam, dat Hij verre is van het vuile en verkeerde, en dat Hij Zichzelf volkomenlijk toegewijd is.

Doch er wordt nog meer gezegd van dat loven.

We moeten ook de sterkte des Konings loven. Want Hij heeft het recht lief. Die gedachte wordt nader verklaard in het tweede gedeelte van den tekst: Gij hebt billijkheden bevestigd, Gij hebt recht en gerechtigheid gedaan in Jakob.

We mogen hier opmerken, dat alleen zij die den Heere kennen dit vers kunnen benaderen. Alleen het volk, dat den Heere kent en liefheeft, kan er in komen, dat God geloofd moet vanwege de heerlijkheden die opgesomd worden in dit vers.

Laat ons eens zien.

Er wordt hier veel meer gezegd, dan dat God recht is. Er staat, dat Hij het recht *liefheeft*. En dat is onuitsprekelijk. Er zijn onnoemelijk velen die recht doen, en—het recht toch haten. Ze doen recht in den formeelen zin, doch het hart is er niet in. Evenwel, wij hebben te doen met een God en Heere, die zoo groot en heerlijk is, dat Hij het recht *liefheeft*. Dat is echt Goddelijk. Ge wordt hier herinnerd aan Micha, die ons vertelt, wat de Heere van Zijn volk eischt. Daar zegt Hij: ge moet de weldadigheid liefhebben! Dat is ontzaglijk veel meer, dan weldadigheid doen. De Heere wil, dat wij een schaduw toonen van God. Hij heeft alle deugd lief.

Het recht liefhebben.

Wat is recht?

Recht is die deugd Gods, waarin Hij in al Zijn doen beantwoordt aan het Hoogste Goed. Recht zijn en recht doen is het beantwoorden aan de eenigste en hoogste standaard en maatstaf. En die eenigste Stan-

daard en Maatstaf is God Zelf. Dus voor God is recht-zijn, het in harmonie zijn met Zijn Eigen heerlijk Wezen.

Dat heeft God lief. Hij doet gaarne recht.

Is het niet heerlijk zulk een God te kennen en te minnen?

Zoo kunnen we den dichter volgen als hij zingt van het doen van billijkheden. Billijkheden, recht en gerechtigheid zijn allen recht. Zij zijn de wonderwerken van den rechten God.

Ik sprak van wonderwerken. Ik koos dat woord vanwege het glorieuze feit, dat hier geboekstaafd wierd. Let er op, dat God billijkheden *bevestigt* heeft, dat Hij recht en gerechtigheid gedaan heeft *in Jakob!* De zanger zingt hier van het groote wonder, dat geschied is in de volheid des tijds, daar even buiten Jeruzalem op Golgotha. Jakob is Gods volk, is de kerk aller eeuwen. Het was hoog noodig, dat God billijkheden bevestigde in Jakob. Jakob is van nature goddeloos en krom. Hij is het tegenovergestelde van recht. Jakob, verre van het recht te beminnen, heeft het kwade lief. Van de goddeloozen wordt gezegd, dat zij den dood liefhebben. Welnu, dat is ook zoo van Jakob, van elk kind van God, zooals hij is krachtens zijn eerste geboorte.

Maar God verkoos en beminde Jakob. En nu gaat God billijkheden bevestigen, recht en gerechtigheid doen in de kerk. En dat is Jezus. Jezus beteekent, dat het kromme rechtgemaakt wordt door God. Als Hij, door Jezus, klaar komt met Jakob, dan is alles billijk, recht en gerechtigheid.

Dat nam de sterkte des Konings!

Leest hier Efeze 1:19, 20. Daar wordt gewaagd van de sterkte des Konings; daar leest ge met bevende aanbidding een opsomming van krachttermen, die alle getuigen van de uitnemende grootheid der krachten Gods. Er moest een eeuwigheid van toorn getorst worden.

Zoudt ge dan niet loven? Temeer, waar ge jubelende tonen van den zinger opving, die getuigt van het hemelsch-heerlijke feit, dat God dit recht-doen bemint? Let er toch op: God heeft eeuwiglijk de redding van Zijn volk in Christus Jezus bemind. Hij heeft dit recht lief! Jakob door Gods recht verlost!

Dat we Hem dan loven!

Zoo kunnen we het verstaan, dat de dichter voortgaat en jubelt: "Verheft den Heere onzen God, en buigt u neder voor de voetbank Zijner voeten, Hij is Heilig!"

Nee, ge kunt den Heere niet verheffen, in den zin, dat Hij verhooging zou ontvangen, die Hij eerder niet had. Dat is onmogelijk, want Hij is volmaakt. Hij is het Inbegrip van alle hoogheid en verheffing. Jesaja heeft ons dat op verscheidene plaatsen gezegd. Ik denk vooral aan die plaatsen waar ons gezegd wordt,

dat Hij in het hooge en het heilige woont; of ook, dat Hij een ontoegankelijk licht bewoont. Of ook, dat Hij in de eeuwigheid woont. Alle teksten die het ons vertellen, dat God volmaakt is.

Wat beteekent het dan, dat we hier opgeroepen worden, om den Heere te verheffen?

Het beteekent, dat we dat doen in ons hart en met onze stem.

Van nature doen we dat niet. Van nature doen we het tegenovergestelde. Het vergif Satans, hetwelk we in het Paradijs inzogen, wrocht malheid, dwaasheid en groote boosheid. Door dat gif zijn we dier mate vergiftigd, dat we den Heere juist niet verheffen, doch Hem verlagen, en onszelf tot een god zijn.

Doch als genade ons genas, zoodat we door Gods recht in Christus verlost zijn, dan moeten we beantwoorden aan het groote hoofddoel aller dingen: we moeten den Heere verheffen. We moeten tot in alle eeuwigheid Hem toeroepen, dat Hij de Volmaakte, de Verhevene is!

Dat is ook de Hemel!

Die verheffing van God gaat gepaard met de openbaring van lieflijke nederigheid. Ge hebt door genade geleerd om de rechte verhoudingen te zien. En de fundamentele rechte verhouding is deze: God op den troon, en ik vlak voor dien troon, voorovergebogen in het stof! Leest het vers nog eens! "Buigt u neder voor de voetbank Zijner voeten, want Hij is heilig!"

En wilt ge nu bewijs, dat dit de fundamentele verhouding is tusschen God en mensch, leest dan Openb. 4 en 5. Aan het einde van het gezicht, ziet ge de drommen van engelen en menschen, die door 24 ouderlingen vertegenwoordigd worden, vlak voor den troon, op hunne aangezichten voorover gevallen! En ze hebben hunne kroonen van hunne hoofden afgerukt en nedergevoerd voor den troon. Luistert naar een hemelsche belijdenis: "Gij, Heere, zijt waardig te ontvangen de heerlijkheid en de eer en de kracht. . . ." Het volk, dat zóó handelt, beantwoordt aan het groote doel der schepping en herschepping: ze loven God!

En nu zal de zanger concrete voorbeelden aanhalen uit de gewijde geschiedenis: hij gaat zingen van Mozes en Aäron, en ook van Samuel.

De eerste twee waren onder Zijne priesters!

Het is onuitsprekelijk heerlijk om onder Gods priesters gerekend te worden.

Waarom?

Omdat een Priester een liefhebber Gods is. Dat is het wezen van het priester-zijn. De priester heeft lief. Hij heeft God lief als het hoogste Goed en Zijn schepsel om Zijns Naams wil.

Ziet het in Mozes en Aäron, vooral in den eersten. Niemand was er onder de menschen gelijk Mozes. Hij was zacht en teer, ootmoedig en nederig. Hij beminde God en had het volk lief. Zóó lief had hij het volk, dat

hij gewillig was om uit Gods boek uitgebannen te worden, als het volk maar behouden mocht worden.

In den brief aan de Hebreërs wordt er nadruk gelegd op de hooge vereischte van een priester: hij moet zich bekommeren om de zonde van het volk. Dat hebben we gevonden bij Mozes.

En zoo was het ook met Aäron en Samuel. De laatste is het product van het smartelijk klagen en smeeken van Hanna. Zijn naam beteekent immers gebedsverhooring?

Welnu, die mannen hebben de Heere aangeroepen en Hij verhoorde ze. God sprak tot hen vanuit een wolkkolom; zij hebben Zijn getuigenissen onderhouden, en de inzettingen die Hij hun gegeven had.

Hier worden voorbeelden getoond van een volk, dat den Heere verheft. Neen, de schoone getuigenis die we hier lezen beteekent niet, dat zij niet zondigden, doch zij hebben Zijn geboden onderhouden! Dat beteekent, dat zij die geboden beminden, en in het diepste hart ook deden. Ze hadden God lief.

Neen, ze waren niet zonder zonde, want we lezen verder, dat hoewel hunne gebeden wilde verhooren, Hij wraak deed over hunne daden. Denkt hier aan de daad van Mozes toen hij den Rotsteen sloeg in plaats van er tegen te spreken. Hij was kwaad geworden op het zondige Israel, en dacht door tegen de Rots te slaan, het volk te doen smachten van dorst. Doch de Heere gaf toch water. En het ging Mozes kwalijk om der Israelieten wil. God had Zijn volk lief. En Moses bewees in deze zijn zonde, dat er een betere Middelaar moest komen.

Maar God heeft Zijn volk verhoord. En Hij heeft Zijn volk hunne zonden vergeven. Lieflijk Evangelie!

Het is werkelijk het beste, dat ge U buigt voor God.

En dat ge buigende voor den berg Zijner heiligheid, Hem verhoogt, verheft, door met jubelende harten Hem te loven.

De Berg van Zijn heiligheid zal U daarin helpen. Niemand kan dien Berg zien en niet jubelen.

O ja, men kan dien Berg zien met het natuurlijk oog, doch dan knerst men zijn tanden, zooals de Joden rondom Golgotha.

Doch als men dien Berg van Gods heiligheid ziet met het oog, dat geestelijk is, dan zult ge vanzelf beginnen te buigen. En buigende zult ge loven.

De Berg van Gods heiligheid is de verheffing van de door de zonde gevloekte aarde. En die verheffing vindt plaats door Jezus Christus. Met eeuwige armen van den DrieEenigen God zoekt en vindt Hij Jakob in den eeuwigen dood. En Jakob vindende, richt Hij hem op, trekt Hij hem op tot in den hemel der hemelen, opdat hij den God van onuitsprekelijke zaligheden mag zien. En dien God ziende, gaat Jakob aan 't zingen en aan 't loven.

Zoo zit het. Sla d' oogen naar dat gebergte heen, en ge zult zingen.

Die berg is gegrondvest op het lieflijkste wat dit heelal ooit zien zal.

En dat lieflijkste is het harte-bloed van God.

Gestort in Christus Jezus voor U en voor mij.

Wie zou niet eeuwig zingen van zoo wondere goeder-tierenheid?

We zullen der engelen stemme overtreffen in klank-geslacht en groote variatie van jubeltonen.

Voor zóó groote zaligheid.

De dorpelen der deuren zullen zich bewegen en het Huis zal vervuld worden met rook.

De rook van 's Heeren heerlijkheid.

G. V.

IN HIS FEAR

Living In His Fear

On vacation, no vacation.

The time for going on our vacation is here. We go to the store and read a sign telling us that this store will be closed for a week while the employer and employees take their vacation. We come to church and read on our bulletins that our pastor is taking his vacation and we will be led in our worship by a visiting pastor.

Far be it from us to condemn vacations as such. In most instances they are beneficial and in some instances even necessary. When today we live in such a commercial life with all its hustle and strain, it does one good to get out into the wide creation of our Almighty God and listen to the quiet music of His creation. The thought often paid us a visit during those hectic days of warfare and wholesale bloodshed a few years ago as we stood by the shore of a quiet lake far removed from these things of man's greed and hatred, can there really be so much turmoil and violence on the other side of the world while here it is so peaceful and calm? There is something restful for the soul to "get out of the harness" so to speak, and relax amidst the wonders of God's hand in creation. Especially for those who work in the artificial light and stuffy atmosphere of our offices and shops, it is not only a joy to get out into God's creation but also of great benefit for the body and soul. We sometimes forget that God has made all this for us to enjoy so that we may be reminded of His greatness, His power and beauty. He made each bird with its own peculiarly beautiful song. He made each flower with its own exciting color and texture. And He surely wants us

to see these things that we may fear Him for His beauty and glory. And as a rule we are too materially minded and too busy materially to sit down in the wonderful creation God has given us to contemplate the glory and power of Him Whom we fear. "The heavens declare His glory and the firmament showeth forth His handiwork." He put His rainbow in the sky as a sign of His grace to His people. He has made an almost endless variety of trees and flowers, of birds and animals, large and small. Surely He does not consider it to be a waste of time or a sin when we for our health's sake and relaxation go out for a week or two into His creation where we may behold all these things which speak of His glory.

That, of course, also applies to those who for their vacation find pleasure in travelling about the country to behold the exceptional works of God's hand, such as the wonders of Yellowstone National Park, the awe-inspiring Grand Canyon in Arizona, and the majestic and expansive Niagara Falls. It does one good to go and see these things. Or if your delight is to go and see the orange groves of California and Florida or the corn fields of Iowa, the mountains of the west or the countless lakes and streams of Michigan and Wisconsin, you may return home with a deep feeling you never experienced before. You have seen more of God's work. You have beheld with your own eyes and seen what a tremendous work the Almighty God has done and is every moment executing. If these things are undertaken in faith and we do not forget our Creator while beholding them, far be it from us to condemn your taking a vacation.

The point of these lines is not that we should cease taking such vacations. The purpose of these lines is to remind ourselves that on vacation we have no vacation. You understand, there is no vacation from living in His fear, while we are on vacation. Our vacation ought not only to be conducted in the fear of the Lord; it ought to help us in our appreciation of the greatness of the Lord Whom we fear. Anything that keeps us from living in His fear is to be condemned whether it be our vacation or our work. If on our vacation we do not forget God but look at His handiwork and even make use of His waters, His woods and fields with an eye single to His glory, we will have increased in our reverence and respect for the Mighty God Who is our Covenant Father in Christ. The child of God, not the world which has not seen Him in His Word, with the Word of God hidden in his heart can see the glory of God which the heavens and the earth declare and will find in his soul richer praise for his Creator and Redeemer.

And so, on vacation let us remember that we have no vacation from living in His fear. Was your vacation such last month? Is the one you have planned for this month arranged so that you will live in His fear these weeks as well as while you were at home?

In our newspapers we have been assured that all the resort areas in this vicinity will have an abundant milk supply. So pack up your things, get the children ready and go, being confident that your children will have the milk they need. But have you made provision, have you investigated whether you and your family will be able to enjoy the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby? Your vacation is not an attempt also to get away from the preaching of the Word, is it? On vacation you may not seek a vacation from that phase of the fear of the Lord. On vacation is no vacation spiritually.

You have investigated and found out that there is a little church near the place where you intend to spend your vacation? You are indeed more honest spiritually than if you had not done so. We surely should never for our pleasure take our families or ourselves to a place where there is no possibility at all for us to worship God on the Sabbath through the proclamation of His Word. We may not do that. If you leave on such a vacation with this definitely planned, and for an excuse you fall back on the old, deceiving statement that God can also be worshipped in creation as well as in His house of prayer, then our answer to you is, "Brother, that is not the fear of the Lord. And when *for pleasure's sake* you leave your place of worship vacant, you will not find God in His creation. You can find Him only in Christ Who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. You will find Christ in the preaching of the Word. No more than Adam and Eve found God and peace of soul under the bushes which God had made and under which they tried to hide, no more will you find God in His creation, His trees, lakes, birds and flowers. And even as Adam and Eve found God and peace in and only in the Word He spoke to them in their guilt and misery, so on the Sabbath on vacation you will find God in His Word which through all these ages He has preserved for that purpose. The milk, the spiritual milk supply, the sincere milk of the word is still abundant today. But on vacation do not despise it.

When your infant child refuses his milk, you begin to worry and to wonder what ails the child. If the infant refuses only one feeding, you know that something is wrong. And something is wrong too when a child of God makes it impossible for himself to drink the sincere milk of the Word on the Sabbath day. We sometimes hear the excuse: it will not hurt me to stay away only one Sabbath while I am on vacation. Listen, such speech reveals already the lack of appetite for the sincere milk of the Word and shows that such a person before he ever leaves for such a vacation has at least a touch of spiritual sickness. And that is all the more reason why he ought to stay home where he can hear the truth. He needs a good dose and tonic of the Word of God.

"But I can appreciate my own church so much more

when I come back. When I hear how shallow and superficial the sermons are in other places, I can appreciate a good reformed sermon again which expounds God's Word and is not simply a systematic patching together of stories with a little moral pep talk interspersed." That there is an element of truth in this, we will not deny provided the experiencing of this meager meal, in a church where the truth is given is such small portions if at all, *is properly before God's face attained*. We must be sure that our reason for attending such services is not our own convenience. We must be sure that it is not so that we can get an extra swim yet Saturday night and Monday morning or because the fish bite best late in the afternoon and early morning, which would be denied us if we stayed home till Monday morning and came back Saturday afternoon. Be sure when you say that it does you good to be away to experience the difference, be sure that you really are concerned with the enjoyment of spiritual things and that this is not merely something incidental to your extra hours of pleasure. On vacation we may not seek a vacation from the fear of the Lord.

The same thing is true when we do not confine ourselves on our vacation by remaining in one locality but rather go out on a journey across our land. We have no spiritual vacation and ought not to seek one. Yet we have experienced ourselves through witnessing the actions of those who confess to fear the Lord that they do let go of those works which characterize a walk of living in His fear.

We now have reference to the beautiful and necessary practice of bowing our heads in prayer before we partake of the bounties of this earth which God has provided for our nourishment. The act of prayer is a beautiful manifestation of the fear of the Lord. It is expressive of the fact that we trust Him for all things, that we recognize Him as the giver of every perfect gift and that we are aware of the fact that we need His blessing upon that food and drink.

The world sits down to eat and drink and rises up to play, and God is not in all their thoughts. He who fears the Lord will confess Him before men also by seeking His face in prayer whether he is at home around his own table or in the midst of the world, in restaurant or dining car. After all, the bounties on that table are God's whether it be in your home or in any cafe. And before we touch and appropriate God's bounties, which He gives us that we may be strengthened for service before His face, ought we not to seek His face in prayer regardless of where we are?

Yet because of the weakness of our flesh, because we do not want the world to smile in derision and because we are ashamed of the Almighty God who has made those bounties, we even as the world, sit down to eat and drink, rise up and speed down His highways again. That is not the fear of the Lord. That is

simply the fear of man's mockery. We are afraid of having godless, corrupt men consider us to be simple or old fashioned.

This, of course, holds true not simply on vacation but whenever and wherever our work calls us and we must seek the bounties of God's earth for our physical nourishment.

The excuse is used that there is always so much noise, clashing, evil music and disturbance that one can hardly pray properly in such places. Our answer to this is that our prayers need not be lengthy but must be sincere and that all these things do not take away our obligation to draw before God in prayer. We have no days or hours or minutes, no not even seconds when we have a spiritual vacation. Living in His fear means living in His fear every moment and every part of every moment. It should not even be necessary that these lines should be written, yet from past experiences we have witnessed the fact that in this pleasure-mad age there is a growing tendency to seek vacations from living in His fear. On vacation what was your vacation like spiritually?

J. A. H.

FROM HOLY WRIT

O. T. Quotations in the N. T.

(Rom. 10:18 and Ps. 19:4)

In this article we intend to introduce you, dear reader, to a very beautiful quotation in Romans 10:18 taken from Psalm 19:4.

This Psalm, indeed, is very well known. Most children of christian parentage have memorized this psalm already in early childhood years. We, therefore, scarcely need to introduce the reader to this psalm as such. It is very familiar to us. However, the manner in which it is at least in part quoted by the apostle Paul is not so well known. Fact is, that in Rom. 10:18 this particular passage from Psalm 19:4 is woven into the thought-pattern by Paul in a very lucid though profound manner. It is to this latter that we wish to call attention in this essay.

Before we do so, however, it will be well to have the respective passages rather clearly in mind to which we hope to call attention.

In the American Revised Version Psalm 19:4 reads as follows: "*Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world*. In them hath He set a tabernacle for the sun". Paul does

not quote this entire text in Romans 10:18. He refers merely to the first part. We have underscored the part by the apostle. He does so, quoting evidently from the Septuagint translation, as follows: "*Their sound went forth into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.*" Rom. 10:18.

From the very outset we ought to have a rather clear understanding of the exact point that interests us in this study.

We are, of course, interested in the matter of the quotation. Our interest, however, is not merely in the purely formal question of quotation. If this were the case we could merely cite the quotation, as we have done above, and let it go at that. We are also interested in the import of the passage quoted both in its setting in Psalm 19:4 and Rom. 10:18. Although we are not interested in an interpretation of this passage pure and simple, we are yet in so far interested in the interpretation of this passage as it has a direct bearing on the correct understanding of the quotation.

By way of general introduction we would call attention to the fact, that there are in the main two schools of thought on this question of Paul's quotation in Rom. 10:18. The one school of thought holds that Paul in quoting Psalm 19:4 in Romans 10:18 gives the sense of Psalm 19:1-6 pure and simple. According to this school of thought Paul would say in Romans 10:18: "*The speech of the heavens and of the firmament is gone out through all the earth. . . .*" The second interpretation holds that Paul is speaking in Rom. 10:18 of the "*sound of the gospel that is gone throughout the earth* and the words of the preaching to the ends on the world".

The question is purely one of exegesis. Dogmatics may here not decide the question. Such, indeed, is always the case in the interpretation of Scripture. We here merely recall that general rule of sound exegesis in view of this particular passage.

It is none the less than John Calvin himself who maintains the first of the two views just enumerated. He does so both in his commentaries on the Psalms and on the book of Romans. In his commentary on Psalm 19:1-6 Calvin definitely, and we believe correctly, finds reference made to the speech of God in the created world; it is the speech of God in the things made, even His eternal power and divinity. Rom. 1:20ff.

In his commentary of this Psalm, Calvin also deals with the matter of Paul's quotation in Romans 10:18. He does so in dispensing with the interpretation which would allegorize Psalm 19:1-6 by appealing to Paul's quotation in Romans 10:18. According to those who would allegorize the various elements in Psalm 19, the "sun" would refer to Christ, the "earth" to the church. The "sun goes forth from his chamber and rejoices as a strong man to run his race", must, according to this allegorizing interpretation, refer to Christ going

forth in the way of His death and resurrection conquering and to conquer.

Calvin will have none of this interpretation. He insists that there is nothing in Psalm 19 which remotely suggests that the "sun" is not very really the "greater light to rule by day". Yea, he points out that the contrast in this psalm between the former part which speaks of God's creation, the heavens and the firmament, and the latter part which speaks of the Law of God definitely contradicts the contention of all who would allegorize the meaning of this passage.

Besides, thus Calvin, Romans 10:18 also refers to God's speech in the created world. Paul means to say, in answer to the question: "Have they not heard?" Indeed the Gentiles have heard of God even before the glad tidings of the Gospel was proclaimed in the name of Jesus. There was from the beginning of creation the clear testimony of creation attesting to the presence of God, the creator and judge over all. When, therefore the gospel is preached to both Jew and Gentile in the New Testament Dispensation of the grace of God, nothing really new begins. Paul preaches the "unknown God" in the streets of Athens, the God of whom the Greek poets unwittingly sang.

When Calvin thus refutes the interpretation of the allegorists we heartily agree with him.

However, we take exception to the manner in which he refutes these expositors. We do not agree with Calvin's interpretation of the quotation in Rom. 10:18. We are convinced that Calvin's dogmatic conception rules here in this refutation of these wild allegorists. To say that Psalm 19:1-6 literally refers to the sun, the firmament, the heavens over against the allegorists is one thing. To say, that Paul in quoting this particular passage from Psalm 19 has the same speech in mind as Psalm 19 is quite another. But, apart from this, it should be evident that careful exegesis of Rom. 10:18 will not sustain the contention that Paul here refers to the *speech of creation which is heard by the Gentiles*. In Paul's question: "Have they not heard", according to Calvin, the "they" refers to the Gentiles. With this latter we disagree.

To what does the "they" in the just quoted question of Paul refer? In our opinion the correct answer to this question is the crux of the entire matter here. It will determine not only the manner of Paul's quotation here, but also the content that is "sounded forth into all the earth" according to Romans 10:18.

Paul is undoubtedly in the verses 16-20 of Rom. 10 still speaking of the Jews, those who are his kinsmen according to the flesh. He is speaking yet of the responsibility of Israel, which is *not obedient* to the gospel. Verse 16. Israel is without excuse. She is not ignorant in the sense that she did not understand the logical content of the Word of God. She understood. Christ was very clearly portrayed in the gospel.

Always the Scriptures, as well as the whole typical-symbolical institutions of the Law, point out the Christ and designate Him to be the end of the Law.

That Paul is here speaking of the Jews is very evident from the quotation from Isaiah 53:1. "Lord, who hath believed our report". Thus Isaiah complains in his day concerning unbelieving Israel, concerning the Israel of which Paul says: "Israel according to the flesh". Of this Israel Isaiah had cried, saying, "If the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant shall be saved." And, again, Isaiah says "Except the Lord of Hosts had left us a seed, we had become as Sodom and had become like unto Gomorrah."

Now it may very well be objected and said: what is here written of the unbelieving Jews to whom the words of God were intrusted in their unbelief and disobedience of the gospel is true also of the unbelieving Gentile. To this objection as such we can heartily subscribe. However, this general objection fails to prove that Paul does here not speak of the Jews.

What may well be accounted the deciding factor here is that Paul repeatedly speaks of "Israel" and each time he refers to the natural seed of Abraham, the Jews. Thus in verse 19: "But I say, did Israel not know?" And, again in verse 21 but unto Israel he saith "All day long have I stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." From this all it is quite evident that Paul is here speaking of Israel, who is disobedient to the gospel.

And Paul asks in verse 18 of this people, a disobedient people: "But I say, have they not heard?" And the answer: "Yea, verily!" They heard the gospel sound, but they did not believe the *matter reported*.

When the gospel sound came to them it was heard; the words of the gospel came to the ends of the world. Thus it is stated by Paul. In so doing he does not directly quote Psalm 19:4, but he alludes to what Psalm 19:4 teaches concerning God's speech in the universe. This speech is heard by all, although spoken in the specific tongue of none. So also the gospel was sounded abroad in the land of Israel; up and down the land it was proclaimed. Israel, to whom the oracles of God were intrusted, indeed, heard!

But what was wrong? Israel did not believe. They did not trust on the Stone layed by God in Zion. They did not hear the voice of the Shepherd. They did not have ears of the sheep to hear. Although they heard the "sound of the gospel", its content never spiritually sank into their heart. The thing proclaimed, the thing heard in the gospel, to wit, repent ye and believe in the Son of God, the Christ, who is the end of the Law for everyone believing, did not find spiritual response in their heart. They did not hear Jesus say: Come to me. Weary and heavy laden they were not. Gainsaying they were and disobedient, and that, too, all the day long!

In them the following was not realized:

1. Faith, as a constant appropriation of the fulness that is in Jesus, is wrought by the thing that is heard, in the gospel. This thing heard is the living voice of the Son of God, the risen Lord, calling: Come to Me. In Me thy God reigneth to your salvation!

2. This "thing heard" is hearing Christ Himself. Him we must hear say: Come to Me. I give you rest. His Spirit must testify with our spirit that we are sons. And this is only possible through the preaching of the Gospel, the Key-power. The key-power says to all unbelievers: you have no part. Although, therefore, the "sound" is heard, yet the "thing proclaimed" is not tasted, experienced.

3. Although many prophets spoke this thing heard, unbelieving Israel never heard it. It was to them foolishness. The "thing heard" did not produce faith, a firm trust in God's covenant mercies. Instead of the savor of life unto life it was the savor of death unto death!

G. L.

PERISCOPE

The Netherlands. . . . Ds. A. C. Van Raalte

We received the following letter from the Netherlands recently and transcribe it without comment. For those of our readers who cannot read the Holland a free English translation is included.

Oldeboorn, 9 Juni, 1947.

Geachte Redactie:

Met opnemng van onderstaanden brief zou u ons zeer verplichten.

Met hoogachting,

Uw dw.

ds. F. Dresselhuis, Geref. Pred.

* * * *

Oldeboorn, Groningen,
Mei, 1947

Aan de Generale Synode van de
Nederl. Hervormde Kerk.

Weleerw. en Eerw. Heeren en Broeders:

In het gedenkjaar van de stichting van de stad Holland (Michigan) in de Ver. Staten van Nd. Amerika komen ondergeteekenden, beide dienstdoende predikanten van een der gereformeerde kerken in Nederland, tot uwe Vergadering met een eerbiedig verzoek.

Het mag als bekend verondersteld, dat de stichter van bovengenoemde stad, ds. A.C. Van Raalte, tot aan het eind van zijn leven gebukt is blijven gaan onder het onrecht. de smaad en de moeite. hem als afgeschei-

den predikant in Nederland aangedaan, van de kant der burgerlijke en kerkelijke autoriteiten. De inkwartiering toch, waardoor ook hij gehoffen werd, was een maatregel van den toenmaligen Minister van Justitie, waartoe deze was overgegaan op verzoek van de Algemeene Synode der N. H. Kerk.

Over deze en andere maatregelen schreef Van Raalte in het jaar 1862: "Van achteren, een blik op 't gebeurde werpende, zoo verblijd ik mij de stem van 't geweten gevolgd te hebben, ofschoon mij zulke veel kostte; aan de andere zijde smart het mij nog altijd, daarom in mijn eigen vaderland door Nederlands regeering en burgers, opgestoot door de Hervormde Synode en plaatselijke regeering, beboet, met straf van inkwartiering gekweld, in gevangenissen geworpen, gedurende jaren gescholden, met stijk en steenen geworpen en als uitvaagsel, in persoon en huis gejaagd en geplaatst te zijn. . . . Na onder andere naties ingelijfd te zijn, heb ik vaak als Nederlander gewenscht, dat die vlek van de Nederlandsche natie door herstelling van *het ongelijk, zooveel mogelijk mocht afgewischt worden.*" (Overgenomen uit de biografie van ds. Van Raalte, door J. Wormser, deel I, "Een Schat in Aarden Vaten", bl. 60.)

Hartelijk en eerbiedig verzoeken ondergeteekenden nu aan Uwe Vergadering, aan dezen wensch van ds. Van Raalte, voor haar deel te willen voldoen.

Een schoon geschenk zou dit volgens onze meening zijn aan de jubileerende stad Holland en bovendien zou het een schrede van toenadering beduiden tot die kerken, welke mede aan Van Raalte's daad van afscheiding haar ontstaan hebben te danken.

Met de bede, dat de Koning der kerk, onze Heere Jezus Christus, Uwe vergadering tot rijken zegen mag stellen voor de wederoprichting en vernieuwing van de Ned. Hervormde Kerk, een zaak, die u maar ook ons ter harte gaat.

Uw. dw. broeders,

(w.g.) F. Dresselhuys, Geref. Pred. Oldeboorn

(w.g.) Dr. P. Prins, Geref. Pred. Groningen.

P.S. Bovenstaande gedachte werd door eerst-ondergeteekende reeds in de Nw. Prov. Groninger Ct. van 24 Febr. jl. zoodat zij niet mag gezien worden als eenvoudige navolging van het bekende verzoek insake eerherstel aan ds. H. de Cock, gedaan door Dr. W. Volger, c.s.

Translation:

Oldeboorn, The Netherlands,
June 9, 1947

Esteemed Editor:

Your placing of the following letter would oblige us very much.

Respectfully yours,

The Rev. F. Dresselhuys, Geref. Min.

Oldeboorn, Groningen
May, 1947

To the General Synod of the
Netherlands Hervormde Church.

Reverend and Honorable Gentlemen and Brethren:

In this year of the commemoration of the founding of the city of Holland (Michigan) in the United States of North America, the undersigned, who are both active ministers of the Gereformeerde Churches in the Netherlands, come to your gathering with a sincere request.

It may be assumed as well-known that the founder of the above mentioned city, the Rev. A. C. Van Raalte, remained to the end of his life under the cloud of unrighteousness, of shame and trouble, which was his lot as a deposed minister in the Netherlands; accorded him both from the civil and ecclesiastical authorities. Also the measure of billeting was imposed upon him; a measure taken by the Minister of Justice, of that time, but which he ordered at the request of the General Synod of the N. H. Church.

Concerning this and other measures Van Raalte wrote in the year 1862: "As I cast a backward glance upon that which has taken place and listen to the voice of my feelings, I am happy for the consequences, even though it cost me dear; on the other hand, it still grieves me that in my own fatherland the authorities and citizens, at the instigation of the Hervormde Synod and local authorities, subjected us to the imposition of the annoying billeting, cast us into prisons, reviled us throughout the years, cast at us with mud and stones, treated us as trash, hunted and plagued us in person and home. . . . Now that we have found refuge among another people it has been my desire, as a Netherlander, that this disgrace upon the Netherland nation should be removed as much as possible." (Quoted from the biography of Rev. Van Raalte by J. Wormser, Vol. 1, "A Treasure in Earthen Vessels", p. 60.)

The undersigned cordially and sincerely request your gathering to accomplish your part of this wish of the Rev. Van Raalte.

We believe it would be a beautiful gift to the celebrating city of Holland and above all would serve as a step towards closer communion with these Churches who must thank the separation of Van Raalte for their establishment.

With the prayer that the King of the Church, our Lord Jesus Christ, may richly bless your gathering unto the revival and renewing of the Ned. Hervormde Church, a cause, which is close to your heart and ours also.

Your brethren,

(w.s.) F. Dresselhuys, Geref. Min., Oldeboorn

(w.s.) Dr. P. Prins, Geref. Min., Groningen.

P.S. The above mentioned thought was already published by the first signer in the *New Prov. Groninger*

Press of last Feb. 24, so that it should not be considered as an imitation of the well-known request for honorable reinstatement of the Rev. H. De Cock, requested by Dr. W. Volger, s.c.

Note: Since the receipt of this letter we heard that the General Synod did not grant either request; neither that concerning the Rev. Van Raalte nor that pertaining to the Rev. H. De Cock. In fact, the Synod refused to go into the matter and returned a very sharp reply to those who had so requested. W.H.

Complete Commentaries of John Calvin. . . .

Another letter received recently concerns the above. It is also of sufficient interest to pass on to our readers.

* * * *

July 3, 1947

Rev. W. Hofman:

We take great pleasure in bringing to your attention the enclosed announcement of our forthcoming publication of *The Complete Commentaries of John Calvin*, including the Institutes of the Christian Religion, as originally published in 48 volumes by the Calvin Translation Society.

We feel that the time is ripe for an American edition of John Calvin's works. There has been a strong revival of interest in Calvin and Calvinism in the last several years and both in America and abroad there is a marked upsurge of evangelical Christian scholarship. It is our aim that the revitalized Evangelical Christian scholarship shall not be lacking for want of adequate teaching and research materials. This American edition of John Calvin will be added to our already extensive list of standard theological sets, commentaries and textbooks, which are now being used in almost all conservative schools and seminaries.

The present project of reissuing *The Complete Commentaries of John Calvin* will involve an outlay exceeding \$250,000. The first volumes are now in production and will appear late in 1947 or early in 1948.

Whatever mention of this project you can make in your publication will be greatly appreciated and we should also be interested in your comments or inquiries. Further details as to format, volumes, prices, and terms will follow in later announcements.

Sincerely yours,
Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co.

* * * *

Since the publishers invite our comment we take this opportunity to set it down.

In the first place, the Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co. is to be complimented and encouraged in this very worthwhile project. The expenditure of the amount noted to finance this publication, is evident of courage and conviction of the Reformed faith. Biblically fundamental and Calvinistically Reformed commentaries and materials are difficult to find. This publication should find an enthusiastic welcome among all who love the Reformed Truth.

In the second place, we also commend the aim of the publishers to supply "adequate teaching and research material". The basic need of the Church today is, just exactly, to return to the fundamentals and course as laid down by the great Genevan Reformer.

In the third place, however, we do not agree with the statement that "there has been a strong revival of interest in Calvin and Calvinism in the last several years." Any revival has produced only a pseudo-Calvinism, or better, perhaps, an American-calvinism; which has desired to retain the name but is far removed from the basic principles. Calvinism, as it is popularly known today, has little of Calvin's Calvinism. That last term reminds us of the book by that title which was republished some years ago by the Sovereign Grace Union of London, England. This book was first published in 1552, and was translated into the English language in the year 1856. About 20 years ago it was reprinted and published by the Sovereign Grace Union under the title, *Calvin's Calvinism*. It contains some of Calvin's later discourses which are in refutation of Albertus Pighius. These are an exposition by Calvin himself of his teaching and is, in many respects, also a commentary on his much earlier *Institutes's*, and hence, a product of his maturer years. It deals almost entirely with the subject of predestination. Perhaps, the publishers could see fit to also include this work in the forthcoming.

We nevertheless look forward with anticipation to the appearance of the commentaries and Institutes. It is also true, that a careful and honest study of these will reveal Calvin's Calvinism and must necessarily condemn much that goes by that name in our own day. We hope to keep our readers informed and, perhaps, comment at greater length at some future date.

CLIPPING THE NEWS

New Bible Version. . . .

London, England. — A new translation of the Bible into modern, idiomatic English has been authorized by the upper house convocation of the Church of England, consisting of 21 bishops, under the archbishop of Canterbury. Six translators, three for the Old Testament, two for the New, and one for those books regarded by the Church of England as apocryphal, will

prepare the new version. They will have a master of English prose to assist them.

This will be the first translation to be officially prepared by the established Church of England since the famous King James II's "authorized" version of 1611. The "revised" version of 1884 was produced by a Convocation of Canterbury, but this was not an entirely fresh translation from source to vernacular.

Predecessors of the authorized version were: John Wycliffe's Bible of 1380, translated from the Latin. This was the first complete Bible in the English tongue, there being nothing before it but the metrical translations of parts of the book by King Alfred in Anglo-Saxon. Tyndale's New Testament was published in 1526. But the first complete Bible to be printed in English was that of Miles Coverdale of 1535.

The Roman Catholics of Britain have had in their hands for 18 months a new translation of the New Testament from the Vulgate by Msgr. R. A. Knox. No such work has appeared since the Rheims version of 1582, although there have been revisions of this, notably that of Bishop Challoner. The Knox version has received the official recognition of the Roman Catholic hierarchy of England and Wales, although it does not displace the Rheims version.

—From the Holland *Evening Sentinel*.

Post-script. . . .

Tulcea, Romania. — Presence of an authorized "talcio," or market for old clothes and other used objects, in the church yard of an Armenian church in the Danube port here, has aroused local protest. Townspeople are urging that the market be prohibited as "profaning the church."

—From the Grand Rapids *Press*.

v. S. Views U. s.

(Continued from last issue)

"And now as I find myself here in the Middle West of the boundlessly great America, in this small place called 'Amsterdam' with its few houses and two churches, and as I see them tonight, this small group, divided, as they go up to remember the suffering and death of our Lord, then I can understand nevertheless, that this schism, though it testify of the sin of the church, yet is a provision of the grace of God, Who also watches over His Church in this out-of-the-way place where the majesty of His mighty creation declares His glory day and night, and I can see that He is bringing this counter-action to oppose the pernicious spirit of world-conformity which has been a

snare and a stumbling-block to the church of all ages; and bringing it even though it means suffering for the flesh and often cuts straight through the ties of relations and families. Church schism to maintain the Church. Perhaps that sounds paradoxical, but hasn't that been the rule in the Church throughout the ages? On Good Friday the veil of the 'official Temple was rent because, although a form of the Church was yet scrupulously maintained by them, the WORD which must explain the symbols was discarded. Through all the ages since then that same principle sin must explain the Church's history."

(The End).

Next time, D.V., we hope to add a few comments to these articles of Mr. Van Spronsen. —W. H.

IN MEMORIAM

The Mary Martha Circle of the Fourth Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, mourns the loss of a faithful member

BARBARA STADT SCHAAFSMA

whom the Lord was pleased to take to Himself on Sunday, June 15, after an illness of several months, at the age of 45 years. May our Heavenly Father comfort the bereaved relatives.

"In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

Mrs. J. De Vries, Pres.

Mrs. G. Bol, Sec'y.

IN MEMORIAM

The 29th of May, 1947, our beloved wife and mother

ELLA VAN DELLEN

passed away at the age of 61 years. She feared the Lord and loved her family. The Lord who makes no mistakes gives us grace to continue our pilgrimage.

Mr. Richard Van Dellen

Mr. and Mrs. Chester Van Dellen

Mr. and Mrs. Earl Strikwerda

Doris

John R.

Marvin

and 4 grandchildren.

NOTICE! — As is customary, The Standard Bearer will not be published on the 15th of August.

Report of Classis East — Convened July 9, 1947 at Hudsonville, Michigan

Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches met on July 9, 1947 at Hudsonville, Michigan. The meeting was begun with the singing of Psalter No. 17: 1, 4 and 5. Rev. S. Cammenga then read Isaiah 6 and led in prayer.

The credentials were read and received showing that all the churches were represented by two delegates. Classis now was declared constituted and Rev. H. De Wolf was called upon to preside.

Opportunity is given to the delegates, who are present for the first time, to sign the Formula of Subscription.

The minutes of the previous meeting of Classis are read and adopted.

The Committee for Church Visitation was continued in order that they may finish their work.

The Stated Clerk reports that he had informed the Theological School Committee of the decision mentioned in Art. 8 of the minutes of the preceding Classical meeting.

Classis taking note of the fact that Rev. H. Hoeksema could not be in our midst due to illness, decides to appoint a committee to draw up a resolution of sympathy for him and to give expression of our gratitude to God, that it has pleased Him thus far to retain him in our midst and to lead him in the way of recovery. This resolution was presented by the committee a little later and adopted by Classis.

This resolution was signed by all the members of Classis and was to be sent to Rev. Hoeksema together with a bouquet of flowers.

A committee was appointed to draw up a schedule of classical appointments for Grand Haven. A little later this committee presented the following schedule, which was adopted by Classis:

July 13, Rev. R. Veldman
July 20, Rev. H. De Wolf
July 27, Rev. J. A. Heys
August 3, Rev. W. Hofman
August 10, Rev. B. Kok
August 17, Rev. S. Cammenga
August 24, Rev. J. De Jong
August 31, Rev. H. Veldman
September 7, Rev. M. Gritters
September 21, Rev. M. Schipper
September 28, Rev. G. Lubbers

Classis decided to accept the invitation of the Second Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, to hold our next Classical meeting there. This meeting will be held there, D. V., on October 15.

At the invitation of Classis Mr. Van Spronsen gave us a brief talk on the conditions in the Netherlands at the present time. From what he revealed to us it became very evident that the housing situation is very bad, due to the fact that thousands of homes have been destroyed during the war. The situation is regard to clothing is also almost as bad as it ever was.

The questions of Art. 41 of the Church Order are asked and answered by the various consistories.

Rev. J. De Jong was appointed to thank the ladies of Hudsonville for their catering services.

It was decided to inscribe the resolution to Rev. H. Hoeksema in the minutes of Classis.

The minutes were read and adopted.

A motion to adjourn carries. After the singing of the Holland Psalm 27:7, Rev. M. Gritters closes the meeting with thanks unto God.

D. JONKER, Stated Clerk.

Note: — The new address of the stated clerk is:

D. Jonker
1210 Wealthy St., S. E.
Grand Rapids 6, Mich.