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MEDITATION

Jehovah Komt

“O Sion! gij verkondigster van goede boodschap, klim op eenen hoogen berg; O Jeruzalem! gij verkondigster van goede boodschap, hef uwe stem op met macht; hef ze op, vrees niet, zeg tot de steden van Juda: Zie, hier is uw God.” enz.

—Jesaja 40:9-11.

Onze tekst is in het eerste hoofdstuk van Jesaja's troostreden, hetwelk met het veertigste hoofdstuk begint.

En het hart dier troost is: De Heere Komt!

Het zou er hachelijk bijstaan in de dagen wanneer deze profetie historie zou worden.

We moeten voor den aandacht houden, dat Jesaja deze woorden neerpande toen Israel en Juda nog in het land der belofte woonden. Er was zelfs een zekere mate van voorspoed, nu wel geen geestelijke voorspoed, maar dan toch een soort van succes. Maar Jesaja zag dieper dan de oppervlakte, vanwege het feit, dat de Geest des Heeren HEEREN op hem was. Hij zag de morele verrotting van het voorheen zoo gezegende volk Gods. Hij zag en wist, door Goddelijke aanspraak vermaand zijnde, dat het volk zijn weg verdorven had, en dat de Goddelijke straf niet uit zou blijven.

Leest de laatste woorden van het voorgaande hoofdstuk, en gij zult ijzen bij het hooren van het verschrikkelijke oordeel, dat straks werkelijkheid zal worden. Des Koningszonen zullen kamerlingen gemaakt worden in het land van Babel.

Maar God is groot van goedertierenheid en lankmoedigheid.

Hij weet, dat het ware volk zal treuren.

Eerst, zij zullen treuren als zij de donkere profetie hooren van Jesaja.

Tweedens, het ware volk in Babel's onderdrukking zal ook treuren als zij in Babel aangekomen zijn om die lange zeventig jaren daar door te brengen, ver van God, Zijn tempel en stad. Zij zullen de harpen aan de wilgen hangen, en weigeren om des Heeren lied te zingen in het vreemde Babel.

En daarom zorgt God er voor, dat er een boek der troostreden is, zoodat beide de treurenden in Juda, vóór de ballingschap, die treuren vanwege de zwarte toekomst; en de treurenden in Babel, die treuren vanwege de aanwezige donkerheid, zichzelve mogen troosten in den Heere hun God.

Troost, troost, Mijn volk, zal ulieder God zeggen!

En het hart van die troost is: De Heere komt!

* * * *

De Heere komt!

Dat is de blijmare voor het volk van God in ballingschap.

Let erop, dat het weer gaan zal als voorheen: “Uit Sion zal des Heeren wet uitgaan, en des Heeren Woord uit Jeruzalem!” Jes. 2:3.

De blijmare is gericht tot Sion en tot Jeruzalem.

Dat brengt hen in een eigenaardige positie. Sion en Jeruzalem zijn de boodschappers, doch zij zijn ook het volk tot wien die boodschap komt.

En toch is het nooit anders geweest.

Let er op, dat ook vandaag er mensen op de preekstoel staan om Sion het goede te verkondigen. Maar de boodschap is ook voor hen die de boodschap brengen.

Dieper nog: Jezus is de groote Boodschapper van God! Maar de boodschap des heils is allereerst zelfs voor Hemzelf! Hij is de grootste Erfgenaam aller dingen, en is de eerste en voornaamste Bezitter der nieuwe aarde.

Zoo ook hier: de verkondigster van goede boodschap wordt Sion en Jeruzalem geheeten, maar dat zijn zij zelf. Want God bouwt Sion door Sion.

Zegt tot de steden van Juda: Ziet, hier is Uw God!

De Heere is aan 't komen!

Men vege de tranen weg. Er komt groote verblijding.

Hij weet, dat het ware volk zal treuren.

* * * *

't Was wel noodig, dat zulk een lieflijke boodschap aan Juda en Jeruzalem gezonden werd. Want het stond er treurig bij.

Israel was in ballingschap gegaan.

En zij verkeerden in een benarden toestand.

Stad, land en tempel waren verwoest door de godvergetenen.

Ze waren wreedelijk door de goddelooze Babyloniërs vanuit het land der vaderen weggevoerd naar het afgodische Babel.

En wat de smart verergerde is dit: zij waren weggevoerd naar Babel vanwege hun groote zonde. Jeremia zal ons hiervan onderwijzen. Luistert slechts naar hem: Jeruzalem heeft zwaar gezondigd, daarom is zij als een afgezonderde vrouw geworden; allen die haar eerden, achten haar onwaard, dewijl zij hare naaktheid gezien hebben; zij zucht ook, en zij is achterwaarts gekeerd. Hare onreinheid is in hare zoomen, zij heeft niet gedacht aan haar uiterste; daarom is zij wonderbaarlijk omlaag gedaald, zij heeft geen trooster.

En zoo is het geweest.

De Heere had Zijne profeten gezonden, vroeg op zijnde en sprekende, maar Zijn volk had het verdorven, zij hadden Zijner niet gewild.

Toen had de Heere gewaarschuwd, keer op keer. Hij had het hun letterlijk aangezegd, dat Hij hen overgeven zou in de handen van de benden die van het Noorden zouden komen om hen weg te voeren, doch zij waren doof voor des Heeren woord. Zij hadden er zelfs om gelachen en lachende gevraagd: Waar is de dag des Heeren? Dat Hij nu kome!

Zij hadden zich gebogen voor vreemde goden, en zij hadden reukwerk gebrand voor de koningen des hemels. Zij hadden den goddeloozen nabuur nagedaan en zich neergebogen voor de Baalim en de Astheroth.

En toen was de Heere ontstoken in groote grimmigheid tegen Zijn volk. Later zal Jesaja gewag maken van het vreemd klinkende woord, dat de Heere Zijn volk veranderd was tot een vijand: Hij Zelf heeft tegen hen gestreden.

En die toorn des Heeren was verwerkelijkt in het komen van Nebuchadnezar en zijne wreede soldaten. Zij waren gekomen, en wij huiveren nog bij het lezen van de ellende van Gods volk. Het land, de stad en de tempel werden verwoest, en de heilige vaten werden meegenomen naar het afgodische Babel. Later zou men erg zondigen met die heilige vaten Gods.

O zeker, het stond er hachelijk voor met het volk.

En zoo zouden zij lijden zeventig lange jaren.

Maar nu kwam de ure der verlossing. Jesaja profeteerde er van: De Heere komt!

Liefelijke mare voor het ware volk van God!

De Heere komt!

* * * *

En, Sion en Jeruzalem! Als Ik, de Heere U uitzend tot de steden van Juda met deze blijmare, denkt er dan aan, dat gij op een hoogen berg klimmet!

Wat dat beduiden mag?

Dat beteekent, eerst, dat de boodschap van Goddelijken oorsprong was. De hooge berg is een prediking van den hoogen God. Daarom gaan onze oogen naar 't gebergte heen, vanwaar onze hulpe is.

Tweedens, dat de bevrijding een werk van boven is, van God die alleen bevrijden kan.

Bovendien, als ge spreekt tot Mijn volk, dan moet ge spreken met een luide stem: ge moet spreken met een machtige stem. Vooral dit: vreest niet! Weest niet bang als ge met Mijn blijmare tot Mijn volk komt. Er is niemand in de geheele aarde die met zoo groote stem en zoo onbevreesd mag spreken als Mijn boodschappers. Laat U door niemand vrees aanjagen. Ik heb U gezonden, en Ik ben de Eene die autoriteit heb om uit te zenden en te doen spreken. Daarom roept met luider keel tot Mijn volk, en zegt: Zie, hier is Uw God!

Ziet! Hier!

Het komen van God om Zijn volk te verlossen zal zoo duidelijk zijn, dat de boodschappers die aanwijzende woorden mogen bezigen.

En zoo is het geweest door alle eeuwen heen.

De inhoud der prediking van af de hooge bergen is altijd geweest: Ziet! Hier! Als iets duidelijk was hier op aarde, dan is het de verlossing van Gods volk.

Uw God!

Er zit muziek in die twee woorden.

Alles is van God, ook de duivel en de drommen der godvergetenen. Niemand is er die zichzelf bezit. Want alles is door God geschapen. En het eigendomsrecht zit in hun schepping in.

Daarom moeten we iets anders zoeken en vinden achter dat bezittelijke voornaamswoord: UW!

En het is dit: er zit de eeuwige liefde Gods in.

Sion en Jeruzalem zijn van God op een geheel eigenaardige wijze. Hij bezat hen van eeuwigheid, en zij hebben een plaats in Zijn Goddelijk hart.

En als ge dan vraagt: maar hoe kan God dan Zijn volk zoo wonderbaarlijk omlaag doen dalen? En hoe zit het dan met hun zonde en straf- en doemwaardigheid?

Om het goede antwoord te geven moet ik U wijzen op den wijzen raad des Heeren. Hij wilde Zich openbaren in al den rijkdom van Zijn goedheid en liefde in een volk daartoe verkoren. Daarom moest Adam vallen en met hem viel het geheel der uitverkorenen Gods. Maar toen heeft God dat volk gegeven aan den nederigen knecht des Heeren, en dat is Jezus Christus die te komen stond. En dat volk Israels is een type van dien Zoon. Als die Zoon voor God staat met al de zonde en schuld van Israel beladen, dan moet dien Zoon wonderlijk omlaag dalen. En dat is geschied typisch toen Israel naar Babel ging. En dat is vervuld toen Jezus aan het vloekhout hing.

Maar God heeft nooit opgehouden om dat volk, rondom dien Christus, te lieven.

Als dan ook het vuur van de wrake Gods, dat brandde vanwege Zijn onkreukbare gerechtigheid, uitgebrand is, dan komt de blijmare: Jehovah Komt! En den gaan de boodschappers rond en roepen het luidkeels van de hoge bergen Gods: Ziet, hier is Uw God!

O ja, de Heere zij geloofd! De Heere Komt!

* * * *

De Heere Komt!

En Zijn komst is met macht.

Want Hij zal komen *tegen* den sterke, en Zijn arm zal *heerschen*!

Dat zijn de wondere woorden des Evangelies.

Dat ziet eerst op Babel.

Babel is de bij uitstek sterke. Wel mocht die generaal van Nebuchadnezar snoeven. We kunnen er in komen. Er was geen volk geweest en geen god die het tegen hem uit kon houden. Hij had man en paard genoemd toen hij stond voor de poorten van Jeruzalem. Hij had tamelijk voorwerpelijk gesproken. En toch was hij zoo dom als een ezel geweest. Nebuchadnezar had gestreden tegen de dingen, en zelfs in zijn strijden tegen de dingen was hij door God gesterkt, anders had hij het niet kunnen doen. Maar nu staat bij voor den God des hemels en der aarde. En Hij laat zich niet bespotten.

En o, als God komt tegen den sterke, dan is het uit met hem. Dat hebben de geweldhebbers der wereld keer op keer uitgevonden. Waar is Napoleon? En Hitler? Waar is straks Stalin?

Gods arm zal heerschen.

God had Nebuchadnezar gebruikt als een gehuurd scheermes. En als dat gehuurde scheermes staat te snoeven tegenover de slachtoffers die hij mocht scheeren, dan lacht God in den hemel. En een lachende God is vreeselijk. Dat zullen Nebuchadnezar en de zijnen uitvinden, hebben zij uitgevonden. Wat zouden zij U kunnen onderrichten als zij op het huidig tooneel der aarde konden komen en prediken.

O ja, de Heere zou komen.

En Hij brengt loon mede. Zijn arbeidsloon is voor Zijn aangezicht.

Er is loon voor de goddelooze verdrukken, die Gods volk moesten verdrukken. God wilde het ook, maar hier is het verschil. Nebuchadnezar heeft Israel en Juda verdrukt uit het motief van pure haat en goddeloosheid. En God wilde het uit het pure motief van liefde. De verdrukking was een smeltkroes die al het tin moest uitzuiveren, opdat het zilver en het goud van Zijn genade te voorschijn mocht komen, blinkende van schoonheid en verradende zijn Goddelijke herkomst.

Luistert, gij steden van Juda!

De Heere komt om Uw vijanden te verbrijzelen.

En Hij heeft ook loon voor U.

Hij zal jubelen van Zijn loon voor U!

De Heere Komt!

* * * *

En hier is Uw loon!

Hij zal Zijn kudde weiden gelijk een Herder!

Klinkt dat niet Nieuw-Testamentisch?

Inderdaad, het is Jezus Christus, de Heere!

Ge kunt Hem gemakkelijk herkennen: Hij zal de lammerkens in Zijne armen vergaderen en in Zijn schoot dragen. De zoogenden zal Hij zachtken leiden!

Wie herkent hier den barmhartigen God niet, die in het aangezicht van Jezus van Nazareth voor ons kwam te staan, nu al voor twintig eeuwen geleden?

Herinnert ge U dien armen tollenaar?

O God, wees mij den zondaar genadig!

Toen hoorde God, Hij is mijn liefde waardig!

En de goede boodschappers gaan nog steeds rond en vanaf de hoge bergen komen zij met de blijmare van Godswege: Ziet, hier is Uw God!

En zij worden ook gehoord en gehoorzaamd.

Zelfs de blinden zullen niet dwalen. En als zij niet meer kunnen, als het schijnt alsof er geen gebed door kan, als alle kracht ons ontzinkt, dan ervaren wij den komenden God.

Want dan neemt Hij ons op in eeuwige armen en draagt ons.

De zoogenden zal Hij zachtken leiden.

Elke dag die wij hier nog ervaren is een bewijs ervan.

Boodschappers! Brengt Uw boodschap met macht. Vrees niet! Achter U, en ter rechter en ter linker zijde staat God met Zijn arbeidsloon. Zegt den rechtvaardige dat het hem wel zal gaan; wee den goddelooze, het zal hem kwalijk gaan! Maar de Heere Komt!

G. Vos.

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EDITORIALS

Insinuations

In the Wachter of June 1, 1948, we read the following from the hand of the Rev. E. Van Halsema, editor of UIT EN VOOR DE PERS:

"*Naar Welke Kerk?* Deze vraag houdt de menschen in Nederland, die er over denken om te emigreren naar ons land en naar Canada, bezig. Het is een vraag die men zoo goed kan verstaan. In een nieuw land is alles zoo vreemd, en ook het kerkelijk leven, al rust het ook op dezelfde belijdenis, is weer anders. Honderden, ja, duizenden kwamen reeds, of zullen komen, naar de Nieuwe wereld. De Christian Reformed Church bood hen de hand der hulpe en der gemeenschap aan. Aanvankelijk vonden velen een plaats in onze kerken, hier en in Canada.

Niet alleen onze Christian Reformed Church doet het hare om de nieuw aangekomenen te helpen, ook andere kerk-groepen staan daarvoor klaar. Er zijn Canadeesche kerken die zich beijveren om de immigranten een welkom toe te roepen. In ons land doet ook de Protestant Reformed Church pogingen tot hulpverleening.

Zooals we onlangs konden lezen uit een verslag van een rede van Prof. Schilder, raadt deze zijn volk aan om zich bij de Protestant Reformed Church te gaan voegen. Anderen houwen op dat zelfde aanbeeld. We lazen in "De Reformatie" een stuk van de hand van K. C. Van Spronsen, die ons land bezocht, ons kerkelijk leven nog al becritisceerde en nu, in Nederland, vragen om inlichtingen ontvangt. Het antwoord, dat Mr. Van Spronsen geeft, wijst de menschen ook op voornoemde kerken.

We lezen:

"Van verschillende zijden ontvangt ondergeteekende brieven met verzoek om inlichtingen omtrent emigratie naar America en Canada, vooral met betrekking tot het kerkelijke leven in deze landen.

Zooals uit de publicaties van ondergeteekende (voornamelijk in het Calvinistische Jongelingsblad) blijkt, is het zijn overtuiging, dat onze menschen het beste thuis zijn in de Prot. Ref. Churches. Er is nog wel geen officieel contact tusschen deze Kerken en de onze, maar naar wij vernemen is er reeds een verzoek van de zijde dezer Kerken naar de Deputaten voor correspondentie met de Buitenlandsche Kerken in onze Kerken in Nederland om tot nauwer contact te komen, en men weet dat men in de Prot. Ref. Churches Prof. Schilder tijdens diens verblijf in Amerika in deze Kerken toegang heeft verleend om te spreken en ambtelijk het Woord te bedienen, terwijl de Chr. Ref. Church voor hem gesloten bleef, op last van "The Synodical

Committee," waaruit tevens het streng hiërarchisch verband, waaronder deze kerk leeft, gebleken is.

Nu kreeg ondergeteekende juist dezer dagen bericht van Ds. De Jong, predikant bij de Prot. Ref. Churches in Grand Rapids, dat door hun kerken een voorloopig comité is benoemd met opdracht contact te zoeken in Nederland met onze kerken en met personen, die naar Amerika of Canada willen emigreeren. Drie dezer broeders hopen in de komende maanden Nederland een bezoek te brengen.

Wanneer er in onzen kring mochten zijn, die persoonlijk of schriftelijk contact met deze broeders wenschen in verband met emigratie naar Amerika of Canada, dan verzocht ondergeteekende zich hierover tot hem te wenden."

We geven bovenstaande aan onze lezers door.

Ter kennisgeving.

We gaan niet in op enkele uitdrukkingen, waar wel captie op te maken zou zijn. Men heeft al strijdwoorden genoeg te lezen in Nederland.

Waar we ons wel voor interesseeren is, dat onze emigrerende menschen in Nederland geen slachtoffers worden van hen die kerkje willen spelen. Wie zich bij de Protestant Reformed Church wil voegen, of bij de Christian Reformed Church, die doe zulks, maar dan op grond van redenen die de toets van waarheid en waarachtigheid kunnen doorstaan.

Dat legt aan allen die leiding geven hooge verplichtingen op. Zoo licht wordt vreemd vuur voor een heilige vlam aangezien.

So far the Rev. Van Halsema.

For the convenience of those who are not able to read the Holland language we will give a resume of the foregoing article:

The theme is expressed in the title: To WHICH CHURCH? Under that title the Reverend Van Halsema points out how this question occupies the mind of many of the brethren and sisters in Holland and that the Christian Reformed Church offered them their help and assistance. Also that many of them found a church home with them. Next, that also the Canadian churches have done their best to offer a church home to these immigrants.

And at this juncture he brings in our churches. He mentions that Prof. Schilder in a lecture in the Netherlands advises his people to affiliate with our churches if they plan to come to this country. And then he quotes an article which he read in DE REFORMATIE from the hand of K. Van Spronsen. Also the latter is of the opinion that his people should join our Protestant Reformed Churches. He mentions that even though there is no official contact as yet between the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, maintaining art. 31 and our churches here, there is nevertheless the fact that the churches here have taken steps to come to such an official status, and also that Prof.

Schilder might speak in our churches and occupy our pulpits in Divine Worship, while it is a fact that the Christian Reformed Churches closed their pulpits to him so that he might not even lecture among them, showing their hierarchical bondage under which they live. In that connection he also quotes from a letter which he received from our own Rev. J. De Jong, telling him (Van Spronsen) that our Prot. Ref. Churches have appointed a committee to seek contact with the liberated churches and brethren of those churches who plan to come to America or Canada.

And the brother advises his people to write him (Van Spronsen) and he will give them the necessary particulars anent the question of church affiliation.

So far the quotation which the Rev. Van Halsema took over in his columns. And then he attaches the following lines to same:

"We present the above to our readers.

For information.

We will not enter in upon some expressions even though we might make caption on some of them. One has heard enough of the battle cry in the Netherlands.

That which does interest us is that our immigrant people in the Netherlands do not become victims of those who want to play at the game of church (kerkje spelen). He that would join the Prot. Ref. Churches or the Chr. Ref. Church: let him do so, but let him do it on the basis of reasons that can stand the test of truth and verity.

That puts a heavy obligation on those who give leadership. So easily we mistake strange fire for a holy flame."

So far the Rev. Van Halsema.

The desire to write much on this piece of journalism which bears the name of Christian fails me.

Imagine: he does not mention one solitary thing or fact which might be used to condemn us or our effort to help those who come to America or Canada. And yet he condemns us. And he does it in an evil way, the way, namely, of insinuation. I used the word "evil" in this connection, and I did so with sober judgment.

His style is calm and serene when he begins to write about the problem and its solution, the solution, namely, of his own church or Canadian churches extending the helpful hand to the immigrants. But after typing the name PROTESTANT REFORMED CHURCHES on his typewriter, his style changes to evil insinuation.

Here are the insinuations:

Number one: We are victimizing the immigrants.

Number two: We play at the game of church.

Number three: We advance false and deceptive reasoning that must serve as a ground for church affiliation.

Number four: We burn strange fire upon the altar of Divine Worship.

What can a man do at this juncture? The Rev. Van Halsema does not come out in the open, so that we can weigh his arguments and answer them. The Rev. Van Halsema does not accuse us honestly and openly of all the corruption which I enumerated above from one to four.

No, but he insinuates; he sneers at us; he shakes the head and sticks out the lip.

What can a man do?

Nothing, but wait patiently for the time when God shall judge the living and the dead.

G. Vos.

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART TWO

Lord's Day XXIII

3.

FAITH AND JUSTIFICATION. (cont.)

According to others, the relation between justification and faith is such that we are righteous before God, in part at least, because of the fruits of faith in our good works. This is the Roman Catholic position. Christ merited for us the gift of faith. And a living faith brings forth good works. Because of those good works of faith we are justified. We must come back to this question in connection with Lord's Day 24. But even now we must call attention to that well-known passage, James 2:14-26, upon which this view of the relation between faith and justification is chiefly based. Apparently James there teaches, indeed, that a man is justified by works, the works of faith. He asks the question: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?" And again in verse 17 he makes the statement: "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." And in verse 21 he asks the question: "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" And in verse 25 he refers to the example of Rahab the harlot, stating that she was justified by works, "when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way." And

in verse 24 he concludes from the whole passage "that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." However, if this be the teaching of James, it would be in flat contradiction with that of the apostle Paul, who always emphasizes that a man is justified by faith only without works. And that is impossible because Scripture cannot be in conflict with itself.

If, however, we look closely at the passage of James 2, it will be evident that he makes a sharp distinction between a living faith and a dead faith. He does not mean to contradict that a man is justified by faith, but he opposes the pretention of him who claims that he has the faith without manifesting a true and living faith in the works of it.

This is evident first of all from the passage 2:14-17. When James asks the question in the last part of verse 14, "Can faith save Him?", he does not have in mind a true and living faith, but a faith which a man *says*, professes, to have. It is a mere intellectual assent, a dead faith, without works. And the question is: what is the proper work of faith? And the answer must be, according to Scripture, that it is to cling to Christ as the revelation of the God of our salvation. Such faith is indeed saving. But faith which a man claims to have, but which is a mere intellectual assent, is as far as the result is concerned, just as vain as the illustration of the man who says to his destitute and empty brother: "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving him food and clothing. Just as that mere statement profits the brother nothing, so the mere intellectual faith, which is not a reliance on the God of our salvation in Christ, cannot save.

In verses 18 and 19 this truth is further elucidated. In verse 18 James, evidently, addresses the supposed speaker or objector, in the words: "Thou hast faith and I have works," at the same time repudiating the implied separation of faith and works. He means to say: "But thou objectest that thou wilt gladly let me have my works, if thou only canst keep the faith; but I answer that thou wilt have to show me that thou possessest the true and living faith at all by thy works, otherwise it is no faith." And the illustration of the faith which the devils have and tremble evidently refers to nothing but a factual faith in one God, which is the very opposite of the knowledge and confidence of true faith.

From all this it should be plain that James is not writing about saving faith at all, but about a mere intellectual assent to the truth, which has no saving power. The work of a living faith is the knowledge of and confidence in the God of our salvation. It is the tie which binds us to Christ, the power whereby we cling to Christ, crucified and raised from the dead, and through Him the complete reliance upon God Who justifies the ungodly. Such a living faith has its fruit

in repentance and in a hearty conversion from sin into holiness.

This is the point which is illustrated by the example of Abraham's faith. The faith of Abraham, James teaches, was made perfect by works. But the question is: by what works? It is striking that as an example of the work of faith which Abraham performed, James refers to his offering up of Isaac. Not to any works of the law, not to any meritorious act whereby he became righteous before God, but to the sacrifice of his son Isaac, he refers as the sole illustration of the faith that was made perfect by works. By this act he revealed that, even after he had first hoped against hope, he still clung to God Who could raise the dead, and completely fulfill His promise. And that faith was imputed to him for righteousness, exactly because it was faith in Christ or in God Who raised up Jesus from the dead.

And the same is true of the example of Rahab. Rahab, the harlot, by the God-given power of faith, clung to the promise, chose the party of the living God against the whole world, and was saved. Her faith too was perfected by works, but in her case too it was the work of faith, whereby she clung to Christ, and to God Who justifies the ungodly.

Hence, overagainst all that would be justified by the works of the law, Scripture emphasizes justification by faith only. But it is equally true that overagainst all that would boast of an empty intellectual assent, without the works that characterize the true and living faith, the Word of God maintains that faith is made perfect by works.

Nor is the relation between faith and justification to be conceived and presented as that of a benefit on God's part and a condition on our part. This, too, is often alleged. God saves and justifies us on condition that we believe. Superficially considered, it might seem as if there were truth in this assertion. Is it not true that we must believe in order to be saved? *If* we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be justified; if not, we shall be damned. It appears, then, that justification is conditioned by faith.

Yet this cannot be the relation. First of all, it should be remembered that objective justification is before faith. Objectively, we are justified regardless of our faith. In eternal election all those given Christ by the Father are righteous before God forever. And this righteousness cannot be contingent upon faith, even though it is true that we cannot appropriate this gift of righteousness except by a true and living faith. Besides, long before we believed, the justification of all the elect is accomplished forever in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And, secondly, although it is true that justification in the subjective sense is contingent upon faith, we must never forget that faith is not of ourselves, it is a gift of God. It is therefore

not a condition which we must fulfill in order to be justified: God Himself fulfills all the conditions of salvation.

For the same reason we would repudiate the illustration of faith as the hand whereby we accept the proffered salvation. The figure is often used of a present, like a watch for instance, that is freely offered to someone. All that is necessary for that someone to become possessor of the present is to accept the gift. But, first of all, salvation is not to be compared at all to such an external gift, which we may accept or reject. And, secondly, we should never overlook the fact that no man has of himself such a hand whereby he can accept the gift of salvation. He is by nature dead in sin and misery, so that he hates the very gift of righteousness if it should be offered him by God. He loves the darkness rather than the light.

The only proper conception of the relation between justification and faith is that it is a means, or instrument, God's own means whereby He unites us with Christ.

There is, undoubtedly, first of all an objective relation in this faith-union with Christ. For it is said of Abraham that his faith was imputed to him for righteousness. This imputation certainly implies that objectively the sinner is declared righteous in Christ before the tribunal of God. God declares that the sinner is free from all his guilt, is perfectly righteous, is adopted as His child, and worthy of eternal life. He is as it were severed from his natural and legal relation which he sustains with the human race in Adam, and by faith legally incorporated in the body of Christ. In Adam he is guilty and worthy of death. In the corporation of Christ he is righteous and worthy of eternal life. God declares the ungodly righteous, certainly not because of any work of faith, or on any condition of faith, but because He imputes the objective legal relation which the sinner sustains to Christ as righteousness. And this relation is the relation of faith only.

This objective justification in the tribunal of God we appropriate by faith.

By faith, through the gospel, we hear the declaration of God that He announces us righteous.

By faith I know with a certain knowledge, which is spiritual, and am entirely confident that I am united with Christ, that I belong to the legal corporation of which Christ is the representative Head. By faith, therefore, I lay hold upon the righteousness which God from eternity has imputed to me in His counsel, which He has accomplished for me in the perfect satisfaction of Christ, and which was manifested in His resurrection. And so, by faith, I know that in the midst of sin I am righteous, that in the midst of death I live, and that although I know that by nature I am a child of the devil I am graciously adopted as a child of God,

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

Such is the meaning of justification by faith before God!

LORD'S DAY 24

Q. 62. But why cannot our good works be the whole, or part of our righteousness before God?

A. Because, that the righteousness, which can be approved of before the tribunal of God, must be absolutely perfect, and in all respects conformable to the divine law; and also that our best works in this life are imperfect and defiled with sin.

Q. 63. What! Do not our good works merit, which yet God will reward in this and in a future life?

A. This reward is not of merit, but of grace.

Q. 64. But doth not this doctrine make men careless and profane?

A. By no means: for it is impossible that those, who are implanted into Christ by a true faith, should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness.

1.

The Repudiation Of All Works.

This twenty-fourth Lord's Day may, in a way, be considered an appendix of the preceding.

It is apologetic in character. He defends the truth that we are justified by faith only, on the ground of the satisfaction and perfect righteousness of Christ, over against every attempt to adulterate and falsify this pure doctrine by the introduction of an admixture of man's good works. And it does this, first of all, by emphatically denying that our good works can have any part in our justification; secondly, by emphasizing that the reward of our good works is of pure grace; finally, by repudiating the accusation that this doctrine does or possibly can make men careless and profane.

This apologetic appendix of the pure truth of justification by faith only is necessary and very important.

First of all, because the erroneous conception and conviction that in order to be saved our good works must have something to say and be meritorious before God is deeply rooted and ingrained in the sinful mind and heart. The pharisaistically-conceived relation between God and man, according to which the latter is

a wage-earner that works for the reward, is very common and is deeply rooted in the heart of every sinner. And it is necessary that this conception be repudiated, and that over against it the truth of imputed righteousness and justification by faith only be strongly emphasized.

Secondly, it is necessary to defend this truth of justification by faith over against all admixture of the doctrine of good works, because we can never stand in the true liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, on the truth that we are not under the law but under grace, and clearly understand that our relation to God is not that of slaves but of free sons, unless we understand that Christ has fulfilled all, and that our righteousness is given to us by God of free grace.

And finally, it is important to defend this truth of justification by faith only, because no sinner can have one moment's peace except in the faith that he is forever righteous before God because of a free gift through Jesus Christ without any works whatsoever. To state the truth concerning this righteousness boldly we may indeed assert that our own works do not add to our righteousness before God whatever. They cannot make our righteousness more perfect than it is, nor can our sins ever detract from the perfection of this righteousness.

This is the glory of the faith of the reformation.

And it is this truth which the Roman Catholics have corrupted and even severely condemned.

This is evident from *The Canons and Dogmatic Decrees of the Council of Trent*, 1563.

We read there in Caput VII:

"This disposition, or preparation, is followed by justification itself, which is not remission of sins merely, but also the sanctification and renewal of the inward man, through the voluntary reception of grace, and the gifts, whereby man of unjust becomes just, and of an enemy a friend, so that he may be *an heir according to hope of life everlasting*."

It is evident that in this Roman Catholic description of the "justification of the impious" the condition and the state of the sinner are intentionally confused. Justification is not merely remission of sins, and imputed righteousness on the basis of the satisfaction of Christ only, but it also consists in sanctification and renewal of the inward man. That this is indeed the Roman Catholic doctrine concerning justification by faith is evident further from Caput VIII, which informs us "In what manner it is to be understood, that the impious is justified by faith, and gratuitously". We quote:

"And whereas the apostle saith, that man is *justified by faith and freely*, those words are to be understood in that sense which the perpetual consent of the Catholic Church hath held and ex-

pressed; to wit, that we are therefore said to be *justified by faith*, because faith is the beginning of human salvation, the foundation, and the root of all justification; *without which it is impossible to please God*, and to come unto the fellowship of his sons: but we are therefore said to be justified *freely*, because that none of those things which precede justification — whether faith or works — merit the grace itself of justification. For, *if it be a grace, it is not now by works*, otherwise, as the same apostle says, *grace is no more grace.*”

Here, too, it is very evident that the Roman Catholic doctrine of justification is not a purely forensic conception, according to which we are declared righteous before God and He reckons faith as righteousness, but it is rather an ethical conception, that of an infused righteousness. That is why faith can be called the beginning of human salvation, and the root of all justification; and that is why, too, faith and works both can be said to precede justification. In other words, according to the Roman Catholic doctrine we are certainly justified by the works of faith.

H. Hoeksema.

OUR DOCTRINE

God's Covenant and The Promise

(2 Corinthians 1:12-20)

Another passage of Holy Writ which throws light on the certainty and wholly particular and unconditional character of the promises of God is the word of the apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 1, verses 12-20. We quote: “For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to youward. For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge; and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end; As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the days of the Lord Jesus. And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit; And to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judea. When I therefore was thus minded did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I

purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea, yea, and nay, nay? But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, Who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.” These words culminate in verse 20 and it is this text which is now of primary interest to us.

The Context:

In verses 12-16 the apostle affirms unto the church at Corinth that he, by the grace of God, had conducted himself in simplicity and godly sincerity, not only in the midst of the world, but more abundantly toward them. Fleshly wisdom had not motivated the apostle to the heathen. He had written none other things unto them that what they read or acknowledge; that is he had written what he meant and had meant what he had written; he had written, not vaguely or indefinitely or ambiguously, but clearly and honestly and sincerely. And in the confidence that he was their rejoicing as truly as they were his, even until and in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, he had proposed to come unto them before in order that they might have a second benefit, even as they always were benefited spiritually when he visited among them. Unto that end he had intended to pass by them into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto them, and to be brought of them on his way toward Judea. This intention, however, he had not carried out.

In the verses 17-19 Paul rises unto the defense of his apostolic preaching. It is evident that the word of the apostle, whereof we read in verse 18, “But as God is true, our *word* toward you was not yea and nay”, refers to his preaching. Paul evidently does not refer to his desire to come unto them, which he had expressed to them, and which he had been unable to fulfill. Verse 19 renders it beyond all doubt that the apostle in verse 18 refers to his apostolic preaching. In that verse Paul speaks of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, Who was preached among them by himself and also by Silvanus and Timotheus. We must bear in mind that the apostle Paul was under attack by his enemies at Corinth. We read in verse 17: “When I therefore was thus minded did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea, yea, and nay, nay? A double accusation the apostle's enemies hurl at Paul because of his failure to come to Corinth as he had desired. He either used lightness or had purposed according to the flesh. To be guilty of lightness implied that he was guilty of worthless levity; he was a man who made rash promises, did not think before he spoke. And to be guilty of purposing according to

the flesh was worse; it implied that he was governed by worldly or selfish interests and considerations. In either case, he was a Yes and No man. And his enemies used this occasion to attack the apostle in his apostolic capacity. Paul, they said, was not dependable, and this also applied to his apostolic labors; with him there was yea, yea, and nay, nay; he said one thing today and another thing tomorrow; he was contradictory, confusing, untrustworthy, fickle, undependable.

Notice now the answer of the apostle to this evil charge in the verses 18-29. What a truly noble answer it is! As far as his failure to come to Corinth is concerned, he answers that charge in verse 23. That can wait for the present. The apostle is not primarily concerned with himself; he cares little what his enemies may say of him personally. But, it does concern him that they attack his preaching, his gospel; the apostle is so much more concerned about his preaching, the gospel of the living God, than about himself. "But as God is true", we read in verse 18, "our word toward you was not yea and nay." Literally this text reads: "But God is faithful that my word towards you was not yea and nay." Different interpretations are given of this particular passage. According to some we should understand this Word of God as follows: "But God is faithful that my word towards you was not yea and nay; I may be unfaithful and undependable, but God is faithful. And because He is faithful, my word, which is His word, is firm and true." Others regard this passage as an asseveration (a solemn pledge or statement) or an oath. As true as God is faithful, so true it is that my word is not yea and nay. And, because He is faithful and true He will vindicate my word that it is not yea and nay. We, then, may insert the word "know" and read this passage as follows: "But God is faithful and knows that my word is not yea and nay." Paul, then, appeals to God and asserts here that his word is not yea and nay, and, that his word is not yea and nay is as true as God is faithful. Whatever interpretation one may adopt, Paul in this text affirms that his preaching is not yea and nay, this today and something else tomorrow, yea today and nay tomorrow, but always yea and true.

In verse 19 the apostle gives us the ground for his assertion to the effect that his word or preaching was not yea and nay. My preaching is true, Paul means to say, because Christ is true. And how could this be any different? Christ is the Son of God, is He not? Jesus Christ is not yea and nay, changeable, inconsistent, contradictory. The apostle, speaking of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in verse 19, is not speaking of the gospel of Christ but of Christ Himself. He does not intend to declare in this text that there was perfect consistency between his own preaching and that of Silvanus (Silas) and Timotheus, that his

preaching of the Christ did not differ from their preaching of Him. He does not emphasize here their preaching of the Christ, but the Christ of their preaching. He is speaking of Christ Himself. We should also notice that he declares here that this Christ was preached unto them, by himself and also by Silvanus and Timotheus. The force of the apostle's words is surely that he is appealing here to the spiritual experience of the church at Corinth. Through my preaching, the apostle means to say, and that of Silas and Timotheus, you, believers at Corinth, learned to know spiritually Christ Jesus. And they learned to know Him as the perfect Yea, the full and simple and complete Truth. In Him is no contradiction, no inconsistency, no Yea today and Nay tomorrow, but always the full and complete satisfying of all our needs. He is always the same. He is always ready and able to forgive us all our sins and iniquities and give us the assurance of being righteous before God. He is always ready and able to fill our hearts with peace and rest in the midst of all the vicissitudes and trials of life. He is always faithful and powerful to save and give us grace to resist the forces of evil and bear all shame and reproach in the conviction and blessed assurance that we are more than conquerors and that all things work together for good. In Him is a fulness of salvation and a complete satisfying of all our needs. And He is the unchangeable, never varying Christ. It is not true that whereas He might be inclined to hear us in favor today, He may be ill-disposed toward us tomorrow. He is true and ever the same, even as God is true; fact is, He is the Son of God and the Personal revelation of God as the God of our salvation. This Christ the Corinthians learned to know; Him the apostle Paul preached; hence, his word is true for that Christ is true.

Verse 20 is the confirmation of all that precedes. That Christ is the perfect Yea and that ye learned to know Him as such is because: For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

Which Translation of Verse 20.

Anyone attempting an interpretation of verse 20 of this chapter is confronted with the choice between two possible translations. The one translation is that which appears in our King James version: "For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" or literally: "For whatever promises there are of God, in Him is the yea, and in Him is the Amen, unto the glory of God by us." Another reading of the text (I believe this translation appears in the Revised Version) is as follows: "For whatever promises there are of God, in Him is the yea, and through Him is the Amen, unto the glory of God by us." The difference between these transla-

tions is apparent. The King James version reads: "In Him is the yea and *in* Him the Amen." The other translation reads: "In Him is the yea and through Him the Amen." The latter translation views the Amen as the subjective reaction of the Church to the promises of God in Christ; the Church answers "Amen"; or, as one writer expresses it: this text speaks of God's Yea and man's or the Church's Amen.

We choose the second reading or translation, and would, therefore, read the text as follows: "For whatever promises there are of God, in Him is the yea, and through Him is the Amen, unto the glory of God by us." Firstly, this reading is generally acknowledged to be the correct reading of the text. Secondly, it gives a richer meaning and a more complete explanation in harmony with the context. It is true that the present King James translation gives good sense and furnishes us with an idea which is surely Scriptural. Yea and Amen, we should understand, are particles of affirmation—the one is Greek and the other is Hebrew. This repetition would emphasize the truth that in Christ is the fulfillment of the promises of God. Just as "verily, verily" emphasizes the truthfulness of a certain statement (and Christ often used this expression), so also the repetition of the particle of affirmation in this text merely serves to emphasize the fact that all the promises of God are sure in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Yet, we believe the second reading to be the correct translation of the text. It should not escape our attention that the word "Amen" does not occur at the end of verse 19, and we might have expected it to appear there. Verse 19 reads: "For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, Who . . . was not yea and nay, but in Him was yea." The very fact that this word is added in verse 20 suggests the thought that it is a new thought, not synonymous with the "Yea" of verse 19. And this receives added significance if we adopt what is generally considered the proper reading: "For all the promises of God are yea in Him and Amen through Him." This "Amen", then, denotes the response of the Church by faith to the fulfillment of the promises of God in Christ Jesus. And finally, if we adopt this particular reading of the text, we will also better understand the concluding words of this text: "Unto the glory of God by us." The "us" of verse 20 refer to Paul and the rest of the preachers of the gospel. This appears from the entire context. These preachers of the gospel are the media through whom God is glorified by the church. Through or by them the gospel of God is proclaimed unto the people of the living God and this gospel speaks of nothing else but the promises of God in Christ Jesus. We conclude, therefore, that the Amen in verse 20 is the spiritual and subjective response of the Church of God to the sure and fulfilled promise of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

All the Promises of God Yea In Christ Jesus.

All the promises of God, we read, are Yea in Christ Jesus. The text speaks emphatically of "whatever promises of God". This expression refers, we understand, to all and every one of the promises of the Lord. Of these promises we read that the Yea is in Christ. The word "Yea" refers to their affirmation, establishment, fulfillment. "Nay" cannot be said of any of these promises. Of all the promises of God not a single denial, lack or failure of fulfillment characterizes a single one of them. They have all been fulfilled in Christ. The word "promises", we understand, refers to all the promises of God throughout the ages. To discuss them in detail is not necessary at this time. The promise of God, in this text, refers indeed to the Lord's solemn declaration that He would grant deliverance unto His people, who by nature are objects of Divine wrath and children of disobedience, and lead them into the glory of His eternal and heavenly covenant. The plural "promises" emphasizes every aspect and detail of that promise of Jehovah. The promise of the Lord to forgive us *every* sin, to lead us *every* step of the way, to cause *all* things to work together for our good, to bestow upon us the glory of His eternal and heavenly tabernacle in *all* its unspeakable glory and beauty has been fulfilled in Christ Jesus. Not a single aspect or detail of this amazing promise of Jehovah has remained unfulfilled.

These promises of God, we read, have been fulfilled in Christ. They have been realized by Him and in Him they have become a fact. It is because they have been fulfilled in Christ and have therefore become reality in Him that the holy writer declares in this text that these promises are Yea in Christ. Our Lord Jesus Christ has indeed realized them through His blood upon Calvary and has indeed obtained them at His glorification at the Father's right hand. In Him they have been realized, have become a fact, upon the cross, according to the righteousness of God. He has secured the forgiveness of all our sins, has accomplished the condemnation of the world, has sealed with His suffering and death the salvation or redemption of Zion and the eternal condemnation and destruction of the world, has merited eternal life for Himself and the children whom God has given Him, and obtained for Himself the right to lead that people out of their present sin and darkness and death into the glory of God's eternal tabernacle. And in Christ these promises have been realized also at His exaltation. For unto Him has been given all power and wisdom, glory and honor. He has received the Spirit beyond measure. He has Himself received the glory of God's eternal tabernacle and also the power and wisdom to lead His chosen into the glory which He Himself has received from the Father. Indeed, in Christ Jesus all the promises of God are Yea, realized and fulfilled.

Let us understand: all the promises of God are Yea in Christ. They do not depend for their fulfillment upon us. They have been realized and fulfilled, unconditionally. Our sins are pardoned, unconditionally. Eternal life has been merited for us, unconditionally. We have been redeemed, purchased by the precious blood of the Christ out of the power of sin and death, and we have become heirs of life and glory everlasting, unconditionally. This is the repeated language of Holy Writ. Hence, these promises of God are wholly particular, intended only for the elect, bestowed only upon the elect, and that unconditionally.

Through Christ Is The Amen.

Indeed, such is the implication of the apostle in this text, *therefore* our Amen is through Christ. Our Amen follows upon the fulfillment of the promises of God in Christ. Our Amen is caused by this realization of the Divine promises. The former is not the cause but the fruit of the latter. How could the people of God ever express their affirmation of the promises of God except for the fact that they have been realized in our Lord Jesus Christ?!

Notice also that our Amen is *through* Christ. To be sure, *by* Him they have been realized. But *through* Him is our Amen. He is the medium, the channel through Whom the Church exclaims "Amen". Of God through the Lord Jesus Christ we receive all the blessings of salvation. With Him we must be united by faith, become one plant with Him. Through Him we have access unto the living God and taste the blessed fellowship with that alone blessed God. And through Christ is the Amen, the conscious, subjective affirmation by the Church of all the promises of God in Christ Jesus. Through Him the people of the Lord confirm the fact of the establishment of these Divine promises. Through Him the Church acknowledges that what she possesses she possesses in Christ alone, alone for Christ's sake. Through Christ we declare that nothing is of us, that all is of and through Him. In Christ are the promises. All we ever do is say "Amen".

Hence: Unto the Glory of God.

"For all the promises of God are yea in Him, and through Him Amen, *unto the glory of God* by us." This lies in the nature of the case. For, and let us understand this fully, the text speaks of the promises of God. *God is God.* All the universe, together with all the children of men that shall have lived from the beginning of time until the end, the sum-total of all things, is less than a drop of water on the bucket and a particle of dust on the balances in comparison with that living God. These are *God's* promises. And God is not a man. His promises are never to be confused with a mere offer, contingent and dependent upon him to whom the promises are made. All glory must

be unto God. Fact is, that these promises are Yea in Christ is only because it is God Who fulfilled them in Christ, His Son and our Lord. It is God Who sent His Son into the likeness of sinful flesh and that for sin in order that sin might be condemned in the flesh. It is God Who sustained His Servant throughout His amazing passion, suffering and death. It is God Who enabled the Christ through the everlasting Spirit to suffer the burden of God's eternal and infinite wrath so as to deliver others from it. It is God Who, having sent His Son into death, the shameful and bitter death of the cross, also raised Him from the dead, and exalted Him into the highest glory, even at the right hand of the Father. It is God Who gave Him a Name above every name, Who clothed Him with all power, glory, might, and honor, and gave Him the Spirit beyond measure. It is the living God Who fulfilled all His promises of salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ, Immanuel, God with us.

Hence, all glory must be ascribed unto God. To be sure, we must fight the good fight of faith. We must put off the old man and put on the new. We must believe on and in the Lord Jesus Christ and run the race even unto the end. We must love and believe and hope that no one may take our crown. But it is all given us of grace. The promises of God are yea in Christ. In Him they have been realized and fulfilled. In Him our salvation is sure. And through Christ, the Author and Finisher of our Faith, the Captain of our salvation, the Bishop of our souls, the Shepherd of His sheep, we say "Amen", express our joyful assurance that in Him all has been completed, and through Him give thanks and glory and praise unto God, for alone of Him and through Him and unto Him are all things. We conclude, therefore, that also 2 Cor. 1:20 establishes the unconditional and wholly particular character of the promises of God.

H. Veldman.

25th WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On July 5, 1948, the Lord willing, our beloved parents
MR. AND MRS. JOHN KNOPER
hope to celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary.

We thank the Lord with them that He has kept and provided for them through the years. It is our sincere prayer that God may continue to bless them in His great love and mercy.

Blessed be the Lord who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation.—Ps. 68:19.

Their grateful children:

Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Bouwkamp
Donald J.
Wilma J.

Grand Rapids, Michigan.

1 grandchild.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

Saul Again Humbled

As we have seen, in the wilderness of Engedi Saul had received tangible proof that David was not seeking his life. The Lord had delivered him into David's hand, but David's eyes had spared the king. As was stated, Saul now was, must have been, as assured in his heart of David's innocence as he was convinced of his own existence in the flesh. Yet a year and a half later the king repeats his persecution. David has returned to the wilderness of Ziph and hides himself in the mountain of Hachilah situated near the cities of Judah. His presence here becomes known to the Ziphites, who hold with Saul, and consequently again show David's abode. Saul arises and goes down to the wilderness with his permanent guard of three thousand chosen men and seeks David's life to take it. Plainly, Saul has developed into a moral monster. For it now cannot be fear that moves him, knowing, as he does, that David has no designs on his life and his kingdom. What sends the king on this evil mission is sheer hatred of David, of the Lord, and of His word of prophecy according to which the kingdom was taken from Saul and given to a neighbor better than he. Saul aims to slay this word by destroying David. But all he accomplishes is to make matters worse for himself. For the Lord replies by once more providing him with even more telling proof of David's innocence.

Saul pitches on the slope of the very mountain in which David and his men are in hiding. Hearing of the king's coming, David withdraws farther into the wilderness. Yet not willing to believe what he has heard, he sends out scouts, and learns that Saul has come in very deed. He now arises and goes to the place of Saul's encampment, being careful not to expose himself to the view of the king and his men. From his vantage-point he beholds Saul and Abner, too. They lie in the midst of the wagons with the people pitched round about them. Turning to his two companions—Ahimelech the Hitite and Abishai the son of Zeruiah, the brother of Joab—he asks who will go down with him to Saul to the camp. Abishai volunteers. The sequel reveals the purpose of this venture. David again wants to confront Saul with evidence such as can be seen and handled that he seeks not the king's life to take it. Humanly speaking, the undertaking is fraught with danger. That David is unafraid can only be explained from his firm belief that the Lord will work for him. His confidence in God is rewarded. Coming to the people by night, they find Saul fast asleep with his spear stuck in the ground and his

pitcher of water at his head. Abner and the people lay round about him likewise asleep. The Lord again has shut up Saul in David's hand. To Abishai it bespeaks God's will that Saul be slain right there and then, and he beseeches David for permission to smite him with the spear even to the earth at once, and he adds that he will not smite him the second time. He means that he will kill Saul with one blow so that there will be no need of a second. But, as already has been explained, Saul as anointed is the Lord's property. Therefore no hand of man may touch his life, except by God's direction. David understands. Fearing God, he says to Abishai, "Destroy him not. For who stretches forth his hand against the Lord's anointed and goes unpunished?" And so David says (verse 10) with an oath, "Unless the Lord smite him (with a stroke), or his day come to die, or he descend into battle and perish, far be it from me on the Lord's account that I stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed." So reads the original text. David means to say, "If the Lord, whose property Saul is, remove him not from the land of the living, far be it from me to make an end of the man." Abishai is requested to take Saul's spear and the water pitcher. He does so, and they both get them away. No one sees or knows or awakens. "For they were all asleep; because a deep sleep from the Lord was fallen upon them."

David goes over to the other side of the mountain and climbs to the top of a peak whence he had previously surveyed Saul's camp. The hill is afar off; a great space is between them, says the text. But it speaks comparatively here. The distance is not so great that David is unable to make himself heard and understood by Saul. Morning comes. It is again light. (Statements occur that seem to indicate that it is again day). David lifts up his voice and cries "to the people and to Abner the son of Ner", and the highest ranking officer in Saul's army. But there is no response as is indicated by David's question, "Answerest thou not, Abner?" Thus accosted, Abner replies, finally. "Then answered Abner and said, Who art thou that criest to the king?" Abner's anger is kindled. He wants that miscreant yonder to understand that his conduct is amazingly contemptuous. He shouts to the king! But David cried only to Abner and the people. And his sole aim was to gain their attention. Besides, Abner should consider his own conduct. Is he a man? And who is like unto him in Israel? Why kept he not his lord? David puts the question to Abner and, at the same time, tells him what might have happened. "For one of the people might have come to slay the king," while Abner slept. "As the Lord liveth," David goes on to say, "this thing which ye have done is not good, so that ye are worthy of death, because ye failed to stand guard over your master, over the anointed of the Lord. And now see,

take notice, where the king's spear is, and the pitcher of water that was at his head."

The thrust of David's discourse to Abner is plain. 'How art thou fallen, O Abner. As custodian of the king's life, thou didst allow thyself to fall asleep, thou and all thy people. That was like voluntarily delivering the Lord's anointed into the hand of death. How terrible thy fault. What a denial of the manly virtues for which thou art famed in Israel. Verily, thou meritest death, thou and all the men with thee.' David's words must move Abner to the core. For they were true. After the day's exertion, Abner and his men were sorely in need of sleep. But, certainly, he could have arranged with his people for standing guard over Saul by turns. This Abner had failed to do. The necessity had not occurred to him. Yet, that the king had been in real peril of his life during all the night is evident. The camp was visited by David. He is a harmless man. But it could just as well have been someone else, one seeking the king's life. That the camp was visited by David is indisputable. How otherwise would he know of their having been asleep. Besides, he has in his possession Saul's spear and pitcher of water. Verily, there is tangible proof that once more the Lord has delivered Saul into David's hand even more completely than on the former occasion. With the whole camp wrapped in deepest slumber, how easy it would have been for Abishai to do as he had requested. Saul would have died instantly without a groan. No one would have seen. David could maintain that Saul had been smitten by one of his own men, and who would there be to dispute his word? David fully comprehended, it may be assumed. But fearing God, his eyes once more spared the king. Abner, too, comprehended, and was silent.

Perhaps Abner does not know by whom he has been reprimanded. He may have contacted David too few times to be able to know him by the sound of his voice. But Saul does know David's voice. Again he is moved as on the former occasion. "Is this thy voice, my son David?" he wails. 'Art thou again the man into whose hands I have just been shut up? And thy eyes once more spared me?' "It is my voice, my lord, O king," is David's reply. He puts to Saul the same questions, "Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? for what have I done? or what evil is in my hand?" "There is no evil in thine hand, my son". Such is the silent response of Saul's heart. David replies to it, "Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king, hear the words of his servant. If the Lord have stirred thee up against me, let him smell an offering: but if they be the children of men (who stirred thee up) cursed be they before the Lord: for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, Go serve other gods."

Let us perceive the point to this argument. "If the Lord hath stirred thee up against me." The teaching of this statement is that the Lord incites men to evil. The conception runs through the whole of Holy Writ. God commanded Shimei to curse David, 2 Sam. 16:10; He incited David to number the people, 2 Sam. 24:1; the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he should not let the people go, Ex. 4:21, etc.; He turned the heart of the Egyptians to hate His people, to deal subtly with His servants, Ps. 105:23; the Lord made His people to err from His ways, and hardened their heart from His fear, Isa. 63:17; God gave up the Gentiles to uncleanness, vile affections, and a reprobate mind, Rom. 1:24, 26, 28. We need not guess at what these scriptures mean to tell us. It is this: God is the Lord supreme also of sin. It is included in His counsel, which is sovereign. It entered the world and riots in the hearts of men according to his holy and sovereign will, and thus serves, can serve, His purposes.

David's counsel is further that Saul let the Lord smell an offering. Reference here is to the atonement by the sacrifice by blood. The idea set forth is that Saul confess and forsake his sins in true contrition of heart, and that if he do so the Lord will accept both his person and his offering and by his gift, in connection with it, testify with his spirit that he is forgiven.

So, then, it is plain that what David means to tell Saul is that "if the Lord hath stirred thee up against me, let him smell an offering" of a broken and contrite spirit that thou mayest be forgiven of God for Christ's sake. We must yet take notice of the idea underlying this statement taken as a whole. The idea is that God's inciting Saul to evil—inciting him to persecute David—is a judicial act on God's part by which He punishes Saul's sin by sin in Saul. Also this conception runs through the Scriptures. Because the Gentiles, when they knew God, glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, changing the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things,—God gave them over to uncleanness, vile affection, and a reprobate mind, Rom. 1:21 sq.

But David also supposes the case that Saul by wicked men is being incited to repeat his persecution, or rather that the Lord by such men incites him. For David understands, certainly, that it is always God who gives men over to sin and that devils and men, their wiles, deceits, and lusts, merely enter in as the means of the divine working. Compare Rom. 1:24, where it is stated that God gave up the Gentiles to uncleanness through the lusts of their own heart, and 1 Chron. 21, according to which God provoked David to number Israel through Satan's agency.

It is clear that David's admonitory discourse is to

be paraphrased thus: "O King, thou seekest my life to take it without a cause. Thine own heart tells thee so. But think not that in thine wickedness thou art thine own. Thou art the Lord's. It is He who incites thee through an evil spirit from God or/and the lies and deceits of perverse men and the lusts of thine own heart,—incites thee in punishment of thy sin. Yet, thou art none-the-less responsible. Except thou repent, cursed be thou and the men by whose lies thou permittest thyself to be incited against me. For your sin is great. Ye have expelled me this day from abiding in the heritage of the Lord, in God's country, the land of the living, saying to me, Go serve other gods, go to hell and to the devils." Canaan was the Heaven of the Old Testament Church. For there dwelt the Lord with His people. Hence, to drive out a member of the theocracy from Canaan, as Saul drove out David from Canaan, was very actually to eject him from God's house and thereby compel him to take up his abode in heathen lands, the lands of the dead.

"Now, therefore," thus David concludes, "let not my blood fall to the ground before the face of the Lord; for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains. The meaning is that David is as little dangerous to Saul as a flea, so that, shedding David's blood, Saul sheds the blood of a harmless and just man, blood, therefore, that as spilled on the ground will cry to Heaven for vengeance. Besides, David being the kind of a man he is—a man who honors the king for God's sake—Saul's fear of David, and his seeking David's life under the impulse of that fear, is a doing unutterably foolish as well. His dread of a flea would not be more irrational than his actual dread of David.

Saul knows that David speaks the truth—knows that his life is precious in David's sight. The evidence again is before Saul's eyes—his spear and pitcher of water are in David's hand—and upon his heart as sent there by the Lord, so that as pricked in his conscience and as filled with carnal remorse he wails, "I have sinned; return, my son David: for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and erred exceedingly."

Saul is not truly penitent. At the core, he is harder than ever. But he is subdued and afraid and remorseful like the doomed in hell are subdued, afraid and remorseful. "I have sinned. I have played the fool. I have erred exceedingly." Saul knew this all along. It simply is the truth about him, which he holds under in unrighteousness, except when, as again now, the Lord lays his terror upon Saul's heart. Then he confesses, "I have sinned."

David replies, "Behold the king's spear! and let one of the young men come over and fetch it." Saul's spear in David's hand fully establishes the truth of

the king's confession, so that David's holding it forth for Saul to see is his way of saying to the king, "Verily, thou hast played the fool! Thou hast erred exceedingly indeed! Repossess thyself of thine spear, and let it be to thee a perpetual sign of my righteousness and of the wickedness of thy doing." But, so David continues, "The Lord render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness," meaning to say, 'The Lord will render to me my righteousness and to thee thy wickedness. That I am righteous, thou knowest,' "For the Lord delivered thee into my hand this day, but I would not stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed. And behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the Lord, and let him deliver me out of all tribulations." It is the way of God, who is just, to make men reap according as they have sown. David was considerate of Saul's life in obedience to the Lord's will. Accordingly, David's life will be precious in God's eyes. The Lord will crown him with glory. This is David's assurance, which he now proclaims in Saul's ears. Saul replies, and his answer is a confirmation of the truths to which David has just given utterance. Says he to David, "Blessed be thou my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and thou shalt still prevail." So does the Lord, who sovereignly hardens Saul, once more cast the obdurate king in the dust at David's feet. And with reason. Saul's hour has struck. Soon he will descend into battle with the Philistines and perish. But before his passing his own tongue must confess that he seeks David's life without a cause. So the Lord wills it for the sake of the cause of His covenant and for the sake of His righteous servant David. All Israel must know that David is righteous and thus see in Saul's persecutions of him a wonderful work of God by which He prepared his servant for the duties of the office of theocratic king. And all Israel does know that David is righteous. For even the persecuting Saul now again exonerates him. And the king's testimony is in the ears of all the people and in their hearts.

"So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place." It was the last meeting between the two. Saul returns to his place; but the affect of the Lord's terror upon his heart and mind soon wears away and the old resolve to persecute David to the death is again as lively in him as ever. This is plain from the sequel of the narrative. David said in his heart, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines: and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand." David is persuaded that soon Saul will go to repeating his persecutions, if he remain in the coasts of Israel. So he passes over with his six hundred men to Achish, king of Gath, and

with the king he dwells. It was told Saul, "and he sought no more again after him." The statement is revealing. The implication is that Saul would have continued to seek after David, had the latter not removed to Gath. For the Lord hardened his heart, it being God's purpose to destroy him.

(The comparison of chap. 26 with the section 23:19-24; 24, shows that the narratives agree in three principal points, in the treachery of the Ziphites toward David, in the persecution of David by Saul, and in the sparing of Saul by David. These agreements have led some to affirm that the two narratives are two accounts of the same events. But this view has so little actual basis in the text that we need take no further notice of it.)

G. M. Ophoff.

SION'S ZANGEN

Majesteit En Heerlijkheid

(Psalm 104; Slot)

Deze Psalm is ons gegeven, opdat wij des Heeren majesteit en heerlijkheid zouden zingen in dit leven. Hij is gegeven, opdat wij de dingen die geschapen zijn, en geduriglijk onderhouden worden door het krachtige woord van Gods voorzienigheid, zouden onderkennen als het werk Zijner handen, en voorts er van te zingen, te zingen.

Het resultaat van het bestudeeren van dezen psalm is ons alreede gegeven: Hoe groot zijn Uwe werken, o Heere! Gij hebt ze allen met wijsheid gemaakt; het aardrijk is vol van Uwe goederen.

Och, zongen we meer in dien toonaard!

"Deze zee, die groot en wijd van ruimte is, daarin is het wriemelende gedierte, en dat zonder getal, kleine gedierte met groote."

De zee, die machtige zee!

Misschien zijn er onder U, lezers, die de zee nooit zagen.

Dan hebt ge een van de machtigste stemmen van God gemist.

De zee is vreeselijk, maar ook schoon.

Zij is vreeselijk van vermogen. Er zijn paal en perk gezet aan de zee, maar soms, naar Gods raad, en op Zijn bevel, moeten die perk en paal wijken, en dan is er groote nood. Soms stormt het op de zeeën en de oceanen, en dan krimt het hart van de visschersvrouw ineen van angst voor manlief, die zijn brood zocht op de baren. Dan is er donkerheid der golven, omdat de wolken zich samenpakten, en de stormwinden loei-

den. Dan is er een bange stem Gods. Ik heb die stem meermalen gehoord, en gehuiverd. Doch we zijn er doorgekomen.

Soms is de zee zeer schoon. Als een groote spiegel breidt zij zich uit, en is zeer stille. Dan schittert het al van licht en stralenbundels die weerkaatst werden op het spiegelgladde water. Dan snijdt de boot stilte door de watermassa's en brengt elke slag der schroeven ons dichter naar veilige haven.

Echter, of de zee stormt en raast, of stille is en zeer schoon, zij is altijd een boodschapster Gods. Zij vertelt ons wat van God, van Zijn grootheid en majesteit. Luistert dan, gij zeelieden, luistert naar den God der oceanen.

Zij is groot en wijd van ruimte, en het maakt geen verschil of ge die grootheid en ruimte bezie vanuit het oogpunt van haar uitgestrektheid of vanuit het oogpunt van haar diepten. Beide oogpunten zullen U doen duizelen. Vooral de Pacific is groot. En diep. Hoe groot? Zullen we gaan meeten en weegen? Vaart op die zeeën en ge zult het meeten en weegen opgeven. Ge ziet tot aan de gezichtseinders, en als Gods Geest U wijsheid leerde, dan zult ge aanbidden, aanbidden.

En daarin is het wriemelende gedierte, en dat zonder getal, de kleine en de groote.

Zonder getal? Och neen, dat beteekent niet, dat er geen zuiver afgerond getal is van al die dieren en diertjes, maar dat het nooit opkomen zal in het plannend hart van een mensch om hun getal uit te rekenen. Er zijn er myriaden.

Maar God kent ze allen, en Hij roept hen allen bij name. "En geen een ontglipt Zijn oog!" Ik moet hier weer denken aan de huiselijke tafereelen van mijn zeer prille jeugd. Daar hoorde ik die versjes: Weet gij hoeveel vischjes spartelen, in den grooten watervloed? En dan kwam het antwoord: Al die duizend, duizend samen, roept de Heer bij hunne namen, en niet een ontglipt Zijn oog; en niet een ontglipt Zijn oog!

"Daar wandelen de schepen, en de leviathan, dien Gij geformeerd hebt, om daarin te spelen."

De schepen wandelen in de zee.

Vanaf het tijdstip, dat de arke van Noach te water ging tot op heden heeft het menschedom de zee gebruikt om daar in te wandelen. Die wijsheid heeft God hen gegeven. En het is goed om het te doen, met dankzegging gebruikt. Men mag op de zee wandelen in schepen. Tegenwoordig vliegt men er over heen met *luchtschepen*. Ik durf er niet in. Ik ben bang om te vliegen. Misschien is het goed om ook het luchtschip te gebruiken. Ik weet het niet. Maar het schijnt mij zoo onnatuurlijk toe. Ik wil geen lans breken voor degenen die er positief zonde in zien. Maar ik moet toestemmen, dat ik er niet voor gevoel. Ik zou willen zeggen, dat ik er instinctmatig tegen ben. Misschien is het slechts pure bangigheid. Ik weet het niet. Maar ik durf wel in een schip over de grootste

oceanen te varen. Daar ben ik heelemaal niet bang van. Ik vind het zelfs zeer prettig. Het speet mij altijd als mijn zeereis over was. In zekeren zin, benijd ik de zeelieden, die altijd op het zilte nat varen. Alles is zoo schoon, zindelijk, maar ook prachtig en indrukwekkend.

In de zee is ook de leviathan.

Ik heb eens nagespeurd wat men van dat beest weet. En het resultaat is nul op 't rekest. Men weet er met positieve wetenschap niets van. De een zegt: het is de krokodil geweest. De andere zegt: het is onze walvisch. Anderen zeggen: het is een prae-historisch monster geweest dat nu uitgestorven is. Ik voel wel wat voor de laatste gedachte. Als men tenminste niet gaat knoeien met dien term: prae-historisch. Ik bedoel er mee, dat de genre leviathan misschien uitgestorven is.

Hoe het dan mag zijn, de Heere bedoelt er mee het grootste beest, dat in de oceanen geschapen was. En God gaf hem de zee om in te spelen. Een mooie karakteriseering der dingen. Wij vragen vaak in verband met de dingen: wat nut het den mensch? Maar God geeft oceanen aan leviathan, opdat zij mogen spelen! Ja, ik heb ook ergens gelezen, dat de jonge raven tot God roepen om hun voedsel. En dat Hij hen hoort. En dat is lieflijk.

“Zij allen wachten op U, dat Gij hun hunne spijs geeft te zijner tijd.”

Dat doen die schepselen onbewust natuurlijk. Zij kennen geen God die voor hen zorgt. Maar onbewust dan, wachten zij op God. Daar gaat het in den psalm over. De psalm geeft ons de ware, de eigenlijke beteekenis der dingen der natuur. De myriaden van schepselen wachten op God om hun ontbijt te ontvangen, en hun diner en hun souper. En of zij nu veel verorberen of weinig, het komt hun van God toe. En let er dan op, dat God tegen het eene vischje of monster der zeeën zegt: zie, daar zwemt uw voedsel voor dit oogenblik! Grijpt het; dood het; en eet! En dan wijst God naar een ander levend schepsel van Hem. Want God bestiert hun leven en hun dood.

Maar dan moeten we ook hieraan denken: zoo was het van den beginne niet! Dat het eene beest het andere beest verscheurt, zooals ontelbare malen vooral geschiedt in de oceanen, komt van Uw en mijn zonde. En sindsdien lijdt het brute schepsel. Het is der ijdelheid onderworpen. En die ijdelheid blijkt uit de verscheuring en vernieling van elkander.

Straks komt er een tijd, dat men geen leed meer doen zal op den berg van Gods heiligheid, waar een vernieuwde schepping zal pralen. Daar zal een ieder schepsel verzadigd worden, zonder zijn medeschepsel te benauwen.

“Geef Gij ze hun, zij vergaderen ze; doet Gij Uwe hand open, zij worden met goed verzadigd.”

Ziet ge wel? Hier staat het. God geeft het slacht-

offer in de klauwen, tanden, bekken van de dieren. Het eene dier wordt door God genomen om het andere dier te voeden.

Zoo komt het zeker, dat wij verder lezen: “Verbergt Gij Uw aangezicht, zij worden verschrikt; neemt Gij hunnen adem weg, zij sterven en zij keeren weder tot hun stof.”

Ik denk, dat dit laatste gedeelte slaat op het verscheuren van de ontelbaar vele dieren die door God gebruikt worden tot spijs van andere Zijner schepselen. En dan zie ik in mijn verbeelding zulk een schepsel zwemmen in de zee. Doch, o wee, daar komt een grooter, sterker schepsel aangezwommen? Wat mensch zal in staat zijn om de schrik dier overvallen en af te malen? En als dan die grootere monsters grijpen, scheuren en eten, dan is het niet anders dan omdat God Zich verborg voor de kleinere schepselen.

Zij worden verschrikt; God is het die hun adem wegneemt in die verscheuring; en zij keeren weder tot hun stof.

“Zendt Gij Uwen Geest uit, zoo worden zij geschapen, en Gij vernieuwt het gelaat des aardrijks.”

Hier zit een schoone leer in.

Als er ontelbare schepseltjes te voorschijn treden, vischjes, groote en kleine, allen op hunnen tijd, tezamen met de myriaden van microben en insecten, dan geschiedt dat door den Heiligen Geest.

En dat is zoo ook met het “gelaat des aardrijks”, d.w.z., met het groene gras, kruid en heestergewassen, zoowel als de boomen en planten die de aarde bedekken. Want de Heilige Geest is de levenswekker. Dat is zoo met de wedergeboorte van het kind Gods, maar ook met de geboorten der myriaden van schepselen en schepseltjes.

Vraagt het aan de geleerden der aarde. Vraagt het aan Zijn haters die met weegschalen, ellen, en o zoo teere instrumenten bezig zijn in hun werkkamers. Ze hebben getracht om door te dringen tot het geheim van het worden der dingen. Blijft vragen, en zij zullen U ten slotte toestemmen, dat zij zelfs geen sprietje gras kunnen doen groeien.

Hoe zou het ook?

Het neemt een God om te scheppen.

En Hij deed en doet het door Zijn Woord en Heiligen Geest.

Dan worden de schepselen vernieuwd in hunne geslachten, en dan wordt het aardrijk in zijn aangezicht vernieuwd.

En dan gaan we prijzen.

De goddelooze geleerden (?) mogen vloeken en schelden op God, Dien zij maar niet op zij kunnen dringen in Zijn Eigen schepping, maar wij zullen instemmen met den geïnspireerden zanger en zeggen: “De heerlijkheid des Heeren zij tot in eeuwigheid, de Heere verblijde Zich in Zijne werken.”

Het gaat Gods volk goed naar den zin, als zij de

Heilige Geest in psalm 104 hooren zingen van Zijn Eigen werken. Als zij Hem hooren zingen van Zijn scheppingsmacht en van Zijn onderhoudingsWoord. Dan gaat het Gods volk naar den zin. Want die God is hun Vader. Zij noemen Hem zelfs HEERE. En dat is de liefste Naam van God. In het Oude Testament staat ergens, dat een goddelooze jongen uitdrukkelijk DEN NAAM vloekte. Dat was de naam van Jehovah. En dat ziet op den onveranderlijken VerbondsGod.

O ja, wij zijn priesters Gode en den Vader.

En als we vischjes zien zwemmen in oceanen, en wilde geiten springen op de bergen, en de ontelbare vogels en andere dieren, dan zeggen we ten overstaan van die massa's schepselen: Heere, HEERE! verblijf U toch in Uwe werken!

Dan zeggen we: We mogen het gaarne zien en hooren, Heere, dat Uwe werken heerlijkheid vertoonen. Daar hebben wij schik van, Heere! Uwe heerlijkheid is de afstraling van Uwe lieflijke deugden, en als we staan in die afstraling dan zingt ons hart.

En de reden van dien zang van het volk des Heeren?

Ze is deze: Ze hebben den Heere lief, omdat Hij hen eerst beminde!

Loof den Heere, mijne ziel!

Onbewust gevoelt de aarde dat het God is die haar bestuurt, onderhoudt, tot de katastroof leidt. Want: "Als Hij de aarde aanschouwt, zoo beeft ze; als Hij de bergen aanroert, zoo rooken zij."

Straks zal hij de tegenwoordige kosmos nog eenmaal aanzien, en dat zal het einde zijn van deze be-deeling. In Openb. staat er, dat de hemel en de aarde wegvloten toen God op hen zag. En dan komen de nieuwe hemel en de nieuwe aarde.

Gaat nu maar aan 't zingen, lezers, die mij gevolgd zijn in het bestudeeren van deze zangen. Gaat maar aan 't zingen, want dat is het volgende kapittel van dit vers. "Ik zal den Heere zingen in mijn leven, ik zal mijnen God psalmzingen terwijl ik nog ben." Dat zal waar zijn. We behoeven niet te wachten totdat wij in den hemel zijn om den Heere te loven. De aarde is vol van Zijn schoonheid en lieflijkheid. Er is stof, prijzensstof te over, als we maar ooren en oogen hebben om te hooren en te zien. En harten om op te merken.

Is God Uw deel tot in eeuwigheid?

Dan is dit Uw bezigheid. Dan zal Uwe overdenking van Hem zoeter zijn dan honig en de honigzeem. Dan zult ge U in den Heere verblijden.

De zondaars en de goddeloozen benauwen ons nog wat.

Ze maken soms het leven van Gods volk zeer bitter. Wat hebben ze het volk Gods niet benauwd in hun Middelaar? Leest psalm 22. Als honden en sterke stieren van Basan kwamen ze aan. Ze mergelen de lieden uit en spreken booselijk van onderdrukking.

Wreekt Uzelven echter niet, beminden! Straks zullen ze er niet meer zijn. En de sluitsteen is de steen des lofs.

Loof den Heere, mijne ziel. Hallelujah!

G. Vos.

IN HIS FEAR

Catechism Around The Confessions

It's happened to most of us, I suppose, who write now and then, that you talk with somebody, and say, "Yes, I wrote about that lately, remember?" And you discover to your dismay and his chagrin, that he doesn't remember. He simply had not read your last article.

Now it is possible that you did not read what we were trying to express in our former issue.

The gist of it was this, that the Catechism which our youth receive during their catechism years, prior to making confession, should include a study of the Three Forms of Unity. The catechism they receive should center around the Confessions.

It would be totally unnecessary, I'm sure, to set forth how important this is. We should insult the church of the ages if we thought it were necessary to prove how valuable are our Creeds. As Reformed people this needs no proof, does it?

It remains therefore that we outline a course by which it will become possible to cover this territory within the time limits assigned us in the development of our covenant youth.

Problem One.

The question arises: how can we cover all this territory during the catechism years? That, however, is not the main problem. There IS time enough. It is a matter of how we make use of that time. That is a much greater problem because it involves us in a re-arrangement of our catechism time. It involves us in re-thinking the methods which are generally in use and which have gradually been adopted.

And then we almost naturally say that we have always done it this way, and that is good enough. But yet, whatever we do we should do it consciously, because we are convinced that it is the best way. We must not do things just because things were always done that way. We must be able to give an account of why we do it thus and why we don't do it some other way.

Well now the first problem is therefore to get ourselves to that point where we examine our catechism course and test it for accuracy and efficiency.

We must ask ourselves whether the catechism as it is being conducted at present is giving the youth a thorough instruction in the doctrine as formulated in the Three Points of Unity. In other words, when the youth come to make confession of faith, have they made a systematic study of the Confessions? We should place ourselves before that question.

Now if you are convinced that our youth should not have or do not need such a study, all right. Period. But, if you can see the great value of a catechism coured in our Confessions, and ask: but how can we work that out, and how can we crowd it into our catechism years. . . . come, we can talk together.

The first half of problem one is solved.

Now the other half.

We will have to change our catechism set-up a little.

Can you concede that a change might be beneficial? If so, the other half of problem one is solved also.

Now for

Problem Two.

To get a catechism course of study which will embrace the Confessions, it is needful that the catechumens receive doctrinal instruction at much earlier age than is generally the case.

That means, of course, that we for the most part shall have to substitute doctrine for history in the younger classes.

Please do not say that doctrine is too difficult for our younger children. It is not too difficult for them. It depends on how it is presented. Instead of taking our refuge within the excuse that doctrine is too difficult for them, let us face the responsibility of presenting it to them so they can understand.

Our fifth graders in school study science, but they do not use university text books for that purpose. They study it out of science books written for fifth graders. They study mathematics, principally the same mathematics as the university students study, only they study it from books graded to their conception. Why then could not our children study doctrine?

As far as teaching history in our catechism classes is concerned it would be well to analyze this carefully. First of all it is our conviction that it is primarily the duty of the home to teach children the history of the Bible. The parents should feel themselves responsible for this work. It is very good for the parents to realize that this is their calling. A great danger today is that all the work is taken away from the parents, or rather that they let the school, the Sunday School and the church do their work for them. The parents should know themselves responsible especially for this work. This ought to induce them also to tell their children Bible stories, read for them out of the Bible, etc. Besides that, our youth should be

induced to read the Bible for themselves. Reading a little while every night before they retire would give them a complete course in Bible history. Then there are the Christian Schools which give a rather thorough course in Bible narratives, and finally there are the Sunday Schools in many churches that provide still more opportunity for acquaintance with the Bible's contents.

Should we in catechism then repeat what first the parents, then their individual reading, then the Christian School and finally the Sunday School has given them? Repeat that? Is that the work of the Church in catechism?

If someone would say: yes, but in catechism we interpret history. We answer that a consistent course in history interpretation is impossible when so much material has to be covered in such little time. And, if we commence to interpret history for the children we presuppose a doctrinal background. For if they shall interpret history they must first have a course in doctrine. Doctrine precedes history, as far as interpreting it is concerned.

And then the high calling of the Church, her grand calling is to indoctrinate. That phase of work is very clearly the peculiar calling of the church. The Christian School, neither the Sunday School is able to indoctrinate, neither should they imagine it to be their duty. The home may indoctrinate and private Bible reading is naturally an indoctrination, but to the Church God says: Preach the Gospel, indoctrinate my lambs, feed them with the Word.

Therefore then the church should clearly feel it her duty to emphasize indoctrination, that is her peculiar field of labor.

Now if such indoctrination shall progress as our covenant children develop, it is evident that we should follow a system.

It is that system which we would at this time set before you for your kind consideration.

Catechism Over The Years.

(the ages are approximate)

Age 7-9 — General History, O. T. and N. T.

Age 10-11—Easy Steps in Doctrine.

Age 12 — Primer of Reformed Doctrine.

Age 13 — Compendium.

Ages 14-15 — Heidelberg Catechism, as is

Ages 16-17 — Belgic Confessions.

Ages 18-19 — Canons of Dordt.

Ages 20 etc — Optional: Essentials of Reformed Doctrine; Church History, Liturgy, etc.

This system requires a graded course of work, wherein the classes graduate from one step to the next in order. It is inherent in youth to want to make progress, and to graduate. It produces an incentive

on their part to make progress. It sets before them a goal, the attainment of which they shall diligently seek.

In favor of this system is surely that our children, at their most impressionable age are receiving the rudiments of sound doctrine. Children learn readily and absorb rapidly, and what is impressed upon them in those formative years can never be erased.

What a solid foundation is then being laid in their lives. How great the unity too, for all their instruction centers around the Doctrine which has been cardinal to the Reformed faith. As the children become founded in doctrine they gradually understand history better and it means more to them. Their home catechism, their Christian School, their private reading, their Sunday School becomes richer as they get a grasp on the true doctrine. The preaching of the Gospel above all becomes richer for them, and that, earlier in life.

This system may present a few difficulties in congregations where, because of distances, etc., the graded plan cannot be followed. But even those difficulties frequently dissolve in proportion as the parents resolve to make a few sacrifices. For the rest it presents no difficulties which are insurmountable. In fact, it is a challenge to the ministers to surmount whatever difficulties this may entail. But I can assure you that the difficulties are not too great.

As for books for the younger classes, there are such books. You may improve upon them if you like. Some initial work will perhaps have to be done for the very young classes. For helps in the older classes there is material available, and the minister no doubt will want to work his own way through the graded series.

Now then, let us consider this carefully. If anyone is interested in a detailed outline of the entire course, methodology and all, we shall be glad to send it to you for your consideration.

The Lord our God builds up His Church, and we His servants shall arise and build.

M. Gritters.

NOTICE!

The entire issue of the Standard Bearer, bound in 23 Volumes, complete with Index, — now offered for a limited time at a special price of \$100.00.

Contact:—

A. Wychers, 900 Watkins St., S. E.

or:—

M. J. Woudenberg, 1042 Worden St., S.E.

Grand Rapids, Michigan.

FROM HOLY WRIT

The Face Of God

Scripture often speaks of God's face, especially in the Old Testament, but also in the New. This expression is even more common than we often realize, for the word for face, both in the Hebrew (*panim*) and in the Greek (*prosoopon*), is sometimes translated as countenance, and sometimes even as presence. For example, in Psalm 4:6 the word is translated as countenance, "Lord, lift up the light of Thy countenance upon us." While in Psalm 16:11 that same word is translated as presence. "Thou wilt show me the path of life; in Thy presence (face) is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore." With but rare exceptions the word for presence in Scripture is 'face'.

Thus we read in Exodus 33:14, "And He (Jehovah) said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." This passage is especially significant because it is an answer to Moses' plea for a token of divine favor. The people had sinned by making a golden calf at the foot of Sinai. Therefore the Lord had said, "I will not go up in the midst of thee, for thou art a stiffnecked people. . . . I will come into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee." But Moses, the Old Testament mediator found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and Jehovah considered that this nation was His people. Therefore He assured Moses that His presence (His face) would go with them, just as in times past when the lighted cloud led them in their journeys, as darkness to the enemy, but a light to Israel.

It is worthy of note, that in the last part of this same chapter God's face is tantamount to His glory. Moses asks for an added token of God's favor, as evidence that God's face will surely go with them to Canaan. The servant of the Lord pleads, "I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory." To which the Lord responds that He will hide him in the cleft of the rock and cover him with His hand while He passes by, "and I will take away My hand, and thou shalt see My back parts; but My face shall not be seen." The point here is, that God's face is associated with His glory. The fulness of that glory Moses cannot possibly behold as yet, for he is a sinful, earthly mortal. As the Lord states, "Thou canst not see My face, for there shall no man see Me and live." Therefore Moses must be content with a glimpse of that glory as it has passed by before him. That is all that he can bear as yet. But God's face and His glory are intimately related.

Many passages of Scripture show us that a man's

face expresses His inward emotions. In Gen. 4:5 we read that "Cain was very wroth and his countenance fell." Also in the prophecy of Daniel it is said that "the king's countenance was changed." Dan. 5:6. So also God's face manifests His innermost feelings and attitude toward the rational moral creature. God causes His face to shine in approval upon His people in Christ. "For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness; His countenance doth behold the upright." Ps. 11:7. This is in contrast to verses 5 and 6 which state that the Lord hates the wicked, upon whom he rains snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest. Thus the prayer of the believer is, "God be merciful to us, and bless us; and cause His face to shine upon us." Ps. 67:1. Even as the Aaronitic blessing expresses it, Num. 6:24-26, "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."

On the other hand, God sometimes hides His face from His people, and they are troubled. Ps. 30:7. Before their consciousness God has forgotten them. Ps. 13:1, "How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? Forever? How long wilt Thou hide Thy face from me?" Their prayers remain unanswered. Ps. 102:2, "Hide not Thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble; incline Thy ear unto me; in the day when I call answer me speedily." Then every prayer dies on their lips. "And there is none that calleth upon thy Name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of Thee, for Thou hast hid Thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities." Is. 64:7. Here the prophet confesses that their iniquities are the cause that God hides His face from His people. Even as the Lord says in chapter 59, verse 2, "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear."

But even as God causes His face to shine in approval upon His people in Christ, so He turns His face in disapproval against the wicked. He frowns upon them in His anger. "The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth." Ps. 34:16. "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." 1 Pet. 3:12. The kingdom of Judah is sent into captivity when the Lord turns His face against them, "Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will set My face against you for evil, and to cut off all Judah." Then God's vineyard is cut down. Ps. 80:16, "They perish at the rebuke of Thy countenance."

Scripture also speaks of seeing God face to face. This was the reassuring experience of Jacob when he wrestled with the angel of the Lord. Gen. 32:30. "And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, for I

have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." In passing, it is worthy of note that here the angel of Jehovah is called the face of God. He is not an ordinary angel, but may well be called the Old Testament manifestation of the Christ. In the new dispensation we see God in the face of Christ, Who is the "brightness (shining forth) of His glory, the very image of His substance." Heb. 1:3.

God encourages His people in Christ to seek His face, giving them grace to respond, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek." Ps. 27:8. The Lord's face is their refuge in prayer, their help. Ps. 27:9. His face is entreated by them. 1 Kings 13:6. It upholds them in their integrity, declaring them righteous in Christ. Ps. 41:12. It makes them exceedingly glad. Ps. 21:6. Therefore they come into His presence (before His face) with thanksgiving, they praise Him for His help. Ps. 42:5. Blessed is that people who walk in the light of His countenance. Ps. 89:14. In His face is the fulness of joy, pleasures forevermore. Ps. 16:11.

It is also the hope of the saints in the life to come, in contrast to their present fellowship with God, that they shall see Him face to face. 1 Cor. 13:12, "For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face. Now we know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." This hope is entirely in harmony with Revelation 22:4, where the fulness of heavenly blessedness is summed up in the words, "And they shall see His face; and His name shall be upon their foreheads."

All these passages can only convince us that the expression 'the face of God' is exceedingly rich in significance.

1. The expression is, of course, anthropomorphic. Just as Scripture speaks of God's hands, eyes and feet, so it also speaks of His face. God has given a creaturely picture of His face in man, His image bearer, in order that we should be able to know and speak about the face of God. With an appeal to Psalm 94:9 we can say, Does He Who formed the face of man not have a face Himself?

2. God's face is the revelation of His *presence*. His Name is also His revelation; but, in distinction from His face, the Name reveals to us His attributes. By His Name we can know Him, speak of Him, and address Him. But by His face He makes His presence known to us. Even the beasts of the forest and the fishes of the sea are troubled when He hides His face from them. Ps. 104:29. And whither shall we flee from before His face? Ps. 139:7.

3. The face reveals to us God's glory. That glory can be terrible in majesty, even as a consuming fire. "The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence (face) of God; even Sinai itself trembled at the presence of God, the God of Israel." The wicked

perish at His presence, even as wax melts before the fire. Ps. 68:2, 8. But that presence is infinitely glorious and blessed for God's people in Christ, upon whom His face shines. "Cause Thy face to shine; and we shall be saved." Ps. 80:3, 7, 19.

4. The face of God also reveals His attitude of favor or of disfavor, of grace towards His people and of wrath to the wicked. The face of man is said to be the mirror of his soul. His character, but also his emotions and thoughts are written in bold letters upon his face. Even so God's face reveals His glories, His virtues, in love toward His people, and in wrath against the wicked. He smiles in loving favor upon His chosen ones, but at the same time He frowns in sore displeasure upon all the wicked, whom His soul loatheth. This is entirely in harmony with God's justice and holiness, as the Lord declared His Name to Moses when He passed before Him, hidden in the cleft of the rock, saying, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping loving kindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation." Ex. 34:6, 7.

5. The saints delight in the light of His countenance. They are aware that the face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off their remembrance from the earth. Ps. 34:16. But they also know He has chosen His people in Christ, that they should be holy and blameless *before Him*. Eph. 1:4. He has exalted Christ to appear as their Advocate before His presence in heaven. Heb. 9:24. He hides His face from their sins and blots out all their iniquities. Ps. 51:9. Therefore He causes His face to shine upon them, to keep them, to be gracious unto them, to give them peace. Num. 6:24-26. When He hides His face from them for a time, they are utterly miserable. Ps. 30:7. When He turns to them again, He causes them to seek His face, and they experience that His face is near to them, always remembers them, helps them in all their troubles hears their prayers, and causes them to walk in its light all the day long. They come before His face with thanksgiving; they dwell in His presence with praises. Ps. 140:13.

Therefore they live in the blessed hope that finally in perfection they shall see Him face to face. That is their portion in this life, in contrast to those whose portion is the things of this earth. The wicked shall perish, but "as for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness." Ps. 17:15. In God's presence is fulness of joy, at His right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

C. Hanko.

A Last Appeal

TO OUR SCHOOL TEACHERS!

Undoubtedly you have noticed the ad in *Concordia* under the heading "*Who Will Help!*" In the June 10 issue it appears on page 2. Thanks to our helpful editor it had a very prominent place so that no one could fail to notice it.

But in spite of what *Concordia*, and our school board, and a few others have been able to do, we here in Redlands, are as yet without teachers for the next school term. As you will understand, *no teachers, no school!* You will agree that that would be a deplorable situation. Must this be after 14 years of existence?

Now the case in Redlands is this. If we are unable to find a teacher (or teachers) in the very near future, the parents will have to try and enroll their children in the Christian Reformed School, if at all possible. We say *if possible*, because the Christian Reformed School in the past season had all the children they could take care of. Therefore, enrollment would be necessary now. If that should fail, the only other way left to us is the public school. We feel that we do not need to make a plea or stress the necessity of our own Protestant Reformed School. The Truth which we as parents by the grace of God love so dearly — should not our children be taught that same Truth in the day school?

Therefore we come with the urgent plea
"*Who Will Help!*"

The Board of the First Reformed
Christian School Society.
Redlands, California.

ATTENTION

*All Those Who Still Enjoy Reading
The Holland Language!*

The book of Rudolph Van Reest "*Van Kust Tot Kust*" is off the press. This book is written by Mr. Van Spronsen, who together with his wife made a tour of the United States, and visited all of our churches. In it he describes his impressions and experiences of his trip. This book, together with the book of Prof. Schilder "*Om Woord En Kerk*", and two volumes of Ds. J. W. Tunderman on the Heidelberg Catechism can be had for the sum of \$5.00 (five dollars). Send your subscription for this series of books to the Rev. B. Kok, 105 W. 19th St., Holland, Michigan.

PERISCOPE

Other Churches. . . .

During the month of June many denominations besides our own hold their annual Synods or Assemblies. Since we have written previously of the problems which various other Churches face, their resolutions in respect to these will be of interest. We quote briefly from various periodicals the decisions of some of these Churches at their annual meetings.

From *The Banner* of June 25, 1948: "Synod At a Glance — 1. Decided to establish a chair of missions and call a professor. Rev. Harry Boer of Nigeria elected. Will begin to serve in about two and a half years. 2. Membership of our Church in National Association of Evangelicals continued. Committee appointed to study the matter. 3. A new committee appointed to study the subject of junior colleges from all angles. 4. Committee appointed to study the alleged conflict between articles 6 and 12 of the Church Order regarding the status of ministers in Christian high schools and other non-ecclesiastical institutions. 5. Limited ordination and office of evangelists for lay-workers in mission fields not approved. 6. New area added to our mission field in China. 7. Eighteen protesting members of the Grace Church in Kalamazoo, including Rev. H. Danhof, must meet three requirements for the continued recognition of their membership, one of these being an expression of adherence to the doctrinal position of the Christian Reformed Church.—H. J. K."

From the same source we learn a bit about the Reformed Church in America. The Rev. Peter Van Tuinen writing in the department "Other Churches in the News", reports as follows: "The valiant efforts of the loyally Reformed elements in the Reformed Church to preserve its traditional character and to annul, or at least weaken, the influence of the strong liberal leadership in the denomination, were reflected in the business of the general synod again this year. The struggle was mainly evident in discussion regarding relocation of the denominational headquarters from New York to the Midwest, denominational membership in the Federal Council, and union with the United Presbyterian Church. Concessions were made to the demands of the conservatives on all three issues, but the fundamental question remains unsolved, and the struggle will continue.

Instead of moving the headquarters so as to give greater influence to the more conservative Midwest area of the Church, the synod provided for more balanced representation on the several boards, and required that all sections be adequately represented at

all times, regardless of financial cost. On the Federal Council question, the synod refused to withdraw its membership, and instead took action to see to it that its own representatives in Federal Council activities be recognized champions of true Christianity. In addition the synod will inform the Federal Council that it reserves the right to disapprove of any action that is not consonant with the Christian faith, and that its view of evangelism is based on the biblical doctrine that man is lost without the atoning work and saving grace of Christ. The action on the Church-union question, of course, remains to be completed during the next couple of years.

From our point of view, a disappointing and rather inexplicable bit of business at the Reformed Synod, according to the *Church Herald* report, was the fact that, after giving the delegates the gloomy prediction that America will be pagan in 20 years because of the lack of religious education in our country, the Board of Education recommended "no action" on a request from Classis Kalamazoo that the Board be instructed to give careful consideration to the possibility of promoting Christian Church Schools in areas where the anti-Christian influence prevails.

Two items of general interest in The Presbyterian Church in the U. S. (Southern) are reported in the June 15 issue of *The Southern Presbyterian Journal*, which records the activities of the 88th General Assembly of that denomination. We quote: "Considerable debate was precipitated on the matter of the Federal Council. Majority and Minority reports came from the Standing Committee. By a gentleman's agreement the debate was limited to two hours, one hour going to each side. . . . The vote showed that 274 Commissioners desired the Church to remain in the Council and 108 to withdraw." The other item of interest concerned the proposed union of the Southern group with the Northern Church or Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. The report on this matter continues as follows: "The Inter-Church Relations Committee, according to a special order of the day, discussed the question of organic union with the Presbyterian Church U. S. A., Tuesday morning. Majority and Minority Reports were also submitted on this question. Dr. L. Nelson Bell of Asheville, N. C., proposed a substitute for the whole. Dr. Bell's substitute stated 'that for a period of five years the entire plan of reunion with Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., be held in abeyance and that during this time the Committee confine its activities to exploring avenues of acquaintance and cooperation only.' Dr. Charles L. King of Houston introduced an amendment which added, 'except that the Committee complete the plan by March 1, 1949, and have the same printed in such number to supply any requests.' The Assembly adopted by unanimous vote the substitute of Dr. Bell with the amendment offered

by Dr. King." Hence, the whole matter will be dropped, except for discussion and study, for at least five years. This appears to be a very wise course and should be emulated by other groups contemplating union.

While speaking of Church union we might add that the proposed union of the Congregational and Evangelical and Reformed Churches has also failed to materialize. The Evangelical and Reformed Church had approved the merger but the Congregational General Council failed to acquire the necessary three-fourths vote from the congregations and conferences. From the outset the Evangelical and Reformed group had been the more enthusiastic of the two denominations. The Congregational groups feared that they would lose their independence and looked somewhat askance at the Presbyterian Form of Church government.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada. . . .

From time to time we have quoted from *Bible Christianity*, an independent monthly journal issued by some ministers of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. It is a conservative and orthodox paper and its editors mean to use it to publicize and fight against the growing evils in their Churches. To give our readers an idea of the tremendous difficulties these men face and the sad state of affairs they are attempting to correct, we quote from the following editorial. It is from the issue of June, 1948, and is entitled, Church Discipline: "A forgotten duty in the Presbyterian Church in Canada is that of Church Discipline. Members who have been guilty even of flagrant sins have not even been admonished. The result is that members of the church have no respect for it and do not feel the necessity of obeying its precepts. Lodges exercise more discipline than the churches.

It must not be forgotten that Christ is the Head of the Church. Those who are members of the Church are the subjects of Christ. They have promised submission to His will and commandments. His laws are enforced and law-breakers are punished by those whom He has constituted rulers in His Church, namely, the ruling elders.

The purpose of church discipline is not merely to indicate authority and to punish. The purpose of church discipline is: to vindicate the honour of Christ, to maintain the purity of the Church, to reclaim the sinner, and to warn others lest they also sin. The Scriptures allow for censure, rebuke, suspension and ex-communication.

If the church were to discipline those who absent themselves from the services of worship and from the ordinances, it would be a good thing and would cause the membership to respect the Church.

W. Hofman.

ATTENTION — YOUNG PEOPLE!

After careful consideration, your Convention Committee has decided to have two days of convention instead of three.

Wednesday and Thursday — August 18-19.

The program will be essentially the same. Wednesday morning at 9:00 Registration of Delegates and Visitors; 10:00 Business Meeting; 12:00 Dinner; 1:30 P.M. Business Meeting; 7:30 Inspirational Mass Meeting at Kollen Park (Band Concert, Hymn Sing, and Address by the Rev. H. Hoeksema). Everyone, young and old are invited to the Inspirational Mass Meeting. Thursday Morning 8:30 Pancake Breakfast at Tunnel Park; 11:30 Dinner at Tunnel Park (Rev. Vos will give an address); 6:30 P.M. Banquet at the Holland Christian High School; (Rev. C. Hanko will be the speaker at the Banquet).

ATTENTION!

All those interested in Our Young People:

The Young People Society of Holland, Michigan is sponsoring this year's Young People's Convention this coming August. We are in need of some financial sponsors to help make this Convention a Success. All those who will help us by sending a contribution, great or small, will be listed as patrons in our Convention Booklet. You will also receive a complimentary copy of this booklet. Please send your contribution to:

Miss Marian Haveman, Treas.
45 East 22nd St.
Holland, Michigan.

Remember, a boost for our Convention is a boost for our Young People.

IN MEMORIAM

The English Ladies Society of the Edgerton Protestant Reformed Church hereby extends their sincere sympathy to one of their fellow members, Mrs. Carl Schnyders, (nee Alice Tempelman) in the death of her,

FATHER

May God sustain and comfort her and the bereaved with His blessed truth, that "blessed are the dead that die in the Lord."

Mrs. M. Mesman, Sec'y.

CLASSIS EAST

will meet in regular session at the First Protestant Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan, on Wednesday, July 14, at 9 o'clock A. M. D. Jonker, S. C.

Notice — As is customary, the Standard Bearer will not be published on the 15th of July.