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MEDITATION

The Dying Christ

"Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God."

Matthew 27:50-54.

"And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus He gave up the ghost."

Luke 23:46.

Everything surrounding this awful cross is wonderful.

We feel a great humility when we set ourselves to say something about one of its episodes. This is true of every attempt at exegesis of the Holy Word; but how much more when we attempt to say something of the dying Christ of God!

It was early when we arrived at the place of a skull. The rulers of the people had done everything with expediency and dispatch. They must have congratulated one another, and themselves. There! That is work that is well done. We are rid of Him, who really was a thorn in our sides! At nine o'clock in the morning it was finished, as far as their nefarious labor was concerned. The Christ (in their eyes, the pseudo-Christ) hung on the cross. Let now every one look to Him.

Oh yes, the devil had his hour, we read; and he certainly used his hour. Every spirit or man at his post, each doing the thing that fitted the hellish plot; and here we have the result: Christ is on the tree of shame and dishonor. Satan has won his war!

* * * *

But has he?

There is a masterpiece in existence, depicting the awful scene of the crucifixion. And with marvellous skill the artist has depicted on the face of Satan, hovering above the cross in a dark and lurid background of clouds, a sardonic leer or grin, but in it there is also an unspoken question of awful dread: Did I have the victory?

I wonder what exegesis Satan put on the *perfectum* of Jesus: It is finished!

And then that loud cry of Jesus as He bowed the head and gave up the ghost. Satan must have heard it. He certainly was there at the time.

And the import of the last crossword! Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit!

Also the terrifying signs at the death of Jesus: the earth quaked, the rocks rent, the graves were opened, the veil was rent, and even from the top to the bottom, signifying that it was God's hand!

Of course, Satan now knows that with all his hatred of God in the persecution of Jesus, he did nothing but help to lay the foundation of the holy city where the perfected kingdom shall be to God's praises forever!

Sorrows of Satan!

* * * *

Yes, Jesus died on the cross.

And what marvellous things happened at His death.

First, He cried with a loud voice just before He died, and said: Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit!

This is a quotation from Psalm 31. And yet, it is no quotation, for they are the words of His own

speech as He spoke them through the mouth of the prophet many ages before. He simply enters His own words and deepens them to the utmost and full-significance.

Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit! I hear in these words an exuberant gladness; it sounds to me like a shout of victory. That is especially so when we connect this last cross-word with the one He uttered just before: It is finished!

We realize full well that His physical death is part and parcel of His humiliation; and that His body must rest in the grave so that He might show to the church of all ages that He has overcome death in all its agonizing phases, to show that He opens the grave for all those that follow Him. But let us also see that this last cry of Jesus signifies that He is going HOME! He is going Home! Home to God, His Father in heaven. From the moment that Jesus bowed the head and died, He arrived in the arms of God and at once He was in the midst of great rejoicings and jubilant singing. The Blood of the New Testament arrived. I realize full well that the victory began with His resurrection, but I would like to contrast this last cross-word with the fourth, and then we will realize that Jesus came to rest in Father's arms. In His arms the spirit of Jesus rejoiced. Moreover, in His second cross-word He had already prophesied: *today* thou shalt be with Me in *Paradise*! And in *Paradise* it is well with Jesus! What inexpressible contrast to the cry from out of the depths and from out of the impenetrable darkness of a few moments before! There He felt *forsaken of God*; here He is in the *hands of Father*. There He experienced an amazing agony; here He experiences the delight of heaven.

There is glory already in His dying, a glory that shall progress to dizzying heights of the New Jerusalem in His final day.

* * * *

Yes, the Christ of God died.

And both the church and the world shall know it. God will take care that this date does not pass unnoticed. Awful things shall happen.

The veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

Why is that added to the holy record?

Undoubtedly it points to the fact that all this cross and dying, all this redemption and glory, is a work of the Triune God. He will not give His praises to another. For Himself He created all things; well, it shall become evident that also recreation is His own work alone.

The veil is rent. Oh yes, but God reached down into the temple, and His own hands ripped the veil in twain!

There is Gospel joy in that act.

For ages it was told the church that God dwelled in the holy of holies, and that no one might enter there that he die not. The highpriest might enter there once each year, but he did so because of the fact that he was an *official*, a copy, a shadow, a type of One who was to come. But God was not at home for just anyone. That had to wait for more gladsome days.

The holy of holies was shut to all men because of their evil, filth, corruption and guilt.

And this is the Gospel: a Man was found who would open the door that led to the holy of holies, the Home of God. And that Man is Jesus. He will rend the veil, and that veil is His own flesh.

Do you notice how God's timing is absolute and perfect?

At the moment Jesus died, the veil is rent, the body and the soul of Jesus are parted in death, and so the opening is made that leads to the inner sanctuary.

I think that Sanhedrin appointed an able committee to see to this strange phenomenon; and that this committee did good work: the veil was repaired or a new one bought and installed. I shudder at the implications of such an act. It says: I refuse to enter the sanctuary. And if we note that the sanctuary, or rather, the opening into the sanctuary, is the symbolic representation of the open arms of God, the matter becomes so horrible that we tremble. Sanhedrin, through its able committee, gave notice to God that they refused His Son!

But to the church of Jesus Christ, this act of God is Gospel joy. The door is open! Heaven itself lies open to our wondering gaze.

Through the death of Jesus a new and living way is opened to the heart of God.

Oh no, we will not repair that breach which God made. But we will come, we do come to Thee, for Thou art our God in this dying Christ!

The blessing of a dying Christ!

* * * *

The earth did quake and the rocks rent!

If you lived in places where earthquakes happen, you see more of the import of this testimony than if you have never before felt the earth shake beneath your feet.

We speak of *terra firma*, the firm and stable earth!

Well, if the creature is to be at rest and comfortable, the earth should be firm. It belongs to our nature to live upon *terra firma*. It is unnatural if the earth quakes. It should not be, according to the ordinances of creation.

But let us not accuse God when He takes the earth in His hands in order to shake it and cause all manner of hardship and fatality.

It is not God who is to blame! Perish the thought!

We, it is man himself, who is to blame. We have

turned the foundations of the earth upside down through our sin and iniquity. You can find that in the Bible too. Sin is perverseness. And that word is akin to the earthquake. Oh, I am certain that when the judgment day comes all the calamities that shall befall the wicked shall be beautifully right, entirely just, wholly righteous. Our condemnation shall equal our corruption.

The earth musth be moved. God's justice demands it.

He has done so many times. It really was not the first time the earth quaked when Jesus died. In the Old Testament they reckoned their years sometimes from "the great earthquake". God has rocked the world in His anger many times.

But I must tremble when I remember a word from Paul: Once more I shall move the earth, and all things!

And that is anticipated every time there has been an earthquake, and especially when Jesus died. It was a prophecy of the final earthquake of the last day. The rending of the veil is a blessing, but the rending of the earth and of the rocks is a curse, or, rather, the promise of the final curse of God when He shall take the earth and shake it in the full revelation of His righteous anger. I think that there shall be an eternal earthquake in hell.

But there is a blessing in it for you, my brother, a blessing in disguise.

The splitting earth and the rending rocks tell you that on the basis of the dying Christ there shall come a palace that is built on the immovable rock, and the rock is Christ. And Christ the Rock is the revelation of God the Rock. Deut. 32:4.

The rocks that split and the earth that quaked when the Christ died tell the church that they shall stand secure forever on the rock of God's everlasting love.

Oh, the blessings of a dying Christ!

* * * *

He bowed the head and gave up the ghost!

Presently loving hands will take Him down from the cross and lay Him in a grave.

But when His body is separated from His spirit, it spelled life for many bodies of the saints that were resurrected and who appeared unto many after Christ's resurrection.

Another sign of the last day, and wrought for your and my comfort in the valley of the dead in which we dwell here below.

Oh yes, at the last day the graves of the saints shall be opened and they shall not only appear unto many, but they shall walk at liberty in the new Paradise of God forever and ever.

What beautiful contrast! When Christ is made ready to fill the grave, the graves of His saints are

opened. It is the Gospel in wondrous acts of God. His death is our life. His burial is our resurrection. His agony is our bliss. Shall we not love Him?

The marvels of God's everlasting Gospel!

The blessings of the dying Christ!

* * * *

The victim of Sanhedrin, Pilate, Herod and the wicked world had died.

Their representative and officiating factotum, the centurion, could testify to the fact. God took care of that! He had not only seen the death of this Strange Man, but he also saw the attending signs.

And he marvelled with great admiration.

A great change had come about.

First the howling mob with their gibes and jokes and taunts and sneers, reviling the dying Christ.

And now the quaking earth, the rending rocks, after the inexplicable three hours darkness! And the mockers flee in great fear!

The strange death of this victim: he cried with a loud voice, and then such mystifying language: "into Thy hands I commend My spirit!"

It was all so unusual, so strange, so out of the ordinary!

God will have His witnesses even out of the Roman oppressors.

No, I do not know if the testimony of this man spelled salvation for him. He may have meant: this dying man is more than an ordinary mortal. We know that the superstitious Romans believed in the gods dwelling with men.

But, at any rate, this man must be a witness for God. Even as Nebuchadnezzar, the wicked king of the Old Testament. He must attest unto the great deed of almighty God, when His Christ died.

But I like to believe that this centurion is a representative of God's elect out of the great heathen world that will find all their joy in the dying Christ, but then the Christ who rose again, and is now sitting at the right hand of God!

O God! We thank Thee for this dying Christ, for His blood speaks good things, better things than the blood of Abel!

Good Friday is good, for it tells me that His death is my life for evermore!

G.V.

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Attention !!

MINISTERS CLASSIS EAST

The Minister's Conference will meet on Tuesday, April 6 at 9:30 A.M. in the Fuller Ave. Church.

W. Hofman, Sec'y.

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EDITORIALS

The Covenant Controversy

5.

With Whom Established.

According to our conception, the Covenant finds its fullest reality in the Tri-une God.

That is our starting point when we think, confess and live the life of the covenant.

Now comes the question: with whom is this covenant established?

There are many answers to this question.

All confess that God manifested, revealed His covenant, but the theologians travel various ways in answering the above question.

Some say: God establishes His covenant with men, others, with the elect, still others, with the elect in Christ; while there are still others who say: with the believers and their seed. The latter answer is given to the question by the liberated brethren in the Netherlands.

But there are also Reformed theologians who answer the question by saying that God establishes His covenant with Christ, and through Him as Head of the covenant with the elect church, and their seed.

Among the latter there is again the distinction that some conceive of the covenant as a means to an end, while others view the covenant as an end in itself. Dr. H. H. Kuyper conceives of the covenant as a means for the realization of election (Hamabdid). Others view the covenant as a way towards salvation.

But we view the covenant as an end in itself.

We tried to show that the Covenant is a very fundamental doctrine. Fundamental, for the Holy Scriptures show that it is no less than the glorious life of the Triune God. God is the Covenant God.

And it is His eternal goodpleasure to show, to reveal, to manifest that glorious Covenant life.

It has become customary to begin with Adam in Paradise when developing the doctrine of the covenant. And such theologians have called this phase of the covenant, the *Covenant of Works*. It is not our intention to criticize this nomenclature at this juncture. Perhaps we will have occasion to say something about that later in this series.

Some theologians, after having treated that phase of the covenant which erroneously is called "Covenant of Works", proceed to the treatment of the "Covenant of Grace, and gather the material from Holy Writ in order to show that God establishes His covenant with the believers, of whom Abraham is the father, and

their seed. Others, among whom, Dr. A. Kuyper, first treat the phase of the covenant, called the "covenant of Nature", meaning with that term the covenant as God established it with Noah, as recorded in Gen. 9.

So there is the covenant of works, the covenant of nature, which according to Dr. A. Kuyper Sr., is the manifestation of the "common grace" of God, and the covenant of grace.

However, it is our conviction that Holy Scripture teaches that basically there is but one manifestation of the Covenant of God, and that the above distinctions merely teach that there are various phases of the one and only covenant.

If we are to treat the covenant of God in its manifestation, we would start, not with Adam, not with Noah, nor with Abraham, but with Christ.

Oh, I know that this has been criticized most severely, but nevertheless, we believe that this method of appreciation of the covenant of God is in harmony with the Word of God.

Let us try to explain.

God certainly starts with Christ.

First, there is that profound passage of Colossians 1:13-19. This passage is so fundamental to a correct understanding of the covenant of God, that I will quote it verbatim: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son: in Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist, and He is the Head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell."

I presume that my readers know that the Liberated brethren deny that Christ is the head of the covenant. They teach that He is the Surety, the Redeemer of the Covenant, the Christ, according to their theologians, is not the Head of the Covenant of grace. God did not establish His covenant with Christ, so they say, but with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, etc.

And, if we read the Holy Scriptures with that bias, it seems as though they are correct. Nowhere do we read in so many words that God established His covenant of grace with Christ Jesus. While, on the other hand, we do read repeatedly that God established His Covenant with men, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Solomon and in the New Testament the Apostle Peter takes over the some vocabulary and says: for unto you is the promise and to your children, etc.

Therefore, it seems to me as though the Liberated theologians are correct in their stand when they say: The covenant of grace is established with men, with believers and their seed, and certainly not with Christ! And they say: where is the proof that the covenant is established with Christ, and in and through Him with the believers and their seed?

And I would like to answer in all modesty: Here is the proof. In that wonderful passage of Colossians which I transcribed above. It has been said that it is not correct to begin the doctrine of the covenant in the *middle of history, with Christ*; we should begin in Paradise, with Adam, or at least, with Abraham, etc. But I would aver that if we begin with Christ, we do not begin in the middle, but we start where we ought to start, that is, in the very beginning. If we start with Christ, developing the doctrine of the covenants, we do as God did, and in His name, for He has revealed to us that such is the proper procedure.

You say: Adam was created first, and we begin the doctrine of the covenants with him, for he is first. Then Paul says: No, but Jesus Christ is the first-begotten of *every* creature!

You say: Abraham was before Christ! How can you begin the covenant of grace with Christ? Then Christ Himself shall supply the answer when He said: Before Abraham was, I am!

Attend to the amazing way in which the great and terrible God put things in order: Adam was 4000 years before Christ, but God says: Yet, my Son is the first-born of every creature!

Or attend to this still greater truth: Abraham, Jacob and Isaac rose from the dead spiritually, and Enoch and Elisha even rose from the dead physically, that is, they went to heaven with glorified, spiritual bodies, but God says: My Son, the Christ, is the first-born from the dead!

Oh yes, this passage is of great import to a correct understanding of the covenant of God as manifested unto man. Its very heart is that God's Son receives *all the preeminence!*

In Creation? No, not Adam is created first. Christ is the firstborn of every creature. In recreation? No, not the millions of saints of the Old Testament that were so many ages before Bethlehem (?), but Christ, God's Son is the firstborn from the dead. He must have *all the preeminence!*

Oh yes, it does concern the covenant. Attend to this that it is God's *pleasure* that in Him, in that Son, in that Christ, should *all the fulness dwell!* All that God should reveal of Himself, the fulness of the God-head, the covenant jewels and covenant beauties included, should dwell in the Christ.

We pointed out before that the covenant is revealed in man in that he is created in the image of God. Well, here we read that Christ is the image of the

invisible God. Also there we have a clear indication that certainly the covenant is established preeminently with Christ, and only with you and me and all God's people, through Him!

We have more on this, but we must halt here, and wait for further space and issues.

G. Vos.

OUR DOCTRINE

Our Covenant God

God's Covenant, Unconditional.

We concluded our preceding article with the observation that the unilateral character of the covenant of God with man is emphasized by the position which our Lord Jesus Christ occupies within the covenant. Our fellowship with the Lord rests exclusively upon Christ's merits. Devastating in this connection is the answer of our Heidelberg Catechism to question 12 in Lord's Day V. In answer to the question, "Since then, by the righteous judgment of God, we deserve temporal punishment, is there no way by which we may escape that punishment, and be again received into favor?", we read: "God will have His justice satisfied: and therefore we must make this full satisfaction, either by ourselves, or by another." How impossible, in the light of this answer, is an offer of salvation to all (the First Point)! There is no possibility of salvation for anyone except upon the basis of the satisfaction of the justice of God. Our debt and guilt must be fully paid before our return into the favour of God will be possible. For God, therefore, to offer His salvation to all men would be a violation of this principle unless we accept the proposition that Christ died for all. But a Christ that died for all is a Christ that did not die atoningly. A universal Christ also died for those who perish. And that He also died for those who perish indicates that His death was not atoning—otherwise they would be saved. Christ, however, died for our sins. He merited salvation for us. Our entrance into the fellowship of the Lord rests exclusively upon His meritorious suffering and death. This fellowship of God's people with the Lord, as far as its relation to the passion of Christ is concerned, is surely unconditional. The value of the cross is not dependent upon our faith; to the contrary, we believe because Christ died for us.

This conception of the cross of Christ and its all-important relation to our covenant-fellowship with the

Lord is further emphasized in a passage such as Heb. 9:16-17. We read in this passage: "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth." The word, translated "testament" in this word of God is in the original the word "diatheene", the word for covenant in the New Testament. The idea of a testament, we understand, is wholly unconditional. A testament is an absolute declaration, knows of no conditions, is simply willed to us, sovereignly bestowed upon according to right. This is the accepted definition of a testament, something willed to us. This word is used in the translation of this text in Heb. 9, although the original word is the word for covenant. It is clear from the context that the translation is correct, for we read of the death of the testator. To enter into a detailed discussion of this passage now is not necessary. One thing is clear: God's covenant with man is a testament, sovereignly willed to us by the Lord, and based upon the death of Christ, the Son of God.

*God Realizes His Covenant Within Us
Through The Holy Spirit.*

That our spiritual entrance into the fellowship of God is possible only through the Holy Spirit should be and is a self-evident fact. Of ourselves we cannot enter into a living relationship of friendship with Jehovah. We are darkness. We are dead. We are not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. And, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God—John 3:3. God only can call us out of that darkness into His marvellous light and He alone can induct us into the blessed relationship of friendship with the alone blessed God. And this, too, is unconditional, as we shall clearly see in the rest of this article.

Scripture Speaks.

Romans 9:15-18.

We read in this passage: "For He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew My power in Thee, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth."

An elaborate explanation of this passage is unnecessary. It speaks for itself. These are significant words, especially in support of the contention that the covenant relationship between the Lord and His own

is unconditional. Firstly, we are told that salvation is not of man. We read, do we not, that "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth." Secondly, we are informed that this salvation is solely of God. We read: "But of God that sheweth mercy." Moreover, the Lord hath mercy on whom He would have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth. In support of this thought the apostle refers to the example of Pharaoh of the Old Dispensation. Pharaoh, we read, this is, the wicked Pharaoh, was raised up by God that in him the Lord might shew His power and that His name might be declared throughout all the earth. It is clear from this particular Word of God that salvation is wholly unconditional. We must notice that not our will is first. God's mercy does not follow upon what we may do. It is, therefore, not conditioned by anything in or of ourselves. Salvation is of God that sheweth mercy and He hath mercy on Whom He will have mercy. The Lord is first and His work is therefore unconditional.

John 14:17.

We read: "Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

The world, we read, cannot receive Him, the Spirit of truth. The viewpoint of this text is that of the world's receptivity. And notice that the world *cannot* (not: will not, although also this is true) receive the Spirit. The world, the wicked world, and therefore man as he is by nature, cannot receive Him, cannot go out to Him, cannot pray for Him, cannot desire Him, can impossibly receive Him, acknowledge Him as the Spirit of truth. And the reason why this world cannot receive this Spirit is expressed in the text: "Because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him." The world does not see Him, does not have a spiritual eye for Him, has no desire for Him, no interest in Him. And this is rooted in that fact that she does not know Him. She does not experience Him, does not know in her heart the operation of this Spirit. The world is estranged from the Spirit of truth and of Christ Jesus. Hence, the world cannot receive Him. But the children of God can receive Him. Why? Because they opened their heart to Him, because they believed in Him and accepted Him and agreed to permit His entrance into their hearts? We know better. They can receive Him because, as we read: "But ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." They *knew* Him, experienced Him, had fellowship with Him. Notice, please, that they did not know Him because they had received Him. Fact is, no man can of himself receive this Holy Spirit of truth. But we read that "they can receive Him, for they knew Him." In other words our receiving of the Spirit *follows* upon His dwelling

in our hearts. And this establishes our contention, namely, that our covenant fellowship with Jehovah is unconditional, does not rest upon anything we may do.

John 10:24-30.

We quote: "Then came the Jews round about Him, and said unto Him, How long dost Thou make us to doubt? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, Which gave them to Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one."

The wicked Jews, who did not believe on the Christ, would blame Jesus for their unbelief. They accused Him of not speaking plainly, of not telling them that He was the Christ. This, they implied, was the reason for their refusal to acknowledge Him as the Christ, as the Messiah. Jesus, however, now proceeds to show them the real, the true reason for their hostility and unbelief. And what is this reason? "But ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep, as I said unto you." This particular word of God must not be corrupted. Jesus does not say that they are not of His sheep because they believe not. Thus the Arminians would have us interpret the Scriptures. But, we read, they do not believe because they are not of His sheep. And in the subsequent verses the Saviour very clearly identifies these sheep. They are the elect which have been given Him of the Father. Notice also in this passage the unconditional character of our salvation. We are or become Christ's sheep not because we believe or hear His voice, but we believe and hear His voice because we are His sheep. Election is therefore the cause of our faith and our believing is not the condition of our salvation; likewise, reprobation is the cause of unbelief and unbelief is not the cause of reprobation.

John 12:37-40.

We quote: "But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again. He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them."

Also in this passage the fundamental cause of the

unbelief of the ungodly Jews is revealed unto us. We read that they *could not* believe because Isaiah, the prophet, had prophesied concerning them. Hence, it was impossible for them to believe. And the prophet had prophesied concerning their unbelief because the Lord had revealed unto him that He would blind their eyes and harden their hearts. Notice also in this passage that the work of the Lord is presented as preceding the unbelief of the wicked, that this work of the Lord is the cause of their unbelief, and that therefore it was impossible for them to believe. Of course, we must maintain the responsibility of the sinner and the fact that he is a moral-rational agent. But this must never conflict with the sovereignty of Jehovah. And the language of the Christ in John 12:37-41 is clear as crystal. The work of God is surely unconditional.

Acts 13:48.

We read: "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

Also this passage speaks for itself. The Gentiles were glad, believed, and glorified the word of the Lord. Why? Because they had been ordained to eternal life. They were not elect because they believed. But they believed because they had been elected. Salvation does not rest upon a human condition, but it is rooted in the eternal election of the Lord.

The Lawgiving. Deut. 5:1-21.

The ten commandments are preceded by this statement: "I am the Lord thy God, Which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage." The implication of these words is plain. The ten commandments, therefore, have been given to a delivered people. It is for this reason that the explanation of the ten commandments in our Heidelberg Catechism appears in the third part of the Catechism, after the discussion of our misery and redemption. Our being the people of God is not the condition of God's gracious dealings with us; to the contrary, we have been delivered and therefore it is our calling to conduct ourselves as a people called out of darkness into the Lord's marvellous light.

Ephesians 4:16-24.

We quote: "From Whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them,

because of the blindness of their heart. Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

A detailed discussion of this rich passage is not necessary in this series of articles. I would call attention to the following. In this passage we are exhorted to walk not as other Gentiles but to put off the old man and to put on the new man. Why? Because we have learned Christ, have heard Him and have been taught by Him. Hence, our calling to conduct ourselves as covenant children is not the condition of God's fellowship with us, but it is the fruit of His saving grace in our hearts, of the fact that we have learned Christ, have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus.

These passages can easily be multiplied. The same thought occurs in Eph. 4:25-32; 5:1-8; Col. 3:1, 12, 13. In the epistles of the New Testament the church of God is addressed by the inspired writers as "saints in Christ Jesus, beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ, elect according to the foreknowledge of God, etc." With respect to Israel of the Old Dispensation the thought occurs repeatedly that they are a separate people unto the Lord because of the Lord's sovereign and elective love and mercy. Read the following passages: Rom. 9:13; Deut. 32:8-10; Deut. 4:37-40; Deut. 7:7-8, etc.

Finally, I would call attention to one more Scripture truths. We are aware of the abundance of miracles in the gospels. Were we ever struck by the character of these various diseases? We do not read of headaches, toothaches, etc. Christ always heals the blind, the deaf, the dumb, the demon-possessed, the leprous, and He calls the dead to life. In other words, His miracles are performed upon people who cannot see, cannot hear, cannot speak, are dead. Is not this remarkable? Miracles are signs. But these diseases, too, are signs. They symbolize the power of sin. Man as he is by nature cannot see or hear the things of the Kingdom of God. He is darkness and has no light in him, is dead and devoid of all life, is spiritually dumb and cannot speak of or unto the glory of God. He is leprous, wholly covered by and in the power of corruption and an outcast from the fellowship of the Lord. Hence, how could the covenant relationship of friendship ever become a reality in the life of the Christian if it were, in any sense of the word, dependent upon anything he would be required to do. God's covenant

with man is monopleuric and unilateral throughout, from the beginning even unto the end.

Consequently, Our Calling unto Faith and Holiness is not the Condition but the Fruit of God's Establishment of His Covenant With us.

Such is the presentation of our Baptism Form. We read: "Thirdly. Whereas in all covenants there are contained two parts: therefore are we by God through baptism, admonished of, and obliged unto new obedience, namely, that we cleave to this one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that we trust in Him, and love Him with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our mind, and with all our strength; that we forsake the world, crucify our old nature, and walk in a new and holy life."

That this is presented here as the fruit of the work of God is evident from the second part of the Baptism Form. There we are told of the work of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Because the Father hath made an eternal covenant of grace with us, and the Son hath washed us in His blood, and the Holy Spirit sanctifies us, we must walk in newness of life.

To be sure, we may speak of covenant obligations. We are called unto faith and hope and love. We must fight the good fight of faith, etc. However, these are not conditions upon which God's covenant with us depends. A condition is a prerequisite, a set of terms presented as the ground for something else (Webster). Conditions of the covenant must necessarily be regarded as outside the covenant. Faith, hope, love, etc., cannot be viewed as outside the covenant, but they themselves belong to the covenant, constitute the essence of the covenant, are, therefore, as also Prof. Berkhof declares, within the covenant. Our calling, therefore, unto a new and holy life is not the condition of the covenant, but the fruit of the operation of God within our hearts and therefore the fruit of the covenant of the Lord with us.

Conclusion.

The use of terms is highly significant. The primary question is not: How do we interpret various terms? A question of greater importance is: How can they be interpreted? Vague, indefinite, ambiguous terms exceedingly dangerous. The reason is apparent. The Church of God must fight to preserve the truth once delivered to the saints. The history of the Church of God throughout the ages testifies to this fact. The forces of heresy and the lie are always ready to creep into the Church and work havoc with the Cause of the Lord. Hence, the people of the living God must ever be on the alert against these destructive forces, as they operate within and without. Never must the

Church of God surrender one square inch of territory, give the enemy a single opportunity to make an inroad into the Church of God. For this reason the use of terms is highly significant. If we use a term which is ambiguous and permits more than one interpretation the result will invariably be that the wrong interpretation will be adopted in the course of time.

Hence, let us be clear, concise, definite, succinct in our speaking. Let us leave no doubt as to our conception of the truth of the Holy Scriptures. If we mean with the use of the word "condition" that man is a moral-rational being and that he must be active in the things of God's covenant because it is God Who works in him both to will and to do, let us express ourselves in that manner. Let us discard the use of the word "conditional". And let us speak of God's unconditional covenant and our calling within that covenant, not as a condition upon which God's fellowship may possibly rest, but as the fruit of the irresistible operation of the Spirit of God in Christ Jesus within our hearts and lives.

H. Veldman.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

David And His Men With Him

As we saw, as provided with arms and bread, David flees to Gath. He hopes to find safety and rest with the heathen in the way of their concluding that he has abandoned his subjection to Saul and deserted into a foreign country. His wish does not materialize. The Philistines recognize him as the slayer of their Goliath. They recollect the song of triumph in which David had been honored above Saul. They conclude that he came to them with evil intent and thus as loyal to his own master and people. The superscription of Psalm 57 reveals that it is as a captive that they lead him to Achish for permanent imprisonment or even destruction perhaps. David's danger is great. In his extremity he feigns madness, while from his heart rises the prayer that the Lord be merciful unto him (Psalm 57). Harkening unto the voice of his supplication, the Lord delivers him from the consequences of his unbelief. Achish actually believes him mad, and is afraid of him. These are his words to his servants, "Have I need of mad men, that ye have brought this one to rave against me (instead of, that ye have brought this fellow to play the mad man in my presence)". In their pagan awe of madness, they dare not harm him now; and they feel relieved at his departing from their midst. The Lord has again come to

the rescue of His servant. With the experience sanctified to his heart, his resolution to put his trust in God takes on new strength. This is his prayer, "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. In God I will praise his word, in God will I put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do to me." (Psalm 56).

Ten miles to the east of Gath runs the "valley of the terebinth, the theatre of David's victorious combat with the giant. To the south are hills, indented by caves, some of them of large dimensions. The city of Adullum is situated here; and the caves are known by that name. Hence, caves of Adullum they are called. Departing from Gath, David escapes to the largest of them. Psalm 57, according to its superscription—it reads, "To the chief musician....of David, when he fled from Saul in the cave"—reveals his feelings also at this time. "Be merciful unto me, O God", is the prayer that rises from his soul, "be merciful unto me; for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast. I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me. He shall send from heaven and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth. My soul is among lions; and I lie even among them that are set on fire; even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword," and the closing verse, "Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: let thy glory be above all the earth."

Adullum is but a few hours journey from Bethlehem, where dwell David's father, mother, and brothers. Fearing the wrath of Saul, and with reason, they go to David to share with him his hiding-place there in the cave. There are still others who cast in their lot with the fugitive. Every one that is in distress, and every one that has a creditor, and every one that is bitter of soul, gather themselves unto him. Doubtless there is connection between the plight and state of heart and mind of these persons and Saul's mis-government. Saul is a menace. As moved by hatred, he persecutes the righteous in Israel, chief of whom is David. And the curse of God, operative through the Philistines, stalks the land.

As to David, he is no longer a lone fugitive but the captain of a band; it is a military organization; and its power grows on account of the brave men that contended to swell its ranks. The book of the Chronicles, in addition to listing the names of several of these braves, relates their deeds of valor. There was Eleazar the son of Dodo, who already was with David in Pasdammim, the scene of his combat with the Philistine Goliath. The two of them gave battle to a company of Philistines that had taken possession of a field of barley. The Lord saved them by a great deliverance. I Chronicles 11: 13, 14. The following took place while

David was in hiding in the cave. On a day he expressed the longing that someone would give him to drink of the water of Bethlehem, where was stationed a garrison of Philistines. Hearing of his desire, three of his men—they were three of thirty captains who had only recently joined his band—broke through the host of the Philistines, and returned to him with water drawn out of the well of Bethlehem. Deeply moved by this demonstration of the love of these men to him, David declined to drink of the water; he poured it out before the Lord, as he said, "My God forbid it me, that I should do this thing: shall I drink the blood of these men that have put their lives in jeopardy? for with their lives they brought it, I Chronicles 11:15-19. Of another—Abishai, the brother of Joab—it is related that he lifted up his spear against three hundred and slew them, I Chronicles 11:20. The Chronicler credits Benaiah, the son of Jehoida with several such acts. He slew two lionlike men of Moab. Also he went down and slew a lion in a pit on a snowy day. He slew an Egyptian; the man was of great stature, his height being five cubits. Going down to him as armed with nothing more formidable than a staff, Benaiah plucked the spear, the size of which was that of a weaver's beam, out of the adversary's hand, and with it he slew him, I Chronicles 11:22, 23. During the last year of Saul's reign, David and his men with their families dwelt in Ziklag, a city that lay in the territory of the Philistines. During this time many more came to him. They were "among the mighty men, helpers of the war". They were armed with bows, and were skilled with both the right and left hand in hurling stones and shooting arrows. All these were Benjamites, thus of Saul's own brethren, I Chron. 12:1, 2. Many Gadites separated themselves unto David during his brief stay in the land of Moab, whither he had fled with his father, mother, and brothers, shortly after his escape from Gath. They "were men of war fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were as swift as the roe on the mountains." They came in the first month, when the Jordan, that they had to swim, was overflowing its banks. Pressing on, they put to flight the enemy—in all likelihood Philistines—pillaging the valleys east and west. I Chronicles 12:8-15. During this same time many of Benjamin and Judah came to David. Going out before them, he addressed to them these words, "If ye come peaceably unto me to help me, my heart shall be one with you: but if ye come to betray me to mine enemies, seeing there is no wrong in mine hands, the God of our fathers look thereon and rebuke it." Under the inspiration of the Spirit, their chief, Amasai, replied, "Thine are we David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse: peace, peace, be unto thee, and peace be thine helpers; for thy God helpeth thee." David received

them, and made them captains of bands, I Chronicles 12:16-19. So, during all that period of persecution, there came to David "day by day to help him, until it was a great host, like the host of God" (I Chronicles 12:22). This last statement warrants the conclusion that even before Saul's death, David's band had grown into a military force that numbered several thousands.

The above-cited data is enlightening in more than one respect. It shows firstly that without any illegitimate effort on David's part, the prophecy of Samuel was coming to pass. The kingdom was being rent from Saul indeed and was being given to a neighbor better than he. The number of Israelites whose hearts were turned by the Lord to David was steadily increasing. But what it also shews, does this data, is that from the point of view of nature, the times were perilous. The southern half of Canaan, principally the territory of Judah, was being crossed by bands of Philistines, bent on plunder. And the throne in Israel was occupied by a man—king Saul—deposed and forsaken of God, and, as troubled by an evil spirit from the abyss, wholly given over to the vile ambition of destroying a righteous man—the son of Jesse—Israel's only hope. Such being the state of affairs, it could only be that the land was filled with "distressed", and "bitter of soul". They were the just in Israel who put their trust in God. They perceived that the Lord had sworn truth to David; and they came to him in large numbers "to help him" (such is the expression used) not against Saul but against the Philistines. For the Lord was not forgetful of His people. Finally, what in addition the above-cited data makes plain is that soon after his escape from Gath David had under him a small army of brave men. The natural inference is that on this account he no longer has anything to fear from Saul. The king is aware that he no longer deals with a lone fugitive, but with a band every member of which will fight for their beloved leader to the death. He will perceive, will Saul, that he can lay hold on David only by walking over the dead bodies of his supporters. It will occur to him that, if he persists in persecuting the son of Jesse, he runs the risk of starting a civil war. So it would seem. The fact of the matter is, however, that Saul does persist in persecuting David, and that, in consequence thereof, the son of Jesse continues under the necessity of leading the life of a fugitive. And the reason is obvious. He may not allow his band to help him against Saul. His calling is to put up with Saul and patiently endure his wrath. The Lord will remove Saul through the agency of the Philistines. For David must be exercised in patience. He must be taught to abide the Lord's time; wait upon God; and make the Almighty his expectation. And fearing God, he learns these lessons in God's school of affliction. And accordingly we see him continually

on the move in the determination to avoid a clash between his band and Saul's troops. There is the question whether it would have been permissible for David to fight in self-defence, had he been trapped. We need not go to speculating what David would have been permitted to do in such an emergency. He must earnestly address himself to the task of avoiding being trapped. He did so; and the Lord worked for him. The result was that every attempt on the part of Saul to get the fugitive in his hands ended in failure.

As was stated, among those that came to David in the cave are his father's house. The company includes his aged father and mother, his brethren and their wives and children certainly. The presence of these people in the cave gives rise to a problem. Sooner or later Saul, too, will come to David, seeking his life. That will call for a swift flight on the part of all. But aged people and small children move slowly. It is imperative, therefore, that David remove his father and mother to a safer place of retreat. Where will he take them? At the moment he can think of but one place, namely, the land of Moab across the Jordan. At this time there were no open hostilities between Israel and Moab. The way was short. They were descendants of Ruth, and Ruth was a Moabitess. Mindful of their descent, the king of Moab will be friendly. In this confidence, it must be, David goes to Mispah, Moab. Betaking himself to the king, he states his request, "Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, and be with you, till I know what God will do with me." The request is granted. Accordingly, David brings them before Moab's king: "and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold." The expression "in the hold" has reference to the "mountain-height", where David and his men entrench themselves. Probably this height is Mizpeh. For, as the name indicates, Mizpeh, the "outlook" is the mountain height of Moab. So has David, as driven by fear of Saul, once more departed from the "land of the living", and cast himself, his men and his father's house, upon the mercy of a heathen king. His doing displeases the Lord. The reasons are obvious. David's movement proceeds from inordinate fear of Saul and accordingly from a lack of faith in God, his ever-present Helper. The Lord has delivered him out of every trouble; yet, he now abides under the wing of a pagan monarch. Besides, the Lord has work for him to do in Canaan. The Philistines overrun the land; they plunder God's people; they must be repulsed. It may be supposed that the tidings of David's removal reach Naioth, the place of residence of Samuel's school of prophets. One of their number is Gad, afterwards David's "seer" and spiritual counsellor (2 Samuel 24: 11-19, etc.). Him the Lord commissions either directly or through Samuel to go to David and say to Him, "Abide not in the hold; depart and get thee into the

land of Judah." In obedience to the divine direction, he "went into the forest of Hereth within the boundaries of Judah.

The scene now shifts to Gibeah, the home of Saul. The king is seated under the tamarack tree in Ramah, on the height. His spear, the symbol of royal power, is in his hand. Standing about him are his servants of the court, all the officers of state. Plainly a royal court is being held. For the king has heard that David "was discovered, and the men that were with him". Hearing, Saul's heart was moved. David now has men with him, who knows how many. That is a new development. The son of Jesse is set. At any time now the blow may fall that will hurl him and his house from the throne. Such are the imaginings of Saul's heart as is evident from his address to his servants. The king is terrified. He deems it not unlikely, yea, he is persuaded, that in their hearts the whole people, including his fellow tribemen, has forsaken him to a man, and is attached to Jesse's son. All men, including the officers of state, conspire against him. Even Jonathan has made a league with the son of Jesse for Saul's overthrow. But supposing that the condition of affairs were actually as Saul imagines them to be, what could he do? He could do nothing except bewail his lot in the hearing of his servants, play on their sympathies, and castigate them for their disloyalty and their treason. And this precisely is what he now does.

"Hear, ye Benjamites", are his first words to them, his captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds. It is Benjamites whom he addresses, and Benjamites alone. For he has surrounded himself only with his fellow-tribesmen, and not also with them of another tribe. His mode of government has been particular and particularistic in the extreme. Let these Benjamites consider what he has done for them, brethren of his own tribe. With the spoils of war he has laden them. He made as many tribunes and centurians as was necessary in order that each of them might have such an office. So he puts to them the question, "Will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds; that all of you have conspired against me, and there is none that sheweth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you that is sorry for me, or sheweth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servants against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?"

"Will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards. . . ? They know better, he means to say. The son of Jesse will favor his own tribesmen, the men of Judah. And to think now that they forsake him, their royal benefactor, and attach themselves to Jesse's son! To think now that they all to a man—they, the brethren of his own tribe—conspire

against him! What foolishness! For how contrary to their own best interest! And besides, what amazing ingratitude! He had laden them with benefits. From the son of Jesse they will receive no benefits. He has done them only good. They in return do him evil only. The shame of it! Reigned there ever a king thus abused by his favorites? And there is no one who feels sorry for him. All have abandoned him in their hearts. What a sad state of affairs! Such are the thoughts of Saul's heart coming to the surface in his address to the brethren. We must be on our guard against adding to these exclamatory expressions sentences such as these: How wickedly ye do, O Benjamites! How ye do sin against God! God is not in all Saul's thoughts. In addressing his brethren he begins and ends in self. He has not the will to bring in God; nor the moral courage. For, walking, as he does, in rebellion against God, and determined to persecute to the death a just man, he stands condemned by his own conscience. His sole striving is to win them back by appealing to their selfishness and playing on their sympathies. Also, he would shame them into remaining loyal to him by holding forth their supposed disloyalty and treason against the background of the generous treatment that he has all along afforded them. Like every sinner, graceless person, he has been loving them, as thinking that they loved him; he has been doing them well in the expectation that they would do him well in return. How his wrath burns against his servants! He flings into their teeth the cruelest, most outrageous and malicious charges. He accuses them of conspiring against him on the imaginary ground that they all along were well acquainted with Jonathan's treachery but failed to warn him, Saul.

There is, of course, not a word of truth in all that Saul says. No one conspires against him! no one seeks his life. No one has actually renounced him as their king, least of all David. The whole nation is as loyal to him as at any time in the past. While Saul sits in his house, nursing imaginary grievances, cursing in his heart the son of Jesse, and welcoming the hour when he will get him in his hands that he may be slain, this son fights for Saul his battles; he fight Philistines. All the fears by which Saul is being tormented are purely imaginary. God is punishing Saul. His soul is being troubled by the evil spirit from God. For Saul will not repent; he will not humble himself under God's hand. He hardens His heart as sovereignly hardened by God. For God wills to destroy him.

The servants of Saul, hearing themselves thus accused, stand speechless all but one, and that one Doeg the Edomite, the offspring of the reprobated Esau, and thus a sworn enemy of God's people, despite the fact that only a little while ago we found him in Nob detained before the Lord. But his heart is far from

God. He arrays himself on the side of Saul and strikes at God's Christ, who stands before him in David. "Then answered Doeg the Edomite, which was set over the servants of Saul, and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. And he inquired of the Lord for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine."

The priest has supplied the famished and harrassed fugitive with arms and food. According to Doeg, he inquired of the Lord for him, too. The priest should not have done that. He should have sent David on his way empty-handed. Better still, he should have had him put in bonds and delivered him fettered and bound to Saul, that he might be slain. For Saul is right. David is a rebel. He purposes to capture the throne in Israel. Accordingly he seeks the king's life. He lies in wait for him this moment. Every Israelite and above all the highpriest should be co-operating with Saul to rid the earth of David. But so far is the priest from standing by the king in this crisis, that he helped the fugitive to escape. And the conduct of Saul's officers of state is just as shameful. They failed to acquaint the king with Jonathan's treachery. What base ingratitude! They have no heart. There is but one right-minded man among them. And that man is Doeg, the Edomite. When he hears Saul wail, "and there is none of you that is sorry for me," he can contain himself no longer. He opens his mouth to tell the king about the supposed treachery of the priest. Doeg is an Edomite indeed; he is a son of perdition. He makes all Saul's charges against David his own, though in his heart he must know, as well as Saul knows in his heart, that the king's charges are baseless, so that it is a just man at whom he strikes. And what may be motivating Doeg? His lust of gain. The opportunity presents itself to him for posing as the only loyal servant that Saul has. Finding him to be such a servant, how the king will delight in him! What honor and dignity will be done to him at the king's command!

The doom of this wicked man and his house is set forth in Psalm 52, "Why boasteth thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? . . . thy tongue deviseth mischiefs, like a sharp razor, working deceitfully. Thou lovest evil more than good, lying rather than to speak righteousness. Thou hatest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue. God shall likewise destroy thee forever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thine dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living." The land of the living was Canaan—God's country—the heaven of the church of the Old Dispensation. Here Doeg had fixed himself down. But God will pluck him up out of this land and he will be cast by the Almighty into everlasting desolation.

G. M. Ophoff.

THROUGH THE AGES

The Reformation Popes

Lee X was the last of the Renaissance popes. The Roman pontiffs with whom we will deal next are those that occupied the pontifical throne during the period of the Protestant Reformation on the Continent of Europe, 1517-1648. They are known as the Reformation popes of whom there were eighteen in all. Several of them were obscure men, who reigned but a few years. From the point of view of their ability to make good their claims to world dominion, they were nonentities as compared with their predecessors of the early Middle Ages. Their limitations in this respect has an explanation. As a result of the rise of new national powers, 1450-1500, the hold of the papacy on much of continental Europe had been broken.

France had freed herself from the domination of the popes. Prior to 1350 France, like all the contries of Europe, was divided into a number of states ruled by nobles. The king of France had little power outside of his private domain. The separate history of France began with the treaty of Verdun, 843. According to the terms of this treaty, Charles, the grandson of Charles the Great, received that part of the Western empire that lies west of the Rhone. That today is France. Charles in his generations ruled France till 987. In this year a new dynasty came to power, the founder of which was Hugh Capet, Duke of Francia. The kings of this royal family were known as Capetians. There were fourteen of them in all. Their united reigns lasted till 1328. They differed little from their dukes, except that they bore a more dignified title—that of king. The real kings of France were the dukes. They reigned supreme, each in his own domain.

The Capetian dynasty was followed by the House of Valois, that continued in power till 1589. It was during the reign of this dynasty that the Hundred Year war was fought (1338-1453). The parties to this struggle were England and France. The chief cause of this war was the clash of material interests between these two countries. They were rivals in trade. Besides, the king of England laid claim to the French crown. The effect of the Hundred Years war on France was the complete ruin of the nobility. The king was now a real power, and national conscience had awakened. France had become a great monarchy and a great nation. The great feudal lords had been destroyed, and their fiefs united to the royal domain. Charles VIII (died 1498) invaded Italy intent on conquering the kingdoms of the two Sicilies. His enterprise is noteworthy because it marks the beginning of

a long series of military campaigns carried on by the French in Italy.

The Valois kings of the 16th century were Louis XII, Frances I, Henry II, Frances II, Charles IX, and Henry III, the last of the Valois kings, who died in 1589. Louis XII and Francis I were strong and able kings but at the same time unscrupulous and unprincipled. The two of them withdrew the church in France from under the jurisdiction of the papacy and brought her under the complete dominion of the crown. Already as early as 1437 great strides had been made in this direction by the adoption of the "pragmatic sanction". As to Francis I, he demanded and received from the pope the following rights: the right to control the appointment of bishops; the right to control the clerical courts; and the right to tax the clergy in the interest of the crown. Thus the pope's power in France virtually came to an end. For he of the two—king and pope—who controlled the appointment of bishops, reigned.

England. The same condition prevailed in England. Here as in France the church was under the dominion of the crown.

Spain. The beginning of Spain. In the eighth century Spain was overrun by the Turks. There were Christian chiefs who refused to submit to the invaders. They fled to the north-west corner of Spain and successfully defended it; besides, by pushing back the invaders they recaptured much of the conquered territory. On the territory thus recovered small Christian states were formed. Included were Castile and Aragon. In 1469 the prince of Aragon was Ferdinand and the princess of Castile was Isabelle. The two married; and their states were united. By their combined efforts the Moors or Turks were expelled from Spain. The struggle lasted ten years. The last Moorish stronghold to be reduced was Granada. The fall of this state marked the end of 800 years of Mohammedan dominion in Spain. The two monarchs extended their jurisdiction over the two kingdoms of the Sicilies; and from that time on their influence predominated throughout all Italy. They now took over the control of the church in Spain. Sixtus IV ceded them the right to nominate the bishops and all higher ecclesiastics, control the church courts and tax the clergy for the benefit of the state. And he agreed moreover not to publish any papal bulls in Spain without the consent of the crown. Henceforth the important posts in the church were filled with men of strict morality and disciplinary zeal devoted to royal interests. The chief among them was Ximenes de Cisneros. As supported by the king and the queen, he rid Spain of unworthy clergy and monks. Perceiving the need of education, he founded the university of Alcala de Henares. Here he gathered learned men, among them four professors in Greek and Hebrew. Twenty-five

years later this university had seven thousand students. The principal study was the Scriptures.

Contrary to the desire of the papacy, the joint sovereigns brought the inquisition in Spain entirely under their control. In their hands it became a fearful instrument for the repression of heresy and dissent, and for the breaking of the independence of the nobles. By the confiscation of their property the treasury of the crown was replenished.

Thus at the beginning of the joint careers of the "Reformation popes", which coincided with the commencement of the Reformation, Spain, too, had an independent church—a church freed from the overlordship of the papacy with the papal abuses corrected. Nevertheless, the church remained thoroughly Roman in doctrine and practice and fiercely intolerant of any and all departures from Roman Catholic theology. As to the revival of learning and study of the Scriptures, it was only temporal. The hierarchy, as a system of church government was, of course, retained, and with it the pope as the *spiritual* head of the church. What the crown had taken over was the actual government of the church. So in France and in England. The real objection of the crowns of Europe to the papacy was its interference in the internal political affairs of their respective realms. The bishops reigned like temporal lords in their respective domains which were immense. The church had developed into a worldly state with the pope as its overlord. It was with a view to bringing under their jurisdiction these domains, bishoprics and arch-bishoprics—ecclesiastical states—that the crowns of Europe insisted on the right of controlling the appointment of bishops. In France and Spain, as has been explained, the crown and the pope agreed that the crown should have this right; but thereby the pope really abdicated in these countries in his capacity of a temporal ruler and also of spiritual ruler, rightly considered. What real spiritual power could the pope any longer exercise with the crown controlling the appointments of all the higher ecclesiastics? In England no such agreement as the one just specified was reached between the pope and the crown. Henry VIII simply declared the reign of the pope in England ended and thereupon took over. And the matter was settled.

Germany. At the time of the commencement of the reign of the reformation popes, Germany, unlike England, France, and Spain, was still divided into separate states ruled by nobles or petty kings. The supreme ruler in Germany was the emperor; but he had no power beyond his own hereditary lands. Thus Germany lacked unity. The nobles spent their time engaging one another in war and plundering one another's domains. The decisions of the courts of the emperor could not be enforced and the taxes that he levied could not be collected. There was a "Reichtag";

it exerted little influence, however; and it could exercise little power. The condition of the peasantry was bad. Unlike in other countries, they were bound to the soil of the landowners; and they were shamefully exploited. On a whole the German national life was in a disorganized state. But conditions were better in the larger German territories—in Austria, Saxony, Brandenburg, Bavaria, and Hesse. Here life was much more orderly; for here the rulers had the affairs of their respective domains much better in hand. They controlled the election of bishops, and taxed the clergy, so that in these territories the pope had little to say.

G. M. Ophoff.

Eating The Lord's Passover

We turn to the book of Exodus, the 12th chapter, the 7th verse and the last clause thereof, and read, "Wherein they shall eat it," namely, the passover-lamb. We last left the people of Israel with the blood of the slain lamb struck on the two side-posts and on the upper door-posts of the houses wherein they are. And the Lord, seeing the blood, passes them by, that is, He does not destroy them with Egypt's first born, representative of the entire Egyptian nation—does not destroy His people but spares them to enter with them into the rest of Canaan; the reason being that the blood of Christ, being a blood that He shed in payment of the guilt of the sins of His people, in payment of their moral debt, fully covers, obliterates this debt, in the same sense that a poor man's money is fully covered, that is, cancelled, by the check of a generous friend ordering the banker to pay money equivalent to that debt.

But we must now take notice of the fact that the people of Israel had not only to cover themselves with the shed blood of the lamb—the passover lamb—but that in addition the Lord also commanded them to eat of its flesh. "And they shall eat the flesh". Thus while the Lord in that terrible night passes through the land of Egypt, smiting Egypt's firstborn, but passing over His people with the shed blood of the lamb upon them, the families of Israel eat the flesh of the lamb in their dwellings. Thus the lamb is not only their redemption (symbolically) but their bread of life as well.

But let us take notice firstly of this, namely, that it is not a matter of indifference to the Lord by whom the passover-lamb is eaten. The command to eat the passover-lamb comes only to the people of Israel, thus to the same people who are commanded to strike the blood of the lamb upon the door-posts of their dwell-

ings and for those whose sins therefore the passover lamb shed its blood. It tells us that it is not true that Christ extinguished by His suffering and death on the cross every man's guilt and thus merited for every man indiscriminately the right to possess the fruits of Christ's death despite the fact that only some men are saved, namely, such men who consent to accept the Christ and His salvation that God is supposed to be offering—offering to all men. Christ died only for His people. Accordingly, it was only unto the justification of this people—the elect of God—that Christ was raised. And so it was only this people that were set with him in heaven and blessed with all spiritual blessing. So the Scriptures do teach. "But God", writes the apostle, "who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sin, quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Jesus Christ." Eph. 2:4. That he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace toward us, that is, that he might realize in us the fruits of Christ's atonement in the way of our faith, His gift in us, thus in the way of our eating his flesh and drinking his blood. Now who does this pronoun *us* in the statement, "that he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace toward us," include? According to the apostle this pronoun includes only such men who were quickened with Christ, raised up with Him and made to sit together with Him in heavenly places some nineteen hundred years ago now, made to sit with him in heavenly places from the point of view of right, He being the head of His people, and they His body. So it is plain that only such men eat the passover for whose sins Christ died, and who thus have the right to eat Him, the Christ, truly eat Him, and in the way of their eating Him, be nourished unto life everlasting by Him, their true bread. And such men do truly eat the passover. For God does not offer His passover to them and agree to save them and to nourish them on the condition that they eat His passover, nay, but He efficaciously commands them to eat His passover, and by this command He continually genders in them a true hunger for His passover; and therefore they do eat His flesh and drink His blood, and thereby give evidence that they have His life in themselves abiding. For the passover-lamb is food not for the spiritually dead but for such men who live in Christ.

The passover then is food for the people of Israel and for this people only, thus not for the stranger, not for the uncircumcised, not for Pharaoh and the Egyptians. This is literally stated in the text. We read, "This is the ordinance of the passover: there shall no stranger eat thereof; a foreigner and an hired servant

shall not eat thereof," Exodus 12:43, 45.

The Lord commands the children of Israel, His own covenant people, to eat the passover, and this people indeed, this people as to all its families, and these families as to every one of their members, the parents and all their children, the young child as well as the child fully matured. The text speaks plainly here. Said the Lord to Moses, "Speak unto the congregation of Israel, saying, in the tenth day of the month they shall take to them every man a lamb, that is, every father of a family, shall take to him a lamb. . . . a lamb for a house." And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next to his house take according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb". Mark you, "according to the number of souls, every man, according to his eating. . . ." The language indicates that at least the first passover was eaten by every member of the family, young and old. No one was excluded except perhaps the infant child on its mother's breast. It was a heinous sin in Israel not to eat the passover. The one guilty of this sin, had to be cut off from the congregation of the Lord. For such a one broke the covenant. If the Lord's Supper took the place of the passover, and it did, then the refusal to eat the Lord's Supper is likewise a heinous son. It is the breaking of the covenant of God.

(to be continued)

G. M. Ophoff.

SION'S ZANGEN

Eeuwige Goedertierenheid

(Psalm 103; Vierde Deel)

De laatste klank die onze aandacht hield, mediteerende over dezen zang, was de overstelpende lieflijkheid Gods die ons toeriep, dat Hij *weet wat maaksel wij zijn!* Hij gedenkt er aan, dat wij slechts stof zijn. En die gedachte wordt verder uitgewerkt in de volgende verzen. En op dien achtergrond van 's menschen broosheid, hooren we, in lieflijke klanken, het gezang van des Heeren goedertierenheid.

"De dagen des menschen zijn als het gras, gelijk een bloem des velds, alzóó bloeit hij!"

Vernederend, maar waar.

O mensch, Uwe dagen zijn als gras!

Er zijn dagen, dat we er met een schok aan herinnerd worden, dagen wanneer men onze lievelingen wegdraagt naar het graf. God's volk vergadert dan in de bedehuizen, en men zingt:

Gelijk het gras is ons kortstondig leven,
Gelijk een bloem, die, op het veld ver-
heven,
Wel sierlijk pronkt, maar kracht'loos is
en teer;
Wanneer de wind zich over 't veld laat
hooren,
Dan knakt haar steel, haar schoonheid
gaat verloren;
Men kent en vindt haar standplaats zelfs
niet meer!

Toch moesten we daar elk oogenblik van door-
drongen zijn. De waarheid van dit vers dringt zich
aan ons op elk uur van ons leven. Afgedacht van de
zonde en den dood die in onze leden woont, is dit waar.
Dat zit vast aan onze ijdelheid, en dan bedoel ik dit
woord in haar beteekenis van den ademtucht, want dat
is het oorspronkelijke woord: Abel. Laat ons slechts
één voorbeeld mogen noemen: onze adem die in onze
neusgaten is! Neemt Hij onzen adem weg: wij ster-
ven. Dat was ook waar van Adam in den staat der
rechtheid. Ook hij, uit dit oogpunt bezien, was ijdel-
heid. In mijn jeugd hoorde ik vaak oude mannen
bidden, en dan bezigden zij vaak deze uitdrukking:
Heere! wij zijn zoo stijl afhankelijk van U!

En zoo is het.

En daar is de zonde en de dood bijgekomen.

Dat bracht groote broosheid en bouwvalligheid.
We sterven elken dag. Reeds vóór onze geboorte zijn
we aan 't sterven. En we zijn zóó dwaas, dat we op
alle manier daaraan meehelpen. De eeuwigheid zal
openbaren, dat we zelfs meegeholpen hebben aan ons
sloopen.

Onze dagen zijn als gras; we bloeien eenige oogen-
blikken als eene bloem des velds.

We hebben ze elk voorjaar gezien. Het beloofde
veel. Doch daar komt een verder getuigenis van God-
delijke wijsheid. Luistert: "als de wind daarover
gegaan is, zoo is zij niet meer, en hare plaats kent
haar niet meer!"

O, die winden, die heete verzengende winden. Want
daar gaat het over in den tekst. Het is maar geen
koelte die verfrissching aanbrengt. Deze psalm is
geschreven in het Oostersche land, waar men in den
zomer van die verbrandend heete winden kende die
vanuit de woestijnen kwamen en het groene blad en
bloem en gewas verzengden.

En zoo gaat het ook in ons leven.

Ons bestaan hier beneden doorloopt een sloopings-
proces. We zuchten, kreunen, hoesten, en schreien
wat jaren, de een meer, de ander minder, en het alles
eindigt in de rocheling des doods, als we den laatsten
adem uitblazen. Van binnen uit werkt en krioelt het
van "wilde dieren"; van buiten af komen Gods legers
van strijdbare helden, die ons aangrijpen, folteren, en

uiteindelijk neerleggen in ons stervende bloed. Boven dien moeten we altijd op onze hoede zijn tegenover de elementen Gods, die ons ook al niet genegen zijn.

O, het schijnt niet zoo te wezen: ziet den jongeling in zijn kracht, zijn blozende jonkheid, zijn machtig (?) streven. Hij belacht alles wat zich tegen hem verheft. Hebt geduld; wacht nog wat. De heete stormen komen en ze zullen het hem leeren, dat ook hij broos en bouwvallig is. Wacht nog wat jaren en komt dan terug. Ziet ge dien kuchenden, strompelenden, voorovergebogen, ouden stakkerd daar? Hij kan amper meer loopen. O ja, ik verzeker het U, het is dezelfde jonge man, die den eersten prijs behaalde bij de wedrennen. De wind van God heeft zijn werk bijna klaar. Nog een paar dagen en we gaan hem onder de zoden leggen.

En dan?

Zijn vroegere plaats die hij wat jaren mocht vullen kent hem niet meer.

Ik denk hier aan sommigen die mij vooruit gegaan zijn. Met moeite roep ik hun gelaatstrekken voor mijn geheugen wakker. Hij verdween als een steen in het water, en het water sloot zich over hem toe.

Vernederend? Ja, maar waar.

Leer ons alzóó onze dagen tellen, Heere, opdat wij een wijs hart mogen bekomen.

Neen, we schreien er niet om. Het is wel. God is het die ons sloopt, doet zuchten, verderft, uitteert, en neerlegt in het graf. Het is altemaal het roepen Gods, door de eeuwen heen: Kinderen der menschen! Keert weder tot het stof waaruit ge genomen zijt! En, hetzij gewilliglijk of niet: we allen gehoorzamen, en ster-ven.

En dit alles is de achtergrond van een schoon tafereel, van een bekoorlijk gezicht. Tegenover onze broosheid en bouwvalligheid zal de Heere iets van Zich laten zien aan U. Ik schrijf het over: "Maar de goedertierenheid des HEEREN is van eeuwigheid en tot eeuwigheid over degenen die Hem vreezen, en Zijne gerechtigheid aan kindskinderen; aan degenen die Zijn verbond houden, en die aan Zijne bevelen denken om die te doen."

Er zijn menschen die zich stooten aan een leeraar die nog al eens "in herhaling" valt. Ik denk, dat ze soms wel eens gelijk hebben. Maar God doet het ook. Wordt ge het niet moede om in dezen psalm steeds maar weer te hooren van "Zijn goedertierenheid"? We zullen ons echter wachten om van Gods herhaling moede te worden. Ik stem toe, dat wij, leeraren, U soms vermoeien met onze herhaling. Ik denk, dat ik weet waarom. Bij ons is de herhaling de eentonigheid des doods. Maar als God Zich herhaalt zijn het de voortgestuwde trillingen van Zijn verbondsleven, die in Zijn Woord al maar rollen en golven en zich voortbewegen gelijk de lieflijke trillingen der muziek, wanneer het thema al maar weerkeerde en Uw ziel streelde.

Als ge hier moede zoudt worden, wat zult ge dan doen met psalm 136 waar het hoofdthema van dezen psalm zes-en-twintig malen herhaald wordt? Slaat dien psalm eens op, en ge zult U verbazen. Er zit ook een wondere les in. Wanneer we het niet verwachten, luiden de verzen: dat Zijne goedertierenheid tot in der eeuwigheid is. Dat zeggen die verzen óók als er een goddelooze koning vermorzeld wordt! Ook staat het altijd daar in redengevend verband. De dingen gebeuren altoos zoo en zoo, *want* Zijne goedertierenheid is tot in der eeuwigheid.

Neen, we zullen niet moede worden, als de HEERE Zich herhaalt. En dan ook om deze reden: het is de hemel daarboven bij God! Hebt ge er wel eens op gelet, dat de vier dieren in het gezicht op Patmos *geen rust hebben, dag en nacht* in hun zeggen van: Heilig, Heilig, Heilig, is de Heere God!? De Hemel is dit: al maar voortdurend roept God van Zijn troon hoe heerlijk, goed en rechtmatig Hij is in al Zijn doen! En ons roepen is de echo van Zijn lieflijke stem.

Hij is goedertieren van eeuwigheid en tot in eeuwigheid.

Wie zou moede worden als de liefhebber van zijn ziel hem vertelde, dat hij altijd hem had liefgehad?

Welnu, als God U bemint, dan beminde Hij U van eeuwigheid en tot in der eeuwigheid. Soms zingen we er van, en dan klinkt het wonderschoon. Hij heeft gedacht aan Zijn genade! En we getuigen ook van de gedachten van vrede die God had, heeft, en altijd hebben zal voor Zijn zeer bemind volk.

Zijn goedertierenheid. Ik wensch het nog eens te herhalen: het beteekent, dat de HEERE U goed wil doen, en goed wil zijn. Alles in God wordt door Hemzelf gedrongen met alle Goddelijke energie, om U goed te doen en te zijn. Legt ons dan neer op het krank- en ziek- en doodbed, en we zullen zingen. Het doet wel zeer, maar we weten, dat ook die smartelijke weg Gods goedertierenheid is. Denkt hier aan Lazarus. O ja, het doet pijn om neergesmeten te worden, dag in, dag uit, bij den poort des rijken. In de verte, bedompt, hoor ik het gerei en het gezang van dien rijke. Doch ik benijd hem niet, en ik beklaag mijzelf ook niet. Ik wacht op God. Straks zendt Hij Zijn engelen om mij voorzichtig op te nemen en omhoog te dragen, al hooger, totdat ik aankom, waar alles zal trillen van genot, van het ervaren van Zijn goedertierenheid.

Voor wien is dit groote goed?

Voor die Zijn Verbond houden, voor die Hem vreezen, voor die aan Zijn bevelen denken om die te doen.

Zijn Verbond is de betrekking van vriendschap en van Goddelijke liefde, die in den aanvang geschonken wordt in de wedergeboorte, die in het bewustzijn treedt in de trekking naar boven, die gesmaakt wordt door het geloof en de levende hope.

Nu zijn er menschen die dat Verbond *houden*. Dit

woord *houden* komt van een stam die beteekent *stijf, rechtop en vast te staan*, zooals iemand die de wacht houdt. De gedachte in dit verband is dan ook tamelijk duidelijk. Het beteekent, dat die menschen bij het Verbond Gods de wacht houden. Het Verbond is hun alles. Het is ermee als wanneer men een schat bevaart. Men omhelst dat Verbond, die relatie; men werpt zich erop, en men sterft liever, dan dat men die betrekking met Zijn God zou verliezen. Denkt hier aan de martelaars van vervlogen eeuwen. Zij zijn in den dood gegaan, doch toen ge hun stem haast niet meer kondet hooren, omdat die stem versmoord werd in den rook, toen hadden zij het Verbond nog vast. Zij wilden liever in die verbondsbetrekking sterven, dan voor een poosje de genieting der zonde te hebben, doch zonder God.

Zoo bezien, kunt ge erin komen, dat dit volk God vreest, en aan Zijn bevelen denken om die te doen. Zij zijn de vrucht van de verbondsbetrekking. En die vrucht is er altijd. Dwaalt niet, en denkt niet, dat iemand die wedergeboren en bekeerd is, die vrucht *niet* zou hebben. Dat kan niet want het zaad Gods zit in Hem verborgen. En dat zaad uit zich. Het mag zwak zijn; soms ook kwijnen; ik stem het toe, maar het blijft in hem en het doet zich gelden. Soms in jubelend geluk, en soms in klaaglijk weenen. Maar het blijft: Goddank, het blijft. Want God kan Zich niet verloochen. Heere! als ik omringd door tegenspoed, bezwijken moet, schenkt Gij mij leven! Zingt ge dat niet? Bezwijkt mijn vleesch en mijn hart, zoo is God de Rotssteen mijns harten en mijn deel in eeuwigheid.

Denken aan Zijne geboden om die te doen? Och arme! Wanneer denken die gelukkige menschen er niet aan? Dat is immers hun leven? Bij deze dingen leeft men! Het is hun *leven* om God te verbinden met al wat hun overkomt. Meer of minder, maar het wordt bij allen gevonden. En dat beginsel wordt verscherpt door de prediking des Woords en het werk van den Heiligen Geest van Christus die nimmermeer van hen wijkt. We hebben toch Jezus' eigen woord tot bewijs? Hij zal bij U blijven tot in alle eeuwigheid!

Gelukkig volk!

De goedertierenheid des HEEREN Heeren is over hen en in hen van eeuwigheid en tot in der eeuwigheid.

Ze denken aan Zijn bevelen om die te doen.

Mag ik daar nog wat van zeggen?

Ik heb dit op het oog: wat is het hart van die bevelen? Jezus zal het U zeggen: de hoofdsom van al Zijn geboden is dit: den Heere Uwen God liefhebben en Uwen naaste als Uzelven. En dat moet met al ons hart, verstand, ziel, gemoed en al de krachten.

Welnu, mijn vriend, onze hoop beschaamt niet, omdat de liefde Gods in onze harten uitgestort is door den Heiligen Geest die ons is gegeven. Rom. 5:5.

Bedoelde Paulus zichzelf daar alleen mede?

Sloot hij op zijn hoogst daarbij in zijn mede-apostelen en evangelisten?

Ge weet het beter. Het sloot en sluit in allen die gegrepen zijn ten eeuwigen leven.

Maar waarom de vermaning en al dit geschrijf er over?

Paulus zal U óók daar een antwoord op geven: Ik wil dat gij daarin meer overvloedig wordt!

De Heere wil, dat we meer en meer bewust zouden worden van de trillingen, de *herhalingen* van Zijn onuitsprekelijk lieflijke goedertierenheid!

Zij werd gekristalliseerd in het Aangezicht van God.

En dat is Jezus Christus, onze Heere.

Ziet dan sterk op Jezus!

G. Vos.

IN HIS FEAR

False Doctrine and The Fear Of The Lord

Mutually Exclusive. (continued)

That, as we stated in our closing remark last time, the fear of the Lord never produces false doctrines ought to be self-evident. It is the lack of filial reverence and fear that produces the lie. The child who loves his father will never speak evil of him. The child who loves his father will not deny him the honor and respect that is due unto him. Neither will the elect child of God as he lives in the fear of the Lord invent and produce doctrines which deny Him the honor and glory due His matchless name.

Let us pause just a moment to assure ourselves of the fact that all false doctrines do deny God His honor and glory. Inventing and promoting false doctrines are not minor things. There is no harmless, innocent false doctrine. God has revealed Himself to us in His Word. He has expressed Himself very definitely and accurately so that we might know Him. And all the doctrines contained in the Scriptures deal with God. In His Word He has revealed to us the things that we must know concerning Him. Whether we are dealing with the doctrine of man, of Christ, of salvation, of the church or of the last things, we are always dealing with the doctrine of God. Thus when we deal with the creation of man and of the earth upon which he was placed, we are dealing with God's work, and if we then say of that work of God that it did not take place in six days but in six periods of time, we are touching the doctrine of God Himself.

Our stand in this apparently unimportant matter will determine whether we are willing to give God the honor and glory due His name or whether we are going to drag Him down to the level of our human reasoning and place Him before the bar of a scientific discovery which entirely overlooks that important question as to the nature of things before the flood, of which man has no record at all. Our view of the entrance of sin into the world vitally touches the doctrine of the sovereignty and holiness of God. We need go no further. It is evident that our views on all these things determine our belief in regard to God. It follows then that our doctrines and teachings always deny God the glory and honor due His name or else confess it and show true reverence and fear before Him. If we do not listen carefully to what He says of His works, we are in that measure going to deny His glory and honor when we begin to lay down a doctrine in regard to that work. But in the measure that we do fear Him, in the measure that we have a deep respect for Him in love, we will be very careful of what we say and teach concerning Him. Love is the inner principle of the Law, and the Law teaches us that we shall not make unto ourselves graven images of Him.

Let us establish that fact first. All false doctrines are the result of man's attempt to decide for himself the truth about God. All false doctrines are man's decisions as to what he thinks God ought to be. They are all refusals to let God declare and reveal to us the truth concerning Himself. The motives behind this refusal are various. About this we will speak a little later. But let us now bear in mind that false doctrines are man's idea arrived at apart from God's revelation of Himself. This is true even when these false doctrines appeal to various passages of Scripture. For then these passages are taken out of their context and made to declare a thing which God does not state. On the other hand, he who fears the Lord will never deal so dishonestly with God's Word. He will respect God's Word. He will listen to God and not try to dictate to God. In false doctrines man tries to stipulate and to tell God that in order to be love, He must love all men head for head, and that if He does not do this, then He is cruel. False doctrines flow forth from that pride of man's heart according to which he thinks that he may speak of himself about God. He refuses to listen to what God says, or if He listens, he rejects part of what God declares, and presents God after the pattern of his own evil, carnally minded thoughts and desires.

He who fears the Lord falls down before God in reverence. He is eager to listen to God. He is desirous of God receiving all the honor and glory due His name. He who fears the Lord is afraid to say anything about God which would in any way or to any degree present him in a wrong light and would in any way deny His

wisdom, holiness, sovereignty and justice. He is afraid to deny any of God's virtues.

Scripture has something definite to say about these things. Scripture declares that false doctrines are the result of man's pride according to which he, refusing to listen to God and in fear to bow before Him, invents his own mental image of God. False doctrines are mental images of God. There is a text in Collosians 2 which is interesting in the light of what we are discussing. In our King James versions the 18th verse reads, "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind." It is plain here that Paul is dealing with false doctrine. What we wrote above is also plain from the text, namely, that false doctrines deny God the glory and honor due His name. These false teachers in this instance of Collosians 2 ascribe some of the glory of God to the angels, urging the worship of angels alongside of God. But the things we wish to have you note in this text now is the fact these these false doctrines are the result of man's refusal in the fear of the Lord to listen to Him and of his proud invention of his own dictrines and conceptions of God. This is not at once plain in the text because it is improperly translated in our King James version at least. It is plain even as the text stands in our King James version that this false doctrine is produced in sinful pride. Note the expression, "vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind." The small word "not" should really be left out of the text according to the greater number of reliable reading of this Epistle in the original, besides the fact that its inclusion into the text is far easier to explain as the work of a copyist than its exclusion is. The text then should read, "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he has seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind." You see at once that it was the vain pride of their fleshly mind that caused them to see, that is, to invent these false doctrines according to which they advocate worshipping of angels.

The text suggests to us the false doctrine of Mariolatry of the Roman Catholic Church. Paul does not have this in mind, but what he states here is surely of direct application to that heresy. Did the fear of the Lord move Rome to invent such an unscriptural doctrine as that of the worship and indispensability of Mary for our salvation? Where does one find it in God's Word. Where is that child-like reverence and bowing before God in such a false doctrine? Behold the glory of God and of His Christ attributed to Mary and in that measure denied God! Paul in the text quoted explains the appearance of that false doctrine. Moved by a proud, fleshly mind they in their own thoughts saw this doctrine as being of advantage for

them. God's glory, His fear did not concern Rome in the production of this lie. This doctrine did not come from God's mind but from the sinful mind of proud man.

What is true here of the Roman Catholic heresy of Mariolatry is true of all false doctrines. It is true of Arminianism in all its forms, and it is true therefore also of the pernicious theory of Common Grace which at its root is simply Arminian. The false doctrine that Christ died for all men head for head, that all men have a chance to be saved, that God sincerely offers salvation to all who hear the gospel is not attained by a humble request of God that He show us the truth. For God will immediately answer in His Word that even before he was born or had done good or evil Esau was hated by Him, that the preaching of the word is foolishness to those that perish and a savour of death unto death as well as of life unto life. The fear of the Lord will prompt one to say, "Yea Lord, so it is. Thine be the glory and honor." The lack of the fear of the Lord will prompt one to disregard what God says and with his own mind dream up things and teach them as the doctrine of God's Word. False doctrines are not simply or ever merely the result of misunderstanding God's Word. In the way of misunderstanding false doctrines do creep into the church. But there is always even behind that misunderstanding the delight in the lie or else the refusal to study the matter further. And both of these spring forth from a lack of the fear of the Lord. He who fears the Lord finds no delight in the lie and is ever desirous of knowing God as fully as he possibly can.

What is even worse, and that is historically so often the reason for the appearance of false doctrines is bitterness, jealousy and greed. That very often plays an important part in the appearance of new doctrinal views. As in 1924 when three expressions were concocted to facilitate the expulsion of men who were confessed to be Reformed, so it has happened frequently. It is the apostle Peter who prophesied such things. In his second Epistle, the second chapter, he warns the church of false prophets who would come in the future bringing in damnable heresies so that they deny that the Lord has purchased them. Peter gives the motive for the invention of these damnable heresies as covetousness in the third verse. He makes a very striking expression in this verse which shows us the true character of all false doctrines. He states that through covetousness they make *merchandise* of those who follow them. Need it be stated that such false doctrines which man invents because of covetousness and jealousy cannot and are not the product of the fear of the Lord? The fear of the Lord never leads one in that direction.

We like to close with this remark that NO ONE HAS EVER YET OR EVER WILL INVENT A

FALSE DOCTRINE BECAUSE HE IS DESIROUS OF PLEASING GOD. The fear of the Lord has never produced a false doctrine yet, and it never will. False doctrines are invented because man desires to please the flesh. Bear in mind that man accepted false doctrine in Paradise because he wanted to satisfy the lust of his flesh, and you will understand that he has developed in the lie and produced various false doctrines just exactly because by nature he can only continue in that way to the satisfaction of his flesh. He does not begin to accept pure doctrine until God instills His fear in him. And as he lives in that fear, he will seek the truth, defend, promote and propagate it.

J. A. Heys.

CHRISTIAN SCHOOL TEACHERS

PLEASE NOTE!

The Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School is in need of a teacher for the lower grades for the season beginning in September. If you are able to serve us in this capacity, please give this notice your earnest and prayerful consideration taking into account the principles which we as Protestant Reformed people are called upon and privileged to maintain. Write, call, or visit Mr. J. Lanning, 1268 Wilson Ave., S. W., R.F.D. No. 5, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Phone 64-7391.

IN MEMORIAM

On February 25, 1948, it pleased the Lord to take from our family circle, unto Himself, our dear husband, father, and grandfather,

DIRK MONSMA

at the age of 57 years.

Our comfort is the testimony he gave during his life that he belonged to his Saviour, Jesus Christ, whom we believe doeth all things well.

Mrs. D. Monsma and Dwight
Mr. and Mrs. L. Mulder
Mr. and Mrs. O. Vanden Berg
Mr. and Mrs. A. Heemstra
Mr. and Mrs. A. Bierema
and 8 grandchildren.

Grand Rapids, Mich.

IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies Aid Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Mich., mourns the loss of one of her members,

MRS. G. ZWAK

and hereby expresses its sympathy with the husband and children. May the Lord in whom we trust sustain them in this hour of bereavement.

Mrs. J. Vander Wal, Pres.
Mrs. C. Lamse, Sec'y.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Walking With God

Scripture says of Enoch that he walked with God. "And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters. . . . And Enoch walked with God and he was not; for God took him." Gen. 5:22, 24. That is by far the most unique biography that you can find anywhere in the annals of history or in the Scriptures. Whatever else Enoch may have done during the three hundred and sixty-five years of his life upon the earth, or whatever cherished memories he may have left behind, the outstanding feature of his life that governed them all was, that he walked with God.

This is also said of Noah as a reason why he alone found grace in the eyes of the Lord, to be spared with his family by the waters of the flood. "Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations; Noah walked with God". Gen. 6:9.

Otherwise this expression is not very freely used in Scripture. We do often read of walking before the face of God, or of walking after God, or following after Him, or even of walking in God's statutes and judgments. But the expression "walking with God" is a unique description of the intimate fellowship and friendship between God and His covenant people.

That is the meaning of the expression. It is evident, that this cannot possibly refer to a physical, outward walk with God. That would be impossible. Whatever physical association there may have been between God and Adam in paradise was destroyed by the fall. God did establish a new relation of friendship between Himself and His people in Christ, but this is not a physical contact. How can an earthly mortal, who is bound to time and place, walk about with the omnipresent, infinite and sovereign God, Who is a Spirit. Moreover, no one can actually see God alive. So that physical association is at once impossible.

But it does refer to a spiritual relation between God and His saints, an inner association and communion through the Spirit. Walking, in this case, means going about, associating, living in fellowship and mutual friendship. It is the fruit of God's grace in the hearts of His people whereby they know that He is their God and they are His people. They count it their highest good that they are privileged to fulfill their "part" in His covenant by walking with Him.

That was originally Adam's blessedness in the state of righteousness. Gen. 3:8 states, "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the

cool of day." This is significant, for now God is walking alone. Adam and Eve are hiding from before His face. They dread His coming, because they have broken their relation of friendship with God by entering into a friendly alliance with the serpent. That covenant communion in which they walked together and spoke together in mutual friendship is destroyed. And as far as man is concerned, he is neither able nor willing to restore that relation. It is broken forever. But God Himself promises to restore His covenant fellowship with them in Christ, by a declaration of war, creating enmity between the prince of darkness and all his host on the one side and God's elect covenant people in Christ on the other.

As a result, Enoch and Noah, the seed of the woman, with God. Later God assures His chosen Israel, "And I will set My tabernacle among you, and My soul shall not abhor you. And *I will walk among you*, and will be your God, and ye shall be My people." Lev. 26:11, 12. This promise is also given to the Israel of God in the new dispensation, "For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and *walk in them*; and I will be their God and they shall be My people." This same promise is finally realized in heaven, according to Rev. 3:4, "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall *walk with Me in white*; for they are worthy."

This walking with God implies a living faith, humble obedience, a devoted love, an implicit trust and constant prayer.

Faith is the bond that unites us to Christ and to God. By that living bond of faith a relation of friendship is established between God and His restored image-bearer. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed." Amos 3:3.

You can be sure that anyone who walks with God does not regard Him as an emergency measure, someone to be called in conveniently when we are no longer able to take care of ourselves. That man's religion is not a conventional side-issue, but fills his whole life. God had first place in Enoch's life. God was his God and his sovereign Lord, before Whom he humbly bowed to ask, Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?

How else can a mere earthly creature ever possibly walk with God? He must be deeply conscious of his own emptiness and insignificance. Compared with God he is but an insignificant speck of clay, less than nothing and vanity. For God is God, the almighty, omnipresent, sovereign God, in Whom we live and move and have our being. And we are His creation, His handiwork, existing each moment by His power that sustains us. The Most High God is worthy to be praised. For even as all things are of Him and through Him, so He has also prepared all things unto Himself, to show forth His praises. He has even

called His people unto Himself, not that they should live unto themselves, but that they should live unto Him in worship, fear and obedience.

That service must be a willing service in love. Our relation to God is not that of a wage-servant. Nor may we regard it our duty for duty's sake, since God demands love from the heart. No man can walk with God without a deep conviction of sin and guilt. Because of our sins we are unworthy and unfit to enter into the presence of Him Who is spotlessly holy. We deserve only to be banished from His presence forever. But God Himself has removed our guilty stain through the perfect sacrifice of His Son upon the cross. He takes us unto Himself, makes us like unto Him in the true knowledge, righteousness and holiness of Christ, Who is our complete salvation. In holy awe His saints worship Him as their God and Father, Who calls them out of darkness into His marvellous light.

Such love manifests itself in implicit trust. Have you never noticed how confidently a child will walk next to his father, no matter how strange the way may be, how dark the night, or how many dangers may threaten? Asaph expresses exactly that in the seventy-third Psalm. When he had ventured a step alone without his God, his feet had well-nigh slipped. He was ready to question the wisdom of the Most High, and allow the doubt to take root whether God was actually good to Israel. He almost mistook the prosperity of the wicked as a token of God's favor, and the adversity of the righteous as a sign that God had forsaken them. Until he went into the sanctuary, where he met his God, and soon his problem was dissolved. He learned to hold to God's hand, walked confidently at His side. In child-like trust he confessed, "Nevertheless, I am continually with Thee; Thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." Ps. 73:23, 24.

Such confidence, Asaph teaches us, is possible only by abiding in the sanctuary in constant prayer. Walking together implies talking together, revealing the thoughts and secrets of the heart to one another. He who walks with God knows Him as his friends. He draws near to Him as to the overflowing Fountain of life and blessedness. He delights in His presence, seeks His face, pours out his heart to Him, and makes all his needs known in prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. He prays without ceasing, in devotion and fear, for from his heart arises the confession,

Whom have I, Lord, in heaven but Thee,
To Whom my thoughts aspire?
And having Thee, on earth is nought,
That I can yet desire.

But that life of fellowship with God requires a spiritual separation from the world of sin and evil. Friendship with God precludes enmity with the world.

God says to Israel, "And if ye will not hearken unto Me, but walk contrary to Me, then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins." Lev. 26:27, 28. If Israel walks away from the Lord to seek other gods or the pleasures of sin, God will walk in the opposite direction away from her. A breach will be established that only grows wider as Israel departs farther from the Lord. The Holy Spirit can have no fellowship with sin, so that He withdraws Himself in sore displeasure, causing us to experience His disapproval until we are brought back in repentance. Therefore Micah admonishes Israel, saying, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to *walk humbly with thy God?*" Micah 6:8.

Enoch walked with God in the midst of an evil generation. And so did Noah. It was the time before the Flood, when a rapid degeneration was hastening the world toward judgment. Cain's city exalted itself against God and His church as a kingdom of anti-christ. Wickedness abounded everywhere, persecution ran rampant. As almost a lone witness of his God Enoch testified, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." Jude 15, 16. Noah, likewise, was a preacher of righteousness, boldly defying and condemning the world. Every hammer blow was a witness that he believed in his God, Who is holy and righteous and a consuming fire against all the workers of iniquity. The fact that they were friends of God made them enemies of the world. Should they not hate those who hate their God? And though they were hated by the world, they had the testimony of God that they were pleasing to Him. Hebrews 11:5-7. They walked with God as a friend with a friend. And God took Enoch unto Himself in heaven. While Noah was delivered from an evil world by the waters of the flood. For God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. He takes them into His glory and clothes them with garments of righteousness in Christ, that they may enjoy His fellowship forever. God is faithful. His covenant never fails. Blessed is that people whose God is Jehovah.

C. Hanko.

CLASSIS EAST

will meet in regular session Wednesday, April 7 at 9:00 A. M., in the First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland, Michigan. Consistories please report on the overture from Creston.

D. Jonker, S. C.

PERISCOPE

N. B. . . .

Once again we welcome the Rev. James Howerzyl of Oskaloosa, Iowa, as guest-contributor to this column. The Rev. Howerzyl has agreed to contribute to this rubric while the regular writer will keep our readers informed of our Home Mission activity and related topics.

W. H.

Interesting and instructive to us are the problems faced by various other denominations in our land. Thus also those faced in the Presbyterian Church in the United States (more commonly known as the Southern Presbyterian Church) which had its origin in 1861, when the Presbyterian Church in America of which all were members demanded an oath of allegiance to the United States of America as a condition of membership. This the southern branch of the church correctly refused to do and since then has existed as a separate denomination. We quote from a few articles taken from recent numbers of "*The Southern Presbyterian Journal*", a semi-monthly magazine published by certain men in this denomination who are opposing continued membership in the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America and other liberal tendencies, but who have especially banded together to prevent the reunion of their denomination with the more modern and lax Northern Presbyterian Church.

We quote from an editorial "How the Continuing Committee got its Name." "About four years ago a group of Southern Presbyterians became acutely conscious of the serious crisis which threatened the existence of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. They met at Montreat for earnest prayer and appropriate action. In this meeting an important committee was born. It was dedicated to the preservation of the Presbyterian Church, U. S., and the conservation of its priceless heritage.

"It was necessary to give a name to this committee, charged with the solemn responsibility of insuring the continuation of our Church. A number of names were suggested, but many felt that it should be called the Continuing Committee. We realized at the beginning that this might not be the best name possible, but it was the best we could think of at the time to express our major objective. The name has at least one thing in its favor. It is a Biblical term. Many times we are exhorted in the New Testament to continue in the verities of our precious faith. Our motto has been:

"If ye *continue* in my Word, then are ye my disciples indeed." We have taken this affirmation of our Lord seriously. . . .

"The members of this committee are therefore continuators of the Christian tradition and the notable achievements of their progenitors. This committee is opposed to the *discontinuation* of the church we love and serve. (By union with the Northern Presbyterians—J.H.). It refuses to permit our church to be liquidated. Although it has been vilified and slandered by the group within our Church which is discontented with the idea of our *continuation*, any intelligent person knows that this is not a radical committee or a devisive group. As the name suggests, it stands for loyalty to our church. It cheerfully approves the Confession of our Faith and our constitution in its entirety. It is willing to make a definite effort to conserve all for which our Church stands, regardless of the sacrifice involved. This committee is not willing to see these things we love dissipated or jeopardized.

"We have never assumed an extreme or fanatical position. The things for which we stand are the same things for which Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Thornwell, and Palmer have stood.

"We pledge ourselves to go forward and onward in the course of action which we believe to have the approval of our Lord, and refuse to turn aside because of the stultiloquence of those who would delight to see our church lose its autonomy."

We comment:

Although we cannot agree with all that has been written in the *Journal* with regard to this controversy and the life of the Southern Presbyterian Churches, nevertheless, it is our conviction that in this matter overagainst the Federal Council and the reunion with the Northern Presbyterian Churches the group represented by the *Journal* has surely taken the better stand and we would encourage them in this, but suggest at the same time that they consistently carry out the struggle also against the false doctrine present within the Southern Presbyterian Churches. In this particular case our reading has convinced us that *continuing* is not sufficient but that far from uniting with the Northern Churches the Southern Churches should themselves be the subject of a Reformation.

From our own denominational experience how well do we know the tactics which are also in evidence in the current struggle in the Southern Presbyterian Church. We quote from an editorial: "We do not fear a frank discussion on Current Issues". "In the morning's mail we received several letters from Southern Presbyterians in a synod where there has been very little discussion from the conservative viewpoint upon the controversial issues now before our Church. One minister states, 'I am very much distressed as there

is an opposition to a frank discussion in our Church. No one has been permitted here to take up the conservative side of the matters now before our Assembly.' Another writes: 'The matters now before our Assembly are not being discussed in a public way in our Synod. The only discussion we hear is limited to private conversations.' Another affirms: 'When the time came to take the vote on the Federal Council issue all discussion was banned even though many Elders stated that they did not know anything about the subject upon which they were called to vote. There is an obvious fear against open discussion. I observe a nervousness here for fear that the conservative side might get a hearing.' An Elder observes, 'I greatly fear that pastors are trying to shelter their people and keep them in ignorance about the real issues.'

"Such an attitude is both unChristian and undemocratic. For a little over three hundred years English speaking people have felt that open and frank discussion is beneficial and in interest of the Truth. It has been the considered judgment of competent thinkers that discussion on controversial matters is the right and just thing to do. It is the willingness to let different points of view speak for themselves in an atmosphere which is characterized by an appreciation of the Truth that we earnestly advocate. . . ."

Our Comment: From the viewpoint of openness of discussion we surely appreciate the sentiments expressed above. Surely a full and free discussion is not only imperitive but is above all the only ethical way to arrive at a full understanding of any given matter. This same willingness to discuss we find in an article entitled "Loyalty" from which we shall quote a few lines: "Were I a preacher or an elder who cannot wholeheartedly subscribe to the doctrine, government and objectives of my denomination, *loyalty* to my religious convictions would obligate me to take a walk over to some denomination to which I could be *loyal*."

"Were I a preacher or an elder who believes that the Southern Presbyterian Church should work for *political* objectives, *loyalty* to my Church's constitution would obligate me to renounce that belief or take a walk over to some denomination to which I could be *loyal*."

"Southern Presbyterian Church government does not permit *political* objectives. Therefore the Southern Presbyterian Church cannot be constitutionally *loyal* to the Federal Council of Churches, which is the "Political Action Committee" for twenty-five denominations, including the Southern Presbyterian Church."

"That the number one objective of the Federal Council of Churches is "Political", therefore not spiritual, "Socialistic" and therefore un-American, is clearly set forth in its own published records which are avail-

able to everyone. "Get the Record". (And here follows a long list of Federal Council publications with the pertinent sections outlined).

We Comment: This willingness to face the facts and conduct an open discussion, on the part of those who oppose the membership in the Federal Council and Reunion with the Northern Church, we applaud as much as we deplore the secretive tactics of their opponents.

And finally, although once more we cannot agree with much that is written by these men—I believe a charge of Arminianism could be supported from their writings—yet in the particular sphere in which they find themselves we cannot but admire the emphasis and trend of their writings and hope they may continue in this way. We quote from an article: "It is *God* who worketh in you."

"And the greatest need of the American Church is the realization of this great and gracious fact. We have become so wrapped up in man's doing that we have forgotten *the working of the might of His strength*. We are assuming that American faith can stand in the wisdom of man rather than in the power of God. We are so busy with the diversities of our workings and the gifts and graces of leaders that we pass by the blessed truth that in these different activities it is the same God who worketh in all. . . ."

". . . . Would that we might all ponder these weighty words of Ruskin: 'I believe that the root of almost every schism and heresy from which the Christian Church has ever suffered, has been the effort of man to earn, rather than to receive His salvation; and that the reason that preaching is commonly so ineffectual is, that it calls on men oftener to work for God, than to behold God working for them.'

"Even the smaller children ought to come to the Church believing that God does something there for them. . . ."

With this we believe everyone can agree and this emphasis is surely not out of place, also for us, lest we fall into the same error.

In this same connection we quote from "The Presbyterian Guardian" of February 10, 1948: "Southern Majority for Federal Council. The vote which is being taken in Presbyteries of the Southern Presbyterian Church concerning continued affiliation with the Federal Council, seems definitely to have gone in favor of that body. Fifty-one presbyteries (which are approximately equivalent to our Classes—J.H.) have approved continued affiliation. This is more than a majority of the presbyteries of the church. Sixteen presbyteries have opposed the continued affiliation."

We shall continue to keep our readers informed of the progress of this struggle.

J. Howerzyl.