

THE STANDARD

Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XXIV

November 1, 1947 — Grand Rapids, Mich.

NUMBER 3

MEDITATION

Rondom Den Troon

“En rondom den troon waren vier en twintig tronen; en op de tronen zag ik de vier en twintig Ouderlingen zittende, bekleed met witte kleederen, en zij hadden gouden kronen op hunne hoofden.”

Openb. 4:4.

Het smachtend verlangen der Kerk is geweest naar de nieuwe “wereld-orde”.

Het zou komen van de bergen Gods.

Men sloeg d'oogen naar 't gebergte heen.

Het zou een wereld-orde zijn van enkel vrede.

De Heere gaf schaduwen, typen, beelden en symbolen van dat vrede-rijk, maar het rijk zelf kwam nog niet. Is er nu nog niet.

Er is veel gekomen. We mogen zelfs zeggen, dat centraal de nieuwe wereld-orde al kwam. Maar het moet nog vervuld worden.

Centraal kwam die wereld-orde in Jezus Christus den Heere. Hij is de groote Vrede-Vorst.

Centraal kwam die wereld-orde op den Pinkster dag. Want de Wet Gods is geschreven in het hart van elk hunner die in die wereld-orde een plaats hebben. Daar in dat diepe hart is het stil. In de grootste smarten blijven hunne harten in den Heer gerust. Dat is waar in alle eeuwen.

Maar vervuld is het nog niet.

De vervulling ervan heeft Johannes gezien.

Hoofdstukken vier en vijf van het boek der Openbaring bevatten een beschrijving van die nieuwe wereld-orde, waarnaar de kerk gesmacht heeft. Van Abraham staat er, dat hij ze van verre zag en omhelsd heeft. Geen wonder: de aanblik is schoon en lieflijk, genoeg om tot in alle eeuwigheid tevreden te zijn. Indien iemand al het goed van zijn huis zou bieden voor den aanblik van dat rijk van eeuwiggen vrede, zoo zou men hem ten eenenmale verachten.

De nieuwe wereld-orde!

Ze is eerst geestelijk. Johannes moet in den geest zijn om het te zien. Een echo van wat Jezus tegen Nicodemus zeide: Tenzij dat iemand wederomgeboren zij, hij kan het Koninkrijk Gods niet zien! En die wedergeboorte is door den Geest. Vleesch en bloed beërft het niet; kan het ook niet zien.

Tweedens, zij is ook hemelsch van aard. Johannes hoorde die stem die tot hem zeide: Kom hier op! En die opgang is naar den hemel der hemelen.

Derdens, die wereld-orde is streng theologisch van stijl. God zit daar op den troon in het midden des hemels. Alles, letterlijk alles, in dien hemel is gegroepeerd rondom den troon. God is het middenpunt des hemels. En dan zal 't gaan.

* * * *

Zoo zien we vier en twintig tronen rondom den grooten witten troon.

En op die tronen de vier en twintig Ouderlingen.

En hun aanzien? Wel, zij hebben witte kleederen aan; en gouden kronen op hunne hoofden.

Vier en twintig.

Bijbelsche symboliek, óók in de getallen.

Indien we de rest van den Bijbel niet hadden, dan zou het niet gemakkelijk zijn om de beteekenis van dit symbolische getal te vatten.

Vier en twintig is de som van 12 plus 12.

En zelfs in dit boek der openbaring vinden we dit dubbele twaalfstal terug. Het spreekt van de twaalf geslachten Israels en van de twaalf Apostelen des Lams. In het 21ste hoofdstuk wordt weer den hemel der heerlijkheid beschreven. De hoofdstukken vier en vijf passen op de hoofdstukken 21 en 22. Welnu: in de beschrijving van de stad Gods lezen we, dat de twaalf namen der twaalf geslachten Israels geschreven zijn op de poorten der stad. En in de fundamenten van den muur van het hemelsche Jeruzalem waren de namen der twaalf Apostelen des Lams.

Nu weten we, dat de Heilige Geest vaak de Kerk Gods noemt naar den naam van hem die met God worstelde: Jakob-Israel. En zelfs nu, in de Nieuwe bedee-

ling, noemt men vaak de kerk naar dien Oud-Testamentischen naam. En van die twaalf Apostelen staat ons vermeld, dat de Kerk gefundeerd is op het fundament der Apostelen, waarvan Jezus Christus is de uiterste hoeksteen.

Zoo mogen we concludeeren, dat dit dubbele twaalf-tal de Kerk van Jezus Christus representeert, de Kerk, beide van het Oude en van het Nieuwe Testament.

Zij representeeren de Kerk van Christus. Daarom staat er dan ook, dat zij de Ouderlingen zijn. Te denken aan het speciale ambt van ouderling op aarde is foutief. De speciale ambten hebben uit in den hemel.

Evenwel, op aarde waren immers de oudsten de vertegenwoordigende hoofden der families en naties? En zoo duiden die vier en twintig Oudsten op de geheele Kerk Gods. Zij vertegenwoordigen haar in dit gezicht.

Die Ouderlingen zitten op tronen, die rondom den grooten troon Gods geschaard zijn. Daar zit tweëerlei in.

Eerst, de Kerk Gods zal regeeren. Dit ligt in de idee van den troon. En dat is een gedachte die overal in den Bijbel ons geleerd wordt. Zoo was het met den oorspronkelijken mensch in het eerste Paradijs. Hij regeerde over alles wat de Heere gemaakt had *op aarde*. We onderschappen die laatste twee woorden, want Adam had geen souvereiniteit over den hemel of de hemelsche schepselen. Verder dan de aarde strekte zich zijn gebied niet uit. Maar hij was koning geschapen. Hij stond aan het hoofd der dingen op aarde. Alles, als 't ware, eindigde in den mensch. Zoo als het zoo schoon uitgedrukt wordt in der vaderen belijdenis: alle dingen moesten Adam dienen, opdat hij God dienen mocht.

Doch toen de koning Gods zich onderwierp aan het koninkrijk der leugen, raakte hij koning-af. D.w.z., hij kon niet langer Koning zijn onder God, want dat de mensch nog veel zeggenschap en regeering overgehouden heeft, is duidelijk. Evenwel is hij nu koning onder Satan en dient hij hem met de aarde.

En nu zien we den laatsten Adam, en ziet, Hij is de Koning der koningen en de Heer der heeren. Het koningschap van Adam in het paradijs is opgevoerd tot in den hemel zoo hoog. Jezus Christus, de Ouderling bij uitnemendheid, regeert over alle dingen. En ditmaal houdt het ook den hemel en de hemelsche dingen en creaturen in. Er is slechts EEN uitgesloten, en dat is Hij Die Hem alle dingen onderwierp.

Maar Jezus regeert. En die van Jezus zijn zullen regeeren.

Dat is het wat Johannes hier ziet.

Ze zitten op tronen.

Tweedens, er zit in dit gezicht ook dit, dat de kerk wel regeeren zal, maar het bewind der kerk heeft zijn oorsprong in den grooten witten troon. God is het die hun elk oogenblik de macht en de kracht en de eer

geeft om koningen te zijn. Zelfs Jezus Christus, de uiterste hoeksteen van het gebouw Gods, is hier niet uitgesloten. Ook Hij ontvangt het regiment tot in alle eeuwigheid van God. Want God wil en moet zijn: alles en in allen. Bovendien, er is slechts één fontein van macht en kracht, en die ééne Fontein is God!

Zoo kunnen we het zien, dat de vier en twintig tronen staan *rondom den troon*. Dat *rondom den troon* moet U nederigheid leeren. Gij zijt niet het middenpunt in den hemel, o Kerk Gods! Leert dat hier op aarde. Alle hoogmoed heeft uit in den hemel. De Kerk van God wil, verlangt het niet anders, dan dat hun tronen tot in alle eeuwigheid staan zooals ze ons hier getoond worden. Men beleeft daar ware THEOLOGIE!

En onthoudt, geliefde lezer, dat die vier en twintig ouderlingen U vertegenwoordigen. De geheele kerk komt straks in den troon rondom God. En de geheele kerk zal regeeren onder God over al wat in de nieuwe wereld-orde zal pronken. Jezus heeft beloofd, dat al wie volharden zal tot het einde met Hem zal zitten in Zijn troon. En Hij zal doen wat Hij beloofde, want Zijn naam is Getrouw en Waarachtig.

Een weinigje geleden heb ik gezegd, dat centraal die nieuwe wereld-orde er al was. Eerst in Christus Jezus die kwam en nog is. En tweedens in het feit van den Pinksterdag. Welnu, gedenkt daaraan in dit verband van die vier en twintig tronen. Ge regeert nu al met Christus. Leest wat Johannes zag in het verder verloop van de gezichten op Patmos. De twee getrouwe getuigen ontvingen groote macht, zelfs om den hemel te sluiten zoodat het niet regende op de aarde, en om het water in bloed te veranderen, en de aarde te slaan met vele plagen, zoo menigmaal als zij zullen willen. Hoofdstuk 11:6. En die twee getrouwen getuigen zijn ook weer van die Oudsten die U vertegenwoordigen. Het is de Kerk Gods ten tijde van het einde, ten tijde van de realizeering van het Beest uit den afgrond en uit de zee.

De Kerk regeert. Zij doodt zelfs met het Woord. Zij pijnigt den goddelooze, en zóó erg, dat die goddeloozen groote vreugde zullen bedrijven bij het hooren, dat die twee getrouwe getuigen eindelijk dood op de straten der stad zullen liggen, de stad die geestelijk genaamd is Sodom en Egypte waar ook de Heere gekruist is.

* * * *

Maar er is nog meer in dit heerlijke gezicht.

De Kerk van God die regeert onder God en door God. heeft witte kleederen aan.

Wit is een zeer sprekende kleur. Eigenlijk is het geen kleur, net zoo min als het zwart.

Wit is het inbegrip van alle kleuren. En zwart is de algeheele ontstentenis van kleurenpracht.

Het wit van de kleederen der kerk hier, is niet het matte en levenlooze wit van onze witte linnen kleederen. Het wit des hemels is het ideale wit. We bemerkten er iets van toen de Engelen Gods op aarde kwamen. Of toen Mozes van den berg omneer kwam. Of toen Jezus op den berg der verheerlijking veranderd werd voor tijd en wijle. Dat is het ideale, het Goddelijke wit. Het is het wit als van het zonlicht, doch ook dan is de vergelijking te zwak. Het is het wit van de schittering des diamants, van kristal en zuiver glas. Het is enkel schittering en straling, fonkeling en heerlijkheid.

Om eenigzins te vatten, wat de Heilige Geest bedoelt met die witte kleederen der Kerke Gods, moeten we voor de aandacht houden, dat die vier en twintig tronen *rondom* den troon Gods staan. Zij vangen dus de fonkeling van den jaspis op. En de vorige maal, toen we stilstonden bij het derde vers, hebben we iets gezien van die kleur Gods, het inbegrip van alle schitterende deugden.

De Kerk is in 't wit, in 't schitterend wit gekleed van alle deugd. Elders staat geschreven, dat die witte kleederen zijn de rechtvaardigmakingen der heiligen.

Och, als ik slechts rechtvaardig mag zijn voor God, dan ben ik schoon en lieflijk. De rechtvaardige is in harmonie met 't hoogste Goed. Dat is immers de juiste beschrijving en omschrijving van rechtvaardigheid. Als ik in al mijn willen, begeeren, denken en doen in overeenstemming ben met God, als 't Hoogste Goed, dan ben ik rechtvaardig. Dan blink en schitter ik van hemelsche en Goddelijke schoonheid. Dan ben ik bezitter van ware deugd.

En dat heeft de Kerk van God.

Dat heeft ze eerst in de rechtvaardigmaking.

En dan moeten we wel bedenken, dat dit niet be tekent, dat wij rechtvaardigheid als een deugd ontvangen in de daad der rechtvaardigmaking.

De rechtvaardigmaking is die daad van den Drie-Eenigen God waardoor Hij den in zichzelf verdoemlijken doch uitverkoren zondaar vrijspreekt van alle zonden en schulden, en om den wille van het werk des Middelaars Jesus Christus, hem de gerechtigheid van Jezus Christus toerekent, zoodat hij frank en vrij staat voor den troon van God, en hij recht ontvangt om den hemel binnen te treden als het aangenomen kind van God.

En, tweedens, op grond van die rechtvaardigmaking die juridisch is, geeft God ook rechtvaardigheid als deugd aan diezelfde uitverkoren zondaren in het proces der heiligmaking, welk proces beëindigd wordt in den dag van Jezus Christus, wanneer die uitverkoren zondaren opgewekt worden naar het lichaam.

En dan zullen zij zitten.

Dan zitten zij op tronen.

En hun kleeren zijn dan wit.

Ze vingen den vollen glans op van den steen Gods,

van den allerkostelijksten steen jaspis!

Zij rusten en rustende regeeren zij. Zij *zitten* op die tronen.

En de ware ruste is immers dat zij ingaan in het volbrachte werk van God? Dat werk te zien, en bezig te zijn in dat vol-brachte werk, dat werk te bewonderen, is de ware ruste.

* * * *

En, eindelijk, zij hebben op hun slapen gouden kronen.

De kroon is symbool van overwinning.

Deze glorieuze verschijningen, op de tronen zittende, vlak voor Gods aangezicht, zijn uit de groote verdrukking gekomen.

De Kerk van God op aarde is in een grooten strijd gewikkeld.

En zij hebben dien strijd om Gods wil. Om Gods-wil worden zij gedood, en zullen zij gedood worden, tot op den laatsten dag toe.

Verkeerend temidden van de wolven, hebben zij de schapengestalte. En de wolven werpen zich op de schapen, verscheuren hen en dooden hen.

Temidden van de goddeloozen, begeesterd door den geest uit den afgrond, hebben zij een zaad Gods in het diepe hart, en dat zaad wil naar buiten en treedt ook daadwerkelijk naar buiten. En waar nu maar ook dat goddelooze volk het zaad van God gewaar wordt, daar benauwen zij die zaadragers. Zij zaaïen dat zaad, doch doen het met tranen. Zij zijn getrouw (zie Psalm 44) in het verbond, doch zij worden verkocht en God verrijkt zich niet met hun prijs. Zij houden niet op van het getuigen, zoodat de Heilige Geest hen noemt de getrouwe getuigen, doch zij doen het met zakken bekleed. Zij hebben den Konings-Geest in het hart, doch voor tijd en wijle zien we hen bekleed met schaapsvellen en geitenvellen, ze dolen soms rond in de holen en spelonken der aarde.

Van allen is waar: zij zijn in de groote verdrukking. En de grootste verdrukking geschiedt in hun binnenste hart. Daar is de strijd het hevigst.

Men noemt de kerk die door die groote verdrukking van eeuw tot eeuw naar den hemel reist, de strijdende kerk.

Het is slechts ten deele waar. Ik mag ze ook noemen de triumfeerende kerk.

Ik mag zelfs zeggen, dat zij meer dan triumfeert: de duivel, de wereld, ja, en ook de zonde, moeten nog medewerken ten goede. Alles, letterlijk alles stuwt dat volk naar boven naar de tronen rondom den troon Gods.

En dan, aankomende, wachten de kronen, zinnebeeld van glorierijke overwinning. Om 't eeuwig welbehagen!

The Standard Bearer

Semi-Monthly, except Monthly in July and August

Published By

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

EDITOR: — Rev. H. Hoeksema.

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

Communications relative to contents should be addressed to REV. GERRIT VOS, Edgerton, Minnesota.

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

(Subscription Price \$2.50 per year)

Entered as Second Class Mail at Grand Rapids, Michigan.

— CONTENTS —

MEDITATION:—

RANDOM DEN TROON49
Rev. G. Vos.

EDITORIALS:—

CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE NETHERLANDS52
Rev. G. Vos.

OUR DOCTRINE56
Rev. H. Veldman.

SAUL'S REBELLION60
GOD'S PLAGUES ON PHARAOH'S HEART62
Rev. G. M. Ophoff.

IN HIS FEAR66
Rev. M. Gritters.

FROM HOLY WRIT68
Rev. G. C. Lubbers.

PERISCOPE70
Rev. W. Hofman.

EDITORIALS

Correspondence With The Netherlands

This is the fourth article, written by the Rev. L. Doekes of the Netherlands Reformed Church, maintaining Art. 31, in answer to the four questions our Editor asked him, Vol. 23 of the Standard Bearer, March 15, 1947, page 271. This fourth article appeared in *De Reformatie*, Sept. 13, 1947, pp. 398, 399.

Our Editor desires to have these articles published in our paper in both languages, hence, there is no room in this issue for my editorials or my series on "Sion's Zangen".

The Rev. Doekes writes:

BELOFTE EN TOEZEGGING.

(Antwoord aan Ds. Hoeksema)

Hoe reageert Ds. Hoeksema op onze artikelen? De lezers van "De Reformatie" hebben er recht op, dat te weten. We onderbreken daarom de voortzetting van onze reeks om iets van Ds. Hoeksema op te nemen. Jammer genoeg heb ik nog niet zijn kanteekeningen op mijn eerste artikelen in bezit. Maar na de ontvangst van zijn nauwkeurig geformuleerde vragen (zie ons blad van 12 April) en mijn eerste artikel als antwoord daarop (zie "Ref." 7 Juni) bevat nu "The Standard Bearer" van 1 Aug. allereerst een zorgvuldige vertaling van mijn artikel, waarna Ds. Hoeksema het volgende opmerkt (ik vertaal):

Tot zoo ver de vertaling.

"Er is één punt in het artikel van ds. Doekes, waar- op ik dadelijk de aandacht moet vestigen. Het betreft de vraag, of in de geschriften der vrijgemaakten iets aanleiding gaf tot mijn vraag betreffende de aange- haalde onderscheiding tusschen *belofte en toezegging*.

Het spijt mij, dat ik op dit oogenblik geen tijd heb om opnieuw het overvloedige materiaal te doorzoeken, dat mij na de beëindiging van den oorlog werd toe- gezonden, en dat op deze kwetie betrekking heeft.

Ik schrijf dit in groote haast, omdat ik op het punt sta, Grand Rapids te verlaten voor een reis naar het Westen, en er prijs op stel, het artikel van ds. Doekes op te nemen in het zoo mogelijk eerstvolgende nummer van ons blad.

Laat mij hierover dit zeggen, dat ik soms uit ge- schriften van de vrijgemaakten den indruk kreeg, dat zij den term "toezegging" (gesproken belofte, "the spoken pledge") de voorkeur geven boven de uitdruk- king "belofte", omdat hij zich gemakkelijker leent om

de gedachte van een conditioneele belofte uit te drukken. En het citaat, dat ds. Doekes hierboven aanhaalde uit de "Verklaring van Gevoelen", versterkt mij juist in die overtuiging.

Ik geloof dat ik juist nu, min of meer "offhand" (voor de vuist weg), kan verklaren hoe ik dezen indruk ontving.

Ik verwijs naar "De Reformatie", jrg. 22, no. 12, waar dr. Schilder de volgende synodale verklaring bespreekt (de vervangingsformule, L. D.):

"In de belofte betuigt Hij niet alleen, dat een iegelijk, die in den Zoon gelooft het eeuwige leven heeft, maar zegt Hij ook den Heiligen Geest toe, Die het geloof werkt, waardoor Hij ons Christus en al Zijn weldaden deelachtig maakt".

Prof. Schilder klaagt, dat de synode in gebreke bleef scherpe en zuivere onderscheidingen te maken, speciaal ten aanzien van de beteekenis van den term belofte. En dan schrijft hij verder (hier citeert ds. Hoeksema vervolgens, wat prof. Schilder schreef in ons blad no. 12, pag. 1, kol. 1—2. L.D.).

"Prof. Schilder vestigt dan de aandacht op een onderscheiding, die de vaderen maakten tusschen belofte en *pollicitatie*. Nu is een *pollicitatie* een belofte zonder wederkeerigheid, d.w.z., een belofte, die niet aanvaard is door de partij aan wie zij gedaan werd. Ze is daarom een onvoorwaardelijke belofte. En prof. Schilder schrijft zelf in dit verband:

"Heel de kwestie van voorwaardelijke of onvoorwaardelijke heilsbelofte hangt hiermee samen".

Uit dit alles, en ook uit andere passages in de geschriften van de vrijgemaakten, mede ook in verband met de onderscheiding die zij maken tusschen "schenking" en "in bezit stellen", kreeg ik den indruk dat zij een onderscheiding maakten tusschen *belofte* en *toezegging*. De belofte is een algemeene verklaring, aan niemand particulier geadresseerd: "Wie in den Zoon gelooft, die heeft het eeuwige leven"; de *toezegging* is de belofte, geadresseerd aan particuliere individuen. De belofte is beperkt tot geloovigen, de uitverkorenen; de *toezegging* is voor allen, die gedoopt zijn. Dienovereenkomstig is de belofte onvoorwaardelijk, de *toezegging* conditioneel.

Deze indruk wordt versterkt door wat ik las in "De Reformatie", jrg. 22, no. 15: "Met andere woorden: aan ALLE kinderen, die wettig gedoopt zijn, is de wedergeboorte TOEGEZEGD, en de H. Geest TOEGEZEGD. En de rechtvaardigmaking TOEGEZEGD. Evenals hun TOEGEZEGD is, dat de Vader hen van alle goed verzorgen en alle kwaad van hen weren of te hunnen beste keeren wil. Maar die *toezeggingen* zijn voorwaardelijk.

Met het oog op dit alles moet ik mijn vraag aan ds. Doekes herhalen, maar nu in dezen vorm:

Hoewel u belofte en *toezegging* dikwijls zonder onderscheid gebruikt, is toch, wanneer er een onder-

scheiding gemaakt moet worden, die onderscheiding als volgt:

a. De belofte is de onvoorwaardelijke, algemeene verzekering aan de geloovigen of de uitverkorenen: zij, die gelooven in den Zoon, hebben het leven, en dergelijke uitspraken in de Schrift.

b. De *toezegging* is de voorwaardelijke belofte, geadresseerd aan alle gedoopte kinderen.

Is deze indruk van mij juist?

En, in de tweede plaats, wanneer de vrijgemaakten de termen belofte en *toezegging* zonder onderscheid gebruiken, schrijven zij dan aan *belofte* niet altijd de beteekenis toe van *de gesproken toezegging, geadresseerd aan concrete individuen*?

Tenslotte, spreekt de Bijbel niet steeds van Gods belofte als (van) de onvoorwaardelijke heilsverzekering aan de uitverkorenen?"

Tot zoover ds. Hoeksema. We zijn dankbaar voor zijn opmerkingen. Want nu kunnen we hem al weer verder helpen.

In de eerste plaats iets over de door hem aangehaalde citaten van prof. Schilder. Ik kan mij voorstellen, dat ds. Hoeksema daarin steun meende te vinden voor zijn aanvankelijken indruk. Maar bij herhaalde nauwkeurige lezing van het door prof. Schilder geschrevene moet ik toch tot de conclusie komen, dat ds. Hoeksema er meer in leest dan er in ligt opgesloten.

In no. 12 van ons blad laat prof. Schilder op de door ds. Hoeksema geciteerde woorden volgen: "Wij zeggen niet, dat wij die *pollicitatie*-theorie willen gaan *doceeren*. Wij zeggen wel, dat we ze niet zullen *negeeren*. Hieruit kan ds. Hoeksema zien, dat prof. Schilder allereerst aandringt op nauwkeurig onderzoek van de kwestie, en voorts, dat hij de in den doop verzegelde belofte aan elken wettigen doopeling individueel geadresseerd noemt. Dat hij daarbij de uitdrukking "toezeggen" gebruikt, is m.i. alleen om daardoor scherper te laten uitkomen, dat de verbondsbelofte niet maar een algemeene mededeeling is, die als 't ware, "over de hoofden heen" wordt uitgesproken (en waarbij ieder dan maar moet zien uit te vinden, of ze tot hem of haar is gericht), doch dat die belofte zich zeer concreet richt tot ieder kind van geloovige ouders. Met andere woorden: de term "toezegging" dient hier alleen om aan te duiden, dat de verbondsbelofte *individueel geadresseerd* is aan alle kinderen der geloovigen; *niet* om daarmee de "belofte" als iets onvoorwaardelijks te onderscheiden van een "toezegging", die voorwaardelijk zou zijn. Overigens wil ik niet nalaten hierbij op te merken, dat ik over Joh. 3:36 anders denk dan prof. Schilder. Maar dat komt nog wel ter sprake.

Dat ds. Hoeksema ten onrechte het verschil tusschen de termen "belofte" en "toezegging" bij ons meent te zien samenvallen met de onderscheiding van "voorwaardelijk" en "onvoorwaardelijk", is ook te bewijzen uit het Bewaarschrift tegen de Toelichting, in Juni

1943 ingediend door de reeds vroeger genoemde groep van bezwaarden (dr. S. O. Los c.s.), en als bijlage opgenomen bij de Verklaring van Gevoelen. We verwijzen vooral naar pag. 55-59, waar de schrijvers zich verzetten tegen de in de Toelichting gehanteerde (en later ook telkens verdedigde) onvoorwaardelijke heilsbelofte aan de uitverkorenen". Zij zeggen daartegenover: "De belofte des heils. . . . komt. . . . niet anders tot ons dan in conditioneelen vorm, d.i. met bevel van geloof en bekeering" (pag. 55).

Op de eerste der hierboven genoemde vragen van ds. Hoeksema is dus mijn antwoord: van vrijgemaakte zijde heb ik nog geen onderscheid kunnen ontdekken tusschen "belofte" en "toezegging" in den zin zooals ds. Hoeksema meende te kunnen constateeren. En persoonlijk acht ik het niet naar de Schrift, de heilsbelofte te versmallen tot een speciale onvoorwaardelijke heilsverzekering aan de uitverkorenen. Natuurlijk bestaat er wel een taalkundig onderscheid tusschen "belofte" en "toezegging". Maar daarin ligt toch niet de bijgedachte van "voorwaardelijk" of "onvoorwaardelijk". En de Schrift geeft m.i. ook in het geheel geen aanleiding, aan die termen een dergelijke onderscheiding te verbinden.

Op de tweede vraag van ds. Hoeksema zou ik dit willen antwoorden: inderdaad is van vrijgemaakte zijde herhaaldelijk gesproken over Gods heilsbelofte als over een concreet en individueel geadresseerde toezegging (in tegenstelling met de synodale theorieën). Intusschen wijs ik er op, dat voornamelijk prof. Schilder meermalen herinnerd heeft aan Ursinus' onderscheiding tusschen conditioneele en niet-conditioneele beloften. Volgens Ursinus is b.v. Gods betuiging, dat de aarde niet meer door water zal vergaan, een onvoorwaardelijke belofte; maar de heilsbelofte van het verbond is volgens hem wel conditioneel. Graag wil ik trachten, in een volgend artikel duidelijk te maken, hoe de Schrift m.i. over dit belangrijke punt zich uitsprekt. We komen dan ook vanzelf met de kwestie van de gemeene gratie in aanraking.

Tenslotte vraagt ds. Hoeksema: spreekt de Bijbel niet steeds van Gods belofte als van de onvoorwaardelijke heilsverzekering aan de uitverkorenen?

Vergun mij daarop eerst een wedervraag: kunt u mij uit de Schrift een tekst noemen, waar de heilsbelofte (die aan alle uitverkorenen en geloovigen vervuld wordt) als een *onvoorwaardelijke* heilsverzekering aan één of meer uitverkorenen wordt toegezegd? Ik ben daar bijzonder benieuwd naar. Tijdens mijn proces heeft een classicale commissie zich eerst beijverd argumenten aan te voeren om mijn verzet tegen de synodale leeruitspraken te weerleggen. Ze noemde in haar rapport een aantal teksten, die ik toen eens rustig heb onderzocht, en die toen allerm minst geschikt bleken om als pijlers onder den wankelen synodalen bruggenbouw dienst te doen. Zou ds. Hoeksema mij het ge-

noegen willen doen, enkele teksten aan te voeren, die z.i. kennelijk een onvoorwaardelijke heilsbelofte aan (de) uitverkorenen bevatten? Ik zal daar dankbaar kennis van nemen, en er graag op ingaan.

L. DOEKES.

I translate:

PROMISE AND PLEDGE

(Reply to Rev. Hoeksema)

How does the Rev. Hoeksema react upon our articles? The readers of *De Reformatie* have a right to know that. Therefore, we interrupt the continuance of our series, in order to insert something from the Rev. Hoeksema. It is a pity that I have not yet his side-notes on my first articles in my possession. But after receiving his accurately formulated questions (see our paper of April 12th) and my article as an answer to same (see: "*Reformatie*" June 7th) "*The Standard Bearer*" of Aug. 1st now contains first of all a careful translation of my article, after which the Rev. Hoeksema observes the following:

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 who-soever 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 en 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 en 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.

Thus far the Rev. Hoeksema. We thank him for his observations. For now we are able to assist him to further progress.

First, something about his quotations of Prof. Schilder. I can imagine that the Rev. Hoeksema supposed to find support in them for his first impression. But through repeated accurate reading of that which Prof. Schilder wrote, I must nevertheless come to the conclusion that the Rev. Hoeksema reads more in these quotations than is contained in them.

In number 12 of our paper, following the words quoted by the Rev. Hoeksema, Prof. Schilder continues: "We do not say that we are going to *teach* that *pollicitation-theory*. We *do* say, that we shall not *ignore* it." From this the Rev. Hoeksema may see, that Prof. Schilder first of all insists on accurate investigation of the question, and further, that he terms the promise, which is sealed in baptism, individually addressed to each lawfully baptized child. In my opinion, he employs the expression "to pledge" (*toezeggen*) in that connection, in order to bring out very clearly that the covenant-promise is not merely a general communication which is pronounced, as it were, "over their heads" (and whereby then every body must try to find out whether or not it is addressed to him or to her), but that this promise addresses itself very concretely unto every child of believing parents. In other words, the

term "pledge" (toezegging) merely serves here to denote that the covenant-promise is *individually addressed* to all the children of believers; *not* in order therewith to distinguish the "promise" as something unconditional from a "pledge" which would be conditional. Apart from that, I will not omit to observe in this connection that my interpretation of John 3:36 is different from that of Prof. Schilder. But that will come up for discussion later.

That the Rev. Hoeksema is wrong when he supposes that with us the difference between the terms "promise" and "pledge" coincides with the distinction of "conditional" and "unconditional" can also be proven from the Writ of Grievances against the Elucidation, presented in June, 1943 by the group of aggrieved persons which I mentioned before (Dr. S. O. Los, c.s.), and as an appendix inserted in the Declaration of Sentiment. We point especially to pages 55-59, where the authors set themselves against the "unconditional promise of salvation to the elect", manipulated in the Elucidation (and later also defended again and again). They say against that: "The promise of salvation. . . comes to us. . . not otherwise than in a conditional form, i.e., with the injunction of belief and conversion." (page 55).

Hence, my answer to the first question of the Rev. Hoeksema, mentioned above is: from the side of the liberated I have not been able to discover a distinction between "promise" and "pledge" in the sense in which the Rev. Hoeksema thought he could ascertain it. And personally I do not deem it in accordance with the Scriptures to reduce the promise of salvation to a special unconditional assurance of salvation to the elect. There is, of course, a grammatical distinction between "promise" and "pledge". But therein we certainly do not find the by-thought of "conditional" or "unconditional". And in my opinion the Scriptures do not give occasion at all to connect such a distinction to those terms.

On the *second question* of the Rev. Hoeksema I would answer this: Indeed, from the side of the liberated there is repeatedly spoken relative God's promise of salvation as of a concretely and individually addressed pledge (in contra-distinction to the synodical theories). Meanwhile I would like to point out that especially Prof. Schilder oftentimes has reminded us of Ursinus' distinction between conditional and non-conditional promises. For instance, God's declaration that the earth shall never again perish by water is, according to Ursinus, an unconditional promise; but the promise of salvation of the covenant is according to him indeed conditional. In a following article I will gladly try to clarify how in my opinion the Scriptures speak on this important point. At the same time we will be brought into contact with the question of common grace.

Finally, the Rev. Hoeksema asks: does not the Bible ever speak of the promise of God as the unconditional assurance of salvation to the elect?

Grant me first a counter-question on this: Can you quote a text for me from the Scriptures where the promise of salvation (which is fulfilled unto all the elect and believers) is pledged as an unconditional assurance of salvation unto one or more of the elect? I am especially curious to know this. During my (ecclesiastical) trial, a classical committee first did their utmost to advance arguments in order to refute my opposition against the synodical doctrinal decisions (leeruitspraken). They quoted a number of texts in their report which texts I have quietly examined at that time, and which certainly did not prove to be fit to serve as pillars under the unstable synodical bridge-construction. Would the Rev. Hoeksema do me the pleasure to present some texts which, in his opinion, plainly contain an unconditional promise of salvation to the elect? I shall thankfully acquaint myself with such information, and gladly enter into the subject.

L. DOEKES.

G. V. (Translator).

OUR DOCTRINE

God's Revelation In The Scriptures

The Scriptures are the Word of God. This expression implies three things. In the first place, the Bible is the Word of God because it was spoken by God. All Scripture, we believe, was given by inspiration of God. The Bible is the only book which can trace its origin directly to the Lord. In the second place, the Bible is the Word of God because it is the infallible record of the Word of God. I now refer to God's Word as a word which God alone can speak and as He alone can speak it. When God speaks, as God, He speaks efficaciously, irresistibly, with almighty power. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth For He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast"—Psalm 33:6-9. "Wherefore He saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light"—Eph. 5:14. This latter passage speaks of a Divine speaking which causes the sleeping to awake and the dead to arise. It is therefore beyond all doubt that the Scripture speak of a Word of God in the Creative, efficacious sense of the word. Man can only speak about, concerning the things, brings them forth. The Lord is not determined in His speaking by the things; the things are

determined by His speaking. Hence, we can speak of the Bible as the Word of God because it is the infallible record of this creative, irresistible Word of the Lord. In the third place, the Bible is the Word of God because it is the medium through which God continues to speak His almighty, efficacious word. God's people experience the Scriptures as the living Word of God. Why? Because the Lord continues to speak His own powerful word through the Bible. The Lord continues to speak the Scriptures in the hearts of His people. Consequently the Bible is full of life for the child of God and he experiences its truths as living truths. If this were not true, how could the Word of God be a lamp before our feet and a light upon our path, actually enlightening our pathway and giving us comfort in an otherwise hopeless world? Yea, it is exactly this inner, powerful testimony of the Holy Spirit which the child of God experiences in connection with the Scriptures which causes him to cling unto those Scriptures regardless of all the evil attacks of an evil world upon their infallible character. Hence, also in this sense we can speak of the Bible as the Word of God. However, in this article we refer primarily to the Bible as the Word of God in the sense that it is God's own inspired, infallible Word.

That the Bible is the inspired Word of God is substantiated, first of all, by the Scriptures themselves. There is, in the first place, the testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ. He surely regarded the scriptures (of course, the Old Testament) as the infallible Word of God. This is of the utmost importance. For Christ is Immanuel, God with us, and therefore the living God Himself. When Jesus therefore quotes from the Old Testament and recognizes the authority of those Scriptures it is God Himself Who quotes from them and sets His stamp of approval upon their authenticity. In those Divine Scriptures Christ, for example, found the entire program for His life (His suffering, death, resurrection, and glorification). "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with Child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us"—Matt. 1:22, 23. And again, "And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called My son."—Matt. 2:15. And this: "And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Sabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: The people which sat in darkness saw great light: and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up."—Matt. 4:13-16.

And finally: "When the even was come, they brought unto Him many that were possessed with devils: and He cast out the spirits with His word, and healed all that were sick: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."—Matt. 8:16-17. The Bible abounds in passages of this nature, as the following: Matt. 12:15-21; 21:4, 5; John 13:18; Matt. 26:31; 27:35; John 19:36, 37. Moreover, Christ the Lord of His Church, testified of the Scriptures in such a way that it is beyond all doubt that He maintained those Scriptures as the Word of God. Those Scriptures were and are His own word, are they not? He Himself spoke them through the prophets whom He inspired through His Spirit. Hence, He quotes them as having absolute authority. Three times He answers the devil with a quotation from the Old Testament, a literal quotation. That written word, therefore, has authority, does not tolerate contradiction, has "the last say". Even the devil does not dare to contradict Christ's quotations from the Old Testament. How could the written word have such authority if it were not the infallible word of God? Of these Old Testament Scriptures, called the "Law and the Prophets" in the Bible, we read in Matt. 5:17-19: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, *Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.* Whosoever therefore shall break *one of these least* commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." And in Luke 24:44 we read: "And He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written *in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me.*" Unto the unbelieving Jews Jesus declares in John 5:39: "Search the *Scriptures*; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of *Me.*" And He identifies the written word of Moses with His own word when He speaks unto them in verses 45-47: "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed *Me*: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe *My words*?" Christ, therefore, identifies His words with the words of Moses and thereby confirms the authenticity of the words of the lawgiver of the old dispensation.

That the Bible is the inspired Word of God is evident, in the second place, from the fact that everywhere in the Scriptures God or Christ or the Spirit of the Lord appears as the speaking Subject. How often

do we not read in the writings of the Pentateuch: "And the Lord spake unto Moses."! Over and over again the expression occurs in the Old Testament: "Thus saith the Lord."

Thirdly, as far as the New Testament is concerned, we would point to the fact that several passages emphasize the truth that the apostles spoke through Divine inspiration. Thus we read in John 16:12, 13: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come." And in John 14:26 we read: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." In Rev. 1:1 and 22:6 we read: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to shew unto His servant things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John. . . . And He said unto Me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to shew His servants the things which must shortly be done." In addition to these passages are the various salutations by which the apostles introduce themselves to the churches, always emphasizing the truth that they speak not of themselves but by the will of God. And in 2 Tim. 3:16 and 2 Pet. 1:19-21 we read: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. . . . We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

That the Bible is the inspired Word of God is not only substantiated, however, by the objective testimony of the Scriptures itself, but also, subjectively, by the testimony of the Holy Spirit within our hearts. This lies in the very nature of the case. The Spirit within us will surely verify His own work in the Bible. He will certainly confirm His own testimony. And this He does, also, by causing us to experience the truths of the Word of God as living realities. The testimony of Holy Writ, as for example in connection with our natural depravity, our hatred of God and the neighbor, our own utter helplessness to save ourselves, the only possibility of salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord, and the complete folly of another way of salvation, is confirmed by the Spirit of Christ Jesus within our hearts. And let us not forget

that the Holy Scriptures, also in this respect, are wholly unique. The Bible alone speaks this language of the natural man, of you and of me. Either God is a liar or man is a liar. And the Church experiences within her heart the living reality of the Word of God, through the Spirit of Christ Jesus, her Lord.

Hence, we believe in Divine inspiration. What is Divine inspiration? Divine inspiration is that work of God whereby He moved and illumined holy men to write His Word. We must not confuse inspiration with dictation. Also a stenographer writes only that which her employer would have her write. However, such a stenographer is merely passive. She has no personal interest in the dictation. She is paid for her work and is only interested in the producing of a perfect copy. In the work of Divine inspiration, however, *holy* men were *moved* and illumined. Indeed, they wrote only that which the Lord would have them write. God is the *primary* Author. But the apostles and prophets are the *secondary* authors. And as such they were *moved*. They themselves were heart and soul in their work. And, although inspired and illumined by the Lord, each secondary author wrote according to his own character and peculiar adaptation. John wrote as John and Jeremiah as Jeremiah. This we believe to be Divine inspiration, God writing His will through the instrumentality of holy men.

It should not be difficult to understand the necessity of this truth of Divine inspiration. Some would deny that all of Scripture must be regarded as Divinely inspired. They declare that we have the Word of God in the Bible and that therefore the whole of Holy Writ is not the inspired Word of God. First of all, however, if this were true, who then would determine what is or is not the Word of God? Who will separate the word of man from the Word of the Lord? Then we could not know of any particular passage of Holy Writ whether it is the Word of God. Personal assurance and certainty would become impossible. Secondly, God could surely not intrust His Word to the imagination of mortal men. In all reverence, He could not take that "chance". Would passages such as Ps. 137, Eph. 1, and Rom. 9 ever have been written if the matter of writing the Word of God had been left to mortal man? In support of this fear all we need do is point to the conflict which has been raging within the Church of God throughout the ages. Throughout history the truth of the sovereignty of God and the utter depravity of man has been attacked. Are not the Three Points a striking illustration of this fact? What, think ye, would have been the result if the Lord had intrusted the writing of His will to man, yea, His Church? Thirdly, the doctrine of Divine inspiration is necessary because God alone can reveal hope and life, etc., in the midst of our world of death and despair. Salvation and the glorious renewal of all things in heavenly glory

are truths which could never enter into the heart of man. We all like sheep have gone astray and we all have gone our own way, but to return into the fellowship and communion of God is humanly impossible. The Scriptures, as the revelation of God as the God of our salvation in Christ Jesus, our Lord, could never have been delivered unto us except by the living God Himself.

We distinguish between "plenary" and "organic" inspiration. This distinction is important. The word "plenary" means: full, complete, entire. This implies, in the first place, that all of Scripture is inspired. All of the writings of the apostles and the prophets, in every detail (we, of course, no longer have the original manuscripts), are the inspired word of God. Plenary inspiration also implies, however, that Scripture is the complete revelation of the will of God as the God of our salvation. To be sure, the Bible is no dictionary. It does not tell us what we may or may not eat, what we must or must not put on, etc. It is spiritual, ethical. The miserable and constantly reappearing questions, such as: What may or may we not do, which moving pictures may we or may we not see, will be answered automatically if only our heart is right and the love of God dwells within our hearts. The Scriptures reveal unto us all we need know as far as our salvation and spiritual calling in the midst of the world are concerned.

We also believe, however, in organic inspiration. This implies, in the first place, that Scripture itself is an organic whole. It is characterized by one central thought: God's revelation in Christ. Christ is the Chief Cornerstone, Eph. 1:20-22. In Him all things, in heaven and on earth, will be united in heavenly glory, Eph. 1:9-10. All things are related to Him. In and through Him the elect obtain salvation and are heirs of everlasting life. In relation to Him the ungodly stumble unto their eternal damnation, unto which they have been appointed, 1 Pet. 2:8. Organic inspiration also implies, however, that in the writing of the Scriptures the writers occupy their own Divinely ordained place. Indeed, we must not speak of the "Divine" and "human" factor. It is not God *and* man who write the Bible. It is God Who writes His Word *through* man. Yet, in the writing of the Word of God each writer occupies his own place in this Divine scheme. God causes each writer to be born with his own peculiar character, gifts, and talents, according to the place he occupies in the Divine scheme of the writing of His Word. Only Jeremiah can write as Jeremiah, etc. God calls each writer out of darkness into His marvellous light. God causes each writer to experience in his own life the things he is ordained to write. Then we can understand that it was particularly Peter who could exhort the Church to take heed that they stand lest they fall. Did not he thrice deny his Lord when

he stood in his own strength? And the apostle Paul surely knew whereof he spake when he declared that our present light affliction which is but for a moment works for us an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Of all the apostles, he surely was acquainted with affliction and suffering for the cause of Christ. And finally, it is God Who inspires them by His Holy Spirit, moves and illumines them, so that they reveal unto us the full and complete will of God as the God of our salvation in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

As far as the content of the Bible is concerned, it is the revelation of God as the God of our salvation in Christ Jesus. It is this, first of all, in distinction from "nature". This does not deny the relation between "nature" and Holy Writ. The former is surely adapted to the former, serves the latter. Creation is a symbol of the heavenly renewal of all things. The sun speaks of the Sun of Righteousness. The seed which only in the way of death produces its fruit speaks to us of the good-pleasure of God whereby He wills to call life out of death. The world of color, of plants, and of the animals, etc. speaks a symbolic language. And this is due to the fact that the Lord created the earthy a symbol of the heavenly. Hence, "nature" is adapted to and serves the revelation of God in Christ in His Holy Word. However, this language of the works of God's hands we understand only in connection with and through the Holy Scriptures. This world is the revelation of the wrath of God and speaks of death. That God will erect His eternal kingdom out of this death we know, not from "nature" apart from the Scriptures, but only through the Word of God. The Bible, therefore, reveals unto us God's salvation in Christ Jesus. Consequently, as far as the reprobate wicked are concerned, the Word of God reveals the utter and complete nature and character of sin. Sin not only rejects the living God. This Adam did in Paradise. But sin also rejects the living God when revealed as the God of salvation. To reject the living God also in His revelation as the only possibility of salvation signifies that man's love of sin and his hatred of the living God is complete. To the godly, however, the Scriptures speak of the counsel of Divine redemption. This salvation is bestowed upon them only in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. Moreover, this redemption must be understood in connection with all things. According to Eph. 1:9-10 it was the eternal wisdom and counsel to gather together in One, namely Christ Jesus, all things in heaven and on earth. This, we understand, was the eternal wisdom and counsel of the Lord. From the very beginning, therefore, even before the fall of Adam, it was the purpose and also the operation of God to realize His eternal kingdom in Christ Jesus. The Scriptures know of only one counsel and plan of God. The "Common Grace Interim", which would ascribe a special significance to this

earthly apart from the heavenly, is surely foreign to Holy Writ. All things, including the fall of Adam and sin, are instruments in the hands of the Lord unto the realization of His eternal kingdom and covenant in heavenly glory. And all this is presented in the Scriptures as the work of the alone sovereign God Who worketh all things according to the counsel of His sovereign will.

What, then, should be our attitude toward Holy Writ? The answer is plain. The Bible must be to us the authoritative Word of God. We cannot and may not be neutral here. To assume an attitude of higher criticism is surely the height of conceit. The Bible is the Word of God. We do not stand above it but it stands above us. It speaks to us with Divine authority. Let us therefore submit to it. Prayerfully. Let us never question the Word of God but embrace its truths and teachings. And let us, above all, make it the object of all our study and meditation. Sad to say, this cannot be said of our rising generation. The desire to study the Word of God does not seem to characterize the young people of the present day. May we take inventory of ourselves and, wherever needed, mend our ways. May the Bible be a lamp before our feet and a light upon our path. May the Word of God of 2 Tim. 3:17 be applicable to our young men and women: "That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

H. V.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

Saul's Rebellion

The meaning of the Lord's repenting him that he set up Saul to be king has been explained. "Saul", to quote the Lord's own words, "is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments." In the beginning of his career he did so, yet not truly but only outwardly. His obedience was not motivated by love of God but by love of self.

The Lord's rejection of Saul as king grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the Lord all night. The Hebrew phrase translated "was grieved" means properly "was hot, excited" by anger or grief or sorrow or by all three combined. If Samuel is angry, it is not with the Lord but with Saul. At the same time, for reasons that already have been stated, the consideration that Saul is now a king rejected of God, causes the seer mental suffering that runs deep. What he cries unto the Lord all night, is not revealed; but it is obvious

that the object of his prayer must be the release of Saul from the sentence of rejection and the forgiveness of his disobedience in the way of true repentance. But Samuel's crying is sinful; for he knows the Lord's will. And therefore the Lord is silent. When he does again speak it is to rebuke the seer on account of his persistently mourning for a king rejected of God from the reigning over Israel.

But Samuel fears the Lord. He is a great man of God. However keen his disappointment and deep sorrow, now as always he is the obedient servant of the Lord, ready to communicate to Saul the will of God concerning him. Accordingly, early in the morning, at the first streak of the dawn, Samuel rises to meet Saul in the expectation that the king comes to report to him. Saul is in duty bound to do just that. But he forbears. What has he really to do with Samuel, that imperious old man. It is the Lord whom he serves not him; and it is the Lord's orders by whom he is bound not by his. And it is the Lord to whom he will give account of his doings not to him. So says Saul, as his actions plainly indicate. For he is not on his way to Samuel's house at all; but he is headed for Gilgal to sacrifice unto the Lord some of those spared fatlings and oxen and lambs—verily, Saul is a pious man—and to receive there in Gilgal the plaudits of the multitude for his capture of Agag. The mighty Agag in chains! What a gladdening sight! What a magnificent token of Saul's military prowess! Saul craves the applause of men. His concern about his own glory even causes him on his way to Gilgal, when he is come to Carmel, to set up a monument in commemoration of his great victory over Amalek. The Hebrew text here reads, "Behold, he—Saul— sets, erects to him a hand. . . ." "The hand" here signifies a monument of victory, as in II Samuel 18:18, because this, like the hand, directs attention to what it denotes. And the *him* (to him) brings out the carnal pride that actuates the king; he erects a pillar to his own honor.

Not meeting up with Saul, as he expected, Samuel makes inquiry. Where can the king be going? It is told the seer that "Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a hand, and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal." So Samuel must take the long journey to Gilgal to meet Saul to speak to him the word of God.

The Lord had not revealed to Samuel precisely in what respect Saul has offended and to what extent. These are matters of secondary importance that Samuel cannot but help observing for himself. So, arriving on the scene of the celebration that is going on in Gilgal—thither Saul went to celebrate his victory with offerings—Samuel hears the sound of the bleating of sheep and of the lowing of oxen, and all is plain to him. He comes to Saul. There can be no doubt that should the king speak his heart, he would say to the seer, "Hast

thou found me, my enemy". For Samuel is the one disturbing element in Saul's life. But the king controls himself. He must take care how he behaves toward the seer. He cannot afford to lose his favor, for his influence with the people is not a thing to be trifled with; it is still that great. Before the seer has opportunity to say one word, Saul, with forced friendliness and in a booming voice vibrant with good-will, it may be imagined, utters his greeting, "Blessed be thou of the Lord;" and in the same breath adds, "I have performed the commandments of the Lord." Saul is adept in putting on an act. But his very speech betrays him. Why should he bring up the matter of the commandments of the Lord and be affirming with such emphasis that he has performed them? Who as yet has maintained the contrary? No one but the voice of Saul's own conscience. And it speaks, does this voice, with such clarity and condemnatory power as to throw Saul on the defensive the moment he catches sight of Samuel. But all along Saul has tried to stifle that voice.

In replying, Samuel does not argue with Saul, but he straightway opposes to Saul's lie the truth. Says he to the king, "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" In a word, 'Thou, Saul, hast not kept the commandment of the Lord; for those sheep and oxen should have been destroyed, as the Lord commanded.' Saul has ready his answer; for he imagines that he has built up for himself a defence that even the old seer is not able to break down. Saul replies, "They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed." Let the thrust of this argument not escape us. It is this, 'What meaneth this bleating of the sheep and the lowing of oxen? True, they were not destroyed. But know well that I really had nothing to do with that. They, the people, brought them from the Amalekites. The blame is all theirs. Why, then, dost take me to task? Besides, what if the people did spare? They were thoughtful of the Lord's altars. Their intention was good. Why then dost thou find fault? True, thou didst order them all destroyed, even the best of them. And thou wouldst have us believe that such was the Lord's will. But the people and I judged otherwise. They were more mindful of God's altars than thou. Lay aside thine anger. Consider that the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel. Come, celebrate with us the great victory over Amalek.'

Saul, then, has a twofold defence: 1. "The people spared", he declares. Hence, the blame rests upon them, and he is without fault. Yet, at verse 9 it is stated, "Saul and the people spared". Besides, supposing the people had spared the good oxen, yet he,

the king, permitted it; the people dared not do it contrary to his will. 2. He tries to justify his transgression of the command of God by pleading the holy intention of sacrificing to God. If this was thought of, it was sheer hypocrisy nevertheless. For it was lust of gain that had constrained them.

That Saul in his pride dares also to set him up as judge over Samuel's orders is evident from the fact that it is at the pride of the man that Samuel in replying to his argumentation first strikes. "Stay", says the seer to him, "And I will tell thee what the Lord hath said to me this night." "Stay, hold," are words that as coming from Samuel seemed to indicate that the seer, sorely vexed and grieved by Saul's hypocracies and lies, can endure listening to him no longer and therefore bids him be silent and hear what the Lord has to say to him. And Saul's response, "say on", bespeaks an impudent and defiant spirit. That the seer does. He says on, "When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel? And the Lord anointed thee king over Israel?" Saul has never known true humbleness; for he is devoid of grace. But there was a time when he suffered from a morbid sense of his personal inferiority. That was when his compact with the reality of his having been selected for the throne stunned him, and when in consequence thereof he declared, "Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families on Israel? Wherefore speakest thou so to me?" And when some time later on the day of his public anointing he was nowhere to be found because he had hid himself behind the stuff. But it did not take long before he discovered himself, woke up to the realization that he was a man of no mean natural ability and courage, a real leader of men with an inspiring presence. And the more battles he won, the more intolerable he became of the Lord; until finally he concluded that he could well manage without God. In this state of mind and heart we find him now. Yet, of course, it must not be supposed that he is telling around or even admitting to himself that he wants to reign without the Lord. In his own eyes and doubtless in the eyes of the people he is an exceptionally pious man, thoughtful of the Lord's altars. It is Samuel with whom he collides. He will not submit to Samuel's word, as willingly ignorant that in Samuel he verily has to do with the Lord. With the Lord he lives on the best of terms. So he tries to convince himself even to his dying day. And doubtless he succeeds pretty well in thus deceiving himself with the arts of a heart entangled in hypocrisy and lies and actually alienated from the Lord. How true it is that the heart is deceitful more than any thing. Said the seer to the king, "When thou wast little in thine own sight, the Lord anointed thee king over his people," meaning to impress upon him

two things: 1. that pride cometh before the fall; and 2. that, being the Lord's anointed, he was in duty bound to allow himself to be bound by the Lord's orders. Samuel continues, "And the Lord sent thee on a journey, and said, Go, and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord?" Saul again affirms with greater emphasis than before that he has done just that: obey the voice of the Lord. Says he, "I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But", he goes on to say, "the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things, which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in Gilgal."

It is plain that Saul is inflexible in his iron determination not to confess that he has sinned and to justify himself in his transgression by any kind of argument however false and absurd. Of his being thus determined, his greeting Samuel with the declaration, "I have performed the commandments of the Lord," already gives evidence. Well might Samuel wonder how the man dared to bring these words over his lips with the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the oxen in his ears. It shows that already now, having been unwilling to retain God in his knowledge, he is being given over to a reprobate mind to think, will, and speak things which are convenient. Samuel's calling his attention to the sounds of those bleating sheep has no other effect on him than to stiffen him in his determination to reason away his guilt. His stand continues to be that so far from the truth it is that he did anything amiss that he has fully obeyed the voice of the Lord. What is more, if formerly he only intimated that the blame for what happened rests squarely upon the people he now expresses himself clearly on this point. Besides, Saul now admits that the spoil—the sheep and the oxen—should have been destroyed; but in the same breath he adds, "to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in Gilgal." In a word, the whole spoil of war should have been put to the sword, to the last sheep and to the last oxen; but the people took of the spoil to sacrifice unto the Lord. The argument to which Saul now resorts in justification of his doing could not be worse. Only a man filled with Satan to lie to the Lord would make use of it. Saul means to say this: The people's sparing the spoil for God's altar contrary to His command that the spoil be utterly destroyed, pleased God just as much or even more than their obeying His command in disregard of His altar would have done. In other words, a disobedience that is motivated by the good intention to sacrifice is just as pleasing or even much more pleasing than obedience. Such is now Saul's argument. It really comes down to

this that disobedience, serving a not-God is just as pleasing to God as being consecrated to him in loving obedience of his command, if only that disobedience, that serving the not-god is motivated by the good intention of making provision for the Lord's altar.

That such is actually the thrust of Saul's reasoning—a reasoning as absurd as it is godless—is evident from Samuel's reply, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and in sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." This, certainly, is true from the nature of the matter,—true, that obedience to the Lord's command is better than sacrifice if the very sacrifice is a forbidden thing, thus disobedience, as is here the case in that, according to the command of the Lord, the victims, those animal sacrifices, should have been destroyed. Such a sacrifice is sheer rebellion, stubbornness; and, if so, the Lord can have no delight in it; for, says the seer, "rebellion is the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Hence, to maintain, as Saul now does, that the Lord hath pleasure in the sacrifice of that spoil, is to insist that witchcraft, iniquity, and idolatry delight him. Saul here blasphemes God in the vile attempt to reason away his guilt.

And his sacrificing is witchcraft and idolatry; and that witch—false prophet—in this case is Saul himself; and the idol, the not-god, before whose shrine he prostrates himself, is again Saul. It means that he is a man wholly self-absorbed, fighting God's wars under the constraint of a thoroughly carnal ambition.

If Samuel had hoped to bring Saul to repentance, he is sorely disappointed. That the seer is moved to the core by Saul's obduracy is evident. Having set forth Saul's disobedience in its true light, he immediately communicates to the king the Lord's sentence, "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king."

Samuel's communication to Saul that the Lord has rejected him takes him by surprise. It frightens him. Gone is that air of flippancy, indifference, and arrogance that has characterized all his speaking. He stands there now as a man transfixed, worried and crestfallen. Samuel's words have moved him to the core. For their import flashes upon his mind. Not that he is sorely troubled by the thought that he has sinned and is now rejected of God. He refuses to believe that he is rejected of God, though his heart tells him that the seer spake the truth. But Saul is the kind of a man who in unbelief holds the truth under in unrighteousness. Hence, he continues willingly ignorant of his rejection as long as he lives. What troubles and surprises Saul now is Samuel's great indignation. He had not thought that the seer would take his defection that serious. What troubles Saul now is that the seer has as much as told him that,

seeing the Lord has rejected him, he, Samuel, has come with him to the parting of the ways. Saul is afraid that as forsaken of Samuel, he will lose the following of the people. By all means therefore he must get himself restored to Samuel's favor. Hence, to hold Samuel he confesses all, and implores the seer to pardon his sin. But God is not in all his thoughts. As always, he is absorbed only in self. These are his words, "I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice. Now, therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord." As to the form of the words the confession of sin to which Saul gives utterance is superbly correct: it cannot be improved upon. Apparently, the Lord, too, is in his thought now. Does he not pray, "I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord?" And in a formal sense he is perfectly honest with the Lord and Samuel. He lays bare his heart before them both in admitting that it was fear of the people, fear of losing their good-will that accounts for his allowing them to transgress the Lord's command. Yet, no prayer ever uttered by human lips could be more abominable. For what brings this prayer over Saul's lips is the same vile ambition under the impulse of which he fights the Lord's wars. What cares Saul whether he has sinned or not. Saul denies it. But if the seer will have it so, it is well; Saul will yield the point. For by all means he must hold Samuel. He will confess to almost anything under the sun, he will be as honest as gold with Samuel and with the Lord, too, if he will only agree to pardon his sin and turn again with him, that he may worship the Lord, mark you, worship the Lord. Had Saul only greeted Samuel with this confession, better still, had he only sought out the seer in his place of residence and there made this confession to him of his own accord, all would have been different. But as pressed out of him solely for the purpose of holding the seer to his person, it, the prayer, is a filthy thing.

Samuel sees through the man. It can therefore be understood that he replies as he does. Said he to Saul, "I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected thee from being king over Israel." Here the seer tells Saul in plain words that henceforth he will have to go his way alone; and this of necessity; for as the Lord has rejected Saul, Samuel henceforth will be speechless as far as the king is concerned. He will have no word of the Lord to speak to him. He could of course have concealed the rupture between him and the Lord on the one hand and Saul on the other, by continuing to honor the king before the elders of the people, but Samuel is not that kind of a man. He is a true servant of the Lord.

But Saul nevertheless insists that he do this very

thing. Samuel turns him about to go away, and Saul is frantic. His words have no effect on the seer, so now he resorts to force. He lays hold on the shirt of the seer's mantle. The seer attempts to free himself from the hold of the king, The strain on the shirt is too great, and it rends. The Lord puts another word in the seer's mouth—a word or prophecy symbolized by the rending of the shirt, "The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbor of thine that is better than thou. And also the strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man that he should repent." But Saul hears as not hearing. He is occupied in his mind with but one thing: how to induce the seer not to forsake him. He repeats his confession and again goes to begging Samuel to honor him before the elders of his people and before Israel, and turn again with him, "that I may worship the Lord thy God." And Samuel yields, whether out of pity or because of Saul's importunity, the text does not state. After all, Samuel is human. But instead of honoring Saul before the elders of the people, he publicly protests against his disobedience, by hewing Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal. Then he goes to Ramah; and Saul goes to his house in Gibeah. And Samuel comes no more to see Saul until the day of his death.

G. M. O.

God's Plagues On Pharaoh's Heart

We now turn to the ninth chapter of the book of Exodus, the thirteenth and the fourteenth verses, and read, "And the Lord said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thine servants, and upon thine people; that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth."

The fifth plague has come. It is the plague of the boils breaking forth with blains upon man and beast, throughout the land of Egypt. Because of the boils, the magicians cannot stand before Moses. For, so it is stated, the boils are upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians. And of Pharaoh it is stated, "And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had spoken unto Moses." And now the Lord, through the agency of Moses, speaks to Pharaoh words that He has not spoken to him before, the words that form my text. What is new in this message is, of course, not the command to Pharaoh that he let the people go, but the announce-

ment that the Lord at this time will lay all His plagues on Pharaoh's heart, and upon the hearts of his servants and upon the hearts of his people, that they may know that there is none like the Jehovah God of the Hebrews in all the earth. The right paraphrase of this message of the Lord to Pharaoh is this, "Let my people go, that they may serve me; for know well, O Pharaoh, that with thee persistently disobedient, I will continue to visit thee with new plagues, thus continue to show thee my power, and in the end thou shalt be destroyed; and moreover, I will send all my plagues on thine heart at this time, and in consequence thereof thou shall know and all thy servants and people shall know, that there is none like me in all the earth, so that, as persisting in thine unbelief with this knowledge in thine heart, thou wilt be wholly without excuse, and therefore thy guilt will be great and always greater, so that in the end, when the measure of thy guilt is full, thou shalt be destroyed. Therefore Pharaoh, be instructed, let my people go. And thou shalt live and not perish." Has it now become the Lord's desire that Pharaoh obey? This cannot be. For after the next plague—the plague of hail—has come and gone, the Lord says to Moses, "Go in unto Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might show these my signs before them, that is, might visit them with new plagues. Thus, the only reason that the Lord anew commands Pharaoh to let the people go, is that through this command he is hardening him. Moreover, the Lord is about to perform a new work in Pharaoh and His servants and his people. The Lord is about to send all His plagues on Pharaoh's heart, in order that Pharaoh may know that He is the Lord. And as was just stated, with this knowledge in His heart, Pharaoh's guilt will be great and always greater, until, when the measure of his guilt is full, he will be destroyed. But before the Lord makes a beginning of performing this new work in Pharaoh, he tells Pharaoh about it, his only reason again being that Pharaoh be without excuse.

And now at this time the Lord actually does perform this new work on Pharaoh's heart, and on the hearts of the Egyptians. The Lord does actually lay all His plagues on Pharaoh's heart; and Pharaoh and the Egyptians do know that there is none like the Lord in all the earth. But there is first of all this question: Just what does it mean that the Lord lays all his plagues on Pharaoh's heart—all His plagues: the plagues with which the Lord already has visited him, and the plagues with which Pharaoh is still to be visited. It means this: What the Lord reveals of Himself to Pharaoh by the plagues, namely His power and His wrath, the Lord at this time also sends on his heart, applies to His heart and the hearts of the Egyptians, so that Pharaoh actually knows in his heart, is thoroughly convinced in his heart, that there is none

like the Jehovah God of the Hebrews in all the earth. This the Lord now does in a measure and to a degree according to which he has not done before. And it is also most evident from the behavior of Pharaoh and the Egyptians that at this time the Lord sends His plagues on their hearts. Let us take notice of this evidence. The Lord visits Egypt with the next plague, the terrible plague of hail. And during the rioting of this plague, Pharaoh sends and calls for Moses and Aaron; and he says to them, "I have sinned this time; the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. Intreat the Lord, (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer." What a remarkable confession as coming from the wicked and rebellious Pharaoh. There is this in it. Yes, indeed, Moses. The Jehovah God of the Hebrews is the Lord of all the earth, thus also my Lord, and maker. The Hebrews are His people. They do belong soul and body to him and I have no claim upon them at all. Thus my refusal to let the people go that they may serve their God in the wilderness—what terrible wickedness on my part. For I am in duty bound to obey the voice of your God. How wicked I and my people are. How disobedient! How rebellious! How righteous your God is in smiting me and my people and country with His plagues. I see it now. I know it in my heart. I am convinced. So does Pharaoh now humble himself before God, now, with God's plagues and God's terror on his heart, as put there by the Lord. He is in the dust before God. He is humbled. Gone is his disobedience and rebellion. This Pharaoh, in the dust before God, what a far cry from that Pharaoh, with his vile fist in God's face, defying the living God. What is the solution of it? The Lord has sent His plagues upon Pharaoh's heart and put upon him His terror. This is the explanation. Has the Lord regenerated and converted Pharaoh? Is he now a man of true contrition of heart? Not at all. It's the same unregenerated, unconverted and unholy Pharaoh that we see here in the dust before God; but the same Pharaoh minus his active disobedience, rebellion against and defiance of Israel's God. The unholy Pharaoh is now wholly passive in the hands of God; and in this state of passivity in which God puts him by sending His plagues on Pharaoh's heart, he only suffers, undergoes, the wrath of God with which he is filled by God, as to his mind and heart and being. In this sense God has overcome for the time being sin in him? How? By operating in him with His common grace? No indeed, this is not the teaching of my text; but this: For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord of all the earth." O, it is true, that in the next chapter we see Pharaoh on his feet again defying the living God and exalting himself against God's people. Indeed, but is it Pharaoh

who again raises him up and makes him to stand? No indeed. If it is God who casts him in the dust, how can Pharaoh be the one to raise him up out of the dust? It simply cannot be. It is God who again makes Pharaoh to stand—makes him to stand by sovereignly hardening his heart. It cannot be otherwise. How true it is therefore that Pharaoh's heart is in God's hand, and not God's heart in Pharaoh's hands. How true it is that God is the Lord of man's heart and that man is not the lord of God's heart. How true it is that God turns man's heart to do all God's good pleasure. How true it is that God is God and that man is not God. How true it is that God's will is in the throne and that man's will is not in the throne. How true it is that the reigns of God's moral government are in God's hands indeed and that these reigns are not in man's hands, in the hands of the Pharaoh's and the Esau's in the earth. In a word, how true it is that Pharaoh is the clay, and that God is the potter. How true it is in a word, that Pharaoh hardens his heart only as sovereignly hardened by God.

But there is much more proof in the sacred narrative that God, the true God of the Scriptures, is also the sovereign Lord of sin as it riots in the being of reprobated men; and that, as Lord supreme of sin, God raises it up and casts it in the dust before him, according as he wills, and that therefore sin is not another God next to the true God of the Scriptures, with which he eternally is involved in mortal combat, striving to overcome it, yet not being able, so that everlastingly sin, the reprobated in hell, will be standing there, mocking, defying, and taunting God. I say, there is more proof in the sacred narrative that God is the Lord of sin. God has made the plague of the hail to cease. Then the servants of Pharaoh come to him and say, "How long shall this man Moses be a snare unto us? Let the men go that they may serve the Lord their God: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?" Assuredly, the Lord has sent His plagues also on the hearts of Pharaoh's servants, so that they, too, know now that there is none like Jehovah God of the Hebrews in all the earth. There is still more evidence of this in the sacred narrative. At chapter eleven verse 3 it is stated that the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people. And then finally this. Every house in Egypt has been turned into a morgue, on account of the Lord's having slain all Egypt's firstborn. Pharaoh rises up in the night, he, and his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there is a great cry in Egypt; for there is not a house where there is not one dead. And Pharaoh calls for Moses and Aaron by night, and says to them, "Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as

ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also." Mark you, "And bless me also," is now again Pharaoh's prayer. Don't we see? The Lord again has sent all His plagues on Pharaoh's heart; and Pharaoh, sin, is once more in the dust before God. And as to the Egyptians, they are urgent upon the people, that they may send the people of Israel out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men." But soon Pharaoh again stands, as raised up by the Lord. Once more he is the disobedient, defiant, and rebellious Pharaoh of yore; he and his servants. And they say, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us. And Pharaoh makes ready His chariots and takes his people with him. And he takes six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them. And the Lord hardens the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, so we read, and he pursues after the children of Israel with all his horsemen, and his army. Sin is again on its feet, defying God, who once more raises it up. But consider Pharaoh's end. Pharaoh pursues the children of Israel in the path that the Lord has made for His people through the sea. And it comes to pass that in the morning watch, the Lord looks unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and lo, sin is again in the dust before God. For the Egyptians say, "Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians. And with all the plague of God once more upon their hearts and with the terror of God upon them, and thus, as knowing and confessing that the Jehovah God of the Hebrews is in truth the Lord of all the earth, Pharaoh and the Egyptians are destroyed by the waters of the sea and disappear in an everlasting desolation, never again to shake their vile fists in God's face. Yes, God is indeed the Lord supreme of sin. Sin therefore is no power rioting independent of His almighty and sovereign will. For in the first place sin has no existence apart from man, the sinner. Sin as such can't meet you on the street and strike you in the face. It has existence only as an active privation operative in fallen man's being, in the being of the Pharaohs and Esaus in the earth. It is only in and through the Pharaohs and Esaus that sin can take on flesh and blood, so to say, take on flesh and blood through Pharaoh's powers of mind and body. And therefore it must needs follow that whereas Pharaoh by himself is nothing, he being God's creature, living and moving and having His being in God, sin, in its ethical opposition to God, is nothingness—a nothingness that God raises up and casts down as he will and puts to whatever use he chooses, so that verily, God is God, and none else.

And in conclusion, Pharaoh in the dust before God, the Egyptians perishing in the sea by God's wrath, as knowing and confessing that God is God, is indeed prophecy. It tells us that the wicked will be destroyed

and that sin in them will cease everlastingly. It tells us that in hell all ethical opposition to God will be no more. Verily, there is no idolatry in hell, no blaspheming of God's name, no defiance of God, no disobedience to His will, no thieveries, no adulteries, no lustings of the flesh. In hell the wicked who perish are as completely devoted to God in their suffering His wrath with which they are filled as the redeemed in heaven are devoted to God in their heavenly perfection and glory. This fact and truth must certainly be blissfully satisfying to every true child of God. His sanctified reason calls for such a humiliation of the Pharaohs and the Esaus in the earth. The thought of the Pharaohs in the place of everlasting desolation, reviling God as they do on this earth, crying out their rebellion with fists clenched in God's face, must be shocking to every one in whose heart God sheds abroad His love. Should the Pharaohs and the Esaus continue defiant in hell, it could only be because God has not the power to lay them low in the dust before His feet, and in that case sin were as mighty or mightier than God. But we know that God is God. The Pharaohs will be humbled forever. The evidence is before us in the Scriptures.

G. M. O.

IN MEMORIAM

Whereas it hath pleased our heavenly Father to take unto Himself the

FATHER

of one of our fellow officebearers, the Consistory of the Second Protestant Reformed Church has resolved herewith to express its sympathy to Elder H. Kooiker. We pray that the God of all grace may comfort our brother and those who mourn with him and that we may experience that we mourn not as the world which has no hope.

Rev. S. Cammenga, Pres.

Geo. Ten Elshof, Clerk.

IN MEMORIAM

The Mary-Martha Society of the Manhattan Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sympathy with one of its members, Mrs. Dick Heys, in the loss of her

FATHER

Mr. J. Mulder of Manhattan, Montana.

May the Lord comfort the bereaved in the assurance of the coming of Christ and the glory that follows.

Rev. C. Hanko, Pres.

Mrs. M. Vander Molen, Sec'y.

IN HIS FEAR

John and Mary are keeping company.

The relation between these two young people is for no small part a sexual relationship. God has created us thus. This relationship must also come under the sphere of Covenant living and be conducted "in His fear". Perhaps these are things which are less often discussed, but this does not remove the fact that they ought to be considered.

Shall There be Sex-Information?

Writes a famous adviser: "I have hundreds of records in my files of men and women who are very bitter toward their parents because the latter failed to give them correct sex information early in life. But I have no record of anybody who has protested because his parents gave him too much sound sex information or because they gave it to him too early". He added: "You are prudish if you cannot discuss sex casually with your children".

Someone might say that sex is a matter too delicate to be discussed, and that therefore the less said about it the better. Such people forget that, as all other things of life are obtained by means of information, so also this. But they also forget that sex information is being given continually, via hundreds of different channels. In all likelihood your children receive their information from such vulgar sources as the street, obscene pictures, lewd talk, etc.

It is not a question of: shall they receive such information? But the question can better be put this way: shall they receive it from a vulgar and questionable source, or shall they receive it from a pure source?

Shall they gather it from observation, from their playmates, from the streets or shall they gather it from the pure source whence comes all their information?

This matter is frequently brought up for discussion. Shall it be treated in our schools? Shall our young people receive sex information along with their regular school studies?

Marriage (or divorce) statistics reveal that a high percentage of young people enter marriage without proper knowledge of what was involved. Of late courses are given for the benefit of young people who contemplate entering the state of wedlock.

What Saith The Scripture?

Scripture touches on this matter also, either directly or indirectly. Against the background of the sins of heathendom, Scripture repeatedly admonishes that we walk in sanctification, also in this aspect of life.

Consider for instance this notice from the Word of God: "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour, not in lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles who know not God". (I Thess. 4:3-5). This is a significant passage. It speaks of INFORMATION, for it says: that every one should KNOW. We must know also how to POSSESS our "vessel", it must not possess us. It must be possessed in sanctification.

The catechism, in explanation of the Seventh Commandment exhorts us to live our sex life out of the principle of regeneration. The Marriage Form exhorts us to live godly in the state of wedlock. To live godly in that state requires among other things that, "we avoid all uncleanness and evil lusts."

If then the Seventh Commandment exhorts us to live chastely in holy wedlock and in single life; and if the Marriage Form applies Scripture to the effect that we avoid all uncleanness and evil lusts, it is evident that we must have a certain and positive knowledge concerning this important phase of life. In single life as well as in wedlock we are to live chastely and temperately.

It is said sometimes that there is no greater undertaking than marriage, yet there is nothing undertaken with so little preparation as marriage. Many people enter it with little more than a natural knowledge. Many enter upon it with a gross misconception. The reading of the Form is a fine exhortation but it comes a little bit late if it shall serve as an education for people who are to enter the married state.

Who Shall Inform Them?

Certainly the church must betimes touch upon this phase of life. As often as the minister comes to the Commandment VII in the Catechism there will be a sermon about the various aspects of sex life. The Church should not become prudish. The subject is a phase of our natural life and the Light of the Gospel must shine upon our pathway here also. The subject must be treated with due respect for chastity and reverence (as every other subject ought to be) but the pulpit does not preach the whole counsel of God if it leave out this phase.

Our schools are bound to treat it also. I mean our Christian schools, where christian teachers can candle it. Let not the filthy world inform and educate us concerning these matters. For they are an adulterous generation and they shall not teach our children their ways. Even though they have some regard for decency and good order, they are adulterous, saith the Scripture. Christian teachers are in a position to give information as God's Word gives it.

I believe however that the task of instructing the

young people in re these things is primarily the duty of the home, the parents. It is a duty which first of all lies upon the home, and the sex instruction they receive ought to originate in and proceed from the home.

We mean, this instruction must come from the fathers and the mothers. Blessed are the sons who have fathers and the daughters who have mothers.

Nowhere can these intimate and delicate things be so objectively and chastely treated as between mother and daughter, father and son. This reduces the danger of vulgarity and removes the glamour and undue excitement which the treatment of this subject could arouse. It removes the glamour of indecency and brings our youth face to face with certain realities of life. This induces them to see this phase of life in its proper proportion. There and then matters can be discussed objectively and piously and they may there be taught in the ways of the Lord. While thus they may be warned for the pitfalls and dangers that surround their path.

Let the parents provide this information wisely and opportunely. Let them go as far as Scripture goes. Do not hesitate to remind your sons how Joseph conducted himself when Potifar's wife allured him; don't forget to mention how Jacob waited fourteen years for Rachael. Many are the directives Scripture gives. . . . use them opportunely.

We can teach them also by way of contrast. The world in which we and our sons and daughters live is an altogether filthy world. Every day their eyes see and their ears hear filthy things. Here we must come with the antithesis. Say "no" to this corruption. Thus the world does, let us not imitate her nor conform ourselves to her. Thus the world conceives of sex, let us not conceive of it that way. In this fashion we can provide the required information. Let not our homes fail in this respect.

Which presupposes of course that our parents are taught of the Lord themselves. If they are not spiritually educated, how shall they give spiritual education?

The school of experience has taught them much, if they at least have sanctified hearts. They have a working conception of what God requires of us, also as pertains to this realm of life. Let them pass on their heritage to their sons and daughters.

This will, by the grace of God, do much to help John and Mary keep the straight course which leads to an honorable marriage and a pious wedded life.

More work for us as parents. But we ought more and more to realize that parenthood involves us in immense responsibilities. While we will discover in the meantime that exactly in assuming these responsibilities lies our parental joy and happiness.

Rev. M. Gritters.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Signs In The Gospel Of John

That it is of great importance to see the special significance John attaches to the term "Sign" we have attempted to demonstrate in our former article. More could be said to substantiate our contention, but we trust that what we have written will, at least for the present, be sufficient to indicate its importance. We will have ample opportunity to refer to this matter again later in this essay in another connection.

It ought to be clear from what we have stated concerning the prevalency and consistent use of the term "Signs" in the Gospel of John, why we wrote "*Signs* in the Gospel of John", above these articles. We did so advisedly. The term "miracles" is too vague to convey the specific notion of the term "Sign".

There is, however, still a fourth term to discuss, a term used to designate the miracles of Christ. Jesus Himself often speaks of His miracles by employing this term. It is the word "Works". The term occurs in the Gospel of John in the following passages, to wit, John 5:36; 7:21; 10:25, 32; 14:11, 12; and 15:24.

The term "works" points out the miracles of Christ as to their agent. They are then viewed in relationship to the one who has *performed* them. They point to their *Performer*, because He is unique, being the Son of God in our flesh, these miracles are Works in a class all by themselves. They are works that are wrought in such a way that they betray, nay, they most emphatically bear the imprint of the Divine Agent. Says Jesus: "I and the Father are one". And again: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very *works* sake". These works speak so loudly of their Divine author, be in the flesh of the descendants of Abraham.

Thus Jesus speaks of His works in John 10:25: "the works which I (emphatically "I" in the Greek) do in the name of my Father, these witness concerning me". So great are these works and so exalted is their testimony that Jesus can say to the Jews in John 5:36: "Now I have a witness which is greater than John. The works which the Father gave Me, that I should finish them, the same works which I do testify concerning Me, that the Father hath sent Me."

In these passages there seem to be the following elements:

1. The miracles, signs, wonders are *works*. They are wrought by an agent, by a personal Agent. They are not just occurrences in nature. They all point to the author.

2. These miracles as works testify, i.e., they have a message that comes with authority, they have convicting power. As works they demand faith and obedience. They substantiate the Word.

3. Their very nature is that they bear the impress of the Divine. They loudly proclaim that the Father, God Himself, is in this Son, and that He is sent to perform these works. They are the works of the great office-bearer of God.

Summarizing what we have thus far seen, we notice the following:

Firstly, that the miracles of Jesus are wonders, they cause amazement to those who behold them, because nowhere else in the whole of creation are such phenomena beheld. Bread is commonly multiplied in the way of seedtime and harvest. But in Jesus' miracles it is multiplied under His hands.

Secondly, that these amazing miracles are also powers. They are divine manifestations of might, either to save or to kill. It is divine power that is manifested in the raising of the dead to life.

Thirdly, these wonders, powers are always "works" of Christ, performed by His will, with all His heart and mind and soul and related to God the Father, Who is very really present in this "Worker".

Fourthly, these works, wonders, powers are always *signs*, portents of things to come. They are pregnant with prophecy. They always speak of greater things to come. They loudly tell, and clearly obsignate the Mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven, and do so in such a way, that believing in their testimony spells life, while unbelief is clearly wilful disobedience. Upon the latter the wrath of God remains.

Having thus seen the implication of the term, we still stand before the task of showing into what pattern, according to the Gospel of John, the "signs" of Jesus are cast.

To begin, we may point out that the Gospel of John records to us only eight miracles. They are the following and recorded in the following chapters:

1. The Changing of the Water into Wine. (2:1-11)
2. The Healing of the Nobleman's Son. (4:46-54)
3. The Healing of the Impotent Man at the Pool of Bethesda. (5:1-9)
4. The feeding of the Multitude. (6:1-14)
5. The Walking Upon the Water. (6:15-21)
6. The Opening of the Eyes of the Man Born Blind. (9:1-7)
8. The Raising of Lazarus From the Dead. (11:34-44)
9. The Miraculous Draught of Fish. (21:1-14)

When we study this list of "Signs" performed by the Lord and recorded by John, it strikes our attention that all except two of these "Signs" are recorded to us only in the Gospel of John. These two are: The Feed-

ing of the Multitude; and The Stilling of the Galilean Sea". These latter two are also recorded in the other Gospel records, called Synoptic Gospels. All the other miracles recorded in John are those which he alone mentions. To this we might add, that strictly speaking, there is still one more "Sign" performed by Christ recorded here in John. It is the healing of the ear of the Highpriest's servant, named Malchus. John 18:10. However, this sign we will not include in our discussion in this series.

Further, we notice, that seven of these signs recorded were performed by Christ prior to the hour of His crucifixion and death and only one refers to a sign performed after His resurrection.

Ere we inquire into the implications of these Signs separately, we still are faced with the task of determining the overall pattern of the Gospel of John into which these Signs are cast. In attempting to do this we are reminded of the words of A. T. Robertson: "The language of the Fourth Gospel has the clarity of a spring, but we are not able to sound the bottom of its depths. Lucidity and profundity challenge and charm us as we linger over it." Yet, we may not for the reason of its profundity fail to try to see the unity and the design of this beautiful Gospel.

In attempting to understand this design there are various matters in this Gospel of John itself that should be noticed, and various notices by John himself that may guide us.

First of all we may notice, that, as we have pointed out in our former article, John has a very practical motive in writing this Gospel. There is every reason to believe that in view of this practical design, John very studiously chooses his materials. That he relates some events of Jesus' life and ministry, and passes by others is done with conscious purpose. Such is the implication of the notice in chapter 20:30, 31. "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His Name."

John very evidently chose to record some signs. And those which He chooses show one outstanding fact: Jesus is the *Christ*, the *Son of God*! This notice here in 20:30, 31 evidently shows not only the purpose of John in describing the events that transpired and the works performed by Christ, but has reference to the purpose of John in this entire "book".

That this what John has here recorded in this "book" is sufficient evidence, is a clear and complete picture of the Christ, the Son of God is also an element that is underscored by John. This element we should not overlook. Writes John in 21:25: "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written everyone, I suppose that even the

world itself would not contain the books which should be written." What Jesus did as the Son of God in the flesh is indeed too numerous to mention. The little that John writes is, however, a rather adequate picture of this infinitely great Christ, the Son of God. For the believers this is sufficient and this testimony has ever been sufficient unto faith in the Son of God. For unbelief this witness is an offence, it is the testimony concerning the Chief Cornerstone. It need not surprise us that the attempts to discredit this testimony of the Apostle have been legion. But, of course, all to no avail. The hammer is worn out but the anvil stands.

We conclude, therefore, that John himself would have us understand the intentional design. Also, we are certain, John would have us understand that he made a very careful *selection*.

We thus have a directive from the writer himself. Consequently we will attempt to trace out this internal unity of the Gospel. We will try to detect its plan in the several parts.

A general perspective and orientation we receive in the so-called "Prologue" chapter 1:1-18. Emphatically the greatness, the Divinity of the Son of God is placed on the foreground. He was in the "beginning". All things were made by Him. He is co-equal with God, the Father. And He became flesh and dwelt among us. (vss. 1-3, 14). And as the Son of God in our flesh He dwells (tabernacles) among us and reveals His glory, glory as of the only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Although no one has ever seen the Father, yet this Son has declared, exeged Him unto us, revealed Him in His word and "works". It is true, the final work of Christ is that He makes the Father have His abode in us, yet in His works, signs, we see portents, evidences of this great coming of God to make His abode, to change the sinful world into a holy temple, and to change the earthly, temporal form of this present world in the heavenly and the abiding.

Thus is the perspective of the "book" of John.

Into this perspective all the "Signs" performed by Jesus are arranged by John. In these "Signs" we see the Son of God in His great power, clearly manifesting that He is the sent one of God, the mighty Worker performing the work of God. By them He convicted men that He is indeed the Prophet, already spoken of by Moses, that should come into the world. None need to doubt. Curiously enough, when John the Baptist sends his disciples to Jesus asking Him whether He is the one to come, or whether he must look for another, the answer that is forthcoming is virtually this: Look at the things you both see and hear!

(To be continued)

G. L.

PERISCOPE

The Day Of The Lord In Scripture

The concept "Day of the Lord" or the idea contained in that term is expressed by the writers of Holy Writ throughout. Besides the literal reference it is designated by such expressions as: "day of visitation", "day of vengeance", "day of battle", "day of evil", "day of wrath", "day of destruction", "day the Lord made", and "especially in the Old Testament, simply as "the day", and even more frequently as "that day". The same is taken up in the New Testament under the terms: "that day", "His day", "my day", "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ", "day of the Lord Jesus", "the great day of His wrath", and, "that great day of God Almighty".

These references extend throughout Scripture, from Moses in the Pentateuch to the closing portions of the Revelation of John. The specific term or the idea contained therein is found in all the prophetic writings of the Old Testament without exception. In fact, the entire body of the discourses of some of the so-called Minor Prophets is devoted to the exposition of the concept. It is also to be found in some of the poetical writings of the Old Testament; notably Proverbs and the Psalms and including the book of Job. The references do not cease, however, with the close of the Old Testament but are taken up again in the New Testament. Though the citations in the New Testament are not as numerous and detailed as those in the Old Testament it is evident that they too emphatically belong to the general concept.

From the space and time given to the exposition of this concept in Scripture, it is evident that the term has profound import for the Church of God in the midst of the world. If this were not so it is doubtful that God in the Holy Spirit writing the Scriptures would go to such length and diligence to expound and place the concept in His Word. From this it also follows that the concept is certainly an aspect of the Revelation of God in Christ. The Reformed conception of Scripture holds it as the Self-revelation of God in Christ—the Perfect Image, as the central theme. A concept therefore, which courses its way throughout that Revelation, as this does, must necessarily be intimately bound with and have reference to that Revelation itself. In other words, the day of the Lord must be an aspect of the Self-revelation of God; it speaks to us of God.

Many writers believe that the term is purely and simply eschatological in character. That it is such at all, is evidently from the general exposition and the

content given to it in Scripture; also from the fact that it is not limited in scope to the old dispensation but is also taken up in the new and would thus have meaning and content for the church today. Generally speaking, in the Old Testament revelation the term is most closely connected with coming judgment, temporal and final, and relative to both God's people and the world in general. In the New Testament salvation is stressed; although it is true that throughout Scripture both elements are stressed as inseparably connected with the term.

To limit the concept strictly as an eschatological idea does not exhaust the significance of it. It is evident that it has meaning for the Church throughout the ages as well as for the daily life of believers. This would follow from the prominent place which this concept receives in the Old Testament. For, although it is true that the prophecy of the Old Testament looks forward to the very end of time, it has its primary fulfillment among Israel—the Church of the old dispensation. It is also clear that the idea contained in the term has been partially realized and accomplished both among Israel of old and in the new dispensation.

In order to see all this clearly and arrive at a definite understanding of the term, three things will be necessary: first to examine several passages in which the term or its equivalent is found, secondly to gather together the various aspects of these descriptions in order to ascertain the meaning of the concept, and finally, to determine its scope and fulfillment.

In the examination of the concept throughout Scripture we will proceed through the books of the Canon in the order that we have them in our Bible. This will not only give a sense of continuity to the discussion but will simplify our search in following the trail in Scripture. It would be difficult to determine, likewise, which writer first introduced the idea historically for many of the dates of the writings of the prophets are not definitely known and cannot be set with any degree of accuracy.

The very first reference, as has been intimated, is by Moses. This is our starting point, not so much because of its worth or clarity but more for its virtue as the first instance of reference to the idea and as forming the foundation upon which the prophets build. It is found in Deuteronomy 31:17-18: "Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us? And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods."

In the following chapters of the Pentateuch are recorded Moses' parting addresses, in which, by revela-

tion of God, he predicts the falling away of Israel, the splitting of the Kingdom, the dispersion of the ten tribes, the captivity and return of Judah, the destruction of foreign nations. He continues through the final dispersion of the Jews at the fall of Jerusalem into the New Testament Dispensation of the gathering of the Church. All of these subjects are more fully developed by the later Prophets, as is also the prophecy concerning "that Day".

The next reference we find in the book of Job, chapter 21. Here Job is diligently maintaining the righteousness of God in His dealing with Job. He shows that the wicked, though despising God, do sometimes prosper but that God is just and sovereign in His dealings and "that the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath". Also in Job God Himself in direct speech refers to the day. In the 38th chapter he answers and rebukes Job declaring His own righteousness and power and sovereignty. Vss. 22-23. "Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?"

The Psalms are filled with references to the same idea. Of them A. B. Davidson writes: "They give back, in thanksgiving, in praise, and often in prayer, the faiths and hopes already contained in the mind of the people and long cherished. And these hopes and faiths are in the main eschatological. When the Psalms speak of judgment, and of the meek inheriting the earth, of the nearness of the day of the wicked, of seeing God's face in righteousness, of the upright having dominion speedily over the unrighteous, and much of the same kind, they are not uttering vague hopes never before expressed, but reflecting the certainties of a faith as old at least as the prophets of the 8th century, the certainty of a judgment of God, and of the rise behind it of a kingdom of righteousness, and peace, and everlasting joy."

A splendid example of this is found in Psalm 110: 5-7, "The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries. He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head." And again in Psalm 118:21-24, "I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation. The stone which the builders refused is become the head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."

The first direct reference to the term "day of the Lord" is found in the prophecy of Isaiah. Beginning with the 10th verse of chapter 2 we read: "Enter into

the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low: And upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan," etc. And so forth, for this prophecy of universal judgment in that day continues through chapter 3, while the short chapter 4 speaks of the salvation of purged Israel. The general theme of the first part of the prophecy is a continuation of judgments of that day, up to chapter 40 which opens with the beautiful word of salvation to God's people: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God." Of the references interspersed between these two, some of the most notable are: "And what will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far? to whom will ye flee for help? and where will ye leave your glory?" 10:3, "Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty." 13:6, chapter 17:11 where it is described as a day of grief and of desperate sorrow, and finally in 28:5 where the aspect of salvation is on the foreground: "In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people."

The main references in Jeremiah are towards the close of his prophecy. The 30th chapter pictures Israel in travail but includes the promise of deliverance with these words: "Alas! for that day is great so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." vs. 7. He speaks specifically of the day again in the 10th verse of chapter 46, which emphasizes the idea of judgment upon the adversaries of God and His cause represented by His people: "For this is the day of the Lord God of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiated and made drunk with their blood: for the Lord God of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates."

Ezekiel adds several new elements to the concept; predicting that battle comes with the day of the Lord and that Israel is not prepared, cf. 13:5. He also warns of the nearness of the day and emphasizes the judgment of the heathen with the following prediction: "For the day is near, even the day of the Lord is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen." 30:3.

All of the minor prophets, unless Jonah is to be included under this category, he is the exception, speak at great length of this concept. Much of the material is repetition and re-emphasis of that which previous writers have expressed in principle so that we can

consider their material but briefly. This should not leave the impression, however, that their treatment of it is brief, for as we stated in our introduction some entire writings are concerned with the concept and these are found among the minor prophets. It is also true that several new and striking ideas are added by them to the already rich term.

Early in the writings of Hosea he makes mention of "that day" and relates at the close of the 2nd chapter that the Lord will bring back His people from their adulterous ways and make a covenant with them in "that day". This discourse closes with the beautiful promise: "And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God." In the 9th chapter he returns to a description of the day and speaks of it as: "the solemn day" and "the day of the feast of the Lord". vs. 5.

Joel is the first of the prophets whose entire discourse deals with "the day of the Lord". He speaks with renewed emphasis of the judgment which shall befall Zion and Israel first of all. This portion closes with the promise of the outpouring of the Spirit which includes this significant description: "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come". 2:31. He closes his prophecy with a curse upon the nations who have wronged Jehovah's people and the blessing which ensues to Judah and Jerusalem "for the Lord dwelleth in Zion". Here is included one of the most striking passages where the term is found. In chapter 3:14 we read: "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision." And again in vs. 18: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth out of the house of the Lord and shall water the valley of Shittim".

Amos introduces a new element when he warns the people who desire the approach of the day with these words in chapter 5:18:20: "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end is it for you? the day of the Lord is darkness, and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness, and not light? even very dark and no brightness in it?" Dr. H. Bavinck considers this as quite a general feeling among the people, for he states in his "Gereformeerd Dogmatiek": *De Jom Jehovah werd door de profeten gansch anders dan door het volk opgevat. Het volk misbruikte deze verwachting en dacht, dat Jhvh het, afgezien van zijn geestelijken toestand, tegen alle gevaar beschermen zou. Maar*

de profeten zeiden, dat de dag des Heeren ook voor Israel een dag des gericht zou zijn; het volk zou in ballingschap gaan en zijn land aan de verwoesting worden prijs gegeven." Except in the passage quoted from Amos we failed to discover in our examination any such general feeling among the people with reference to the day of the Lord. Even here it is limited and particular in scope; concerning those who were not aware of its import and meaning. In the closing chapters Amos again speaks of the judgments coming but closes with the blessing and promise that the day shall bring for the faithful.

Also Obadiah in his short writing directly mentions the day of the Lord; in the 15th verse: "For the day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall be upon thine own head."

The prophecies of Micah, Nahum and Habakkuk are, generally speaking, completely concerned with "that day". Micah directs his prophecy of judgment especially against the ten tribes and Judah, while Nahum and Habakkuk add decrees against particular heathen nations. All close their writings with the promise of restoration and salvation for the faithful. Nahum adds an element to the idea when he calls it "the day of his preparation" 2:3. Habakkuk experiences fear and trembling and rottenness enters his bones when he considers "the day of trouble", as he calls it. Cf. 3:16.

Once again the entire prophecy of Zephaniah speaks very definitely and precisely of the day of the Lord. He stresses the universality of the judgment that comes in that day and closes with a beautiful promise to the true Israel: The two most striking passages are 1:14-16, "The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty men shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers;" and from the promissory section, chapter 3:16, 17: "In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing."

W. H.

NOTICE!

If consistories will furnish the name and address of newly married couples, the R. F. P. A. Board will mail them a year's subscription to the Standard Bearer free of charge.

REPORT OF CLASSIS EAST

in session Oct. 15, 1947 at Grand Rapids, Mich.

This meeting of Classis was held at the Second Protestant Reformed Church, of Grand Rapids, Mich. The meeting was begun with the singing of Psalter No. 357. Rev. H. DeWolf then read I Peter 5 and led in prayer.

The Credentials were read and received, showing that all the churches were represented by two delegates at this meeting. Classis was then declared constituted.

According to rotation Rev. M. Gritters presided and Rev. H. DeWolf recorded the minutes.

The President speaks a word of welcome to the members of Classis and to the delegates from Classis West who were present for the examination of the two candidates, Mr. E. Knott and Mr. G. Vanden Berg.

Advisory vote was given to the Revs. G. Vos, A. Cammenga, J. Blankespoor, W. Hofman, D. Jonker, and to Prof. K. Schilder.

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

The Committee on Church Visitation report that they have now finished their work.

The Consistory of Holland, Mich., and of the First Church of Grand Rapids, ask for Classical appointments. The following committee was appointed to draw up a schedule for classical appointments: Rev. H. Veldman, Rev. S. Cammenga and Elder H. E. Windemulder. They later presented the following schedule which was adopted by Classis.

Holland:—Oct. 19, Rev. J. D. DeJong; Oct. 26, Rev. J. A. Heys; Nov. 2, Rev. R. Veldman; Nov. 9, Rev. S. Cammenga;

Nov. 16, Rev. G. Lubbers; Nov. 23, Rev. H. DeWolf; Nov. 30, Rev. H. Veldman; Dec. 7, Rev. M. Schipper; Dec. 14, Rev. M. Gritters; Dec. 21, Rev. G. VandenBerg; Dec. 28, Rev. B. Kok; Jan. 4, Rev. H. DeWolf.

First Church:—Nov. 9 (Eve.) Rev. J. A. Heys; Nov. 16, (Aft.) Rev. G. Lubbers; Nov. 23 (Eve.) Rev. G. VandenBerg; Nov. 30 (Aft.) Rev. H. Veldman; Dec. 7 (Eve.) Rev. R. Veldman; Dec. 14 (Aft.) Rev. M. Gritters; Dec. 21 (Eve.) Rev. S. Cammenga; Dec. 28 (Aft.) Rev. B. Kok; Jan. 4 (Eve.) Rev. J. D. DeJong.

The report of the Classical Committee, dealing mainly with the schedule of the Candidates E. Knott and G. VandenBerg is read and adopted.

Classis decided to give the examiners fifteen minutes for each locus of Dogmatics and fifteen minutes for each of the other subjects, while the time for the preaching of the sermons was set at thirty minutes. Candidate E. Knott delivers a thirty minute sermon on Rom. 1:16, 17, and Candidate G. VandenBerg on I Peter 1:13.

Rev. B. Kok examines the candidates in the first and second loci of dogmatics; Rev. H. DeWolf had been assigned the third and fourth loci; and Rev. J. D. De Jong examined them in the fifth and sixth loci. The examination in Controversy was conducted by Rev. W. Hofman. Rev. H. Veldman examines them as to their knowledge of the Confessions; and Rev. M. Schipper in knowledge of the Scriptures; while Practica had been assigned to the Rev. M. Gritters.

After hearing the examination of the candidates and the reports of the Sermon Committee and of the delegates from

Classis West, Classis unanimously decides to advise the consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church in re Candidate E. Knott and the consistory of Grand Haven in re Candidate G. Vanden Berg to proceed with their ordination and installation.

The instructions of Oak Lawn and Fuller Avenue, dealing with the matter of obtaining contact with emigrants from the Netherlands are read and received for information. This matter was then referred to the Mission Committee for further action.

The Consistory of Holland requested the appointment of a counsellor. Classis decides to appoint Rev. B. Kok.

The request of Grand Haven for permission to ask for collections in the churches of Classis East is granted.

Fuller Avenue requests advice in re increase of censure in respect to two cases. After receiving the necessary information from the consistory, Classis decided to advise the increase of censure in both cases.

The voting for Classical Treasurer resulted in the re-election of Mr. F. La Grange, and the voting for one member of the Classical Committee resulted in the election of Rev. J. D. De Jong.

The next meeting of Classis will be held at the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids the first Wednesday of January, 1948.

The minutes of this Classical meeting are read and approved. After singing Psalter No. 71:1, 5, Rev. B. Kok closes with thanks unto God.

D. JONKER (Stated Clerk).