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MEDITATION

The Dayspring From On High

"To give knowledge of salvation unto His people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the Dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

Luke 1:77-79.

While I write these lines, and also while you read them, we are in the days of advent, when we look forward to the day when we shall commemorate the gift of Jesus to the world of God's goodpleasure.

And I have taken my text from the history of the first advent, from the history when the remnant of God's people made merry and sang the song of redemption. In fact, my text is part of a song which was sung by Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist.

Those days of the first advent were days of great happiness. And we can understand it that God's people, and also the angels, started to sing. The great theme of their singing is that which shall make heaven musical forever: the unspeakable Gift of the Heart of God to His people.

Let us see.

Even the unborn child in Elizabeth's womb sang for joy: the child leaped for joy when it heard the voice of the mother of Jesus.

That mother, Mary, sang her song of great rejoicing when she heard the unbelievable report: the Saviour was coming, and the Triune God had appointed her to be His mother.

And Zacharias, seeing the fulfillment of prophecy, broke forth in jubilant singing. He saw in his son

the man who would prepare the way of the Lord.

And presently, when the Dayspring from on High, and that is the Saviour, was actually born in Bethlehem, a singing heaven visits the earth, the hosts of the angels gather in the night of Bethlehem, and they have left us the heavenly meter of their jubilant symphony.

Hark! the herald angels sing!

Again, there is a song in the heart of men, humble men, they are but shepherds, but when they have seen the glittering Light from on high, they return, and returning they sing their song of the praises of Jehovah.

And, finally, we hear the trembling tones of a Godfearing duet: Simeon and Anna. They have seen the wonder-Child, and they sing of the God-given Redeemer.

They tell me that early in the morning there is a veritable chorus of birds that sing their happy song: the night of darkness is past!

This earthly symbol of happy birds is fulfilled in the church, surrounded by the angels of God, singing in the morning of redemption: Jesus is born today! Glory to God in the highest!

Shall we then not sing?

Oh yes, indeed, we will sing again and again of Jesus, until our song shall be made perfect there where the Dayspring shall have ascended to the height of heaven, and the darkness is forever gone. We shall sing of our Redeemer!

* * * *

The Dayspring from on High!

Whomever He may be, He came to dispel the gloomy darkness of death.

Oh yes, when Jesus came it was night. Also that is divinely ordained. Jesus must be born in the depth of night in Bethlehem. That is in keeping with the state and condition of those whom He would visit.

And what a night!

There was deep darkness in Zion.

Darkness is absence of the light, and spiritually it is absence of all goodness and virtue. And it is also presence of all evil and wickedness.

Darkness is utter impotence to see, to walk and to live.

And by Divine decree: those that walk in darkness shall not have the light of life.

And the objects of this wonderful song of Zachariah are those that "sit" in darkness and in the land of the shadow of death. The picture is horribly complete.

A horribly complete picture, for that word "death" tells us the terrible quality of the darkness and the gloom that surrounds them.

Darkness of death! It is the folly of the natural mind, the crookedness of unrighteous souls, and the corruption of the entire nature of man. It is the very opposite of the beauteous image of God which adorned us originally.

Such is the night of Bethlehem.

Oh, let us not gloss over this awful fact. If you do, you will never be able to sing the Christmas carols of the heavenly host of angels. Exactly in the measure that you see the gloom of the night of sin and guilt, do you see also the glittering and the shining Light of the Dayspring from on High.

The song of Zachariah is about those people that sat in darkness and in the shadow of death!

* * * *

But attend to the name which he gives to them, a name that spells singing and rejoicing, the jubilant cry and the God-given anthem of praise.

What is it? It is the name "His people"!

That possessive pronoun means infinitely more than mere possession. Does not God possess everything and everyone, be he wicked or good, be he elect or reprobate?

They are His people because He loved them from all eternity. It is a possessive pronoun indeed, but it tells us of the relation of loving possession. It tells of a love that never knew a beginning. As old as Jehovah is so old is the love which sends you your Christmas, and your Christmas-Child, and your Christmas joy! You are His people, and it is for that reason that the Dayspring from on High will visit you again and again.

And that Dayspring, whomever we mean, will visit you because you became a sinner in time, and since He loves you eternally, He loves you even when you were sinners, and sat in the darkness of the shadow of death.

You dare not speak any different on that glorious day when you remember the song of the angels. One of the most important of the heavenly host has told it to Mary: "for He shall save His people from their

sin!" And the host of angels sang of the "men of God's goodpleasure."

It is because the "people" are so blessed that we commemorate the days of advent and the Christmas day.

* * * *

Look, if you can, into the Face of that Dayspring!

I say: if you can, for it is tantamount with looking into the golden lustre of Divine mercy! The Son of God comes with the glory of God's unspeakable pity and commiseration.

Let us look at that Dayspring!

Yes, it is imagery. It is the sun in his rising. The Dayspring from on High is the sun when it appears at the horizon and sheds its golden lustre, prophesying of a day when all shall be bathed in light, light, glorious light, all the Day of Eternity! I would shout it from the housetops: There shall be no night there! And why not? Because it is the place where the Dayspring has run His course. Eternally He shall stand and shine at the zenith of the heavenly heaven of God.

Oh yes, it is Jesus Christ the Lord.

You knew it all along. You have heard of Him so much and so often. When you could scarcely speak, they told you of that Christ-Child. It was the theme of the whole life of your forebears, of your progenitors, your teachers, your pastors, your friends, your whole world of thought, expression and action. Oh yes, we knew it! The Dayspring from on High is the blessed Son of God who comes to us with healing in His wings. Shall we then not make merry on Christmas eve? If we did not the very stones and the rocks would organize their Christmas programs.

And we will continue to look into the golden lustre of Divine mercy, for that is Jesus Christ.

It is in the text: look at it! Through the tender mercy of our God!

Mercy! Divine compassion! It is God, tenderly commiserating with the miserable object of which we spoke above. Mercy always has to do with misery.

Jesus is the Mercy of Triune God!

And this mercy has visited us. God came to you "on company".

He did so, long, long ago.

First, in the Word of Promise in the first Paradise. Oh that seed of the woman! Well, here she is: the final woman: Mary the mother of Jesus.

The "people", *His* people, clung to that promise throughout all the ages with their attending death and darkness. They loved to bring forth children, and they hoped for the redemption of Israel.

Second, He came in the humble city of Bethlehem. There is the Dayspring from on High. Careful, do

not stumble here in this smelly barn. Come, do not be afraid, come closer if you want to see the "golden lustre" of a Sun that shall shine unto all eternity! Oh yes, you are right: He lies in the sour-smelling manger, the place where beasts of the field slaver and munch and eat their fodder. Oh yes, you are right. There is no mistake.

All this misery, this poverty, this degradation is a picture of the darkness of the shadow of your and my death.

But it is also the visiting of that Dayspring. It is the eternal mercy of your and my God, blessed forever!

He came.

He visited me.

And He proved His mercy in His coming. The dirty stable, the animals, the sour-smelling manger, the swaddlingclothes, the poverty-stricken and forsaken mother and "father" are so many proofs that He came in order to shine on me, and to continue to shine on me, until all my darkness is gone and I do not have to spend my eternity in the outer darkness of hell. He went there for me.

Such is the Light of the Dayspring that visited you and me.

In accents sweet it is a song of mercy of God. He was moved with our misery and absorbed it. Yes, that is the right word. It is absorbed. In all my afflictions He was afflicted. Carry over this cypher and carry it over and over again, unto all eternity, for He bore our eternal sorrows. Reason why His name is also Man of Sorrows.

Shall we then not sing on Christmas eve?

We shall sing and we shall teach the little ones to sing until the sun and the moon shall shine no more.

And then He shall continue to shine.

Oh yes, shine on Christ of God, Sun of righteousness Golden lustre, Bearer of Divine mercy of Thy God!

* * * *

And the result?

Has Christmas a fruit?

Zacharias shall sing also of that.

Listen to him: To give knowledge of salvation unto His people by the remission of sins . . . to guide our feet into the way of peace!

To give knowledge of salvation *by the remission of sins!*

Who is there among you who has not tortured himself with the thought of his or her terrible sins? Do you remember the nights when sleep fled and slumber vanished from your tearstained eyes? Do you remember the nights when you uttered unheard groanings, shed "dry" tears, gave vent to sighing and murmuring?

Man! No matter who you are: do you know your sins and misery?

And have you learned to bewail them before the Face of Him who KNOWS ALL AND EVERY SIN YOU COMMITTED! A good question to begin your festivities when the days of advent are over and when the ADVENTED ONE came!

Well then: this is the Gospel of Christmas. This is the result of the shining Dayspring from on High: He took all your sins away, never to return. There is remission of sins.

It means that when you appear before the Judgment Seat, you shall hear Jesus say to God: I will not that this one and that one and all the others there and here, descend into the pit: I HAVE FOUND A RANSOM!

Remission of sin means that when finally you will see the glorious Face of God, that this Face will be wreathed in smiles of goodpleasure in you, and you, and you!

He will be silent in His love regarding all your sin, and He shall be voluble in His words of welcome on that first day in heaven. At the door you will hear Him say: Welcome home my son, my daughter! Your sins are forever gone. Come in and enter into the joy of your Lord!

And why?

Because of Christmas!

And that knowledge He gives. And that knowledge we embrace.

And though we smile in that knowledge through our tears of suffering, here in the midst of devils and wicked men, we smile nevertheless, for Jesus gave us the knowledge of salvation, by the remission of our grievous sins.

* * * *

But there is more: to guide our feet into the way of peace!

Peace is the harmony between your heart and the heart of God. When His heartbeat and yours beat in unison, and you know that, then you taste peace. In a figure: when you sing a song with God and when your voices merge and you sing as one. Then you have peace.

The way to that peace is the Christ-Child.

His name is the Prince of Peace.

And He has made peace through His heart's blood. He is the great Peace-maker.

And Christmas tells me that He takes your hand and leads you on the way of peace to the place where your peace will eternally flow like a river!

Blessed night when Jesus was born!

G. V.

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EDITORIALS

A Question Regarding Paul

The Grand Haven adult Bible Class sends me the following question:

"Editor, Standard Bearer
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Dear Editor:—

We would appreciate having your opinion voiced with respect to the following:

"It is, of course, impossible to determine the exact time of one's regeneration but to explain the apostle Paul's religious zeal prior to his conversion, (Phillip. 3:6) is it probable that he was already regenerated and that this zeal was a fruit of that work? Or was his regeneration and conversion simultaneous and if so, from whence arises this zeal?"

Thanking you, we eagerly await your reply.

Fraternally,

Grand Haven Adult Bible Class.

In answer the following:

1. The Editor, that is, the Rev. Hoeksema is not available at this time to answer your question. However, the undersigned "subs" for him, and therefore, I will do my best.

2. The texts, pertinent to this question are, among others, the following:

Philipp. 3:6: "Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless."

I Tim. 1:3: "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief."

II Tim. 1:3: "I thank God whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience. . . ."

Acts 9:3-8; 22:6-11; and 26:12-18.

2. There are two inaccuracies which crept into your thinking, and which we better treat first. They are.

a. The idea that the mistaken zeal of Paul could have been the fruit of his regeneration. There is only one fruit of regeneration, and that is conversion; b. The idea that regeneration and conversion could possibly be simultaneous. That is impossible. Regeneration is the root of conversion. Proof: ad a. Regeneration is the quickening of the new man in Christ: *II Cor.* 4:6; and *II Cor.* 5:17. It is through the operation of the Holy Spirit of Christ in the heart of man, through which he becomes "one plant with Christ". And you will understand that no mistaken zeal, sinful zeal, such as of Paul in his unconverted state, could

possibly spring from that holy seed which is in the regenerated man's heart. See also I John 3:9. ad b. See I Pet. 1:23. There you have proof that regeneration and conversion cannot be simultaneous. To be born again in that text constitutes the whole process: regeneration in the narrow sense, namely, in the sense that we are suddenly, in the twinkling of an eye, made alive in Christ; and also conversion which is its fruit and which is a continual process. That this is so with respect to that text is plain when we note how the man is born again *out of* seed and *through* the Word. The result of the two is the new birth. Again: when we speak of regeneration in the narrow sense of the word, we have in mind the implanting of the new seed through the immediate operation of the Holy Spirit of Christ. But when we speak of the new birth in the broader sense of the word, we have in mind the quickening of the inner man, plus the coming of that life in his consciousness, namely, his conversion. And according to my opinion, the text in question (I Pet. 1:23) pictures both: born 1. out of seed; and 2. through the Word of God.

3. Now about the heart of your question: how must we explain the zeal of Paul before he was converted? In answer to that question I would say that Paul's zeal in persecuting the church of Christ was neither the fruit of his regeneration, nor of his conversion, but sprang from purely carnal motives and was to be condemned. We know that the Jews had the oracles of God, and that there were many devout Jews also at the time that Christ sojourned on earth. But the zeal of Paul was plainly no devotion to God. Attend to what he himself says about that zeal in I Tim. 1:3. He calls himself a blasphemer, and a persecutor and injurious. But what to my mind is the plainest proof for the stand that Paul's zeal was carnal is found in Acts 22:3, where we read: "I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, *as ye all are this day!*" Note that Paul compares his zeal before his conversion to the zeal of the wicked Jews that surround him and that thirst for his blood. Of that zeal he himself says in Romans 11:7 that it did not obtain that for which it sought after, namely, justification by the works of the law, but that the election obtained it.

I would conclude therefore and say that the zeal of Paul was carnal and very sinful; indeed, the zeal of Paul before his conversion is so worthless that he himself in the verses following upon the verse you sent in, counts all those things a loss for Christ. See Phil. 3:7 and especially verse 8.

Hoping that I may shed some light on your question, I am yours in His service,

G. V.

Regrettfully Passed By

Our readers will remember that our Editor at various occasions enlightened you on the First Reformed Ecumenical Synod which was held in Grand Rapids, Mich., from August 14 to August 30, in 1946.

The Christian Reformed Church(es) had also delegated a number of men to that Synod which claims to be Reformed, but which did some things which are very unreformed.

These delegates brought their report to the Synod of the Christian Reformed Churches which was held last summer in Grand Rapids, Michigan. That we did not comment on their report and our portion in it, is because I did not get a copy of their acts in my possession until recently.

Yes, we have had our portion in that report, and I think you have a right to know about it.

The Ecumenical Synod decided to express itself on the foundation of such Synods. (For the benefit of those among you who do not know the meaning of the word ecumenical, I would give you the meaning as follows: It refers to a synod of the Reformed Churches that are found in the whole wide world; and therefore it is a synod that is or claims to be (sic) universal.) Well the Ecumenical Synod decided to make the foundation to be "the Holy Scriptures of the old and the New Testaments as interpreted by the confessions of the Reformed Faith, namely, and then follows a list of those Reformed Confessions, among which are found our own Three Forms of Unity, namely, The Belgic Confession, The Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dordt.

On page 48 of their Acts they say as follows: "All Churches which profess the Reformed faith are to be invited unless they fail to exercise discipline in the case of departures from the Reformed faith."

Now I do not believe that I am presumptuous or overly proud when I say that I expected that our churches would be invited to such an Ecumenical Synod of the future. I would even go one step farther and say that the whole Christian Reformed Church(es) know that we are Reformed.

But that is not the point I wish to make. It is not a subjective question at all. They went on record to state that all churches that profess the Reformed faith would be invited. Further, they enumerate a list of Reformed Confessions, and our Confessions are among the list. So the only proper conclusion would be that they address our Synod and request us to send delegates to their Ecumenical Synod.

But no, such is not the case. Listen to what they sav. First they enumerate a list of churches which they *will* invite, and then they say this about our churches: "Your delegates also regret the fact that

they are unable to advise synod to extend an invitation to participate in the next Reformed Ecumenical Synod to the Protestant Reformed Church (that should have read Churches, since we believe in the conceptions of Reformed Church Polity and also try to practice it. G.V.), since your degelates are convinced that as long as the Protestant Reformed Churches assume the position and attitude as expressed in the official communication addressed to the Christian Reformed Synod of 1943, Acts 1943, Art. 161, attempts in the direction of ecumenical friendship with the Protestant Reformed Churches are futile."

Please note, that the above ground for their decision militates against their accepted ground for the invitation of possible churches to the general synod. They said: all churches that profess the Reformed faith are to be invited. And now they say: we will not invite the Protestant Reformed Churches because they sent us a bad letter, or they sent us a letter which proves that they are not the kind of people one would associate with.

But here is the real reason: 1. They do not like us because we *are* Reformed, even fundamentally Reformed; see Acts of the Christian Reformed Synod of 1924 in re decision relative the Three Points. 2. Hence, they must find an alibi in the face of their own action; the alibi is found in a letter which we sent not in 1943 but in 1940.

It is a sad case. The action of the delegates to the F. R. E. S. is really very unfair and evil too. What did we write in that letter? We reminded them of their sins in throwing outside the pale of their churches faithful office bearers. We reminded them also of their evil action in raising the error of common grace to an accepted dogma in the church of God.

The brethren need not exclude us on account of that letter since we told them very humbly that, and I quote: "we on our part gladly confess that we are far from having attained to perfection, and hereby express our willingness to receive and consider whatsoever admonitions you may deem proper to give us, either with regard to our doctrine or to our conversation. . . ." I ask you in all seriousness: is it proper to exclude such people from your R. E. S. since they confessedly are Reformed and ethically prove themselves tractible, as is clearly proven from the above excerpt?

But no, the brethren reveal all too clearly what is the real object. They have proven it also in the case of the Liberated Churches. They condemned them also, and without hearing one word from the other side, a side that counts 100,000 souls. They want a social get-together at stated times; they want "een onderonsje", not a ruggedly Reformed Synod. Our present generation of would-be Reformed theologians hate the very heart of Reformed theology. And these are no empty words. This can be proven. They

throw outside the pale of the churches men that love the Reformed truth.

And when the so-called Ecumenicals get together in Holland, Michigan, they build the graves of the prophets, and say: if we. . . , you know the rest.

It is a sad case.

Not that we are not invited. I doubt if our synod would have sent delegates to a synod which at its very inception corrupted true Reformed church polity such as they did in the case of the Liberated churches. I doubt if our synod would delegate men and expend money for such a conglomeration of weak-backed would-be Calvinists who prove at every turn that they are devoid of the true love of Reformed truth.

But it is sad when we see this wicked action by men who call themselves Reformed. We are sad for their sake.

And it is a sign of the times.

G. V.

OUR DOCTRINE

Our Covenant God

*The Propriety of Discussing the Covenant
At This Time.*

Reformed writers or theologians of the past have not always accorded the subject of the Covenant the same place in their discussion or treatment of Reformed dogmatics. The late Professor Bavinck of the Netherlands, in his "Gereformeerde Dogmatiek" treats this subject in his Christology, the doctrine concerning the Christ. Prof. L. Berkhof, in his "Reformed Dogmatics", discusses the Covenant in Anthropology, the doctrine of man. The late Dr. A. Kuyper of the Netherlands speaks of the Covenant immediately prior to Christology and following upon his discussion of the fall of man and its consequences. Others, among whom also the late Prof. Ten Hoor, treat this subject in Soteriology, the doctrine of salvation. Until now we have discussed the Knowledge of God, the rational proofs of His existence, God's Revelation in the Holy Scriptures, His Oneness, and the doctrine of the Trinity. We now purpose to continue our contributions to the rubric, "Our Doctrine", with a series of articles on the Covenant. We believe that a series of articles on this subject can be of benefit to the readers of our Standard Bearer, particularly to our Protestant Reformed young people. We are also convinced that God's living fellowship and relationship with His people, His covenant fellowship with His own, is inseparably connected with His own being and life—theologians, such as Kuyper and Bavinck, have recognized and given expression to this truth. We believe

the trinitarian life of God to be the basis of the Lord's covenant fellowship with us. Hence, having treated the doctrine of the Trinity in our last article, we would at this time begin our series of articles on the covenant.

A Tremendously Vital Subject.

The subject of the Covenant is of tremendous and vital importance. It is surely Scriptural. The Word of God speaks of a relation between God and man in various ways. The Scriptures speak, among other things of: the covenant, God's dwelling with man and man's dwelling with God, Enoch's and Noah's walking and talking with God, the tabernacle and temple of the Old Testament, Abraham as the friend of God, God's eternal tabernacle with man in the new heavens and upon the new earth. Of importance is this subject, however, not only because of the emphasis which it receives in Holy Writ, but also because of the many questions which it occasions within the heart and mind of the child and church of God. Should we speak of parties or of parts in the covenant? Our Protestant Reformed Churches prefer to speak of "parts" instead of "parties". Also our Baptism Form speaks of "parts" in the familiar expression: "Even as in all covenants there are contained two parts". Prof. K. Schilder of the Liberated Churches of the Netherlands, however, prefers to speak of "parties". This was emphasized by him during his recent visit among us. He spoke of God as the large or capital "P" and of man as the small "p". In all justice to the learned theologian of the Netherlands it must be noted that he spoke of the *large* "P" and the *small* "p" exactly because he would emphasize the *infinite* distinction which exists between God and man. Repeatedly he emphasized that he spoke of God and of man as parties in the covenant not because they must be considered independently in any sense of the word. Nevertheless he preferred to speak of God and of man as the capital "P" and the small "p" respectively. And the reason which prompts him to make this distinction is that, although we must maintain the infinite distinction between God and man, we must nevertheless not lose sight of the fact that man, as a moral-rational creature, assumes an active part, plays an active role within the sphere of the covenant. Another question, always of vital interest for the anxious child of God, is that which concerns the position which our children occupy within the covenant. Must we regard, presuppose them to be regenerated? This is the position of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands today. In this they follow the conception as conceived and developed by the late Dr. A. Kuyper. According to Dr. Kuyper, presupposed regeneration is the ground for the baptism of infants. Or, must we regard all our children as essentially of the covenant, as covenant-children in the essential

Prof. Heyns. He declared the promise to constitute the essence of the covenant. And, inasmuch as he applied the promise to all, he placed all within the covenant in the essential sense of the word. And, although Prof. Schilder, during his visit among us, vehemently rejected the Heynsian conception of Baptism and the Covenant, also the Liberated Church of the Netherlands seem to desire to say something positive for all the children of believers. The writer of this article is of the conviction that the most important question for the believing parent is not the salvation of this particular child or children. God's covenant and the realization of that covenant is and must remain the supreme question. The church gives birth to a two-fold seed. And in this we must be willing to be a sweet-smelling savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish—2 Cor. 2:14-16.

Fundamentally but two conceptions of the covenant are possible. The covenant is either a means unto an end, or it is the end itself. The covenant is either the way of salvation or a contract which God has sovereignly established with man unto his salvation, or it is salvation itself, the expression of God's eternal and blessed fellowship with His people in Christ Jesus.

Various Conceptions of the Covenant.

The first conception of the covenant to which we would call attention is that of the late Prof. Heyns. He sought the essence of the covenant in the promise. However, we must bear in mind that he did not understand the promise in the Reformed sense of the word. The promise, according to the Holy Scriptures and understood in the Reformed sense, is the word of Divine faithfulness whereby He declares unto His people that he will bestow upon them the eternal salvation which He has laid away for them from before the foundation of the world. The Reformed conception of the promise is not that of an offer but exactly that of a *promise*. And in a *promise* the question whether we will receive something is determined *solely* by him who gives the promise. But Prof. Heyns understood the promise in the sense of an offer. God's promise of salvation was therefore an offer of salvation. And, according to him, this offer of salvation is extended to all. To support this view, Heyns advanced his pelagianism as applied to the baptism of infants. The professor was well aware of the fact that, according to the Holy Scriptures, all are conceived and born in sin and therefore wholly unable to accept this gracious offer of salvation. He, therefore, advanced the theory that the Sacrament of Baptism confers upon each child a sort of qualifying grace, not saving grace, enabling that particular child to accept the promise or offer of salvation which would later be extended to him in the preaching of the gospel.

In the first place, it must be rejected because it is guilty of Pelagianism. It declares that each child is rendered able to accept the "offered salvation" without regenerating grace. Man, therefore, is not wholly corrupt apart from the regenerating grace of God. This is Pelagianism. Secondly, this view must be rejected because it contradicts the Scriptures. Paul, confronted in Romans 9 by the promise of God on the one hand and by the destruction of thousands of Israelites and their evident damnation on the other hand, declares that the word of God (the promise) had not taken none effect exactly because the promise had never been extended to all. According to Paul in Romans 9 the objects of the promise are not all who are called Israelites but only the true Israelites according to election. Thirdly, the Heynsian view must be rejected because it involves a virtual denial of the Trinity in its interpretation of the first part of our Baptism Form. According to our Baptism Form, and we quote: "Second: Holy Baptism witnesses and seals unto us the washing away of our sins through Jesus Christ. Therefore we are baptized into the Name of God, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. For when we are baptized into the Name of the Father, God the Father witnesses and seals unto us that He makes an eternal covenant of grace with us and adopts us for His children and heirs, and therefore will provide us with every good thing and avert all evil or turn it to our profit. And when we are baptized into the Name of the Son, the Son seals unto us that He washes us in His blood from all our sins, incorporating us into the fellowship of His death and resurrection, so that we are freed from our sins and accounted righteous before God. Likewise, when we are baptized into the Name of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit assures us by this holy sacrament that He will dwell in us, and sanctify us to be members of Christ, imparting to us that which we have in Christ, namely the washing away of our sins and the daily renewing of our lives, till we shall finally be presented without spot among the assembly of the elect in life eternal." Heyns, in that particular part of this quotation which deals with the work of the Holy Spirit, laid all emphasis upon the word "will", "that He *will* dwell in us", and emphasized that this will or desire of the Holy Spirit to apply the blessings of Christ unto us was independent upon our acceptance of the gospel or willingness to permit this sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. And this involves us in a virtual denial of the Trinity. The Father has made an eternal covenant of grace with us and adopted us to be His children and heirs—this is a fact. The Son has washed us in His blood and incorporated us into the fellowship of His death and resurrection—this, too, is a fact. The Father and the Son have, therefore, witnessed and sealed unto this eternal covenant of grace, the adoption unto children and heirs, the wash-

ing away of our sins, and the incorporation into Christ's death and resurrection. But the Spirit? Does He witness and seal unto us the bestowal of the blessings of the Father and the Son? Not at all. He will do this, if only we accept the proffered blessings of salvation. The Father and Son on the one hand, and the Spirit on the other hand, therefore, are not in complete accord.

A second view of the covenant to which we would call attention is that which conceives of the covenant as a contract or mutual agreement, with mutual stipulations and obligations. Prof. Berkhof's definition of the covenant, virtually the same as the definition of the late Prof. Ten Hoor (page 121 of his *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*), page 277 of his *Reformed Dogmatics*, reads: "The covenant of grace is that gracious agreement between the offended God and the offending but elect sinner, in which God promises salvation through faith in Christ, and the sinner accepts this believingly, promising a life of faith and obedience." We should note in this definition that God promises salvation through faith in Christ, and the sinner must promise faith and obedience. Older theologians, such as Mastricht, also regarded the covenant as such a mutual agreement or contract (see *Standard Bearer*, Vol. 1, No. 12, pages 15-16). We must bear in mind, in our evaluation of this conception of the covenant, that it was maintained that the covenant of God with man, as far as its origin, beginning, and establishment is concerned, is solely of God, "monopleurisch". Nevertheless, in its essence it is presented as a contract and mutual agreement. This conception of the covenant is based, among other things, upon the so-called "counsel of peace" or "counsel of redemption", in which the Father and the Son are described as entering into such an agreement or contract, the Father requires obedience, etc., and promising eternal life to the Son, and the Son promising obedience and expecting eternal life of the Father. Another proof for this conception of the covenant is seen in the text which is regarded as a fundamental expression of this covenant relationship: "I will be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee, and ye shall be My people." God, therefore, promises to be our God. And we must respond and promise to be God's people. Besides this text, many other texts are quoted in which the obligations of the people of God (hope, faith, love, etc.,) are mentioned in Holy Writ.

Also to this conception of the covenant we object. Such a conception of the covenant is indeed possible among men. Among men a covenant must be regarded as a mutual agreement or contract. Men can stand over against one another on an equal footing. But this is surely impossible as far as the relationship between the living God and man is concerned. God is the living God. He is the infinite Creator of heaven and earth.

The entire universe, not merely man therefore, is less than a drop of water on the bucket and a particle of dust on the balances. Hope, faith, obedience, the gifts of the grace of God, are not to be regarded as the conditions upon which God's covenant with us is realized, but as fruits of the Spirit of God in Christ Jesus. Hence, God's work is always unconditional, whereas our personal or covenant obligations are nothing else than what is required of us because of the nature of the grace of God. God's grace is such that it saves us as moral-rational creatures and therefore causes us to work and to will according to His good pleasure.

A third conception of the covenant is that which regards the covenant as a way of salvation. This view is closely related to the conception of the covenant as a contract or agreement. God, establishing His covenant with us, makes known unto us the way of salvation. This way of salvation is faith in Jesus Christ, our Lord. This, then, is the significance of God's covenant with man. To this we object that, if the covenant of grace be merely a way of salvation, it is necessarily only temporary and comes to an end as soon as the salvation has been attained. However, according to the Word of God, God's covenant is presented as an eternal covenant. This does not mean merely that it is unbreakable, that, according to Prof. Berkhof "God remains forever true to His covenant" and will therefore grant life in the way of faith. But the covenant itself is eternal, is never annulled, abrogated. God will dwell forever with man.

A fourth conception of the covenant to which we would finally call attention is that which regards the covenant of God with man as an alliance against a third party. This view of the covenant was advanced by the late Dr. A. Kuyper. In his "Dictaten Dogmatiek", locus de Foedere, pages 3-5 we read, and we translate: "The idea of the concluding of a covenant signifies in the most pregnant sense an alliance between two or more persons, families, tribes, or empires, with the purpose to defend oneself with united strength against a third power, from whom danger does or can threaten. The concept 'covenant' falls under the genus, 'alliance', but it is a species of this genus, and its specific character lies in the uniting of self to ward off danger. . . . Whereas the concept 'covenant' is applied to the relation between God and man, not only in the present day but also in times when the concluding of a covenant was generally understood as an alliance against a third and dangerous power, hence, in the Covenant of Grace as well as in the Covenant of Works, we may not lose out of sight this character of being united against a third party. Also the concluding of a covenant of God with man presupposes, as background, the existence and operation of a third power, which threatens God in His honour as well as man in his position and future, and against which

God and man unite. This third power is, concretely, Satan, and in general the ungodliness into which the godliness, which originally had been laid into the creature, could turn about." In the last statement Dr. A. Kuyper refers to the possibility of our holiness and righteousness and godliness becoming corruption and unrighteousness and ungodliness. Hence, the meaning of this learned theologian is clear. Dr. Kuyper conceived of the covenant between God and man as an alliance against Satan and sin. When later in the same book Dr. Kuyper discusses the Covenant of Works he again declares that Adam not only received from God the calling to exercise dominion, but also the mandate to protect and defend Paradise and the entire cosmos in behalf of God against the devil.

Also this conception of the Covenant we consider impossible. We reject this view mainly because fundamentally, it gives us a dualistic conception of the realization of God's covenant. Sin and Satan are presented in this view dualistically. God and Satan are presented here as standing over against each other, and the Lord and man conclude an alliance with the purpose of thwarting and frustrating the Evil One. Of course, Satan is the adversary of God. The very name "Satan" signifies "adversary". This, however, must not be understood in a dualistic sense of the word as if the devil can in any sense frustrate or oppose the work of the Lord. That the devil is the enemy of God must be understood spiritually. Spiritually he hates Jehovah. Spiritually he attempts throughout the ages to frustrate the realization of God's covenant and the coming of His Kingdom. However, in this Divine realization of His Covenant and Kingdom sin and the devil must not be viewed dualistically as if they are opposing the work of the Lord and that the Lord, in spite of all their evil efforts, manages to realize His counsel. Fact is, sin and Satan serve the Lord and the realization of His covenant. This is surely the testimony of Holy Writ. "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things"—Is. 45:8. And in I Cor. 3:21-23 we read: "Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are your's; Whether Paul, or Appollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." And therefore the church of the living God can take the cry of victory upon their lips of 2 Cor. 4:15: "For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God." Indeed, we must fight the good fight of faith. And the Lord enables us by His grace to fight that good fight against sin, Satan, and all the powers of hell. Nevertheless, we are more than conquerors, and all things, also sin and Satan, work together for our eternal good and salvation.

Conclusion.

We conclude, therefore, that the covenant must not be understood as a promise (and surely not in the arminian sense), or as a contract or agreement with mutual stipulations and obligations, or as a way of salvation inasmuch as the covenant according to the Word of God is an eternal covenant, or as an alliance against sin and Satan. Rather, God's covenant is the highest to which man can possibly attain. God will forever dwell with man. It constitutes the very essence of eternal life—"For this is eternal life, that we know the one and only true God, through Jesus Christ Whom He has sent"—John 17:3. God's covenant is the relationship of living friendship between God and His people in Christ Jesus, His Son and their Lord. To this we will call attention, the Lord willing, in subsequent articles.

H. V.

God's People Live Alone

We now turn to the book of Exodus, the 14th chapter, and the last clause of the 19th verse thereof, and read, "so that the one came not near the other all that night."

The families of Israel, the last time we left them, were eating the Lord's passover in their respective homes. And in the same night the Lord went out in the midst of the land of Egypt and the firstborn in the land of Egypt died by the Lord's plague, as He had said. There was a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, and shall not be like it any more. Pharaoh and his servants came down to Moses, and they bow themselves to him, and say, "Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee." They are urgent upon the people that they may send them out in haste; for they say, "we shall all be dead men." So the people of Israel take their journey and encamp in Etham on the fringe of the wilderness. If they continue on the road that they have taken—the straight road to Canaan—they will shortly arrive at Canaan's borders. But they depart from this road. They turn southward and march to Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the Red Sea, at which place, arriving, they encamp. In leaving the straight road to Canaan, the children of Israel have followed the instructions of the Lord. Said the Lord to Moses, "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pihahiroth between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon; before it ye shall encamp by the sea. For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in. Thus they have fallen into a ready trap

for my forces. And Pharaoh, hearing does indeed conclude that the wilderness shuts them in. For Pharaoh's heart is in the Lord's hands to desire, will, think, conclude and speak, and do exactly as the Lord wills that he shall think and do. And the Lord continues, "And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; that I may be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all His host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord." And the Lord does harden Pharaoh's heart; so that the narrative continues, "And the heart of Pharaoh and his servants was turned—mark you, was turned, turned by the Lord—against God's people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us." And accordingly, he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him, including all the chariots of Egypt, so we read. And the text continues, "And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel." Shall we, with these scriptures before us, maintain that God was all the time purposing and striving to save Pharaoh but that, according to His changed purpose, He nevertheless destroyed him, because Pharaoh would not let God do anything with him but to destroy him? In a word, shall we with these scriptures before us, make of God an impotent diety, a football of Pharaoh?

Indeed, as sovereignly hardened by the Lord, Pharaoh pursues after God's people. Now according to the scriptures, also the doings of God, presented above, have a bearing on the higher things of Christ's work and His kingdom. The Scriptures tell us that the relation these doings of God obtain to the higher things of Christ's work, is that of prophetic type or picture, if you will. As has already been explained and also proved with the Scriptures, Pharaoh and the Egypt of the Exodus narrative is the type, the prophetic picture, of that devil-worshipping, God-defying, immoral, civilized, refined cultured, holy-seed persecuting and Satan-inspired consort of evil powers, that crucified the Christ, and through the ages of this present dispensation of the world, persecuteth Christ's church with the aim to destroy it out of the earth. It is verily this anti-christian coalition of dark principalities, that in and through the Pharaoh and the Egypt of the oppression and as represented by this Pharaoh and his Egypt, follows the people of Israel, the church of God, in their track. Lifting up their eyes and beholding Pharaoh with all his people and with all the chariots of Egypt, marching after them, the people of Israel are sore afraid. These people are no cowards. The mighty Egyptian host comes approaching them from the north. There is no escape in that direction. Eastward is the Red Sea. To the west and south rise foreboding mountains. Escape is impossible. Defence is madness. From the point of view of nature, their plight is hopeless, their doom sealed. These people then must not

be accused of lacking in natural courage. Who among mortals would not be terrified by such a predicament? What these people—this redeemed people of God—lack, is not what men call courage, but faith,—faith in their God, in His promises, in His wonderworking power. Their lack of faith is serious. It is a great sin. For it means that even with all God's marvelous works as performed in their behalf still fresh in their memory, they still refuse to discern that there is no limit to His power to save them out of any trouble, in that with Him all things are possible; that He, their God—the God of their redemption, as He has just proved Himself to be, is just as willing as He is able; and that therefore the thing for them to do is to trust in Him in their present plight and be still, and follow where Jesus leads them.

And verily, He is leading them this very moment. For we read right here in the narrative, "And they took their journey from Succoth and encamped in Ethem. . . . And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people." This pillar of cloud that the narrative in the 19th verse of chapter 14 identifies with the angel of God, is the visible manifestation of Christ Jesus, and in His face of Christ's God, the triune Jehovah. And He goes before them, leading them at this juncture to the Red Sea. But that precisely is their difficulty. If the Lord actually means well with them, should he not by another mighty demonstration of His power destroy that advancing Egyptian host right there and then. But the Lord does not destroy that advancing Egyptian host right then and there. But He leads His people to the Sea, as if their deliverance from that dreadful hour could possibly come to them through that Sea. It cannot be. Entering that sea, they will perish. All will be drowned. Such is the reasoning of the unbelief of those terrified Hebrews. It is well that we understand that we have to do here with unbelief. But let us not fail to confess with tears of true contrition of heart that this same unbelief dwells in us, in our flesh—I speak now of God's people—and that as often as it gets hold of our tongue, we go to voicing these same sentiments of unbelief. For the fact of the matter is that night reigns on this earth, the fearful night of sin and unrighteousness; and over it the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven in a sea of judgments that flood the earth. And we are just as fearful of that sea as were those terrified Hebrews, just as slow to believe that we can go into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground and be saved by its water from Pharaoh and his hosts as were they.

But it is the Lord's will to lead His people to the

promised land of their abode through the sea of His wrath and judgment; for He wants Pharaoh and the Egyptians in that sea. For in that deep He purposes once more and permanently to put all His plagues upon Pharaoh's heart and upon the heart of the Egyptians, and with the Egyptians knowing and confessing that He is the Lord, to deliver His people from their clutch forever by drowning them, the Egyptians, in the deep. And, therefore, the way to the Father's house must needs lead through the deep of divine wrath and judgment, in order that this separation between Israel and the Egyptians may be permanently effected through the Lord's coming in judgment upon the wicked, the defiers of His name and the spoilers of His people. There is no other way by which God's people can be saved from the world, from that vile consort of evil powers of which Satan is the prince, saved from this dark coalition, unto Christ's God, than the way of Christ's coming in judgment over it, and destroying it by the breath of His nostrils. And there is no other way by which the Lord can get him honour upon Pharaoh and upon His chariots and horsemen, than by the way that leads through the deep. Therefore that deep of divine wrath and judgment cannot be circumvented. This way must be pursued by the redeemed of God to the end. And the end is glory for all such who know Christ in the power of His resurrection.

But the people of Israel are unmindful of this in the terror of their unbelief. They are afraid to go forward. And in their fear they cry out unto the Lord. It is the cry of unbelief, as is also evident from what they say to Moses. They say to him, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou so dealt with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?" This bitter complaint, though directed to Moses, is really meant for God's ears. The fearful complainers have more to say to Moses, namely, this, "Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness." They argue as though the Lord, while they were still in Egypt, had demanded of them to choose between His perpetuating their bondage under Pharaoh and His slaying them in the desert, and as though God, having set aside their choice of having their bondage perpetuated, had appointed them to death in the wilderness. So they reason and this with God's Gospel, as preached to them by Moses and as confirmed by all the wonderful works that the Lord had performed in their behalf still fresh in the memories. And what a wonderful gospel he had preached to them. "I have heard your groanings", He, the Lord, had said to them, "and I have remembered my covenant, and I will bring you out from under the burdens

of the Egyptians, and I will rid you of their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm, and with great judgments: and I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from your burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you into the land, concerning which I sware to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an inheritance." What a marvellous message of peace with which the Lord had come to them. And how copious the evidence with which He has already provided them, that He means to do as He has promised. And yet, holding the truth under in unrighteousness, they dare to tell Him to His face that He has appointed them to death, and that accordingly He is now about to slay them through the agency of the Egyptians. O, the sinfulness of sin! And this whole argument of theirs springs from their unwillingness to follow where the angel of the Lord, Christ Jesus, leadeth. They will not to enter into the deep. Moses attempts to silence the voice of their unbelief by telling them that presently they will see the Lord's salvation. "Fear not," says he to them, "stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew you this day; for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them no more forever." Yet Moses, too, seems not to perceive that salvation is to come to them through that sea and that the way of escape lies in the deep. Being therefore at a loss to know and to say just how the Lord is to save them from that dreadful hour, he, too, cries unto the Lord, while he should be telling the people to go forward. He, too, is deserving of rebuke therefore, which he also receives. Says the Lord to him, "Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward, thus go where Christ leadeth," go into the deep, in order that the separation may be effected in that deep. "Therefore, Moses, speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." The Lord continues, "But lift up thy rod, instead of crying unto me," and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow thee: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord. Therefore Moses, speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." And now the Lord acts. According to His purpose that there be separation between His people and the Egyptians, the Angel of God, which goes before the camp of Israel, removes, so we read, and goes behind His people, and stands behind them. So Christ comes between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and He, the Christ, is darkness to the Egyptians, but He gives light by night to His people, so that the one comes not near

the other all that night." Mark you, the one comes not near the other during all this awful night of sin that now reigns on the earth—a night of sin of which the setting of the sun of righteousness in paradise was the commencement. The Egyptians come not near the people of God and the latter come not near the Egyptians. Let us read this picture aright. What it teaches, verily teaches, is that in the sphere of the realities of Christ's kingdom, the children of the world and the children of God, in the spiritual-ethical sense are separated. The one knows not the other, spiritually. And how can it be otherwise? For what concord hath Christ with Belial? what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? And speaking now to God's believing people, "ye are the temple of the living God . . . Wherefore come out from them and be ye separate, saith the Lord. . . and I will receive you." And, mark you, the separation is permanent. And the one came not near the other, all the night." And the true children of God do dwell alone. For the matter is of the Lord. He is darkness to the Egyptians. Yet, He, the Christ, is light. But the light, the gospel of the Christ, is in them darkness. For Christ sovereignly hardens them through that Gospel. And therefore, as so hardened, they hold under the truth in unrighteousness, brand the truth a lie. It means that even the light that is in them is darkness. And if so, how great is that darkness in them. And it is all Christ's work. For He is darkness unto the Egyptians. How then, in the light of these truths and facts, can the Gospel be grace to the Egyptians? It is not. But as to His people, to them Christ gives light in all this terrible night. Upon His people, He lifts up His countenance, bright with the joy of the love that God bears them, the love according to which He takes them to His heart in Christ and saves them unto Himself. So does the angel of the Lord make separation between the Egyptians and His people, even before the latter enter the deep. Indeed, it is only because God's believing people do live alone, that they are willing by the mercy of God to enter into that deep. The man who is not living alone will return to the camp of the Egyptians sooner or later and make his peace with Pharaoh against God's people. Thus, it is just because God's people do live alone, that Pharaoh pursues them into the deep. But when the night is spent, and the everlasting day is at hand, Christ will look unto the wicked, who persecute His people even in the deep and during all the night—look unto the wicked will Christ. And His countenance will wear a terrifying frown. The Egyptians will be afraid. Terrified, they will turn and flee only to be overwhelmed by the floods of God's anger. That will be the final, complete, and permanent separation between His people and the Egyptians. So will the Lord, through the destruction

of the wicked, save His people from the wicked unto Himself. The Lord does verily make separation between His people and the world. What God has separated, let no man, by his vain philosophy join together. God's people dwell alone. And on this account, and on this account only, do they go on dry ground through the sea of God's wrath and anger. Though the sufferings and the tribulation of this present time must be also their portion, yet they go on dry ground through that sea of tribulation. Nay, more, it all works together for their good. And they are saved, but only because they live alone. G. M. O.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

Jonathan's Love Of David

So had David slain the giant Goliath of the Philistines. Seeing their champion dead, the Philistines flee. They should have come to the Hebrews and said, "We are thy servants." So they had promised by the mouth of the giant in the event he should be killed. "If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me," these had been his words, "then will we be your servants". Such had been their proposal. And it had been accepted by David's fighting with their champion. But the impossible had happened. Their champion was killed. And the Philistines now flee. To be sure, they had not intended to keep them to their word. Doubtless it even had not occurred to them that perhaps there would be a word for them to keep. They were too confident that the victory would be to their champion. But yonder the fowls of the air feed on his beheaded carcass. The reproach of the armies of the living God has been wiped out.

We must now go back to verse 40 (of chapter 17) which states that, as equipped with staff and sling and the shepherd's bag containing the five smooth stones that he had taken out of the brook, David draws near to the Philistine. Seeing him go (verse 55), Saul inquires of Abner, the captain of the host, whose son this youth may be. Abner replies that he cannot tell. As his soul liveth, he cannot. The king instructs him to find out. "Enquire thou whose son the stripling is," are his words to Abner.

(This section—17:55-58—in which Saul repeatedly asks, "Whose son is this," is not in conflict with 16:16-23, a passage according to which David was described to Saul at the outset as the son of Jesse of Bethlehem; Saul, after having put himself into communication with David's father by a message, took David into his service; and David played before the king's face with the result that

he was healed from his sufferings by the strains of music. The simple explanation is that Saul does not recognize David. The reasons are not revealed; but a good conjecture is that David had long been absent from court; that Saul had seen him only in moments of madness, which were rare; and that Abner was absent from court when David was there; and that David's personal appearance had undergone a change).

Having killed and beheaded the giant, David returns to the camp of the Israelites with the head of the giant in his hand. Arriving in the headquarters of the camp, which is in Jerusalem (verse 54), he is led into the presence of Saul by Abner (verse 57). Saul's question as to David's identity can now be answered. So the king himself puts to David the question, "Whose son art thou, young man?" David replies, "I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite" (verse 57). Now follows a somewhat long conversation between the two, the content of which is not revealed; but it must exhibit anew David's faith in the wonder-working power of Jehovah, and in His readiness to save His people out of all their troubles in the way of their keeping covenant fidelity. For among the silent listeners to that conversation is also Jonathan, whose soul by the time the conversation is ended, is knit to the soul of David. And he loves David as his own soul. So it is stated (18:1). The binding ties here are spiritual. For the trust of Jonathan, like that of David, is in the Lord, and not, like the trust of Saul, in the arm of flesh. How marvelously the Lord had worked for him in that first crisis! He gave Jonathan the victory over that mighty Philistine army that was pitched in Michmash. And his victory was his faith. So now the two of them—Jonathan and David—suddenly find each other in the Lord. They are one by a common faith in Christ.

The conversation having ended, David expresses the desire to return to his father's house. (This the text at 18:2 plainly presupposes). But Saul will not hear of it. He orders David to stay with him (and Saul took him that day), and takes the son of Jesse into his service anew. The first acquaintance had resulted in Saul's loving David greatly (16:21). But here in this section the narrative is silent regarding Saul's feelings toward David. The king permanently attaches him to his court. But it is not stated that he is motivated by love of David's person. Something remarkable has taken place in between time. The Goliath of the Philistines has been slain by this stripling, David, the son of Jesse. Doubtless, Saul already begins to look askance at David in the fear that he might turn out to be that "neighbor, better than he" to whom the Lord has given the kingdom. If so, it explains his interest in David, his wanting to know who this "stripling" is: and also his insisting that

David permanently abide at his court. He wants to keep David with him in order to be able to control and check on his movements. David, he thinks, is a man to be watched. Though he meaneth not so, Saul opens the way wherein David is trained for the duties of the office of king. So does the wrath of Saul serve God's counsel.

But as to Jonathan and David, that same day they make a covenant, because Jonathan loves David as his own soul (18:3). And Jonathan strips himself of the robe that is upon him, and gives it to David, and his garments even to his sword, and to his bow and to his girdle. Jonathan's doing has greatest significance. Recognizing in David that "neighbor" to whom the Lord has given the kingdom, Jonathan, in contraposition to Saul, who is on the alert to kill that "neighbor" the moment he makes his appearance, waives by this his doing all rights to Saul's throne. He willingly perceives that by the decree of God the throne belongs to David. By the grace of God he submits to God's will; he honours David as his lord and king, goes over to his side, and makes with him a covenant. The articles of this covenant, though perhaps not voiced by the covenanting parties at this time, are revealed in the sequence. Jonathan will do all in his power to save David from the wrath of Saul (20:10). David will show Jonathan kindness as long as the latter lives, and not only him but after his decease also his house forever, then when the Lord hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth (20:15, 16). Jonathan is an excellent saint. He hates Saul, his father, for Christ's sake. For David is Christ. He is willing that David be all and he nothing. So does he find his soul in the way of losing it for Christ's sake. And he acts under the impulse of the love that God sheds abroad in the hearts of His people. For it is stated once and again that he loves David as his own soul.

We must now go back to verse 52 of chapter 17. As was said, when the Philistines see their champion dead, they flee, without trying to battle. With the enemy in flight, the men of Israel and of Judah arise, raise the battle cry, and pursue the enemy. It is not the working of faith that we here behold,—faith in the wonder-working power of the Lord. Tracking down fleeing Philistines calls for no faith. All that is needed for such an undertaking is common sense to take advantage of a rare opportunity. And the Hebrews have this sense and also the will to act upon it. The Philistines are a perpetual menace. After his conversation with David, Saul, too, takes to the field, as is indicated by the narrative at 18:6. With Goliath out of the way, he again is the brave man of yore. The Hebrews pursue the Philistines to the gates of Ekron and of Gath and on the road as far as Shaarim. The roads to these cities are littered with the wounded

of the enemy. Returned from the chase of the Philistines, the Hebrews spoil their tents. It was a telling victory. And the instrument through whom the Lord has wrought mightily is David.

The fame of his accomplishment spreads with speed throughout the whole land of Israel. David's name is on everyone's tongue. So it comes to pass (18:6) as Saul and his men of war return from the chase of the Philistines that the women come out of the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul "with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of music". And the women answer one another as they play. And they say, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." It is a bold and meaningful folk-song. It is the voice of the people declaring that in their hearts David by his victory over the giant has obtained all the consideration and that Saul has obtained none. True, they do credit Saul with having slain his thousands. But this is but their way of telling him that in the crisis that has just passed he has really done nothing for his people. And what they say is true. Saul is fully aware that the deep significance of this song is its showing that the Lord is actually taking the kingdom from him and giving it to that "neighbor" who is better than he. And he also concludes, and rightly so, that this "neighbor" has made his appearance in the person of David. But instead of submitting to the will of God, as Jonathan has done, he continues to harden his heart. It means that now he is that much more determined to maintain himself in the position of king contrary to the revealed will of God. Hence, the narrative states that "Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousand, and to me they have ascribed but thousands; and what can he have more than the kingdom?" This is followed by the statement, "And Saul eyed David from that day and forward," eyes him with the view of availing himself of the first opportunity to kill him.

Yet Saul does not dismiss David from his service, however much he now hates him. This is not strange. It is wholly congruous with his determination to destroy David. Only by keeping David with him at court can he eye him.

As to David, he goes whithersoever Saul sends him, and behaves himself wisely. His sudden elevation to the honorable position which he takes at Saul's court, does not turn his head, so that, as blown up with pride, he does things not fitting. It soon becomes evident to all that his endowments are exceptional. None are as brave as David, and as wise and true, and withal as humble and unpretentious. His ability as a leader of men is just as outstanding. A remarkable young man, this son of Jesse,—a man fit to be king. But Saul's hatred of him becomes fiercer by the day, as also his determination to destroy him. But this does

not prevent the hardened king from making the best possible use of him. He sets David over the men of war, that is, appoints him commander of a body of soldiers. David is now a military officer. And he is accepted in the sight of all the people, even in the sight of Esau's servants (verse 5 of chapter 18). No one objected to his promotion. All are pleased, even the official's at Saul's court. None are envious and jealous. The loveliness of David's character wins to his side even them.

Then it comes to pass "on the morrow" doubtless shortly after Saul's return from the chase of the Philistines and on the day following the kindling of his fierce wrath by the song of the women, that the evil spirit from God comes upon Saul, and he prophesies in his house. The narrative sheds little light on the exact nature of Saul's affliction. This much is plain, however. It is a severe mental and emotional disturbance that is brought over him by God through the agency of an evil spirit from the abyss in punishment of his rebellion. Saul refuses to submit to his sentence of deposition and of the loss of his kingdom. He will be king; and accordingly he has begun to eye David. With the evil spirit once again upon him, he prophesies in his house, so it is stated. But his condition of mind is not that of true prophetic elevation and enthusiasm but rather that of a strange and mysterious frenzy, delirious excitement. And his prophesying is anything but edifying. For it is plain that he is fully aroused as to all the badness that dwells in his flesh. David plays with his hands before him as at other times in order that he may again be healed from his sufferings by the strains of music. Catching sight of David, he casts the javelin that is in his hands as he says, "I will smite David even unto the wall." David avoids the missile and removes from Saul's presence. Saul's behaviour lays bare his soul. There is murder in his heart, the will to destroy David, whom he rightly takes to be that "neighbor" better than he. However, in this attempt on David's life, he acted not according to plan but in obedience to a sudden, diabolical impulse. His reaction to David's presence surprises perhaps even himself. He meant not to do that. A strange influence impelled him. But he is none the less responsible. He will not submit to the sentence of God, has all along been nourishing a powerful grudge against his divinely appointed successor, and recently has begun to eye David. The result is that his heart has become a playground for the devil. Saul should take warning. But he doesn't. He persists in fighting God, and thus continues to go from bad to worse.

As to David, Saul's attempt upon his life astonishes also him. He must not have expected that. For his conscience is clean. He is confident that he has done

taken offence. His once again having appeared in Saul's presence to heal his spirit by strains of music would seem to indicate that he is not yet aware that Saul hates him and wishes him dead. Doubtless, he ascribes the assault to Saul's illness, and believes that he did a thing of which in his normal moments he is not capable. But he will soon learn different. And even now Saul's assaults must have the effect of putting him on his guard. This is its purpose.

Having in his moments of delirium tried to kill David, Saul, being the kind of man he is—a reprobate, far advanced in sin—is certain that David will retaliate in kind. He imagines that it cannot be otherwise but that David will avail himself of the first opportunity to kill him. And he concludes that the attempt is sure to succeed. For he perceives that the Lord is with David, and will help him overcome Saul. And so the Lord will, but not in the way that Saul imagines—thus not in the way of David's laying violent hands on Saul. This is the forbidden way. Saul therefore has nothing to fear from David as such. For David fears God. He has no ambition to be king. Though the anointed of the Lord, he has no intention of usurping Saul's place in the kingdom by means of violence, nor by any other means for that matter. He still is the unassertive and unobtrusive stripling of yesterday. True, he came to the scene of battle; but not of his own will but as sent by his father to salute his brethren. He fought with the giant and killed him, but only because he was under necessity in that the faith of all the others continued to falter. And that he has taken up his residence at Saul's court and is now an officer in the king's army is wholly Saul's doings. David had nothing to do with that. Had he been permitted to follow his own inclinations, he would have speedily returned to his father's house, after having slain the giant. Neither is it his fault that now he is being held by the people in much higher esteem than Saul. This is God's doing. He gave victory over the giant, because David made God his expectation. It may be truthfully said, therefore, that the thought of working Saul out of his throne by stealing the hearts of the people is furthest from David's mind. And this is right. The Lord himself will destroy Saul through the agency of the Philistines in the final battle of Saul's life with this enemy of God's people. And David must abide the Lord's time, which he does. Though once and again the opportunity presents itself to him for making an end of Saul, he forbears. Such is the Lord's will for him—will that he refrain from trying to capture the throne by the employment of force. So doing, he puts his trust in the arm of flesh and not in the Lord. So doing, he will be destroyed, as Saul is now being destroyed. Like Christ, David must overcome the world as he

is, as standing immovable in the faith that the Lord will give him the kingdom in the way of loving obedience, of obedience even unto death, if need be.

Certainly, then, Saul has not a thing to fear from David as such. Yet, after his abortive attempt on David's life, Saul lives in mortal dread of David. He imagines that with David around his life is in constant peril. Saul therefore removes David from his presence by making him a captain over a thousand (18:13). This must have been a kind of promotion that made it necessary for David to absent himself from Saul's court to be with his men in the field. Unintentionally and this time to safeguard his life against an imaginary foe, Saul as an agent of God continues to open the way wherein David must be trained for the duties of the office of king; and thus at once opens the way that leads to the throne. Also in his new position David behaves himself wisely. And he goes out and comes in before all Israel and Judah, making war on the Philistines and on other adversaries of God's people. The result is that he increases still more. He rises still higher in the loving esteem now of all the people. "All Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and in before them" (18:16). Saul from his point of view—he wanted David out of the way—could not have done a more foolish thing than he did, when he made David captain over his thousands. But the thing is of the Lord. The Lord's purpose is that David reign. And all things, definitely Saul's wrath and foolishness, must and actually do serve that purpose. In his ethical opposition to God's will, Saul is all the time and in everything he does serving God's counsel and promoting the ends of God's kingdom.

And seeing that David in his new position "behaves himself very wisely", thus perceiving that he continues to increase, Saul "is afraid of David", that is, his dread of David increases in proportion. Going from bad to worse, instead of repenting, he in his great wrath now begins to plot against David's life, something that hitherto he has not done. But, as was said, he goes from bad to worse. He persists in hardening his heart and this as clearly perceiving that, as opposing David in the attempt to maintain himself in power, he fights God. He clearly perceives this. This must be the implication of the statement (verse 12) that Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him, and was departed from Saul." But, as holding under the truth in unrighteousness, Saul rushes on in his mad course—a course that ends in hell. But we must once more examine the statement last quoted. What it states directly is that Saul's fear of David was due to the fact that the Lord was with David, that is, because the Lord was on David's side against Saul, He makes the latter afraid of David and this with the purpose that the fearful king may rid himself of David's presence by making him cap-

tain over thousands. For by this promotion David must be further trained for the throne. What it shows is that Saul's heart and, speaking in general, the hearts of all men are in God's hands for the Lord to turn as He wills, and that therefore also the reins of the moral government of the world truly are in God's hands. Saul, too, as well as the Pharaoh of the Israelite oppression hardens his heart but he does so only as sovereignly hardened by the Lord. Truly, God is God and not Saul is God.

It is further stated here that because the Lord was with David "He took His Spirit away from Saul," and bestowed it on David, the sacred narrator would have added, had he been of a mind to complete the sentence. Thus the Lord, as has already been pointed out, has ceased to qualify Saul for his office by awakening, ripening, and sustaining in him his natural abilities, including also his natural, slumbering courage. For it is plain that Saul was naturally a brave man, a man every inch a king in the natural sense. But the Lord ceased to qualify him. And this is also evident. From that moment on Saul ceases to take the field against Israel's enemies. It means that his natural courage now fails him. In the final battle with the Philistines we find him in the grip of a paralyzing fear. For in the sight of God he is a deposed king judicially. Israel's real king is David. It is he therefore who now makes war on the adversaries of God's people; and thereby he endears himself to the whole nation. For the Spirit of God is upon him. The Lord is with him. As to Saul, he spends the remaining days of his life in persecuting the righteous David. When the measure of his guilt is full, the Lord slays him by the hand of the Philistines. For then the Lord has done with him.

G. M. O.

NOTICE!

We have received several orders for "The History of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America" which have not yet been filled. The stock of bound copies of this book is exhausted at present but more will be available soon. As soon as these are received from the binder they will be sent out. May we urge all our Consistories and members who are interested in procuring this work to send orders to: The Mission Committee, 1210 Logan St., S. E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. Price: In lots of 25 or more: \$1.65 per copy postpaid, single copies: \$2.00 postpaid. Please make check or money order payable to The Mission Committee. The response for this re-print has been beyond expectation, so if you desire a copy we would urge you to send in your order soon, that you may be assured of receiving this valuable work by the Rev. H. Hoeksema.

Mission Committee.

SION'S ZANGEN

Het Gebed Eens Verdrukten

(Psalm 102; Derde Deel)

Met het vers, dat nu volgt begint een nieuw gedeelte in den psalm. Het eerste deel, van het eerste tot het twaalfde vers, getuigde van groote smart vanwege verdrukking door menschen en door God, en dan zóó, dat God de menschen gebruikte om den zanger te benauwen.

En we mochten zien, dat in dien zanger, die het werkelijk kwaad te verduren had, Jezus Christus Zijn lijden vooruit zong. De psalm is sterk Messiaansch gekleurd.

Het einde vooral van dat gedeelte sprak van de smarten van Messias. Hij vergeleek Zich met een afgaande schaduw, en de "groote toorn" Gods had Hem verdord als gras. Men ruikt hier het vuur en de zwavel.

Doch nu zal zich de zanger sterken. Hij zoekt en vindt steun. En zooals het altijd gaat in het Koninkrijk Gods, de zanger vindt zijn sterkte in God. "Van Wien het volk zijn sterkte heeft!" Of: "Hij is de kracht van hunne kracht!"

En dat gaat streng theologisch in zijn stijl. Hij moet beginnen met de deugden Gods. In die deugden ligt zijn smart, doch ook zijn heil.

Let er op, dat terwijl hij zichzelf vergeleek bij een afgaande schaduw, die aan 't verdwijnen is, hij God ziet als de eeuwig Zijnde, die beklijft tot in alle eeuwigheid: "Maar Gij, HEERE, blijft in eeuwigheid, en Uwe gedachtenis van geslacht tot geslacht."

Och arme, wat zal ik daar van schrijven tot *verduidelijking*? Wie zal den eeuwigen God verklaren in Zijn eeuwigheid? Hij blijft in eeuwigheid, dus Hij loopt nooit weg, kan niet opzij gezet, vergaat nimmer, houdt nooit op van te bestaan. Het zit zelfs in Zijn naam: Jehovah. Die naam heeft als stam het werkwoord ZIJN. Reden waarom God tot Mozes kon zeggen: IK ZAL ZIJN heeft U tot dat volk gezonden!

Neen, we kunnen den Eeuwig Zijnde niet verklaren, maar we kunnen Hem wel kennen. En die kennis, al is zij zóó wonderbaar, dat we er niet *bij* kunnen, toch weten we, dat daar een onuitsprekelijke troost in ligt voor ons. Laat me het zóó, en dan een beetje eigenaardig, mogen zeggen: de naam Jehovah die "in eeuwigheid blijft", maakt, dat we gerust naar den hemel kunnen reizen. We behoeven niet bang te zijn om ons geheel en al aan Hem toe te vertrouwen. De naam JEHOVAH getuigt ervan, dat we eeuwig en altoos veilig zijn. Hij blijft er, Hij verdwijnt nimmer en Hij blijft inist omdat Hij Jehovah is. Ik heb

wel eens gevraagd: wie waarborgt mij, dat er weer niet iets gebeuren zal zooals in den hemel ten overstaan van Satan, en in het Paradijs ten overstaan van Eva en Adam? En dan is het antwoord: Jehovah! Hij is eeuwiglijk de getrouwe VerbondsGod van Zijn volk!

En zoo blijft ook Zijn gedachtenis van geslacht tot geslacht!

Wat schoone gedachten dringen zich hier aan ons op. Ik denk aan mijn grootvaders en grootmoeders, die ik alle vier goed gekend heb. Ook heb ik hen gevraagd naar hun ouders en grootouders. En ze hebben ervan verhaald, toen ik nog heel jong was. En in later jaren is er troost uit geboren. Ik zag zelfs zes godvreezezende zusters van een grootmoeder. Ook oud-ooms en neven. Ik heb kennis aan een godvreezend voorgeslacht. Hoe wonderlijk werkt God Zijn vreeze uit in de geslachten. De een vertelt het aan den ander, al rondgaande rondom Sion om toch maar zijn torens en zijn paleizen goed te zien. En wat die ouden en grijzen gezien hebben, werd ons verteld in onze prille jeugd. Wat was het anders dan "Uwe gedachtenis"? Die gedachtenis werd duidelijker toen we naar de catechisatie, de Christelijke school en de vereeniging gingen. De predikatiën waren eerst wel wat diep voor mij. En later kwamen de mooie uitleggingen vanaf de preekstoel. Nog wat later lazen we, en zagen en zochten en vonden voor ons zelf.

Ik vraag U: wat kunt ge stellen in de plaats van de verbondsoopvoeding? Het welbehagen van den Drie-Eenigen VerbondsJehovah gaat door Jezus, hand gelukkiglijk voort *in de geslachten*!

God zorgt er voor, dat Zijn gedachtenis voortgeplant wordt van vader tot kind tot kleinkind, tot aan het einde der wereld.

Vrage: is de gedachtenis van Jehovah voorwerp van levende bespreking in Uwe woning? Merkt ge het, dat de Heere Zijn gedachtenis aan 't voortplanten is in Uwe geslachten?

"Gij zult opstaan, Gij zult U ontfermen over Sion, want de tijd om het genadig te zijn, want de bestemde tijd is gekomen!"

Die eeuwige God nu heeft een raad, en in dien raad heeft alles zijn bestemden tijd. Van dien bestemden tijd spreekt dit vers. Er was een lange nacht geweest, een nacht van asch eten en tranen drinken: denkt hier maar weer aan Jezus Christus op den bodem der hel. Neen, ik kan niet ten volle verklaren hoe iemand den eeuwigen dood kan sterven, en er toch weer uit komen, maar ik weet, dat Jezus er weer uit kwam. Ten volle verklaren kan ik het niet, maar ik denk, dat we hier aan twee dingen moeten denken. Eerst, de groote Lijder leed uit liefde; en, tweedens, Hij was God en mensch, zoodat we stamelen van "een eeuwige waar-dii" die bij het liiden biikwam, en van een Almachtige

kracht en energie die Hem ondersteunde. Doch ook dan vermenigvuldigen zich de vragen, rondom een Jezus die den *eeuwigen* dood stierf en er *mee klaar kwam!* Mag ik het eens heel eigenaardig zeggen? Het neemt een God om den toorn van een God *weg* te dragen!

Hoe het dan ook zij: er kwam een "bestemde tijd" in Gods raad om Sion genadig te zijn. Centraal is dit vervuld in den hof van Jozef. We kunnen daar wel eeuwigheden verwijlen. Die hof jubelt van dit vers. Er kwam genade voor den schreienden Jezus. Er kwam een stem die Hem toefluisterde in dat nieuwe graf: Waak op, Mijn Zoon! En Hij stond op, en zweefde tusschen de zwachtels vandaan. De zweedoek liet Hij achter. O wonder der wonderen! Er werd geen ritseling gehoord. En kwam niet één vouwtje bij die zwachtels bij. Hij zweefde weg van de plaats der dooden. Sion leefde, jubelde, zong Gode lof. Ge gelooft toch, dat Sion eigenlijk Jezus Christus is? Sion is de plaats op aarde die door God gekust werd. Het is de plaats waar God en mensch tezamen wonen, minnen, lieven en loven. Het is de plaats waar God en mensch tezamen worden. "De lofzang klinkt uit Sion's zalen tot U met diepst ontzag. Daar zal men U, o God, betalen, geloften dag bij dag! Nu dan, er is niemand op wien dit beter past dan op Jezus. Jezus is de aanraking Gods, die den mensch aanraakt met een eeuwig intieme aanraking. We noemen Hem in navolging van de Heilige Schrift: Immanuel: God met ons. Die aanraking van God en mensch was eerst vreeselijk: daar bloedde men met bloed dat zeer goed was, beter dan het bloed van Abel. Wanneer de gerechtigheid en de vrede (voor menschen) elkaar kusten, zoo vloede daar het Bloed. Doch de bestemde tijd brak aan, en Hij bloedde met een eeuwige bloeding verscheen blinkende in den hof van Jozef.

God was Jezus genadig! Kan met dat zeggen? Is genade geen "onverdiende gunst"? Dat zegt men toch altijd? Genade is verbeurde gunst Gods. Dat is niet alleen een omschrijving van genade geworden in onze tijden, doch het is bijna verhoogd tot een axioma!

Laat ons eens zien. Lukas vertelt ons, dat Jezus toenam in wijsheid en grootte, en in *genade bij God* en de menschen. Dus Jezus had genade bij God. Onverdiende gunst? Dat is toch onzin? Ziet ge niet, dat genade niet altijd onverdiende gunst is? Als de Heilige Geest in de profeten van het oude testament Jezus ziet, dan zegt Hij van Jezus: *genade* is uitgestort op Uwe lippen! Ps. 45:3b. En toen Jezus sprak en preekte in de synagoge van Nazareth, toen verwonderde men zich over de *genadige* woorden die Hij sprak. Ik weet wel, dat de Hollandsche vertaling hier spreekt van *aangename* woorden, doch dat is een verkeerde vertaling. Het Engelsch heeft hier *gracious words*, en dat is correct.

Ik zeide daar, dat de Hollandsche vertaling verkeerd

is. Ik moet daar wat aan toevoegen. Ik denk, dat ge in die Hollandsch vertaling van het Grieksch woord *charis* een tamelijk goede *verklaring* van het woord *charis* hebt. Genade is lieflijkheid, aantrekkelijkheid, schoonheid, bevalligheid. En zoo is het ook als dit woord gebruikt wordt tegenover een zondaar die de hel verdiend heeft. En zoo kwam men er toe om in die gevallen te spreken van onverdiende gunst. Als we maar goed voor de aandacht houden, dat *genade* rijker, breder beteekenis heeft dan net maar onverdiende gunst. Men kan immers tot God zeggen: Zijt U genadig Heere!? God is immers een genadig God, afgedacht van de schepping, de val, de wederopneming van menschen? Genade is toch een deugd van God? Het eeuwige Wezen is lieflijk! Wel, dat is de diepste beteekenis van het woord genade. Hij is gracieus! Hij is de bevallige, de schoone, de lieflijke tot in eeuwigheid, ook dan wanneer er nooit geen menschen geweest waren!

En zoo wilde ik spreken ten overstaan van Sion, en dat is eerst Jezus die opklom vanuit den eeuwigen dood.

En dan die van Jezus zijn. Er is een bestemde tijd om hen genadig te zijn. En als ge dan dat volk ziet vanuit het oogpunt hunner zonde, schuld en doemwaardigheid, dan moogt ge spreken van onverdiende gunst Gods, want dat is ze.

En als die tijd daar is, dan staat God op. Dat wil zeggen, dan komt er een openbaring van verlossingen. Dan ontfermt Hij Zich onzer. Ik zeide: *openbaring*. We moeten hier oppassen en geen creatuur maken van God. Vaak geeft ons de Heere een blik in Zijn doen en laten, maar dan spreekt en toont hij ons de dingen in anthropomorfen vorm. God staat eeuwiglijk op, God is altijd barmhartig en genadig aan Zijn volk. Evenwel, zulks is niet altijd ons geopenbaard. De Heere doet het deksel van de verlossingen Jakobs eraf, en dan zien we datgene wat eeuwiglijk voor Gods oog is. Hij ziet Sion's muren altoos. Hij ziet nooit zonde in Jakob, maar Jakob ziet ze wel, en weent.

En de Heere doet ons weten, dat die bestemde tijd er is, want Hij werkt in ons. De knechten van God ontvangen een welgevallen aan zijne steenen, en medelijden met zijn gruis. Dat is het volgende vers.

Als de tijd er is om weer een ander kapittel van de verlossingen Jakobs te openbaren, dan komt er ook beweging beneden op de aarde. Als Jezus komen moet op de aarde, dan zorgt God er voor, dat er godvruchtige herders klaar zitten in de velden rondom hunne wachtvuren. Dan zorgt God er voor, dat de godvruchtige Simeon zucht en wacht en bidt. Dan is er een zeer godvruchtige moeder die zwanger is en dingen, Goddelijke dingen, in haar hart overweegt. Dan is er die stille Jozef.

De Heere zorgt ervoor, dat er een volk is dat wel-

gevallen heeft aan de steenen van Sion en medelijden heeft met het gruis van Sion.

Tracht eens om daar in te komen. Er zit een groote schoonheid in.

Welgevallen aan de steenen van Sion.

Medelijden met Sion's gruis.

De steenen, zegt Petrus, zijn Gods volk die door God uitverkoren zijn en dierbaar, en die gebouwd worden als "levende steenen tot een geestelijk huis, tot een heilig Priesterschap, om geestelijke offeranden op te offeren, die Gode aangenaam zijn door Jezus Christus." I Petr. 2.

Welgevallen aan die steenen te hebben beteekent dan ook, dat ge met innerlijk welbehagen neerziet op het wonderwerk van God die Zijn volk bouwt door Woord en Geest. Hetzelfde is aangenaam Gode, zegt Petrus. Dus als gij het óók aanziet met welgevallen, zoo bewijst ge het ware karakter van het kindschap Gods. Het is een goed kind dat naar zijn vader aardt, zegt men. En dat is waar.

Medelijden te hebben met zijn gruis, beteekent, dat het lijden en de smart van Sion de Uwe zijn. Het toont, dat ge één zijt met Sion, dat eenzelfde leven beide in Sion en in U woont. Ge zoekt den vrede van Jeruzalem, en als er de oorlog heerscht, dan bloedt het in Uw hart. Dan betoont ge een ware Sioniet te zijn. Het bange tegenovergestelde vindt ge bij hem die God en Jezus en daarom ook Sion haat. Nazaten van Edom, die toen Jakob hem voorbijging, op weg naar Babel in bange ballingschap, luidkeels lachte en hoonde en spotte met het "gruis" van Sion.

Die medelijden hebben met Sion's gruis zijn het volk, dat het altijd opneemt voor Sion's, en dat is Gods, zaak op aarde.

Welnu, als God zóó werkt in de harten van Zijn volk, als Hij krachtdadiglijk Zich betoont in hun hart en verstand en alle genegendheden, dan is zulks een profetie, dat er wat op komst is. Dan is het ook de tijd dat Hij weer een stuk van Zijn raad openbaart, dat Hij opstaat om te werken. Weer eens, niet dat God verandert, ten goede of ten kwade (des neen!), maar omdat Hij zoo doende aan 't openbaren gaat, en ons verder inleiden wil in de heilgeheimen van Zijn verbond. Hij deed het in de tijden van Bethlehem, van Jozef's hof en van de opperzaal bij het geluid van gedrevene stormen van Gods liefde in Zijn Geest.

En wij mogen ook aan 't zingen gaan, want de Heere is aan 't opstaan in onze dagen. Hij zegt luide, dat de tijd om Zich te ontfermen aanstaande is.

Ter eener zijde: de goddeloozen maken het gruwelijk gelijk nooit te voren, er, ter anderzijde: hoewel hun getal klein is, er is weer een volk, dat medelijden heeft met het gruis, de bange vergruizing!

Vraag: hoe staat ge tegenover den Steen en de steenen van Gods wonderwerk?

Wat zegt ge van het weenen der kinderen Gods, omdat zij vergruisd werden?

De ware kinder-aard doet wondere dingen!

Ze doet U wandelen als God! Ef. 5:1, 2.

G. V.

IN HIS FEAR

The Reformation And Our School Movement

(Continued)

Correction: In the next to the last paragraph of the last installment of this department a glaring error appeared. There you read, "And what is it but the worthy activity of our Protestant Reformed parents in this vicinity. . . . to protect our children from the dangerous world and life view of light and darkness, election and reprobation and of righteousness and unrighteousness." It should have read thus, "And what is it but the worthy activity of our Protestant Reformed parents in this vicinity. . . . to protect our children from the dangerous world and life view of common grace which more and more seeks to deny the sharp antithesis of light and darkness, election and reprobation and of righteousness and unrighteousness."

Since that is the historical background of our school movement, it is to be understood that the Reformation of 1517 has significance for this school movement. In general of course the Reformation of 1517 explains the existence of all present Christian schools. Without that reformation we would all still be under the lie of Rome and have no Christian schools of our own. Now that God has realized this reformation, we have protestant churches all over the world, and we have protestant Christian schools likewise.

Yet the Reformation of 1517 has special significance for us as we seek ways and means to establish a new school for the defense of our own world and life view and for the instruction in the doctrine as taught in our churches. The reformation of 1517 says two things to us in this movement. First of all it encourages us and tells us that God's blessing truly rests upon such movements which seek to defend and promote the old truths of Scripture over against new heresies that arise. Time fails to show this blessing of God upon the churches of the Reformation. Let me simply call your attention to one thing. It is in the churches of the reformation that by the grace of God and His blessing upon them those three monumental

works, The Heidelberg Catechism, The Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dordrecht were brought into being. These churches of the reformation were led so deeply into the truth because they had not departed from it. Where in the Roman Catholic church today will you find anything to compare with these three works? Through all these years since Luther's day where is there one piece of work produced by Rome that can stand in the shade of these three works of the protestant churches? It is not difficult to see where God's blessing rests. So let us today not look at numbers and size, but let us be assured by what God accomplished in the churches of the reformation in the ages past that God will also bless our school movement as well as our churches. He will lead us ever more deeply into the truth, if we do not forsake it.

Therefore the Reformation of 1517 also speaks to us and tells us to go forward. We may believe that our stand in 1924 meets with God's approval because of the blessings He bestowed upon the churches which took a similar stand in 1517, but by virtue of that very same thing we have the calling then to go forward. To establish our own schools for the defense and development of the truth is the only thing left for us.

You may say that it is quite different today. We have not been put out of the present Christian schools as Luther and his followers were put out of the Roman Catholic church. That is true, but I assure you that if Luther and his followers had been willing to send their children back to the Roman Catholic church for instruction, they would not have been rejected either. I am quite sure that even today, if you were willing to pay the tuition, you could enroll your child in a Catholic school. Our children are not put out of the present Christian schools; but after twenty-three years of struggle to protect our children in these schools from that dangerous world and life view of common grace what have we accomplished? After twenty-three years of protest and struggle we still find our children coming home and asking whether it is true that the two murderers on the cross had an equal chance to be saved. Thus they had been taught in school. After twenty-three years of fighting against Arminianism our children still come home singing glaringly Arminian songs. And on the positive side how much have we accomplished to get those who believe an other world and life view to teach our children our own world and life view? As far as the doctrine is concerned, we were put out of these schools also in 1924. In them we may not and cannot have our world and life view taught. No matter what we may do to the present Christian schools, they will never become Protestant Reformed Christian schools. Even if the school board would be one hundred percent Protestant

Reformed, the teachers would still be incapable of teaching from the world and life view which recognizes total depravity, election and reprobation and the antithesis of Genesis 3:15. Their acceptance and belief in common grace prevents this. Thus the Reformation of 1517 tells us to go forward. Even as it would have been folly and tremendously dangerous for the reformed people of Luther's day to send their children back to the Roman Catholic church for instruction, so it is folly and tremendously dangerous for us to send our children back to those who put us out because we held on to the old scriptural truths of election and reprobation and of the total depravity of man. The Reformation of 1517 says to us, "Go forward, and never go backwards!"

Our school movement then also has significance for the Reformation of 1517. You ask whether it is not a conceited stand to take to maintain that our little school movement to build an eight or ten room school has significance for the Reformation of 1517? Not at all. Indeed our little school movement can in no way exert any influence upon that which has happened hundreds of years ago. It can neither add to nor take away from that important historical fact. Yet we would have you consider what we said at the very beginning. We may speak of the Reformation of 1517 as The Reformation because it was the greatest reformation in history, but there were many reformations which followed and continued the good work begun in 1517. Our reformation of 1924, together with our present school movement which grows out from it, is a continuation of that reformation of 1517. It also is a return to the old truths of Scripture which were being denied and rejected.

Our school movement then signifies that the love for the truth which manifested itself in 1517 is still alive. It signifies that the Reformation of 1517 was not in vain. It signifies that the Spirit, whose work resulted in the Reformation of 1517, is still working in His church. It signifies that there still is, by virtue of the operation of this same Spirit, a people who appreciate the truth and the deliverance He wrought in 1517.

I would like to leave that last thought with you as I bring this brief talk to a close. We, especially as we are active in this school movement of our own, are the only ones who can and do properly appreciate the Reformation of 1517. Other denominations may celebrate it and do celebrate it, but they cannot appreciate it as we can. Those who practice hierarchy themselves may celebrate the reformation which delivered the church from the hierarchy of Rome, but they cannot appreciate that deliverance. Their hierarchical practices show that they do not appreciate the principle of the autonomy of the local church. Their return to Rome's error shows lack of love for the

principle that was violated, and such cannot appreciate what took place when the church was delivered from Rome's hierarchy. The same can be said in regard to the appreciation of the truth maintained by the Reformers. Those who themselves teach the lie cannot appreciate the fact that the church was freed from the lie in 1517. They may celebrate that fact, but they cannot appreciate it. The particular form of the lie may have been different in 1517 than in 1924. The degree of departure may not be as great. But those who take only a step in the wrong direction, by that very step show less appreciation for the right direction than those who have not taken this step. We have held on to the truths of total depravity and of election and reprobation which are the truths of Scripture. And as long as we do, we are the ones to appreciate the fact that God brought the church back to the truth in 1517.

And so let us go on in this school movement. Let us be assured that it meets with God's approval. Let us hold on to that which God has given us to defend and maintain. Let us continue the good work of the Reformation of 1924 and provide our children with instruction that is based on the truth we have been called as reformed churches to defend, maintain and proclaim.

J. A. H.

FROM HOLY WRIT

The Beginning Of Signs

(John 2:1-11)

The conclusion that we may draw from the data given in our former article, seems to be that the "wine" is chosen by Christ as a picture of His perfected work as the Son of Man. For wine, we saw, is the product of what we have at the end of the entire process of fermentation. It can be developed no more. It is aged, perfected. So too with Christ's work, when it is completely perfected, there will be no possibility of bringing it further. That will be when the Son shall forever reign in glory as the First-born of all creatures, the First-born out of the dead. Col. 1:15-18. This perfection of the work of Christ will be realized centrally in "mine hour" (verse 4), when He shall suffer and die and rise again, and shall thus make all things new.

We feel confident, that in thus interpreting the meaning of the changing of the water into wine, we are not arbitrarily explaining it. It is the only interpretation that fits with the idea of the "glory" that it must "manifest". Besides it should not be overlooked, that Jesus Himself connects what He is about to per-

form here with what He calls "mine hour". And this "hour" is consistently the great wonder of grace realized in Christ's suffering and death, and of His resurrection from the dead and ascension unto the right hand of God. What we here say about this "wine" is not a bit of philosophy, but it is the very sense of the Holy Spirit. Our interpretation, therefore, does justice to every element in the text.

The Son of God, Mary's firstborn son, at this wedding feast *manifested* His glory. So John informs us in verse 11. It seems to us, and it is sustained by the Gospel account here, that Jesus here does all things very *intentionally*. And all that he does and says here *magnifies* the sign, and takes away the last shred of doubt that He performs a miracle. It all must serve to call attention to Him; He must come to stand in the lime-light. When the wonder is accomplished those who are present must have seen in him more than a mere man. They must also see something else than a magician. The majesty of the God of Israel must have been seen. Here must be seen the great power of God, the same power that shall be displayed in the raising of the Son out of the dead.

For does Jesus here not perform this sign over against the interference of Mary? And is this Mary not called "the *mother* of Jesus" in this narrative of John? And is not the blood that Jesus has in His veins from this Mary? Out of her He is as far as the flesh is concerned, of the seed of David. She is His *mother*. She had borne Him under her heart. She had sucked Him as a babe after she had "brought Him forth as her firstborn Son and laid Him in a manger". This Mary, the mother of Jesus, is also present at the wedding feast. We are not told whether she was merely a guest, or that she was there helping to serve. That she was present in the latter capacity does not necessarily follow from the fact that she tells the servants "whatsoever He tells thee, do it." This she could very well have instructed the servants to do even as a mere guest, after Jesus had rebuked and corrected her. What seems to be important about her presence at this feast is, that she is the *mother* of Jesus. In that capacity she acts here on the feast as we shall presently see. And over against all that this Mary, the *mother* of Jesus would do here at this wedding feast, Jesus performs this sign.

For what would Mary do? What does she have in mind when she comes to Jesus and tells Him "they have no wine". Did she mean that Jesus should run an errand for her, and go and purchase some wine? We think not. And our reasons for not thinking that Mary had this in mind is first of all, the reply that Jesus gives to her: Woman what have I to do with thee; mine hour is not yet come! Mary has great plans in her mind for *her* son. He must come and stand here in the limelight as *her* son. But Jesus says: in

this matter of my glory there is nothing between me and you. This is a matter of *mine* hour, in which I will attend wholly to and be busy in my Father's business, whose will I am come to perform. And in that particular relationship you are to me no other than any other woman. Indeed you are the blessed among women, but this matter you are to me just like any other woman in Israel. "Woman" what is there in this matter between you and me? There is simply nothing. Surely "woman" all men from now on shall call you blessed. It shall be confessed in my church "Born from the virgin Mary", but that will also be the limit of what will be said of you. Here the church will place the period! From there on it will indeed be: Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried, descended into hell, etc. But in this latter you have not one iota a part. That suffering of mine Hour is wholly mine. Indeed, as far as my birth "from a woman" is concerned, I am born from thee, but as I come willingly "under the law" to redeem all who are under the law, and to thus, as the Father's Firstborn among many brethren, to bring deliverance from bondage, and from being sold under sin to liberty to all my brethren, this is wholly my matter. I will tread the wine-press of the wrath of God alone. (Gal. 4:5, 6). Shall I mean something to you then you Mary must learn to see in me not merely your firstborn Son, but God's only-begotten Son, who according to the firm decree will sit on David's throne, the firstborn of God, Lord of glory over all!

From this we can see what Mary had in mind. She would have Christ show His glory. That He will do only after it has become perfectly clear to Mary and also to all of us who read John's account, that this is wholly His glory as the Son of God in the flesh, yes, in *our* flesh.

But let us not be too severe in our criticism of this Mary, the *mother* of Jesus. Was she not after all the *mother* of Jesus? And was there ever a woman who had such a wonderful and for the flesh terrifying experience? Was this Jesus not after all her son? Could she penetrate into the depths of this mysterious child of hers? Is not the great Mystery of godliness wrapped up in Him?

Let us try to understand Mary just a bit.

If we do this it will aid us to understand the need of this sign of Jesus, as a *beginning* of signs over against all flesh.

Had not that which had happened in the last while brought to a head all that Mary had pondered about now these little more than thirty years? What had happened? Jesus was now thirty years old and had gone to John the Baptist to be baptized of him that all righteousness might be fulfilled. At this time the very heavens had opened, had they not, and the Holy Spirit had descended upon Jesus? And had God not

spoken audibly in the ears of the people: This is my beloved Son, in whom my good-pleasure is! After that Jesus had been led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil. And now Jesus had returned. And John the Baptist had pointed Him out to be the Lamb of God that beareth away the sins of the world. This John the Baptist was now sending his followers to Jesus. And, what was more significant still, was that Jesus was now even gathering His apostles already. Yea, He is here present with them at the feast.

This puts Mary into action! The time has come. Her Son will be called great, Son of the Highest. The hour has struck! So thinks Mary. Hence she says to Jesus: They lack wine!

We said: do not be too severe with Mary. For this Mary had received God's revelation concerning this Son again and again. Always she saw more. But she could not possibly so put the pieces together that she could see what we see today. She did not see what we see. What we see is due to Christ's death having become a reality, and also because He had ascended on high and sent His Spirit to lead us, the whole church into all truth. And under the guidance of this Spirit the church confessed the twelve articles of faith. But Mary could not confess this. It did not become, neither could it be clear to her. Presently on Pentecost also Mary shall hear and understand the mighty words of God. Also she is present with the first church on whom the Spirit is poured forth.

But as yet she does not see.

Yet she belongs to those violent who would take the kingdom and its glories by force!

Oh, had not Gabriel himself, the angel who stands before God, come and told her of what was to befall her? That she was to have a son, and thus she would be the blessed among women, for that her son would sit on the throne of David, that he would rule over the house of Jacob, and that of His kingdom, even as Daniel has already seen in the night visions (Dan. 7) there would be no end? And could Mary ever forget that Word of Revelation declaring to her that she would have this son without a man? And then was there not that marvelous and wonderful experience of going to Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, and that equally marvelous prophesying of herself? And had in those terrifying days of her pregnancy not the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph telling him that what was conceived in Mary's womb, was of the Holy Spirit, and that she was the Virgin of whom Isaiah, the prophet had already spoken? Was this not already much to ponder in the heart? But had not the word of the Lord been more and more plentiful, and that, too, always concerning this her son? When in that night in which she had given birth to this Son, had not shepherds again told her that an angel had

appeared to them in that night, telling them of the Saviour who was born unto them, unto all the congregation, and that the sign which had been given them, was that the babe would be found wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger? Mary had had no other place to put the child, and possibly had nothing else to wrap him in, but God had so directed their path that even this poverty is a sign, a word of revelation!

Shall we still be severe with the *mother* of Jesus?

Had not the Word of God been further multiplied to her? What about that significant name that was given to Jesus on the eighth day: His name shall be called *Jesus*, for He shall save His people from their sins. Was this not great revelation? And then too on the fourtieth day in the temple, when they presented their firstborn; presented Him according to the law of Moses? Was this not strange. Simeon can now die in peace. It is the light of the nations and the glory of the people of Israel! And this child would be unto a fall and rising of many in Israel, and a Sign that would be contradicted. Then there would come these wise men from the east. The very stars of the heavens must serve this child. And they had worshipped Him in her presence. Soon they were to flee into Egypt. There they must remain until God would call them back again. And by special appointment and direction of God they again come to dwell in Nazareth.

All seems to be quiet again. Other children were born in the family. Literally Jesus had become Mary's first-born son. Always he is obedient. There must have been a marked contrast between Jesus and the other children. Could a day have gone by that Mary's attention was not called to this? But, again suddenly the Lord has called everything so freshly to her memory when the child is twelve years old. We know the gospel account. Jesus is after three days of searching, found by His parents in the temple, asking and answering difficult questions with the doctors of the law. Upon Mary's reproof this child had said: Wist ye not that I must be busy in my Father's business?

(To be continued)

G. L.

PERISCOPE

Home Mission News

Present Activity. . . .

Undoubtedly, most of our readers know that at present our Missionaries, the Rev. W. Hofman and E. Knott, are laboring in Byron Center and vicinity. Although the work there is of a different nature than

in an entirely new field, there were compelling reasons why this field was chosen for the beginning. For the same reason it is not expected that their stay in this neighborhood will be as extensive as it would were this an entirely new opening. However, there were several considerations which caused the Mission Committee in conjunction with the calling Consistory to send our Missionaries to Byron Center.

In the first place, it had often been expressed to the Mission Committee, by members of our churches, either those living in the vicinity of Byron Center or to others, that there was some desire amongst our people to attempt to re-organize there. Upon the basis of these expressions the Mission Committee had made a preliminary investigation and found that it might be possible to re-establish in Byron Center. In the second place, it was a fact that there were several families who are at present scattered amongst various churches in Grand Rapids, and vicinity, who might form a nucleus for a congregation. All of these families travel great distances at present and a church in Byron Center would be much closer to them. It was also rumored that in this area there were others interested in our cause who had never been with us; this has also proven to be the case. Finally, since there was no other obvious field the Mission Committee and Consistory of Fuller Ave. decided to send our missionaries to investigate. We might also add, that from the point of view of all the arrangements necessary to the resumption of our mission labors, as also for the new missionaries, beginning here would give us an opportunity "to get our feet on the ground", so to speak.

Since their induction in the work, the missionaries have labored rather extensively in this field. Many preliminary contacts were made both amongst our own families and others. From these it was determined that there was a definite possibility for a Protestant Reformed Church in Byron Center. A general meeting was called for the evening of November 21, to which all those interested were invited. After discussing various matters, such as organizations and location, it was decided to hold preaching services once each Sunday in Byron Center. Through the generosity of the Methodist Congregation of Byron Center we were able to secure their building both for this initial meeting and for services each Sunday afternoon. The first Sunday meeting was held on November 30. An audience of 80-85 individuals, representing about 20 families, was present. Needless to say, both the individuals present and the missionaries were greatly encouraged by this large attendance. The following week a somewhat smaller group was present, due in part to the fact many from Hudsonville attended their own service there to hear the Rev. B. Kok preach his farewell sermon at that time.

It is planned to continue these services and con-

tacts for a time. Shortly after the first of the year, it is expected that another meeting will be called at which the question of organization will be discussed and decided upon. In the meantime, we herewith extend a cordial invitation to any of our people in the vicinity of Grand Rapids, Hudsonville, etc., to meet with us occasionally. Our meetings are held at 2:30 P. M. each Sunday in the Methodist Church, which is one block south of the main street of Byron. We feel that your attendance will not only increase your interest in our labors but will also encourage this new group. Let's see you there sometime!

* * * *

Canada. . . .

As is well known, the Province of Ontario, Canada, has received several hundred Dutch immigrants and more are expected to arrive next spring. Naturally we are greatly interested in these friends from the old Fatherland. Having been informed of this immigration, both of our Classes, at their last meetings, discussed the possibility of contacting these people. Since there were many problems and questions as to procedure both Classes referred the matter to the Mission Committee.

Recently, the Mission Committee reviewed these overtures and took action. The consistories of our Creston and Hudsonville churches were asked to release their pastors that they might investigate the situation. During the weeks of November 14 and 21 the Revs. J. De Jong and B. Kok journeyed to Canada to gain preliminary and first-hand information; while their charges at home were filled by our missionaries.

It is difficult to make anything like a comprehensive and authoritative report of their findings since both their time and contacts were necessarily limited. They did, however, meet several of these families and enjoyed visiting with them; being well received. Generally we may say that the situation in Canada is unsettled. Most of the immigrants are of limited means, in every respect. They have little material wealth, are practically without transportation facilities and few possess any means of communication, such as radio, etc. They are also usually separated from one another by great distances, and nowhere is there a great concentration of them in any one center. They are unacquainted with our Churches and our specific doctrine and preaching, and are quite generally satisfied with the *status quo*. The Christian Reformed Church, having both the means and facilities at hand in Canada, has done a splendid job of receiving them and aiding them to get settled in Canada. These churches, there present, are doing all they can to provide the immigrants with worship services and transport them great distances to these services.

The whole situation is still fluctuating. Many are or will be, moving from their present places. Many more newcomers are expected in the future. Since we have no churches in Canada nor anywhere near these people, and since they cannot possibly be quickly molded into a separate group, nor even, perhaps, with a great deal of labor, it seems that for the present at least, Canada does not offer a promising field of activity. This is especially true during the winter months that are upon us, since many of these families are settled in farm areas off the main highways on poor roads. At the same time we can assure our people that the Mission Committee plans to continue its investigation and will do all it can in Canada. In the meantime, we would suggest that if anyone of our readers have any acquaintances or relatives settling there they would greatly appreciate gifts of clothing and household articles, since these are lacking to them.

* * * *

Immigration to the U. S. . . .

In connection with the above the Mission Committee has also received several letters from individuals and families in the Netherlands who desire to come either to this country or Canada. Many of these letters were referred to us by the Rev. H. Hoeksema and the Consistory of Fuller Ave., the original recipients. These letters and the entire matter of investigating and acquiring information regarding entrance into the U. S. was given into the hands of our missionaries. They are, at present, also busy corresponding with these brethren in the Netherlands, as well as with the proper officials in both countries, to gain the necessary information to aid these prospective immigrants. It is expected that in the near future, some definite plan can be worked out for a committee to handle this matter.

* * * *

Where Next ? ? ? ?

That, of course, is always an interesting question for speculation and discussion. There are many rumored possibilities of interest. In order that the Mission Committee and calling Church may be better able to decide this question, we have written to all of our ministers and consistories requesting suggestions and information regarding fields. We are happy that several of our Churches have shown their interest in this work by a prompt reply. May we hear from the rest soon? We would also be pleased to hear from any individuals having suggestions. Address your letters to the Revs. W. Hofman and E. Knott, 1210 Logan St., S. E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. Above all we request your prayers for us in this our mutual work of the Lord.

W. H.