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MEDITATION

The Heavenly Gift

"And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them."—Jeremiah 32:39.

This text is the expression of the wonder, the miraculous wonder, of the lovingkindness of our Covenant God.

In order to see this, we will have to tell you a bit about the historical background.

Jeremiah, the true prophet of the Lord, was shut up in the court of the prison, which was in the king of Judah's house. In these few words are a world of iniquity and trespass. The prophet should have occupied a place of honor and tranquility: a place in the court of the king of Judah's house would not have been too high for him, for he spoke the Word of the Lord. And we do find him in the house of the king of Judah, but, alas, his place is in prison. It augurs evil for Judah when the prophet of the Lord is thus treated.

And the reason is given why he was shut up in prison. It was because Jeremiah had said, Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it; and Zedekiah king of Judah shall not escape out of the hand of the Chaldeans, but shall surely be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon. . . .

Then the king of Judah had given word to shut him up in the prison that was situated in his own house. His evil abided very near unto him.

And it came to pass that while Jeremiah was shut up in this prison that his cousin, Hanameel, visited him with the plea to buy his field that was at Anathoth!

This action on the part of Hanameel set the prophet to thinking.

And his reaction is immediate. He bought the field, subscribed the evidence of the purchase, sealed it, and

weighed him the money in the balances. And the evidence of the purchase Jeremiah gave into the safe-keeping of a certain Baruch, charging him to put the papers into an earthen vessel, that it might continue many days.

We would be inclined to ask: what was so wonderful about this incident? A man is shut in prison, and his cousin offers him the purchase of a field!

But wait! Jeremiah walked with God, and with the God of heaven and the earth he was in daily communication. Note that Jeremiah said, immediately after his cousin had finished his story: "Then I knew that this was the word of the Lord." Marvellous penetration of the Lord's doing!

Jeremiah had seen all the abominations which Judah had done in the sight of Jehovah their God. And he knew that God was righteous and just and that punishment was in the offing. In fact, he himself had announced the just punishment in the name of the Lord.

But now came this message, clothed in the act of his cousin: the offering in purchase of a field!

Here is Jeremiah's interpretation of the purchase of the field of Anathoth: "For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land!" And therefore the evidences of the purchase must reside in an earthen vessel. God will return from His fierce anger. There is marvellous lovingkindness in the offing.

* * * *

And the Lord confirmed the reasoning of his servant Jeremiah.

He came to him and said among other things: "The children of Israel and the children of Judah have only done evil before Me from their youth: for the children of Israel have only provoked Me to anger with the work of their hands, saith the Lord." And that was true of all of them, for the prophet accuses in the name of the Lord "they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets, and the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem."

Also their sins are outlined precisely by the voice

of the Lord. Here it is: "They set their abominations in the house (that is, the temple), which is called by My Name, to defile it. And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Moloch; which I commanded them not, neither came it into My mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin."

Well, dear reader, what would you expect at this juncture?

Yes, I know your answer. It is mine also. We would expect this: not only should they be sent into captivity into the hand of the cruel king of Babylon, but they should be sent into everlasting captivity in the chains of eternal darkness of hell and damnation! That is exactly what we would expect. For the Lord is righteous and holy, a God of truth and equity is He!

Judah and Israel, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem had revealed themselves to be a bad lot. That is all there is to it! And the end of a bad lot is evil, evil for time and for eternity.

Their hearts, from which are the issues of life, had been evil from their youth, so that they had only done abomination, according to the Word of the Lord. And a just recompense of an evil reward is all we can expect for such hearts, and such ways.

The evil heart and the evil way find their end in hell itself!

* * * *

But wait!

We have to deal with Jehovah, the Covenant God of His people.

Hard upon God's own revelation of all their evil doings, indeed, the very next verse in the story reads thus: "And now therefore thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning this city, whereof we say, It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword and by the famine, and by the pestilence; Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in Mine anger, and in My fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely."

I ask you in all sincerity: can you understand it? Here is a people that are evil from their youth, doing only evil continually, provoking God to anger, justly being given into the hand of a wicked and cruel tyrant, and then comes that cousin to Jeremiah the prophet, trying to sell a piece of land, which is God's way of telling Jeremiah that the land shall be theirs again after many days. In other words: God shall forgive their iniquity and shall return from His fierce anger, and bless them abundantly!

And here is the reason, and I would beg of you to try and understand it: "And they shall be My people, and I will be their God." (The next verse)

That is the reason: God is the God of His people.

The reason is heavily theological. God took reasons out of His own Being. From all eternity, and in the very depths of God, there is love, indescribable love and lovingkindness.

And that is also the Gospel of God which is eternal: His love and lovingkindness seek and find their way to the heart and life of Judah, Israel and the inhabitants of Jerusalem through sin, iniquity and great abominations. For such is the case here with Jeremiah, Hanameel, Baruch, Israel, Judah, and Jerusalem with their sins on the one hand; and Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon, the Chaldeans, and their cruel tyranny and oppression on the other hand. The one should find the other: Nebuchadnezzar should crush Israel because of their blatant sinning against God, whereupon also Nebuchadnezzar should be thrown into the fire as a used razor. And there should stand the period.

But God is God. He never changes. He loved Israel-Judah-Jerusalem from everlasting and to everlasting. They shall go to heaven to be to His praises forever. And that is that.

And so Hanameel gets it into his head to sell a field to a man in prison, which man is of a keen and penetrating mind about things theological. He knows God. And he reasons correctly. God shall visit His people again.

God's love and lovingkindness are a continual, an everlasting surprise and wonder! You may prepare yourselves to begin the singing of the hallels of praise and adoration.

God always remembers His Covenant which is eternal.

* * * *

And then comes the text that is written above this piece of writing. It took me a long time to come to it. But I cannot help that. I could not begin to tell you of the heavenly Gift of a new heart and a new way without this introduction, an introduction which is longer than the treatment of the text. You meet with these things in Scripture. Besides, the Gift is enhanced in the light of the historical background with all its lurid background of the unfaithfulness, abominations and the very grievous sins of Israel-Judah-Jerusalem. The brilliancy of God's love needs a dark background.

If you give love to lovers, it will make the angels sing. But if you give love to those that hate you, time stands still, and there is an eternity of wonderment, which shall grow into the most beautiful singing of those so treated. Remember that there is one song which no one can sing but those beings that are treated with love when all justice would damn them forever.

Yes, then comes the text. Here it is: And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them!

A little later will give us the edition of the selfsame Gospel of Ezekiel. And it will be well to quote that edition too. It sheds light upon the present edition of Jeremiah. Here it is: "And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh." Ezekiel 11:19.

The New Testament is not always so flowery as the Old Testament and uses less imagery. Paul would say of this same glorious Gospel-truth: "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Phil. 2:13.

Adding those touches of Biblical quotation makes it easier to understand Jeremiah's version. The "one heart" is a new heart, which is going to take the place of the "stony" heart which is our natural inheritance.

The Gospel according to the holy prophet Jeremiah: God will give unto Judah-Israel-Jerusalem a new heart and a new way!

* * * *

A heart of flesh for a heart of stone!

That is all you need in order to be happy for ever and ever! And it is given to Israel-Judah-Jerusalem gratis, free, without money and without price.

And if your heart is made new, one, and of flesh instead of flint, your way will be one, new and tender as flesh. You will become angelic, no, even better than angelic: the saints in Christ shall be "nicer", more glorious than angels. For Christ is far above all angels in beauty and splendor.

By nature our hearts are hard, and they are divided. For that stands overagainst a heart that is one.

We know what that meant in the present case. They turned unto God the back, and not the face. (vs. 33) And they had done that in spite of God's teaching and preaching. They simply refused to learn theology. And there they went. They took the abomination and placed it in God's house. They took their children and offered them to Moloch.

The general description is terrible. Imagine: "They only did evil before Me from their youth!" Oh, if Judah and Israel of 1924 would have opened their Bible at this place, how different would have been their conclusions of natural man's doing! Kalamazoo! Kalamazoo! You should have gone to Jeremiah for instruction. If the terrible God speaks of "only evil before His face from their wouth", how then can man, no, how dare man say: "The GOOD that sinners do!?" Do you not see that if you brighten the picture of man's abomination, you tarnish the beauty of God's love in the same measure? We marvel about God's love and loving-kindness just because it is shown to men who are wholly corrupt and evil from their youth. We wonder with eternal wonderment when *we* may go to heaven, while all our lives testify to and seek for eternal damnation.

The heart of natural man is divided and cruelly

hard. It is an old heart and an old way I have by nature.

Oh, for a new heart and a new way!

* * * *

A new heart and a new way!

It is Jesus of Nazareth, dear reader.

He is the new and one heart for man.

The heart is the ethical center of a rational moral nature. From it are all the issues of life.

Well, when humanity corrupted its heart originally in Adam and Eve, and subsequently in all its members, God showed us a new heart in Jesus, the Babe in the manger of Bethlehem.

A way of a man is his heart in motion. And the motion of a heart is thought, will, imagination, reflection, desire, speech and deeds.

Look strongly on Jesus of Nazareth. He will prove to you that He is the New Heart. And His life will show you that great Heart in motion.

And here are the reasons why that Great Heart and that Great Way came to earth in the midst of wicked men and devils. First, in order to take away the sin and guilt of Judah-Israel-Jerusalem which was loved of God from all eternity. The Triune God gave His Son and caused Him to appear in the midst of the children of men. He took the nature of the children upon Him, and He took their place before the avenging justice and righteousness of God. And He stood there so long until all the outraged justice of God was satisfied. Second, we read that Israel-Judah-Jerusalem "have done nothing of all that Thou commandest them to do", vs. 23. Well, this Great Heart did this in all His way. He fulfilled the law of God for us. Third, the reason He came, which I would call the deepest reason, is that He would exhibit the greatness of God, the love of God, the wonderful virtues of God. God is on exhibition on the Cross of Calvary. And the view is surpassing in beauty. And shall be forever and ever.

But who is Israel-Judah-Jerusalem? It is the people that fear the Lord. They are those who receive Jesus of Nazareth in their heart, for the good of them, for the good of their children forever. Christ Jesus is so good for them that they shall sing forever and ever of God's praises.

G. Vos.

NOTICE!!

We now have an adequate supply of "*The History of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America.*" All orders have been filled and a number of copies remain ready to be distributed. Price per single copy is \$2.00. We would urge our consistories to take advantage of the reduced price of \$1.65 per copy in quantity lots. Send orders to:

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

EDITORIALS

Set The Ball A-rolling?

A short while ago, a brother asked me why I did not react to a certain article, or, rather, editorial in *The Banner* of April 23, 1948. The truth of the matter is that when I read the editorial in question I intended to answer it, but due to other pressing material for editorial reaction it arrived in the background, where it lay, until this brother prompted me.

I am of the opinion that we should make some comment on the editorial referred to.

I cannot transcribe the whole editorial because of space limits. I will, however, transcribe the occasion for the comments of the Editor of *The Banner* anent a certain matter. Wrote he:

"In view of the 'cold war' between this country and Russia, which could easily issue in another gigantic, world-embracing conflict, and the certainty that such a war would be unbelievably destructive, the Christian people of Grand Rapids responded to a united call to prayer in which they were asked to come together in their respective churches for one hour each evening during the week of April 12-17 for 'a series of solemn services of repentance, petition, and intercession.'"

"Some of the churches of this city followed the appeal literally and had a prayer service of some sort every evening of that week. Others arranged for a special prayer service on one of the evenings suggested. Still others joined together for a 'community' prayer service."

And then follow the comments by the Rev. H. J. Kuiper, bringing them under four different heads.

I hasten to say that there is much to which we would heartily agree in his comments, but there are also sentiments which are harmful to his readers. His leadership in this matter is wrong, and that on more than one count.

I would offer the following criticism:

1. The whole "campaign" for prayer is forced. I use the word "campaign" in this connection, and the Rev. H. J. Kuiper will forgive me, for he occasioned such nomenclature. In his first comment he expresses the hope that other communities will follow the example set by the Christian people of Grand Rapids. And the Rev. Kuiper agrees to that, but he makes the stipulation that "ministers and consistories should take the lead. . . . let our own people *set the ball a-rolling if necessary.*" Such words from a Reformed minister of the Word reveal much. Is that Reformed? Does any man ever *set the ball a-rolling*? It reveals a certain tendency when we note that the more than two columns which Kuiper writes on this matter of prayer does not

include one word on the vital truth that God sets the *ball a-rolling*. That is true with respect to everything, and especially with regard to prayer, the highest and most beautiful expression of the Christian life. Where is the sentiment expressed in the Old Testament prayer that God would pour out His Spirit of prayer and supplication on Israel?

2. How can Kuiper advise his people to pray for the world in the face of the plain teaching of the Bible that this is never done? Did not Jesus say: I pray not for the world? Abraham's prayer for the righteous in Sodom is not in place here. He prayed not for Sodom but for the possible righteous souls living in Sodom. Neither is the quoted text from II Chron. 7:14 applicable to the matter at hand. There we hear that God will spare the "land" upon the prayer of the saints, but the "land" is not the world for which Kuiper would have us pray, but the heritage of Abraham, the "holy land".

3. Since when is a possible "revival of the church a restraining influence in the nation"? Scripture teaches us that the very contrary is true. There are many proofs, but I will restrict myself to the very core and center of such proof. Where is the restraint in the case of the ministry of Christ? The very opposite effect is noted. Devils and wicked men gather around Him, and finally lead Him to the cross. Note the reactions of the wicked world when Paul wends his missionary way through Asia Minor. It seems as though hell itself broke loose. The same must be said anent the so-called "longsuffering of God toward the world" which will be the result if God's people repent. I would very much like to have some Scriptural proof for this. This is the teaching of Scripture, namely, that outside of the Cross and its effects of repentance on the part of God's Church, there is nothing but wrath and condemnation for the wicked world.

4. Kuiper dreads another, more horrible world war, and I find no fault here. We all dread it. But he adds at the end of his editorial that our prayer and supplication and also repentance are sorely needed to keep away another world war since in such case "our entire foreign mission project might be stymied". Imagine: the foreign mission project of the Christian Reformed Churches might be stymied in another world war! The Rev. Kuiper forgive me, but the whole thing sound childish. Let us see: Kuiper will be the first to hold that the mission endeavor of his churches is the work of God? Can God's work ever be stymied by what the wicked nations are doing? Can anyone ever stop God from bringing the Gospel to the heathen? Do not our confessions state in more than one place that the Gospel is sent to the heathen in "God's goodpleasure" with respect to place and time and persons involved? I think that Kuiper himself could make out a good case to prove the very opposite, that namely the Gospel through

missions would flourish because of a global conflict between the wicked nations.

5. Finally, some positive remarks. First, Kuiper must begin to see that it is rather late on the clock of the present universe. We are more and more arriving at that stage of history to which Christ alludes in Luke 21:28. When the terrible things of the last period of the world's history are beginning to come to pass, we as Christians, must not organize a "campaign" of prayer meetings for the world, but "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and life up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." Luke 21:28. Second, I also believe that there must come a special note in our supplication in these evil days, but that special note should partake more and more of the holy and theological sentiment expressed in the prayers of those that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held. For they "cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" That prayer resounds with a loud voice at the time on the calendar of the universe which is called "when the 5th seal was broken". It would be well that we were a little more instructed in the matter of prayer such as holy and perfect saints pray in heaven, before we organize our "prayer campaigns" on earth. Rev. Kuiper would not like to be at variance with the prayers of the saints in heaven, would he? I know he would not.

Third, I would like to remind brother Kuiper in a kindly manner that whenever he utters the second petition of the most perfect prayer: Thy Kingdom Come! he is praying also for the coming of all the dreadful things which must come to pass before the glorious end can come. The Rev. Kuiper's own glorification cannot come except through the way of the revelation of the man of sin, the coming of the anti-christian kingdom and kindred horrors. Much of our present day prayer is a veiled criticism of the adorable God in His just and true treatment of the wicked world.

Just and true are His ways and judgments!

Our blessed portion is to worship.

G. Vos.

IN MEMORIAM

Whereas our Heavenly Father in His wise and loving providence, took out of this life,

MRS. M. SWART

the English men's Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan expresses its sincere sympathy to our fellow member Mr. M. Swart and his family in the loss of their beloved wife and mother.

May our God comfort them according to their needs in these lonely days.

Mr. A. Van Tuinen, Pres.

Mr. O. VanderWoude, Sec'y.

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART TWO

LORD'S DAY 24

1.

The Repudiation Of All Good Works. (cont.)

That the Roman Catholic Church, by its doctrine of justification, means an infused rather than an imputed righteousness is also plain from the following:

"For, whereas Jesus Christ himself continually infuses His virtue into the said justified,—as the head into the members, and the vine into the branches,—and this virtue always precedes and accompanies and follows their good works, which without it could not in any wise be pleasing and meritorious before God,— we must believe that nothing further is wanting to the justified, to prevent their being accounted to have, by those very works which have been done in God, fully satisfied the divine law according to the state of this life, and to have truly merited eternal life, to be obtained also in its (due) time, if so be, however, that they depart in grace: seeing that Christ, our Saviour, saith: *If anyone shall drink of the water that I will give him, he shall not thirst forever; but it shall become in him a fountain of water springing up unto life everlasting.* Thus, neither is our own justice established as our own as from ourselves; nor is the justice of God ignored or repudiated: for that justice which is called ours, because that we are justified from its being inherent in us, that same is of God, because that it is infused into us of God, through the merit of Christ. Neither is this to be omitted,—that although, in the sacred writings, so much is attributed to good works, that Christ promises, that even *he that shall give a drink of cold water to one of his least ones, shall not lose his reward*; and the apostle testifies that, *That which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory*; nevertheless God forbid that a Christian should either trust or glory in himself and not in the Lord, whose bounty towards all men is so great, that he will have the things which are his own gifts be their merits. And forasmuch as *in many things we all offend*, each

one ought to have before his eyes, as well the severity and judgment as the mercy and goodness of God; neither ought anyone to *judge himself, even though he be not conscious to himself of anything*; because the whole life of man is to be examined and judged not by the judgment of man, but of God, *who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart, and then shall every man have praise from God, who, as it is written, will render to every man according to his works.*

"After this Catholic doctrine on Justification, which whoso receiveth not faithfully and firmly cannot be justified, it hath seemed good to the holy Synod to subjoin these canons, that all may know not only what they ought to hold and follow, but also what to avoid and shun."

Caput XVI.

The canons that follow these decrees very severely condemn the doctrine of justification by faith. In Canon IX we read: "If anyone saith, that by faith alone the impious is justified, in such wise as to mean, that nothing else is required to cooperate in order to the obtaining the grace of Justification, and that it is not in any way necessary, that he be prepared and disposed by the movement of his own will: let him be anathema."

And in Canon XI we read: "If anyone saith, that men are justified, either by the sole imputation of the justice of Christ, or by the sole remission of sins, to the exclusion of the grace and *the charity which is poured forth in their hearts by the Holy Ghost*, and is inherent in them; or even that the grace, whereby we are justified, is only the favor of God: let him be anathema."

And again, in Canon 12: "If anyone saith, that justifying faith is nothing else but confidence in the divine mercy which remits sins for Christ's sake; or, that this confidence alone is that whereby we are justified: let him be anathema."

This, then, is the Roman Catholic doctrine of justification. Christ merits for us the right to infuse a righteousness into our hearts. By the power of that infused righteousness, we can perform good works. And these good works are meritorious, and are worthy of eternal life.

In opposition to this Roman Catholic doctrine the Heidelberg Catechism emphasizes: 1. That our only righteousness is the righteousness of Christ, which is imputed to us of mere grace. 2. That we can appropriate this righteousness only by faith, which is a gift of sovereign grace. 3. And that our good works have absolutely no part in this righteousness, even as all our sins cannot possibly detract from it.

This does not mean, however, that sanctification and walking in all good works have no relation to justi-

fication except in the way of faith, through regeneration and sanctification. We must come back to this in connection with the last question and answer of this present Lord's Day. But it does mean that, objectively considered, justification is first. We are not justified because we are sanctified, but we are sanctified and are the recipients of all the blessings of salvation, because we are justified. Justification must necessarily be first, before we receive any blessings of salvation at all. God is righteous. He loves the righteous only. He cannot have any fellowship with sin, or with sinners. He hates all the workers of iniquity, and they are no objects of His grace whatever. Hence, His favor is only upon the righteous. The grace of righteousness, therefore, must necessarily precede all other blessings of salvation. And who are the righteous? They are those only that are judicially in Christ, eternally in His counsel of election, and in time by faith.

This truth the Catechism emphasizes in question and answer 62.

Good works cannot possibly be meritorious.

Mark you well, they could not have any merit, even if they were perfect. The whole idea of merit must be rooted out. The notion of merit can be applicable only to the relation of man to man, never to the relation of God to man. For when is any work worthy of merit? I can speak of merit only when I have something to offer, whether it be time, talent, strength or power or anything else, which someone else does not have and to which he has in himself not the right. But how could this possibly be applicable to the relation between God and man? God is God, man is a creature. The creature owes everything to God alone: time, talent, power and means, yea, his very being. Hence, he is obligated before anything else to serve and to love Him with all his heart and mind and soul and strength. And when he has done all, he may, as far as God's being obligated to him is concerned, say: I am but an unprofitable servant. Besides, it is a privilege to serve God, a gift of grace to him, never the reverse. The whole idea of serving God for wages is corrupt. God does not want wage-earners in His house, but free sons to serve Him. And the service of the living God has its own reward.

Besides, how could all our good works merit the forgiveness of one sin? We certainly cannot work overtime for God, for we owe Him all to start with. If once we are behind in loving Him with all our heart and mind and soul and strength, we can never make good again. And even one sin is sufficient for our eternal condemnation.

How then can our good works merit eternal life? This is evidently forever impossible!

But we must still consider another question. For we have proceeded from the assumption that our good works are perfect, and that is not true. It is especially

from this point of view, that the Heidelberg Catechism stresses the fact that our good works, either the whole of them or part of them, can never be our righteousness before God.

In this connection the Heidelberg Catechism teaches us two things: first of all, 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, secondly, that our best works in this life are all imperfect and polluted with sin. The first of these statements is self-evident. Righteousness is to be right. And the sole standard or criterion of righteousness is the divine law, which is the expression of the living will of an absolutely holy God. Just as the plumb-line is the criterion by which it is determined whether or not a wall is perpendicular, so the law of God is the sole standard of righteousness. And conform to that law must be all our works and our whole nature, if we are to be declared perfectly righteous before the tribunal of God.

We must remember and emphasize that there is nothing relative about the idea of righteousness. One cannot be satisfied and imagine that God is satisfied with the promise that he will do the best he can. Neither is it possible that one gradually approach righteousness. Righteousness is absolute. One is either righteous or unrighteous. There is nothing in between.

And if we are to be perfectly righteous before God, our nature as well as all our works must be conform to the law of God. That our nature is conform to the law of God means that our very heart functions in harmony with that law, which demands that we love Him. And that our works must be conform to the law does not mean that they can be outwardly in harmony with it merely, but implies that from their hidden motives to their outward manifestation, from their root in the heart to their visible fruit in our everyday walk and life, they are pure, and perfectly motivated by the love of God.

Only such perfect righteousness is acceptable to God. Nothing else and nothing less can be pleasing to Him.

Now, the Catechism teaches that *all* the works of the Christian are defiled with sin. This is a very strong statement indeed.

This does not deny the fact that they who are justified are also sanctified. They are saints in Christ Jesus. In principle, they are new creatures, old things are passed away, and all things are become new.

But it does mean, first of all, that in many things they do not live from the principle of the new man but from that of the old. Oh, it is true, that even in respect to their sins they do not live like natural men. Always they are new creatures, always old things have passed away, even in regard to their own sins. They

hate sin and condemn it. They are sorry after God, they repent in dust and ashes, they cry for forgiveness, and they can never rest until they have the testimony in their heart that their sins are forgiven them in the blood of Jesus Christ and that they are righteous before God in spite of the sins they have committed. Always they are of the party of the living God even over against their own sins. Never can they walk in sin, or live any longer therein. But this does not alter the fact that often they fall into sin, and their sin is damnable before God. As far as their sin is concerned, they are worthy of eternal punishment. And they can have rest and perfect peace only in the righteousness of Christ which is imputed to them and which they appropriate by faith only. But even so, all is not said. For the situation is not thus, that some of our works are indeed sinful, and others are perfect and conformable to the divine law; but all our works without exception are defiled with sin. Even the very best of our works are not perfect before God. Sin cleaves to them, and pollutes them entirely.

Such is the emphatic teaching of the Heidelberg Catechism.

This truth, that all our good works are defiled with sin, the Roman Catholics and all Pelagians and Semi-Pelagians consistently deny. They hate this doctrine and condemn it very severely. They claim that one who is justified can keep the commandments of God perfectly. This is evident from Chapter 11 of the *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*: "But no one, how much soever justified, ought to think himself exempt from the observance of the commandments; no one ought to make use of that rash saying, one prohibited by the fathers under an anathema,—that the observance of the commandments of God is impossible for one that is justified. For God commands not impossibilities, but, by commanding, both admonishes thee to do what thou art able, and to pray for what thou art not able to do, and aids thee that thou mayest be able."

And after some Scriptural passages are quoted, the same chapter continues: "From which it is plain, that those are opposed to the orthodox doctrine of religion, who assert that the just man sins, venially at least, in every good work; or, which is yet more insupportable, that he merits eternal punishment; as also those who state, that the just sin in all their works, if, in those works, they, together with this aim principally that God may be glorified, have in view also the eternal reward, in order to excite their sloth, and to encourage themselves to run in the course."

And in Canon XXV, an anathema is pronounced upon all who teach that all the works of the Christian are polluted with sin. In that Canon we read: "If anyone saith, that, in every good work, the just sins venially at least, or—which is more intolerable still—

mortally and consequently deserves eternal punishment; and that for this cause only he is not damned, that God does not impute those works unto damnation: let him be anathema."

Yet, according to both Scripture and the experience of every true child of God, the Heidelberg Catechism states the truth, when it declares, that in this life all our works are polluted with sin.

As to Scripture, I but have to refer you to that remarkable passage in Romans 7 where the apostle speaks of his own experience as an example of the experience of every Christian.

There we read: "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."

We are well aware of the fact that many commentators and theologians would explain this passage as having reference, not to the regenerated child of God, but to the natural man. This explanation is plainly untenable. For, on the one hand, there is nothing in the whole passage which the child of God cannot take upon his own lips. What true child of God does not admit that, in himself, he is carnal, sold under sin, that in his flesh there dwelleth no good thing, and that the evil, which he hates, he performs? And, on the other hand, no mere natural man can declare of himself, nor is he willing to do so, what the apostle, in this passage, expresses to be a matter of his own experience. The person that is speaking here is keenly conscious of an awful inner conflict between Spirit and flesh. He finds a law in himself, that, when he would do good, evil is ever present with him, vs. 21. He speaks of the inward man, a term that is applied in Scripture, only to the new man in Christ, and according to that inward man, he has a delight in the law of God, vs. 22. But he sees another law in his members, which wars against the law of his mind, and which

brings him into captivity to the laws of sin which is in his members. He is conscious of the sad fact that in his flesh there dwelleth no good thing, though the will to do good is present with him. The result is that he does not accomplish the good which he would, but commits the evil, which he would not. Nevertheless, he hates the evil which he does, and he loves to do that which is good. And in the end, he cries out, as if in despair: "O wretched man that I am!" Yet, he does not despair. He looks for a deliverer, who shall save him from the body of this death. And he is confident that he shall have the victory through Jesus Christ his Lord. And it is this same man, who looks for complete deliverance from the body of this death, who thanks God for the victory which he has in Christ, that concludes: "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God: but with the flesh the law of sin."

Surely, it is quite impossible to apply all this to the natural man. He knows of no such a conflict between the Spirit and the flesh, between the inward and the outward man. No man, by nature, earnestly longs for deliverance from the "body of this death:" no regenerated man ever looks to Jesus Christ as the deliverer from the power of sin; nor does he hope for the final victory in this conflict, and give thanks to God for it.

The whole tenor of this passage is expressive of the experience of the regenerated man in Christ.

Besides no true Christian, who knows himself at all, can assume a critical attitude over against the statement of the Heidelberger that all our good works are defiled with sin.

H. Hoeksema.

OUR DOCTRINE

God's Covenant and The Promise

(Galatians 3)

The epistle of Paul to the Galatians is surely of interest to anyone who is concerned with the question whether the promises of the covenant are conditional or unconditional. In the early part of this epistle the apostle had defended his apostleship. There were false teachers, also in the congregation of the Galatians, who had disputed his apostolic authority. He refutes them and proves himself commissioned of God to preach to the Gentiles. In chapter 2 Paul had stated that, after years of experience and preaching and preparation, he had also preached his gospel before the church at Jerusalem, and there all had given him the handshake of perfect agreement (verses 1-9). And,

according to verses 11-21 of the second chapter, the apostle had even attacked and withstood the apostle Peter to the face, and this, too, for the purpose of defending his apostleship.

In chapter 3 of this epistle the apostle Paul really begins to discuss his subject, namely, that we are saved by faith and not by the law, the result of which is the Christian liberty of the New Dispensation. The epistle to the Galatians emphasizes the truth that salvation is given unto us by faith; it is *given us* of Divinely sovereign mercy, for faith does not emphasize what *we can* do or *must do* but what we *cannot do* and need not do; faith is not that which proceeds from us toward God but it proceeds from God toward us; faith, for this reason, does not nullify the promise—the law does nullify the promise. Let us look at these things a little more closely as held before us in this third chapter of Paul's epistle to the Galatians.

The Foolishness of the Galatians

We read in verses 1-5 the following: "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain. He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"

The fundamental significance of these words is clear. The apostle addresses them as "foolish Galatians"; literally we read that he speaks to them as ignorant Galatians, lacking in understanding. And their foolishness consisted in their attempt (verse 3) to be made perfect by the flesh whereas they had begun in the Spirit. We must bear in mind that Paul is addressing the church of God at Galatia; he is not speaking to individuals, but to the church as she was revealed at that place—we must remember that if to fall away from the truth is impossible for the individual Christian this is possible for any locally organized and instituted church. Before their eyes, we read, Jesus Christ had been evidently set forth, crucified among them. Clearly He had been set forth before them, and that as the crucified Christ. Mind you, He is the end of the law. In Him the law of the Old Dispensation is fulfilled and has come to an end. And they had believed in Him, had tasted the fulness of His salvation.

But now, having begun thus in the Spirit, they sought to be made perfect, to finish the work by the flesh, that is, by the works of the law, their own works or activity. The apostle asks the Galatians: Who hath bewitched you? This question contains, in the first

place, the element of astonishment. Paul is astonished that they, having tasted the blessedness of the Lord Jesus Christ, could return to the law of the Old Dispensation. Someone must have bewitched, hypnotized them that they could be guilty of such an unbelievable foolishness. The question, however, also suggests an evil power who must have gained the ascendancy over them. They had been bewitched. Hence, some fatal spell had been cast over them; an evil mind must have paralyzed them. We know to whom the apostle Paul refers. False teachers, corrupt Judaizers, evil minds had led them away from the truth, the truth of God in Christ Jesus, had subjected them once more to the bondage of the law of the Old Dispensation, had caused them in that sense to "suffer many things" (verse 4). Once more they had groaned underneath the rule upon rule, precept upon precept, line upon line. And the apostle is afraid that their suffering will not be in vain (verse 4). If only it were in vain! If only these evil teachers would fail in their attempt to subjugate the church of God anew! But Paul fears that it will or may be permanent.

Paul's Appeal To Their Experience

This appeal is expressed in the verses 2 and 5. We read in these verses: "This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? . . . He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" This appeal to the spiritual experience of the people of God is always a powerful argument. This also applies as far as our approach is concerned in connection with the doctrinal differences between our churches and the Christian Reformed Churches. Points One and Three of the famous Three Points speak of the love of God to all men which He manifests to them in the preaching of the gospel and also of the good which man can perform before the living God without the regenerating operation of the Holy Spirit. Is it true, we might ask of the Christian Reformed brethren, that we "accepted" Christ Jesus, or did we experience that we were apprehended of Christ Jesus? Did we love God or did the living God love us? Did He save us because we believed on Him or did we believe on Him because He saved us? Did our love of God precede His love or did His love precede our love? And, is it our spiritual experience that we can of ourselves please and serve the living God, or did we experience the truth of Holy Writ that the carnal mind is enmity against God, is not and cannot be subject unto the law of God? Are we by nature sinners who are wholly corrupt or are we corrupt but in part? Paul, too, in this third chapter of his epistle to the Galatians, appeals to the spiritual experience of the Galatians. Did they receive this Spirit, that is, did they receive consciously and thus experience the Spirit

of regeneration, love, hope, etc., by the works of the law? Did they, by fulfilling the law, experience the blessedness of salvation? Of course, their answer must be an emphatic No. Or did they receive this Spirit by the hearing of faith? These false teachers preached a justification to them which was of the law, a justification by the law whereby the Galatians rendered themselves just and righteous before the living God by means of their own works of the law. But the apostle had preached a justification unto them which was not of the law but only of faith, a justification which they had experienced only then when they had acknowledged their own iniquity and unworthiness and hopelessness and had taken refuge to the Christ of Calvary. And when they had heard this preaching of the apostle that we are justified only by faith and in the way of faith, and had embraced this preaching, they had received the Spirit. Such had been the spiritual experience of these Galatians; this they could never deny. And the same appeal is addressed by the apostle to these Galatians in verse 5.

Paul's Reference To Abraham

This reference to Abraham is expressed in the verses 6-9. We quote: "Even as Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."

Firstly, why does the apostle Paul refer the Galatians to the example of Abraham? Galatians 3:6 is a quotation of Gen. 15:6. Does Paul refer to Abraham merely because he considers Gen. 15:6 a striking proof in support of his contention that salvation is not by the works of the law but through faith and, therefore, of Divinely sovereign grace and mercy? Is it because Abraham merely furnishes him with a telling illustration? This can hardly be the reason why the apostle at this point of his epistle to the Galatians calls attention to the "father of believers". Other reasons prompt the apostle in this selection. Is it not true that the false teachers who would subject the Galatians anew unto the bondage of the law appeal exactly to a man as Abraham? Did not the Jews, who would maintain the law of the Old Dispensation, not pride themselves in the fact or contention that they were children of Abraham and that he was their father? Did not the rite of circumcision begin with Abraham and did it therefore not seem undeniable that circumcision and to be of the seed of Abraham were inseparably connected and invaluable? And did not God establish His covenant with Abraham and his seed? Hence, what right does Paul have to preach *his* gospel, namely, that the works of the law are wholly worthless and the rite of

circumcision without value? This, I believe, explains the apostle's motive when he calls attention to the "father of believers". As far as the charge is concerned that Paul proclaims *his* gospel, a gospel of his own invention, this was overwhelmingly refuted by the apostle in chapters 1 and 2. And as far as Abraham is concerned, with whom the covenant of God had its historical beginning as far as the Old Dispensational aspect of that covenant is concerned, the apostle will let that father of believers speak.

And what do the Scriptures teach us with respect to Abraham? In the first place, we read concerning him that he *believed* God and it (his believing) was accounted to him for righteousness (verse 6). This text is often quoted by those who maintain that the act of faith is for us the work that saves us and makes us righteous. We can never satisfy the justice of God for all our sins and trespasses. The Lord, then, is satisfied if we merely believe in Christ, confess that we could never satisfy the Divine demand and acknowledge His love and mercy toward us. This explanation, however, is obviously impossible. It is impossible, first of all, because the apostle declares that Abraham's faith was *reckoned* unto him for righteousness. Anything that is reckoned for, accounted as righteousness is obviously not that righteousness itself. Faith is never regarded by the Lord as merely a substitute for the satisfying of His justice and righteousness. Secondly, all of Scripture establishes the truth that our righteousness before God is possible only in and through Jesus Christ, our Lord—we are just before God, our sins are forgiven and we are heirs of everlasting life, not on the basis of what we do or have done but only of the work and merits of the Lord Jesus Christ.

That Abraham's faith was accounted unto him for righteousness is only because his faith was the working of the spiritual bond which united him with the Lord Jesus Christ. It is true that the reckoning of his faith for righteousness implied that this faith was not the righteousness itself. On the other hand, however, it is equally true that this Divine reckoning must rest upon the basis of Divine justice. Faith never replaces the satisfying of God's justice. That justice of the Lord must be satisfied. Hence, our unity with Christ, the fact that we are in Him and, therefore, one plant with Him, is the reason why God reckoned Abraham's faith unto him for righteousness. Our oneness with Christ is our righteousness. Because we are His body His atonement is our atonement, and, through faith in Him, His righteousness is also actually bestowed upon us. Abraham's faith was indeed the working, the operation of this spiritual bond which united him with God through Christ.

Let us, however, understand: Abraham *believed* and, *believing*, he experienced the blessedness of justifi-

cation. He did not become righteous by the works of the law. He did not present unto the Lord anything he had done. He did not attach any meritorious value to his act of faith. Besides, to believe means exactly that we trust not in ourselves but in the living God. The very act of faith, therefore, rejects the thought that man can of himself present anything unto the Lord. Abraham believed, that is, he trusted by the grace of God not in himself or his own work, but solely in God and in the fulfillment of Jehovah's promises. And the promise of the Lord had been that He would establish His covenant with him and with his seed for an everlasting covenant and would give, therefore, unto him and Sarah a son. The fulfillment of this promise, however, was humanly impossible, for both, Abraham and Sarah, as far as the bringing forth of children was concerned, had died (Hebrews 11:12). But Abraham had believed, had trusted that the faithful Jehovah would call life out of death, had cleaved unto that which was humanly impossible and therefore invisible, had placed his trust solely in the faithful and irresistible God. And in the way of this faith the father of believers had attained unto the unspeakably glorious assurance that he was just and righteous before the Lord. This faith of Abraham and its accompanying justification is, we understand, a direct refutation of the presentation of the false teachers who would subject the Galatians once again to the bondage of the law and teach that our works have meritorious value before the living.

And who are Abraham's children? Notice: "In thee shall *all nations* be blessed". This statement of the apostle is a stunning blow, launched with studied effect full in the face of Jewish privilege. Paul, too, we understand, believed that the promise belongs to the children of Abraham. However, these children of Abraham, to whom the promise belongs and whom the promise concerns and in whom the promise will be realized, are not natural Jews but those who believe even as Abraham believed. Why the believers are heirs of the promise we shall see later—the verses 16, 26, and 29 explain this: believers are heirs because Christ is *the* Heir, and faith is God's gift uniting us with that Christ. But, the point is now that in Abraham shall *all nations* be blessed. God establishes His covenant not merely with the Jews, not merely with the circumcised, not merely with those who cleave to the Old Dispensational rites and circumcision. But all nations shall be blessed, and therefore also the heathen; salvation is not by the law but by faith; and faith must be understood here, not as a substitute for the law, as something which the Lord will accept in its place, but as the very opposite of the works of the law. If righteousness is of the law, we earn it. If it is by faith, we are given it. Hence, we do not merit the promise. God gives us the promise, and, therefore,

the promises of the Lord are wholly unconditional.

The Needless Folly Of Seeking Salvation By Works

We read in the verses 10-14: "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, the just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

On the one hand, the apostle teaches us in these verses that as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse. To be sure, the man who doeth them shall live by them. None has ever failed to experience that the words and commandments of the Lord are words of life and peace and joy. To do the commandments of Jehovah constitutes the very essence of eternal life, for life is fellowship with and service of the living God. However, this implies that we actually do them. We must love the Lord our God with all our heart and mind and soul and strength; and, if in anything we have violated the precepts of Jehovah, we must also in that case do the law of the Lord perfectly: love the Lord our God even underneath the eternal and infinite wrath and indignation of the Most High. But, who is able unto these things? What flesh is there that can obey the law of the Lord and satisfy all the justice of Jehovah? Hence, as many as are under the works of the law are under the curse. To be under the works of the law means that we take our refuge to these works of the law and that the Lord will judge us according to the things we do and have done. The law, we read in verse 12, is not of faith. It is either or: we are under the law or under faith. To be of the law implies that we are not of faith—such an one does not live out of faith but out of the works of the law. And to be under the law means that we are under the curse, for: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." The law of God, it is plain, must curse every one who attempts to justify himself in the way of works, for none can satisfy the demands of the Lord.

On the other hand, however, God hath redeemed us from the curse of the law. He became a curse for us. He *became* a curse. He was not accursed of Himself but he became a curse. He took upon Himself the sins of others, entered into the guilt and condemnation of others, and therefore became a curse. Hence, He became a curse *for us*. Of course! To become a curse, to assume the guilt of others surely implies that He

took upon Himself the guilt and debt of others, of a definite people, the elect. He became a curse *for us*. Hence, He removed the necessity of fulfilling the law by fulfilling the law for us. And this He did, "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." The blessing of Abraham is expressed in verses 6 and 8: our righteousness before the Lord. Were salvation of the law, it would be limited, of course, to those who are under the law, the Jews. Then the Gentiles would necessarily be excluded. But Christ redeemed us from the law by fulfilling the law; hence, the law is no longer necessary; salvation is now possible also for those who are not under the law, the Gentiles. Of course, this blessing comes upon us through Jesus Christ, our Lord. And notice, that Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law in order that we might receive the promise of the Spirit *through faith*. All emphasis must be laid upon the words: *through faith*. Not by the works of the law! But by faith in Christ, as a gift of sovereign grace! And this is possible because Christ redeemed us, having become a curse for us.

Now we also understand the folly of the Galatians. They would maintain both: law and faith. Having begun in the Spirit they would now be made perfect by the flesh. However, the law cannot save because it curses whosoever continueth not in all things that are written in the law to do them. But, the law need not save. We need not take recourse to the law of the Lord to merit our righteousness before God. We need not fulfill that law because Christ fulfilled that law for us. How foolish, therefore, the Galatians were! But also how wicked! Their efforts to establish their own righteousness by their own works of the law were surely a denial of the cross of Christ. Salvation is given us, by faith and out of sovereign mercy and grace. God's promise of everlasting life is given by the Lord unto His people, unconditionally. Galatians 3 surely establishes this unconditional character of the promises of God.

to be continued)

H. Veldman.

IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies Aid Society of the First Prot. Ref. Church wishes to express its sincere sympathy with Mr. M. Swart and family in the loss of wife and mother.

MRS. M. SWART

May our God comfort them with His abiding grace and the assurance that there remaineth a rest for the people of God.

Mrs. J. VanderWal, Pres.
Mrs. C. Lamse, Sec'y.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

David' Residence In Philistia

As we have seen, the Lord through David again confronted Saul with evidence such as could be seen and handled that the son of Jesse seeks not the king's life to take it. As pricked in his conscience and as filled with carnal remorse, the king confessed, "I have sinned." But he was not truly penitent. As was pointed out, he was subdued and afraid and remorseful like the doomed in hell are subdued and afraid and remorseful. That Saul was not truly penitent, that at the core he now was harder than ever, is plain from the sequel of the narrative. He would have continued to seek after David, had the latter not removed to Gath. Such, as was explained, is the implication of the statement, "And it was told Saul that David was fled to Gath: and he sought no more after him."

But what are we to think of David's removal to the land of the Philistines? It is a doing that proceeds from unbelief; first, from the fear of his life that unbelief genders in him. "I will now perish one day at the hand of Saul," says David in his heart. He imagines that sooner or later Saul will succeed in ridding the earth of him here in God's country. David's imagining is vain. As he well knows by this time, he has been appointed of God to the kingship. Hence, as the Lord has been a wall of defence to him in days gone by, so the Lord will preserve him in days to come right here in the borders of Israel. David cannot perish by the hand of Saul.

But David's faith wavers. "There is not to me any good—there is to me no future—except I hastily escape to the land of the Philistines," says he in his heart. But Philistia is the land of the dead. David need not immigrate to such a land to be saved of God from Saul's wrath, as if the Lord were no longer willing or able to preserve him in the land of the living. The Philistines, being uncircumcised—uncircumcised in heart—are enemies of God's people. And they are always actively hostile. They are always making war against God's people or planning war as at this very juncture. To get along with such men David will have to pretend that he disowns his own brethren in the faith and makes war against them. And he will have to feign love of the ungodly. David does the one and also the other as well. Necessarily so, as friendship with the world is enmity against God. Besides all this, some time ago, through a prophet, David received of God the command to take up his residence not in a heathen land, but at home, in God's country, definitely in the land of Judah (22:5). Now he disobeys this command under the constraint of the fear that there

is no escape for him from Saul but in Philistia. David's immigration to the land of the Philistines is a sin. The Lord frowns upon the doing. And, as we shall see, He does not fail to reveal his hot displeasure.

But it is not only fear of his life that sends him to Gath, but an unwillingness to endure the chastening of the Lord as well. What brings this out is the concluding words of his soliloquy. "And Saul will desist from me to seek me and I shall escape out of his hand," says David in his heart. What he means is clear. His life in the land of his people, he tells himself, is insufferable. Wherever he betakes himself in the coasts of Israel, Saul is always hard on his trail seeking his life to take it. He wants to believe that it is more than the Lord is asking him to endure. Thus by his immigration to the land of the Philistines, he will benefit himself in two respects, so he reasons. First, he will free himself of the miseries of an existence that consists in being chased from one corner of the land of Israel to another by a mad king. Second, he will escape out of Saul's hand. Such is David's reasoning. It indicates an attempt on his part to justify his doing before the bar of conscience. But let us not in our criticism of this estimable servant of God underestimate the severity of his trials; and let us not fail to consider that patience in tribulations is a gift of Him—Christ Jesus—without whom God's believing people can do nothing. The scriptures admonish the believers even to glory in tribulations. But who of himself is sufficient to these things.

David arises, so the text now states. His mind is made up, and he is ready for action. He passes over unto Achish, the son of Maoch, king of Gath—he, David, his two wives, Ahinoam and Abigail, and the six hundred men that were with him, every man with his household. David's flight is reported to Saul. "And he sought no more again for him."

David dwells with Achish at Gath, says the text. The notice is important as showing that David was well-received. He is a distinguished leader with a considerable armed band against whom Saul is known to make war. As the sequel reveals, Achish cherishes the hope that he has acquired in David a permanent friend and ally in the Philistines' wars with the people of Israel.

But it doesn't take long before David requests Achish to allow him a freer position in the land. "If I have found grace in thine eyes, "are his words to the king, "let them give me a place in some town in the country, that I may dwell there: for why should thy servant dwell in the royal city with thee?" Thus he gives as the reason of his petition the impropriety of him, the servant, dwelling in the royal city with his lord and master. But what may be the real reason of his request? According to some David understands that Achish cannot be expected for long to bear the

expense of the support of so many strangers in Gath. But even with a change of residence David still will be living more or less on the bounty of the Philistines. According to others, his real motive is "to be out of the way of observation, so as to play the part of Saul's enemy without acting against him." But this is just as unlikely, since after every military expedition against heathen tribes friendly to the Philistines and hostile to the people of Israel, David reports to Achish. It may be supposed that David's real reason for wanting to dwell alone in this enemy territory is that he cannot endure living in the same city with Philistines. Their idols and idol temples are an eyesore to him. Their godless way of life vexes his righteous soul. So he is determined to get him and his band out of Gath. Achish immediately accedes. He gives him Ziklag that day. The text states that he *gave him*. It means that the city is a present from Achish to David. Accordingly, the text goes on to say, "wherefore Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day." The city has a history back of it. It pertaineth first to Judah (Josh. 15:31), then to Simeon (Josh. 19:5), and was afterwards captured by the Philistines. To say that since that time the city remained uninhabited is not an idle conjecture. Certainly Achish would not give away a city inhabited to any appreciable extent by Philistines. That would only get him in trouble with his countrymen.

Once settled in Ziklag, David is faced with the vexing problem of the material support of himself and his large retinue. And as he has withdrawn from God's country and assumed dependence on a heathen king, it is decidedly his problem, one of his own creation, with which he now also undertakes to deal in his own strength. South of Philistia and Judah lie the districts of the Geshurites (to be distinguished from the Aramean kingdom of Geshur, 2 Sam. 15:8; and from the northern Geshurites near Hermon on the border of Bashan, Deut. 111:14) the Gezrites (a tribe not elsewhere mentioned), and the Amalekites. Of the three tribes, the last mentioned, the Amalekites, "were inhabitants of the land, who inhabited it of old," says the text. They are the original occupants. They had opposed Israel in the Exodus. On that account the Lord had sworn that He would "utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven," (Exodus 17:5 sq.). As a tribe they are thus under the ban of God and doomed to extinction. Joshua had discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. Saul had smitten them "up to Shur, which is on the border of Egypt". But each time they had recollected and settled here. Their old seats stretched into Arabia Petrea. Against these cursed tribes, who being nomads had large herds, David and his men make military expeditions from Ziklag. Doubtless he tries to persuade himself that he performs a good work, well-

pleasing to God. He fight Amalekites, doesn't he? But the work is not good. It is very useful, but not good. It has no ethical value. Walking, as he does, in disobedience, David's heart is not right with God. Better than fighting Amalekites is obedience. Those raids from Ziklag are mere incursions for booty, at this time a dire necessity for David and his men. So he smites the land, and leaves neither man nor woman alive but takes away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel, and returns. Such is his custom in each raid of which there are several, as the time that he dwells in the country of the Philistines is a year and four months, says the text. But the Amalekites and the Philistines are friends. What if those raids were reported to Achish, king of Gath. How might not Achish react? David has thought of that. He saves "neither man nor woman alive, to bring tidings to Gath, saying, Lest they should tell on us, saying, So did David. But though dead men tell no tales, the difficulty is but half settled. The Philistines in the vicinity of Ziklag and particularly Achish will want to know how David comes into the possession of all those sheep and oxen and camels and asses and apparel. It is booty with which he returns. This is apparent. Whom is David plundering? What tribes of men? David has thought also of that. He has thought of everything. Returning from his expeditions, he goes to Gath, instead of going immediately to Ziklag, in order to make report to Achish of his movements and to share with him the spoil. The king invariably asks, "against whom have ye went up today?" To which David replies, "Against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerah-meelites, and against the south of the Kenites." Jerahmeel was the firstborn of Hezron (2 Chron. 11:9, 25). His posterity—the Jerahmeelites—are one of the three great families of Judah who dwell on the southernmost border of Judah. The Kenites are under the protection of Judah. In Num. 24:21 it is said of them, "in rocks thou hast put thy rest," meaning that they dwell in the rocks and caves south of Palestine. These tribes and those first mentioned—the Geshurites, Gezrites, and the Amalekites—dwell near one another in the district that borders on the south country of Judah and stretches between the hill country of Judah and the Arabian desert (Josh. 15:21). The close proximity of all the tribes mentioned makes possible David's deception. That he practices deception, that he has recourse to trickery and lies with Achish is clear. His language to Achish is ambiguous, equivocal. "Against the south of Judah can mean: against the southern portion of the tribe of Judah. It can also mean: against tribes that dwell to the south of Judah, the Jeshurites, and the Amalekites. The gullible Achish takes David to mean that he plunders the tribe of Judah, the Kenites, and the Jerahmeelites. And he has a right. For

David makes no mention of the heathen tribes actually attacked, it being his purpose to deceive. The sacred writer holds David responsible. "And Achish believed David," is his statement. Mark you, he believes *David*. What he believes originates not with him but is communicated to his mind by David, to wit, that he makes war against his own brethren. And the jubilant Achish concludes, "He hath made his people utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant forever." Says the narrator, "So did David and so was his manner all the while he dwelt in the country of the Philistines." David is guilty of open lying and denial of his people during all this time. Doubtless, he tries to justify himself by saying that his equivocal language is an allowable strategem of war and that it is a heathen, an enemy of God and His people, whom he tricks. But he soon finds out that, in the words of one writer, "God weighs those who will belong to him in the scales of His sanctuary, in which there is, among others, as weight-stone, the indestructible word: Thou shalt not bear false witness."

It comes to pass that the Philistines gather their armies together for warfare to fight with Israel. It is a general war of all the Philistine princes against Israel that is contemplated in which even David, posing as a Philistine vassal-prince, and feigning love of the Philistines and hatred of his brethren, is requested or rather commanded to take part by Achish, his royal master and benefactor. "And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly, that thou shalt go out with me to battle, thou and thy men." Achish is emphatic. To reproduce the sense of the original text, we must translate, "I want thee to understand by all means that thou, yea, even thou indeed, shalt go out with me to battle, thou and thy men." It is vigorous language, indicating that Achish means to avail himself of the opportunity afforded him by the impending war to put David's loyalty to a test. David's reply seems to say that the test will be endured. Says he to Achish, "Surely, thou shalt know what thy servant can do." Achish takes the ambiguous answer as a promise of the action that he requires. Elated, he names David "the keeper of his head", the captain of his body-guard, forever.

David now finds himself under the painful necessity of going into battle with Philistines against his own brethren. Why did he not avoid being drawn into this predicament by returning to the land of his people while there was still opportunity? What had prevented him from rejoining his people? His fear of Saul or an inability to get him out of Philistia or both? Or did he voluntarily remain because he welcomed going into battle with Philistines not against his own brethren surely but against these Philistines? Or is this hour to him a dreadful one, and is he silently and fervently praying to be delivered out of it? We

can only conjecture. David's residence in Philistia, his conduct toward Achish during the period of this residence, his intercourse with this royal heathen, forms a strange and perplexing story. One thing is certain. If forced into the battle that is pending, David is not going to fight his own people. He was never more in earnest than, with a view to combating Philistines in this war, if need be, he says to Achish, "Surely, thou shalt know what thy servant can do". David's heart is still with his people as much as ever. Of this, as we shall presently see, all the Philistine princes are deeply convinced,—all but Achish.

Meanwhile the Philistines gather together all their armies to Aphek in Issachar. In divisions of hundreds and thousands, at the head of their divisions "the princes of the Philistines" march on to Jezreel. Here in the north they advance with their whole force in order to bring about a decisive battle in the plain with the Israelites. Their advance to Jezreel compels Saul to lead his whole force thither. The Philistines having begun their march, Achish finds himself with David in the rearguard. Catching sight of David and his men, the Philistine princes are amazed. "What, these Hebrews?" say they to Achish, meaning, "What do they here? Achish observes that David is servant of Saul, king of Israel, thus reminding them of his enmity with Saul; that he already has been allied with him a long time against Saul; that in all this time he found no fault in him, saw nothing in him to awaken suspicions of treachery. At hearing Achish argue for the retention of the Hebrews in his division, the wrath of the Philistine lords kindle. They command Achish to order David to return to the place that was appointed him, and not to allow him to go down with them into battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary unto them. For wherewith should he reconcile himself with his master but with the heads of Philistines. They are not forgetful of David's military skill and bravery. They recall the defeat he inflicted upon their Goliath. For they say, "Is not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, Saul slew his thousands and David his ten thousands?"

Achish is compelled to yield to the demand of his comrades. His is now the painful task—painful to him—to communicate the decision to David. Calling David, he tells him the sad news. David must blame the Philistine lords. If Achish had his way, it would not happen. For he believes in David, and his confidence in him is implicit. Using the name of Jehovah even, he affirms under an oath that "thou hast been upright, and thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host is good in my sight, "meaning to say that it would be good to have David with him in the pending battle. "For", says Achish, "I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day: nevertheless, the lords favor thee not. Wherefore

now return and go in peace, that thou displease not the lords of the Philistines." For, Achish means to say, what will the lords do to David, if he disobeys their voice? Doubtless they will slay him and his whole company. And Achish will be out a faithful servant, a good friend, and a brave ally.

Achish's attachment for David is great. He loves this Hebrew. He would not fain lose him. It is not a wonder. David poses as a Philistine prince. He has done Achish only good. After every military expedition against what Achish believed to be Hebrews he divided with Achish the booty. David refrained from spoiling Philistines. In this point of view he merits Achish's trust in him. But Achish is not a good man. He is a heathen, an uncircumcised of heart. And he loves as do the uncircumcised. He loves those who love him and none other. Yet, how the man can appreciate uprightness in people especially if they be his servants and hate with him God's people and are willing to help him in his warfare with them.

David must persist in equivocating. There is no turning back for him now. "But what have I done?" he asks in feigned amazement. And "what has thou found in thy servant so long as I have been before thee unto this day, that I may not go fight against the enemies of my lord?" David involves himself in another open lie, be it that in his own consciousness "my lord the king" is Saul and "the enemies of my lord" the Philistines. For David has all along unto this moment been posing as servant, friend, and ally of Achish, and therefore the latter has the right to take David to mean that he is greatly disappointed at being prohibited from going into battle with Achish to fight against Israelites. There is also the question whether David is actually disappointed at not being able to avail himself of the opportunity to go down into battle with the Philistines to help his own brethren against this adversary, or whether he leans far backward to conceal his great joy at being freed of the necessity of going down into battle with Philistines. Here, too, we can only conjecture. What pleads for the former view is that it must be exceedingly painful for a man of David's disposition to sit still with his brethren in the faith involved in bloody combat with Philistines.

As can be expected, David's reply incites Achish to even greater extravagance in his laudation of what he considers to be David's virtues. Says he now to David, "I know that thou art good in my sight, as an angel of God—as an *angel*. Think on that—notwithstanding the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go with us to battle." He wants David to understand by all means that the fault lies exclusively with these lords. As it can spell only disaster for Achish and his excellent servant, David, to refuse to submit to the will of the lords, his last counsel to David is, "Wherefore now rise up early in the morning with the servants

of thy lord (that is, of Saul) that are with thee: and as soon as ye be up early in the morning, and have light, depart."

"So David and his men rose up early to depart in the morning, to return unto the land of the Philistines." Doubtless David had wanted to help his brethren in that war, thinking that he would be doing a good work whereby to reconcile himself not with Saul, as the Philistines imagined, but with the Lord. But the Lord does not want him in that battle for more than one reason. David must first repent of his sin before he again is "meet for the Master's use". So the Lord sentences him to inactivity until he repents.

G. M. Ophoff.

SION'S ZANGEN

Israel's Liefdevolle Heiland

(Psalm 105; Eerste Deel)

We zijn toegekomen aan de behandeling van een psalm die zeer geliefd is onder hen die den Heere kennen. Opsomming van slechts drie verzien uit de berijming is voldoende om dit te staven. Wie onzer kent niet het zingen van:

Vraagt naar den Heer en Zijne sterkte,
Naar Hem die al uw heil bewerkte; enz.?

Of ook:

God zal Zijn waarheid nimmer krenken,
Maar eeuwig Zijn verbond gedenken; enz.?

Dit laatste vers wordt vaak gezongen na de doopsbediening, en terecht.

Dan is daar het laatste vers, dat mij altijd in de gedachten komt als er sprake is van een genade die algemeen zou zijn, des neen!

Die gunst heeft God Zijn volk bewezen,

Opdat het altoos Hem zou vreezen, enz.

Ik heb boven de behandeling van dezen psalm een titel geplaatst die den geheelen psalm wil karakteriseeren: *Israel's Liefdevolle Heiland*. Ik kwam daartoe, omdat Hij zoo geheel en al zwijgt van de zonde des volks, ook dan wanneer we weten hoe Israel gruwelijk zondigde. Neem tot voorbeeld vers 40. Daar staat: "Zij baden, en Hij deed kwakkelen komen en Hij verzadigde ze met hemelsch brood." Maar uit de geschiedenis weten we hoe het volk murmureerde in dit vragen om vleesch.

In den geheelen psalm wordt de zonde van het volk niet éénmaal genoemd.

In den volgenden psalm is dit anders. Ik denk, dat ik daar hetzelfde thema boven mijn verhandeling zal

schrijven, doch met deze toevoeging: *Schoon zwaar getergd!*

“Looft den Heere, roept Zijnen naam aan, maakt Zijne daden bekend onder de volken.”

Hoe vaak lezen we dit: Looft den Heere!

En toch niet te vaak. Want het loven van den Heere is het einddoel van alle dingen. Het is overduidelijk uit Gods Woord, dat het loven van den Heere centraal is in Zijn eeuwigen raad. Let maar op Ef. 1:9-12, waar ons gezegd wordt, dat het Gods welbehagen was om alle dingen wederom tot één te vergaderen in Christus Jezus, . . . opdat wij zouden zijn tot prijs Zijner heerlijkheid.

Het is goed, dat wij dat beseffen ten allen tijde, want alleen de mensch die daaraan beantwoordt is gelukkig.

Loof den Heere!

Doe dat, en ge zijt gelukkig, al is het ook, dat ge in groote armoede en uiterlijke ellende zijt, zooals Lazarus aan den poort des rijken.

Wat is het loven van God?

Het is, dat ge Zijn deugden verkondigt. En nog enger: dat ge het Hem persoonlijk vertelt hoe schoon, lieflijk, wonderlijk, sterk en wijs Hij is. Dat mag Hij gaarne hooren uit Uwen mond.

Looft den Heere!

Dat te doen is het beantwoorden aan Zijn vooropgezette doel: alles moet, als 't ware, een spiegel zijn, waarin Hij Zijn heerlijk deugdenbeeld weerkaatst ziet.

Nog eenmaal: het loven van den Heere is einddoel van alle dingen, en daarom is het het eenigste werk, wat we doen zullen in den hemel, daarboven bij God.

“Roept Zijnen naam aan, maakt Zijne daden bekend onder de volken!”

Hierboven zeiden we, dat het loven van God bestaat in het opsommen van Zijn deugden. Wel, hetzelfde is waar van het aanroepen van Zijn naam, of van het aanbidden. Hier op aarde is het aanroepen van Zijn naam het vragen om dingen, beide voor het lichaam en voor de ziel. We zijn arm en ellendig op natuurlijk gebied of op geestelijk gebied, en dan gaan we al roepende tot God om hulp en heil. Dat houdt straks op. Straks, als we aangekomen zijn in het volmaakte, dan vragen we nooit meer om iets, want dan liggen we aan aan de rivier van God die vol waters is. Daar vraagt en smeekt men nimmermeer, maar daar doen we niets dan aanroepen van den Naam, aanbidden van Zijn deugden, die in dien naam voor ons staan. Want Uw Naam ziet het Wezen!

En dan worden we opgewekt om Zijn daden bekend te maken onder de volken.

Ik denk, dat *volken* hier slaat op de volken Israels. En dan vooral in de geslachten, zoodat vaders en moeders en leiders van Gods volk geroepen worden om te zorgen, dat de volken te weten komen wat een wondere God wij hebben. De kinderen worden dom geboren,

en alles moet aangeleerd worden.

Nu, in den Nieuw Testamentischen dag, mogen we het ook toepassen op het zendingswerk. De Kerk van Christus moet er voor zorgen, dat de volken de daden Gods te weten komen. Dat moeten we doen officieel door de geïnstitueerde kerk, en organisch in ons geheele leven. Want er is o zoo veel domheid ten overstaan van des Heeren daden. Om nu maar één ding te noemen: men zegt: *het* regent! Nu moeten wij er voor zorgen, dat men te weten komt dat God regent! Dat onpersoonlijke in die werkwoorden is diep goddeloos. *Het* regent; *het* vriest; *het* dooit; *het* sneeuwt; *het* dondert; *het* weerlicht; enz. Het is allemaal goddeloos. *God* doet alle deze dingen.

Welnu, zoo is het met alle dingen. God doet alle dingen, hier op aarde en ook in den hemel. Niets kan zich roeren of bewegen of God moet hem of het bekrachtigen.

En dit moeten wij den volken onderwijzen vooral op geestelijk gebied. “Maakt Zijn daden bekend!” O ja, en vertelt het geduriglijk, dat Hij het is die van de allervroegste eeuwen de menschen Gods getrokken heeft uit den dood tot in het eeuwige leven. God is het die de geheele kerk optrekt vanuit de klauwen des doods en des verderfs tot in de atmosfeer van het eeuwige Jeruzalem. Ik de Heere doe alle deze dingen! Men zal U haten in dezelfde mate, dat ge vertelt hoe de Heere wondere daden doet, maar dat is niet zoo erg. Het is erger als ge zwijgt van Zijn daden. Laat er geen stilzwijgen onder U gevonden worden.

“Zingt Hem, Psalmzingt Hem, spreekt aandachtiglijk van alle Zijne wonderen!”

Zoo, ge moet zingen en vertellen: een mooie combinatie.

Ik denk, dat men zingt om twee reden. Eerst, men zingt omdat het hart boordevol is. Men kan het niet laten om te zingen. Het is uiting van groote blijdschap en verrukking bij het zien en ervaren van de groote daden Gods, en dan vooral op geestelijk gebied. Wanneer men het ziet en ervaart, dat God U vanuit de duisternis der zonde en des doods optrekt en Uwe voeten zet op het pad des eeuwigen levens, dan moet men zingen. Tweedens, men zingt van tevredenheid. Er is een radio-program der goddelooze wereld, dat tot zangthema heeft: “Ik zing, want ik ben tevreden!” En dat is waar. De Wereld heeft het formeel gezien en ervaren, dat tevredenheid doet zingen. Welnu, zoo is het óók op geestelijk gebied. Als men tevreden is, dan gaat men aan 't zingen. En men is tevreden, als alle nooddrift vervuld is. En de grootste nooddrift voor het geestelijk ethische en moreele wezen is God te hebben tot zijn deel in eeuwigheid.

O ja, dan zingt en psalmzingt men, en het onderwerp van Uw zingen is dan God. Daaraan onderkent men des Christen's gezang. De wereld zingt van de wereld, den mensch, de tijdelijke dingen, maar het

kind Gods zingt van God.

En ge behoeft niet te zoeken naar de stof voor het zingen. God heeft Uw lied vooruit bereid. Er zijn 150 psalmen in den bundel. Het was te verwachten, dat men die oude psalmen zou verachten en zich overgeven aan de meestal flauwe gezangen. O neen, ik veroordeel niet alle gezangen. Ik heb sommige gezangen met genot gezongen. Maar zet ze toch niet op één lijn met de psalmen Gods. Neemt nu de beste gezangen die er zijn, en ge zult zien, dat men zelfs in die betere gezangen zwijgt van sommige deugden Gods, zooals de gerechtigheid, de heiligheid, en Zijn eeuwig toornen op de goddeloozen. Vrage: waar vindt ge stof in de gezangen zooals in psalm 68:1? Of in Psalm 5? ik kon zoo voortgaan. Gedenkt ook aan Psalm 73.

“Spreekt ook aandachtiglijk van alle Zijne wonderen.”

Ik heb wel een hooren zeggen, dat alles een wonder is. Daar zit waarheid in. Is misschien wel geheel en al waar. Maar daar gaat het hier niet over. Het gaat hier over wat de Heilige Schrift wonderen noemt. En dat is iets geheel speciaals. Als de Heilige Schrift spreekt van Gods wonderen, dan gaat het over de herschepping aller dingen, en dan vooral zooals die herschepping den mensch omzet van een kind Satans tot een kind Gods. En daar is alles wonderlijk. Het is een wondere liefde die mij van eeuwigheid kende, verordeneerde om het beeld Zijns Zoons gelijkvormig te zijn, riep vanuit de duisternis tot Zijn wonderlijk licht, deed hooren en zien de wonderen Zijner liefde en goedertierenheid in Jezus Christus, rechtvaardigde door het geloof, heilige door Zijn Geest en Woord. En het centrale wonder is Jezus van Nazareth, dat is, de vleeschwoording van God. We zullen nooit uitgesproken raken over die Wonderen Gods. En, let wel, ge moet daarvan spreken met aandacht. Uw geheele wezen moet er in zijn.

Allereerst, hebben we daar kerken voor. Ge gaat naar de kerk om de wonderen Gods te verhalen. Ge doet dat door het ambt van leeraar, ouderling en diaken. En ook door het generale ambt der geloovigen. Ge doet dat door predikatie, luisteren, zingen, offeren, gemeenschap der heiligen.

Tweedens, doet ge dat door Uw leven in deze goddelooze wereld. Ge zijt een brief die door God geschreven is. En als ge dat leven openbaart rondom U, dan leest men van Gods wonderen. En dan kan het gebeuren, dat anderen door Uw voorbeeld getrokken worden.

Derdens, doen we dat in de diepte van ons hart. Daar is dat spreken het zuiverst. Zoo spoedig dat spreken in het diepe hart omgezet wordt door daden, komen er onzuivere elementen bij. Dat is zoo erg, dat men 's avonds zegt: hetgeen ik vandaag gedaan heb ken ik niet.. Ik herken de aanzet en de opzet niet meer. Zóó ben ik vanmorgen niet begonnen te spreken

in mijn hart. Vanuit het “zuivere” hart komt het aandachtig spreken van en over Gods wondere daden. In Jezus Christus.

“Roemt in den naam Zijner heiligheid: het hart dergenen die den Heere zoeken, verblijde zich.”

Roemen is, dat men iets of iemand boven alles uit doet staan. Roemen is als men iets verhoogt tot de hoogste hoogte.

Dat past bij den Naam.

Het gebed dat over den Naam spreekt in de wet op Horeb spreekt dezelfde taal. Daar heet het: “Gij zult den naam des Heeren Uws Gods niet opheffen in het ijdele!”

De Naam van God is heilig, dat wil zeggen, die naam is afgescheiden van het kwade, het gewone, het gemeene; en, positief, die naam is toegewijd aan het alleen-goede, en dat is God. God is toegewijd aan God, en daarom is Zijn Naam heilig.

Dus ge moet den Naam van God zeer hoog houden, zoodat Hij uitstaat boven alles wat schepsel is. En dan moet ge dien naam uitroepen, bezingen, er van jubelen den ganschen dag.

Doet ge dat, dan is op U van toepassing wat er verder in dit vers gezegd wordt. “Het hart dergenen die den Heere zoeken, verblijde zich.”

Als ge de heerlijkheid en de heiligheid van den Naam gezien hebt, zoodat ge dien Naam heiligtet, dan kan het niet anders, dan zijt ge aan 't zingen gegaan in het diepe hart.

Doch om dit te doen, om den Naam te heiligen, moet ge dien Naam kennen, zien, ervaren. En dat is tegennatuurlijk. Dat gaat “zoo maar” niet. Dan moet ge aan 't zoeken. Er ligt een floers over dien Naam. En die floers is subjectief. Ik bedoel daar dit mee. Indien wij Engelen Gods waren, dan behoefden we niet te zoeken naar God en naar Zijn Naam. Dan zagen wij het “zoo maar”. En Adam behoefde God óók niet te zoeken. Hij zag Hem en Zijn Naam (en dat is eigenlijk hetzelfde) zoo maar, elken dag, van oogenblik tot oogenblik.

En daarom moet ge aan 't zoeken.

En dat doet niemand van nature. De Heere moet U zoekend maken. En als Hij dat doet, dan zult ge zekerlijk zoeken. En dan zult ge Hem ook zekerlijk vinden. Dat zegt Jezus, en Zijn Naam is de Waarheid.

En als ge God zoekt, dan zal Uw hart zich verblijden. Let er op, dat er staat dat men zich verblijden zal “in zijn hart”. O, het is de Heer om Uw hart te doen. Want als ge Uw hart op Hem gezet hebt, dan komt de rest als vanzelf. Eerst nog niet, doch er komt een tijd dat vervuld wordt den zang van David: “Dan zal zich 't hart met mijne daden paren.” Als het hart God zoekt, dan is dat hart rein, en dan kan het niet anders, dan woont daar blijdschap en verheuging. Toon mij een mensch die God zoekt, en ik zal U een vroolijk mensch doen zien. Degene die gerechtigheid

doet in zijn hart, die is vroolijk in God. Jesaja sprak van dat soort menschen: "Gij ontmoet den vroolijke en die gerechtigheid doet, die Uwer gedenken op Uwe wegen!" Benijdenswaardige menschen! Zij zijn vroolijk en hun hart verheugt zich in God.

Zingt, psalmzingt dan van Gods heiligen Naam. Ziet de heerlijkheden van den Naam Jehovah, want daar gaat het over. Ziet het, dat die God tiert van goedheid over Zijn volk, dat Hij bemint van eeuwigheid, en die dat volk naar Huis brengt. Zoekt Hem, en gij zult zekerlijk vinden!

G. Vos.

IN HIS FEAR

In View Of The Housing Shortage

As children of God we are not OF the world, but we are certainly very much IN the world, and the trends and events of this world have effect upon us. We are confronted with the situations of this present world. This is especially true in respect to our to-be-married or our just-married young people.

The housing shortage effects everyone of us, but especially our young people who are planning to enter or have recently entered upon married life.

In rural communities it is perhaps the farm shortage, in the cities it is the housing shortage.

Various Situations

Time was when one could rent a farm or rent a home. Due possibly to our increasing population and due probably to no small extent to common greed, the for rent signs have almost disappeared from the scene. To get a place therefore which they can call home it becomes almost imperative to buy. These things affect our young people. Various alternatives present themselves. Let me name a few of them.

"Postpone marriage". How often you hear of marriagably aged people, who would much desire to enter the married state and are ripe for it, but are compelled to wait it out until they find an opening here or there. These conditions exist. They are the facts of life today. If marriage were a cold business enterprize one could say: we have ample time, we will wait until the opportunity comes. But marriage is not like that. It is not something which will be indefinitely postponed. Yet if it has to be postponed and be long postponed, it sets up a situation which forms a trial for the young people.

Or they can marry and begin their united life submerged in mortgage. To buy a farm or a home costs

a veritable fortune, yet, frequently, there is no other way out. There will always be those who have the cash or the collateral to finance a dwelling, but there are more who will have to assume a heavy debt if they will find a roof over their heads. Time was when a newly married couple could set up housekeeping with very little capital. And time was when one could find for rent signs in almost every block in the city. But things have change immensely. Generally speaking, we may say that marriage costs a fortune today, even if such a fortune can procure them a house.

Or they marry and become wards. Instead of having a place of their own, they live in with the parents or others and really become wards. Here in our big city it is nothing strange to read how three families are living in quarters originally built for one normal family. They are compelled to put up with cramped conditions, no room for additions to the family and no room for the normal expansion which married life naturally seeks.

Or they marry and, of necessity, strike out for some almost uninhabited regions of our country. The wide, unsettled, open spaces beckon them, and when the opportunity presents itself the news comes that John and Mary have gone to live in Faraway.

There then you have the various situations and I hope to show how each of these has a definite bearing on living in the fear of God, especially as it affects our young, just-married people.

Postponing Marriage

Friendship between young people normally leads to courtship, and courtship advances into engagment, and engagement flowers out into wedlock. There should be a period of courtship and a period of engagement to the end that the parties may learn to know one another and ascertain whether marriage between them is proper. The period of engagement, being what it is, should not be long. They have pledged fidelity. Now they wait. They mature. They plan for wedlock. But, with the difficulty of finding a dwelling place, the wait becomes long. Marriage has to be postponed from one season to the next, and the period of engagement, instead of being a hopeful anticipation becomes an almost futile waiting for an opening. They are ready for marriage, and they know oneanother but there is no place to set up a home.

These situations are modern realities.

They are a discipline for the young people, a discipline in patience. It is the hand of the Lord that brings these things upon them, therefore they must exercise patience, not only in respect toward the common objective but also in respect toward one another. They must not become impatient toward oneanother and as a result fret at and nag each other. Be patient. Keep looking for an opening and meanwhile accept the discipline with christian submissiveness. But while

marriage is being postponed the engagement calls for marriage. Marriage is not a cold business affair, it is the merging of two lives, as Scripture speaks of it. While therefore marriage of necessity waits, the danger besets them of assuming marital privileges. The familiarity continues while marriage has to wait. And here again they must discipline themselves and conduct themselves chastely. The Lord, through circumstances, commands their marriage to wait, and therefore they must keep their familiarity within the bounds of chastity. This is the calling we have of the Lord. Receive it as a discipline, approach it as a challenge. A mutual love for God's commands as well as a mutual faith will be the means to keep you while you are being thus disciplined.

Marriage Under Debt

Time was when one could set up housekeeping inexpensively. Today however we have a different picture. The possibility of renting a place becomes increasingly difficult. One almost has to buy if one will acquire a home. And that involves a vast outlay of money. For many young people this means begin their married life under a heavy mortgage, and this debt will have to be met. At least there will have to be regular monthly payments. They find themselves virtual prisoners. Marriage becomes an extreme attempt to meet the payments. As a result they will probably decide to both work, and pool their incomes. Married life is liable to become little more than a chase after material things. With such payments to meet there will be little left for church, school, charity, etc. But to facilitate these matters they may also decide that they cannot afford to have children. Having children would hamper their progress. If she is a wage earner, her wages would cease if a child came, but at the same time the family expenses would mount. Thus they come into temptation in respect to the ordinances of God. If you see the houses which the contractors are building these days it is evident that men are not thinking in terms of families. And frequently, if there happens to be a house for rent, the owner looks askance at a family of children. He would rather you came with a kennel than with a baby buggy or cradle. These things present actual temptations and our young people much arm themselves with faith and righteousness, lest they become conformed to the world in their married state.

Married Wards

Here in Chicago it is nothing strange to hear about several families living in quarters fit for only one family. Some of the newly-weds, who enter marriage despite the fact that they can find no home, live in with the in-laws. This is a help out, but it is far from ideal. It is contrary to nature. It may be successful, but it may prove disastrous. We resent the stories

coming to us from the world about the in-law misery, but even among christians, where all of us are imperfect, in-law trouble can arise. And that makes for utter misery. It may even threaten to drive a wedge between the newly-weds or otherwise between the in-laws. Besides, they are faced with cramped conditions, no room for additions to the family, no room for the normal expansion of married life. Not ideal conditions for having children, for the birth of a baby may be interpreted as an imposition upon the generosity of the in-laws. In some circumstances it is almost an unwritten contract that the young people may share the home, but there must be no additions to the family. And again the newly-weds are confronted with the danger of violating the ordinances of God. Let's remember that there can never be excuses for violating the ordinances of God as laid down in the married state. Times and styles and public opinions may change, but God is unchangeable and His ordinances are unchangeable. The psalmist prayed: let integrity and uprightness preserve me. May we desire that also.

Moving Faraway

And there are those who seek a solution to the situation by marrying and then moving far away from everything. This may seem like a solution, but for our covenant youth it is really a dissolution of covenant living. The danger is that they do what Lot of old time did. To move far away from the preaching of the truth, the sacraments, christian discipline and christian instruction is a reckless move. I know that our young people cannot all stay close in, they have to seek place elsewhere, and I know that there are few places in this land where the reformed truth is maintained. We have relatively few churches in this country. But let us beware lest we violate the covenant of our God and thus bring upon ourselves and our children desolation.

May God grant our young people wisdom, integrity and patience and may you seek it where it may be found.

M. Gritters.

CLASSIS WEST

of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet, D. V., on Wednesday, Sept. 1, 1948 at 9:00 at Pella, Iowa. Delegates desiring lodging should contact Rev. L. Vermeer, 609 Peace St., Pella, Iowa.

J. Blankespoor, Stated Clerk.

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

FROM HOLY WRIT

The Service Of God

Scripture often refers to our relation to God as a relation of servants, our calling to serve Him, and our obligation to devote ourselves with our whole lives in His service.

The Old Testament employs only one word almost exclusively to express the idea of service. The root meaning of the word is simply to labor, to work, to serve. It may refer to the duty of a slave who is owned by his master and thus obligated to serve him. It may designate the worship of idols. And it is even used in reference to consecrated service of God. Moses was such a servant of the Lord. God calls Job His servant, as a man who was perfect and upright, fearing God and eschewing evil. And they were also called servants of God who held an office among the people, either as prophet to speak the praises of God, as priest to consecrate himself in the ministry of God's house, or as king to rule over Israel. Even Israel itself is referred to as God's servant whom He has chosen. Isaiah 44:1, 2.

In the New Testament at least three different words are used. The first (*douleuoo*) compares in meaning with the word used in the Old Testament. It means to be a slave, to do service, and thus includes the idea of obedience and subjection to some master, who has full authority over his slave. In that sense Paul likes to refer to himself as a servant, or slave of Jesus Christ. Cf. Rom. 1:1; Phil. 1:1. The second word (*latreuoo*) includes the idea of worship and homage. It is just as common as the first, but is generally employed with special reference to the service of God in fear and reverence. The third word (*diakoneoo*) is the source of our word 'deacon' and means to wait upon, to minister to someone. Although it carries the general meaning of ministering to anyone's needs, it is also used to designate the office of those who are called to dispense the mercies of Christ.

Instead of quoting from the many possible passages of Scripture that speak of the service of God, we shall select a few outstanding passages that can be of a particular help to us in understanding the Scriptural idea of this expression.

The first passage is found in Deut. 10:12, 13. "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and His statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?"

In this chapter of Deuteronomy Moses is reviewing

in the ears of the people the mercies of the Lord in restoring the two tables of the law, which had been shattered in pieces. It was only by the mercy of the Lord that they were not consumed at the foot of Sinai. Only because of the unchanging faithfulness of Jehovah toward His covenant people would they inherit the land of Canaan. Therefore they are admonished to serve the Lord and keep His commandments. The text shows us:

1. That the service of the Lord is mandatory. I consider it significant that this mandate is directed to the Lord's covenant people. The Lord *requires* of them that they serve Him as the Lord their God, Who has delivered them from sin and death unto His glorious salvation.

2. This service must be rooted in love, manifesting itself in fear. We must "love Him", and "serve Him with all thy heart and with all thy soul".

3. This includes a holy walk in sanctification, involving our whole life upon earth. "To walk in His ways", and "to keep His commandments".

4. And finally, those who serve the Lord are blessed. God requires it "for thy good". The service of the Lord itself is blessed, so that those who serve Him derive true joy and blessedness from it. Moreover, the Lord blesses His people with all the riches of salvation in the way of obedience to His will.

A second passage that merits our attention is found in Matt. 4:10: "Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord your God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

This passage is the final answer of Jesus to the three-fold temptation of the devil. Satan has been forced to state his case bluntly and frankly, offering Jesus all the kingdoms of the world on the condition that He will bow down in worship before him. The refusal is final, on the basis that we owe our worship solely to God.

1. It is interesting to note that two different words for service are used here. "Thou shalt worship (*latreuoo*) the Lord your God, and Him only shalt thou serve (*douleuoo*)."

2. This service is entirely exclusive. For God is God, and He gives His honor to no other. He asserts and maintains His glory eternally as the only True and Living One. The Lord thy God is a jealous God. Ex. 20:5. On the other hand, it is impossible for the creature to divide his service between God and some other object. We either worship God or we worship the powers of darkness, but never both. We serve God or we serve an idol. As we read in Matt. 6:24, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

Especially worthy of note in this connection is also Heb. 9:14, "How much more shall the blood of Christ,

Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God."

1. This passage suggests that our service by nature consists of "dead works". They are dead because they have their origin in our old sinful nature, which is dead in trespasses and sins. They are also dead, empty and vain in themselves. And they even work death.

2. The text further implies that these dead works condemn us, even before our own consciousness. God does not leave Himself without witness in the hearts of the wicked. Nor does He ever leave His people at ease in the way of sin. Our conscience condemns us before God.

3. But the blood of Jesus Christ surely purges us. "How much more shall the blood of Christ. . . purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." That means, first of all, that we are justified by the death of Christ, so that God declares us righteous before our own consciousness. It means, secondly, that we are sanctified in Christ to walk in newness of life.

4. The result is that we bring forth living works which God works in us "to serve the living God." This service involves our whole lives, even as by nature we constantly serve sin, thus we also serve God with our whole lives and all our being through the operation of the Spirit within us.

And finally, we should consider for a moment the passage in Hebrews 12:28, "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear".

1. The expression "let us have grace" should be translated as "let us be grateful," or, "let us exercise gratitude," which is the correct translation of the original Greek. The idea of the text is, that the hope of the unshakeable kingdom which is eternal in the heavens should arouse us to true gratitude before God.

2. This gratitude manifests itself in worshipping Him. It is therefore a willing service. It is joy to do His will. We serve the Lord with gladness; we come into His presence with singing. Psalm 100:2.

3. It includes reverence and godly fear. God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and plenteous in compassion. But our God is also a consuming fire. From the fire of His wrath He has delivered us in His mercy, unto a kingdom that stands immovable in the heavens. These present things must pass away, but that kingdom will never pass away. Should we then not be thankful, filled with gratitude, reverence and fear before Him?

4. This worship is always acceptable to God. How could it be otherwise? It is the work of His grace within us. It is the manifestation of true gratitude before Him.

From the foregoing we can make the following significant conclusions:

1. That the service of God is never a matter of personal choice, but an obligation which God lays upon us. God demands it simply because He is God, Who has formed all things to His glory and can give His honor to no other. "Let all the creatures praise Him," is the mandate that man as a rational, moral creature may not fail to carry out consciously and willingly in his whole life. Therefore if we have done that which was our duty to do, let us not seek a "thank you", or expect to collect wages, but let us wholeheartedly confess that we are unprofitable servants. We have done only that which was our duty. Luke 17:10.

2. God requires a willing service. A mere formal lip or eye worship is an abomination to Him. *Obedience* is the first requisite. But then an obedience rooted in love, manifesting itself in humility and godly fear.

3. This service of God is possible only by grace. By nature we are rebellious enemies of God, servants of sin. Rom. 7:25. But God turns us from the dead works of sin unto His service. He calls us to the holy office of believers, as prophets to tell His praises, as priests to consecrate ourselves to Him in love, as kings to use all things to His glory. To serve Him according to our calling does not mean that we perform a few special works of mercy or evangelizing, but it consists in a consecrated life, a daily crucifying of the old man of sin and a putting on of the new man unto the glory of God in every sphere of life, wherever God places us and in whatever He gives us to do.

4. Therefore it is a unique privilege to be a servant of God. It means that God has called and ordained us from eternity. Isaiah 44:1, 2. (Jacob is God's servant, and Israel He has chosen). Therefore we are also God's fellow workers. I Cor. 3:8 A.V. Not in the sense, as it is so often mistakingly interpreted, that we are co-workers together with God, working hand in hand with Him, under a common yoke with Christ. That is forever impossible. But each believer receives his own personal place and calling in the office of believers, so that we are co-workers together, co-workers called of God unto the work He has given us to do. By grace we take Christ's yoke upon us, only to discover that His yoke is easy, and His burden is light. Matt. 11:29, 30.

Even in heaven this will still be our privilege. A privilege, not to sit idle, but to be busy every moment in the service of God. Rev. 7:15, "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." This will be our highest blessedness. Rev. 22:3, "And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him." Hallelujah.

C. Hanko.

PERISCOPE

Mission Activity

During the months of April and May the Rev. J. De Jong and the undersigned spent approximately four weeks in the Province of Ontario, Canada. The purpose was to make a rather thorough investigation to determine the possibility of working amongst the Holland immigrants there. Both Classis East and West, as well as several individuals, had contacted the Mission Committee suggesting such an investigation and urging that we as Churches labor in Canada, if at all possible. At this time we would like to present some of our findings and conclusions since these have motivated the Mission Committee, in conjunction with the calling Church, to begin work in Canada amongst the immigrants.

There are several thousand Holland immigrants already established in Canada and during the course of this year about 10,000 more are expected to arrive. Most of these are settled in the Province of Ontario, although the other Provinces also absorb some; notably, Manitoba and British Columbia. Our investigation covered only the Province of Ontario and of that only a portion. It is evident, therefore, that we contacted comparatively few of the immigrants, although we believe, a representative group. Generally these immigrants are scattered, except for concentrations around such cities as Sarnia, Chatham, Kitchener, St. Catharines and a few lesser groups. There is still much moving about amongst them and a generally unsettled condition prevails. Many of the immigrants also realize that if they are to maintain their Reformed character they will have to concentrate in greater numbers in various centers; this they also hope and expect to do.

The great majority of the immigrants are of Reformed persuasion coming from the Hervormde and Gereformeerde (both Synodaal and Vrijgemaakt) Churches. We found sound convictions amongst those who call themselves Orthodox Hervormde as well as among the Synodalen and Vrijgemaakten. Generally we were best received and able to speak most freely with the Liberated brethren; many of whom had heard of us and were interested in knowing more of our history and position. These families are also scattered with not more than 3 or 4 in any one center. Some of these Liberated brethren have not joined themselves to any established Church in Canada and are very desirous that we should labor there. (Note: We refer here especially to the Christian Reformed Church and the United Church of Canada. The former, having been established in Canada, is laboring diligently to give the immigrants a Church home within their

denomination. The existing congregations have greatly increased in number and many mission posts have been established and new fields opened as more men are called to labor. The United Church is also becoming actively interested in this immigration. It is very strong and large in the Province of Ontario; numbering over a million souls there. The United Church of Canada is a heterogeneous union of various Protestant groups which was formulated in 1925. Their labor amongst the Holland immigrants is somewhat handicapped by the language problem since it is a completely English speaking Church. Apparently the United Church has contact with the Hervormde Church in the Netherlands for a letter which had been sent to many of the immigrants stated that confessionally the Hervormde people would find a home in the United Church and that a certain Ds. Smits from the Hervormde Church in the Netherlands would be working in the interest of the United Church in Canada for a period of about 6 months. It was stated that he would call on the immigrants and also hold several services in the Holland language.)

Among those with a sound Reformed background, some from both the Synodalen and Vrijgemaakten realize and admit that they do not receive in the preaching what they did in the Netherlands and are not completely satisfied with present Church life from that point of view. It is a question, however, whether they would break away from the established groups since they have been well received and treated by the established groups and hence feel somewhat obligated, while also enjoying the contacts of the larger groups through the Sunday services and society meetings. Added to this is the fact of the relationship and contact of the established Churches in Canada with the Netherlands. Hence, many membership papers are received directly from the Netherlands to an established group in Canada. There is also a close relationship and contact between the Immigration Societies, both in the Netherlands and this country, and the Churches. These are all factors to consider but seem not to be overwhelming. There seems to be no reason why we could not operate in much the same way; though on a smaller scale.

Amongst some of the Liberated brethren there seems to be the tendency to desire a separation, also in Canada, along the lines of the dispute in the Netherlands. This is a danger which would be enlarged if we should enter the field and, since we would appeal to all those who love the Reformed truth, would have to be guarded against. This same danger is seen and realized by the Christian Reformed Church and warned against at every opportunity. In all our contacts we emphasized that we are neither Synodaal nor Vrijgemaakt but Protestant Reformed and would expect so to labor and establish ourselves.

That there is a field in Canada and that this field is increasing should be evident. But that there are also many problems is evident. These problems are mostly of a physical nature and could, perhaps, to a great extent, be overcome, if we were once established in Canada. The greatest of these is the fact of the scattering of the immigrants and the unsettled situation amongst them. It appears that a great deal could be done, to aid those interested, in moving towards centers, by men in Canada. It is also evident that this effort would have to be limited, at first at least, to two or three centers not too far apart. It would be physically impossible for us as Churches to work in any more widely scattered areas. Much of this ground work would have to be done and it should not be expected, therefore, that Churches could be organized in the very near future but that our beginnings would be small. Perhaps, at times only "houses" could be served. But we also feel that we have a calling to witness to our truth though it be but in a small way.

Since our visit to Canada and due also to the notices which appeared in *De Reformatie*, many letters have been received requesting information and advice. Through much correspondence which has been carried on several interested families in Canada, and in the Netherlands from those expecting to enter Canada, have asked us to serve them. Though this represents but a small fraction among the immigrants it is felt we should heed this call. It should be borne in mind that since we as Churches are not first of all interested in numbers but rather in gathering those of true Reformed persuasion, we need not expect great things in Canada or anywhere else. We also feel rather strongly that a work in Canada should have the wholehearted support of our leaders and people and the Churches in their various activities. Thus with God's blessing and by His grace we may be enabled to witness to the Truth He has entrusted to our care; and the issues are in His direction.

* * * *

This material was treated by the Mission Committee in conjunction with the calling consistory and finally by our Synod. As was reported previously the Synod decided that we should labor in Lynden, Washington and also make provision to continue the work begun in Canada.

The Mission Committee and calling consistory met several times to discuss and deliberate upon ways and means of carrying out this advice of Synod. After much discussion the following was adopted: 1. That the Rev. E. Knott should take up residence in the Lynden area and labor there while the Rev. W. Hofman should reside in Canada and begin the work there. 2. That the Holland speaking ministers of Grand Rapids and vicinity and their consistories be asked

to cooperate by alternately assisting with the work in Canada through laboring in the field there. This decision is an attempt to meet the language problem in this field. The decision was limited to ministers in this vicinity in an endeavour to decrease expenses and also because it is expected to be but a temporary measure. It is hoped, that if the Canadian field should prove successful, ways and means may be found to call a Holland speaking man for this field. 3. It was left to the discretion of the missionaries whether or not they should begin the work in Lynden together. If so, the Rev. Hofman is to accompany the Rev. Knott there for a period of approximately six weeks before beginning the work in Canada. Due to the relative inexperience of Rev. Knott and Rev. Hofman's knowledge of Lynden it was felt that this might be the wiser course. Since Rev. Knott felt this rather strongly the general sentiment of the Mission Committee and calling consistory was that the undersigned should accompany Rev. Knott to Lynden to begin the work there.

* * * *

The Knott family plans to leave for Washington during the first week in August. Undersigned will follow by train a week or two later and after getting the work started there will return for his family and seek to take up residence in Canada to work there. Many problems and difficulties have been faced, and, in a measure, met by these arrangements. We realize that many problems still lie unsolved. Both missionaries will, undoubtedly, labor under severe difficulties and handicaps. We earnestly request the prayers and cooperation of all our people in our labors.

W. Hofman.

IN MEMORIAM

It pleased the Lord in His great wisdom to suddenly remove from us on June 30th, our beloved mother and grandmother,

MRS. BERT STEIGENGA

at the age of 60 years.

We are comforted that our loss is her gain. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Steigenga
Mr. and Mrs. Joe Steigenga
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Pastoor
Mr. and Mrs. Edw. Van Wesep
Mr. and Mrs. Fred Ophoff
11 grandchildren

REPORT OF CLASSIS EAST

IN SESSION JULY 14, 1948

Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches met in the First Church on Wednesday, July 14, 1948.

The opening exercises were conducted by the Rev. J. A. Heys in the usual manner.

The credentials were then read and received showing that all the churches were represented.

According to rotation Rev. M. Schipper is called upon to preside. He speaks a few words of welcome, and gives opportunity to the delegates who are present for the first time, to sign the Formula of Subscription.

The minutes of the last Classical meeting are read and accepted.

Advisory vote was given to Revs. E. Knott, D. Jonker and G. M. Ophoff.

The following Classical appointments were given to Randolph, Wisconsin.

July 18, Rev. G. Vos
July 25, Rev. M. Gritters
August 1, Rev. B. Kok
August 8, Rev. J. De Jong
August 15, Rev. S. Cammenga
August 22, Rev. H. Veldman
August 29, Rev. G. Vanden Berg
Sept. 5, Rev. J. A. Heys
Sept. 12, Rev. C. Hanko
Sept. 19, Rev. R. Veldman
Sept. 26, Rev. H. De Wolf
October 3, Rev. M. Schipper
October 10, Rev. G. Vos

The report of the Church Visitors was given by Rev. B. Kok. The report brought out that on the whole the Churches are flourishing. There is growth; church edifices are being built or enlarged, as for example, Fouth Church in Grand Rapids, Hope, Kalamazoo and Grand Haven.

Randolph asks for advice in regard to their financial situation due to the illness of their pastor. Classis advises Randolph to ask for financial aid from the other congregations of Classis East if she feels she cannot meet her expenses.

The instruction from Kalamazoo failed to carry: n.l., to instruct the stated clerk to gather the names and addresses of the secretaries and treasurers of our various churches at the first meeting of Classis in the year and to publish them in his report.

It was brought out that these names are not available at that meeting of Classis.

A consistory asks for advice in regard to proceeding with the second step of censure. After the consistory gives the necessary information in this case, Classis advises them to proceed with the second step of censure.

Classis appointed Rev. G. Vos and Rev. R. Veldman to visit Rev. G. Lubbers to extend our sympathy to him and to assure him of our prayers in his behalf.

The questions of Art. 41 of the Church Order were read and answered satisfactorily by the delegates.

Mr. J. H. Kortering was appointed to thank the ladies for their catering services.

Classis decided to meet again in the First Church on October 6.

The minutes were read and approved. A motion to adjourn carries; and Rev. G. Vos closes with thanks unto God.

D. JONKER, Stated Clerk.