

THE STANDARD

Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XXV

October 1, 1948 — Grand Rapids, Michigan

NUMBER 1

MEDITATION

Het Gebed Eens Boetvaardigen

“En de tollenaar van verre staande, wilde ook zelfs de oogden niet opheffen naar den hemel, maar sloeg op zijn borst, zeggende: O God, wees mij zondaar genadig!”
Lucas 18:13.

Als deze gelijkenis vandaag geschreven wierd, zouden we misschien lezen: Twee menschen gingen naar de kerk om den Heere aan te roepen in den gebede, de eene was een Dominee en de andere een bandiet.

Ja, zoo stonden de verhoudingen. De eene was een Farizeër en de andere was een tollenaar. En de gelijkenis zegt ons, dat zij opgingen naar den Tempel om te bidden.

Waarom sprak de Heere Jezus deze gelijkenis?

Ge weet het antwoord: “En Hij zeide ook tot sommigen die bij zichzelf betrouwden dat zij rechtvaardig waren, en de anderen niets achtten, deze gelijkenis”.

Dat gaat altijd samen: denkt men bij zichzelf dat men rechtvaardig is, dan ziet men in laatdunkendheid neer op de anderen, op allen die ons omringen.

Misschien had Jezus deze ondeugden ook gezien bij den kleinen kring van Zijne discipelen. We weten het niet.

In elk geval, deze gelijkenis is van toepassing in alle tijden, en onder allerlei soort menschen. Zij accentueert een wet in het Koninkrijk Gods: Die zichzelf verhoogd zal vernederd worden, doch die zichzelf vernederd zal verhoogd worden.

Twee menschen gingen op om te bidden

Laat ons naar hen luisteren en hen gadeslaan. Misschien kunnen we er wat uit leeren.

De eene was een Farizeër.

* * * *

Dat waren bijzondere menschen. Hun naam be-
teekent: de afgescheidene!

Die soort menschen namen het heel nauw. Zij maakten nauwkeurige studie van Gods Woord. En niet alleen poogden zij om, ten minste in het uitwendige, naar dat Woord te leven, maar zij trachtten zelfs om nauwer te leven dan het Woord hen voorschreef. Zij waren een gedurige censure voor het domme volk, dat zij verachtten. Zij wisten zich een voorbeeld voor de geheele natie.

Met statige schreden wendt hij zich naar den Tempel Gods. Ik denk, dat een ieder die hem zag gaan bij zichzelf dacht: die man hoort daar! Wat deftigheid, wat vroomheid, wat schoonheid!

En de andere was een tollenaar.

Men kon zich onder menschen haast geen schriller tegenstelling vormen. De tollenaar was de meest verachte onder het volk. Zij hadden zich verkocht aan de gehate Romeinen om de tol en de cijns te innen. Vandaag zou men hen schelden voor Quisling. Zoo spoedig men tollenaar werd, zoo spoedig werd men de synagoge uitgeworpen. Men mocht geen eed doen voor het gerecht. Men werd gerekend met de hoeren en zondaren.

En hij sluipt langs de huizen heen. Waar moet dat heen? Ook naar den Tempel Gods? Foei! Die kerel hoort daar niet!

Wel, de Heere noodigt ons om dit tweetal te volgen. Zij zijn beiden aangekomen in den Tempel.

Afgaande op het 13de vers, stond de Farizeër voor-
aan in den Tempel, want dat vers zegt, dat de tollenaar van verre stond. En, ik denk, dat niemand zich stootte aan den Farizeër daar vooraan in den Tempel. De man paste daar. Zoo was zijn naam, zijn positie in Israel, zijn reputatie, zijn uitwendige leven.

Maar die tollenaar!

Hoe durft hij het bestaan om in den Tempel te verschijnen. Is hij niet bang, dat het heilige gebouw neer zal storten om hem in zijn dристheid te straffen?

Laat ons echter niet te hard zijn. De stumper heeft het zelf beseft, dat hij niet past bij de heiligheden Gods.

Hij staat van verre.

Hij durft ook zelfs de oogden niet op te heffen naar den hemel.

Hij slaat op zijn borst.

Die drie houdingen vertolken wat in zijn hart woont. Hij staat van verre. De arme man beseft, dat hij een zondaar is, en dat hij zich in het heilige Huis van den Heiligen God bevindt. Daarom staat hij van verre.

Hij durft ook zelfs zijn oogen niet op te heffen naar den hemel. Hij weet, dat van den hemel niets te wachten is voor hem, den zondaar, dan een eeuwigen toorn. Opzien naar den hemel? De hemel kon zijn bliksemen eens zenden, bliksemen die Gods haten tegen de zonde vertolken.

En hij slaat op zijn borst. Symboliek van de straf die hij zich alvast maar zelf toedient. Hij zegt door dat slaan: Heere, zoo moest ik geslagen worden door U! Ik ben het dubbel waardig geslagen te worden.

Laat ons nu maar wat stille zijn, want zij maken zich gereed om te doen waarvoor zij kwamen: te bidden!

* * * *

O God! ik dank U dat ik niet ben gelijk de andere menschen, roovers, onrechtvaardigen, overspelers, of ook gelijk deze tollenaar; ik vast tweemaal ter week, ik geef tienden van alles wat ik bezit.

Wel, dat is een kort gebed. Dat heeft niet lang geduurd.

En toch, wat zit er veel in dit korte gebed. Een zeer geleerd man heeft eens gezegd tot iemand die tot hem kwam: Spreek, opdat ik U kenne! En, waarlijk, ons spreken maakt ons openbaar.

Dat zien we vooral hier. Hij staat ons ten voeten uit geteekend door dit korte gebed.

Eerst, hij stinkt van hoogmoed.

Ge kunt dit alreeds zien in de Hollandsche vertaling van zijn gebed. Maar het oorspronkelijke is nog duidelijker. Er staat niet: *andere* menschen, maar de *rest* van de menschen. Hij heeft het geheele menschdom in twee klassen verdeeld. In de eene klas staat hij geheel alleen, en in de andere klas staat de rest van het toen levende menschdom. Hij blinkt boven allen uit. Hij staat ver boven hen.

Hij zal ook bewijs aanvoeren voor zijn waardschatting van zichzelf. Ik vast tweemaal ter week. Welnu, dat behoefde niet. Eenmaal per jaar, bij den grooten verzoendag, was genoeg. Ik geef tienden van alles wat ik bezit. Dat behoefde ook niet. Men behoefde slechts tienden te geven van den winst, van het inkomen.

Tweedens, hij veracht iedereen.

Hij slingert allerlei beschuldigen naar zijn medemenschen.

Roovers, onrechtvaardigen, overspelers!

Als hij nu nog zichzelf er bij ingeschakeld had, dan zouden we naar hem willen luisteren. Doch als men eerst zichzelf een vrijbrief van zonde geeft, en dan begint te schelden op de rest der menschheid, dan wordt het toch wat te bar!

Maar hij is nog niet klaar. Hij heeft, zoo onder 't bidden, den tollenaar zien staan, daar achter hem. En hij grijpt hem beet, houdt hem voor 't Aangezicht van God, en uit zijn verachting tegenover hem in het bijzonder: of zooals deze tollenaar!

Derdens, hij bidt eigenlijk niet tot God.

Niemand kan zoo als deze Farizeër bidden voor het Aangezicht. Ik denk, dat de Heere Jezus ons dit ook wil leeren in de gelijkenis, want er staat: De Farizeër, staande, bad dit *bij zichzelf*. Hij is zijn eigen god. Hij herinnert zichzelf aan al de schoonheid van zijn leven. Hij laat al zijn deugden voor zijn oog voorbijgaan, opdat hij zich verlustigen mag in eigen lieflijkheid en heerlijkheid.

Wat een walgelijk mensch!

Echt duivelsch. Gij zult als God zijn!

De hoogmoed ten top gevoerd. En dat nog wel in den Tempel Gods, waar alles God moet eeren en loven.

Vreeselijk bidden van den Farizeër!

* * * *

Zooeven hebben we eigenlijk wel wat haastig geoordeeld toen we het hadden over het passen van sommige menschen in den Tempel. We dachten, dat die Farizeër er wel mocht komen, doch dat die ellendige tollenaar zich eigenlijk moest schamen om in Gods Huis te komen.

Voorals we lezen, dat zij naar den Tempel gingen *om te bidden!* Bidden is een zaak van den inwendigen mensch, van het hart, niet van het aangezicht.

O God! Wees mij zondaar genadig!

Indien we straks geoordeeld hebben, dat het gebed van den Farizeër uitmuntte door korthed, wat moeten we dan wel zeggen van dit gebed? Er zijn maar zes woorden in.

Vooraleer we iets zeggen van dit gebed moeten we U op één punt opmerkzaam maken: in het oorspronkelijke staat er dit: O God, wees mij *den* zondaar genadig!

Dat is een belangrijk punt. Het is een van de hoofdpunten die Jezus ons wil leeren, indien niet de hoofdgedachte zelf van de geheele gelijkenis.

Let er toch op, dat juist daardoor duidelijk wordt, hoe de tollenaar óók het menschdom in tweeën deelt. In het eene deel staan alle andere menschen, en in het tweede deel der menschheid staat hij geheel alleen! Immers, hij noemt zich *de zondaar!* Juist alsof er anders geen zondaren op aarde zijn.

En daaruit blijkt zijn groote nederigheid.

Die nederigheid en zelfveroordeeling sprak ons al toe door zijn van verre staan, zijn weigering om naar boven te zien, en zijn slaan op de borst. Dat wordt hier verdiept door zijn woorden. Hij is *de* zondaar.

De Farizeër was aan 't tellen gegaan van al zijn goede werken.

De tollenaar is het tellen van zijn zonden moe ge-

worden. Hij kan ze niet tellen één voor één. David zou zeggen: zij zijn meerder dan de haren mijns hoofds.

En daarom is hij zóó klaar: Heere, ik ben de zondaar! Hij ziet niet één goed werk: alles is kwaad, goddeloos, overtreding van Gods wet, groote zonde!

Ziet, geliefde lezer, dat is de eerste les die we van God leeren.

Wat een schoon gebed!

En hij kent God.

Wees mij genadig. Het woord beteekent: wees mij een verzoenend God! De idee van de verzoening door het offer der voldoening zit er in. Hij kent God.

Die arme tollenaar vraagt om ontzettend veel.

Hij vraagt God of Hij hem al zijn zonden en schulden kwijt wil schelden, zoo geheel en al, alsof zij nooit bedreven waren. En hij vraagt Hem voorts om hem dan op te nemen in armen van genade en erbarmen, en om hem te doen smaken Zijn eeuwige liefde. (Och arme! Ik heb veel meer woorden noodig dan die tollenaar!)

Als het slechts duidelijk mag zijn, dat dit gebed een zeer rijk gebed is.

Rijk, want de liefde Gods zit er in. Hij verwerpt zich en Hij verdoemt zich, omdat hij God lief heeft. Daar is geen andere reden voor zelfveroordeeling.

En zij wordt door God onderwezen.

We hebben geluisterd naar een lieflijk, want boetvaardig gebed.

Gelukkige tollenaar!

* * * *

Hoe is hier alles afgeloopen?

Wel, de Heere Jezus heeft het ons verteld.

Hij begint bij den tollenaar.

Deze ging af gerechtvaardigd in zijn huis!

Dat is een klein stukje dogmatiek. Een heel klein stukje. Maar, o hoe schoon!

Wat wil het eigenlijk zeggen om gerechtvaardigd te zijn voor God?

Men is gerechtvaardigd, wanneer al zijn zonde en schulden vergeven zijn, wanneer de Rechter des hemels en der aarde zegt: Ik vind geen schuld in dezen mensch!

Tweedens, dat men aangenomen wordt tot een kind van God. Dat de Heere U Zijn zoon of Zijn dochter noemt.

Derdens, dat men recht ontvangt om door de poorten in te gaan in de stad. Dat men recht krijgt van God op het eeuwige leven, daarboven bij God.

Vierdens, dat men vrede ontvangt met God. Dat is een toestand en een staat waar we niet veel van kunnen zeggen. Denkt men aan God, dan wordt het stil, aangenaam stil en harmonieus. Luistert men scherp, dan hoort men een lied der liefde, der liefde Gods, en dan begint men met God mee te zingen. Vrede is als het harteleven van God en van U één leven wordt, zoodat

ge samen één lied zingt. Ik zal Zijn lied zelfs in den nacht zingen daar ik Hem verwacht. Ook zingt men het lied van het Lam.

Dat is het om gerechtvaardigd te zijn voor God.

En dat was het deel van den tollenaar. Wat hadden we ons toch vergist in den stumper.

Jezus heeft het Zelf gezegd: deze ging af gerechtvaardigd in zijn huis!

Neen, God stond daar niet op den weg of straat in Jeruzalem, om het dien man even hoorbaar te zeggen. O neen. Zoo werkt God niet.

God zeide het tot hem in Zijn Woord en door Zijn Geest. Zóó werkt God. De Heere rechtvaardigde dezen tollenaar door het levende geloof, dat in hem woonde. En ik mag het zeker wel even hier bij zeggen, dat dit geloof aan al die tollenaars een gave Gods is. God doet alles tot verblijding, verzoening, lossing, redding, enz. van al Zijn volk.

Die man had geloof op God.

Vandaag zou men zeggen: zoo iemand heeft geloof op God door Jezus Christus onzen Heere. Want Jezus Christus en Zijn verzoenend sterven en opstaan is de grond voor onze rechtvaardigmaking.

Ik denk dat hij zeer blijde thuis gekomen is. Als hij een vrouw gehad heeft, dan zal hij ervan getuigd hebben, hoe de Heere hem ontmoet had in Zijn Huis, en dat daar alle zorgen en lasten hem ontvallen waren, en hoe hij verheugd huiswaarts ging.

Hoe onuitsprekelijk gelukkig is een boetvaardig mensch!

* * * *

. . . . meer dan die!

Was dan die Farizeër ook een beetje gerechtvaardigd?

Zoo schijnt het bij het lezen van den Hollandschen tekst. Zoo staat het echter niet in het oorspronkelijke. En ge kunt mij ook controleeren. Leest het maar in den Engelschen tekst. Daar staat: rather than the other.

Neen, die andere man was niet gerechtvaardigd.

Hij kwam in den Tempel een vijand Gods, en hij ging er uit, een groter vijand Gods. Gods Woord is of een reuke des levens ten leven, of een reuke des doods ten doode. Toen deze Farizeër uit den Tempel kwam was hij een groter zondaar dan toen hij er in ging.

Wat een waarschuwingen liggen in de weinige woorden van deze gelijkenis voor ons allen.

Wij vertrouwen ook vaak bij onszelfen dat wij rechtvaardig zijn, terwijl wij de anderen niets achten.

O God, wees mij den zondaar genadig! Dat zij ons aller bede!

G. Vos.

The Standard Bearer

Semi-Monthly, except Monthly in July and August

Published By

The Reformed Free Publishing Association

1463 Ardmore St., S. E.

EDITOR: — Rev. H. Hoeksema.

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

Communications relative to contents should be addressed to REV. GERRIT VOS, Hudsonville, Michigan.

Communications relative to subscription should be addressed to MR. GERRIT PIPE, 1463 Ardmore St., S. E., Grand Rapids, Mich. Announcements and Obituaries must be mailed to the above address and will be published at a fee of \$1.00 for each notice.

(Subscription Price \$2.50 per year)

Entered as Second Class Mail at Grand Rapids, Michigan.

CONTENTS

MEDITATION—

- Het Gebed Eens Boetvaardigen 1
Rev. G. Vos

EDITORIALS—

- Clear Language 4
Rev. H. Hoeksema
Correction 6
Rev. G. Vos

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE—

- An Exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism 6
Rev. H. Hoeksema

OUR DOCTRINE—

- God's Covenant and The Promise 10
Rev. H. Veldman

THE DAY OF SHADOWS—

- The Transaction At Endor 13
Rev. G. M. Ophoff

SION'S ZANGEN—

- Israel's Liefdevolle Heiland 17
Rev. G. Vos

IN HIS FEAR—

- A Unified Living 19
Rev. M. Gritters

FROM HOLY WRIT—

- The Mouth of the Lord 21
Rev. C. Hanko

PERISCOPE—

- Universal Military Training 23
Rev. J. Houwerzyl

EDITORIALS

Clear Language

From one of the ministers in the Old Country I received a letter, which was not meant for publication, but which, because of its importance, I will publish in part, at least, nevertheless. There is nothing personal in the letter; its contents concern all our churches and are very important, and its language is very clear.

Here follows a partial translation of the letter, which originally, of course, was written in Dutch.

"Esteemed colleague:

"Through various circumstances, as is well known to you, we gradually came more into contact with the Protestant Reformed Churches of America.

"Formerly we also knew, indeed, of their existence, but we were not so well informed about them as we are now.

"The reason for this was, among others, that they were hardly mentioned in our church papers nor in the papers we received from America.

"We only knew that Rev. H. Hoeksema denied common grace, and that was about all; and if you talked occasionally with one who could know more about it, then it was alleged that Rev. Hoeksema was something like 'intractable', in spite of the great 'long-suffering of Synod'. Thus I heard even recently from someone who attended the procedure.

"Through Prof. Schilder closer attention was called to your churches. Already after his first visit to America, he wrote about them.

"As far as I am concerned, I always was interested in the American churches; and I still am. Family relations have even increased this: my wife spent 8 years in America (1916-1924), and three brothers of hers are still living there. From them I regularly receive *De Wachter*.

"Through the fact that Prof. Schilder visited you last year, and that your churches were willing to receive him, the latter have come into closer contact with us and share more in our interest.

"For that reason I, too, have tried to learn more about them. Thus, when I learned that a brochure entitled, "De Geloovigen en Hun Zaad", could be procured, I secured it.

"Moreover, my personal interest in your churches has also been strengthened in connection with the fact that members of our congregation are living in Canada, and voices are heard here in favor of their seeking contact with your churches.

"For this reason I went to investigate the matter,—also in connection with the fact that voices are heard here in favor of mutual correspondence of our churches.

"And by this investigation objections have arisen with me.

"These objections concern especially your view of the covenant, as you develop it in your brochure. I am going to oppose that view, my colleague, because I am of the opinion that this view is untenable on the basis of the Word of God and the accepted Confession (Catechism, qu. and ans. 6, and the Canons of Dordt, III, IV, 8). You call us Remonstrants because we accept the doctrine of Prof. Heyns. (There may be a different conception here and there; in the main, all our ministers are thinking in that direction.) You want to see only one line in Scripture, and there are ten times as many texts that draw another line, repudiated by you. (I underscore, H.H.)."

"Your doctrinal conception in regard to the covenant is essentially the same as that of the 'Synod' in this country, even though you construe it somewhat differently.

"I therefore believe that we must fully express ourselves about this matter before we can fully recognize each other as sister churches. In that direction our church directed, therefore, a letter to our synod.

"Now you must not misunderstand this letter.

"This is not written out of antipathy; much rather the opposite is true.

"I stand sympathetically overagainst your churches, but we must first of all discuss this matter and reach an agreement.

"Also in regard to the advice which, for instance, I must give to our members in Canada.

"For the rest, I can only sympathize with your churches as far as their aim and endeavor is concerned. I mean that from a church-political viewpoint we are entirely in agreement with each other, as well as in regard to various endeavors and aims in our time. I know, in as far as I read something about it, that your churches do indeed want to live according to the Word of God in all things, more than the Christian Reformed Church that is becoming superficial, 'broad', as it is called in our day, but without depth.

"Also the grounds on which you are suspended and deposed are not valid. Insubordination! That word points in the sphere of the church directly to hierarchy. But I ask myself the question (you must not take this evil of me; I want to discuss and call the things honestly) whether there was no reason to depose you on other grounds than that on which you were indicted. You are radically supra-lapsarian, and I deem that untenable.

"But I believe that (I mean especially as churches) we can discuss this with one another."

Thus far the quotation from the letter.

I first of all want to express my hearty thanks to the brother for the very clear and outspoken expres-

sion of his views and his attitude toward our churches.

The brother does not have to fear that I will feel offended at his frankness, even though he suggests that I might have been deposed on the grounds of my supra-lapsarianism. I am, on the contrary, very glad for his outspokenness: it clears the air. I am an enemy of all camouflage and compromise when it concerns the truth of the Word of God. And I am by no means 'intractable', as that "long-suffering Synod" suggests in order to have an excuse for their iniquity.

And I will answer just as frankly.

First of all, I want to deny that I ever directly called the people and the leaders of the Liberated Churches Remonstrants, although I would not hesitate to maintain that the view of Heyns is Remonstrantism and Pelagianism applied to the covenant and that his theory of the two wills in God looks very much like the view of Saumur.

In the second place, I want to remind you that you have never satisfactorily answered your accusers, when they indict you of Remonstrantism, as Liberated Churches. I would very much like to see a clear answer in this respect. If the promise is for all the children that are under the covenant and are baptized, and they have all a God-given right to all the blessings of salvation, how come they do not all receive them?

You are acquainted with Heyns's answer to this question. He makes, first of all, separation between the Three Persons of the Trinity as they are represented in the Baptism Form. God the Father makes an eternal covenant of grace with us and adopts us for his children and heirs, will provide us with every good thing, and avert all evil. God the Son seals unto us that he doth wash us in His blood from all our sins, incorporating us into the fellowship of His death and resurrection, so that we are free from all our sins and accounted righteous before God. But the Spirit, in baptism seals only that he *will* do so. He *will* dwell in us. He *will* sanctify us to be members of Christ and apply unto us that which we have in Christ, namely, the washing away of our sins and the daily renewing of our lives, till we shall finally be presented without spot or wrinkle among the assembly of the elect in life eternal. But that "will" of the Holy Spirit is, according to Heyns, very evidently contingent upon and dependent on the will of man. Only if man accepts the obligations of the covenant does the Holy Spirit fulfill the promise. That is the reason why Heyns invents the theory that all the children of the covenant receive sufficient grace to accept or to reject the promise and the covenant. Now, that, to me, is Pelagianism, pure and simple, applied to the covenant.

But if that is not your answer to the question, and the answer of the Liberated Churches, how do you meet the indictment of Remonstrantism? And, if you believe with me that the promise includes the application

by the Holy Spirit, so that God promises unconditionally regeneration and faith, how can the promise be for all?

That question you, brother, and the Liberated Churches, must answer very clearly and concisely.

In the third place, let me assure you very emphatically that the matter of advising your members in Canada whether or not they ought to join our churches is not up to you only, but also up to us. We do not want Heynsians in our churches, still less, to organize Heynsian churches in Canada. If your members are really Heynsians, they must either become thoroughly Reformed, or they better join the Christian Reformed Churches. In them there is plenty of room. Or, better still, they could organize churches of their own, and call their own ministers from the Old Country. But Heynsianism we simply detest!

This, too, must be clearly understood.

In the fourth place, as far as our becoming sister churches is concerned, let me say: 1) That our Synod requested your Synod not to decide immediately upon our becoming sister churches, but to appoint a committee to talk the matter over with our committee of correspondence, and then advise their respective synods. 2) It seems to me that if we are all agreed that we really want to stand on the basis of the Word of God as interpreted by our Three Forms of Unity, that we could certainly find some basis of correspondence, regardless of some minor differences.

Finally, I will see to it that you receive the Standard Bearer regularly, as you request. I gladly receive the "Gereformeerd Kerkblad voor Gelderland en Overijssel" in exchange.

In the meantime, I am, with brotherly regards,
H. Hoeksema.

Correction

Regarding my recent editorial: ONE TWENTIETH, RATHER THAN FOUR-FIFTHS, the following:

One of the Board members of the Illiana High School wrote me that their advertisement meant to include the Protestant Reformed Church. But my informant agreed that, to quote him: "I grant that the mere wording of the advertisement would seem to indicate your criticism."

That is indeed true. Read the advertisement again, if you wish, and you will see that it definitely excludes the Protestant Reformed Church. It says: *member of Reformed or Christian Reformed church*. If the term *Reformed* was meant to include all the different Reformed denominations, the conjunction *or* is not in place, for that conjunction as used in the above phrase leaves but room for one conclusion, namely, the one I

drew. Moreover, if the first member of the phrase was meant to include *all* Reformed denominations, then it also included the Christian Reformed Churches, and there was no point in separating them from other Reformed churches, as was done in the advertisement.

It was not my intention to provoke or to aggravate existing grievances. I love the Church of God, and have proved it.

Therefore, I withdraw the editorial, and express my sorrow that I wrote it.

However, I would maintain that the advertisement is grammatically and logically in error. And through these errors I received what is sometimes called "a bum steer".

G. Vos.

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART TWO

LORD'S DAY 24

3.

The Impossibility of a Careless Christian.

In the last question and answer of Lord's Day 24 the Heidelberg Catechism intercepts a practical objection that may be, and often is, raised against the truth of justification by faith without works.

The objection runs somewhat as follows.

You insist that you are righteous before God without any works on your part at all, that your works have no merit in any sense, that your good works can never add to your righteousness in Christ, and that your sins cannot possibly in any wise detract from it. But this is a positively immoral doctrine; for if this is true, it matters not what man does: he is free to sin as much as he likes, for he is righteous before God anyway. Whether he walks in sin, or performs works of righteousness, he is certain of eternal life. No matter how much iniquity he commits, he is certainly headed for everlasting glory. He is in a position to enjoy freely all the pleasures of the world. He can afford to be perfectly careless. In fact, it would seem to be better for the Christian not even to make the attempt to walk in all good works, for the old man is corrupt anyway and will perish in death. To walk in sin has at any rate the advantage to show forth the greater

glory of the grace of God. Let us, therefore, sin that grace may abound. The doctrine of free justification makes men careless and profane.

Thus the opponent of this truth argues to show the utter absurdity of it and the immoral consequences of salvation by free grace without the works of the law.

Now, let us in the first place carefully note the nature of this argument.

The one that raises this objection does not base it on Scripture, but draws a conclusion from his own sinful human reason. He wants to maintain by all means the false doctrine of justification by works. He insists that the whole or part of our works can be our righteousness before God and that our good works are surely meritorious. Hence, he must have nothing of the truth of free justification. He really hates it with all his heart. He does not hesitate to call him accursed that teaches it. Yet, he cannot deny that the Bible plainly teaches the truth that the sinner is justified by faith in Jesus Christ only, without the works of the law. And being well aware that he can do nothing with Scripture to gainsay this truth, he resorts to human reason and argues from his own sinful human mind. He concludes that the truth of justification by faith only, without the works of the law, is absurd, for it leads to the conclusion that sin is a virtue and that to sin is to glorify the grace of God. It is an immoral doctrine that makes men careless and profane.

It is well for us to note the unbiblical character of this argument. Similar arguments are often used by carnal men against other parts of the truth of Scripture.

Take, for example, the truth of divine predestination, the truth that God from all eternity ordained His people in Christ Jesus unto eternal life and salvation, while in sovereign righteousness He destined others to eternal desolation. This truth is clearly taught in Scripture, and men cannot possibly deny it. Yet carnal men contradict and oppose this truth. They usually do so by appealing to Scripture first of all. They adduce certain texts that apparently teach that God loves all men, that Christ shed His life-blood for everyone without distinction, and that now salvation or damnation is up to the choice of the free will of man. But when you have explained to them that the passages of Scripture to which they appeal do not have the meaning they ascribe to them, that they do not teach the universal love of God, general atonement, and the free will of man in regard to salvation, and when you have proved very clearly that the matter of salvation is not up to the will of man but determined by God's sovereign grace alone,—in short, when every Biblical argument is exhausted by them and they still do not admit the truth of sovereign predestination,—they usually have recourse to arguments derived from the carnal mind of man. They reveal that they after

all do not want the truth, that they hate it and rave against it. They claim that by the doctrine of sovereign election and reprobation you make God a cruel tyrant instead of a loving God and Father. They accuse you of making God the author of sin and of denying man's responsibility. And thus they show that they do not want the truth of Scripture that God is sovereign and that the matter of salvation is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.

In a similar way those argue against the doctrine of justification by faith without the works of the law that raise the objection that it makes men careless and profane.

What shall we say about this?

It certainly cannot be denied that if the argument of our opponents against justification by faith were correct and their conclusion true, if it were the tendency of this truth to render men secure in their sin, to make them careless and profane, the truth of free justification could no longer be a cause of glorying. In that case it would indeed be a dangerous doctrine. But they that thus oppose the truth only speak in their ignorance.

They have not experienced, neither do they understand the marvelous mystery of justification by faith.

For rather than causing men to rest secure in their sin so that they become careless and profane in their walk and conversation, the power of justification has the effect that it causes men deeply to abhor sin, to repent in dust and ashes, and to walk as children of light in the midst of this world.

A careless and profane Christian is an impossibility.

This is also the answer of the Heidelberg Catechism. In answer to the question, "But doth not this doctrine make men careless and profane?" it instructs us, "By no means, for it is impossible that those, who are implanted into Christ by a true faith, should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness."

To speak of a careless and profane Christian is to be guilty of a contradiction in terms. He that is truly and freely justified before God cannot possibly walk in sin, cannot have a delight in iniquity; and, on the other hand, he that delights in sin or walks carelessly has never tasted the grace of justification.

This is the language of the Christian's experience. Even though he may not be able to explain why he that is justified cannot abide in sin, he knows that he is justified, and he knows, too, that he is not careless and profane but has a delight in the precepts of his God. To verify this, just ask, not the enemies of the cross of Christ, but those that have experienced the power of the blood of Jesus unto their free justification and that know what it means to be justified by faith. Ask them if they have any confidence in their own works as a ground of their righteousness before God, and

they will assure you that all their boasting is in the cross of Christ and in the atoning power of His blood. To them all other ground is sinking sand. They utterly repudiate it. They know that their best works are defiled with sin and that they cannot be the whole or part of their righteousness before God. But ask them again whether this exclusive confidence in the cross as the ground of their righteousness has the effect upon them that now they become careless and profane, induces them to draw the conclusion that it is profitable to continue in sin that grace may abound; and they will reply with holy indignation and abhorrence, "God forbid!" They will assure you that the power of the cross as they experienced it bore the very opposite fruit, that the grace of their justification caused them to abhor sin, to eschew it, to flee from it, to fight it with all their might. Enemies of all sin they have become, and for nothing they long more fervently than to be delivered from the defilement of sin finally and completely. Whether or not they are able to explain the mystery of justification by faith through grace, the voice of their spiritual experience tells them that it certainly cannot make men careless and profane.

But the Christian who is instructed in the mystery of justification is able, too, to explain the reason why it is impossible that he should ever abide and walk in sin.

That reason is principally Christ!

He is justified subjectively only by a true and living faith, and that means that he is implanted into Christ. Apart from Christ he has nothing; in Christ he has all. To Christ he belongs with body and soul, for time and eternity. He is one with his Lord both judicially and organically.

That means, first of all, that in Christ he has the right to be delivered from the dominion of sin. In fact, this right to be delivered is included in his justification: for in Christ the right of sin to have dominion over us and to reign in our flesh has been destroyed. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Rom. 8:3. We are, therefore, judicially and principally *dead* to sin. As the same apostle teaches in Romans 6:2, ff.: "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is

raised is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered unto you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." The grace of justification does not mean an indulgence for life to sin, but liberty: the right to perfect freedom from the slavery of sin, the right to serve God in Christ.

But there is more.

By a true and living faith the Christian is not only forensically but also organically in Christ. He lives out of Christ. This organic union with His Lord is inseparable from the faith whereby he is justified. And that means that in Christ he does not only have the right to be delivered from sin but also that he is in principle liberated from the dominion of sin through the Spirit of Christ that dwelleth in him. Thus the apostle teaches us in Rom. 8:2: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

The justified Christian is dead to sin.

The apostle teaches in Rom. 6:1, 2: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

We should observe carefully here that the Bible does not say that sin is dead in the believer but, on the contrary, that he is dead to sin. The difference is evident: it would be indeed a grievous error to change this expression or to understand it as meaning the same as the statement that as long as the believer is in this world sin is dead in him. For this error would certainly create confusion in the mind and heart of the sincere Christian. Fact is, that when we are ingrafted into Christ and the power of the cross is realized in us and we are justified by faith, sin is not dead

but remains very much alive. In this life we never have more than a small beginning of the new obedience. Even the very holiest of the saints, he that is farthest advanced on the way of grace and sanctification, still has only a principle of the new life in Christ. Our old nature, earthly and carnal, remains with us till the grave. Not until we breathe our last are we delivered from sin. And in that old nature are the motions of sin, and they are very active. In fact, it seems that, according as we grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, the motions of sin in our members also increase their activity, always attempting to bring us again into bondage. We must, therefore, till the day of our death heed the exhortation of the Word of God to put off the old man and to put on the new.

No, the apostle does not teach us in this passage that sin is dead in the Christian but, on the contrary, that he is dead to sin.

The difference is plain.

The natural man, the sinner apart from Christ, is alive unto sin. Sin is his lord. The power of sin is enthroned in his heart. It is his rightful lord. It has the right to exercise dominion over him, and he is its legal slave. God's sentence is that the sinner shall die. To this death belongs the spiritual darkness of mind, the perversion of will, the pollution of the desires and inclinations that make the sinner a slave of sin. From this slavery he does not even have the right to be delivered unless atonement be made for his sin. Sin therefore has dominion over him. This dominion of sin, however, is not contrary to the will and desire of the sinner so that he ever longs to be delivered from its bondage. On the contrary, he agrees with it. He is well-pleased with the reign of sin. He delights in the service of his evil lord. He is a willing servant; he loves the darkness rather than the light; he yields his members to the service of unrighteousness; he is in bondage. Yet because the service of sin is sweet unto his corrupt taste, he does not feel the oppression of his slavery. He takes sin to his bosom. Quite willingly he follows her. To the service of sin he willingly devotes his body and his soul, his mind and will, all his desires and inclinations. For sin he lives; with sin he agrees; the paths of sin are his delight. He is alive unto sin.

To be dead unto sin is the direct opposite of this.

It is the state in which we are no longer under the legal dominion of sin. Sin is no longer our Lord. It has no longer the right to reign over us. Just as a slave for whom the price is paid or that has been declared free by law, he is no longer legally bound to serve his former master, so that he is dead to sin, is liberated from the legal dominion of sin by God's own verdict of liberation. Sin shall not have dominion over him because he is not under the law but under grace. Moreover, this sentence of liberation is also realized

in him. He is actually, spiritually liberated from the bondage of sin. His fetters are broken. Grace instead of sin, the law of the Spirit of life rather than the law of sin and death is enthroned in his heart and has dominion over him. His mind is enlightened, his will is turned about, his heart is renewed, and from that renewed heart all the issues of his life move in the direction opposite to that of sin. The result is that he beholds and judges sin in a new light, the light of the love of God. Formerly he agreed with the dominion of sin; now he radically disagrees with it. Formerly he always said, "Yes", when sin said "Yes", and "No", when sin said "No"; now he opposes sin's "No" with his own "Yes", and sin's "Yes" with his own "No". When he was alive unto sin, he loved the works of darkness; now he is dead unto sin, he hates them with all his heart. While in his bondage to sin he yielded his members to the service of unrighteousness, he now strenuously opposes that service. He is dead unto sin.

O, sin is still present with him, and it operates in his members. Ever it attempts to gain its former lordship over him, but all that is within him according to his inner man hates and abhors the service of iniquity. Sin is not dead, but he is dead to sin. His entire attitude overagainst his former lord has radically changed. He is *converted*. And for the sin that still operates in his members and ever attempts to divert the vehicle of his life and walk into the old ruts of unrighteousness he humbles himself before God daily, repents in dust and ashes, and confessing his sins before God he has no rest till he has found forgiveness anew in the blood of the Lamb.

This, then, is our answer to those who would allege that the doctrine of justification by faith without works makes men careless and profane.

This is utterly impossible.

For we are justified by a true and living faith in Christ, and in Christ we have both our justification and our sanctification in inseparable connection with each other.

And therefore a careless and profane Christian is an utter impossibility.

It is a contradiction in terms.

H. Hoeksema.

— NOTICE —

The *Ministers' Conference* of Classis East will be held on Tuesday, October 5, at 9:30 A.M., at the First Prot. Ref. Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Rev. C. Hanco will deliver a paper at this Conference. This is the first and only notice you will receive. Don't forget the date.

J. D. De Jong, Pres.

OUR DOCTRINE

God's Covenant and The Promise

*The Dispensation of the Covenant Follows
the Line of the Generations of the Believers.*

In our series of articles on the Covenant thus far, we have discussed several aspects of this thoroughly Scriptural concept. We began by calling attention to the idea of the covenant. God's covenant with man, e.g., is not a promise. That the Lord establishes His covenant with men does not merely imply that He promises them eternal life. This, we noted, can be interpreted in a Reformed sense. However, it also lends itself aptly to Arminianism. The promise, then, is confused with a general offer of salvation. The Lord offers to all His salvation. And in that general offer of salvation the essence of God's covenant of grace must be sought. This is the interpretation of the covenant as taught by the late Professor W. Heyns in the Christian Reformed Churches for some thirty years.

Neither must the covenant be explained as an agreement or a contract, with mutual obligations and stipulations. God, then, agrees to save us upon the condition of our faith and fighting of the good fight of faith. It is true that we must believe and fight the good fight of faith. This is required of us, not as a condition of the covenant, however, but as fruit of the operation of the grace of God in our hearts. Because the Lord makes us His covenant people and enables us by His Spirit to believe and fight the good fight of faith we are obliged, as the people and party of the living God, to lay aside our old nature and walk in all the precepts of Jehovah.

Others would explain the covenant as a way of salvation. The Lord establishes His covenant with us, makes known unto us the way of salvation. This way of salvation is faith in Jesus Christ our Lord. This, then, is the significance of the covenant of God with man. We objected, however, that, if the covenant of God with man be merely an agreement to save or a way of salvation, it is merely temporary, has been concluded as soon as its goal, the salvation of the sinner, has been reached. But, the Scriptures tell us that God establishes with us and our children an *everlasting* covenant of grace.

Neither must the essence of the covenant be sought in an alliance between the Lord and man against the devil and his hosts. Such is the interpretation of the late Dr. A. Kuyper. In the first place, the Lord does not enter into covenant fellowship with man in general. And, secondly, that the covenant of God with man in

such an alliance smacks of dualism. All things are ours. The Lord causes all things to work together for our good. The devil, too, and all his host are instruments in His hand and must serve the realization of His eternal covenant and Kingdom in heavenly glory and perfection.

We also called attention to the unilateral character of this covenant of God with man. God's covenant is not bilateral or dipleuric (two-sided), but unilateral or monopleuric (one-sided). And, the realization of God's covenant is unilateral throughout, from the beginning even unto the end. That we must live a new and a godly life is not because the realization of God's covenant is in any sense dependent upon our action, but only because the nature of the operation of the grace of God is such that it calls us out of darkness into His marvellous light. This is the repeated teaching of the Word of God.

And, finally, in several articles we have attempted to establish the Scriptural truth of the particular character of the promise or promises of God. Passages such as Rom. 9, Heb. 6:17-18, 2 Cor. 1:20, Gal. 3, and Hebrews 11 speak for themselves.

A Pertinent Question.

The question finally confronts us with respect to the dispensation of the Covenant as it follows the line of the generations of the believers. This is a pertinent question. Who are in the Covenant of God? What does it mean to be a "Covenant Child"? Is the covenant established only with the elect? And if the covenant is established only with the elect why are all the children of the believers baptized? Why, then, should all receive the sign of a covenant which is established only with the elect? How, then, could Esau be a covenant-breaker? How can anyone be "cut off" if he were never "in" the covenant? Do not Heb. 11:17 (the olive-tree) and John 15:1-2 (the vine) speak of the cutting off of these branches? In what sense are all in the covenant and why, in the dispensation of the covenant, do the blessings of the Covenant (sacraments, preaching, catechetical instruction) come to all without distinction? Are all the children (including the reprobate children) baptized and do they all receive the preaching of the gospel because the Lord, after all, would save all and therefore have all come to the knowledge of the truth? This is a fundamental question. It reveals to what extent we are reformed. That which reveals our reformed identity is not so much the question with respect to the baptism of the elect. That the Lord loves him and would save and actually does save him everybody understands. But why are the others baptized and must they be brought up in the sphere of the covenant? To these questions we will attempt to give an answer as we conclude our series of articles on "The Covenant".

*It is surely Scriptural that the Covenant
Follows the Line of the Generations of the Believers.*

This truth stands as a rock, first of all historically. It is simply an historical fact that the development of God's covenant occurs in the line of continued generations. In the Old Dispensation this development runs in the line of: Adam-Seth-Noah-Shem-Terah-Abraham-Isaac-Jacob-Israel, and it is confined to the Old Testament nation of the Jews. In the New Testament one can trace the progress of the church or the covenant with one's finger on the world's map: Jerusalem-Antioch-Macedonia-Greece-Rome And this development of God's covenant takes place according to the Lord's sovereign good-pleasure. When the apostle, Paul, would travel eastward to proclaim the gospel he is prevented from doing so when having come to Troas, and, receiving an urgent appeal from a man in Macedonia in a vision, proceeds to Macedonia. The Lord determines the course of His gospel.

Also textually the truth is everywhere taught in the Word of God that the development of the Lord's covenant with His people occurs in the line of the generations of the believers. This is true, first of all, of the Old Testament. Notice how the Scriptures speak continually of the parents with their children. In Ps. 127:3 the children are called an heritage of the Lord—"Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is His reward." They are always reckoned with the parents, and it goes well with both, parents and children, as in the following passages: Ex. 20:6: "And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments"; Deut. 1:36, 39: "Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the Lord Moreover your little ones, which we said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it."; 4:40: "Thou shalt keep therefore His statutes, and His commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, for ever"; 5:29: "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever"; 12:25, 28: "Thou shalt not eat it; that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, when thou shalt do that which is right in the sight of the Lord Observe and hear all these words which I command thee, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee for ever, when thou doest that which is good and right in the sight of the Lord thy God." Together, the parents and their child-

ren serve the Lord, as in the following passages: Deut. 6:2: "That thou mightest fear the Lord thy God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged"; 30:2: "And shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey His voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul"; 31:12, 13: "Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law And that their children, which have not known any thing may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it"; Joshua 24:15: "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"; Jer. 32:29: "And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear Me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them"; Ezek. 37:25: "And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and My servant David shall be their prince forever"; Zech. 10:9: "And I will sow them among the people: and they shall remember Me in far countries; and they shall live with their children, and turn again." The acts and ordinances of the Lord must be delivered by the parents to the children, as in the following passages: Ex. 10:2: "And that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, the things I have wrought in Egypt, and My signs which I have done among them; that ye may know how that I am the Lord"; 12:24: "And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever"; 12:26: "And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service?"; Deut. 4:9, 19 40: "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons Specially the day that thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb, when the Lord said unto me, Gather Me the people together, and I will make them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children Thou shalt keep therefore His statutes, and His commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee and with thy children after

thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, for ever"; 6:7: "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up"; 11:29: "And it shall come to pass, when the Lord thy God hath brought thee in unto the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt put the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal"; 29:29: "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law"; Joshua 4:6, 21: "That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying What mean these stones?"; 22:24-27: "And if we have not rather done it for fear of this thing, saying, In time to come your children might speak unto our children, saying, What have ye to do with the Lord God of Israel? For the Lord hath made Jordan a border between us and you, ye children of Reuben and children of Gad; ye have no part in the Lord: so shall your children make our children cease from fearing the Lord. Therefore we said, Let us now prepare to build us an altar, not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice: But that it may be a witness between us and you, and our generations after us, that we might do the service of the Lord before Him with our burnt offerings, and with our sacrifices, and with our peace offerings; that your children may not say to our children in time to come, Ye have no part in the Lord." Finally, the Old Testament Scriptures teach us that the covenant of the Lord, with its blessings, develops from child to child, and from generation to generation, as in the following passages: Gen. 9:12: "And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations"; 17:7, 9: "And I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep My covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations"; Ex. 3:15: "And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: This is My name for ever, and this is My memorial unto all generations"; 12:17: "And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall you observe this day in your genera-

tions by an ordinance for ever"; 16:32: "And Moses said, This is the thing which the Lord commandeth, Fill an Omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt"; Deut. 7:9: "Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations"; Ps. 105:8: "He hath remembered His covenant for ever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations".

This truth, that the Covenant follows the line of the generations of the believers, is also taught throughout the New Testament. Jesus continues to view the children as children of the covenant, as in the following passages: Matt. 18:2 ff.: "And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, etc."; 19:13 ff.: "Then were there brought unto Him little children, that He should put His hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them, etc."; 21:15 ff.: "And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the son of David; they were sore displeased, etc."; Mark 10:13 ff.; Luke 9:48: "And said unto them Whosoever shall receive this child in My name receiveth Me: and whosoever shall receive Me receiveth Him that sent Me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great"; 18:15 ff.; these passages clearly teach us that the Lord calls the children unto Himself, embraces them, lays His hands upon them, blesses them, declares to them that their's is the Kingdom of Heaven, presents them to the adults as examples, warns not to offend them, declares that their angels watch over them, and sees in their cry of Hosanna a fulfillment of prophecy. We also read that entire families are added to the Church: Luke 10:5: "And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house"; 19:9: "And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham"; Acts 5:42: "And daily in the temple and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ"; 20:20: "And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house"; 11:14: "Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved"; 16:31: "And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house"; 16:34: "And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house"; 1 Cor. 1:16: "And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other". The promise of the covenant, that God will be our God, we read, for the believers and their children, Acts 2:39: "For

the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Hence, the children of believers are admonished, as Christian children, in the Lord: Acts 26:22: "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come"; Eph. 6:1-3: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth"; Col. 3:20: "Children, obey your parents, in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord"; 1 John 2:13: "I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father"; 2 Tim. 3:15: "And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." These passages from the Old Testament, we understand, can easily be multiplied.

To this we would add the following. There is an organism in the midst of the world, the Church of God, which is called in the Scriptures Israel, Vine, Olive Tree, and these various names are addressed to the entire organism. The entire Church is addressed in The New Testament epistles in various ways: elect, believers, saved in Christ Jesus, saints in Christ Jesus, beloved of God, called of God, etc. And also these expressions are addressed to the entire Church. Moreover, they are not suppositions, so that we presume regeneration with respect to all; they are statements of fact. To this thought we will return in due time. The Scriptures, therefore, abundantly speak of an organism in the midst of the world, consisting of a two-fold seed, elect and reprobates, beloved and hated of God and that sovereignly, blessed and cursed of the Lord, which is called Israel, Church, etc. It is surely Biblical, therefore, that the covenant of the Lord, in its development in the midst of the world, follows the line of the generations of the believers. But, then the question will also assert itself: How must we understand these things? Are all in the covenant of the Lord? If so, in what sense are all covenant children? In what sense are all within the Church saints of God and of Christ Jesus, beloved of God, elect of God according to the foreknowledge of God, called of God, etc.? Are all essentially in the covenant? Is the promise of Jehovah, which comes without distinction to all, also meant for all? Does the Lord purpose or intend to bless all but man turns this blessing into a curse? To these questions we will attempt to give an answer in our following article.

H. Veldman.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

The Transaction At Endor

Let us now concentrate on the transaction at Endor as such and allow the sacred text to tell us just what took place there. The first question with which we go to the text concerns the message as such, what Saul was made to hear, the doleful discourse addressed to his ears. Was it the word of God, that had its origin in His mind, thus a message of which He was the author, or was it the word of man, definitely of the witch, her recollections, conjectures, and speculations, and by reason thereof a lying or at best an uncertain prophecy of a false prophetess not sent of God yet pretending to be speaking in His name by identifying herself with Samuel. This is the view even of conservative commentators such as Erdmann. He argues the point that "what the woman said of Saul (and to Saul) in the name of Samuel was partly nothing but what Samuel had repeatedly said, partly nothing beyond the reach of natural conjecture and inference; for—he goes on to say—after the universally known divine rejection of Saul, after the sad line of experience which showed that God had forsaken him (he having forsaken God), and especially after the fact, which the woman learned from Saul herself (5:15) that in the presence of the Philistine army he had inquired of the Lord in vain, the fateful issue of the war could not be doubtful."

The point to this excerpt from Erdmann's pen is precisely that what Saul was made to hear forms a discourse of which the woman was the author. And he accounts for the sacred writer's affirmation that Samuel really appeared and for the statement occurring in his narrative that "Samuel said to Saul" on the ground that the woman psychologically identified herself with the deceased prophet, so that the narrator might represent her discourse and her personation of him as his personal word and appearance. But this is not exegesis but baseless conjecture and as such a distortion of the text. The rationalist commentators, admitting this but yet unwilling to be bound by the plain statements of the text, maintain that the sacred writer shared the superstitions of his day and believed that the conjurations of the witch really had power over the dead.

That Erdmann's view—the view that the discourse of Samuel had as its author the woman—is false, is already proved on the one hand by the content and character of the discourse and on the other hand by the aim of all false prophets, of the diviners, dreamers, sorcerers and necromancers in Israel on the other

hand. Their aim was to please; for they prophesied to hire.

As to the discourse, what Saul was made to hear, it was stern and in its final section so dreadful as to move Saul to the core; it crushed his spirit and so debilitated him that he fell straightway all along the earth. Saul had not gone to the witch for that purpose. He yearned for a word—a promise of victory—that he could seize on to reassure his trembling heart. Of this the woman was fully aware. Hence, had she not been restrained from following her own sinful impulses she would have prophesied victory for Saul and Israel. For she was a necromancer, a lying prophetess. Also her aim was to please. Hence, like all prophets of her class she customarily prophesied falsely, lies, false visions, and dreams in the name of the Lord. She prophesied, in the language of the Scriptures, of “corn and strong drink”. She, too, was of those who cried, “Peace, peace”, when there was no peace. But the discourse was not a lie; it was true. All came to pass. Israel was delivered into the hands of the Philistines. Saul and his sons did die on the battlefield. As God only knows the end from the beginning, the discourse must have had Him as its author. How could the woman have had the courage to conjecture for Saul and to speak in his ears predictions that dreadful?

If the author of the discourse was the Lord, there next is the question through what human or creatural agency He communicated this word to Saul. We may suppose that the Spirit of God could have seized on the woman for that purpose, despite her being a necromancer. Baalim is one example in the Scriptures of the Lord speaking His word through an enemy. But such was not the case here. For the statement occurs, “And Samuel said to Saul . . .” Now, certainly, it cannot be supposed that the spirit of the deceased prophet, laying hold on the woman and making itself master of her speech organs, delivered the divine communication through her agency, so that after all she was the speaker. The text states that *Samuel* said. The implication is that the deceased seer spake by infallible inspiration of God’s Spirit the word of God that the Spirit communicated to his spirit. How could the sacred narrator affirm that Samuel *said*, were it true that the seer uttered his revelation through the person and speech organs of the woman? Can it be supposed that the woman was possessed for the moment of Samuel’s spirit in much the same way that men were possessed of evil spirits from the abyss in the times of Christ?

That God here spake through Samuel is clearly discernible from the discourse as such. It proves Samuel’s calling as a prophet. It sets before Saul the very sin on account of which the Lord by the mouth of the prophet had rejected him. It sets forth Saul’s woes as a punishment of that sin according to Samuel’s

word. It bespeaks the same zeal, consecration to God and unflinching devotion to His cause that had always characterized Samuel. It fortells Saul’s doom.

For all these reasons the view according to which we here deal with a discourse originated and uttered by that godless witch is not only untenable; it is absurd. But how could the departed seer utter an audible speech? There is but one answer. The Lord endowed him with a voice for the task of that moment. This is not the only instance recorded in the Scriptures of disembodied spirits of men returning to our world for the moment as invested with a corporal body and as gifted with the power of audible speech. There is the appearance of Moses and Elijah at the transfiguration of Christ (Matt. 17; Luke 9), though, of course, the apparition of Samuel, summoned by God from the realm of the dead, is a different thing from the appearance of Moses and Elijah, because the latter appeared in heavenly refulgence and glory. Yet this phenomenon is not in that degree unanalogous as to forbid its being cited in support of our interpretations.

Herewith has been answered the questions whether Samuel really appeared. The text contains a clause twice occurring and necessarily implying that Samuel did actually appear,—the clause, “And when the woman saw Samuel”. The statement is true beyond the shadow of a doubt. For it was made by the sacred narrator himself and is not the recording of what *the woman* said she saw. We thus have the narrator’s own word for it that she saw Samuel. And therefore she must be taken to be speaking the truth when in reply to Saul’s question, “What form is he of”, she answers, “An old man cometh up and he is covered with a mantle.”

Let us now consider the objections that through the years of the past have been raised against these views by rationalist and conservative commentators alike.

The view that the discourse had God as its author and was communicated to Saul through the agency of Samuel has been pronounced too unlikely for adoption, and this on the following grounds.

1.) In the language of Erdmann, Saul had already vainly used all ordained means for learning God’s will, and might thence conclude that his obstinate impenitence had rendered him unworthy of answer. In other words, since the Lord refused to answer Saul by the Urim and the prophets, it is hard to see why he should have revealed His will to Saul by the deceased Samuel.

2.) The appearance and word of Samuel could no longer have any religious—ethical end, because the means of rousing Saul to repentance were exhausted. For this recourse to a witch showed a mind thoroughly alienated from God and seeking help elsewhere, a disposition in respect to which even such a miraculous appearance and speaking of the prophet would be with-

out effect, as in fact in Samuel's words there is no exhortation to repentance, and there is no trace afterwards of any change for the better in Saul.

3.) The appearance and word of Samuel could have no *theocratic* end, because Saul's rejection as king had already been repeatedly announced, and the sending of Samuel would have been superfluous for the announcement of Saul's impending fall, which, without a miracle, might have reached Saul's ear and made his heart tremble. Let us understand this statement. What is meant by the miracle is God's recalling Samuel from the realm of the dead to reveal to Saul his impending fall. And the point that is here being argued is that this miracle would have been superfluous, seeing that anyone, acquainted with the facts of Saul's life, could conjecture his fall, as was actually done by the woman. This argument has already been met. We may add this. The sacred text states that "Saul was sore afraid", mark you, not because of the words of the witch, but "because of the words of Samuel". Certainly, the Lord does not terrify the wicked by the conjectures of unbelieving and godless persons such as that witch but by His own infallible word as proclaimed by His servants and as sent upon the hearts of the wicked by His Spirit.

In reply to the arguments under 1) and 2) there is this to say. All such criticisms are due to a lack of understanding of the purpose of the event. First to be considered in setting forth the purpose of that transaction at Endor is the Lord's silence. The Lord answered Saul not, "neither by dreams, nor by the Urim, nor by the prophets" then living. There plainly was this purpose to the Lord's silence: Through the speech that rose from that silence—the speech, "Thou shalt repent, and repenting thou wilt be heard of Me and be saved—the Lord hardened Saul's heart, so that, rather than be saved of God in the way of repentance, Saul did a thing of climactic wickedness. Turning his back on God, he asked counsel of the necromancer at Endor. So God willed it. For it had to appear that He was wholly right in destroying Saul. "Saul died for his transgressions," says the Chronicler (I Chron. 10:13, 14), "Which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it; and enquired not of the Lord (meaning, inquired not of the Lord in the way of repentance, and therefore did not truly enquire of Him); therefore he slew him." It is plain that the Lord's silence was necessary. It drove Saul as hardened by the Lord to the witch, and thus it brought out in him a wickedness that was climactic in order that God might be justified in making an end of him.

Saul having committed that great wickedness, the Lord now spake. But He persisted in turning a deaf ear to Saul's request, "Show me what I shall do,"

which Saul now put to Samuel. In harmony with His previous silence and Saul's impenitence and climactic wickedness, He now revealed to Saul his impending doom and this through the deceased Samuel and not through a prophet then still living. The idea of the Lord's doing is plain. He revealed to Saul his impending doom through the very prophet whose calling Saul always had denied and accordingly whose words he persistently had spurned and rejected. But this time the Lord sent Samuel's words—the prophecy of Saul's fall—on Saul's heart; "and he was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel." As paralyzed by fear, he fell straightway all along on the earth at Samuel's feet. There he lay in the dust before the seer as smitten by his word, and with his tongue silently confessing that Samuel was God's prophet indeed. Thus there was purpose to God's recalling Samuel from the realm of the dead to speak to Saul once again and for the last time the word of God. The Lord wanted His servant vindicated even by the wicked Saul before all Israel to the glory of God. Do we not deal here with a preindication of the humiliation of all the wicked at the appearing of Christ who was raised from the dead and seated in the highest heavens? Then every wicked tongue shall confess that Jesus is the Lord to the glory of the Father. Saul had asked the woman to bring him up Samuel, yet not truly Samuel but an ethical caricature of the seer. But the Lord sent to him *Samuel*.

It is plain that the objection that the Lord could not have been the answerer through Samuel in that it is expressly said in verse 6 that God answered Saul no more—this objection, it is clear, is without foundation. First, the text does not state that God answered Saul *no more* but that "He answered *him not*." As was explained, the notice has exclusive reference to Saul's request that the Lord counsel him in the present crisis by showing him what he should do. This request the Lord answers not, the reason being Saul's obduracy. The Lord's silence therefore, implying as it did Saul's unwillingness to repent, calls for his destruction. Accordingly, the Lord tells him through Samuel not what he shall do but that he will die in the impending battle. The trouble with this class of critics is that they construe the statement, "And the Lord answered him—Saul—not," as though it read, "And the Lord spake to Saul no more."

And as the objection that the appearance and word of Samuel could no longer have any religious-ethical end, because the means of rousing Saul to repentance were exhausted, it rises from the mistaken notion that the purpose of God in revealing to Saul his impending fall was, or rather, would needs have been, to bring him to repentance. Certainly, had that been the Lord's purpose, Saul would have repented. In the point of view of God's power to save the means of

rousing Saul to repentance were not yet exhausted. But such was not the Lord's purpose, but rather to cast Saul in the dust before Samuel and to harden him further.

Thus far we have been occupied more exclusively with the objections raised against the view that the silence of God was followed by one more revelation to Saul through the deceased Samuel. We have yet to consider more in particular the objections raised against the view that that Samuel *really appeared*.

1.) If Samuel actually appeared, why, it is asked, was he seen by the woman only. Now it is true that the apparition was not visible to Saul. Such unquestionably is the implication of the text at verse 14, "And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantel. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel." These words imply that Saul recognized the form seen by the woman to be Samuel from her description. It indeed raises the question why Samuel, if he actually appeared, was not seen also by Saul. There is the solution of the rationalist critics that the appearing of Samuel was a hallucination, a perception of the woman with no objective reality and arising from temporary disorder of her nervous system. To illustrate, there is no objective reality to the snakes seen by the drunkard in his violent deliriums. But this solution may not be ours as it does violence to the sacred text, which too plainly asserts that Samuel did appear and prophesy.

The apparition of Samuel required an opened eye in order to be seen. Saul was not given that eye. For he had no need of seeing Samuel but only of hearing the voice of the seer prophesying his doom. Hence, the apparition was not rendered visible to the king.

The event has its analogies in Holy Writ. The Lord had to open Baalim's eyes in order that he, too, as well as the beast on which he rode, might see the angel of the Lord who stood in the way for an adversary to him. Elisha saw the horses and chariots of fire surrounding him and filling the mountains. And it was not until the Lord opened the eyes of the servant of the prophet that he, too, saw.

It is not difficult to discern the reason back of the Lord's opening the eyes of the woman only. The Lord wanted that woman with her magic and vain speakings out of the way. For He still had a thing to say to Saul through Samuel. And Saul also must be made to perceive that he had to do with God and His prophet and that the prediction of his fall was God's very own word, and not an idle conjecture of the sorceress. The means that the Lord employed for eliminating the woman were precisely His rendering Samuel's appearance visible to her by opening her eyes. Seeing Samuel she was amazed and terrified; and she cried with a loud voice. For what she saw she did not anticipate. It was her first and only experience of its kind. For

doubtless she was not really able by her witchcraft to recall from Hades departed spirits of men. She described the apparition of Samuel to Saul at his request; and thereupon she retreated into the background and was silent while the seer spake to Saul the word of God. As terrified by the apparition of Samuel and by her recognizing the king, she was only too willing to withdraw and leave Saul alone with Samuel and God.

Now these are no idle speculations but views that have a firm basis in the text. Let us again take notice of the statements, "And when the woman saw Samuel" (verse 12). "And Samuel said to Saul" (verse 15). "Then said Samuel" (verse 16). "And Saul . . . was sore afraid because of the words of Samuel" (verse 20). And let us in addition take notice of the woman's reaction to Saul's falling straight forward all along the earth in mortal dread of Samuel's word. "And the woman came unto Saul", and talked with him, implying, certainly, that she had been keeping herself at a distance, perhaps in another room, and that therefore the prophecy had been uttered neither by her as identified with Samuel nor by Samuel as speaking through her, but by Samuel directly. That the woman, too, heard the voice of Samuel is not likely. She saw the apparition but did not hear the voice. Saul, on the other hand, heard the voice but did not see the apparition. This, too, has its analogies in Holy Writ.

2.) Still other objections have been raised against the view that Samuel really appeared. They come, do these objections, from the fathers, reformers, and early Christian theologians, who, with few exceptions, held that there was no real appearance of Samuel. "It is certain", says Calvin, "that it was not really Samuel, for God would never have allowed his prophet to be subjected to such diabolical conjuring. For here is a sorceress calling up the dead from the grave. Does anyone imagine that God wished his prophet to be exposed to such ignominy; as if the devil had power over the bodies and souls of saints which are in His keeping?" To this we can reply, Assuredly not, but must hasten to add that Calvin's objection strikes only at his own wrong assumption that Samuel was recalled from Hades through the demoniacal arts of the woman while the fact of the matter is that the seer was evoked and given real appearance solely by a miracle of God apart from the woman's conjurations. This is proved by her great terror at seeing Samuel and in addition by the way the text reads at verses 11 and 12. "Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice." Let us take notice of the silence of the text regarding the woman's operations or formulas of conjurations which it was her custom to employ. It indicates that no sooner had she begun these operations, if she was al-

lowed to begin them at all, than the apparition of Samuel appeared to her eye.

On the ground of the wrong assumption that the woman evoked Samuel by her witchcraft, Calvin concluded that it was not the real Samuel but a spectre and Luther, that it was the devil's ghost. Tertullian regarded it as "a rivalry of truth to represent the soul of Samuel when Saul enquired of the dead. Far be it from us to believe that the soul of any saint, much less a prophet, can be drawn forth by a demon." But, certainly, the text by all that it says plainly excludes the witch and the devil.

The assumption that what the woman saw was a spectre effected by her devilish arts goes hand in hand with the view that the revealer of the prophecy was the devil. So Calvin, who remarks, "God sometimes gives to devils the power of revealing secrets to us, which they have learned from God."

3.) Finally, there is the objection that, in the language of Luther "the raising of Samuel by a soothsayer or witch was certainly merely a spectre of the devil . . . because it was evidently in opposition to the command of God that Saul and the woman inquired of the dead". But, in the language of Keil, "The prohibition of witchcraft does not preclude the possibility of God having, for His own special reasons, caused Samuel to appear." And the appearance of Samuel itself and the seer's prophesying Saul's doom, showed to the witch and the king that the Lord's prohibitions cannot be trampled with impunity.

G. M. Ophoff.

IN MEMORIAM

The Board of the Hope Prot. Ref. Christian School hereby wishes to express its sympathy to our fellow board member, Mr. D. Kooienga, in the loss of his mother.

MRS. WM. KOOIENGA

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

R. Newhouse, Pres.

E. Howerzyl, Sec'y.

The Consistory of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, wishes hereby to express its sympathy to our fellow elder, D. Kooienga, in the loss of his mother,

MRS. WM. KOOIENGA

whom we may believe the Lord took unto Himself.

May our Covenant Father comfort the bereaved with the truth of His Word, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

The Consistory

Rev. John A. Heys, Pres.

Mr. I. Korhorn, Secretary.

SION'S ZANGEN

Israel's Liefdevolle Heiland

(Psalm 105; Vierde Deel)

Het laatste vers, dat we behandelden de vorige maal, toen we stilstonden bij dezen psalm, ging over het vreemdelingszijn van Israel en dus ook van de kerke Christi aller eeuwen. Ze waren weinige menschen in getale, en vreemdelingen in het Kanaän hetwelk God hun beloofd had.

Nu gaan we verder:

"En wandelden van volk tot volk, van het ééne koninkrijk tot een ander volk."

In die weinige woorden hebt ge, eerst, de geschiedenis der aartsvaderen, Abraham, Izaak en Jakob. Zij ervoeren dit letterlijk. Nergens mochten zij thuis gevoelen. Steeds verder, steeds verder. Van Mesopotamië tot Haran, van Haran naar Egypte en dan weer terug naar Kanaän. Voor Jakob werd het bang. Van Kanaän tot Egypte en daar kwam hij in groote benauwdheid en vreeze. Maar God dacht aan Zijn verbond en redde hem met wonderteekenen. Hij voerde hem uit door de Schelfzee en leidde hem door een huilende wildernis. En bracht hem uiteindelijk in het beloofde land. Doch ook dat Kanaän was het eigenlijke, het wezenlijke Kanaän nog niet. Want men zondigde en men verdierf het ook daar voor God. Er was veel gemengd volk in die bedeeing. Het aardse Kanaän leidde op door Woord en Geest naar het hemelsche Kanaän. En het ware volk heeft altijd David's psalm gezongen. En dat hijgende volk dacht dan aan het hemelsche Kanaän.

En zoo is het met U.

En zoo is het met allen die de eeuwige liefde Gods in 't harte hebben.

Die zeggen, die zingen, die klagen en die juichen: O God, mijn God, God des eeuwigen Verbonds: wanneer zal ik ingaan en voor Uw aangezicht verschijnen?

En Gods antwoord is dat Hij hen opneemt in heerlijkheid!

"Hij liet geen mensch toe hen te onderdrukken, ook bestrafte Hij Koningen om hunnentwil, zeggende: Tast Mijn gezalfden niet aan, en doet Mijnen Profeten geen kwaad."

Dit vers klinkt vreemd.

Hij liet geen mensch toe om hen te onderdrukken? Wat moeten we dan denken van den schrijver aan de Hebreëen, die van ditzelfde volk zegt: "en anderen hebben bespottingen en geeselingen geleden, en ook banden en gevangenis; zijn gesteenigd geworden, in stukken gezaagd, verzocht, door het zwaard ter dood

gebracht, hebben gewandeld in schaapsvellen en geitenvellen, verlaten, verdrukt, kwalijk behandeld zijnde (welker de wereld niet waardig was), hebben in woestijnen gedood en op bergen en in spelonken en in de hollen der aarde”?

En ziet nu het liefste van dit volk, en dat is Jezus van Nazareth! Hij liet niemand toe om hen te onderdrukken? Dáár hangt Hij, aan het vervloekte hout! En de massa's joelen en spotten rondom dat kruis, ze steken de lip uit en honen het Kind van God! Zijn beenderen kan Hij tellen: één voor één! Van rondom ziet Hij honden samenrukken. . . .er kwam een muitgespan: 't heeft Hem ter prooi verkoren, Zijn handen en Zijn voeten doen doorboren, zoo fel het kan! Geen onderdrukking voor Israel? Hoe zit dat?

Hier is het antwoord: alles wat we aangestipt hebben, en nog veel meer, is nooit werkelijke onderdrukking geweest. Nooit is er één kind van God geweest, dat ook maar een duimbreed door die dingen van God verwijderd werd, maar juist het tegenovergestelde is waar: zij zijn door die dingen dichter, nauwer en nader tot God gebracht. Luistert naar den triumpkreet van Paulus: “Wie zal ons scheiden van de liefde van Christus? Verdrukking, of benauwdheid, of vervolging, of honger, of naaktheid, of gevaar, of zwaard? (gelijk geschreven is: Want om Uwentwil worden wij den ganschen dag gedood, wij zijn geacht als schapen der slachting.) Maar in dit alles zijn wij meer dan overwinnaars, door Hem die ons liefgehad heeft.” Rom. 8:35-37. Vertrapt, verguisd, vermoord te worden door de wereld is meer dan een overwinning voor Gods volk.

Ook moest dit duidelijk zijn voor allen die God en Zijn Woord kennen. Vraagt Uzelve dit af: kan ooit één duivel, of één goddeloos mensch, of één der elementen zich keeren tegen Gods volk, zonder dat God het weet, het zoo bestemde en regeerde, en met wijsheid het juist zoo bestuurde? Is er ooit één traan of één druppel bloeds geweest, die door Gods volk geweend of gestort zijn, of zij waren in Zijn Boek geschreven? David weende, doch in het weenen was dit zijn troost: al zijn tranen waren in Gods flesschen!

En het doel?

Het doel wordt ons geopenbaard in II Cor. 4:16-18. Eerst wordt ons gezegd, dat de verdrukking die ons deel is slechts een lichte verdrukking is; tweedens, dat zij zeer haast voorbijgaat; en, derdens, dat zij ons een gansch zeer uitnemend eeuwig gewicht der heerlijkheid werkt. Eigenlijk had Paulus hetzelfde al gezegd in het 10de en 11de vers, waar hij spreekt van het overgegeven worden in den dood om Jezus' wil, opdat ook het leven van Jezus openbaar mocht worden in ons lichaam. En in het gedeelte hierboven aangegeven zegt hij, dat hoewel onze uitwendige mensch verdorven wordt, de inwendige mensch vernieuwd wordt van dag tot dag.

We komen dan tot de conclusie, dat de verdrukking, voorzoover we die moeten dragen in dit leven, een zeer lichte is, haast voorbijgaat, niet te waardeeren is tegen de heerlijkheid die aan ons zal geopenbaard worden, ja, dat zij zelfs die heerlijkheid *werkt*; zoodat we mogen zeggen, dat wij in alle verdrukking meer dan overwinnaars zijn door Hem die ons liefgehad heeft.

En daarom is het ons duidelijk, dat de Heere nimmer toeliet, dat iemand ons wezenlijk verdrukte. Een verdrukking die U opheft tot in de eeuwige heerlijkheid is geen verdrukking, maar meer dan overwinning. En zoo kunnen we er eenigzins inkomen, dat Paulus ook zegt, dat wij “roemen in de verdrukkingen”!

Het bittere kruis van Jezus is eigenlijk de verheerlijking Gods. Nooit of nimmer heeft de heerlijkheid van God schitterender gestraald dan aan dat vloekhout. De smarten van Jezus zijn openbaring van ongekende, eeuwige liefde.

En zoo is het ook bij Zijn volgelingen.

Hoort hen zingen: “ 't Is goed voor mij verdrukt te zijn geweest!”

Soms trad God tuschenbeide om Zijn volk te beschermen tegen goddelooze aanvallen, zeggende: Tast Mijn gezalfden niet aan en doet Mijn Profeten geen kwaad! Ziet het in de gevallen met Abraham ten overstaan van een Farao in Egypte en Abimélech in Gerar, alsook het geval van Izak ten overstaan van Abimélech in Gerar.

“Hij riep ook een honger in het land, Hij brak allen staf des broods.”

Hoe leerrijk is dit Woord van God!

Als er hongersnooden komen in de wereld, dan is het God die ze riep. Als de staf des broods gebroken wordt, dan is het God die het doet.

O, we zijn zoo hard en verhard in ons gewone leven!

Het gebeurt wel eens, dat we knorrend opstaan en ongeduldig wachten op het brood in den morgen. Kwam het dan, dan zetten we de tanden er in en verscheurden ee stukken broods, zonder nu veel aan God te denken. Men had het brood toch gekocht en betaald? Moeder had het klaar gezet?

Dat brood had een lange reis gemaakt vanuit de aarde tot op de tafel, dáár, vlak voor mij.

Ik heb al voor heel lang brood gegeten, en nog weet ik al de stappen en reizen niet van de aarde tot op de tafel. En de wonderlijkste reizen zijn wel die in de aarde geschieden, van korrel graans tot de rijpe aar. In de aarde, in den korrel, rondom de groeiende sprietjes, en, later rondom de aar, zijn de vingeren Gods die werkt, en werkt, en werkt. Er moet rijp graan zijn voor de menschen en de beesten en de vogels. En later is het God die den mensch wijsheid geeft van bewerking tot bewerking, totdat het heerlijke brood voor mij staat.

Wel mag het de *staf des broods* geheeten.

Zonder die staf des broods val ik om, en geef den geest.

Het brood is zóó hoognoodig voor mij, dat het als een staf is die mij omhoog houdt, mij ondersteunt, en verder doet wandelen op deze aarde.

Doch, o wee, als God aan 't roepen gaat om den honger. Hij is het die de dingen die niet zijn roept alsof ze waren. Er was geen honger. De zon kosterde, de aarde was vochtig en rijk van stoffen tot den groei van het zaad. Er waren dag en nacht die zich steeds openbaarden om mee te helpen om brood te mogen hebben. Er was wijsheid om te zaaien en te oogsten. Maar God wilde het niet. Hij greep ergens in; het maakt weinig verschil waar. Soms in het zaad, soms in den regen of zonneshijn. Hij deed het zaad verrotten van te veel regen of verbranden van te veel hitte. Soms kwamen er groote watervloeden die zelfs het land meenamen.

Het is zelfs gebeurd, dat er graan was en te over, doch dat er evenwel millioenen van menschen waren die door den van God geroepen honger omkwamen. Het is gebeurd, dat er hongersnood was in China, en dat de menschen stierven, alhoewel er genoeg graan voor hen was in andere deelen van de aarde. Er kon uitgerekend worden hoeveel honderd-duizenden moesten sterven, en waarom? Er was geen middel van vervoer, dat toereikend was om genoeg graan bij de hongerigen te brengen. En we hebben de plaatjes gezien van uitgeteerde kinderkens die langs de wegen lagen in China. In de onmetelijke achterhoeken van China en van Indië zijn geen spoorwegen die ijlings de graan-rijkdom zouden vervoeren.

God kan overal ingrijpen op den weg waarlangs het brood naar Uw maag komt. En dan roept Hij een honger in het land.

In dit vers is het de honger geweest in Egypte. Als kind hebben we gehoord van de vette en schrale koeien en aren in den droom van Farao.

Maar God wilde een groot volk in het leven behouden. Daar was Israel-Jakob. En die zijn Zijn volk. En in hunne lendenen is Christus, voor zoo veel het vleesch aangaat. Zij moeten gered worden. En de honger die God riep, mitsgaders de uitredding door Zijn knecht Jozef, zal zijn om het volk te toonen hoe liefdevol hun Heiland is. Is dat niet het hoofdthema van dezen psalm?

G. Vos.

CLASSIS EAST

will meet in regular session Wednesday, October 6, at 9 o'clock A. M., at the First Prot Ref. Church of Grand Rapids.

D. Jonker, Stated Clerk.

IN HIS FEAR

A Unified Living

"This one thing (I do)" says Paul in Phil. 3:13, "towards the goal, I pursue for the prize".

"One thing I know" says the man born blind," that whereas I was blind, now I see."

"One thing have I desired of the Lord" says the psalmist in Ps. 27:4, "that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life".

Many a person's life is like a stream that divides itself into thousands of little currents, spreads itself over the marsh and ends in becoming a filthy pool. No unified living, no unity in thinking and willing and striving.

I wonder how much the communion of saints is practised when the congregation goes home from church and on Monday the members go each to his work? I wonder how much, in all their labors and striving, and toiling and sweating they are UNITED in seeking ONE thing?

In Ps. 86:11 there is the prayer: "Unite my heart to fear Thy Name."

Unite my heart.

Then there is unified living in your personal life.

Then life becomes: ONE thing I do, ONE thing I know, ONE thing I desire.

Confusion.

Confusion characterizes many lives. It characterizes also much of our life. Instead of a God-and-life view that unites life, we either live aimlessly or we divide life into various ambitions and we wear out our lives attempting to realize our various ambitions. Perhaps life is divided so that part of the time we do one thing, then we do another, then still another and there is no unity in the whole of our doing.

Some people live aimlessly. They have no one ambition in life, nor any ONE goal, but they simply live as live will. They go from one day to the other without having any definite aim in life.

Some people live carnally. They most surely have an ambition, but their ambition comes within the vicious and hopeless circle of which Solomon speaks in his Ecclesiastes. In their lives there is one thing they do, one thing they know and one thing they desire, but the tragedy is that the unifying principle of their life is the spirit of the antichrist. After all, the natural man always in one way or the other is living out of and unto this antichrist. In antichrist they will finally find their organization.

Some people live divided lives, that is, you may call

them one-day-in-the-week christians. They imagine that Sunday (in that sense) is different from all the other days, consequently they presume that they ought to do entirely different things on Sunday than on Monday. On Sunday they presume to do one thing, on Monday they are engaged in something entirely different. Besides, their day is divided into a pursuit of various goals. Or perhaps they attempt to serve two masters. And thus we get divided living.

A little ways down the road of this divided living lies also hypocrisy.

In Luke 16:8 Jesus tells us "the sons of this age are in their generation more prudent than the sons of light". The children of this world are prudent. They do not lead divided and confused lives. They prudently put everything into use so that they attain their purpose. They set themselves a goal and then press everything into service to reach that goal. Take for instance the matter of entertainment. Time was when the carnal man had to go to a theatre to see a movie. Today there are these mighty open air theatres where you can leisurely drive your car into the parking lot, remain in your automobile and enjoy the screen. Or they have television for you, so you can remain at home and with a single turn of the button indulge in the Hollywood corruption. The children of this world are prudent. They set themselves a goal and then they keep their eyes fixed on that goal and ever move in the direction of it.

How much communion of saints is there after the congregation goes home from church? How much are they a "union" in that they seek the things which are above and serve the Lord as prophets, priests and kings? How much is there on Sunday nights, after the service ends, how much on Mondays, how much during the rest of the week? How much do the saints worship God and serve him when one is in the hayfield, another in the factory, another driving a truck, another teaching school? How much, in other words, are we all doing ONE thing, seeking a goal?

Apply this also to our personal lives. We shall have to bewail our sins before the Face of Him Who sees the whole of our life. Sin has brought about confusion, division, transgression. There is present the "I would" of Romans 7 but there is also the lament "what I would I do not."

Organization.

The Law comes and says: thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, all thy soul, all thy strength and all thy mind. Notice that expression ALL thy heart, ALL thy soul, ALL thy mind and ALL thy strength. God requires unified living. He disdains the attempt to serve two masters. He curses them who attempt to give God "part time" and the rest to

some other aim. God says: ALL, nothing less than all.

And where was there one who came with his ALL? Not among men. Scripture repeatedly pictures to us the life history of saints, who served well as far as it went, but failed in coming to a unified life. Look across the life of an Abraham, an Isaac, a Jacob, a Moses, a David, and you discover that sin has marred the unity.

Who but Jesus Christ the perfect Servant of God, lived a unified life? None. Never did He do anything but this ONE thing: serving, obeying, humbling Himself before God. The birds of the air might have time to sit on nests, the foxes of the field have time to creep in their holes and rest, but the Son of God hath no time to rest. He loved God with ALL His heart and mind and soul and strength, every day, every moment.

Jesus Christ is not merely our example, as Modernism would present it. Christ is our Saviour Who redeems us from the vanity of sin, from the curse of judgment. Through His Spirit He renews us, He anoints us, we became christians. . . . prophets, priests and kings unto God.

These pray "Unite my heart to the fear of Thy Name".

Unite our living. May it be organized, its issues, its inclinations, its ambitions, may they be integrated.

God and His service becomes the unifying element in our oft' times so divided living. Serve God, obey God, discern His will in whatsoever you do, resist evil, flee from wickedness.

The difficult and practical problem remains of how you shall serve this ONE purpose in the particular work which you are doing at present. Your work must be a legitimate one, one of which God can approve. You must do your work honestly. But even then the ever present danger is there that you lose sight of the service of God, and become perhaps what the natural man next to you is, a mere toiler. God has by His grace raised us up to the high position of service, let us be aware of it, and engage in it, no matter what our particular work may be. Some are giving eye-service; others are pleasers of men, others toil for the things which pass away. May we know ourselves raised into the glory state of the service of God.

But then we must pursue this service all along the lines of our different occupations. Are you a lawyer, a doctor, a minister, a factory worker, a chimney sweep, the grace of God has redeemed us from vanity and given us a position in His service. Let us practise that service.

When God looks down from heaven, how much does He see the saints everywhere, doing this ONE thing?

M. Gritters.

FROM HOLY WRIT

The Mouth Of The Lord

In this brief essay we can only hope to sketch briefly the wide and varied implications of the rich concept "the mouth of the Lord". We are dealing once more with an anthropomorphism, just as when we speak of God's face or eyes. God is a Spirit and is not made up of substance as we are, yet our earthly substance carries a reflection of His divine perfections, so that we can know what it means that God sees, hears and speaks. Again we must remember that God's mouth is divine, even as His face and His eyes. God's mouth is divinely sovereign, almighty, eternal, immutable, filled with knowledge and wisdom, holiness and righteousness grace and truth. And most intimately related to the *mouth* of the Lord is the *voice* that proceeds from it, and the *word* that is spoken.

"And God said . . ."

A. We note, first of all, that the mouth of the Lord is a channel of *power*, from which the almighty, efficacious word of the Lord proceeds.

1. It is of more than passing significance that God created all things by the word of His mouth. Not, for example, simply by His 'hands', but by His spoken word. Gen. 1:3, "And God said, Let there be light; and there was light". And again, Ps. 33:6, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth."

In this connection it is sufficient to merely mention that creation is an act of the triune God, involving all three persons of the holy trinity. For creation is by the Son, the Logos, the Word. John 1:1, 3, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word with God, and the Word was God. . . . All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." Likewise, creation is the work of the Holy Spirit, the Breath of God's mouth, for "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Gen. 1:2.

2. Moreover, recreation is also by the almighty, efficacious word of God. John 5:25, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." It is true, that the 'Son of God' in this passage is the Christ, the Servant of God, Who is given power to quicken the dead because of His meritorious suffering and death on the cross. Yet the Christ is called the Son of God, just exactly because He is endued with divine power. His voice has the power to create, to raise Lazarus from the dead, but also to quicken the sinner who is dead in tres-

passes and sins. Even that is possible with God. He speaks, implanting new life in the heart of the dead sinner. This is regeneration in the narrower sense. But He also speaks through His Word, converting the heart, so that the life of regeneration manifests itself in repentance, confession of sin and a sorrowing after God. In fact, the voice of God through the means of the preaching of the Word always remains a power unto salvation to all believers. Deut. 8:3. And even as God raised Christ from the dead by the word of His power, so He shall also raise our mortal bodies into the likeness of Christ's glorious body in the day of His coming.

3. The mouth of the Lord is therefore powerful, efficacious, doing all His good pleasure. Is. 55:10, 11, "For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

"And they heard the voice of the Lord God . . ."

B. The second main thought that we should note is, that God's mouth is the channel of revelation.

1. All the works of providence are God's voice speaking to us continually. This could not possibly be expressed more beautifully than is done in Ps. 29:2-5, 7-9, "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: for the God of glory thundereth: The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars; yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire. The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in His temple doth every one speak of His glory."

2. God also reveals Himself in grace to His people by the word of His mouth. He spoke directly to Adam. As we read particularly after the fall, Gen. 3:8-10, "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." In the same manner God spoke to Noah, Gen. 6:13, to Abraham, Gen. 15:1, to Jacob, Gen. 31:3, to Moses, Numbers 7:89, and also to Israel from Sinai at the giving of the law, Deut. 4:12. Especially this last passage is significant because in the context Moses

assures Israel that there is no God like unto their God, and there is no nation that is so great upon all the earth as that people that hears the voice of their God. Verse 12, "And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only a voice." And verse 33 adds, "Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?" We shall have occasion to refer to this passage again in this essay.

God also spoke through the prophets. They were as His mouth to the people. Jer. 15:19. And in these last days God has spoken to us through His Son, Jesus Christ, from heaven, Whose Spirit filled the apostles. Heb. 1:1, 2, "God, Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, Whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the world." Note here that this speaking through the Son is brought in connection with the creation of the world by the word of God's power. Therefore also this speaking is powerful, efficacious.

3. In this connection it is important to note, that God reveals Himself as the sovereign God, Whose Word is His law, which must certainly be obeyed.

Ps. 103:20, "Bless the Lord, ye His angels, that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His Word." It need hardly be said, that we have here a Hebrew parallelism, where the last part of the sentence interprets the foregoing. The expression 'hearkening to the voice of His word' expresses what it means to 'do His commandments'. He who keeps God's commandments hearkens to His voice in obedience. This same idea is found in Exodus 15:26, "And (the Lord) said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: For I am the Lord that healeth thee."

We should pause here a moment to notice the passage in Ps. 95:7, "For He is our God: and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness." It should be beyond dispute that 'His voice' here as elsewhere cannot possibly mean a voice of divine entreaty, as if God offers His salvation promiscuously to all men, but is the voice of His command. Today that voice must be obeyed, or today we stand guilty of transgression.

There is also a strong affinity between God's law and His verdict of approval or condemnation that fol-

lows upon it. God's commandments are often called "His judgments". Ps. 119:12, 13. No man can sin against the voice of the Lord God with impunity. No more than any one can take a dose of poison without suffering the dire consequences. Obedience always carries away the divine approval, while disobedience carries death and desolation in its wake. And that without exception! Therefore no man, except those who are redeemed by the blood of the cross, can ever hear the voice of God and live. God's law always curses them. We need but be reminded once more of that passage in Deut. 4:33, "Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?" Therefore, "the Lord shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel." See also Heb. 12:26-28.

"The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

Finally we should notice that God's mouth is the channel of promise for His people.

There is a very interesting passage in the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem, 1 Kings 8:23, 24, where he utters, "Lord God of Israel, there is no God like Thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath Who keepeth covenant and mercy with Thy servants that walk before Thee with all their heart: who hast kept with Thy servant David my father that Thou promisedst him: Thou spakest also with Thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with Thine hand, as it is this day."

1. This passage speaks particularly of God's promise to His servant David, spoken with His mouth. In a broader sense, God's promises hold for all His people in Christ. Unconditionally God promises all the blessings of His covenant upon that people. As for example in Is. 58:14, "Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Or again, as in Mic. 4:4, "But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it."

2. Notice also that this is the final court of appeal, the end of all dispute, that the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. God's word is as sure as His oath, for He is the sovereign, immutable, ever faithful God, Who keeps covenant forever. His promise can never fail.

That is the firm conviction of the believer in the midst of all the confusion and unrest in a world of darkness and the lie. Isaiah 40:5, "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

C. Hanko.

PERISCOPE

Universal Military Training.

From a daily newspaper we quote the following:

"Three hundred Protestant ministers and leaders urged the youth of America Tuesday to refuse to register for the draft and if already in the armed services to resign.

"The statement was issued under the address of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, which binds its members to refuse to participate in any war.

"As the early Christian refused to offer a pinch of incense to Caesar's image, so we believe Christian youth in the United States should refuse to grant even the token recognition of registration to this contemporary evil, which means disaster for their country and their church," the statement said.

"Among signers were Henry H. Crane, Central Methodist Church, Detroit Also signing were Rev. C. P. Dane, Second Reformed Church of Kalamazoo"

As we read this we were filled with amazement! Certainly we expect such statements from members of the Society of Friends (Quakers), Jehovah's Witnesses etc. One could reasonably expect something like this in modern church circles where the brotherhood of man has been substituted for the atoning death of Christ as the heart of the church's instruction. But how anyone who claims to be Reformed can take the stand outlined is beyond our understanding in view of such texts as Romans 13:1-7, of which we shall quote only the first two and the last verses: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation Render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour." Or to quote the words of Christ from Matthew 22:21: "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things which are God's. Or in the light of the instruction of John the Baptist as we find it in Luke 3:14: "And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages."

However, from a practical point of view this is not yet the most serious. We realize, of course, that Rev. Dame would probably attempt to interpret the above texts differently than we do. We would therefore call his attention to the Form for the Administration of the

Lord's Supper, where we read: "Therefore, we also, according to the command of Christ and the Apostle Paul, admonish all those who are defiled with the following sins, to keep themselves from the table of the Lord, and declare to them that they have no part in the kingdom of Christ; such as all idolaters, . . . all those who are given to raise discord, sects and mutiny in Church or State" Certainly to refuse to hear the voice of the government in such instances as registering for the draft is an act of rebellion, and to give this advice and counsel to countless numbers of our young men who face this situation must fall under the same heading and is to be condemned. The Consistory of the Second Reformed Church of Kalamazoo, Michigan should place Rev. Dame under censure and refuse him admittance unto the table of the Lord until he repents of this action.

Where Now?

"In the Grace Church (formerly the First Protestant Christian Reformed Church of Kalamazoo, Michigan—J.H.) the Rev. George Gritter carries on in the midst of difficulties brought about by a small group. We regret to report that all efforts on the part of the consistory and the special committee appointed by Classis to bring about a peaceful solution have failed. On Sunday, July 25, the membership of the eighteen protestants who appealed to Synod was declared terminated as decided by Synod." From *The Banner* of September 17, Kalamazoo and Vicinity, by Edward B. Pekelder.

If we understand this correctly it must mean that Rev. H. Danhof and the few families who with him appealed to the last Synod of the Christian Reformed Churches have been cut off from the Grace Christian Reformed Church of Kalamazoo.

We placed the title "Where Now" above this article as a serious question. Unsatisfied with independent existence, unable to live in the communion of the Christian Reformed Churches, where now? Perhaps it is time for Rev. Danhof and his followers to face once again the possibility of reunion with the Protestant Reformed Churches, but then, of course, in the proper way.

"Orthodox Presbyterian Statistics".

"According to information from the General Secretary of the Committee on Home Missions, statistics for the year ending March 31, 1948, show that the membership of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church has for the first time passed the eight thousand mark. Total membership reported was 8,006, of which 5,922 are communicants, and the rest baptized children. The total increase was 434, a gain of nearly six percent over the previous year.

"Contributions for both general fund and benevolences increased by about 9 percent over the previous

year, while contributions for building funds decreased by about 15 percent. Total contributions amounted to \$450,000, and the average contribution per communicant member was \$76.76.

"The denomination has 72 organized churches and a number of groups in the process of organization. Only one church has over 500 members, while three others have over 400. Two Sunday Schools have 400 members each. Total Sunday School enrollment is 7,309."—From the *Presbyterian Guardian*, Aug. 1948.

"The Danger of Complacency."

"A Christian is on dangerous ground when he becomes complacent, for complacency is a form of pride. This holds true for institutions and organizations.

"Risking the danger of the displeasure of some, we are however constrained to say that in our judgment this is one of the greatest weaknesses of some of our work. . . .

"We believe that Christians face a constant warfare and no soldier can safely become indifferent to his enemy. So the maintaining of Christian life and standards requires an ever constant infilling with spiritual food and power.

"To that end we individual Christians, Christian Schools and Christian organizations, need this refreshing from above. Without it our witness becomes superficial, stereotyped and devoid of spiritual power. A form of godliness may persist but without spiritual reality.

"Humility will banish complacency and turn us back to the heart-searching before God which brings revival and blessing."—From the August 2nd number of *The Southern Presbyterian Journal*.

"Dramatic Fever"—2.

From "Voices in the Church" in *The Banner* of August 6, we take over part of an article signed by D.

"It is not at all surprising that our circles are breaking out with a 'rash' of plays or theatricals of late. To me it seems just another manifestation of the yearning for forbidden fruit. 'Oh yes,' we piously prate, 'our young people must have some fun too.' Has it come to the point where our entertainment must be for fun only and that we must imitate the world in these matters?

"Then I hear some one say, 'Must we not use our talents for our mutual benefit and edification, and to the honor and glory of God?' By all means! Our greatest musical compositions, our great masterpieces of art were produced by men who expressed their deepest religious feelings. Can the same be said of the field of plays or theatricals? I do not think anyone will be so naïve as to try and defend the present-day crop of dramatists, playwrights, and others

of their like, not to mention the Hollywood movies which are an offspring of the same family.

". . . . We are 'old fogies' and reactionaries if we resist this particular snare of the evil one. I earnestly request those who think they must have plays to busy themselves in some worth-while activity in God's kingdom. There is, for instance, a crying need for enthusiasm in all our church society-life. Let us build something worth-while on our existing foundations before we adopt other foundations and institutions of dubious value."

J. Howerzyl.

IN MEMORIAM

It pleased our heavenly Father to take from us unto Himself on September 7, 1948 our beloved wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and sister,

MRS. WM. KOOIENGA (nee Visser)

at the age of 68 years and 8 months.

Mr. William Kooienga
Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Kooienga
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Kooienga
Mr. and Mrs. Dick Kooienga
Mr. and Mrs. Edward Kooienga
Mr. and Mrs. Arie Ponstein
Mr. and Mrs. Martin Wustman
Mr. and Mrs. John Lanning
Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur Kooienga
Brothers: William and Peter Visser
29 Grandchildren
1 Great-Grandchild.

Grand Rapids, Michigan.

CONSISTORIES — ATTENTION

I have sent the Acts of the Synod of 1948 to all our consistories. If you have received an extra copy, please sell it and send the money to the undersigned.

And may I urge every consistory to appoint one of its members as agent to sell the Acts and Yearbook of 1948. I am sure every one of our families would like to have a copy. Price \$1.00. There are also a number of Church Orders left which sell for \$1.00.

D. Jonker, Stated Clerk
1210 Wealthy St., S. E.
Grand Rapids 6, Michigan.

When one thinks of the similarity between the world and the church it is necessary to remember that the world has not become more Christian; — Christians have become more worldly.—Vance Havner, quoted in *The Banner*.