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MEDITATION

De Lof Sions

“Gaaf rondom Sion en omringt het; telt zijne torens; zet uw hart op zijne vesting; beschouwt onderscheidenlijk zijne paleizen, opdat gij het den navolgenden geslachten vertelt. Want deze God is onze God eeuwig en altoos, Hij zal ons geleiden tot den dood toe.”

Psalm 48:13-15.

Er waren koningen gekomen tegen den berg Sion.

En toen was de Heere gekomen om Zijn volk te helpen. De Heere had plotseling gewerkt, want zoo spoedig zij Sion zagen, zoo werden zij verschrikt. Beving greep hen aan, smart als van een barende vrouw.

O ja, de Heere zorgt ervoor, dat er een gedurig getuigenis is van Zijne wonderdaden. En waarom? Opdat het goddelooze rot niet te verontschuldigen zou zijn.

Als ik over deze dingen schrijf, denk ik altijd aan die wondere gebeurtenis in Gethsemane. Daar staat Jezus, en Hij vraagt aan de goddelooze bende van ruwe, sterke, wreede soldaten: Wien zoekt gij? Wel, Hij wordt geantwoord, dat ze Hem zoeken. En dan plotseling, zonder één woord te spreken, vallen die sterke mannen achterwaarts ter aarde. En als ze opstaan, elkaar verbaasd aanstaren, dan vraagt Hij het nog eens. Weer hetzelfde antwoord, doch dan steekt Hij de handen uit. En de dwaze, goddelooze bende denkt niet meer aan die wondere achterover-werping, maar steken de handen uit naar Hem die het eeuwige gezang des Hemels is. Wat zouden ze er nu wel van denken?

Maar God liet zich niet onbetuigd in Sion. Mischien is deze psalm wel geschreven toen Sanherib

teruggeslagen werd door slechts één Engel van God die in den nacht 185000 soldaten sloeg.

Maar ik weet het niet. God heeft het ons niet openbaard.

Maar dit weet ik wel, dat Hij het veelmalen gedaan heeft. En dat Hij het gedaan heeft met een dubbel doel. De goddelooze menschen moeten het getuigenis van Gods grootheid hebben, en het doet Gods volk juichen van blijdschap. Hij zet Zijn volk aan 't loven hier op aarde alreeds. Hij zegt: Gaaf rondom den burcht Sions, en als ge alles gezien hebt van zijn sterkte en kracht en schoonheid, zingt er dan van en vertelt het aan het volgende geslacht! En zorgt ervoor, dat Ik, de Heere, al de eer ontvang. Want de God van al deze kracht en schoonheid is Uw God, en Hij zal U leiden tot over dood en graf naar de zalen waar die lof voortgezet zal worden in het orkest van eeuwige muziek en zingen, volmaaktelijk.

Israel, looft den Heere!

* * * *

De lof Sions!

Gaat rondom Sion!

Maar zegt het ons: wat is Sion?

Sion is letterlijk een berg in Palestina.

En het is de berg waarop Jeruzalem gebouwd is.

Maar Sion heeft nog grootere en meer heerlijke beteekenis. Sion is ook poëtische taal voor den tempel Gods en voor het koningshuis van David, want beide zijn op zijn rug gebouwd.

En als zoodanig was Sion het centrum van Israel's nationaal en godsdienstig bestaan.

O, daar zitten schoone gedachten in verscholen.

Sion is Jeruzalem, de stad des grooten Konings.

Sion is de tempel Gods, welks centrum het verzoendeksel is, waar het Bloed gesprenkeld werd, het Bloed der eeuwige verzoening.

En door dat Bloed, Sion is de omstrengeling der liefde van God en Mensch in eeuwige min.

Sion is Immanuel, God en verkoren mensch vereend.

Sion is David's Koningshuis, hetwelk symbolisch spreekt van het hoogheerlijke feit, dat God Koning is

van Zijn volk, dat Hij Zijn liefdewetten afvaardigt en dat zij Hem dienen in liefde.

Sion is de aanspraakplaats van Gods heiligheid.

Sion is lieflijk, is beeldschoon van gelegenheid, een vreugde der gansche aarde!

Geliefde lezer, denk het U even in. Zonder Sion gaat ge naar de hel der eeuwige verdoemenis.

Als er geen sprenkeling van Bloed komt op dien berg van Gods heiligheid, dan is er geen voldoening van de gekrenkte gerechtigheid en heiligheid van God.

Maar die sprenkeling is er gekomen. Sion is geopenbaard.

Sion was geprofeteerd van de allervroegste dagen. Getuige die hoopjes zand en steenen die door Gods volk al snikkende of al juichende gebouwd werden. Hun naam is altaren. En elk hoopje zand en elk hoopje steenen was een profetie van Sion. Sion zal komen. Sion zal pralen van de stralen van liefde-licht. God had dien berg al gemaakt. Hij lag te wachten op de bouwers van Jeruzalem, van den Tempel, van het Koningshuis, van het Kruis op Golgotha.

Want in dat laatste hebt ge de vervulling van alle altaren, van alle tabernakelen, tempels, koningshuizen, van alle bloedlatingen en slachterijen van beesten. Alle verzoendeksels ontvangen hun vervulling bij dat vloekhout.

Dat vloekhout is het eigenlijke Sion.

Sion is de plaats waar God de aarde aanraakt.

Ik mag het zoo zeggen: Sion is de plaats waar God de aarde kust.

Maar o wee! ziet het: waar God de aarde principeel kust, dat wil zeggen, waar Hij die aarde kust in den Heere Jezus Christus, daar wordt het bloed van Zijn minnend hart gestort.

De profeten hebben er van gezongen. Ze hebben gezegd, dat God er voor zorgen zou, dat de gerechtigheid en de vrede elkaar zouden kussen, maar die kus spelt den eeuwigen dood voor Jezus van Nazareth.

Looft dan treurend Golgotha.

Ge luistert naar de lof Sions.

* * * *

Israel, looft den Heere om Sion dat geopenbaard werd op Golgotha.

Het was nacht geweest in Sion.

Dat Sion scheen tot ondergang gedoemd. Geen twee duizend man in de vesting. En honderdduizenden van de Godhaters voor de vesting. En de duivel wist, dat er geen tweeduizend in de stad waren. Spot er mee.

Er zijn voorname koningen vergaderd. Ze hebben gezegd: Laat ons optrekken in den nacht tegen Sion.

Het was bang geworden in Sion. Leest den psalm maar.

Doch de morgen daagde.

God is groot in Sion. Dat moet Israel nooit ver-

geten. Anders is er geen troost voor dat volk. Verliezen we den God van Sion uit het oog, dan hangen we de harpen aan de wilgen.

En die God van Sion had de stad verlost door Zijn krachtige arm.

“Door ’s Hoogsten arm ’t geweld onttogen!”

En Sion staat blinkende. Een monument van de liefde Gods.

En zoo gaat het altijd met Sion. Het mag soms donker worden, maar achter die wolken schijnt de zonne der gerechtigheid en dra breekt hij door de wolken heen. En dan schittert alles in Sion.

Bezieet Sion nu eens! zegt God.

Gaat rondom en omringt het. Let op de verdedigingswerken: de torens en de vestingen.

Geen steen is losgemaakt of losgeschoten uit de borstweringen. Niet één peil van Satan vermocht iets tegen de verdedigingswerken van Sion. Al die vurige pijlen zijn geblusht. Niet één stormram der hel heeft ook maar iets geschaad. Alles is even gaaf en even stevig als het van eeuwigheid af geweest is. Hebt ge het nooit gehoord, dat Hij niemand toeliet om Sion waarlijk kwaad te doen?

Maakt dan studie van Sion. Sion is de wijsheid en de kracht Gods om Zijn volk te verlossen. Paulus heeft het ons gezegd. En die wijsheid en die kracht Gods is Jezus van Nazareth die aan het kruis sterft, doch in den hof van Jozef opstaat, om voorts naar de hemelen te reizen.

Bestudeert Sion dan. Ziet sterk op Jezus, en ge zult het zien, dat alles recht kwam. God heeft nooit een veldslag verloren. Hij en wij zijn meer dan overwinnaars.

Looft dan den Heere vanwege Sion!

De lof Sions is goed en betamelijk.

* * * *

Israel moet den Heere loven vanwege Sion.

Ziet dan nog eens op Sion.

Het is “het geducht paleis” van Zijn eeuwige trouw.

En daarom is Hij nog groot in Sion. Zijn trouw bestaat tot in der eeuwigheid. Zijn verbondsgemeenschap der vriendschap en liefde is ongedeerd.

Satan en alle hellemachten en alle krachten om te zondigen hebben niet vermocht.

Looft dan met nieuwe lofgezangen de nieuwe blijken van Zijn gunst.

En de Heere zal U onderwijzen in het waarom.

Sion is *wordende*.

Sion is ingezet bij de roeping van Adam en Eva. En God is blijven roepen, zoodat Sion vermeerderde van eeuw tot eeuw. Vader en grootvader zijn toen naar den hemel gegaan, en zij wachten op de zonen en de dochteren.

Om te spreken met andere woorden, woorden die

gij van Uw prilste jeugd af aan gehoord hebt, en langzamerhand hebt liefgekegen: Sion bestaat uit geslachten. God bevestigt Zijn verbond van *kind tot kind*.

En zodoende wordt Sion voller en voller van eeuw tot eeuw. Wat heeft Adam er al veel zien komen! Altemaal kinderen van hem.

En dat zal voortgaan van geslacht tot geslacht tot dat geen maan meer schijnt, totdat de laatste Sioniet binnengehaald wordt, de tijd ophoudt, en de deuren van de stad des grooten Konings gesloten worden voor eeuwig.

Maar God gebruikt het eene geslacht om het andere te onderwijzen aangaande het lieflijke en het schitterende Sion.

De vaders onderwijzen de kinderen.

"Opdat zij het den navolgenden geslachten vertelt!"

Looft God in Sion ten aanhoore van Uwe kinderen!

En dan heeft men mij verteld dat er menschen gevonden worden die zeggen in Sion te wonen, en die toch niet gelooven in de Christelijke School!

Ik kan het haast niet gelooven. Zijn het soms verspieters van den vijand? De vijand binnen de muren van de stad? De meest verachtelijke van Satan's uitbroedsel?

God zegt: Vertelt het aan het navolgende geslacht.

Zullen wij dan zeggen: ik weet het beter?! Ik stuur mijn kinderen naar Satan en ik zal Satan opdragen om mijn kinderen te onderwijzen?

Spreeken wij te bont? Ik wil slechts één vraag vragen: Is de wereld dan niet het gebied van die goddelooze koningen die vergaderd waren tegen Sion?

Neen, maar wij gaan onze kinderen bij de hand nemen, en wij zullen hen gedurig wijzen op de vestingen en verdedigingswerken, op de almachtige kracht van Sion. We zullen hen voorts meenemen naar binnen en wij zullen hen de paleizen van God's eeuwige trouw laten zien. En we zullen zeggen: Kinderen, ziet sterk op Sion, daar, op het aangezicht van den bloedenden Zoon van God die daar hangt te sterven voor U en voor mij. Het al is een openbaring van een eeuwige liefde.

Wij die ouder geworden zijn, wij vergaderen de jongeren, de kinderen, en wij roepen hen al zingende toe: Israel dat aan 't komen zijt, verkondig de lof des Heeren vanwege Sion!

* * * *

De lof Sions!

En dat beteekent dat ge den geheelen inhoud des lofs vertelt.

Het is een zeer particulier werk. Zeer moeilijk.

Er is altijd de verleiding om de grootheid van God te verkleinen, en de miserabele kracht van den mensch te vergrooten.

Laat ons maar direkt hier uitspreken, dat de mensch, de uitverkoren mensch, de wederomgeboren, bekeerden, door God goed-gemaakten-mensch geen krachten heeft in zichzelf. "Van Wien het volk zijn sterkte heeft". En ook dit: "Hij is de kracht van hunne kracht!"

O ja, ge vecht in Sion en buiten Sion tegen het goddelooze rot, die vechten onder het vaandel van de leugen en onder hun bevelhebber, Satan. Maar alles aan U die een krijger Gods zijt is afkomstig van God.

Uw aanzijn als een beminnend krijger onder de banier van Jezus is van God. God verloor datgene wat *niet* was. (Leest I Cor. 1.)

Uw geestelijke kracht wordt U ingegoten.

Uw wapenrusting is van God.

En als ge al juichende vecht onder aanvoering van den oppersten Generaal Jezus, dan roept Hij U toe: Gij zijt meer dan overwinnaars door Hem die U heeft liefgehad!

Zorgt er dan voor, dat ge Uw kinderen den vollen inhoud van de lof vertelt.

Zorgt er dan voor, dat ge Uw kinderen den vollen inhoud van de lof vertelt.

Predikt het komende geslacht een God die waarlijk God is. Hij is onze God en Hij zal ons leiden tot den dood toe.

O, maar daar zit een eeuwigheid van gedachten in: de leidende God. Ik mag ook schrijven: de lijdende God. Als ik dat laatste maar verbind aan het eigenlijke Sion: de schandpaal van Golgotha.

O ja, God leidt in den strijd. En tot den dood toe. Dat zal waar zijn.

Laat ons ten slotte dien God die leidt gadeslaan in Zijn leiden en in Zijn lijden.

Tusschen U en de verwerkelijking van Uw verblijf in de eeuwige paleizen in den hemel der hemelen staan: de toorn Gods, de duivel en zijn trawanten, de wereld en haar haat, en Uw eigen verraderlijke vleesch: Petrus hoor ik zweeren en vloeken!

Maar God leidt.

God is aan de spits getreden.

Hij vernietigt den toorn Gods. Staat hier even bij stil, en aanbidt. Laat mij het nog eens zeggen: God vernietigt den toorn Gods die anders eeuwig over U en in U zou branden. Ziet ge niet dat God de leidende en de lijdende God is? In Jezus.

En Satan grijpt Hij in de borst en vermorzelt zijn kop.

De wereld werd veroordeeld in het kruis.

En onze zonde hangt hij als schuld aan Zijn kruis en vernietigt het.

Wie zou dan niet loven in Sion?

G. Vos.

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EDITORIALS

Extinguished Root And Branch

In *Eenigheid des Geloofs* we read an article by the Rev. K. Meima in which, among other things, he writes as follows:

“Hierbij kan ook nog genoemd worden het recente voorbeeld van de verhouding tussen de vrijgemaakte kerken en de Prot. Gereformeerde Kerken in Amerika. De Synode van Amersfoort heeft besloten om met deze kerken contact te zoeken. Maar enkele leden van die Synode, t.w., Ds. E. Th. v.d. Born van Amersfoort, de praeses Ds. D. van Dijk van Groningen, Ds. K. Doornbos van Wormer, Ds. J. van Raalte van Neede, Ds. G. Vissee van Kampen, ouderling Pilon van Uithuizen en Prof. Holwerda, vroegen opname van de verklaring in de acta: ‘Wij verklaren, dat wij ons niet conformeren aan de besluiten van de Generale Synode van Amersfoort 1948, inzake het scheppen van de relatie van corresponderende kerk, met de Protestant Reformed Churches in Noord-Amerika en dat wij ons het recht voorbehouden deze besluiten te bestrijden, ook in het openbaar.’

“De drijfveer tot deze verklaring zal wel liggen in het feit, dat door Ds. H. Hoeksema van Grand Rapids, de geestelijke vader van de Prot. Ref. Ch., in een brochure ‘De Gelovigen en hun zaad’ van de verbondsopvatting, zoals deze onder ons gangbaar is, is gezegd, dat ze met wortel en tak moet worden uitgeroeid.

“Prof. Schilder heeft indertijd in de Reformatie Prof. Dr. G. Ch. Aalders verweten, dat hij zijn verbondsopvatting alleen voor de schriftuurlijke hield. Wie niet leerde, dat verbond en verkiezing quantitatief gelijk waren, was niet gereformeerd. Prof. Schilder heeft toen erop gewezen, dat velen hier te lande en in Amerika het niet met die stelling eens waren en toch goed gereformeerd waren. Hij wees toen ook op het pas verschenen boek van Ds. W. H. v.d. Vegt van Goes: Het genadeverbond bij Calvijn, die juist aantoonde, dat verbond en verkiezing bij Calvijn helemaal niet quantitatief gelijk waren. Ik heb de indruk, dat Ds. H. Hoeksema wel zeer sterk het verbond vanuit de verkiezing benadert. En het heeft mij zeer verwonderd, dat Prof. Schilder, die anders meestal zo consequent is, niet tegenover Ds. Hoeksema dezelfde houding heeft aangenomen als tegenover Prof. Aalders. Een uitdrukking: ‘met wortel en tak uitroeien’ kan niet door de beugel.”

In reply to this I want to say first of all that in my brochure, “De Geloovigen en hun Zaad”, I did not attack the covenant view of the liberated churches but that of Prof. Heyns. In my foreword, with the second

print, I wrote very specifically: "Ben bedenke hierbij, dat deze materie niet geschreven werd met het oog op de kerkelijke verwickelingen in het oude vaderland, doch reeds achttien jaren geleden verscheen in den vorm van artikelen in de STANDARD BEARER. De tekst werd geheel onveranderd gelaten." Of course, if the Rev. Meima means to say that the covenant view of the liberated churches in the Netherlands agrees one hundred percent with that of Prof. Heyns, I will apply the proverb, "Let him whom the shoe fits put it on." But I have my doubts whether at least all the liberated churches will follow the view of Prof. Heyns, who, in my estimation, is certainly Arminian and Pelagian.

The expression, "This view must be extinguished root and branch," occurs in the context of the following paragraph in "De Geloovigen en Hun Zaad".

"We can, therefore, on the basis of Scripture as well as of the Reformed line, as it is especially indicated in the form for the administration of baptism, reach first of all this negative result, that the presentation of Prof. Heyns is to be rejected. The essence of the covenant does not consist in a promise in the sense of a general offer. All the children of the flesh, or rather, all external children of the covenant, all 'covenant members', do not receive a certain life. God does not promise every child of believers the salvation in Jesus Christ. No more than there is a certain general offer in the preaching for every one that hears it, no more is there a certain general promise in the covenant of God. This view must be extinguished root and branch. It lies entirely on the line of Pelagius and Arminius."

I still maintain that this is true.

The essence of the covenant is not the promise, and especially not the promise, as Prof. Heyns presents it, as a general offer of grace and salvation. To me the idea of the covenant is the eternal relation of friendship between God and His people in Jesus Christ, according to which He is their God, their Friend-Sovereign, Who saves them and grants them all the blessings of His grace, until He eternally realizes His covenant in His everlasting tabernacle; while their part in the covenant is that they love the Lord their God with all their heart and mind and soul and strength, forsake the world, crucify their flesh, and walk in a new and holy life. That is the idea of the covenant according to Scripture.

According to Prof. Heyns all the external children of the covenant receive a certain grace, a certain life, which enables them either to accept or reject their covenant obligation. If this is not Pelagianism applied to the sphere of the covenant, then I do not know what Pelagianism means. Nor do I believe that the liberated churches in the Netherlands accept this view of Prof. Heyns at all.

When, on the other hand, liberated churches emphasize that the promise of the covenant is for all children of believers, elect and reprobate, carnal and spiritual, I certainly do not agree with them. And I still look for an explanation that squares this view with Reformed theology. I wish that the Rev. Meima or anyone else in the old country would make an attempt to do this.

The Rev. Meima complains that I approach the truth of the covenant very strongly from the direction of election. But I ask: what is wrong with this approach for people who believe in the Reformed truth? Is not election the very heart of the church? And should not that heart beat in every doctrine which the church teaches? Can the approach to any doctrine ignore the doctrine of predestination? I deny this. And especially do I deny that the doctrine of the covenant can be approached properly, except on the basis of election and reprobation.

But once more I must emphasize that in my brochure, "De Geloovigen en Hun Zaad", I did not attack the covenant view of the liberated churches, but simply the view of Prof. Heyns, which is certainly Pelagian and Arminian.

H. H.

Proposition Concerning The Covenant Of Grace

We were discussing the third proposition signed by Dr. F. L. Bos (a liberated) and Rev. E. G. van Teylingen (a synodical).

In this proposition they explain the seventy-fourth answer of the Heidelberg Catechism, concerning infant baptism, in such a way that redemption from sin and the Holy Ghost, the author of faith, is promised to all the children of the church. By "children of the church" they evidently mean all the children that are born in the church as the gathering of believers on earth, or, all the children of believing parents. And therefore, the two brethren agree that all the children have the promise, the promise of redemption from sin by the blood of Christ, and the promise of the Holy Spirit as the author of faith.

We were wondering, as we stated in our last editorial, how Ursinus, in his commentary on the Catechism, would explain this answer; and we found that he apparently contradicts himself. Compare the following quotations from said commentary, on answer 74: "All the children of those that believe are included in the covenant and church of God." It seems that this must be understood in the widest sense of the word, as cer-

tainly including all that are born in the church on earth. Now compare with this the following quotations: "Those who do not believe, that is, who have no faith at all, neither by profession nor by inclination, are not to be baptized. But infants born of believing parents have faith as to inclination." And again: "If infants have the Holy Ghost, he certainly works in them regeneration, good inclinations, new desires, and such other things as are necessary for their salvation, or he at least supplies them with everything that is requisite for their baptism."

Now, if we compare these two classes of quotations and take them together, the only conclusion to which one apparently can come is that Ursinus believed that all the children of believing parents are regenerated and have faith. But this is impossible, because it certainly is not according to Scripture that the whole church on earth, as it appears to us as the gathering of believers and their children, consists of the elect. And also experience teaches quite the contrary. And many quotations can be made from the commentary of Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism which plainly show that he himself did not believe this. But if this be true, there can be only one other alternative, and that is that the expression "all the children of those that believe are included in the covenant and church of God" must be limited to the elect, to the true spiritual children of the covenant. They have the promise of redemption through the blood of Christ and the promise of the Holy Ghost, the author of faith.

Nevertheless, although we fully agree with the answer in the Heidelberg Catechism concerning infant baptism, we cannot agree with Ursinus when he declares that only those that believe, or that have the inclination of faith, should be baptized, and no others. In the first place, it ought to be plain that in that case we are never in a position to baptize anyone, whether adults or children: for we cannot look in the hearts, and "*de intimis non judicat ecclesia*"; and there are also hypocrites in the church, even among the adults. In that case, however, we certainly could not baptize infants: for we cannot distinguish between the true spiritual seed and the carnal seed born of believing parents. Besides, the Word of God plainly teaches that there are reprobates in the historical line of the covenant, that are under the covenant, yet not in the covenant. And experience teaches the same thing. Hence, it is plain that God also wants reprobates baptized, just as Esau, the typical reprobate, was circumcised. And just as in the old dispensation to apply the sign of circumcision was commanded by God, so in the new dispensation we baptize all the children born of believing parents, all the children of the church, all the children that are born in the line of the covenant, on God's own command, whether they be elect or reprobate. Even if we should be able

clearly to distinguish the children of the covenant between carnal and spiritual seed from their infancy, which, of course, is impossible, yet we would baptize them all.

For the same reason we cannot agree with the synodicals, who presume regeneration in all the children of believers and want to reckon them as real spiritual seed until the opposite becomes manifest. Also presumptive regeneration cannot be the basis for infant baptism. We simply know quite definitely, both from Scripture and from experience, that this presumption is not true. We know, according to Scripture, that there are carnal and spiritual children in the covenant line. And after all also the church on earth and the covenant of God must be judged not according to our suppositions or according to our presumptions, but according to the revelation of the Word of God.

Nor can we agree with the liberated. Just as it is the attempt of the synodicals to assert something about all the children of the covenant, head for head, even though it is only in presumption, so the liberated assert of all the children born in the church in the line of the covenant and of believing parents that they all have the promise of God. Also this is plainly contrary to the Word of God, which emphasizes that the promise of God is only for the elect, Rom. 9:8: "That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." And in Heb. 6:12 ff., we read "That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. For when God made the promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of the promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." Especially from the latter passage it is very evident that the promise is not for all, but for the heirs of the promise, for the elect, whom God in His eternal counsel has chosen unto eternal life. Besides, this position is also contrary to the truth that the promise includes the promise of the Holy Ghost and faith, which certainly does not depend on the will of man. Therefore, if the promise depends on God alone, and God certainly fulfills His promise, it must be very evident that the promise is for the elect only.

But we certainly can subscribe to the seventy-fourth answer of the Heidelberg Catechism as it

stands: "Yes: for since they, as well as the adult, are included in the covenant and church of God; and since redemption from sin by the blood of Christ, and the Holy Ghost, the author of faith, is promised to them no less than to the adult; they must therefore by baptism, as a sign of the covenant, be also admitted into the Christian church." And always the elect receive the promise, and the rest are hardened.

H. H.

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART TWO

Of Man's Redemption

LORD'S DAY 25

5.

The Idea Of The Sacraments. (cont.)

Sacraments are visible signs and seals instituted by God, administered by the Church, received by the believers and their seed, whereby He obsignates visibly the invisible grace of His covenant and seals it unto the believers, and whereby He gives unto His Church ensigns and banners of His covenant to distinguish them from the world.

Signs in general serve the purpose to represent something visibly that is in itself invisible. Numerous are such signs in the life of men in general; they evidently have need to express the spiritual and invisible by a visible and material token. Thus, secret police bear a badge of their invisible authority and power. Members of secret societies and unions wear a button to denote their membership and their unity with the fraternity to which they belong. A ship raises the flag as a sign of its nationality.

The same is true of signs in the Word of God. The Word itself is really a sign, for language serves the purpose to express in visible and audible form that which eye hath not seen and ear hath never heard and hath never been conceived in the heart of man. And so, also in creation there are many visible signs of the invisible and heavenly things. In a very general sense all things are signs and symbols of things that

are heavenly. For when the Creator of the universe called into existence the present world, He had respect unto the world to come. Mere earthly things did not constitute the ultimate realization of His eternal good pleasure. He hath provided some better thing for His people, the glory of the heavenly kingdom. And when He made things earthy, He had the heavenly things in mind and made the former an image of the latter. And so it happens that all things are signs, and that the things of the kingdom of God, according to the Word of Christ, take place in parables. The sun and the moon and the stars, shining and sparkling in the firmament, the rainbow that spans the heavens, the beasts of the field and the flying birds, the cedars of Lebanon and the noble vine, as well as the thorn and the thistle, the lamb and the serpent, the mystery of the numbers and the manifold beauty of the colors, the earthly square and the heavenly cube and the eternal circle, the sparkling diamond and the softly shining pearl, the sand that is by the seashore, the restless ocean and the mighty mountains, the bare desert and the fertile field, the seed that falls in the earth and dies to live again, the fierce tempest and the gentle zephyr, the roaring thunder and the flashing lightning, the light of day and the darkness of the night,—all things are signs, and they speak a language of their own, pointing upward, groaning in hope.

Besides, there are signs which the Lord God Himself has separated out of that creation and which He especially designates as signs, drawing the attention of His people. The tree of life in the first paradise was indeed more than a sign in as far as Adam through the means of that tree could receive the perpetuation of his earthly life. But it nevertheless was also a sign. As the tree stood there, in the midst of the first paradise, it was a token between God and Adam of the life of the friendship of God, an image of the eternal life in the new paradise that was to come. And the same is true of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil: it was a sign unto Adam and also between God and Adam of the antithesis, a sign that either in the way of obedience or of disobedience he could attain to a certain knowledge of good and evil. For in the way of obedience Adam would be established in that positive knowledge according to which he hated evil and loved the good; while in the way of disobedience he would plunge himself in the darkness in which he hated the good and loved the evil.

Later, after the deluge, God gave the sign of the rainbow to the people of His covenant. For the rainbow was a visible creature of God, obsignating the invisible faithfulness and grace of God's eternal covenant as it encompasses all the universe. Similar signs, to which God Himself calls the attention, were given to Abraham in the stars of the firmament and in the sand that is by the seashore. Besides, in Scripture the

flood is called a sign of baptism, and so is the passage through the Red Sea; while the rock in the desert, that followed the Israelites, and the manna that rained from heaven point to the Christ. Besides, all the miracles performed by the Saviour during His earthly ministry, the healing of the sick, the restoration of sight to the blind and of hearing to the deaf, the strengthening of the lame and halt, the changing of water into wine, the cleansing of the lepers, and the raising of the dead, were signs, manifesting the power and authority of Christ to redeem and to renew all things in the eternal kingdom of heaven.

However, all these signs are not as such sacraments, although some of them, especially the trees in paradise, have a certain sacramental value. But they are nevertheless distinguished from the sacraments in this respect, that they are not instituted in the Church to be kept and administered by the Church and to serve as distinguishing marks and banners for the Church. However, also the sacraments are first of all signs. There is in the sacrament a visible token: water, bread, and wine. And these visible signs obdurate and represent the invisible grace of God's covenant: the blood of Christ, forgiveness of sins, justification, sanctification, the entrance into God's covenant, and the nourishing grace which is received out of Christ. And therefore they also serve as ensigns and banners, separating and distinguishing the people of God in separation from the world and designating them as of the party of the living God.

In the second place, the sacraments also are seals; for thus we read in Romans 4:11: "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also." Now a seal is a sign of the authority of its author, in this case of God. It is a sign that cannot be violated or broken; it is a solemn pledge. It is, as it were, the oath of God, which He will surely fulfill. For thus we read in Hebrews 6:13,ff.: "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."

The question is, however: what exactly is being

sealed by the sacrament? Is everyone that receives the sacrament by that seal of God assured of his salvation? Is the sacrament a seal upon the persons that receive the sacrament? This is evidently impossible, for in that case the sacrament would lie at least as often as it speaks the truth: for there are many that partake of the sacrament, or receive it, without believing or without having the faith; not all that receive the sacrament are saved. Hence, some try to make the distinction between the objective bequest of salvation and the subjective reception or acceptance of it. According to them the case would be thus, that God through the seal and the sign of the sacrament on His part assures unto everyone that receives the sacrament that He will grant salvation out of free grace. This means about the same thing as the so-called well-meaning offer of salvation to all that hear the gospel. Just as the promise of salvation in the well-meaning offer of the gospel is meant for all that hear it, so, objectively, God promises grace and righteousness and salvation and eternal life to all that outwardly receive the sacrament. And it depends upon the acceptance of this gracious bequest on the part of God whether or not the sacrament is applicable to and valid for him that receives it.

This is the view of the sacrament which for many years has been taught by Prof. Heyns and has been imbibed by many in the Christian Reformed Churches. The essence of the covenant, according to him, is the promise of God; and that promise really amounts to a well-meaning offer of salvation to all that receive the sacrament. He made the distinction between the objective bequest of salvation on the part of God and the subjective application or acceptance of that bequest on the part of the believer. In the baptism form he made the distinction between the work of the Father and the Son on the one hand, and the work of the Holy Spirit on the other. In the sacrament God the Father "witnesseth and sealeth unto us, that he doth make an eternal covenant of grace with us, and adopts us for his children and heirs, and therefore will provide us with every good thing, and avert all evil or turn it to our profit." And through the same sacrament "the Son sealeth 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 freed from all our sins, and accounted righteous before God" All this belongs to God's objective bequest of grace and salvation. It belongs to the promise of God which is applicable to all that receive the sacrament. But whether those that partake of the sacrament will also actually receive the salvation depends upon the subjective state of him that receives it, that is, upon the faith of the believer. Hence, Heyns wants to read that part of the baptism form that speaks of the application of salvation and of all that

we have in Christ by the Holy Spirit in such a way that it is really contingent upon the choice and the will of man. God the Father and God the Son objectively grant and bequest all that is included in the promise of salvation to everyone that receives the sacrament. But when it comes to the Holy Spirit, Heyns wants to emphasize that He *will* dwell in us and sanctify us to be members of Christ, applying unto us that which we have in Christ; but whether He will actually apply this salvation to us depends upon our acceptance of the objective bequest of God. It goes without saying that in this way we must needs fall into the Arminian and Pelagian error.

Hence, we must view the matter in a different light.

Sacraments do not seal the persons that receive the sacraments, nor do they seal an objective bequest or offer of salvation to everyone that receives the sign of the sacrament. But they do seal the righteousness which is out of faith. That is why the element of faith was emphasized in all the quotations of the Reformed symbols to which we referred in the preceding part of this chapter. God seals, He assures with an oath, that He reckons faith unto righteousness. Hence, through the same sacrament He assures the believers in Jesus Christ that He will surely grant unto them all without doubt the grace of His covenant and the salvation which He promised them. In other words, the sacraments are particular, not general. Even as the promises of the gospel are particular and are only for the believers, that is, therefore, in last analysis, for the elect, so also the seal of the sacrament is a particular seal: the sacrament sets the inviolable seal of God upon the unbreakable connection between faith and righteousness without the works of the law. This is evidently the meaning of Romans 4:11: "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised." This is also the meaning of question 67 and its answer of the Heidelberg Catechism: "Are both word and sacraments, then, ordained and appointed for this end, that they may direct our faith to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, as the only ground of our salvation? Answer. Yes, indeed: for the Holy Ghost teaches us in the gospel, and assures us by the sacraments, that the whole of our salvation depends upon the one sacrifice of Christ which he offered for us on the cross." Sacraments direct our *faith* to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. Faith is presupposed, and is an indispensable requisite for receiving the sacrament. The unbeliever has absolutely nothing in the sacrament. This does not mean that the sacraments ever lie: for they seal the righteousness which is of faith. No more than the promise of the gospel. But exactly because it is faith that is required in the true participation of the sacraments,

and faith is not of man but the work of God through the Holy Spirit, the author of faith, therefore the sacrament as well as the gospel is ultimately only for the elect. And just as for the unbelieving reprobate the gospel is a savour of death unto death, so also is the sacrament, whether of baptism or of holy communion, a savour of death unto death for those that have not the faith. It is only to the believers, therefore, that in the sacraments God seals His salvation.

In the third place, it must be emphasized that sacraments are signs and seals that are instituted by God. This implies first of all that God has ordained them and separated them unto the purpose of sacraments. Bread, water, and wine are indeed adapted in creation to be signs of the grace of Christ; but without anything else they are not sacramental signs. This they become through the fact that God separated them and ordained them specifically to be signs of His salvation. And in the second place, this also implies that the Church received the sacraments in order that they should be observed and administered and celebrated by her. This was true with respect to circumcision and the passover under the old dispensation, and this is equally true with respect to baptism and holy communion under the new dispensation. In Gen. 17:9-11 we read: "And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant, therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man-child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you." And in Exodus 12:14: "And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever." In Matt. 28:19 we read: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." And in I Cor. 11:23-27 the apostle Paul speaks of having received the ordinance of the Lord's Supper as a special revelation: "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."

H. H.

OUR DOCTRINE

The Attributes Of God

THE HOLINESS OF GOD.

Its Idea.

The principal words in Scripture for the concept, "holiness", are KADOSH in Hebrew and HAGIOS in the New Testament Greek. These words mean fundamentally "purity", either physical or moral, and particularly "freedom" from moral defilement. However, the root meaning of the word is closely associated with "cutting, separating", so that "holiness" refers to a separation from evil and corruption and consecration to the Lord.

Its Prominent Mention in Holy Writ.

That "holiness" occupies a prominent place in the revelation of the Scriptures can hardly be questioned. This applies particularly to the Old Testament, due undoubtedly to Israel's unique position in the midst of the world, although the word also appears prominently in the New Testament. Israel's position in the midst of the world was unique; the people of God during the Old Dispensation lived a life of separation from the world and unique dedication unto the Lord. Israel was not separated from the nations round about her as one nation was separated from another nation. Israel was separated from *all* the nations of the world. It alone did not serve idols. And, Israel alone was dedicated unto the Lord, the living God. All the other peoples of the earth served idols, such as Baal, Baalim, Moloch, Bell, Ashteroth, etc. But Israel's God was Jehovah, the I AM, the Rock, Who is what He was and shall be what He is, the only and absolute Reality, of Whom and through Whom and unto Whom are all things, Who alone does all things and Who does all things for His Name's sake. This God, the only God, was the God of Israel and of Israel alone, and they were His people, they alone. Hence, Israel's position in the midst of the world was unique. The eyes of all the peoples of the earth were upon her. One need not, therefore, be surprised because of the prominent mention of "holiness" in the Old Testament. The fundamental significance of this concept is that of separation and consecration. Whatever is holy is surely unique. Israel's peculiar position in the midst of the world, and Jehovah's revelation to them that He was their God, only their God, that He alone is God and that no other god (and every other "god" is vain) can be compared unto Him must unquestionably ex-

plain the oft repeated occurrence of the concept "holiness" in the Old Testament. This, as we have already remarked, does not mean that this emphasis upon the word, "holiness", must be confined to the Old Testament. It also appears throughout the New Testament.

No attribute of the Lord is mentioned more prominently in the Scriptures than that of "holiness". And although one cannot separate the attributes of God and ascribe more significance to one than to another, yet the Word of God surely lays emphasis upon this virtue and presents it as *the* peculiar Divine virtue. How often do we not read in the Scriptures (as, e.g., in the prophecy of Isaiah) that the Lord is holy! It is a fact that He is repeatedly called "the Holy One of Israel, de Heilige Israels." Thus the Lord reveals Himself to Isaiah in the sixth chapter of that prophecy, and thus the prophecy continually speaks of Him. How often the word occurs with respect to the ceremonial, civil, and religious life of the people of God in the Old Dispensation! Everything is holy in connection with the life of the covenant people of the Lord. How often does it not occur that the people of God themselves are called holy! And we are all acquainted with the fact that the third Person of the Trinity is called by this name, "The Holy Spirit." It is clear, therefore, that the word "holy" occupies a very prominent place in the revelation of Holy Writ. God is holy; His Spirit is holy; Jesus is called "holy", both as the Son of God and as the Lord's holy Child; His calling is holy and, because this calling of God is holy, we are called "called saints (called holy ones)." Indeed, "holiness" is a very important aspect of the Goodness of God.

"Holiness" Also Expresses a Position or Relationship.

It is unquestionably true that the concept "holiness" expresses a position or relationship. The question has been disputed at length whether holiness emphasizes a moral, ethical quality or merely a position or relationship. Is a "holy" person primarily one who is characterized by ethical perfection, or is he "holy" because he has been separated from and consecrated unto something or someone? Is a person holy in himself or because of a relationship wherein he stands to another? Is holiness, therefore, primarily a relative concept, a concept which emphasizes a position or relationship?

That the concept "holiness", in Holy Writ expresses a position or relationship is plain. We read of an holy land (Ex. 3:5), a holy convocation (Ex. 12:16), a holy sabbath (Ex. 16:23), a holy people (Ex. 19:6), a holy place (Ex. 29:31), a holy oil (Ex. 30:25), a holy linen coat (Lev. 16:4), a holy jubilee (Lev. 25:12), a holy house (Lev. 27:14), a holy acre (Lev. 27:21), a holy

tithe (Lev. 27:30), holy water (Num. 5:17), holy vessels (Num. 16:37), a holy firstling of a cow or of a sheep or of a goat (Num. 18:17), a holy army (Deut. 23:14), holy gold (Joshua 6:19), holy bread (I Sam. 21:4), holy ark (II Chron. 35:3), holy seed (Ezra 9:2), holy city (Nehemiah 11:1), holy covenant (Daniel 11:21), holy word (Ps. 105:42). Besides, we read of the temple as a sanctuary (holy place), in Exodus 15:17, with its Holy Place and Holy of Holies; and in many passages of the Word of God the angels and the children of Israel are declared to be holy. The Bible speaks of holy prophets, priests, and kings, of holy cups and spoons and knives as they were used in the tabernacle and later in the temple. And it is evident from all these passages that the concept "holiness" here does not emphasize any inner, spiritual attribute, but a relationship—all these persons and things are "holy" because they have been separated from common use and consecrated unto the peculiar service of the living God.

However, this does not necessarily prove the contention that this idea of position or relationship constitutes the essence of "holiness". On the one hand, we must bear in mind that the Israel of the Old Dispensation was a mighty type. Its vast and intricate, complex ceremonial and religious and civil life spoke a mighty symbolical language. Why were all these vessels and cups and spoons, etc., holy? Why do we read of the holy city, land, acre, etc.? Why does the Word of God reveal to us all the intricate and complex details of the tabernacle and the temple? What may be the meaning of all the couplings and brackets and sockets and colours of the temple service? Why is it that this entire system of worship, in all its minutest details, has been prescribed by the Lord, so that, in the book of Leviticus, these words recur repeatedly: "As the Lord commanded Moses"? Why is it that nothing was left to the ingenuity of man, even such a man as Moses? Is it not because our service of the Lord is purely of the Lord? Is it not because the establishment of the covenant, the relationship of living friendship between us and Jehovah, is exclusively of Jehovah? And if, then, this temple service is recorded in the Old Testament in minutest detail, so that we read of the vessels, spoons, cups, snuffdishes, sockets, couplings, brackets, etc., is it not because it is our calling to be a consecrated people unto the Lord in all the minutest details of our lives? If in the Old Dispensation everything belonged unto the Lord and must be dedicated to the Lord, also of us it is true that we must be a people of the living God and that we must be dedicated unto Him and His service with all that we are and possess. Israel of the Old Dispensation was, therefore, a mighty type, and its vast and intricate, complex mode of living likewise spoke a mighty symbolical language.

Besides, that the concept "holiness" must not be understood as merely emphasizing a position or a relationship also appears from another observation. If a holy person be merely a person who has been consecrated unto the service of another, would sinners, then, not also be holy? They are consecrated to the devil, are they not? Would they, therefore, not also be holy, if to be holy merely emphasizes a relationship? Whether we are devoted to the Lord or to the devil, we stand in a relationship. Holy we are, then, whether we serve the Lord or Mammon, if we understand, to be holy merely implies a relationship. Yet, we do not read of a "holy sinner." That would be a contradiction in terms. Holiness and sin exclude each other. It must be obvious, therefore, that the concept, "holiness", also has a spiritual, ethical content in Holy Writ. Only that which is related and consecrated to the Lord is holy. Obviously, therefore, God determines a person's "holiness".

*"Holiness" Also Implies an Ethical,
Spiritual Quality.*

That the concept, "holiness", also has an ethical content is plain from Holy Writ. This appears not only from the passages which refer to the living God (to which we will call attention presently in this article) but also from passages which refer to Christ and His people. Christ, e.g., is called "holy" in Mark 1:23-25. We quote: "And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him." It is clear from this passage that this evil spirit recognizes the Christ. It is also clear that the recognition with which he recognizes the Christ is also a spiritual recognition; i.e., he recognizes the spiritual contrast between himself and the Christ. He calls Jesus the "Holy One of God". And the holy writer refers to this spirit as an "unclean" spirit. The "holiness", therefore, of the Christ stands over against the uncleanness, corruption of this "evil" spirit. Christ is the "Holy One of God" because He is supremely and perfectly devoted to God; this spirit is unclean because he is the very opposite of this holiness of the Christ, stands opposed to God and all that pertains to His Name and Kingdom. And we must also notice from this account in the gospel of Mark that this recognition of the Christ by the unclean spirit is immediate and spontaneous.

In Acts 4:27-30 we have another reference to the holiness of Jesus Christ. We again quote: "For a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, Whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the

Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together. For to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto Thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak Thy word, by stretching forth Thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the Name of Thy holy child, Jesus." Notice the contrast in this passage between the "holy child, Jesus", and wicked men who have threatened the Church of God. The reference here to the "holy child Jesus", surely explains the wicked action of these men. Their hatred of Jesus is rooted in the fact that He is God's "holy child". And as God's "holy child" He was supremely dedicated unto the living God. These words of Acts 4, which constitute a part of that beautiful prayer of the Church, are a quotation of Ps. 2:1-3 where we read of the raging of the heathen against the Lord and against His Anointed. God's "Anointed" is he who has been ordained and qualified by Jehovah to be His Party and Servant in the midst of the world. Also Acts 4:27 speaks of this anointing of the Christ in the words: "Whom Thou hast anointed". To be "anointed" by the Lord and to be "His holy child" are synonymous, identical in meaning. Christ is the Lord's "holy child" exactly because He loved the Lord with all His heart and mind and soul and strength and was His Servant in the midst of the world. Therefore wicked men hated Him; and for this reason the wicked world has always hated His Church because that Church represents and reveals Him. It is evident also from this passage that this "holiness" of Christ is contrasted with the wickedness of evil men and, therefore, must have an ethical content here.

Moreover, the word "holiness" is also used with respect to the people of God and as denoting a setting apart for the purpose of honoring and reverencing that which is holy. In this sense, e.g., the word appears in John 17:19, where we read: "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." We should notice in this passage that the people of God are sanctified through the truth. To be sanctified through the truth signifies that the truth renders them an apart people in the midst of the world. God is the Truth; He is the Absolute Reality. Whatever would vainly oppose the living God is the lie, is the denial of the Reality, lives without God. Christ lived and revealed the Truth because He was the Party of the living God in the world and revealed and testified of Him. And He sanctified His people through the truth, through His atonement and Spirit, when He causes the truth of the living God to be poured out into their hearts, to become part and parcel of their life and being. Hence, "holiness" has a spiritual, ethical connotation in John 17:19.

This also applies to I Peter 1:14-16. We read there: "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as He Which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." This passage clearly teaches us that the living God, Who called us to be holy, called us out of the former lusts of our ignorance. Our "holiness" is contrasted here with our former lusts. Formerly, we were disobedient children, children of pride and rebellion, children characterized by the former lusts which consisted of the hatred and enmity against the Lord, when we were ignorant of His fellowship and grace and love. Then we loved ourselves, were consecrated unto ourselves, and lived apart from the Lord and His service. But God called us to be holy, even as He Himself is holy. He called us unto Himself. He called us irresistibly, by the almighty power of His Spirit and Word. And the result of this calling was that we became holy. Here, too, "holiness" has a spiritual meaning.

In I Peter 3:15 we read: "But sanctify (render holy—H.V.) the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." Notice in this text that we must sanctify the Lord God *in our hearts*. Another and undoubtedly proper reading of this text would be: "But sanctify Christ, as Lord, in your hearts". The apostle, Peter, in this context, is exhorting the Church of God to suffer for righteousness' sake and admonishing her to trust in their risen Lord in the midst of trouble and persecution. The heart, in Scripture, is the center of our spiritual life, and, in the words of this particular text, it is the center of our conscious life. To sanctify Christ, as Lord, in our hearts signifies that, in the midst of all our troubles and afflictions, we may trust in Him as the King of kings and the Lord of lords, that we may regard all our enemies in the light of His majesty and power, that we may sanctify Him, set Him apart, and that so all our woes and sufferings may concentrate, as it were, in the one all-important point of His majesty and dominion. That the concept, "holiness", means separation from and consecration to is beautifully illustrated in this word of the apostle, Peter; with all our heart and mind and soul and strength we must be devoted and consecrated unto Him, Who bled and died and is even now exalted at the right hand of Divine power, in order that, in the midst of our greatest troubles and afflictions, we may have perfect peace.

Finally, in connection with this Scriptural proof for the assertion that "holiness" also has spiritual connotation in Holy Writ, we would point to the Scriptural truth that this sanctifying (this rendering holy) always occurs through the blood of our Lord Jesus

Christ. This is clearly taught in Heb. 13:12, where we read: "Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate." It is evident from this text, first of all, that our sanctification, as according to this text, could occur only through Christ's blood. This implies that we are by nature sold under sin, objects of God's wrath and estranged from the communion and fellowship of God's covenant. To be sanctified through the blood of Jesus implies that we are sanctified through His blood, not only centrally upon the cross, but also by the Spirit of the risen and glorified Lord. Such a sanctification (a being rendered holy) surely signifies that we are separated from the power and the dominion of sin and consecrated unto the living God. Also Hebrews 13:12 establishes the truth that "holiness" does not merely refer to a relationship but that it also denotes a moral, ethical quality.

God is Holy.

It is obvious that God determines a person's holiness. This is evident from a passage which we have already quoted, I Peter 1:14-16, where the apostle writes: "But as *He* which hath called you *is holy*, etc." What, then, is the significance of holiness as an attribute of God?

That the Lord is holy is repeatedly and emphatically taught in Holy Writ. This applies particularly to the prophecy of Isaiah. We read in Isaiah 6:1-3, 5-7: "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered His face, and with twain he covered His feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory. . . . Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged." In this vision the prophet beholds the glory of the Lord. And he cannot endure this radiation of the Lord's glory because he is a sinful man. The prophet's sin, therefore, is in contrast to the incomparable glory, perfection of Jehovah. And this perfection of the Lord is proclaimed by the seraphims when they cry unto one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory." How often the expression, "The Holy One of Israel", occurs in this prophecy! We read in chap. 10:17: "And the light of Israel shall be for a

fire, and His Holy One for a flame: and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briers in one day." See also Isaiah 29:19, 30:11, 41: 16, 47:4, 54:5. In chapter 57:15 we read: "For thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, Whose Name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Surely, in the light of this text, there is little support for the theory of "Common Grace" which would have us believe that God also exercises friendship with and is kindly disposed to the ungodly and the sinner. And in John 17:11 we read: "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep through Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as we are."

(to be continued)

H. Veldman.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

The Removal Of The Ark

The first invasion of the Philistines was followed by a second. For David had put them to flight but had not pursued and smitten them. Rallying their scattered forces they came up again and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. David again sought the Lord's counsel and received as answer, "Thou shalt not go up." These words suppose the question, "Shall I go up?" The Lord now demanded the employment of a different strategem. For the Philistines would be guarding against another surprise attack from the same direction. So the Lord instructed David to "fetch a compass behind them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees. And let it be when thou hearest the sound of going—the sound produced by marching troops by which the Lord would terrify the enemy—that thou shalt bestir thyself: for then shall the Lord go out before thee to smite the host of the Philistines." David did as the Lord commanded and smote the Philistines from Geba to Gezer. The Chronicler observes in connection with these victories that the "fame of David went out unto all lands; and (that) the Lord brought the fear of him upon all the nations" (I Chron. 14:17).

Having expelled the Jebusites from Mt. Zion, and

having made this stronghold his royal residence, David now made preparations for removing thither the ark of God. "Again David gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand" (II Sam. 6:1). The chronicler states that "David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds and with every leader" (I Chron. 13:1). "All the chosen men" were not the "captains of thousands and hundreds". The former were the military men (as in Judg. 16:34; 20:15; I Sam. 24:3); the latter were the leaders of the people. That David had need of the protection of his army on this occasion shows that the events of this period followed one another in the order given them by the Chronicler (I Chron. 14). According to this order the war with the Philistines had yet to be fought. If so, the Philistines at this time were still a menace. But would David undertake the removal of the ark in the presence of such a danger? The unlikelihood of this is the one objection against the view that the Chronicler was narrating the events in question in their chronological order. But though the adversary had already been vanquished and expelled from the borders of Israel, David would still desire the presence of his men of war to head the procession. It was through them that the Lord had wrought.

With the princes of the people—the captains of thousands and hundreds—David consulted. He said "unto all the congregation of Israel", that is, to the princes of the people, "if it seem good unto you, and that it be of the Lord our God, let us send abroad unto our brethren everywhere, that are left in the land of Israel, and with them also to the priests and Levites which are in their cities and suburbs, that they gather themselves unto us; and let us bring again the ark of our God to us: for we enquired not at it in the days of Saul." What David proposed pleased all the congregation. It was right in their eyes. And they said they would do so. So David gathered all Israel together, from Sihor of Egypt to the entering in of Hemath for the purpose of bringing the ark from Kirjath-jearim (I Chron. 13:1-5). These notices indicate that it was a great multitude of people with which David went "from Baale of Judah to bring up the ark of God. . . ." From I Chron. 13:6 we learn that Baale was Kirjath-jearim. At Joshua 15:60 the place is called Kirjath Baal and at chapter 18:14 of the same book simply Baalah. This name was Canaanitish and its association with Kirjath doubtless reveals that the place was originally a center of pagan worship. This Canaanitish name had continued along with the Israelitish. As to the location of Kirjath, it was situated perhaps about eight miles west of Jerusalem on the border between Benjamin and Judah. The reason that the people were instructed to assemble in this place perhaps lay in the difficulty of the way of approach to Mt. Zion. The reason was not that the

Jebusites had not yet been expelled from that stronghold.

In giving the reason for his contemplated undertaking David says to the people that "we inquired not at it in the days of Saul" (I Chron. 13:3). Had he gone more into detail he would have said that it was about 70 years ago that the people had last sought the Lord at the ark, His throne. During all this time there was not a place, a tabernacle of the Lord, where the people could enquire at the ark. The Lord used to dwell in the tabernacle of Shiloh. There in the holiest place atonement was made for sins, and on the ground thereof the congregation blessed. There the Lord had satisfied the poor with bread and there the saints had shouted with joy.

But a cloud had settled upon the tabernacle of Shiloh, and its glory had departed. For Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and was serving Baalim. "They forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them up out of the land of Egypt, and followed after other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and provoked the Lord to anger. And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and He delivered them into the hands of the spoilers that spoiled them, and He sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies. . . . and they were greatly distressed." So we read in the book of the Judges. The narrator continues, "Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. And yet they would not hearken" (Judges, chapter 2).

Besides the incursions of the enemy the nation was torn by internal strife. Chaos reigned. Every man did that which was right in his own eyes, there being no king in Israel. The climax was reached when in a war with the Philistines the ark was removed from its resting place in the tabernacle of Shiloh and born to the scene of battle, where it was captured by the Philistines who placed it in the house of Dagon.

But the psalmist wants us to understand that this was God's doing. To quote his own words, "They had provoked him to anger with their high places and moved him to jealousy with their graven images. When he heard this he was wroth and greatly abhorred Israel; so that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he had placed among men; and delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand; and he gave his people over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance. The fire consumed their young men; and their maidens were not given to marriage. Their priests fell by the sword; and their widows made no lamentation" (Ps. 78:60-66).

The glory had departed from Israel indeed; it had departed permanently from the tabernacle of Shiloh. In all likelihood the city itself had been destroyed by the Philistines on the day of their capture of the ark of God.

"Then," to quote once more the psalmist, "The Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man shouted by reason of wine. And he smote his enemies in their hinder parts: and he put hem to perpetual reproach." This has reference to the calamities that befell the Philistines in punishment of their vain imagining that with the help of Dagon they had triumphed over Israel's mighty God whose ark they were holding as a trophy of war. With His hand upon the neck of His enemies the Lord returned to Canaan. However, He refused the tabernacle of Joseph, the sanctuary of Shiloh," and chose not the tribe of Ephraim; but chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved." (Ps. 132:11). Here then it is expressly stated that the Lord had permanently done with the tabernacle of Shiloh. Returning from captivity he set His face toward Zion. Jerusalem at the time was occupied by the heathen. But instead of giving orders that the ark of the covenant be restored to the holiest place of the tabernacle of Shiloh that after the likely destruction of the city of Shiloh had been reared at Nob, He terrified by His judgments the men of Israel to place it in the house of Abinadab in Kirjath. Here it remained for some seventy years, twenty years up to the victory of Ebenezer (I Sam. 7:1sq.), forty years under Samuel and Saul, and about ten years under David. This doing of the Lord with the ark of the covenant was significant. It indicated a breach between Him and His people. The grief of God's believing people was great. They could not seek the Lord at His throne. There was no way of approach. For the altars of God and the blood of the atonement were not there in the house of Abinadab. Communion with him there at the ark through the priesthood was therefore only a memory to be cherished; it was not a reality to be enjoyed. The Lord, so to say, was holding His people at arm's length. The nation deserved this stroke. It had rejected the Lord. It had asked for a king to rule it in the room of the Lord. The Lord had given them Saul. But he was a self-willed and rebellious king. He died a suicide in battle and a new Philistine oppression began. Though Israel merited destruction, the Lord sware truth unto David. Once established in the throne, he undertook to bring back the ark of God to him and his people. Had he consulted with God? Was he acting under divine direction? The answer is that He perceived that it was the Lord's will as he had perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel. For "the Lord had chosen David His servant, and taken him from the sheepfolds: from following the ewes

great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance" (Psalm 78:71-72).

The text in this connection describes the ark. It states that the name of the Lord who dwells with the cherubim was upon it. Through the ark as His instrument He revealed His glory. The cover of the ark was His mercy seat, and this seat was His throne. Here He was present with His word and His ruling power in the midst of His people. "And thou shalt put the mercy-seat upon the ark—such had been His instruction to Moses—and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat. . . ." (Exodus 25:32). With the name of the Lord thus upon it the ark was a holy thing. The law contains a detailed instruction for its conveyance. It was always to be born by the Levites on their shoulders. (Numbers 7:9). David did not see to it that this was done. The ark was set on a cart and so brought out of the house of Abinadab. The cart, it was true, was new; it had not been desecrated by common use. Yet, they were acting contrary to the legal requirement just cited. They may have been following a pagan custom. The Philistines and the Phoenicians carried about their gods on carts. The text at I Sam. 7 sq. reveals that Abinadab's son Eleazar was entrusted with the care of the ark. Here we find Uzzah and Ahio mentioned as Abinadab's sons and as "driving the new cart", that is, the oxen by which it was drawn. According to verse 4 Ahio went before the ark and Uzzah alongside of it. "And David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord on all manner of fur wood," says the text, and continues, "even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals. The text in (I Chron. 13:8) omits the expression "on all manner of fur wood". It states that David and all Israel played before the Lord with all their might and then names the various instruments of music. Thus did the procession as headed by David move forward with song and dance and music.

Then they came to the threshing-floor of Chidon, or as some, who maintain that *Chidon* is not to be taken as a proper name, translate, "And when they came to a fixed threshing-floor," and still others, "threshing-floor of the blow". Here the oxen shook the ark perhaps by their stumbling or because of the condition of the way. It seemed to Uzzah that the ark was in danger of falling. For he stretched out his hand and took hold of it, and was instantly killed as if he had touched a live wire. God was angry with Uzzah and smote him on account of his error or rashness, which consisted in touching the ark, that none could even look at. (Numbers 4:20; I Samuel 4:19). The Levites, appointed to the task of bearing the ark,

must not go in to see when the holy things were covered, lest they die. They must not touch any holy thing lest they die. (Num. 4:15). These things are plainly stated. It is hard to see why they were not done.

The reaction of David to the Lord's doing is perplexing. "And David was *angry*—thus reads the text in the original—because the Lord had broken upon Uzzah. . . ." But the statement is not the effect that David was angry with the Lord; yet with whom was he angry, if not with the Lord? He perpetuated the memory of the Lord's doing by naming the place, "The break of the Lord". Further "David was afraid of the Lord that day, and said, How shall the ark of the Lord come to me?" David was perplexed, genuinely and greatly perplexed. If so, he must have been ignorant of the precepts of the law for the transportation of the ark. But the priests must have known. David dared not remove "the ark of the Lord unto the city of David." He had it borne into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. The question of who he was cannot be decided with certainty. Here the ark of the Lord remained for three months. The Lord blessed Obededom and his household. It was told David, and he brought up the ark of God from the house of Obededom with gladness. "And when the bearers of the ark had gone six paces or steps, he caused to be sacrificed an ox and a fat calf, that is, he consecrated the procession with a sacrifice. And David danced before the Lord with all his might. There was again shouting and the sound of the trumpet. With the ark placed in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it on Mt. Zion, he offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord. It was a great day in Israel. Of this David and God's believing people were fully aware. The refusal of the Lord to be joined to David in Jerusalem would have spelled everlasting doom for the nation. But the Lord could not refuse. For He had chosen Zion. He had sworn to bless abundantly her provision, to satisfy her poor with bread, to clothe her priests with salvation, to make the horn of David to bud, to ordain a lamp for His anointed, to clothe His enemies with shame, but to cause upon his anointed His crown to flourish. (Ps. 132).

G. M. Ophoff.

"When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;
For I will be with thee thy trials to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress."

* * * *

"Not by works of righteousness which we have
done, but according to His mercy He has saved us."
—TITUS 3:5.

SION'S ZANGEN

Eeuwige Goedertierenheid

(Psalm 107; Eerste Deel)

Dit is een psalm die zingt van de goedertierenheid des Heeren, en dan een goedertierenheid die eeuwig is.

Tot in bijzonderheden zal de zanger er van verhalen.

Hij zal die goedertierenheid des Heeren uitstallen ten overstaan van allerlei ellende die het deel van Gods volk is. Hij zal zingen van de verlossingen dergenen die verstrooid waren over de geheele aarde, van hen die zwierven in de wildernissen en woestijnen der aarde, van hen die zich gebogen hebben in den stok, van hen die in gevaar waren voor hun leven op de baren der zeeën en oceanen, kortom, het is een psalm die ons herinnert aan de eeuwige liefde Gods, die ons verlost, verlost en verlossen zal, totdat alle ziel, door Hem gekend van eeuwigheid, zal rusten in de armen die altijd onder hen waren.

Gij moogt ook zeggen, dat deze psalm zingt van het feit, dat God onze Goël is.

Het begin is aanbiddelijk schoon: "Looft den Heere, want Hij is goed, want Zijne goedertierenheid is in eeuwigheid."

Ge ziet waar we onzen titel van daan haalden. Zooals vaak het geval is, zoo ook hier: de hoofdgedachte van den psalm wordt in het eerste vers bezongen.

Looft den Heere!

En dat moet ge doen: want Hij is goed en Zijne goedertierenheid is in eeuwigheid!

Wij kunnen er eenigzins inkomen, dat Gods volk tot in alle eeuwigheid niets anders doen zal, dan den Heere loven. Iets gevoelen we daar van nu reeds. Het schijnt mij toe alsof ik alle woorden die ik ooit geleerd heb kan gebruiken om dit vers te beschrijven. Men voelt aan, dat de eeuwigheid in deze woorden zit. En dat komt dit er bij: als men klaar is met zijn "verklaring", dan voelt men, dat men het onderwerp geen recht deed wedervaren. Men komt nooit klaar met het thema van den lof des Heeren.

Hoe zou het ook!

Hij is de Eeuwige!

Looft den Heere!

— Wat mag dat zijn?

Men looft den Heere als men het Hem vertelt hoe lieflijk, hoe schoon, hoe aantrekkelijk, hoe krachtig, hoe wijs en hoe heerlijk Hij is. Met andere woorden:

men zegt het Hem aan, dat Hij het inbegrip is van alle deugd.

Ik zal een Bijbelsch voorbeeld aanhalen. Psalm 145:8: "Genadig en barmhartig is de Heere, lankmoedig en groot van goedertierenheid!"

Maar, och arme! Ik had waarlijk niet naar dien psalm behoeven te gaan. Wilt ge een voorbeeld van wat het zeggen wil om den Heere te loven? Legt dan dit stukje ter zijde en zoekt Uw Bijbel op, om dan *dezen psalm* verder te lezen. Deze psalm is een voorbeeld van het loven van God. Daat gaat ge aan 't opsommen van des Heeren wondere en lieflijke daden, zooals de dichter doet.

Laat ons zijn voorbeeld volgen; laat ons de dingen met aandacht nazeggen. Hij wil het ook. Keer op keer hooren we hem zeggen: "Laat ze voor den Heere Zijne goedertierenheid loven, en Zijne wonderwerken voor de kinderen der menschen."

Het motief, de drangreden voor zulk loven van den Heere is omdat "Hij goed is, en omdat Zijne goedertierenheid tot in eeuwigheid is."

God is goed!

Jaren geleden heb ik een troep heilsoldaten gadeslagen in London. Het was ten tijde van hun groote wereld-congres. Ik geloof dat het in 1915 was, vlak voor wereld-oorlog No. 1. Wat me trof was, dat die troep soldaten al maar zong: God is goed! In allerlei variaties van zingen, kwam men keer op keer terug tot dit hoofdthema: God is goed, is goed!

Ik heb geen sympathie voor het Leger des Heils. Ik geloof dat zij de plank mis zijn, doch ik gevoelde het lieflijke van die bezongen waarheid. Kan er in komen, dat men in den hemel al maar zegt, dat God goed is.

Zijn goedheid is dan ook zoo overweldigend. Zijn goedertierenheid is tot boven de wolken. Zij is geweldig over die Hem vreezen.

God is de Algoede is Zichzelf. Het Inbegrip van alle deugd. En Hij is ok de Goede voor Zijn volk. Nog nader uitgedrukt en verklaard in het woord: *goedertierenheid*. Dat is de goedheid Gods waardoor Hij Zich uitstrekt tot Zijn volk met het doel om hen goed te zijn. Hij tiert van goedheid over Zijn volk. Er is een zwak beeld van in het leven der menschenkinderen. Als men een persoon waarachtiglijk liefheeft, dan wil men zulk een persoon overladen met bewijzen van onze liefde. Dan dringt zich de ziel en het lichaam om toch maar lieflijkheden te stapelen op het voorwerp. Men wil alles wel doen voor zulk eenen, en men wil alles wel geven aan zulk eenen. Zoo is het, en dan, oorspronkelijk, met God en Zijn volk. En van Zijn Eigen goedertierenheid zegt God: Hij overlaadt hen dag aan dag met Zijne gunstbewijzen!

En dit is het heerlijke: Hij zal dat blijven doen tot in alle eeuwigheid! De Heere zal Zich tot U neer-

buigen vanaf den grooten witten troon, en Hij zal het U toeroepen tot in alle eeuwigheid, dat Hij U mint, en Hij zal "de daad bij het woord voegen", want daar zult ge verzadigd worden met het goede van Zijn Woning, reis op reis.

O ja, God is de Goedertierene!

En zooals we zeiden, daar zal deze psalm van getuigen.

Luistert slechts: "dat zulks de bevrijden des Heeren zeggen, die Hij van de hand der wederpartijders bevrijd heeft".

Gods volk is vaak in de handen der wederpartijders.

Wederpartijders zijn Satans. De Satan is de groote wederpartijder van God en van Zijn volk. En ongelukkige menschen worden wederpartijders van Gods volk, omdat de haat tegen God hun ingespoten is door Satan.

Ik noemde dat volk "ongelukkige menschen." En dat zijn ze. Denkt terug aan wat ik zooeven poneerde, neen, hetgeen ik aanhaalde uit den psalm: God is goed! Daarom is het zoo vreeselijk om zich tegen een goeden God te stellen om Hem te wederstaan. Het is ook belachelijk. Daardoor worden wij zot en dwaas. En daarom staat er, dat als God menschen ziet die zich tegen Hem stellen, Hij in den hemel lacht. Vreeselijke gedachte.

Ze zijn zot die het doen. En als ge die zothed ten top gevoerd wilt zien, dan moet ge Satan gadeslaan zooals hij aan 't woeden is tegen God en Zijn Gezalfde aan het begin van onze jaartelling. Hij denkt dat hij God tegenstaat in Zijn voornaamste werk: de verlossing van Zijn volk. Satan ziet, dat het vastzit op dat kindje in de kribbe. Welnu, hij gaat aan 't tegenstaan, totdat hij Jezus eindelijk naar het kruis gesleurd en aan het kruis gehecht heeft. Ziezoo! Ik ben klaar, zegt Satan. De zot aller zotten! God lacht in den hemel. Want Satan heeft meegewerkt met God om het vaste fundament der zaligheid, ja zelfs van het geheele nieuwe Koninkrijk, te leggen.

En zoo zot en dwaas zijn ook het volk dat door Satan geïnspireerd is. Zij zetten zich tegen God en Zijn gezalfden, en dat zijn Zijn volk. Zij leggen hun vuile handen aan dat volk en brengen ze in de gevangenissen.

Maar God bevrijdt hen.

Daar zingt de psalm van. Het is een reden om God te loven. Menigvuldig zijn de bevrijdingen des Heeren. Gij moogt lezen het woord: *verlossen* voor het woord: *bevrijden* in den tekst. Dat eerste woord zou zelfs een zuiverder vertaling zijn. God is de Verlosser, de Goël van Zijn volk. Hij treedt als de Goël op U toe in het anagezicht van Jezus, den Verlosser van Zijn volk.

Wij allen bevinden ons in het gevang. Maar God

breekt de deuren open en leidt de gevangenis gevangelijk, om plaats te maken voor groote vrijheid, en gaven uit te deelen aan de bevrijden.

“En die Hij uit de landen verzameld heeft, van het Oosten en van het Westen, van het Noorden en van de zee.”

Dit vers heeft eerst een historische klank en moet op Israel gepast. Het is tweemaal geschied, dat God de arme bannelingen verlost uit de hand der wederpartijders. De eerste maal toen Hij hen riep uit Egypte, en de tweede maal toen Hij hen riep uit Babel.

Maar die bevrijding is ook typisch.

God roept de gevangenen vanuit alle windstreeken naar Sion, de aanspraakplaats van Zijn heiligheid. En Hij doet dat van alle eeuwen en tot in alle eeuwen.

Van nature zijn we allen in het diensthuis der zonde en worden wij zwart van dienstbaarheid onder de klauwen van den geestelijken Farao: en dat is Satan.

Maar God roept Zijn volk. En dan met een roeping die zekerlijk gehoord zal worden. In deze dagen las ik iets in “Readers Digest”, hetwelk ik even moet aanhalen. Iemand moest de Bijbel vertalen in een vreemde taal. Doch hij kon geen woord vinden in die vreemde taal voor het woordje: geloof. Toen vroeg hij wat te doen met dat woord aan een bekeerling van dat vreemde volk. Die man dacht wat na en zei toen: “Is gelooven niet dit: hooren in het hart?” Ik ervoer een schok toen ik het las. Het is zoo wonderlijk waar wat die arme man zei. Gelooven is hooren in het hart. En men hoort in het hart, omdat God daar eigendommelijk roept. Wordt men zoo geroepen, dan hoort men en dan volgt men. Jezus behandelde dezelfde waarheid toen Hij zeide: Mijne schapen hooren Mijne stem. . . . en zij volgen Mij.

En zoo is God Zijn volk aan 't verzamelen. Hij is begonnen aan den vroegen morgen van de historie en is het nog aan 't doen.

En het middel is Zijn lieflijk Woord en de Geest van den verheerlijkten Christus.

En in den psalm is het oogpunt: Zijn eeuwige goedheid en goedertierenheid. Als ge menschen needrig ziet knielen in Sion dan ziet ge daar de verwerkelijking van Gods goedertierenheid.

“Die in de woestijn dwaalden, in eenen weg der wildernis, die geene stad ter woning vonden.”

Wie denkt hier niet aan het volk van God zooals zij dwaalden in de woestijnen op de lange reis van Egypte naar Kanaan?

Een woestijn is een bang ding. Ik heb de woestijnen gezien. Ik ben tientallen van keeren door de wildste wildernissen heengekomen. En werd nooit moede om te luisteren naar de sprake van die woestijnen. Men wordt stil als de wildheid der wildernissen

toenemen. Dat was zoo vooral in de “Doodsvallei”, die we doorkruist hebben van het Westen tot het Oosten, en van het Zuiden tot het Noorden. Er was op 't laatst niemand meer die een woord sprak.

Die woestijn is type van de hel.

En Hanna zeide dat de goddelooze zwijgt in de duisternissen der hel. Men voert geen aangenaam gesprek in de hel. Daarom doet men het ook niet in de “Doodsvallei”. Ik heb gerild toen ik de namen las van sommige streken en heuvels en bergruggen in die woestijn. De wereld heeft ook de sprake van de woestijn gehoord en ervaren. En zoo spreken zij van “De Keuken der hel”, (Hell's Kitchen). Er waren nog meer namen die ons herinnerden aan de bange beschrijving die God in Zijn Bijbel geeft van den duivel en van de hel en van de arme menschen die eeuwig daar zullen verkeerden. Welnu, de wereld zinspeelde daarop in het namengeven in de “Doodsvallei”. Vreeselijke ironie.

Die woestijnen zijn wij *doorgekomen*. En hier moogt ge Halleluja zeggen. Er was geen stad ter woning in de woestijn. Die hoort er niet in de woestijn. (Ik heb het altijd vreemd gevonden, dat men een stad zooals Las Vegas vindt in die vreeselijke woestijn van Nevada. Als men die stad plotseling voor zich ziet, als men een zekeren bergrug overkomt, dan doet het ons vreemd aan.)

Men kan in de wereld niet *wonen*. In de wereld is er chaos. Er is geen rust voor den goddelooze.

Maar God heeft ons arme stakkerds die uit de woestijnen en wildernissen komen een Stad bereid ter woning. En die stad is het hemelsche Jeruzalem. Daar mogen we Wonen. En wonen doet men waar men thuis is. En als men dan gedenkt dat God in den hemel het Alles is, dan verstaat men eenigzins waarom Gods volk zich thuis zal voelen in den hemel. Zij hebben in de woestijnen gedorst naar God. En nu worden zij in die stad geslecht.

“Zij waren hongerig, ook dorstig, hunne ziel was in hen overstelpt.”

Daar hebt ge Uw beeld, mijn vrienden!

Wij zijn hongerig, ook al is het dat men de geheele wereld zou bezitten. De wereld en al haar volheid schiet tekort om Gods volk te verzadigen. En zoo zeg ik het niet goed. Dat laat den indruk achter alsof de wereld en haar volheid dan toch Gods volk *ten deele* zou verzadigen. Laat mij het eens duidelijk zeggen: De wereld heeft nog nooit één kruimeltje verzadiging gegeven, nooit één druppeltje verkwikking gegeven aan een ziel die uit God geboren is.

En waarom niet?

Die uit God geboren is schreeuwt tot God en tot Hem alleen om verzadiging. Want Hij is de Fontein van ons heil!

G. Vos.

IN HIS FEAR

Training For Life's Calling

Training in the Physiology Class.

In the last issue we made a few remarks in regard to the necessity of emphasizing to our children in the physiology class that our bodies are the workmanship of our Allwise and Almighty God. There are three other matters that ought to be brought to the attention of the covenant child at this time. The three points for consideration are, (1) the child must be taught to care for and to treat his body as the temple of the Holy Spirit, (2) he ought to be taught to consider all disorders, ailments of the body and even death as the wages of sin and (3) he ought to be assured and to be taught that we may and must expect new bodies, perfect and glorified so that we may serve God fully in the new creation.

First of all then we have the fact that the child must be taught that his body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. That is plainly taught in Scripture. We need not go into all the dogmatic implications of this truth either here or in the physiology class, but one thing can be stated here and in the class-room and receive much emphasis, and that is that our bodies by the power of God's Spirit are instruments wherewith we are to serve God. The temple in Jerusalem was a building wholly dedicated to the service of God. So much was it such a building that on two occasions Christ saw fit to cleanse it of all else. Our bodies are likewise instruments to be dedicated wholly to the service of God. In it no evil, no devil, no sin may dwell. No single member nor any combination of members may ever be used for any purpose but the glory of God. We may not live to eat, nor may we burn up our digestive tract with the acid and poison of strong drinks. Even the matter of getting enough sleep should not be overlooked. We are too soon of the opinion that our bodies are our own and that we live only for ourselves, and that we can abuse our bodies in order to get a few more moments of satisfaction for the flesh. That is the folly of the natural man! He abuses his flesh in order to satisfy or seek to satisfy his flesh. His tools, his machinery, his automobile he will oil and polish and wax and clean and warn all users thereof not to abuse, but his body he abuses left and right. And failing to give it sufficient rest is only one of the many ways in which he abuses it. And early in life the covenant child should be taught that he must keep his body strong and clean, not for the utilitarian reason that otherwise he might get sick

and suffer pain and discomfort to say nothing of death, but because it is the temple of the Holy Spirit which must be used in the service of God and because it is the most precious possession God has given him over which to exercise his stewardship.

And in this connection let it also be remarked that of course the *Christian* school teacher sets an example herself. She realizes that she is teaching covenant children and not offspring of imoral Hollywood and Paris. She realizes that there are parents and pastors who do not want their children to be conformed to this world. There are *still* parents and pastors, elders and deacons who dare to be so different from the world that they do not want to see God's children walk about painted like Jezebel, Aholah, Aholibah and the harlot of Revelation 17. And when parents strive to keep their children from this widespread craving and striving to be just exactly like the world so as not be thought narrow-minded and old fashioned, no Christian school teacher has the right to teach their children to go ahead with this world conformity. For a teacher has a tremendous influence over the child especially in the things the parents forbid and the child desires to perform. And while we are on the subject, pardon the digression a moment, what assurance have we as young women that we will *refuse* the mark of the beast if we do not DARE to refuse the mark of Hollywood? (Notice that the harlot, colored in red and purple, in Revelation 17, rides on the beast who is the Antichrist, they go and belong together). And what assurance have we as men that we will not take the antichrist's sign on our right hand or forehead if we do not DARE or CARE to separate from worldly organization for our work and daily bread. If we need to do that today for bread, we will need to do much more in the days of the antichrist. If we have no courage and faith while we still have freedom of religion and speech, what courage can we expect to have when every possible liberty is taken from us?

Not, of course, to return to our line of thought, that we are against our young women, and older women also for that matter, making themselves attractive and being neat and clean. But your beauty should not be that of Hollywood which is and only can be in the service of SIN. By all means, Scripture speaks of the bride being adorned for her husband. And God, who is a God of beauty and order made man a beautiful creature and does not approve of slovenliness. Did He not give to Job daughters which were fairer than all others living at that time? But we must never forget that all our homeliness and unattractiveness as well as blemishes and imperfections are due to sin. And not Hollywood but the cross of Christ is the only way out of our ugliness! And cleanliness and beautification are quite different from wearing the sign of the harlot. And if Romans 12:1, 2 does not refer to this

misuse of our bodies and does not condemn it, what does the text refer to then? If this is not world conformity with the body, what is? The church never began this practice and surely never practices it in order so to present its bodies a living sacrifice to God! Who will deny that our modern lipstick, which is not at all natural—as according to Revelation 17 the colors do run all the way from scarlet to purple—originated among the harlots? It surely did not originate in the Church, the Bride of Christ! It originated with those who dissipated their lives and lost their color from their lips and cheeks in the way of sin. And shall our children! and our young women wear then the sign of adultery and of harlotry? It is the duty not only of parent and pastor but also of the *Christian* school teacher in the physiology class to root out this scourge. Our bodies are temples of the HOLY SPIRIT! And yet when we see our own young women with their blood-red lips, fingernails and even toenails we shudder and ask ourselves whether the Spirit does dwell behind such a shell which loudly cries to Babylon, Athens, Paris and Hollywood! I wonder what Jesus would have done if He had found the temple in Jerusalem filled with “red lights” on a night when He was in Jerusalem! And our young women who do not mean these things by the sign which they wear of the scarlet sisterhood surely should not want to sail under that color and under that flag. But enough of this now.

The second thing to be brought to the child's attention in his physiology class is that the countless number of disorders and diseases to which the body is subject are here because of sin. We so easily talk of germs and cancer, of heart attacks and strokes and do so atheistically. We do this in that we fail to speak of them or even to consider them as God's servants both to punish mankind for his sin and to prepare and bring His elect child into His house of many mansions. Of course we cannot and should not here either go into a dogmatic exposition of sin and God's just judgment in punishing it. But we surely can and ought repeatedly, whenever the opportunity is there, to remind our children that God is visiting man for his rebellion and departure from the living God.

There are certain childhood pains and afflictions which can so be applied to make this very real to the covenant child's mind. He is often afflicted with toothache and he feels in his body very keenly that his body is subject to decay and corruption. And so we have an approach to teaching him that the whole body wears out and decays and returns to the dust because man did eat of the forbidden fruit and became subject to death even as God declared in Paradise that he would. And he can also be taught and shown how that even above and beyond these ailments which come over all men because of the sin of our parents,

we also have many afflictions and ailments which are peculiar to us because we have not taken good care of our bodies and have lived with these bodies to the deceptive lusts of the flesh rather than to use them to the glory of their Sovereign Creator. The Christian school teacher who does not reckon with God and sin and the curse in teaching physiology is missing her calling to train God's covenant youth for their life's calling.

Nor may we stop there. The child should be taught that there is the promise of God that we shall one day be out of this vale of tears and out from under the dominion of corruption. A description of the new heavenly bodies need not be given to our children in their schoolroom. That may be left for them when they are so taught in the catechism class. But the fact that we shall receive new bodies which shall be beyond the power of death and corruption should be taught them.

After all they are Christians who have that promise of God that He will raise them also from the dead. If we only call their attention to the misery, disorders of the body and of its death and do no more, we surely leave them with the wrong impression. These things do not live so very really or deeply in a child. But as he grows up he does begin to think more and more of these things, and as he becomes more and more conscious of the reality and awfulness of death, he ought also to be pointed to the promises of God in regard to these bodies in which death reigns. The teacher will have to use her own discretion as to when she will introduce remarks in regard to this wonderful truth, but she surely must make mention of it and do so in a way that leaves with the children the impression that it means everything to her.

J. A. Heys.

PERISCOPE

HOME MISSION NEWS

Under this heading we can mention a few items of interest that have occurred recently. Upon the advice and recommendation of the Missionaries, the Mission Committee in conjunction with the calling Consistory, has decided to release one missionary from the Lynden field. In view of the situation both here and in Canada, the missionaries felt that one man could continue the work here while the other could aid the work in Canada, and so recommended. Thereupon, the Mission

Committee decided that Rev. Knott should supply the pulpits of other Holland speaking ministers who would then be free to labor for longer periods in Canada. Rev. Hofman will continue the work here for a time. According to information we have at present, Rev. Cammenga and his Consistory have consented to his working in Canada during the month of March. Rev. Knott and his family will leave for Hull shortly, and probably will have arrived there by the time this is read.

Since the beginning of February we have been holding two services each Sunday in Sumas. This town is about 10 miles north-east of Lynden on the Canadian border. We were able to procure a more suitable meeting place there while it is also closer for many of those who attend. It is our plan to concentrate our labors in that vicinity for a time. Progress remains slow and it becomes increasingly evident that long patience is required to produce visible fruit.

* * * *

Prayer

Last time we called attention to the discussion in *The Banner* regarding prayer for the Public Schools. In connection with that discussion we often read strange statements concerning the nature and purpose of prayer. From these it became evident that many of the writers had gross misconceptions as to what constitutes prayer and its content. Here are a few examples of what was written. One states: "Living a Christ-centered life does not exclude the possibility of praying for public schools, even by our ministers. Christ himself prayed for His worldly enemies, whose lives were anything but God-centered, when He prayed, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do' Let us not attempt to undermine the belief in common grace by saying no good fruit can be borne outside the pale of Christianity. . . . Surely, they need our prayers even more than the Christian Schools which bask in the sunshine of God's special saving grace." Another writes: "Now Mr. states that we should pray for those who teach in public schools that they see their error and repent of their sin. I would say rather pray that they do good missionary work in this field with the children who are unchurched." Still a third declares: "Above all, may ministers, laymen, and all others pray for all men, even those who are not of the household of faith, that they may come to a saving knowledge of Christ. Pray for the public school teacher. She needs your prayers." And finally, to quote no more: "I think we must give God thanks for those wonderful institutions. I think, rather I know, the state does a wonderful job to give us those schools. . . ."

It is not our purpose to enter that debate or speak of other gross misconceptions that are implied in some of these statements, but merely to comment a bit on the ideas concerning prayer that are advanced. We wondered about some of these things until recently a friend sent us a copy of a radio message entitled: "Prayer for the World", which had been delivered over the coast-to-coast network of the Back To God Hour by the Rev. P. H. Eldersveld, in the name of the Christian Reformed Church. If what he proclaims is the teaching of that Church it is not strange that these pupils write as they do. We will quote rather freely from the message and let Scripture speak in refutation.

The Rev. Eldersveld began his talk by relating the incident of the man who prayed publicly on the busy street-corners of Chicago. Then he continues: "But, for all that, the man who prayed on the corner of State and Randolph streets, in the stream of surging humanity, reminded me that we Christians are indeed set down here in the middle of a wicked world, and we certainly are called upon to pray for it. . . . I question the value of such ostentatious methods, but there is no doubt concerning the obligation we have to pray for this world."

Scriptures teaches us that Christ prayed, and hence taught us to pray: "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." John 17:9.

In an attempt to support his argument, the radio minister continues: "There is the case of Abraham, praying for the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, when God had told him that they would be destroyed because of their sin. . . . his heart went out to those who would perish. He could not stand aloof when he knew of their impending doom. So he prayed earnestly for them. . . . He prayed for the postponement of doom, and he presented intelligent reasons to justify the extension of divine mercy. . . . Abraham stood yet before the Lord, and begged him for undeserved mercy upon the wicked cities."

Now it is true that the Rev. Eldersveld mentions that Abraham presented his prayer on the ground that the cities be spared for the sake of the righteous. According to the message, however, this is secondary and incidental; as is clearly evident both from the quotations above and also since the example is used to support the contention that we must "pray for the world". To say the least, this is surely twisting the point of the whole passage to fit a misconception of prayer. Even a cursory reading of Genesis 18 indicates that Abraham was not at all concerned about the wicked in Sodom and Gomorrah. The Scriptural starting point does not teach prayer for the ungodly and wicked but is expressed in Abraham's first state-

ment: "And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy *the righteous* with the wicked?"—and so throughout.

The application of the message by the Rev. Eldersveld is as follows: "We have our enemies in many parts of the world, and within our own boundaries—enemies of the nation, enemies of Christianity itself. Does their predicted fate arouse you to pray for them? Are we asking for the extension of God's mercy, the prolongation of peace, the postponement of deserved punishment? Here is a mighty mission project for all Christian."

How differently the Psalmist prayed and the Church still sings! See for example, Psalms 55; 59; 69; 70; 74; 79; 94; 109; and many more. And listen to the Word of God to the Church of the new dispensation: "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on earth?" Rev. 6:9-10. The true Church still cries with them: How long?

Finally, the message is closed with a "prayer for the world", in which it is said in part: "In the spirit of Abraham, the father of all believers, we ask for postponement of the punishment which this generation deserves, so that men may have opportunity to find the peace of God in Jesus Christ. . . . May our broadcast not only induce Christians to pray with power for the world, but also may it show the unbeliever that we are indeed concerned about his salvation, so that we therefore give him a large place in our prayers."

Again the Scriptures teach us: "Behold, I come quickly. . . . And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus"

* * * *

The Modern "Church". . . .

Below we have listed several news items which reveal the state and function of what is called "Church" in our own day. Perhaps, with a few exceptions, any one of these in itself would be no cause for alarm and appears quite innocent. Yet, when they are taken collectively they certainly testify to the truth of the Scriptures as a mighty sign of the times. They remind one of what Paul wrote to the young Timothy: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be

turned unto fables." All quotations are from a single issue of *The Grand Rapids Press*, of February 12, 1949.

"Pancake Supper—Class X club of church will serve its annual pancake supper in the recreation room of the church Friday from 5 to 8 p.m. Tickets are on sale at the Church office."

"..... Church to Hear Book Talk. Mrs. will review the book 'Remembrance Rock', by Carl Sandburg at the Evensong service in church Sunday at 7 p. m. . . ."

"Jenison Youth to Repeat 'St Elmo' Young Folk of the Jenison church again will present the play, 'St. Elmo', by Preston Conway, at South High School auditorium Thursday at 8 p. m. The performance will be sponsored by the Tryphosa society of the church"

"East Principal to Speak at Trinity. . . . Lewis Allbee, principal of East Grand Rapids High School, will speak on the 'Experiences of an American Counter Espionage Agent in World War II', at a meeting of the Senior Youth Fellowship of church Sunday at 6:30 p. m. Refreshments will be served."

"Club Sponsors Lecture on Medicine—Sunday Evening Club of church will present the fourth in its series of lectures Sunday evening at the church. on 'The Romance of Medicine'."

"Youth Day at South Church—South church will observe National Youth day Sunday at 11 a. m."

CENTRAL WILL DEDICATE NEW PROJECTOR AT CHURCH SUPPER.

PLAN FOREIGN FILM SERIES—Film Council of will present a series of four foreign films in the vestry room in the next four months. . . . The films will be shown one Sunday each month. . . ."
W. Hofman.

S.P.R.E. Secretary's Report

It seems customary that the secretary of your board make an annual report at this our annual meeting, and so it is now that I again must make a review or take stock of the activities of your board for the past year.

In going over the material of our meetings since our last general meeting one feels that most of the 'news', so-called, has been published in our S.P.R.E. Since your secretary was also a member of the propaganda committee, it seemed pointless repetition to go over the same material again. We feel as propaganda committee that we have kept you all pretty well abreast as regards our board action, and so for this time your secretary will depart from the usual procedure and briefly call your attention to a few general aspects of our cause.

The first observation we shall make is that of the success of the various denominational organs and projects of reformed circles outside our own, not only in the sphere of primary education such as we are concerned with tonight, but in nearly every field of endeavor whether it be primary, secondary, or even higher education. Whether it be the field of religious broadcasting or of official organs of publication, or shall we say—even mission work, the success of these causes in circles outside our own seems amazing. There seems no limit to the funds that are raised; figures nearly always run into hundreds of thousands; there seems no dearth of personnel. One is amazed at the seeming abundance of brilliant talent with which these various institutions and publications are manned. Not only does the Lord provide them with men and money, but it seems that their progress usually stops nothing short of being nation-wide. Brethren, what shall we say to these things? Does the Bible teach us to measure spiritual and eternal values by such outward progress and success? Far be it from me at this time to reflect on the inner spiritual condition of any reformed group outside ourselves. However, is not Scripture intensely clear on this point, that though outward success may be a sign of real and inner growth, surely it insists that it is not necessarily a measure of it. Let us procede for a moment to look at our own denominational causes, shall we say our own Protestant Reformed Christian School movement, our own Reformed Witness Hour, our own Standard Bearer, Concordia, and Beacon Lights. Perhaps we need not nor should we dwell on our outward success and progress. We as Protestant Reformed people have the habit, or at least should have, of penetrating into the

reality of things, into the things as God sees them. However, let us look at it just a bit. Perhaps we should begin by being humbly grateful to our covenant God for the S.P.R.E. with its supporters and funds that He gave us, for our Standard Bearer and radio, etc. However, if we insist on evaluating or measuring our outward growth and success as we in the world measure success, doubtless we must confess that we are small, that we are weak, that we are even sometimes back-sliding. What shall we say to these things, brethren? Does the Bible teach that lack of earthly and material success indicates an inner moral decadence and apostasy? Far be it from me at this time to deduce that because of our small measure of carnal and earthly values that therefore we have a large measure of eternal and spiritual values; that God is really and truly pleased with us; but by the same token and most emphatically do we assert that our measure of outward success in no sense is necessarily an indication of moral or spiritual weakness or decadence or apostasy.

To leave the matter of outward success and progress and to continue further nevertheless in general on the subject of denominational causes and projects, I would like to observe further the work itself in the various phases. As usual a number of brethren have again tonight come to the end of their tenure of office in our school board. Some of the brethren in our boards and committees have labored for years in this board not only, but in other fields of church work as well. In our various activities of campaigns and drives, and in approaching people in their homes, we have occasion to observe rather accurately and at first hand the varied reaction of our people. The attitudes of those who do not support a given cause range from a mere 'not interested', to a wicked, slothful neglect of one's religious obligations, to sneering and even bitterness and opposition. Perhaps this failure on the part of so many to support church causes and organs is somewhat a normal natural condition in the church militant. Even apart from the sloth and slovenly neglect of our responsibilities and duties, obviously there is room for a certain amount of difference of opinion. Take, e.g., this cause of our own school—when we should start, how we should start, where we should start, or perhaps even if we should start at all—can be a matter of honest, diligent, and faithful opinion. Far be it from me to reflect on this difference of opinion as such. I do choose at this time to reflect rather vigorously on this other thing that is so often confused with this difference of opinion. I refer to that sloth, that neglect, that refusal to cooperate and to do one's share in the work, to assume responsibility and duty, that bitterness and opposition. If we take, e.g., our own school causes once more, let us assume that it is possible to honestly differ on the question

*) Secretary's Report given at the last annual meeting of the Society for Protestant Reformed Education. This report is published at the request of the Society.

whether we should even have our own school or no. When Protestant Reformed parents assemble together and band together in such a cause as we represent, let it be that most of them feel that we should have our own school at once, yet they *are* Protestant Reformed, they are parents who have chosen to deny themselves, who have chosen to work together for the common cause of the instruction of the covenant seed. Anyone who is convinced that we should not at this time have such a school, I beg to submit and I stand to be corrected, that such an one cannot honestly and sincerely absent himself from such assembly and still be faithful and diligent. Surely such an one cannot be scoffing and bitterly opposing and at the same time love the cause of sound instruction for the covenant seed. If such an one, for example, is convinced that we should continue to attempt cooperation with the existing schools and if he really is devoted to the cause of sound reformed Christian instruction, I suggest, should not such an one seek his place in such assembly, should not he contribute of his light, of his talent, of his vantage point to such assembly? And is there not something wrong with said assembly if it does not give place to that type of individual?

To continue further on this business of making our Protestant Reformed causes and projects our own, I would like to inquire, is not the above described prevailing spirit indicative of something wrong in the midst of our various congregations of this community, *not* that there is any wrong merely in the fact that this ignorance, neglect, and bitterness exists, but something wrong in the fact that this spirit *maintains* itself in its position and rank as complacently as it does? Perhaps there are various things to which we could point as an explanation of this spirit. Permit me to point to only one basic matter in conclusion. The basic cause to which I refer is that of our leadership. I would ask, has the leadership from the pulpit and from the consistory been as consistently clear, as vigorous, as positive, and as unambiguous as it should have been? I do not hereby necessarily reflect on the person of any preacher or on the persons of any consistory. We, as Protestant Reformed people, believe that the church functions through its offices. I would ask further as regards this spirit of ignorance, neglect, and bitterness; should not this spirit, *far* from maintaining itself in its smugness and its complacency, far rather hang its head in *shame*? During the course of the past year many of us undoubtedly have had the opportunity to witness a few outstanding and magnificent occasions of such fearless and vigorous leadership. The reactions to these few instances would seem to indicate rather emphatically how far we have slipped in the past quarter of a century and how much room there is for the above suggested investigation.

I already hear some say—"Why bring that up here

in a gathering such as this where people have chosen to deny themselves and to identify themselves with this cause?" Let the few final remarks be an answer to that question. I would say if I examine my own heart and mind that I find a very strong tendency to neglect to apply myself to the knowledge and the principles and the duties of the kingdom. The tendency to absorb oneself in kingdom duties and causes seems comparatively weak, and I trust that even the best among us will gladly admit that their love and zeal for these unpopular kingdom causes is nothing of which to boast.

In the first place, therefore, let this, your secretary's report, tend to a re-awakening, to a renewed interest, to a rededication to the organs and institutions which the Lord our God has given us and that we may do so with all the gifts and light and talents wherewith our Maker has endowed us. And what about that segment among us that has forgotten or for some reason neglected to gather with us and to dedicate themselves to any or to all of the kingdom work which our God has given us to do? Let this, your secretary's report, tend to a charitable and humbly understanding spirit above all, but also a spirit of determination to approach our brethren, calling these things to their attention so that we may do our duty even here in witnessing and giving expression to principles and duties as we have been led and taught to see. And what about that spirit of wicked neglect and opposition, that spirit that may have allowed prejudices and personalities to warp one's sense of values, of principles, and duties? Let this, your secretary's report, tend to lift this spirit up out of its oblivion. Let's look at it. Let's define it. Let's deal with it. Let's be severe with it. Let's give no quarter. Let's root it out!

And what about our leadership? Let not the impression be left that sound and vigorous leadership is confined to a few instances, but let this, your secretary's report, tend to a fostering of such sound and vigorous leadership. Let us love, support, encourage, and insist on leadership that hews to the line, that follows that sound and true line of reformed truth and polity and policies. And may we together seek Him in His precious Word in order that we may have wisdom and light and strength to labor and struggle together to the advancement of His great cause and that we may have a blessed part therein.

Charles Doezeema,
Secretary of the Board.

"Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my life, and I shall be
Ever, only, all for Thee."