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MEDITATION

Jesus Before Pilate

"Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man.

"... said unto them, Ye have brought this Man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined Him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse Him.

"And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath He done? I have found no cause of death in Him: I will therefore chastise Him and let Him go.

"And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required.

Luke 23:4, 14, 22, 24.

"Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained.

Acts 17:31a.

Christ Jesus the Lord is God revealed in the flesh. For that reason we see the strangest of contrasts in His life.

All through the ages the Holy Ghost signified that the Lamb of God would come to take away the sins of the world. And in the evening before His trial (so-called) we see the Lamb of God over against the Pass-over lamb which was eaten by the disciples of Jesus.

A little later we see the contrast of the rock that is Peter and the Rock of ages that is Jesus. The first fails miserably, while on the second Rock the whole structure of God's goodpleasure is made to rest.

Still later there is a high priest, and the name is Caiaphas. But before Him is brought a Man in whom all the highpriests of the Old Testament find their fulfillment.

And in the texts that you read above this meditation we see two judges. The one judge is the governor of the Roman Empire, which is commissioned to keep order among the nation of the Jews, while the other

Judge is Christ Jesus, who is commissioned of the Triune God to keep order with real justice, and presently to judge the world with equity. Oh yes, God has commissioned a Man by whom He will judge the world. And there He stands: before Pilate, accused of His own nation.

It was early. But there was a great multitude afoot in this morning of all mornings. We read of the "whole multitude" which arose and brought Him to Pilate. And, besides, Jesus was very popular at this stage of His life on earth. A few days hence He had called Lazarus back to life, where he was laid in the tomb, being dead four days already. And the popularity of Jesus was so great that the rulers of the Jews feared that the "whole world" would finally follow Him. And thus, out of envy, they arose together and brought Him to Pilate.

Terrible implication!

Here we see the Church of God, instituted and kept by Him, in the persons of its leaders, bringing the Messiah to the world powers. And then with the declared intention to have Him condemned to death. He came unto His own, but His own received Him not.

Away with Him! Let us bring Him to Pilate, the world's representative!

And thus the Man who is destined to be the Judge of the whole Universe is found before a miserable replica of a judge: Pontius Pilate.

Jesus before Pilate!

* * * *

Jesus before Pilate!

And here a strange thing awaits us: Pontius Pilate would let Jesus go. If we read all the accounts of this mock-trial, it becomes clear that Pilate at four different occasions would let Jesus go; and if we include his wily action of sending Jesus to Herod, who also found Him innocent, it is on five different occasions that Pilate would let Jesus go free. Imagine: the world is more merciful(?) than the church. Or put it this way: the Church Institute in its corrupted state is

more bloodthirsty than the world. There is no hatred like unto the hatred of corrupted religion.

Pilate, hearing the tumult, or being called by his servants to this sorry spectacle, comes with the sober question: what accusation do ye bring against this Man?

And the answer given by the rulers of the Jews reveals their self-righteousness: If this Man were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up to you!

But Pilate is not duped by this "pious" answer. He knew with whom he had to do. We read elsewhere that Pilate knew that they had delivered Him up out of envy.

But on the part of the Jews it reveals their burning hatred of Jesus.

And finally they do bring some sort of accusation against Jesus.

Oh, Pontius Pilate, here are the accusations: this fellow is trying to pervert the nation! He forbids the people to give tribute unto Caesar! And He makes Himself equal with God, calling Himself a King of some sort.

If you analyze these accusations, you will note how shrewdly they were chosen. They present a picture of fawning would-be docility to the powers that be. It is their avowed purpose to play upon the basest instincts of the dictator: this Man may be a dangerous rebel. He perverts the nation; He may institute a riot which might grow into an insurrection; it might even swell into a real revolution.

It is plain that their purpose is to prejudice the judge. Besides, how false are their accusations! And how dangerous in that they constitute a mixture of truth and error.

Oh, yes, Christ is the King of God, but not an earthly King as they seemed to indicate to Pilate. And that He forbade people to give tribute to Caesar cannot mean that Jesus incited the people to withhold the taxes laid upon them, for we read that on one occasion the Lord instructed Peter to go and pay the tax for himself and for the Lord. Christ must have meant that we may not give a certain tribute to Caesar which we owe to the great Potentate of potentates, that is, our tribute to God.

And certainly the Lord was no "malefactor". I would say that the earth, and the heavens and even hell gave its testimony to His goodness. As to the earth, we read that Christ went through the land, *doing good*. As to heaven, there was that testimony of Israel's Jehovah: This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased! As to hell, there was the admission of the devil in this motley crowd of his foul children: We must seek for *false witnesses*! When you seek for false witnesses, you have already admitted that the accused is righteous.

And we might even solicit the testimony of the land of dreams: the wife of this would-be judge tells us of this Righteous One!

Oh yes, Jesus is very Righteousness itself!

But still, He must stand before Pilate!

The most dreadful anomaly of history: Jesus accused before the judge.

Why, it is the horror of all horrors: this same Man is chosen of God to show forth the most wonderful Justice in the Day of days: *He* is the Judge of the world!

And yet: Jesus stands before Pilate!

* * * *

Jesus before Pilate!

At first it seems as though the trial (?) of Jesus will be of short duration. Pilate examines Jesus and comes before the people: I find no fault in this Man! And this conclusion is voiced by him time and time again. There is no question about it: Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent.

And here we have the great sin of this man Pilate: he should have released Jesus at once. And he should have arrested the leaders of the Jews because of defamation of character. And he should have told his soldiers to take their swords and clear the streets of this howling mob who were after the blood of their victim.

Note that this man is not at all moved by the question: is this Man guilty or innocent, but by the selfish question: how can I get rid of this case without getting hurt myself. In this last word you have the key to his despicable performance: care for *self*. Note that when he persists in telling the Jews how innocent Jesus is, and when they finally answer him: If you let this Man go you are not Caesar's friend, he is ready at once: Christ is sacrificed on the altar of Pilate's security.

Oh no, Pilate, it matters not that you wash your hands. You wash your hands indeed, but not in innocency. Look unto your hands: they are red with the blood of the great *Innocentius*!

Jesus before Pilate!

The world of so-called justice must give its answer to God's question: What think you of Innocence's beauty?

And the answer is given by Pilate.

The sin of Pilate is that he obstructed the sway, the Divine sway, of Justice. Unrighteousness prevailed in this so-called trial of Jesus.

Jesus before Pilate!

* * * *

Jesus before Pilate!

Pilate is plainly afraid of Jesus.

There must have been a very majestic mien in Jesus' appearance before this judge. Besides, we liter-

ally read that Pilate became the more afraid. Especially, since he received the message from his wife.

Then, too, the superstitious Roman had heard the Jews tell of this Man that He claimed to be a Son of the God of the heaven and the earth.

And so we can somewhat understand that Pilate likes to get rid of Jesus. Take Him yourselves, and judge Him according to your own laws, he cries to the Jews. Later, he hears that Jesus is of the territory of Herod, and forthwith he sends Him to that wily fox. Still later, he will make a duo, a terrible duo: choose ye whom you want: Jesus or Barabbas! And you all know that Pilate thought: they certainly will not dare to choose a man who is both a murderer and a rebel.

What a mockery is this so-called trial of Jesus! Pilate does not know what to do with Jesus, but nevertheless scourges Him. He would like to release Him for he is afraid of Him, but fears the Jews: they might send a delegation to Caesar, and then his popularity in Rome is in jeopardy.

And the end is that Pilate chooses security for self, even at the expense of justice, and he becomes ripe for judgement.

Jesus before Pilate?

Jesus has no chance(?) at all before that corrupt man.

He is given over to their will. The soldiers come and take Jesus. They will have some sport with Him. Horrible, a thousand horrors multiplied! Sport, wicked sport with Jesus?! But He is the God of heaven and earth!

O God, have mercy upon us! They are men, even as we are. How is it possible that Thou didst not crush the whole Universe at this wicked, horrible hour?!

Jesus cast away from before the tribunal of wicked Caesar!

Look strongly upon Him!

The Via Dolorosa is becoming very rocky indeed. He will be bruised very sore.

* * * *

Jesus before Pilate?

Wait a minute. I would turn it about.

Very really: Pilate stood before Jesus, and then Pilate as the representative of the whole world.

This is not the trial of Jesus!

As I said before: everyone here around this tribunal knows that Jesus is innocent. Everyone has known that right along.

When I enumerated the testimonies of heaven and earth and hell in defense of Jesus' innocence, I forgot the testimony of Judas: I have shed the innocent blood! And that is the testimony of him who is called a devil.

No, but the world was on trial.

And what a world!

First, there is the world of Rome. Rome had digested the wisdom of Greece. And Rome was the

flaming torch of Justice in that time and in all succeeding time. Even to our own day, Rome's code of justice is world-renowned.

And then there is the world of religion.

You bear me witness that there was no other nation on earth like the nation of the Jews! They had the oracles of God. They knew the law of God. They knew that the very Name of God means that He is righteousness itself. And that He requires justice and equity. Every one of the howling priests, elders, pharisees, and lawyers knew a certain text by heart: And what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly?

And would anyone then hold that this was the trial of Jesus? In any sense of the word?

Oh no, but everyone said within his own heart: this Man is just, but I thirst for His blood!

Listen to us, O Pilate: His blood be upon us and upon our children. But let us have His blood!

And therefore, it was not Jesus who was on trial, but it was the world of Rome, of Greece, and of Israel.

The world of Israel. Later the Holy Ghost would call that worldly Israel Sodom and Egypt spiritually.

The whole world was on trial in the year of our Lord 33.

It is this: Pilate stands before Jesus!

* * * *

Pilate, and then as the representative of the corrupt world of the heathen, of the refined culture of Greece, and of the self-righteous Pharisee in Israel, Pilate stands before the bar of the shining INNOCENCE of Jesus!

And that world is utterly condemned by Him.

Let us try to explain.

As I have said many times: Jesus was Innocent! Do not grow weary of *this* repetition. You are going to hear it countless times unto all eternity.

And Innocence personified said to the whole world: What will ye do with He? What do you think of Me?

And they answered Him: We hate Thee so much that we will drag Thee through the streets of Jerusalem, and there, at the place of the skull we will crucify Thee!

And that is our condemnation. When we so treat shining innocence, we condemn ourselves.

But why is this come about, O God of eternal, everlasting miracles?

Listen to our fathers: they have given us the answer in a dusty form: He was innocently condemned to death that *we might be acquitted at the judgment-seat of God!*

O wonder of wonders! The Innocent was made guilty by God so that the guilty might be made Innocent!

Sing aloud, thou inhabitant by Zion!

G. Vos.

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EDITORIALS

Propositions Concerning The Covenant Of Grace

The Fourth proposition to which Dr. Bos and the Rev. van Teylingen subscribe reads as follows:

"That the faith through which we are justified before God and are saved is the fruit of the efficacious operation (working through, *doorwerking*, H.H.) of the covenant promise of God, which God without their assent fulfills in and for the elect through the Holy Spirit. (cf. Canons of Dordrecht, III, IV, 12)."

In the Canons of Dordrecht referred to in the above proposition we read:

"And this is the regeneration so highly celebrated in Scripture, and denominated a new creation: a resurrection from the dead, a making alive, which God works in us without our aid. But this is in no wise effected merely by the external preaching of the gospel, by moral persuasion, or such a mode of operation, that after God has performed his part, it still remains in the power of man to be regenerated or not, to be converted or to continue unconverted; but it is evidently a supernatural work, most powerful, and at the same time most delightful, astonishing, mysterious, and ineffable; not inferior in efficacy to creation, or to the resurrection from the dead, as the Scripture inspired by the author of this work declares; so that all in whose heart God works in this marvelous manner, are certainly, infallibly, and effectually regenerated, and do actually believe. Whereupon the will thus renewed, is not only actuated and influenced by God, but in consequence of this influence, becomes itself active. Wherefore also, man is himself rightly said to believe and repent, by virtue of that grace received."

This proposition:

1. Evidently intends to emphasize that faith is wrought in the hearts of the elect by the Holy Spirit without the cooperation or assent of those in whom it is wrought. And this is, of course, correct. Not to maintain this in all its force is Arminianism. And the liberated with their view of the covenant and their contention that the promise is for all the children that are born of believing parents are often accused of Arminianism.

Now, we do not believe that they are Arminians. The accusation as such as undoubtedly false. They certainly mean to be Reformed. They themselves emphasize repeatedly, as also in the above proposition,

that faith is the work of the Holy Spirit without the assent or cooperation of man.

Yet I must confess that I never found an explanation of the dilemma that the promise of God is for all the children of believers that are born under the covenant, yet is fulfilled only in the elect, and that the realization of this promise of God depends solely on the operation of the Holy Spirit. I think I can put their conception of the covenant promise in what I consider a faulty syllogism as follows:

- a. God's promise is for all.
- b. God surely fulfills His promise through the Holy Spirit.
- c. Only the elect receive the promise of the covenant.

Now, the correct form of this syllogism must be either:

- a. God's promise is for all.
- b. God surely fulfills His promise.
- c. Hence, all the children of the covenant are surely saved.

Or:

- a. God's promise is for the elect only.
- b. God surely fulfills His promise through the operation of the Holy Spirit.
- c. Only the elect receive the promise and are saved.

The last form of the syllogism, of course, represents our view.

A couple of years ago one of the liberated ministers wrote me that according to his conviction all the children of the covenant had a check in their pocket, representing the promise of salvation. All they had to do was to go to the bank to cash that check. I replied at that time to him in the form of two questions: first of all, I asked him what was written on that check. Did the check state: "I, Jehovah God, promise Tom, Dick, and Harry eternal life?" Or: "I, Jehovah God, promise the elect, the believers in Christ, eternal life?" And, secondly, if the former was true, whether God issued false checks, seeing there certainly is no capital in the bank for all in view of particular atonement, which means that Christ died not for all but for the elect only. He replied to the first question that on the check was written the name of each individual child that was born under the covenant, born of believing parents; and to the second question he replied that God certainly did not issue false checks, but that this is a mystery: in other words, we cannot understand how God can promise eternal life to all the children born under the covenant while at the same time He powerfully works faith only in the elect.

However, this is no mystery, but a flat contradiction. Mysteries there are plenty; and the believer rejoices in mysteries. Mysteries grow deeper and more profound in the measure that we contemplate them. But the statement that God promise salvation to all

the children of the covenant and that He issues checks to all on the bank of heaven while He fulfills that promise only in the elect is certainly no mystery, but a contradiction which a very child can understand. There is nothing profound about this.

It is the same so-called "mystery" as that of the Heynsian "two wills" in God, namely: the will that He wants all men to be saved and the will that He does not want all to be saved, but the elect only. This also is no mystery, but a flat contradiction. Or again, it is the very same so-called "mystery" as the well-meaning offer, on the part of God, of salvation to all men, and the salvation of the elect only.

Of such mysteries we must have nothing.

And therefore, I still ask the leaders of the liberated churches how they harmonize the two: the promise of God which is sure and can never fail to all the children that are born under the covenant and of believing parents, on the one hand; and, the efficacious working of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the elect unto faith, on the other hand.

2. And therefore, we can agree with this fourth proposition, though we prefer to use a little different terminology. We would, rather than speak of the powerful operation of the promise, present the matter in this way that "our part" (not: "parties" but "parts") of the covenant is the fruit of God's part. When God establishes His eternal covenant of grace with us, adopts us for His children and heirs and through the blood of Christ does 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, and through the Holy Spirit dwells in us to sanctify us to be members of Christ and apply unto us all that we have in Christ, namely, the washing away of our sins and the daily renewing of our lives, then, and as the fruit of that grace of God bestowed upon us, we assume our part of the covenant, which consists in this, "that we cleave to this one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that we trust in him, and love him with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our mind, and with all our strength; that we forsake the world, crucify our old nature, and walk in a new and holy life."

Nevertheless, as such we have no objection to the proposition "that the faith through which we are justified before God and are saved is the fruit of the efficacious operation of the covenant promise of God, which God without their assent fulfills in and for the elect through the Holy Spirit."

Nevertheless, the present proposition stands in contradistinction with proposition 3, where it states that "all the children of the church are included in the covenant and church of God, and 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."

For again I say that if all the children that are born of believing parents in the church have the promise, that promise will God certainly fulfill in all: for He does not lie. And if then it is true that "the faith through which we are justified before God and are saved is the fruit of the operation of the covenant promise of God, which God without their assent fulfills in and for the elect through the Holy Spirit, either all are elect or the third proposition cannot be true.

Perhaps these two propositions constitute a certain compromise between Dr. Bos and Rev. Van Teylingen.

But a compromise is never a solution.

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. (concluded)

Finally, it must be emphasized that sacraments are given to the Church in the world to be administered by her officially and institutionally, and to be received, observed, and celebrated in the midst of the gathering of the people of God.

Just as the preaching of the Word is entrusted to the Church as the chief means of grace, so the sacraments are instituted in the Church as means whereby the Holy Spirit strengthens the faith of the believers. Hence, not any private group of Christians can administer baptism or celebrate the Lord's Supper. It is in and for the gathering of believers and their children, for the Church as such, that the sacraments are instituted. In the gathering of believers, where the Word is preached, the sacraments are to be celebrated. Reformed people generally were opposed to baptize children or to celebrate the Lord's Supper in private, either in case of sickness or because of other circumstances. They were afraid, and not without reason, that the desire to have the sacraments thus administered, in the privacy of the home, outside of the gathering of the Church, rested upon a super-

stitious belief in the efficacy of the sacraments as such and that they are essential unto salvation.

And this is not true.

Sacraments are surely important, and wilfully to ignore or to neglect them must be detrimental to the spiritual life of the believer. But they are not to be considered as indispensable unto salvation. In this respect they differ from the preaching of the Word. The Word, it must be remembered, is always the chief means of grace; it is the means whereby we are called unto conscious faith in Christ. And it is also the means whereby the believer is strengthened in faith and edified unto sanctification. But the sacraments are added to the Word, and must always take a secondary place. Without the Word the sacraments are meaningless. But the Word is never dependent on the sacraments for its significance and efficacy. In fact, as some of the confessions which we quoted in this chapter emphasized, the Word itself is even one of the most important elements in the administration and celebration of the sacraments; for when in the administration of baptism the minister employs the well-known formula, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost", it is Christ Himself that speaks His own Word and Who through His Holy Spirit causes the sacrament of baptism to be efficacious. And the same is true of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. When in the celebration of that sacrament the gathering of believers who partake of the signs of the broken bread and the wine that is poured out hear the minister say, "The bread which we break, is the communion of the body of Christ," and again, "The cup of blessing, which we bless, is the communion of the blood of Christ," the Word of God is administered to them and Christ Himself through His Holy Spirit addresses them and causes the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to be sanctified unto their hearts unto the strengthening of the faith. This is also very plain from our form for the administration of the Lord's Supper, especially from the following passage: "And that we might firmly believe that we belong to this covenant of grace, the Lord Jesus Christ, in his last supper, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave it to his disciples and said, 'Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you, this do in remembrance of me; in like manner also after supper he took the cup, gave thanks and said, Drink ye all of it; this cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins; this do ye as often as ye drink it in remembrance of me;' that is, as often as ye eat of this bread and drink of this cup, you shall thereby as by a sure remembrance and pledge be admonished and assured of this my hearty love and faithfulness towards you; that, whereas you should otherwise have suffered eternal death, I have

given my body to the death of the cross, and shed my blood for you; and as certainly feed and nourish your hungry and thirsty souls with my crucified body, and shed blood, to everlasting life, as this bread is broken before your eyes, and this cup is given to you, and you eat and drink the same with your mouth, in remembrance of me."

Thus, the Word is always the chief means of grace, operating in and through the sacraments; and the latter are always subordinate to the former.

This also sheds light upon the question of the so-called sacramental union, or the relation between the signs and the things signified. This relation is not such that the signs are changed into the thing itself, so that, for instance, the signs in the Lord's Supper are changed into the essence of the body and blood of Christ and that essence can be eaten with our physical mouth. Such is the erroneous theory of the Romish Church, called transubstantiation, of which we must speak later. Nor is this relation to be conceived of as local, so that together with the signs the thing signified is presented essentially to the believer, as is the Lutheran theory of consubstantiation. But the relation is entirely spiritual, so that through the means of the sacrament as signs of the invisible grace of God, Christ, through His Spirit, operates upon the faith of the believer unto salvation.

Thus Ursinus in his "Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism" writes: "A sacramental union, therefore, is not corporal, nor does it consist in the presence of the sign and the thing signified in the same place; much less in trans- or con-substantiation; but it is relative, and consists in these two things: 1. In a likeness or correspondence between the signs and the thing signified thereby, concerning which Augustine says: 'If the sacraments have not a certain resemblance or relation to the things of which they are sacraments, they would not be sacraments.' 2. In the joint exhibition and reception of the signs and things signified in their proper use, which cannot be done without faith, as we shall hereafter show. None but those who have faith receive from the minister signs, and from Christ the things signified; and when they thus receive both in their proper use, we have what is called the sacramental union."

And in the same connection he writes: "This is proven, first, from the nature of a sacrament. The word sacrament is relative. The rites and ceremonies which God has instituted constitute the foundation or ground work. The term includes Christ, and communion with him in all his benefits. The relation is the order or connection which exists between the rites and the things which they signify. The correlatives are the signs and the things signified. From this, it is evident that the sacramental union is nothing else, than the relation which the sign has to that which is

signified, from which we obtain this infallible rule: *While this relation continues the sign and the thing signified remain united; but when it once ceases, they are no longer united*; by which we are to understand, that as long as the order established by God between the sign and the thing signified remains, so long are the things exhibited and sealed with the signs; but when this divine appointment ceases, the signs do not exhibit or seal anything unto us. The second proof which we advance in support of the sacramental union as just explained, is that which arises out of the analogy and correspondence of sacraments. It must be a union in harmony with all sacraments. Let us, therefore, inquire what was the union between Christ and the sacraments of old, and we shall then see what is the nature of the union which holds in the sacraments of the New Testament; for there must be a correspondence in this respect, or else the sacraments of old were no sacraments, or the union was not sacramental, not being such as corresponds with all sacraments. The union now which we belonged to the sacraments of old could only be a respective or relative union. Hence, such must now also be the nature of that union which is sacramental."

From all this it is evident that Christ from heaven, through His Holy Spirit, establishes what is called the sacramental union, so that by faith the believer receives the thing signified through the means of the sacrament. And that is the reason why we insist that even in the sacrament the Word of Christ is paramount.

As to the fruit and the effect of the sacraments upon different classes of participants we may state the following. Neither the preaching of the Word nor the administration and celebration of the sacraments is ever vain and without effect. But the effect is not always the same; for as the preaching of the Word is both a savor of life unto life and a savor of death unto death, so also the sacraments as they are administered in the visible Church as visible tokens of God's invisible grace produce in the main a two-fold effect. But even so, we can distinguish four different classes of participants in the sacraments: first, there are, of course, the true believers, who partake of the sacraments, both of baptism and of the Lord's Supper, and who through the means of them are strengthened in their faith by the Holy Spirit. This is done chiefly and usually at the very moment of the celebration of the sacrament, although it is not impossible that the fruit of the sacraments is obtained later. And, this saving effect of the sacraments is for the whole church, for all the believers that partake of them. And this is true not only of the Lord's Supper, but also of the sacrament of baptism. It is the whole Church that celebrates the sacrament of baptism at the moment when an infant is baptized; and the blessing of that

sacrament is received not only by the infant but also by all the believers that partake of that sacrament, so that they are strengthened in the faith of the covenant and of the incorporation into Christ, of the forgiveness of sins and the adoption unto children and heirs. This is often forgotten. When baptism is administered in the services of the Church, the congregation often assumes the attitude as if the ceremony was a transaction between the minister and the child and its parents. But this is a serious mistake. The whole Church must consciously celebrate the sacrament of baptism, as well as the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, wherever it is administered. Secondly, the sacraments also have a detrimental effect upon believers that do not partake. This, of course, appears to be chiefly true of the Lord's Supper; but we should never forget that the two sacraments can never be separated; and whenever a believer for some reason fails to partake of the sacrament of communion whenever it is administered, he also loses hold on the efficacy of his own baptism. This failure to participate of the table of the Lord may be due to misunderstanding of that sacrament; or it may be caused by the fact that temporarily believers love certain sins, and nourish them, and rather refrain from partaking of the Lord's Supper than to confess their sins. But whether the one or the other is the cause of their failure to partake, the inevitable effect is always that they fail to grow in grace and that their spiritual life is impoverished. And therefore, it is very essential that in the preaching of the Word believers are urged regularly to attend unto the administration of the sacraments. Thirdly, there are those in the Church on earth, mixed with the gathering of believers, that have not the faith, but that nevertheless partake of the sacraments. They are the hypocrites. These receive the signs but not the thing signified thereby. And the signs they receive unto the aggravation of their judgment and the hardening of their hearts. This is also plainly expressed in the thirty-fifth article of the Belgic Confession, where we read: "Further, though the sacraments are connected with the thing signified, nevertheless both are not received by all men: the ungodly indeed receives a sacrament to his condemnation, but he does not receive the truth of the sacrament. As Judas, and Simon the sorcerer, both indeed received the sacrament, but not Christ, who was signified by it, of whom believers only are made partakers." And lastly, for the unbeliever who is for a time member of the Church as the gathering of believers and their children, who indeed carries the sign of the covenant on his forehead, but who despises the covenant of God and separates himself from the table of communion, the sacraments also are a savor of death unto death. He is the public violator of the covenant of God, is a profane person, as Esau was, and shows in his relation to the sacra-

ment that he despises holy things; and the result also for him is that the sacrament is a savor of death unto death and an aggravation of his judgment.

In conclusion we may say a word about the number of the sacraments, as taught in the sixty-eighth question and answer of the Heidelberg Catechism: "How many sacraments has Christ instituted in the new covenant, or testament? Two: namely, holy baptism, and the holy supper".

The Romish Church adds five other sacraments to these two, namely: confirmation, penance, ordination, extreme unction, and matrimony. None of these, however, are instituted in the Church by Jesus Christ to be administered in the Church and to be observed and celebrated by her. It is true that Roman Catholics appeal to Scripture in support of their contention concerning the number of the sacraments. Thus, for instance, for confirmation they refer to texts that speak of the laying on of hands, as Acts 19:6 and Heb. 6:2. But it is plain, in the first place, that this was not an institution of Christ personally, and secondly, that the laying on of hands by the apostles was a ceremony peculiar to the primitive Church as a sign of the special powers of the Holy Ghost, such as the gifts of healing, the gifts of tongues and prophecying, and the like,—a ceremony which soon passed away and is no longer in vogue in the Church of today. For the so-called sacrament of penance they refer to James 5:16 especially: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray ye for one another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." That this is not an institution of Christ, to be administered by the Church officially, and to be observed in the gathering of the saints, goes without saying. And penance, or absolution, is affected in the Church of Christ by the preaching of the gospel. For orders, or ordination, they appeal to passages like II Tim. 1:6 and I Tim. 4:14. But although these passages do indeed teach the ordination of the ministers of the gospel, yet they do not speak of a sacrament which is appointed and instituted by Christ for the Church, to be administered unto her and to be observed and celebrated by her. And for the so-called sacrament of matrimony they refer especially to Eph. 5:30-32: "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church." That, however, matrimony is not a sacrament, especially instituted by Christ in and for His Church ought to be evident already from the fact that the marriage relation is rooted in creation and is common to all men. Besides, although in Ephesians 5:32 Paul speaks of "this is a great mystery", the mystery refers not to the marriage relation as such, although for believers

it is a symbol of the union of Christ and His Church, but only to the latter relation, according to which "we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." And for the so-called sacrament of extreme unction they refer to passages like Mark 6:13: "And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them;" and to James 5:14: "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." But again, in the first place, this is not a sacrament, because sacraments are appointed especially by Christ, instituted in and for His Church, to be administered unto her and to be celebrated and observed by her. And in the second place, these passages certainly have nothing to do with what the Romish Church teaches concerning extreme unction, which is administered only to the dying; for, whether or not we explain James 5:14 as referring to spiritual sickness, it is very evident that both the passages quoted speak of the healing of the sick and not of the anointing of the dying.

Hence, on the basis of Holy Writ we hold that there are only two sacraments, namely: baptism and the Lord's Supper. The former corresponds to the sacrament of circumcision in the old dispensation; the latter was adumbrated by the paschal lamb and perhaps by the various sacrifices of the law. Of these two sacraments baptism is first. And although it is repeatedly celebrated by the Church, it can nevertheless be administered to the individual only once, because it is the sacrament of the incorporation into Christ. And the Lord's Supper follows the sacrament of baptism as the sign and seal of the nourishment and strengthening of the faith of the believers. This sacrament can be partaken of only by those that come to years of discretion and are able to discern the Lord's body, although it may be questioned very seriously whether the children of the covenant cannot discern the Lord's body and therefore partake of communion at a very early age.

H. H.

CLASSIS EAST

will meet in regular session D. V., at 9:00 A.M., Wednesday, April 6 at the Hope Protestant-Reformed Church. This is the last meeting of Classis before Synod.

D. Jonker, S. C.

OUR DOCTRINE

The Attributes Of God

The Holiness of God. (continued)

We concluded our preceding article by quoting a few Scriptural passages in support of the truth that God is holy. Attention was called to Isaiah 6:1-3, 5-7, 10:17, 29:19, 30:11, 41:16, 47:4, 54:5, 57:15, and John 17:11.

From these passages we may conclude that the Lord Himself is holy. Holiness surely implies separation from evil and consecration to goodness and perfection. This is applicable in an infinite sense to the living God. He is *the* Holy One and, therefore, the Incomparable One. This we literally read in Isaiah 40:25: "To whom then will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy one." As the Holy One He is the Incomparable One, Who cannot be compared with or likened to anyone. He alone is the Holy one. Holiness, therefore, is an attribute peculiarly Divine. That God's holiness is synonymous with His own incomparable perfection is plain from Isaiah 6:3, 5 which we quoted above. The prophet, because he is a sinful man, cannot endure this radiation of the glory of the Lord, the radiation of His holiness. The Lord is the Holy One of Israel, *the* Holy One; God and holiness are therefore inseparable; He alone is holy.

The Holiness of the Lord is, then, that perfection of Jehovah whereby He is eternally separated from the common and sinful world and wholly consecrated unto Himself. He is the God of infinite perfection and as such is eternally consecrated unto Himself. The holiness of God, therefore, implies, first of all, that He, and He alone, is the God of infinite and spotless purity, and, secondly, that He is the motive and purpose of all His activity so that He is eternally consecrated unto Himself as the Highest Good. The Lord 'finds' the motive and purpose of all His actions in Himself. He does all things for His Name's sake. He is the God of eternal and infinite perfection, is never prompted by anything less than the glory of His Name and the manifestation of His own incomparable greatness and perfection. He is consecrated solely and eternally unto Himself, the Highest and Absolute Good.

This virtue, which belongs to the Lord's communicable attributes and is, as the name suggests, communicable, the Lord also bestows upon His people. That God renders us holy implies that He, through the power of His grace, separates us from all that which is common and sinful and consecrates us unto Himself. This is perfectly applicable to the Christ, although, of course, He knew no sin. That Christ was

separated from all evil does not, of course, imply that He ever was evil. We become saints (holy ones) through the power of Divine grace. The Scriptures speak of the people of God as "called saints," who become such through the irresistible calling of God. And this, we noticed in the foregoing, always occurs through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 13: 12). Through that blood we have been redeemed from the guilt of sin and have received the right unto eternal life; and also through the power of that blood, the power of the risen Christ Who was dead and is alive forevermore, we are also actually called, delivered out of the spiritual power of sin and darkness into the blessedness of the communion and fellowship of the alone blessed God, now in principle and afterwards in eternal and heavenly perfection.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

Its Idea.

The word, "righteousness, righteous," means literally: to be right, straight, as a straight line, to be in harmony with a certain standard or norm. The word "righteousness or righteous" appears very often in Holy Writ. Although it has been said that we cannot speak of righteousness in God because there is no law or norm to which He is subject, nevertheless the Scriptures repeatedly declare that He is righteous. The word also occurs frequently with respect to man, as especially in the books of Psalms and Proverbs. Time and again, throughout the Word of God, the righteous are contrasted with the unrighteous or wicked. Abraham, e.g., in his prayer for the preservation of Sodom (Genesis 18) bases his petition exactly upon this distinction between the godly and the ungodly. This appears from verses 23-25, and we quote: "And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt Thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: Wilt Thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from Thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from Thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" It is clear from this passage that the "Common Grace" theorists are completely in error who would have us believe that the father of believers is concerned with the city of Sodom and the wicked inhabitants of that city. He is concerned with the righteous within that city and his plea before the Judge of all the earth is certainly rooted in his concern for the righteous, that the *Judge of all the earth will not destroy the righteous with the wicked*. And, as far as the book of Psalms is concerned, the righteous may well be considered the theme of that particular book.

In this article we are interested in the concept, "righteousness," as an attribute of God. Often in Holy Writ, as in the epistle to the Romans, this word refers to the righteousness of the people of God and must be understood in the sense of justification, "rechtvaardigmaking," the state of righteousness, of being just before God. However, we are at present discussing the attributes of God. And "righteousness", very closely related to the concept, "holiness", is one of the communicable attributes of the Lord.

God Himself is Righteous—Scriptural.

That the Lord Himself is righteous is repeatedly taught in the Word of God. "He is the Rock, His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He" Deut. 32:4; "O Lord God of Israel, Thou art righteous: for we remain yet escaped, as it is this day: behold, we are before Thee in our trespasses: for we cannot stand before Thee because of this."—Ezra 9:15; "And foundest his heart faithful before Thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give it, I say, to his seed, and hast performed Thy words; for Thou art righteous."—Nehemiah 9:8; "Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and upright are Thy judgments."—Psalm 119: 137; "The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works."—Psalm 145:17; "Tell ye, and bring them near: yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the Lord? and there is no God else beside Me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside Me."—Isaiah 45:21; "Righteous art Thou, O Lord, when I plead with Thee: yet let me talk with Thee of Thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?"—Jeremiah 12:1; "The Lord is righteous; for I have rebelled against His commandments: hear, I pray you, all people, and behold my sorrow: my virgins and my young men are gone into captivity."—Lamentations 1:18; "Therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the Lord our God is righteous in all His works which He doeth: for we obeyed not His voice."—Daniel 9:14; "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee: but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent me."—John 17:25; "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."—2 Timothy 4:8; "If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him."—1 John 2:29; "And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because

Thou hast judged thus.”—Rev. 16:5. All these passages clearly speak of a righteousness of God Himself. Let us look a little more closely at a few of these passages.

Deuteronomy 32:4: “He is the Rock, His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgments: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He.” Moses declares here that God is the Rock, the only, firm, abiding, unchangeable Reality, and therefore the ultimate Criterion and Standard of all that is. He is *the* Rock, the only Rock, the only One Who can speak of Himself as a Rock, the only unchangeable Reality. It is for this reason that His work is perfect and that all His ways are judgment—because the Lord is the Absolute Goodness, Norm, Standard, Criterion, He always judges the children of men, determines whether they walk according to Him or not. His ways are ways of judgment; *His* ways alone are ways of judgment; He alone may judge and He alone can judge; and when He judges he always judges men in the light of Himself, because He alone is the Rock, the unchangeable Reality. This God is furthermore, so the text continues, the God of truth and without iniquity; He is without iniquity, i.e., is not a lie or vanity, but the Truth, Reality. And as that Truth, Reality He knows Himself. Hence, the Lord does not usurp authority, does not appropriate unto Himself undue authority when all His ways are judgments, does not imagine Himself to be what He is not. He is without iniquity, without the lie or vanity. He is the Truth and knows Himself as such. Hence, He is good and upright, straight and upright, always in harmony with the Standard of all goodness, Himself. That God is righteous evidently means, therefore, that He is eternally in conformity to Himself—He is the unchangeable and ultimate Criterion of all goodness and perfection.

Nehemiah 9:8: “And foundest his heart faithful before Thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgathites, to give it, I say, to his seed, and hast performed Thy works; for Thou art righteous.” In the context of these words the inspired speaker speaks of the promise of God to give to Abraham and his seed the land of Canaan; hence, in the context of these words the holy writer speaks of the promise of the covenant. This appears, not only from the text which we have quoted, but also from the preceding verse: “Thou art the Lord the God, Who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham (father of many nations—H.V.) Please notice, in these seventh and eighth verses, the unconditional character of the promise of the Lord. We quote, and the contents in the various parentheses are of the undersigned: “Thou art the Lord the God, Who didst choose Abram (Abram

did not choose the Lord but the Lord chose him, and this is the root of that which follows), and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham (*God* led him forth, and *God* gave him the name of Abraham—it is all of God, therefore, we see); And foundest his heart faithful before Thee (this, surely, does not mean that the Lord “happened” to find Abraham’s heart faithful, and that the faithfulness of Abraham’s heart was the basis for the Lord’s dealings with the father of believers—this is pure arminianism; faithfulness was not the condition on which the dealings of the Lord with him depended, but the Lord’s sovereign way in which He led the ancient patriarch and revealed unto him His covenant), and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites. . . . , to give it, I say, to his seed (notice that the Lord would give *give* him and his seed this land, and that this word “giving” appears twice in this text), and hast performed Thy words (God, therefore, *has performed* His words). The unconditional character of this Scriptural passage is surely beyond all doubt. And that the Lord has performed His words, His promise to Abraham, is because: “For Thou art righteous.”—the Lord carried out His promise because He is unchangeably in harmony with Himself; He wills what He promises; He wills as He is; He is the Rock and unchangeable; hence, He always fulfills His word or promise. That the Lord fulfills His promise is, therefore, because He is righteous, and His righteousness is His unchangeable harmony with and maintaining of Himself.

Psalms 145:17: “The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works.” This text is obviously explained by the psalmist in the verses 18-20 that follow: “The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth. He will also fulfill the desire of them that fear Him: He also will hear their cry, and will save them. The Lord preserveth all them that love Him: but all the wicked will He destroy.” And for this reason the man of God can conclude this psalm with the words: “My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord: and let all flesh bless His holy Name for ever and ever.”

The exponents of “Common Grace” delight in calling attention to this psalm. This theory would have us believe that the Lord is also graciously inclined to the wicked in this life. At the conclusion of this world’s history this present dispensation of the general mercy and kindness of the Lord will come to an end. In hell the Lord will reveal Himself forever as a Consuming Fire. Then this present day of grace will have been concluded. In this world, this present dispensation, however, the Lord continues to be favorably inclined to all the children of men. And He, according to these theorists, reveals this general kindness not only in all the earthy things which He bestows upon

them, but also in the preaching of the gospel, which manifestly on the Lord's part is a sincere effort to save others besides those whom He has sovereignly chosen from before the foundation of the world. Do we not read in verse 9: "The Lord is good to all: and His tender mercies are over all His works."?

How different and contrary to this conception is the presentation of the psalmist in the concluding verses of this psalm! Indeed, this already applies to the first part of this psalm. Read carefully the verses 1-8 and let us honestly ask ourselves the question whether this applies to all men or only to the children of God. And in the verses 18-20 we are told that *the Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth*, that He will fulfill the desire of *them that fear Him*, will also hear *their* cry and save *them*, and that the Lord preserveth all *them that love Him*, but will destroy all the wicked. And this, mind you, will not occur merely in the hereafter. This always happens. Fact is, according to verse 17, the Lord is righteous in *all* His ways, and holy in *all* His works. All God's ways and works are *all* His dealings with the children of men. And let us understand correctly: He is righteous in *all* His ways and works. Always He is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, that call upon Him in truth. Always He will fulfill the desire of them that fear Him; always He will hear their cry; always He will save them. And always the Lord is preserving all them that love Him, but also always He will destroy the wicked. And this is due to the fact that the Lord *is righteous* in all His ways and works. Because the Lord is righteous, unchangeably in harmony with Himself, therefore His attitude toward the godly and the ungodly is always the same. God is unchangeable in Himself and therefore in all His dealings with the children of men.

Jeremiah 12:1: "Righteous art Thou, O Lord, when I plead with Thee: yet let me talk with Thee of Thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?" The prophet is faced in this text with a dilemma. His problem concerns the prosperity of the wicked. We have the same problem here as that which confronts the psalmist in Psalm 73. The question concerning the prosperity of the wicked and the affliction of the people of God is therefore not a problem of recent date. Also the people of God of the Old Dispensation were confronted by this vexing situation. And, yet, there is a vast difference between the attitude of the prophet toward this perplexing problem and that which is generally revealed in the present day. In the Old Testament, in the experiences of the psalmist of Psalm 73 and of the prophet, Jeremiah, the matter of the prosperity of the ungodly and the affliction of the righteous constituted for them a very perplexing and distressing enigma. They could not understand it.

And it grieved them. The holy writer of the seventy-third psalm continues in his restless and sorely troubled state until he enters the sanctuary of God. Rest and peace elude him until he is able to view their present prosperity in the light of their end, until he realizes that the Lord has placed them on slippery places and that, therefore, all things work together unto their eternal ruin and desolation. The question of the "welfare" of the ungodly and the "misfortune" of the people of God is to the prophet and the psalmist a miserably perplexing problem because they cannot harmonize it with the righteousness and perfection of the living God. And they love that God and cannot tolerate the thought that anything might be in conflict with His holiness and righteousness. How different is the attitude of many today toward the same dilemma! It is to them no longer a dilemma! They do not hesitate to ascribe the sinner's "welfare" to the general kindness and compassion of the Lord. The Lord, they say, is graciously inclined to all. Neither are they troubled by the Scriptural testimony that the Lord is angry with the wicked *every day*, that the Lord is righteous in *all* His ways and holy in *all* His works, that the curse of Jehovah is in the house of the wicked and that the living God curses him continually in all that he is and possesses (*Deut. 28*); very superficially he accepts both. He believes that the Lord loves and hates the same person at the same time, and does not hesitate to accuse anyone who sincerely recoils from such a conception that he is guilty of the attempt to understand with his finite and faulty mind the things which God has so "clearly" revealed in His Word and which we must embrace by a childlike faith. This, however, is not the presentation of Psalm 73 or of the prophet, Jeremiah.

And now the prophet, in *Jeremiah 12:1*, would plead with the Lord in connection with this phenomenon. He would talk with the Lord, we read, of His judgments. He inquires of Jehovah why all they are happy who deal very treacherously. But, before he begins to plead with Jehovah, one thing stands fast. That one thing is expressed in the text: "Righteous art Thou, O Lord." This is the Rock on which he stands when he pleads. The appearance of things, which he does not understand, does not tempt him to doubt and impugn the right of Jehovah. God *is* righteous. To doubt or attack the righteousness of the Lord would be the height of folly. God *is* righteous—nothing can change or alter that. And the reason why no amount of reasoning can alter this truth, why we must proceed from this truth and allow it to govern all our reasoning and deliberations, is simply because the Lord *is* righteous. Righteousness constitutes His very Being. It does not merely clothe Him as a garment; it expresses what He is. A deviation by the Lord from the path of righteousness would involve

Him in a denial of Himself. And that is impossible, for God is God, the Rock, the I AM, the unchangeable. This truth receives all the emphasis in Jeremiah 12:1, in the few passages we have briefly discussed, and throughout the Word of God. What this righteousness of the Lord implies we shall see, the Lord willing, in our following article.

(to be continued)

H. Veldman.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

Christ Alone In His Suffering

We turn to the eighth and the ninth verses of Isaiah 53, and, as quoting the original text, read the Word of God as follows, "From violence and judgment he was taken; and who of his contemporaries considered, that he was cut off from the land of the living, this stroke lighting upon him, because of the transgressions of my people?"

The dominant thought in this scripture passage is that the passion of Christ was understood by not one of his contemporaries. The enemies, though they well knew that Jesus was a blameless and just man, were totally ignorant of the fact that it was the blood of the atonement that was being shed there on Golgotha. And the disciples of Jesus shared this ignorance. Christ's terrible experiences in the hours of His passion—His trial, the miscarriage of justice that characterized that trial, His crucifixion with all its attending shame, disgrace, ignominy, pains and sorrows—mystified, perplexed, and confounded them. It troubled their heart. It terrified their souls.

But how is it to be explained that even the disciples of Jesus understood not, failed to perceive that Christ was the true sin-offering, God's true Lamb, who came to bear away the sins of His people? The prophets had spoken plainly, Isaiah especially, in the very chapter with which we now deal. And it may be assumed that the disciples and friends of Jesus in general were thoroughly acquainted with these discourses. Besides, the disciples had walked with Jesus and had imbibed His instruction. Yet the cross was as much of an enigma to them as to any of their contemporaries. The gospel narratives bring this out clearly. As His career on earth was drawing to a close, Christ showed His disciples how He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and the chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised the third day. Taking Him aside on a day, Peter rebuked Him saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord;

that shall not be". And when Jesus' hour was come, they came, did the enemies, and laid their hands on Him there in the garden. But the disciples would not have it so. Inflamed with anger, they would fight to the death for their beloved Master. This is evident from Peter's reactions. He begins swinging with his sword, and strikes a servant of the highpriest, cutting off his ear. Christ bids him to put up again his sword in its place, and heals the servant's ear. Amazed at the doing of their Master, the disciples take to flight. These men are not cowards. Seeing that He has forbidden them to fight for Him, there is nothing left for them to do but to flee. Jesus is led away to the court of the highpriest. Wanting to see the end of the matter, Peter follows afar off. At the opportune time, when the moment is right, Jesus will save Himself out of their hands, certainly. He has always done so thus far. But Jesus remains in their hands, apparently a helpless victim of their wrath. Witnesses present their lying accusations; and Jesus is silent. They buffet Him, they mock and deride Him. They beat Him with their fists and spit in His face; but He does not even as much as raise His voice in protest. Peter sees and hears all. He can hardly believe his eyes. The thought rises in his soul, and in the souls of them all, "Can that be the Christ?" It means that Peter is offended at Jesus. Christ had predicted that. Peter denies Jesus thrice openly, even going so far as to affirm his denials by an oath. The Savior had predicted that, too.

Then there are the two wayfarers to the village of Emmaus. They are talking together of all the things that have befallen Jesus, and they are sick at heart. Knowing all about their sorrows, the resurrected Jesus, appearing to them, inquires about the manner of their communications and after the reasons of their sadness. He receives as answer that their conversation turns on Jesus of Nazareth, "which they say", was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people; and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and have crucified Him." Their next statement is significant. They say, "But we trusted that it had been he which should redeem Israel." They had trusted; but their hopes, in common with the hopes of them all, had been blasted by what had befallen Him in those latter days. That cross of Jesus! It had them baffled and confounded.

What may be the reason? How is it to be explained that not even they, to say nothing of Jesus' enemies, perceived that it was the blood of the atonement that the Savior was shedding for His own?

It can be explained.

Firstly, the disciples in common with all the Jews were picturing to themselves the promised Messiah as a deliverer of the type of David and Solomon; and

and they imagined that this deliverance was to consist in their nation being freed from foreign domination. This is not surprising. Through all the ages of the past, all the deliverances that God had sent, had been just that,—namely, the lifting of the yoke of a foreign oppressor. And all the deliverers that the Lord thus far had raised up had been of the type of Joshua, and Gideon, and King David. It was the only kind of deliverer and deliverance of which they knew and that they could imagine. It never occurred to them that Christ was a king not of typical, earthly, but of a heavenly glory; and that to enter this glory Christ has to go by the way of that terrible cross. They had no conception of the heavenly. For it had been revealed to them in terms of a typical language and typical things. And their mistake was that they mistook the type for the reality.

Secondly, though the disciples of Jesus were regenerated men, they, same as we all, were slow of heart to believe all that was written. For they, too, as are we, were sinful men, with only a beginning of true obedience, and thus encumbered in their thinking by the sinful biases of their flesh. They liked to think of Christ as a king of earthly typical glory, surrounded by themselves as His chief ministers and counselors. It appealed to their flesh. And they frequently fell to disputing among themselves who of them would stand closest to Christ when He had once come into His kingdom.

Thirdly, it was a hard and difficult way by which Christ had to go to enter His glory. It was the way of the terrible cross. Perhaps, and I say perhaps, for I am only supposing now,—perhaps if Christ had gone to the highpriest and explained to him that He was the true sin-offerings; that, seeing His hour had come, He had now to be offered up; and had the highpriest, obeying, ordered Him slain, and sprinkled of His blood on the horns of the altar for a covering of the sins of His people,—the disciples of Jesus, might have understood.

It was that amazing cross that troubled them. In Israel the cross was a thing too horrible to contemplate. The land of Canaan, let us consider, was God's country. It was the heaven of the Old Testament church, and therefore so often referred to in the Old Testament Scriptures as the land of the living, in contradistinction to all the rest of the earth, which was the land of the dead. For in the land of Canaan God was tabernacling with His people. Jerusalem was the very city of God. Jerusalem's temple was His house, His very dwelling place. The court of the temple was the only place on earth where God's people could stand before His face. For there in that court stood God's altar. The true Jew loved Jerusalem better than life. Canaan being what it was, God's country, the land of the living, the wicked had to be cut off from it by death. "The

soul that doeth ought with uplifted hand," so the Lord had commanded, "shall be cut off from among His people, because he hath despised the word of the Lord, and hath broken his commandment; that soul shall utterly be cut off; he shall bear his iniquity." This had to be done by putting the offender to death; and thereupon his dead body was hung on a tree till even in token of his being cursed of God and cast into everlasting desolation by God. "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree," thus spake the law. This precisely is the stroke that fell on Christ. Pronounced a blasphemer by Israel's judges, He was cut off from God's country, the land of the living, by death on the accursed tree, cut off, banished from God's very presence by God Himself. Did he not from out of the darkness that enveloped His cross cry out to God, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me!" Verily, He was made a curse for us. And who of men considered that this stroke lighted on Him for the transgressions of His people? Not one of them. The only solution of His sufferings that men, including His people, could find within themselves is that He was afflicted of God for His own sins. Would God otherwise thus afflict Him? Does the Lord expel from His presence the righteous? Were He a prophet, sent to deliver Israel, would His career be ending on a cross? So men reasoned among themselves. No one perceived that it was the blood of the atonement that was being shed.

As workers in God's kingdom, we like to be appreciated, don't we? We expect from the brethren their moral support. And if that appreciation and support is not forthcoming, we, in our haste, begin to debate with ourselves whether we had not better resign. It would serve the brethren right. Christ was performing a great work on the cross. He was pouring out His soul unto death for His sheep. But who of His sheep understood and as understanding was there at the cross speaking words of appreciation and encouragement? Not one! Could we have gotten our way, Christ would have come down from that cross. Nay, worse, unless grace had intervened, we, His people would have helped to crucify Him. "For all we as sheep have gone astray," is our confession, is it not? Christ was all alone in His sufferings. It was the Father's will.

But the church of that day, had the Scriptures, one will say. And the Scriptures spake plainly. They did, to be sure. But, as the apostle John remarks in his Gospel, "The Holy Ghost was not yet sent; because Jesus was not yet glorified." He had not yet been sent, had the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, in Christ's own words, to teach His people, His disciples, all things, and to bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever He had said unto them." The Holy Ghost as Teacher and Comforter, is the fruitage of the travail

of Christ's soul. As the Spirit had not yet been sent, there was no understanding of Christ's cross. Now there is a reason why God withheld this understanding until Christ was glorified. Had men, had we, known that it was the blood of the atonement that we were shedding, we all would have perished in hell in that very hour. For in that case our crucifying the Christ would have involved us, Jews and Gentiles alike, in a sin that God does not forgive, namely, a sin identical to that of crucifying the Son of God afresh and putting Him to open shame. According to the Hebrews, this is sin that is not forgiven. For, so we read there, "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, if they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance, seeing that they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh." Hebrews 6:6. As it is, we did not commit an unpardonable sin, when we crucified the Christ there on Golgotha. For we did it in our ignorance. We knew not that it was the blood of the atonement that we were shedding. Thus God's people, that is, all such, who in tears of true contrition of heart, beseech God for mercy, are surely forgiven. And the evidence of this is Christ's making intercession for the transgressors then in the hour of His crucifixion, praying, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Forgive them, the contrite of heart, my people. It is, of course, only for them that Christ prayed.

So, then, we are forgiven. For we did it in our ignorance. The apostle Paul makes mention of this, too, with respect to his own case. Let us have Paul's own words here. I quote, "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious, but I obtained mercy, because I did it, namely, crucify Christ by persecuting His church,—ignorantly in unbelief. And in his pentecostal sermon, the apostle Peter, touching on the same matter, addresses His Jewish audience in this language, "And ye killed the prince of Life, whom God raised up from the dead; . . . and now brethren I know that through ignorance ye did it, and so also your rulers. But these things which God before had shewed by the mouth of his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath now fulfilled. Repent therefore and be converted that your sins may be blotted out." Also the point to the apostle Peter's argument is that, whereas his brethren, the Jews, had crucified Christ in their ignorance, they will obtain mercy, if they repent.

How unsearchable the wisdom and mercy of our God. He kept us in ignorance respecting the meaning of the cross in order that we might be saved by the Christ that we had to crucify. How true it is that all things, even their ignorance of the truth, work together for good to them that love God. G. M. Ophoff.

SION'S ZANGEN

Eeuwige Goedertierenheid

(Psalm 107; Tweede Deel)

De laatste maal, dat we bij dezen psalm stilstonden, hoorden we van de overstelping der ziel van het volk Gods: "hunne ziel was in hen overstelpt!"

En de oorzaak van die overstelping is de honger en dorst der zielen.

En die honger en dorst van het volk Gods aller eeuwen verraadt de nobiliteit huns levens: ze hebben God lief, en zonder Hem kunnen zij niet leven.

"Doch roepende tot den Heere in de benauwdheid die zij hadden, heeft Hij ze gered uit hunne angsten."

Benauwdheid en angst zijn vreeselijke gewaarwordingen.

Ze strijden tegen ons wezen. We zijn geschapen om in de ruimte te wandelen en te wonen, en dan in die ruimte in groote vroolijkheid uit te barsten in lieflijken zang.

Maar zoo is het niet meer.

We zijn zondaars geworden, en zoodra we ons goddelooslijk loswrikken uit de banden en de koorden Gods, komt de benauwing en de angst.

En nu is er niemand die dit beter weet dan de wederomgeborene en bekeerde. Ge moet bekeerd zijn om iets te vatten van dit: "Ik lag gekneld in banden van den dood, waar d' angst der hel mij allen troost deed missen. Ik was benauwd. . . ." En die angst en benauwdheid wordt verergerd door het werken der liefde Gods in het hart. De diepste grond van honger, dorst, heimwee en alle hunkering in het hart der kerk is de liefde Gods. En die honger en dorst en dat hunkeren zullen nimmer hun volle verzadiging ontvangen hier op aarde. Ge zult hunkeren tot den laatsten snik.

Maar we zullen roepen.

Dat deed Israel ook in de wildernissen. Ze riepen tot God in angst en benauwdheid.

Benauwdheid is de vreeselijke ervaring van in een plaats te verkeeren die te klein is voor U. En angst is het gevolg van die ervaring.

Ge behoeft een plaats voor ziel en lichaam. Hier staat het leven der ziel voorop. En de plaats voor Uwe ziel is in den boezem Gods. Augustinus heeft eens gezegd, dat de mensch niet kan rusten totdat hij rust in God. En dat is correct.

Nu is er een aanvankelijke redding uit benauwdheid en angst hier op aarde reeds.

En daar zal het volgende vers van verhalen: "en Hij leidde ze op een rechten weg, om te gaan tot een stad ter woning." Ik had het woordje "weg" bijna met hoofdletters geschreven.

Want deze weg is Jezus van Nazareth. Hij zeide: Ik ben de Weg. . . .

En daar zit een lange geschiedenis aan vast.

Ziet ge: we zijn verdwaald. We zijn den rechten weg kwijt geraakt. In het Paradijs was ook een weg. En die weg lag over den Boom des Levens. Gehoorzaamheid aan Gods Woord was de weg voor Adam en Eva, in wien ge begrepen waart.

Maar Adam zeide: Ik wil dien weg niet bewandelen. Ik heb liever dien anderen weg daar, daar waar Satan wandelt. En die zijn de wegen des doods, waarvan de Spreuken-dichter gewaagt.

En op die wegen des doods bevinden wij ons van nature, zoodra we geboren worden.

En op dien weg des doods vindt God ons.

En op dien weg des doods is benauwdheid en angst.

En het zal ook erger worden. Blijft ge op dien weg des doods, dan komt ge uit bij de angsten der hel en de benauwdheden der eeuwige duisternis. Sprak Paulus niet van "benauwdheid van alle ziel die het kwade werkt"?

Ik mag het ook zoo zeggen: rechtelijk, en bij den aanvang ook geestelijk ethisch, bevinden wij ons onder den veroordeelenden uitspraak van den Rechter.

Jezus vindt het volk van God in de gevangenis der hel. Daarom moet Hij naar de hel toe op U op te halen.

En daarvan spreekt dit vers: Hij leidde ze op een rechten weg!

Zoudt ge er niet van zingen? Luistert naar Jezus: Niemand komt tot den Vader dan door Mij!

Jezus, en dat is Jehovah in Uw natuur, gaat uit naar de hel en smaakt en proeft en verzwelgt die hel, die gevangenis waarin ge verkeert. Hij gaat heen in den donker van dien vreeselijken Vrijdag en we kunnen Hem niet meer nastaren. Hij gaat heen om een weg te ontginnen, om een weg te maken waar geen weg meer is. En die weg gemaakt hebbende in Zijn vleesch, roept Hij U uit den dood tot het leven. Vanuit den dood roept Hij U om Hem te volgen, te wandelen op dien weg. Hij loopt vooruit en achteromme ziende, zegt Hij, preekt Hij en lokt Hij: Komt en volgt Mij. En we zullen tezamen wandelen naar het Vaderhuis daarboven bij God!

O ja, Hij leidde hen op een rechten weg.

Die weg, die Jezus, die God van Uw eeuwige prijs en lof, is recht, is Goddelijk recht.

Als er straks geen tijd meer zijn zal en wij aankomen bij den grooten witten troon, dan zullen we het zien, dat die WEG recht was. Dan zullen de duivelen en alle goddelooze menschen het zien, dat die weg recht was.

Ik heb allerlei critiek gehoord tegen dien WEG van God. Laat mij U van die critiek verhalen. De goddeloozen zeggen: hoe kan God David naar den hemel

brenge? Dat kan nooit langs den weg van recht en gerechtigheid. Hij was een moordenaar en een hoererder. Hoe kan dat een man zijn naar Gods hart?

Maar ik zeg U, dat als alle duivelen en goddelooze menschen den weg zien waarlangs David naar den hemel gestrompeld is, dan zullen zij allen het zeggen, neen, uitbrullen: die WEG was recht. Dat zit zoo: Jezus neemt de moord en de hoererij van David, als schuld, op Zich, en Hij vernietigt ze in de hellesmart. En als Jezus klaar is, dan is er niets meer over van David's zonde en schuld. Ze zijn weg, voor eeuwig weg! Halleluja!

En, lezer, als ge dien WEG afgestrompeld zijt, dan komt ge uit bij "eene stad ter woning".

Ach, wat zal ik daar van zeggen?

Eigenlijk moest ik daar alles van zeggen wat het Woord zegt van Jeruzalem, de stad des grooten Konings. En dan zal ik moeten spreken van de beteekenis van die symbolen en gelijkenissen, want stad en straat en huis, en zelf de idee van wonen is symbool en gelijkenis.

Ik mag het zóó zeggen: Vanuit de hel, waar we eigenlijk, rechtelijk, moesten verkeeren in groot gebul, in weening en knersing der tanden, vanuit die hel brengt Jezus ons tot in den boezem Gods.

Let er op in de visioenen van Patmos, dat er zat "Eenen op den troon in het midden des hemels". En die Eenen blinkt en schittert van pracht en heerlijkheid. Johannes getuigt van den allerkostelijksten steen jaspis. O die Jaspis! Het is de steen Gods. Het is de kostelijke diamant van Goddelijke heerlijkheid. En dan, ietwat later, ziet Johannes in het midden van dien troon, dus in het midden van de openbaring Gods die Hij van Zichzelf geeft, in het midden van dien troon ziet Johannes een Lam, staande als geslacht. En dat is Jezus. En die Jezus heeft gezegd, dat "Wie overwint, Ik zal hem geven met Mij te zitten in Mijnen troon, gelijk als ik overwonnen heb en ben gezeten met Mijnen Vader in Zijn troon." Ziet ge het nu, dat het aankomen in een stad ter woning beteekent, dat ge aankomt tot in het hart Gods? O, iets beginnen we te verstaan van dat uiteindelijke der historie des heils: God zal zijn alles en in allen!

Het zit vast op het "wonen".

Men woont waar men zich tehuis gevoelt.

En God gevoelt Zich tehuis in Zijn Eigen verbondsleven.

En Hij strekt het dak van Zijn TEHUIS over Uw arme hoofd uit.

En dan gaat ge aan 't zingen zooals nooit te voren: Daar zal ons 't goede van Uw WONING, verzaden reis op reis! En 't heilig deel, o groote Koning, van Uw geducht paleis!

Daar wordt ge verzadigd, want daar zult ge eten en drinken van de verbondsgemeenschap naar hartelust.

O, daar te zijn!

Is het dan wonder, dat de psalmist verder gaat en het, ik zou haast zeggen, in eenige ongeduldigheid uitroept: "Laat ze voor den Heere Zijne goedertierenheid loven, en Zijne wonderwerken voor de kinderen der menschen."

De inhoud van deze woorden is de lof des hemels.

In den hemel doet men dit volmaaktelijk. Daar ziet men elk oogenblik Zijne goedertierenheid. Hier op aarde moet ik het U en mijzelf aanprijzen. Ik moet onderwezen worden in het zien en gelooven, dat God de Goedertierene is. Ik moet het keer op keer verhalen voor de ooren van het volk. We vergeten het, en ons vleesch is stug, hard, onverschillig. Mijn vleesch waardeert die heilgeheimen niet.

En die wonderwerken? Ik moet ze uitstallen. Ik moet er van den vroegen morgen tot den laten avond van vertellen.

Het groote wonderwerk is dit: Gods eeuwige armen zijn onder Israel, ook dan wanneer Israel afgaat en ondergaat in het zwarte van het diensthuis. En die armen grijpen U beet, houden U vast, blijven U vasthouden met een eeuwige omarming. Straks halen die ARMEN U omhoog en zetten U met geheel Israel in den hemel voor zijn aangezicht, opdat ge mocht zijn tot prijs van Zijn deugden.

Het groote wonderwerk van God, die omarming en dat beetgrijpen en die vasthouding, dat ophalen en dat brengen tot in den hemel daarboven, dat alles tezamen is Jezus van Nazareth, de Liefhebber Uwer zielen.

Och, dat nu al wat in mij is Hem prees!

"Want Hij heeft de dorstige ziel verzadigd, en de hongerige ziel met goed vervuld."

En dit is voor lange eeuwen gezongen van aardsche menschen die op de aarde woonden. Hij heeft de aardsche bedeeling op het oog.

De Heere zij gedankt en geprezen: we behoeven niet te wachten totdat wij in den hemel zijn om eenigzins verzadigd te worden.

Let op dat woord *eenigzins*.

Ten volle worden wij verzadigd in den hemel.

Maar op aarde is nu al eenige verzadiging.

Laat ons eens zien.

Ge wordt opgezocht in het uur der minne: dat is de wedergeboorte.

God blijft bij die wedergeborene ziel en schenkt haar de beloning van Zijn liefhebbend oog. Hij geeft Woord en Geest aan die zielen. En langzamerhand komt het wedergeborene leven in het bewustzijn. Zoo spoedig het uitbreekt in het bewuste, spreken we van bekeering, of geloof.

Luistert naar het Bijbelsche beeld. God strooit het zaad van het leven van den verheerlijkten Christus in Uw diepste hart. Hij verwarmt dat zaad en Hij bevochtigt dat zaad door Zijn lieflijk Woord en Zijn lieflijken Geest, net zoo lang totdat het uitbot en het

kleine plantje in Jezus verschijnt. En die verschijning is de bekeering.

En dan gaat ge naar moeder's schoot en vader's knie, en ge luistert als God tot U spreekt door vader en moeder. En ge gaat naar de Christelijke School en naar de catechisatie, en ge luistert naar God. Mijn schapen hooren Mijne stem, zegt Jezus. Ja, en Zijn lammeren luisteren ook. En er is verzadiging.

Later gaat ge naar de kerk. "Hoe vroolijk gaan de stammen op!" Ik vraag altijd aan Gods volk of ze graag naar de kerk gaan.

Daar in de kerk verzadigt God Zijn volk.

Niet graag naar de kerk te gaan toont dat ge geen honger hebt.

Vroeger heb ik mij vaak verwonderd over het gezang in Sassenheim's kerkgebouw: De lofzang klimt uit Sion's zalen tot U met stil ontzag!

Dan keek ik om mij heen in die oude, leelijke kerk. (Wij waren toen nog in het oude gebouw. Later kwam er een schoon gebouw.) En wat duurde die preek toch vreeselijk lang. Ik smachtte er naar om toch maar naar buiten te mogen. Er kwam haast geen einde aan.

Vaak dacht ik: zouden die menschen nu werkelijk schik hebben om hier in dit saaie gebouw te zitten, te zingen, te luisteren? En vaak sluimerde ik in.

Maar het werd anders met mij.

Nu zie ik, dat het aardsche kerkgebouw een vooruitgrijpen is naar den hemel. Nu versta ik die phrase: Sion's zalen! Het zijn hemels in 't klein.

Het is heerlijk om naar Gods Huis te gaan. Alles herinnert ons daar aan de stad ter woning, waarvan we zoeven spraken.

Het is Gods dag, Gods huis, Gods volk, Gods Woord, Gods Geest, Gods dienst, Gods zang, Gods lof, Gods Heilige Geest die in ons zucht met onuitsprekelijke verzuchtingen: alles herinnert ons aan het VaderHuis daar boven!

Verzadiging en vervulling met goed hier op aarde?

Gaat naar Gods volk en knoop een gesprek aan met hen over het genot van den dienst van God, van het lezen en overpeinzen van Zijn Woord, van het wandelen met God.

Eén ding, slechts één ding, begeeren we: onderzoeken in Zijn Tente!

En nu verandert het tafereel. Tot hiertoe hoorden we van de angsten van het volk Gods en hunne benauwdheden vanwege het dwalen in dorre wildernissen, doch nu zien we hetzelfde volk in smarten vanwege de verdrukking en het ijzer. Luistert: "Die in duisternis en schaduw des doods zaten, gebonden met verdrukking en ijzer."

Hoe kon Israel getuigen van zulk een verdrukking!

Voor honderde jaren hadden zij zich gekromd in Egypte, en voor de kleinste vergripen werden zij ge-

klonken in het ijzer en achter de ijzere deuren der gevangenissen der goddeloozen.

Ook was het den enkelen persoon overkomen.

Gedenkt hier aan Jozef.

En al dat buigen en het gekromd verkeer in het gevang is type van de komende smarten van Messias.

In al hunne benauwdheden is Hij benauwd geworden.

Jezus Christus zou later in al die gevangenissen komen.

Maar dan veel vreeselijker dan een Jozef ooit kon lijden.

Uiteindelijk was het de gevangenis van den eeuwig toorn Gods.

Die gevangenis moest Hij lijden, uit-lijden.

Tot de eindelijke, eeuwige vrijheid en blijheid van het Nieuwe Koninkrijk verdiend was.

En zoo is het gegaan. We viere vaak de Opstanding uit het gevang van het vreeselijke graf!

G. Vos.

IN HIS FEAR

Training For Life's Calling

Training In The Reading Class.

Man being created in the image of God was created as a rational creature. This makes it possible for him to be taught to read. This is likewise necessary and essential for his salvation. It is not essential that every child of God be able to read and to write in order to be saved. Thousands in the old dispensation were saved who could not read a word. But a Moses was raised and trained carefully by the world under the providence of God that he might write—and others with him—the Old Testament Scriptures for us to read or to have read to us. The fact remains that the faculty of reading and writing is essential to the salvation of God's church.

Our children live in a time of abundant opportunities to learn to read and to write. They have the whole Word of God recorded and preserved for their perusal and enjoyment. They should be taught to read that Book of books. And reading then also becomes a means whereby we may train our children for life's calling. It definitely has a place in the class room of a Christian school.

We present here again that which the Rev. Gritters has drawn up as the principles which should be the basis for instruction in the Christian school. That which he has to say in regard to Reading as a subject in the class room appears below. We give you also

at the same time the few lines that the Rev. Gritters presents in regard to Spelling and Grammar.

1. Reading is the art of ascertaining the thought expressed in any writing. God made man capable of reading, adapting him thereby, and at the same time confining him to the written Revelation of Scripture. Hence, the highest purpose of all reading is to have fellowship with God and to know Him through His revelation of Himself in His Word.
 - a. We realize that reading alone will not bring us to the knowledge of God. For the natural man, however well he may read, cannot understand the things of God, for they are spiritual.
 - b. But again, the man of God must be *thoroughly furnished* (II Tim. 3:16, 17). Therefore indeed he must be able to read.
2. School reading first of all must have content value, that is, as the pupil learns to read, his knowledge should become enriched by what he reads.
 - a. Through reading the child gains information concerning the things of the world round about him. Reading is basic practically to the whole of the knowledge he accumulates.
 - b. It stands to reason therefore that our children may not be reared on reading material which is untruthful, harmful, silly, worldly or carnal. Such reading material produces a taste for the trash which the news-stands sell. The reading material ought to have real content value, and the teacher must know it her calling to bring out this value and apply it.
3. Above all, reading must be regarded for its *training value*.
 - a. Most of the teaching of reading in the grades is a preparatory course to train the youth to read with pleasure, ease and accuracy. With that in view, and only with that in view, do we give place for the reading of tales, stories and fables, etc. It is, however, our desire and endeavor to find or produce good reading material without resorting to fables, believing that their content value is very poor to say the least. Though the content value of many of these tales, stories and fables is not high and very often is poor, they are valuable for training our children to read, and it is, of course, the instructor's calling to point out to the children the worldly philosophy around which the story may center, or the unspiritual moral it may strive to promote.
 - b. Instruction in reading also serves the purpose of preparing the man of God that in later life he may be an intelligent, well-informed and careful as well as alert citizen of the state and kingdom of God and be useful in home, school and church.
 - (1) The natural man abuses *everything*, as Titus declares, "He is to every work reprobate",

and thus his capacity to read serves his carnal lusts and worldliness.

- (2) But the man of God with the talent God has given him, can develop that talent most efficiently if he can read and has learned to enjoy reading. It provides mental recreation also for his spare time. It keeps him informed on things which happen round about him. And it leads him to intelligent discernment between truth and lie, that he may the better "try the spirits". I John 4:1.
- c. Above all, his reading must serve the positive purpose of helping the man of God to read the revealed Word of God efficiently and intelligently and to read also those things which assist him therein. The carnal man minds the things of the flesh, and this holds true also of his reading. To read God's Word and reading to understand it—that is the *crown* of all reading. Bearing this in mind the Christian teacher will always try to keep first things first, and that first thing is: "That the man of God may be thoroughly furnished".

Reading and Spelling.

Spelling lies along the same lines as reading, standing as a help to reading. It finds its place somewhere between reading and writing. In spelling we teach the youth to put into writing the things they wish to express.

Grammar.

This also is closely related to both reading and spelling. On the one hand grammar helps the youth to understand better the sense of that which is written. On the other hand a knowledge of Grammar is necessary if the pupil is to learn to give expression to his thoughts, whether orally or in writing or in both. If in reading the person is passive, absorbing; in writing the person is active. He himself gives expression. And the Christian approach here would be to emphasize that the man of God is also a prophet of God. And as that prophet of God he must rise up in this world to testify of the things that are true. Scripture saith: "This people have I formed for Myself. *It shall tell forth My praises*". And again: "But ye are a chosen generation, a peculiar people, *that ye should show forth the praises of Him who has called you. . .*" To condemn the lie, to testify of the truth and bear witness that we are of the Party of the living God in this world, your youth must have Grammar; and having that goal in mind the teacher is spurred on to make the best of this often difficult and sometimes abstract subject.

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of the Rev. Gritters. We have only a little space left to consider this subject and those of Arithmetic and Civics and will have to be very brief. We do however wish to remark that what is found under 3a, is not exactly the way it appears in the principles that the Rev. Gritters drew up. We do not have at hand his original copy, but are aware of the fact that our own Educational Committee inserted a few lines in regard to the reading of fables. The sentence which reads, "It is however our desire and endeavor to find or produce good reading material without resorting to fables, believing that their content value is very poor to say the least", we are sure was inserted by our board. And if we are not mistaken the last phrase, "and it is of course the instructor's calling to point out to the children the worldly philosophy around which the story may center or the unspiritual moral it may strive to promote" has also been added by our Educational Committee. It makes little difference. The sentiments expressed by the Rev. Gritters are such in the remainder of the paragraph, that it becomes evident at once that he agrees fully with these additions. However, we wish to be innocent of putting in print and ascribing to him things which he did not actually write.

It certainly is a deplorable thing that we have to go to the fables and unspiritual writings of the world to teach our children to read. As foolish as these fables are, they have their appeal to the flesh. And their use certainly does create in our children an "appetite" for such things. Similarly, after our children are out of their preparatory schools, or even before, that which is presented them in the line of "Christian" novels and fiction is not worth being read. On the whole that which is supposed to make it a "christian" story is actually anti-christian, for it is Arminian, it presents a false Christ who can be disappointed and runs the risk of having died in vain, for some whom He desires to save go lost even in spite of His death and His pleadings and attempts to rescue them.

There is no financial remuneration in it, and that undoubtedly does not spur us on. But we surely ought, as we have been given talent by God, seek to write and compose readers for our children in all ages, books which do have good content value so that the child while he learns to read, also learns to know his Maker, his sinful state and his Redeemer. There is however spiritual rewards of grace which God gives to those who sacrifice and use their talents in this way. Even though it is only done to the little folk, the primary pupils it is done to the least of these His brethren, and it is as though it were done to Him. God grant us men and women with talents and zeal to work along these lines.

We have only a few lines to add to these remarks

J. A. Heys.

FROM HOLY WRIT

The Office In The Church

This is the first of an intended series of articles on the office in the church. By the office is meant the special office of ministers, elders and deacons as instituted by God in the new dispensation. This is one of the most invaluable gifts God has entrusted to His church, yet it is quite frequently misunderstood, taken for granted, and even slighted. It is an institution of God, introduced by Christ through the instrumentality of the apostles in the early church after Pentecost. As a result, mere sinful men, who are endowed with the Spirit of Christ, are called by Christ to serve as office bearers in His Name in the midst of the church. As ambassadors of Christ they have entrusted to them the ministry of the Word and of the sacraments, the exercise of the keys of the kingdom of heaven whereby they open and close the doors of the kingdom, and the ministry of mercy in Jesus' Name. In fact, Christ, our heavenly Prophet, was exalted High Priest and our eternal King, bestows all the eternal blessings of salvation upon His church through the office. By this means God's church is gathered, God's people are enriched with all spiritual and heavenly blessings in Christ, and God's kingdom is realized and prepared for its ultimate manifestation in heavenly glory.

The first passage we turn to is found in 1 Peter 5:1-4, "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." In this connection we note particularly the following:

1. That Peter speaks of Christ as the *Chief Shepherd*. This is of primary significance for our whole discussion. The implication is that office bearers are nothing more, yet also nothing less than undershepherds under Christ. They are His servants, who are mandated by Him to feed the flock and to be overseers over God's heritage in His Name. They are vested with the authority of Christ. They come in His Name. Like an ambassador of the government serving in a foreign country, who can only speak authoritatively when he presents the message of his government verbatim, so the ambassador of Jesus Christ must always and only say, "So saith the Lord." As Paul expresses

it in 2 Cor. 5:20, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ (huper Christou, that is, in the place of, instead of Christ), as though God did beseech you by us: we pray in Christ's stead (again, huper Christou), be ye reconciled to God."

2. That the apostle refers to himself as also an elder. We read, "I . . . who am an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed." Notice that he classifies himself with those who are the members of God's church, the heirs of the promise and partakers "of the glory that shall be revealed". But in that church he is also an elder. In that respect he is like any other elder, an undershepherd of Jesus Christ. Yet as a personal eyewitness of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that followed, he is more than a common elder, for he is called to be an apostle.

In Ephesians 4:11, 12 the office of the apostles is mentioned in one breath with that of the ministers. The text states, "And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." All these are gifts of Christ to His church. In His Name and on His authority they all serve the same ultimate purpose, each in their own capacity, for the work of the ministry unto the edification of the church, which is Christ's body. In passing, it is well to note that "prophets" and "evangelists" refer to certain special gifts in the early church. Prophets were certain individuals who were given the special power of prophecy as a peculiar manifestation of the presence of the Spirit of Christ within the church. These prophets served particularly the local congregations of which they were members. They were always bound to the church institute and to the office of believers, even to the extent that they also, even as those who spoke in tongues, had to be confirmed in all that they said by the other believers present. 1 Cor. 14:27-32, "If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course, and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God. Let the prophets speak two or three, and *let the other judge*. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." As to the evangelists, who are also mentioned with the apostles and ministers, these were helpers of the apostles. They accompanied them on their journeys and aided them in the ministry of the Word. They were also called of Christ, but were always under the supervision of the apostles. Paul calls Titus his "partner and fellow helper", and

refers to Tychicus as "a beloved brother and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord." 2 Cor. 8:23, Col. 4:7. When the apostolic office fell away these temporary offices also disappeared.

3. Referring once more to our passage in 1 Peter 5:1-4, we note further that although Peter calls himself an elder, a distinction must be made between the apostolic office in the early church and the offices as we have them today. By implication Peter himself makes this distinction, for he speaks of himself as an eye-witness of the suffering of Christ and addresses the church with an apostolic authority. Even as in the opening words of his epistle he introduces himself as "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ". In Ephesians 2:20 the church is said to be founded on the "foundation of the apostles and prophets (Old Testament prophets are meant), Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone." It could surely never be said of the ministers, elders and deacons of the church that they are its foundation. They do serve to gather God's church, and thus to build it, but the Word of God, delivered to us by the prophets of the old dispensation and the apostles of the new, is the only foundation upon which God builds His Church.

There were special requirements for the office of the apostleship.

First of all, an apostle received his calling to the office *direct* from Christ. He was personally called without the intervention of the church. Mark 16:15, "And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." It is exactly for that reason that Christ endued them with a special gift of the Holy Spirit even before His ascension. John 20:22, "And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Paul appeals to this direct and personal calling to prove his apostleship to the Galatians. He comes to them as "Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead." Gal. 1:1. This is a rather conclusive argument that not Matthias but Paul was the divinely chosen apostle to fill the vacancy of Judas.

Secondly, an apostle was a personal eye-witness of the resurrected Christ. Therefore Peter can say in his second epistle, chapter 1, verses 16-18, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount." (The mount of Transfiguration is meant.) Paul also appeals to the fact that he saw

the risen and the exalted Lord in the vision on the way to Damascus. Acts 26:16.

Thirdly, closely related to the foregoing is the fact that they were personally instructed by Christ Himself. The eleven disciples went about with Him day and night. They heard His preaching, saw His miracles, accompanied Him to the mountain to pray, witnessed all His sufferings and agonies of soul, and were constantly under His private instruction. He appeared to them personally after the resurrection and spoke to them concerning His resurrection, in as far as they were able to receive it. Paul also received this personal instruction, even though it was necessary for him to receive it later, as one born out of season. What stronger proof could the apostle adduce for his apostleship? As he writes to the churches of Galatia, "But I certify unto you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. . . . But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus." Gal. 1:11, 12, 15-17.

And finally, an apostle was guided by the Holy Spirit to infallibly speak and write the Word of God. 1 Peter 1:19-21, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." See also 1 Tim. 3:16, 17.

Thus somewhat in anticipation we can already make this distinction between the apostolic office and the special offices as we now have them in the church:

1. The apostles were directly called by Christ without the medium of the church; other officebearers are called by Christ through the church.

2. The former served to reveal Jesus Christ in His suffering and exaltation and thus to establish the church institute as we have it in the new dispensation; the latter serves to gather and feed the flock by means of the Word, and thus preserve her unto the end of the world.

3. The apostolic office was temporary, and therefore disappeared with the death of the last apostle; the special offices are permanent, abiding with us until the end of time.

C. Hanko.

Next time:

"The Special Office and The Office of Believers".

PERISCOPE

Internal Strife In O. P. Church

"In response to a call from the elders of Faith Church, Quarryville, a congregational meeting was held at the church on January 26, at which time the congregation, by a reported vote of 31-3, determined to withdraw from The Orthodox Presbyterian denomination. A committee appointed by Presbytery to attend this meeting was denied permission to attend by the session of the church.

"A congregational meeting of Calvary Church, Willow Grove, was held on the same evening. Representatives from Presbytery were present at this meeting, but only one of them was permitted to speak. After about a three hour session, the meeting was recessed for two weeks.

"The congregational meeting of Calvary Church reconvened on Wednesday evening, February 9. Presbytery's representatives were again present, and were permitted to speak for a limited time, and then withdrew before the meeting closed. Following further discussion, the meeting, according to information from the pastor, Dr. Robert Strong, voted 'overwhelmingly' to withdraw. Other information indicates that there were less than 75 persons present for the meeting, and that the vote to withdraw was 58-14. The Minutes of the 15th Assembly indicate the last reported communicant membership of the church as 336.

"Dr. Strong also informed us that the session of Calvary Church had been authorized to enter into association with the session of the Quarryville Church. Such action, if consummated, would constitute the beginning of a new denomination."—From *The Presbyterian Guardian*.

* * * *

Church Union

"Two specific programs for church union are currently attracting attention in their respective denominations. For several years the United Presbyterians and the Reformed (Dutch) Church of America have been talking merger. A joint committee of the two denominations which recently met in Kalamazoo completed final revisions of its plan of union, and voted to submit the proposal to the General Assembly and General Synod of the two churches this year. It is hoped that the plan will be sent down to local presbyteries and classes, but a request was made that the voting on it not to be done until after January 1, 1950.

"Recently the *United Presbyterian* has carried sev-

eral articles both for and against the proposed union. The argument against the union, as voiced by one writer, was that there was a general apathy and indifference on the part of the members to the whole thing, that it was largely planned and motivated from the top, and especially that the natural course of union for the U.P. Church should be with the Presbyterians North and South, rather than with the Reformed Church. In reply another writer maintains that attempts are being made to 'get acquainted' and that since union with the Southern Presbyterians was rejected in 1912, and with the Northern Presbyterians was rejected in 1934, either the union with the Reformed Church must go through now or the U.P. Church will be settled in its path of isolation. He also suggests that if union with the Reformed Church is consummated, the newly merged body will be in a good position to renew negotiations with the Northern Presbyterians, because 'union seems to beget union'. Neither of these writers gives much attention to the doctrinal basis of such a union.

"Another union negotiation currently under consideration is that between the Congregational-Christian denomination and the Evangelical and Reformed Church. Here the chief opposition seems to be on the part of a minority of the Congregationalists who have organized into an 'anti-merger' group and have indicated that they are prepared to fight to the finish, even to the extent of going into court to claim the property in case a merger takes place. Here there is perhaps more of an issue of principle at stake. For the Evangelical and Reformed Church is more inclined to recognize synodical and denominational authority, while the Congregational denomination historically adheres to the idea of local autonomy. *The Christian Century* is doing its best to promote the union cause, denouncing the opposition as 'diehard obstructionism at its worst'.

"The particular problem in this union is that the proposed merger has received the approval of only 72 percent of the Congregational Christian Churches, while a decision made some time ago required the approval of 75 per cent. The General Council met the first week in February to decide what to do in view of the missing 3 per cent. The urge to 'go ahead anyway' was strong."—From *The Presbyterian Guardian*.

* * * *

Editorial Quote... . . .

"All men have doubts and imperfections: even Paul said that he had not attained, neither was perfect; but Paul was not proud of his doubts, if he had any, nor his imperfections. He was very fond of the word, 'know': we know, he kept repeating. And Paul was ashamed of his sins, and deplored them. He besought

his converts to yield themselves fully to God; to not be content with anything short of perfection, holiness, sanctifications, consecration, or whatever term one wished to use to denote Holiness in life and character.

"(The more holiness we have, the clearer we see our sins: the closer we get to God, the more unclean and unholy we appear. God's greatest saints have been those who confessed their utter unworthiness.)

"But there is a tendency today to rather boast of the fact that we have doubts and imperfections. Was there anything in Christ's teaching which even suggests such an absurdity? Did He not stress faith as the most necessary thing for His disciples: did He not say, Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect? Did He not upbraid His disciples, for their lack of faith? 'Oh slow of heart to believe'; 'Where is your faith'? Is not unbelief the most deadly of all sins, and is not any sin just so much poison in the soul?

"In a sermon not long ago, the speaker intimated that 'The Doubters' were the favored people of God, and expressed gratitude that there were no perfect people in his audience. This was a fact, but he seemed proud of the fact. He further said that Job's three friends were 'Fundamentalists', and that God rejected them, while Job was 'The Doubter' and God accepted and blessed him.

"We rather expect that if these friends of Job had been 'in his place' they would have had more doubts than the old patriarch had, and would have followed the advice of Job's wife: curse God, and die. The only 'Fundamentalism' these men had was a fundamental fallacy—that suffering is always the result of sin.

"Job was a Fundamentalist. He believed in his God, and although doubts assailed him, he clung to that faith: 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him'.

"Doubts and imperfections are blemishes; sins, which like all other sins, are to be forsaken in real repentance. A man is not usually proud of some ugly scar, or sore, like a boil, or cancer. If we like to have bodies which are strong and well, why pride ourselves on these ugly blemishes in our souls?"—J.K.P.—*The Southern Presbyterian Journal*.

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Immigration News — De Reformatie

"We ontvingen onderstaanden brief uit Hamilton, Oost Canada:

Hamilton, 18 December, 1948

Hooggeachte Redacteur,

Ondergeteekenden vragen u bij dezen beleefd opname van deze enkele regels, speciaal ter voorlichting van hen, die zich in de naaste toekomst denken te vestigen in Canada.

In Holland leden van de Geref. Kerken (onderh. art. 31 K.O.), hebben zij zich, hetzij voor korter of langer tijd, in Canada, aangesloten bij de Chr. Geref. Kerk van Hamilton, eenigermate gerust gesteld door de verklaringen van dezen Kerkeraad.

Intusschen hebben de zaken, door de verschijning van enkele broeders uit de Prot. Ref. Church, de predikanten De Jong, De Wolf, en Kok, door ons luisteren naar deze broeders een zoodanige wijziging ondergaan, dat de Kerkeraad van eerder genoemde Chr. Geref. Kerk, er toe is overgegaan ons te weren van het Heilig Avondmaal.

Wij meenden goed te doen deze feiten ter kennis te brengen van de kerkelijke pers in Nederland, en dus op deze wijze die broeders en zusters, welke hierbij belang hebben, te wijzen op de consequenties van het lid zijn of worden van de Chr. Geref. Kerken in Canada.

Naar de uitspraak van den Kerkeraad alhier zijn de besluiten van de Synode, gehouden te Kalamazoo 1924, overeenkomstig Gods Woord, en daarom bindend voor al de leden dezer kerken.

Een duidelijke uitspraak inzake de besluiten van de Synode 1942-'44 gehouden te Sneek-Utrecht, mochten wij tot nu toe niet vernemen, maar naar onze vaste overtuiging niet twijfelachtig.

Overname van het bovenstaande in andere kerkelijke bladen zullen wij zeer op prijs stellen.

Dankend voor plaatsing en gaarne bereid medewerking te verleen tot publicatie van meerdere gegevens, tekenen zij, hoogachtend.

P.S. Uitgaande van de Zendingscommissie der Prot. Ref. Churches worden in de Labor Temple, St. Catherinesstr. te Hamilton geregelde diensten gehouden des morgens en des namiddags van elken Zondag. Ook in andere plaatsen in Ontario wordt in deze richting gewerkt.

"Tot zoover de ons toegezonden brief. We herhalen wat we reeds eerder schreven: voor onze menschen is in de Chr. Ref. Church van Noord Amerika geen plaats. Dat hebben de woordvoerders van deze kerk zelf duidelijk uitgesproken, toen ze door een synodale commissie de deur liet sluiten voor de gereformeerde kerken in Nederland, teneinde zich voortaan alleen op te houden met het synodocratisch gezelschap, dat iets anders geworden is dan die kerken met wie vroeger der Chr. Ref. Church correspondentie onderhield. Hier blijkt het al weer: men doet alles om onze menschen op te vangen, want het is overal hetzelfde: *de ambtsdragere*, die trouw blijven aan de binding der confessie, en dus de binding van de valsche formules en aan het goddeloos kerkrecht van 1942-44 verwerpen, worden uitgeworpen, maar men ziet er niet in het minst tegen op, de *leden* van onze kerken verder als 'smaldeel' (dr. H. N. Ridderbos) op te vangen, als

ze maar stil zijn, en de verloochening van hun broeders lijden aankomt, dan worden ze geweerd. Het blijkt, dat men nog steeds de dwaze en schandelijke uitwerping van Rev. Hoeksema voor zijn rekening neemt; niets is onbekeerlijker dan een kerk, als ze zich eenmaal vergaloppeerd heeft.

"Onlangs las ik nog eens den latijnschen tekst van het theologische werk van Van Mastricht; de besluiten werping van Rev. Hoeksema voor zijn rekening neemt; uitgeworpen in een volslagen onrijpe beslissing ten gunste der gemeene-gratie-leer, zijn blijkens de Acta 'ondersteund' met een in de nederlandsche taal gesteld citaat uit Van Mastricht, waarin de gemeene gratie werd 'geleerd'. Maar toen ik de nederlandsche 'vertaling', die deze synode van Kalamazoo, waarschijnlijk op nederlandsch advies (Amsterdam) genomen heeft, heeft afgedrukt in haar officieele Acta, eens vergeleek met den latijnschen (oorspronkelijken) tekst, bleek me, *dat die heele vertaling onbeholpen nonsens was* (al was ze allang gedrukt). Het blijkt, dat de synode van Kalamazoo de lichte moeite genomen heeft een nederlandsch citaat te gebruiken tegen Rev. Hoeksema, terwijl echter wat aan Van Mastricht wordt toegeschreven, *door hem nooit gezegd is*. Zoo maakt men kerkhistorie; en men is te lui en te koppig, om de fout te erkennen.

"De Chr. Ref. Church neemt dus niet alleen de dwaze besluiten van Kalamazoo voor eigen rekening, doch ook de even lichtvaardige nederlandsche besluiten van 1944, die door haar afgevaardigden in Grand Rapids in 1946 zijn 'goedgekeurd'. De eenige kerken, *die de oude voortzetten* zijn de Prot. Ref. Churches; laat onze menschen daarheen gaan: dat is de *wettige voortzetting van wat er was*."—K. S.—in *De Reformatie*.

W. Hofman.

IN MEMORIAM

The Men's Society of the Fourth Prot. Ref. Church of Grand Rapids, Mich., hereby wishes to express its heartfelt sympathy to one of its members, Mr. C. De Jong, in the death of his beloved wife,

MRS. C. DE JONG

who passed away suddenly the morning of Sunday, January 23.

May the blessed assurance that their loved one is now forever with her Lord and Saviour abundantly comfort the sorrowing family.

R. Veldman, Pres.

A. Haan, Sec'y

Note:—This obituary should have appeared in the February 15 issue, but it was mislaid by the undersigned, for which I tender my sincere apology to all parties concerned.—G. Vos.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

We are taking this opportunity to acquaint our readers, subscribers, consistories, and societies with some facts concerning the work, distribution of the *Standard Bearer* and the cost of printing of each issue.

The cost of printing and mailing each copy is about 20¢ per copy, which figured on a yearly basis brings the cost to approximately \$4.40 per year, while our subscription price still remains at \$2.50 per year. We hope that it will not be necessary to increase this yearly rate. During the past month we have sent notices and letters to some of our subscribers. If you have received such a notice or letter and have not responded, will you please do so.

As you read this notice you may wonder how this difference between cost and subscription is being taken care of. This we have been able to do thus far because certain congregations and a few societies have remembered the work of the *Standard Bearer* with offerings and gifts. For this we wish to express a word of appreciation and thanks.

It should also be remembered that the *Standard Bearer* is circulated to interest God's people everywhere in the Reformed truth. For this reason it should be considered as a missionary endeavor. Copies are being sent to India, Ireland, England and Canada. 40 copies of each issue are mailed to the Netherlands for use in schools, colleges and church societies. Certain ministers in the Netherlands and the United States receive copies. We have received a request from one of our missionaries for 25 copies of each issue. All these are furnished and mailed free of charge.

We believe for the reasons mentioned above that ALL of our congregations should remember this work and our societies can help us by keeping the *Standard Bearer* in mind when monies are donated to Kingdom causes.

In anticipation of this. . . . Thank you.

The Board of the R. F. P. A.

Should Thy mercy send me
Sorrow, toil, and woe,
Or should pain attend me
On my path below;
Grant that I may never
Fail Thy hand to see,
Grant that I may ever
Cast my care on Thee.