

THE STANDARD *Bearer* A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XXV

April 1, 1949 — Grand Rapids, Mich.

NUMBER 13

MEDITATION

De Verworpen Steen

“Jezus zeide tot hen: Hebt gij nooit gelezen in de Schriften: De steen dien de bouwlieden verworpen hebben, deze is geworden tot een hoofd des hoeks; van den Heere is dit geschied, en het is wonderlijk in onze oogen? Daarom zeg Ik ulieden, dat het Koninkrijk Gods van u zal weggenomen worden, en aan een volk gegeven dat zijne vruchten voortbrengt. En wie op dezen steen valt, die zal verpletterd worden; en op wien hij valt, dien zal hij vermorzelen.”

Matth. 21:42-44.

Hebt gij nooit gelezen in de Schriften. . . .?

O, de Heere Jezus kon de verachtelijke Overpriesters en Farizeërs met Zijne woorden striemen!

Stelt het U voor: hier is een college van geleerde mensen, die het beste gedeelte van hun leven besteed hadden om de Heilige Schrifturen te bestudeeren.

En nu zegt deze Man tot hen: Hebt ge wel eens in de Schrift *gelezen*? Let wel; niet: hebt ge wel eens aandachtig de Heilige Schrift *bestudeerd*, maar: hebt ge wel eens *gelezen*? De Heere heeft dit meermalen gevraagd. En, natuurlijk, terecht. Hij is in geheel eenige wijze de Heilige Schrift zelf. Hij is het Woord Gods. Het vleesch geworden Woord.

En terecht, zeiden we, kon Hij, en mocht Hij, vragen: Hebt ge wel eens gelezen. . . .? Want het scheen wel, alsof zij de Heilige Schrift nooit ingekeken hadden. Overal in de Heilige Schrift pronkt en praaft het Beeld van den alleen zaligen God, en dat is Jezus. Doch toen Hij kwam behandelden zij Hem minder dan een dief en een moordenaar. Verkozen zij niet Bar-Abbas boven Jezus?

O ja, Jezus mocht het hun vragen: Hebt ge wel eens gelezen?

* * * *

Hebt ge wel eens gelezen?

Wat, Heere?

Dit: De Steen dien de bouwlieden verworpen hebben, deze is geworden tot een hoofd des hoeks. . . .enz.

Deze woorden zijn een aanhaling uit den honderden-achttienden psalm, de verzen 22 en 23.

Nu zijn er die denken, dat we hier te doen hebben met een historische gebeurtenis. Zij zeggen, dat er een steen was bij den bouw des Tempels, waarvoor men maar geen plaats kon vinden. En die steen lag gedurig in den weg bij al het grootsche werk der bouwlieden. Die steen werd keer op keer verworpen, van de eene plaats naar de andere.

Maar, o wonder, toen men toekwam aan het leggen van den steen des hoofds des hoeks, toen vond men uit, dat die verworpen steen juist daarvoor paste.

Men zegt, dat deze historische verklaring rust of sommige overleveringen der rabbi's der Joden.

Ik weet het niet.

Het maakt ook niets uit.

De historische vervulling dezer profetie gaat zelfs terug voordat die woorden in Psalm 118 opgeschreven werden door den geïnspireerden profeet. Het is een fundamentele wet in het Koninkrijk Gods, dat de STEEN verworpen moet. Dat is geschied van het oogenblik af aan, dat God Zijn werk des Tempels begon in den tijd.

Laat mij een voorbeeld gebruiken. Toen Abel tegen den grond geslagen werd, toen werd de Steen verworpen. Kaïn is de eerste bouwmeester die den Steen, en dat is Jezus, verwierp.

Ziet ge, er zijn altijd typen, beelden, schaduwen en figuren van dien STEEN geweest in alle historie.

De duidelijkste type was de actuele steen, het hoofd des hoeks, in den Tempel van Salamo. Men is het hier over eens, dat die steen absoluut noodig was voor het structuur van den Tempel. Sommigen zeggen, dat hij in het fundament des Tempels een plaats vond; anderen, dat hij paste als de laatste sleutelsteen aan den voorgevel des Tempels, doch hoe het dan ook moge zijn; zonder dien STEEN is de Tempel Gods ondenkbaar. Hij behoort tot het Wezen van den Tempel.

Daarom: zorg er voor dat ge leest van dien STEEN.

Hebt ge wel eens gelezen van den STEEN des Tempels?

* * * *

Leest ge de Heilige Schriftuur Gods aangaande den STEEN?

Welnu, dan hebt ge gezien hoe Hij verworpen is door de bouwlieden.

Zooals ik zooveen aanhaalde: Hij is verworpen van den beginne aan.

Hij? Wien hebben we op het oog?

Jezus Christus, de Heere.

Hij is die STEEN des Tempels, zonder Wien we het niet kunnen stellen. Zonder Jezus is er geen Tempel Gods denkbaar. Zonder dien stuttenden Steen Gods komt er geen woonplaats des Heeren in den Geest.

De Tempel is de gedachte van het wonen met God in één Huis.

En die gedachte kan niet tot vervulling komen dan door den Steen des hoeks.

Dat zit zoo: we zijn het niet waard om met God te wonen. Verre van te wonen met God, moesten we eigenlijk in de vreeselijke diepten des eeuwigen doods in het verlatene vergaan. Niemand heeft het recht om zelfs aan te kloppen aan de deur van Gods Tempel. God is verre van den goddelooze.

Er moet steun komen. En die Steun is Jezus Christus. En Jezus Christus is eigenlijk Jehovah Zelf, die door Zijn Zoon te zenden in onze natuur, de steun is voor het gebouw van Zijn gunstbewijzen.

Maar toen die Steun, dat is de Steen, dat is Jezus Christus, kwam tot ons, toen hebben de bouwlieden Hem verworpen.

Is het niet vreeselijk?

Hier komt de eenige steun voor de idee van samenwoning met God, en wij werpen Hem weg! Hij komt en verklaart telkens weer aan dat Hij de Steen voor het hoofd des hoeks is, en hoe meer Hij dat verklaart, hoe meer men Hem verwerpt. Hoe duidelijker het uitkomt door Zijn Woord, dat Hij de ware Bouwer is, van God gezonden om het Huis Gods te bouwen, zoodat Hij Zelf de uiterste Hoeksteen wordt, hoe meer men verhit wordt in zijn toorn tegen Hem, en men Hem dan ook gedurig verwerpt.

Hij kwam zoo aan den vroegen morgen der gescheidenis: Abel die een lam offert. Dat is een ander beeld dan de steen, maar het komt op 't zelfde neer. En als Abel aanhoudt en dat lam verklaart, en zegt: zonder dat lam kan het niet. dan wordt zijn stem vermoord in het bloed.

Maar wacht: er komt veel meer bloed der verwerping.

Er is een lange lijn van getuigen in de vier-duizend jaren vóór de geboorte van Jezus. En steeds komt het op 't zelfde neer: er is IETS zeer particuliers van Jehovah God, zonder HETWELK we niet voor Hem

kunnen bestaan! Ge moet den STEEN Gods loven in het bouwwerk der eeuwen. Er komt geen Tempel Gods zonder dien STEEN!

Zoo spreekt Henoch, en men vangt hem bijna om hem op hun gemak te vernielen. Maar God nam hem weg.

Ook Noach, die prediker wordt van de gerechtigheid: en dat is ook dezelfde STEEN. O, als ze maar gedurfd hadden! Er schijnt weer vreeze Gods te zijn die hen bang maakt. De heele kerk was teruggedrongen tot een huis vol, maar verder durfde men niet. En Noach zaagde en schaafde, hamerde en klonk, tot dat de arke Gods klaar was. En tevens preekte hij van den steen Gods. Maar niet een luisterde met een luisteren der gehoorzaamheid. Er waren er acht, honderd-twintig jaar voordien: er waren er nog acht toen de fonteinen zich openden en de sluizen des hemels hun stortvloed zonden. Men heeft den STEEN altijd verworpen!

Men zag niet dat die Steen juist paste voor het hoofd des hoeks.

Men las, doch men las zonder te zien.

Vreeselijke blindheid en domheid in de dingen Gods!

* * * *

En zoo is Die Steen blijven komen door alle eeuwen heen.

Voor al bij David is het duidelijk.

David beteekent: Beminde, en dan, natuurlijk, Beminde Gods.

Hij is immers de man naar Gods hart?

Niemand is ooit eerder of later een duidelijker type van Jezus geweest.

Zou het daarom zijn, dat de Heilige Geest in Gods volk zoo vaak sprak van Jezus, Gij Zoon Davids? Ik weet het niet, maar vermoed het.

En hoe is David verworpen!

Samuel zou zalven, maar David moest in het veld blijven. Saul wist, dat David Koning moest worden, maar hij jaagde hem als een veldhoen op de bergen.

Zijn eigen zoon vertrapte hem.

O, David is verworpen door de bouwlieden.

Maar, wacht! Daar komt de vervulling van alle typen, beelden, schaduwen, en figuren: daar komt Jezus Christus, de Heere.

En als Hij geheel en al klaar is met al het werk, dat noodig was om STEEN te zijn in den Tempel Gods, dan neemt men Hem beet en slingert Hem aan het vloekhout, onder honen, tarten en schimpen, dat ons doet huiveren.

En het zijn de bouwlieden van het Huis Gods die het Hem aandoen. Ten minste, naar hun eigen getuigenis. Zij zijn immers de ware, trouwe knechten Gods? Wij hebben Abraham en God tot een Vader.

Maar de ware STEEN wordt verworpen.

Men hangt Hem aan het kruis, en daar sterft Hij.

Buiten de legerplaats, buiten Jeruzalem, ver van den Tempel, moet Deze hangen.

Maar voor Zijn dood heeft Hij hun nog gevraagd: Hebt ge wel eens gelezen?

O, te lezen van den STEEN, en toch Hem te verwerpen. Het toont, dat men ziet en niet bemerkt; hoort en niet verstaat. Het is de blindheid der haat, die ons toegepast wordt door den vorst dezer eeuw.

Blinde Bouwlieden!

* * * *

Leest nog eens!

De Steen die verworpen is voor 4000 jaren is geworden tot een Hoofd des Hoeks.

Met andere woorden: Hij past precies!

Hij heeft altijd gepast. Het paste voor Abel om vermorzeld te worden. Daar zit eeuwige wijsheid in. De profeten moeten gedood. Het bloed der martelaren moet stroomen. En als men U haat, doet de Heilige Geest U denken aan die eerder verstorvenen, neen, geslachten, en zegt: Verheugt U als ge moet lijden in de verwerping: want zoo verwierp men de profeten.

En hier is het Wonder: de Steen past in den Tempel juist in die verwerping. De verwerping van den Steen is juist de kracht om te steunen. Als ge gaat graven onder het gebouw van Gods gunstbewijzen, en als ge aan het diepste en krachtigste fundament toekomt, en dan onder dat fundament blik, dan ziet ge dat het fundament rust op het bloed van Jezus. Zijn verwerping, zou een profeet zeggen, is onze aanname! Als gij straks zult blikken in het lieflijke OOG van God, dan komt dat hier vandaan, omdat gij staat op de Rots der eeuwen.

O ja, de Steen past.

Zelfs in Zijn verwerping. Juist door Zijn verwerping door de bouwlieden. En wilt ge nu de lieflijkste hallels zingen? Komt dan met mij en we zullen naar Petrus luisteren als hij aan 't bidden is. Hij zal kommentaar geven op den wonderen zin van den tekst die zegt: Van den Heere is dit geschied, en het is wonderlijk in onze oogen! Petrus heeft immers zelf de Heere dezen zin hooren spreken? En later, als Petrus vervuld is met den Heiligen Geest, dan ziet hij, dat de kruisiging, dat is, de verwerping van Jezus eigenlijk van den Heere geschied is, en daarom bidt hij op den eersten Pinksterdag: "Want in waarheid zijn vergaderd tegen Uw Heilig Kind Jezus, welken Gij gezalft hebt, beide Herodes en Pontius Pilatus, met de heidenen en de volken Israels, om te doen al wat Uwe hand en Uw raad te voren bepaald had dat geschieden zoude!

Is het niet wonderlijk in onze oogen? Wij zien het maar doorgronden het niet.

De Steen Gods is voorspeld, keer op keer.

In de volheid des tijds wordt Hij finaal verworpen.

Maar als we zien met oogen die door den Geest verlicht zijn, dan zien we dat die verwerping van Gods Raad en van Gods hand komt. De tekst zegt: van den

Heere is dit geschied.

Leest ge zóó de Heilige Schrift?

Dan zijt ge zalig.

* * * *

Weinigen lezen zóó de Heilige Schrift.

Het is zoo vreeselijk vernederend.

Stelt het U voor: van de allervroegste dagen zegt God: Ik bouw Mijn Tempel, en Ik bouw ook U om in dien Tempel te wonen. Als Tempel en volk klaar zijn, en als ge rondom dien Tempel wandelt om zijn torens, vestingen en paleizen te beschouwen, dan zullen de Engelen U toezingen: Dit is van den Heere geschied! Of, zooals we het in Gods Woord nu al keer op keer lezen: Het Heil is des Heeren.

Laat mij het eenvoudig zeggen, zoodat ge het allen verstaan kunt: God is aan 't werk gegaan in den vroegen morgen der historie toen Adam viel, om Zijn Tempel te bouwen en om Zijn volk te bereiden voor dien Tempel. En nu al voor zes duizend jaren zegt God tegen ons, waar wij er bij staan met onze vuile kleeren: Blijf van dit werk af! Ge kunt den Tempel Gods niet bouwen, en gij kunt uzelf niet klaarmaken voor dien Tempel. Paulus hoorde dat, en zeide: "degene die niet werkt, maar gelooft in Hem. . . .

God bouwt den Tempel, en Hij komt naar U toe en naar mij toe, waar wij in onze vuile kleeren staan, en terwijl we onszelf nog vuiler maken van dag tot dag, en dan zegt God: Alles is geschied van Mij, en niet van U.

Luistert maar naar Petrus: "zoo wordt gij ook zelve als levende steenen gebouwd tot een geestelijk Huis".

Vraagt ge: is er dan niets te doen voor ons?

Niets uit en van uzelve.

We kunnen wel trachten om het Huis te verknoeien.

Maar wat ge wel moogt doen en moet doen, en ook daadwerkelijk doet, is dit: De Heere heeft ook nog werken, goede werken, voor U bereid van eeuwigheid, opdat gij allen daarin zoudt wandelen. De goede werken zijn ook nog een gave. En gij werkt die werken door Zijn Heilige Geest!

Is het niet wonderlijk in onze oogen?

Wij zien die dingen elken dag gebeuren, maar wij doorgronden 't niet.

O ja, de STEEN werd verworpen. Maar Hij was al dien tijd en eeuwigheid voor God dierbaar. God mag gaarne naar dien Hoeksteen zien. Het is Zijn schoonste werk.

Straks zal die STEEN de goddelooze bouwlieden verpletteren en verbrijzelen, maar U is Hij dierbaar.

Sommige struikelen over den STEEN Gods, maar voor U is Hij de Rots der eeuwen die van geen wankelen weet.

Ik sprak zooeven van hallels zingen: zijt ge bereid om dat te doen, en dan voor eeuwig?

G. Vos.

The Standard Bearer

Semi-Monthly, except Monthly in July and August

Published By

The Reformed Free Publishing Association

Box 124, Sta. C., Grand Rapids, Mich.

EDITOR: — Rev. H. Hoeksema.

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

Communications relative to contents should be addressed to REV. H. HOEKSEMA, 1139 Franklin St., S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Communications relative to subscription should be addressed to MR. J. BOUWMAN, 1131 Sigsbee St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. Announcements and Obituaries must be mailed to the above address and will be published at a fee of \$1.00 for each notice.

Renewals:—Unless a definite request for discontinuance is received, it is assumed that the subscriber wishes his subscription to continue without the formality of a renewal order.

(Subscription Price \$2.50 per year)

Entered as Second Class Mail at Grand Rapids, Michigan.

CONTENTS

MEDITATION—

- De Verworpen Steen289
Rev. G. Vos

EDITORIALS—

- A Few Corrections, Please!292
Propositions Concerning The Covenant Of Grace294
Reply Of The Rev. Van Raalte294
Rev. H. Hoeksema

CONTRIBUTION—

- Marriage In The Church296
Rev. P. De Boer

OUR DOCTRINE—

- The Attributes Of God298
Rev. H. Veldman

THE DAY OF SHADOWS—

- David Displeased302
Rev. G. M. Ophoff

SION'S ZANGEN—

- Eeuwige Goedertierenheid305
Rev. G. Vos

IN HIS FEAR—

- Training For Life's Calling308
Rev. J. A. Heys

PERISCOPE—

- What Authority???309
Rev. W. Hofman

EDITORIALS

A Few Corrections, Please!

In the Calvin Forum, March, 1949, the Rev. Paul De Koekkoek writes an article about the situation in Canada in which occurs the following paragraph:

"We can see more point to the work of Protestant Reformed missionaries who reportedly also try to win adherents to their church. They have at least taken the official position that the Christian Reformed Church is off the beam in the matter of Common Grace. And although that has not prevented several of their individual members to rejoin our churches, and one congregation, originally of the same position, to return in a body, the official position still is against our denomination. Perhaps these brethren are mostly interested in those of the (Holland) Reformed Churches (Art. 31) insofar as these do not see fit to join the Christian Reformed Church. We know that efforts are being made, both here and in Holland, to keep these immigrants from casting their lot with us. Some of these are not at all anxious to keep away from us because of their church conflicts in Holland, and we admire their good sense, but others remain aloof. Of course, I think it is a pity that while in Holland serious efforts are now put forth toward healing the breach, there are those here who would rather widen it and start another church, if need be with those from whom they differ more than from us. They should know that although they may find a sympathetic atmosphere in the Protestant Reformed Church along church-political lines, they certainly will not find it in matters of doctrine, particularly not in that for them so delicate subject of the Covenant of Grace. If that can be glossed over, a good deal more can, and that, perhaps, with very peaceful results."

I feel constrained to reflect upon this paragraph and to insert a few corrections here and there.

First of all, I want to reflect upon that clause, "and although that has not prevented several of their individual members to rejoin our churches". In the first place, it seems somewhat strange that the Rev. De Koekkoek hears about this way in Edmonton, Canada. It leaves the impression that his informants rejoice when even a very little dribble of a few members leave our churches to join the Christian Reformed Church. However, I can assure the Rev. De Koekkoek that there are but very few, not only individual members,

but also families, that have forsaken us and left to the Christian Reformed Church. There is nothing to rejoice over on their part. How otherwise would the Reverend account for that fact that while at the time when we were so cruelly cast out of the fellowship of the Christian Reformed Church we had in Grand Rapids only one congregation of approximately 450 families, now that same congregation still counts over 500 families, and from that same congregation there have been organized three other churches of fair size and self-supporting in the same city?

Besides, is it such a wonder that a few members left us? In fact, is this phenomenon not very normal? Does not also the Christian Reformed Church constantly lose membership to other churches?

And who, after all, were those individual members that rejoined the Christian Reformed Church? In the first place, there were those who from the beginning conceived of the possibility that in our small church they could be big frogs in a small pond. And when they could not realize their ambition, they left us again. In the second place, there were those that belonged to the union; and when they were admonished and disciplined, they simply left to find a safe refuge in the Christian Reformed Church. And their reception is certainly no credit to the latter church. Then, of course, there were some that loved a woman or a man more than the church and so forsook us and the truth. And finally, there were a few that went along with us in 1924 but not for principle's sake. They left us because they never understood and were convinced of the Reformed truth. These all found a glad welcome in the Christian Reformed Church. But to us their departure simply proves that a healthy body is able to throw off its impure elements.

Then I must also make a remark about the statement, "and one congregation, originally of the same position, to return in a body." I suppose that the Rev. Paul De Koekkoek refers to what was originally called the Protestant First Christian Reformed Church of Kalamazoo. Yet, although the Rev. De Koekkoek is very careful in his statement, it may leave a false impression, the impression, namely, that a Protestant Reformed Church forsook our denomination and left in a body to the Christian Reformed Church; and that is not the case. The present Grace Chr. Ref. Church was never Protestant Reformed, not even in name, and never belonged to the Protestant Reformed Church denomination. And besides, the sound members of that church in Kalamazoo organized a Protestant Reformed Church, which is also entirely self-supporting and is about to dedicate a beautiful stone building as their church-home.

Further, I want to call attention to the statement: "Of course, I think it is a pity that while in Holland serious efforts are now put forth toward healing the

breach, there are those here who would rather widen it and start another church, if need be with those from whom they differ more than from us." I want to call special attention in this connection to that statement concerning healing of the breach in the old country. It is, of course, true that a few individuals on both sides, of the synodicals and of the liberated churches, have indeed put forth efforts to heal the breach. But it is also true, as the Rev. De Koekkoek ought to know, if at least he reads the Dutch papers, in the first place, that those efforts meet with very little success; in the second place, that officially the liberated churches frown upon these efforts to heal the breach; and thirdly, that after Oosterbeek II even the synodicals are opposed to them. I predict, therefore, in the light of the present situation that all these efforts to heal the breach will prove entirely fruitless, unless Oosterbeek and its conferences may originate a third party that ultimately will result in still another Reformed Church,—which, however, is not very probable.

Finally, I must reflect on the latter part of the preceding quotation together with the sentence that follows in the paragraph, namely: "They should know that although they may find a sympathetic atmosphere in the Protestant Reformed Church along church-political lines, they certainly will not find it in matters of doctrine, particularly not in that for them so delicate subject of the Covenant of Grace. If that can be glossed over, a good deal more can, and that, perhaps, with very peaceful results." Now, in the first place, it is not true that our churches, through their missionaries, work only among those that are members of the liberated churches. They work among the synodicals as well, although it is true that we find a ready ear among the former first of all. Secondly, I want to call the attention of the Rev. De Koekkoek to the fact that our differences with the Christian Reformed Church, regarding which we may find a sympathetic atmosphere in our churches for the liberated people, do not lie only along church-political lines: for the liberated churches also reject the doctrine of common grace; and we find that some of the members in Canada that emigrated from Holland are rather well-indoctrinated on this matter. Some of them even sent a protest to their consistory about the Three Points and about the way they treated faithful ministers in 1924 by casting them out from the Christian Reformed Church fellowship. And although we find, as we approach those people, that they differ with us on the matter of the covenant of grace, it is nevertheless a fact that they are quite Reformed in their convictions and that they can be readily instructed to adopt our view of the covenant instead of their own. You see, fact is that they feel especially at home with us because the truly Reformed immigrants find true

Reformed preaching in our churches which they fail to find in the Christian Reformed Church in Canada. About this there is rather general complaint among the immigrants of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.

H. H.

Propositions Concerning The Covenant Of Grace

The fifth proposition which Dr. F. L. Bos and Rev. E. G. van Teylingen jointly subscribe to, reads as follows:

"That the most wise God has ordained the use of the gospel to be the seed of regeneration, and food of the soul," and that, "it must be far from either instructor or instructed to presume to tempt God in His church by separating what He in His good pleasure hath most intimately joined together," (Canons of Dordrecht, III, IV, 17.) "although the sovereign power of the Spirit to operate already in the unconscious heart of the child must be fully and reverently acknowledged."

Let us first of all quote Art. 17, referred to, in full: "As the almighty operation of God, whereby he prolongs and supports this our natural life, does not exclude, but requires the use of means, by which God of his infinite mercy and goodness hath chosen to exert his influence, so also the beforementioned supernatural operation of God, by which we are regenerated, in no wise excludes, or subverts the use of the gospel, which the most wise God has ordained to be the seed of regeneration, and food of the soul. Wherefore as the apostles, and teachers who succeeded them, piously instructed the people concerning this grace of God, to his glory, and the abasement of all pride, and in the meantime, however, neglected not to keep them by the sacred precepts of the gospel in the exercise of the word, sacraments, and discipline; so even to this day, be it far from either instructors or instructed to presume to tempt God and the church, by separating what he of his good pleasure hath most intimately joined together. For grace is conferred by means of admonitions; and the more readily we perform our duty, the more eminent usually is this blessing of God working in us, and the more directly is his work advanced; to whom alone all the glory both of means, and of their saving fruit and efficacy is for ever due. Amen."

Now, it is evident that this proposition really presents another compromise,—that of mediate regeneration in the case of those that can consciously receive the gospel, and of the possibility of immediate regeneration in the case of little infants.

It seems, at least, as if this is such a compromise.

In reality it is not, because the proposition simply quotes, except for the last part, the Canons of Dordt, III, IV, 17; and to this all Reformed people subscribe, whether they believe in immediate or in mediate regeneration.

Hence, suppose that Dr. Bos, as a liberated man, believes in mediate regeneration, as he very probably does, and the Rev. van Teylingen in immediate regeneration, they can still use the same language, that is, the language of the confession. Hence, the proposition may not even be a compromise.

The only suggestion that the two brethren approach each other in a compromise is the last clause, 'although the sovereign power of the Spirit to operate already in the unconscious heart of the child must be fully and reverently acknowledged.' There Dr. Bos evidently concedes to the Rev. van Teylingen that in the case of children the possibility of immediate regeneration must be granted; and on the other hand, the Rev. van Teylingen by implication, though not expressly, seems to concede that in the case of adults regeneration is always through the preaching of the Word.

As to our own conviction in this matter, we shall present it, D.V., in a following issue.

H. H.

Reply Of The Rev. Van Raalte

In "Gereformeerd Kerkblad voor Overijsel en Gelderland", the Rev. J. Van Raalte replies to my observations of some time ago, as follows:

ONZE BROEDERS IN CANADA
EN DS. H. HOEKSEMA

In zijn *The Standard Bearer* komt Ds. Hoeksema, pred. van de Prot. Ref. Church te Grand Rapids terug op de brief, die we in ons Kerkblad richtten aan onze geëmigreerde leden in Canada. Hij vraagt mij, om op zijn schrijven te antwoorden.

Dat wil ik gaarne doen, maar ik kan niet zooveel ruimte van de redactie vragen.

Ds. H. heeft eigenlijk twee vragen.

De eerste is, waarom Ds. van Raalte zoo graag correspondentie wil aanknopen met de Chr. Geref. Kerk in Noord-Amerika. Hiervan behoef ik niet veel te zeggen.

Als de lezers zich het schrijven nog herinneren, dat weten zij dat de inhoud en bedoeling was om de emigranten leden der Geref. Kerken te waarschuwen TEGEN aansluiting bij de Christelijke Geref. Kerk in Amerika (c.q. Canada).

Wanneer ds. H. daaruit een pleidooi distilleert

VOOR correspondentie met die kerk, begrijp ik hem niet.

Hij haalt dat misschien uit de aan onze leden daar gedane mededeling van hetgeen de Chr. Geref. Kerk inzake de correspondentie met ons heeft gedaan, n.l., dat die de VOORTZETTING er van heeft geweigerd, en dat daaruit onzerzijds nu ook de consequentie moet worden getrokken, dat er van het lidmaatschap van die kerk ook geen sprake meer kan zijn, en dat onze leden zich dus niet moeten laten vangen door een scheve voorstelling van zaken, alsof er niets is gebeurd.

En dat zoeken van het voortzetten van de correspondentie was overigens niet in de eerste plaats de zaak van ds. van Raalte persoonlijk, maar van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland.

Daarom spijt het me, dat ds. Hoeksema mij iets laat zeggen, dat ik niet gezegd heb. Zijn lezers krijgen de indruk: Ds. van Raalte wil met alle geweld correspondentie met de Chr. Geref. Kerk!, en de werkelijkheid is, dat ds. van Raalte adviseert aan de leden in Canada: SLUIT U IN GEEN GEVAL AAN BIJ DE CHR. GEREFORMEERDE KERK!

Ds. H. heeft dat stuk van ondergeteekende trouwens ook overgenomen. Misschien hebben zijn lezers zooveel objectiviteit, dat ze zien, dat de inhoud van dat stuk en de door ds. Hoeksema er van gegeven interpretatie van elkaar verschillen.

Dan heeft ds. Hoeksema nog een vraag: Waarom ds. van Raalte in dat stuk geen gewag heeft gemaakt van de Prot. Ref. Churches waarvan ds. Hoeksema predikant is.

Als ik het antwoord heel zakelijk moet geven, in de geest, of met de bedoeling, waarmee het indertijd werd geschreven, dan kan ik het heel kort zeggen: Omdat ik in dat stuk niet anders wilde doen, dan onze mensen waarschuwen TEGEN aansluiting bij de Chr. Geref. Kerk, die probeert hen in te palmen en met bedriegelijke voorwendsels te vangen. Daarmee zal ds. H. echter niet tevreden zijn, want hij zal opmerken: Maar U hebt hen toch aangespoord om de Kerk van Christus tot openbaring te brengen naar Zijn Woord!, en dat is niet nodig, want de Kerk van Christus is in Canada al, want dat zijn de Prot. Ref. Churches, en die noemt U niet!

Ik begrijp best, dat ds. H. dat bedoelt.

Maar dan wil ik in de eerste plaats opmerken, dat de Prot. Ref. Churches in Canada niet vertegenwoordigd zijn: die hebben daar geen enkele Kerk (tenzij dat ze sindsdien in Hamilton een kerk hebben geïnstitueerd).

Bovendien weet ds. H. ook wel, dat ik bezwaar heb tegen de Prot. Ref. Churches, ondanks het vele goede, dat ik van haar weet.

Wat dat bezwaar is?

Ik zou het zo kunnen uitdrukken: Dat ds. H. in zijn brochure DE GELOOVIGEN EN HUN ZAAD heeft

aangekondigd, dat de leer inzake het Verbond, die deze leden hier in Nederland geleerd hebben (en dat is de leer van het Infra-lapsarisme) "met wortel en tak moet worden uitgeroeid". Ik heb daarover vroeger uitvoerig geschreven in dit blad, en kan daarop nu niet terugkomen.

Ik kan dat bezwaar ook in andere woorden weer geven: Omdat in de kerken, waartoe ds. H. behoort, een leer wordt geduld, die in strijd is met de Dordtse Leerregels cap. III, IV, art. 8 en 9 en met de Heidelbergse Catechismus, antwoord 6.

Over die kwestie wil ik eerst gepraat hebben, en als we dan elkaar kunnen vinden, dan ben ik bereid tot correspondentie met deze kerken, hetgeen zal inhouden om in Canada en Amerika zich bij deze kerken aan te sluiten, of zich er mee te vereenigen, want ik hoop, dat er spoedig een Gereformeerde Kerk in Canada tot openbaring zal komen.

Ds. Hoeksema merkt ook nog het volgende op: "en indien de Vrijgemaakte Kerk (hij bedoelt: De Geref. Kerken in Nederland) de verbondsleer van (Prof. W.) Heyns geloven, dan kunnen ze niet als leden (van onze kerken) aanvaard worden, tenzij, zij zich bekeren. Want het is onze overtuiging, dat de leer van Heyns niet Gereformeerd, maar Remonstrants is". (Hetgeen tussen (—) staat, is door ons ter verduidelijking ingevoegd. J. v. R.)

Wij zijn niet overtuigd van het Remonstrantisme van Prof. W. Heyns, al betekent dat niet, dat we het met elke uitdrukking van hem eens zijn; b.v. niet met wat hij zegt van de voorbereidende genade.

Maar ik wil ds. Hoeksema wel meedelen, dat onze mensen er een heel andere verbondsbeschouwing op na houden, dan hij doet: ik zou het niet zo'n wonder vinden, indien hij er bezwaar tegen had om hen met die leer te aanvaarden; consequent zou het zeker wezen.

Op nog een opmerking moet ik iets zeggen. Ds. Hoeksema zegt n.l. ook dit: "Ik hoop, dat het grondmotief voor het verschil in houding bij ds. van Raalte (hij bedoelt met die houding dan de zienswijze die hij op de houding van ds. v. Raalte heeft, die wel correspondentie met de Chr. Geref. Kerk, maar niet met de Prot. Geref. kerken zou willen) niet dit is, dat wij klein en veracht zijn."

Ik wil ds. Hoeksema antwoorden, dat het kiezen voor het trouw blijven aan de Belijdenis en het accoord van kerkelijke samenwerking in Nederland ook betekent zich te houden bij een *kleine groep*. Me dunkt, dat moet hem genoeg zijn om die onderstelling royaal terug te nemen.

J. Van Raalte.

We thank the Rev. Van Raalte for his reply. But we are not quite satisfied with it, and hope to reflect on it in the next number of our Standard Bearer.

H. H.

Contribution

From the Rev. P. De Boer we received the following contribution:

Rev. H. Hoeksema,

Marriages In The Church.

This article is being written on a rented typewriter while I am sitting in a room in the Kahler Hotel here at Rochester, Minnesota. The latter part of February my wife and I spent the greater part of two weeks here at the Mayo Clinic, and now (the third week of March) we are here again. This time we are staying in a hotel connected with the Clinic by a sub-way to make it as easy as possible for my wife for whose condition we are here. As you may remember—the people of Redlands certainly will—some four years ago my wife was very seriously ill with what was finally called “encephalitis”, from which it took about a year for her to recover. Well, about six weeks ago the double vision that started things off the other time began again. Gradually the pain in the left eye became more severe, the eye finally remained closed entirely, and the repeated spasms of pain leave her very weak. We hesitated to come to Rochester this week wondering if my wife could stand the trip, but doctors advised us at all events to take her to Mayo’s because the case was a difficult one. There is something fundamentally wrong but to date the doctors are not yet sure just what the trouble is, although they now seem to think they are on the right track and hope to be able definitely to say within a few days. In the meantime my wife spends most of the time in bed, resting-up between appointments. Our prayer is that it may please the Lord to give the physicians the necessary wisdom to discover the nature of the ailment and to prescribe some remedy, but that above all He may teach us Christian submission to His way, knowing that all things work together for good to them that love God and are the called according to His purpose.

The purpose of this article, however, is to write about marriages in the church. Some months back you as editor of the Standard Bearer placed a question concerning this matter and briefly gave some of your views on the matter. At that time you invited Edgerton’s consistory to write on the matter in the Standard Bearer. To date nothing appeared. However, with the permission of the consistory, I would like to quote various decisions of our consistory on this matter of marriages in the church and thereby bring this entire matter before the attention of our people. Without intending exactly a debate I would like to hear what you think of our present decisions. If we have erred we want to know our error and go in the right direction with this matter. Rather than write personally

for your opinion I’m writing publicly. This discussion is in the nature of the case one in which our people in general are interested and can profit by.

Let me begin by saying that, as I understand, it has well-nigh been a prevalent practice in Edgerton, not only in our Prot. Ref. Church, that marriages are solemnized in the church. By the latter I do not mean that marriage ceremonies were merely solemnized in the church buildings, but that marriages took place in a divine worship. Marriages in the church here in Edgerton do not generally mean ceremonies performed in the building, but regular divine worship during which the marriage vows are taken by the bridal couple. If marriages are performed in the church they are solemnized in divine worship, though not necessarily on Sunday.

In March 1944, a request came from someone in the congregation for the solemnization of a marriage in divine worship, requesting however permission for bridesmaid, best-man, etc. At that time—this was while the Rev. G. Vos was minister in Edgerton—the consistory ruled as follows: “that the bridal pair only shall appear before the pulpit, and that in harmony with sober and correct Reformed church polity no other worldly usages shall be tolerated”. (Consistory minutes, March 6, 1944). According to this ruling all attendants at weddings are called “worldly usages”, which to my mind can mean nothing more than sinful. If they are sinful they are sinful in divine worship not only but also in all other places where marriage may be solemnized. The appearance of the bridal pair alone is called in harmony with sober and correct Reformed church polity, in plain words a “mouthful” that demands evidence which is not expressed. Though naturally I would submit to this decision in practice, I cannot personally subscribe to the view that all the attendants, etc., are in themselves “worldly usages”, worldly in the sense of sinful.

Again in September 1948, the consistory received a request for the solemnization of marriage. This request was for marriage in a divine worship together with two attendants and flower girls. However, the request was also that in case the consistory would not allow the attendants, flower girls, etc., in a divine worship, the building would be granted for the ceremony apart from a worship. At this time the consistory reconsidered its decision of March 1944, and now decided “that in a divine service the preaching of the Word should have all emphasis, and to have more than the bridal pair before the pulpit tends to distract rather than add to the sanctity of Holy worship. Hence the consistory considers it advisable in a marriage ceremony that takes place in a full divine worship to allow only the bridal pair. Otherwise we see a danger that couples may seek to outdo each other, which will hinder rather than add to the basic idea of

divine worship of God meeting with His people". (Consistory minutes, Sept. 10, 1948). You will notice that in this decision the consistory does not at all speak of "worldly usages", of "sober and correct Reformed church polity". The consistory feels that a divine worship consists of God meeting with His people, that more than the bridal pair before the pulpit will open the door to more and more additions to the forms connected with the marriage ceremony and thereby focus the attention upon matters other than the primary idea of divine worship. We granted the use of the building in that case for a marriage ceremony arranged as the bridal pair wished it, but without divine worship. Personally, I have in the past been in favor of marriages solemnized without divine worship, whether in the church building or in some other suitable hall. In the past I have not felt too much for Church Order, article 70, that obligates the consistory to see to it that all marriages are performed in the church, which means not the church building but a regular divine worship. Yet, the more I think of this entire matter the more I am in favor of Church Order, article 70, which (by the way) we are obligated to carry out, or in the way of gravamina to change.

The question you received was in regard to this request, just mentioned in the fore-going paragraph. In this instance the consistory did not condemn attendants as "worldly usage" but laid down a rule for divine worship and what should form a part of it. In such a wedding that takes place in a full divine worship the consistory clearly is within its jurisdiction when it draws up some general rule that shall obtain for all marriages performed as part of a divine service. Certainly in such services there should be a general practice to which all must conform. The consistory simply was seeking to establish some general practice for divine worship. We did not open the door for the use of weddings in the church arranged as the couples might desire. But this left out the ministry of the Word, which I felt more and more to be more important than all other forms and practices.

But this is not the end of the matter. In February we received a request for the use of the church building for a marriage by someone though a daughter of the church no longer a member. Again this whole marriage matter came before our attention.

Now the consistory decided as follows. I quote: "In view of the fact that repeatedly requests come for public church weddings with divine worship, or for the use of the church building for marriage ceremonies without divine worship, by those in the church and even outside the church, with or without bridesmaids, flower girls, etc., the consistory decided the following:

1. That henceforth all marriages in our church

building shall be in a divine worship. Church Order, Art. 70.

2. That only such marriages shall be solemnized as in 1, where both parties are members (by baptism or by confession) of our Prot. Ref. Churches, or declare their intention to become such. Ground: only those that are members can truly before God take part in a Prot. Ref. divine worship.

3. That in these public marriages only the bride and the groom shall appear, as per our decision of Art. 3 of Sept. 10, 1948." End quote.

The second point needs some explanation. It has happened in the past that a marriage was solemnized in divine worship in our church where one of the parties was not a member of the Prot. Ref. Church, nor intended to become one, and where the couple intended to affiliate with a church of another denomination after their marriage. Personally I am convinced that it is not proper to solemnize a marriage in a divine worship where one of the parties involved is not of the Prot. Ref. Churches nor intends to be. Church weddings in the full sense of the Word, which imply approval before God on the part of the consistory and the church, ought to take place where both are of the Prot. Ref. Churches, or where the one not a member declares his intention to become such. Only such marriages can properly be contracted in the presence of God and His church and with the official sanction of the consistory. At any rate our consistory has expressed that only such marriages where the parties involved are members of our church, or where one who does not declares his intention to become such, shall be solemnized before the church. Other weddings can take place in the home or in a hall, if the parties wish, but marriages in the church are only for those who are members of the Prot. Ref. Church. How can anyone who in his heart says that some other church institute is the true church, that the Prot. Ref. Church is not the church institute to which he is commanded of Christ to belong, properly before God's face take part in a divine worship of the Prot. Ref. Church? You understand we realize some may look at this matter differently, but we are seeking objectively to determine some method by which to determine these matters: and concrete church membership is the objective standard by which we must go. In the back of our mind is Art. 27 of the Confession of Faith.

Well, Rev. Hoeksema, I have written enough to start some discussion on a matter that is repeatedly a problem to consistories. We are convinced that in view of the general American disregard for the sanctity of marriage, it is fitting that marriages be performed according to Church Order, Art. 70. The preaching of the Word ought to be on the foreground. We are also convinced that marriage in a divine service ought to be solemnized only between those of the

Prot. Ref. Churches. And we are further of the opinion to avoid all the present day frills connected with marriages, general as they have become, we shall limit the bridal party to the couple concerned, not because bridesmaids, etc. are in themselves sinful, but because in a divine worship we need a general limitation, applicable to all, lest the propriety of a Reformed worship be forgotten. Aren't our present-day marriage customs departing from the primacy of things and losing themselves in secondary matters? Is the line we are drawing to your mind the best to lead these matters in the direction of Church Order, Art. 70?

If anywhere we err in our present stand we want to correct our stand, but we want to keep marriages as part of church services, and not just in the building. We look forward to your comments, and very likely after that ask for more space.

P. De Boer.

We all deeply sympathize with Rev. and Mrs. De Boer in their affliction. We assure them that our prayers are ascending to the throne of grace in their behalf. May they abundantly experience that God's grace is always sufficient.

The rest of this article I hope to answer as soon as I have time and space.

H. H.

OUR DOCTRINE

The Attributes Of God

The Righteousness Of God. (cont.)

In our preceding article we called attention to various passages from the Word of God which teach us that the Lord is righteous in Himself. Attention was called, briefly, to the following portions of Holy Writ: Deut. 32:4, Nehemiah 9:8, Psalm 145:7, Jeremiah 12:1. And we concluded our article with the statement: "What this righteousness of the Lord implies we shall see, the Lord willing, in our following article." We understand, I am sure, that this truth of the righteousness of the Lord is corroborated by many more passages of the Word of God.

What This Divine Righteousness Implies.

We have already remarked that the word "righteousness" signifies literally: to be right, straight, as a straight line; to be in harmony with a certain standard, norm. The righteousness of God implies, in the first place, that the Lord is the Absolute Good. The Lord

is not merely good or goodness. To be sure, God is a Light, and there is no darkness in Him. His entire Being is goodness, perfection. Were we able to gaze into the infinite depths of His being, we would see nothing but goodness. The goodness of the Lord certainly implies, therefore, that nothing but goodness and perfection characterizes the living God. But God is absolute goodness. He is the Absolute Good. He alone is goodness. And He is this not merely in the sense that all other goodness is of Him. He is not merely the Sun in Whose light we see light, the Fountain Whose waters we drink. But the Lord is absolute, an inaccessible Light, the only, absolute Good, so that all other good is but a creaturely reflection of Jehovah, made by Him, infinitely distinguished from the Lord. It is true that, according to the apostle, Peter, in the first chapter of his second epistle, we become partakers of the Lord's Divine nature, but this, we understand, must be understood in the creaturely sense of the word—the Lord enables us to live, as creatures and in the measure of the creature, the life which He eternally lives as God. Hence, inasmuch as He is the Absolute Good, the alone and only living God, the Wholly Incomparable One, Who alone is God and besides Whom there is no other, He is therefore the only, absolute Standard or Norm. He alone determines what is good or evil. All good and evil is determined by its relation to Him, the alone living God. The question whether an act is good or evil cannot be determined, therefore, before a court of human justice, cannot be decided by a standard of human, worldly, civic righteousness or justice. Man's opinion of us is not *the* determining factor, does not determine the issue. God, and God alone, is the Standard or Norm of all good and evil; the all-important question is: What is our relation to Him, the Incomparable One?

The righteousness of God, to quote the definition of the Rev. H. Hoeksema (whose definitions, we readily admit, we frequently quote), is that virtue of the Lord, according to which all His willing and acting are in perfect harmony with His holiness and the infinite perfection of His being, and that according to His own eternal and infinitely perfect judgment of Himself. The Lord knows Himself perfectly. And He is the God of infinite perfection. Our being is deeper than our consciousness. We are told that that part of an iceberg which is underneath the surface of the water is seven times larger than the part above the surface. This, relatively speaking, also applies to the life of the human being. Our subconsciousness is surely greater than our consciousness. But the Lord is infinite in perfection, knows Himself perfectly. There is in God no subconsciousness. All God's being is known unto the Lord.

Moreover, as that infinitely good and perfect God the Lord knows and wills Himself. We will as we are

and according to what we are. Even as the nature of a particular tree determines its fruit and as a fountain determines whether its water shall be bitter or sweet, so also we will as we are. Out of a good heart proceed good thoughts, and out of an evil heart proceed evil thoughts. Our being determines our willing. We are not as we will to be (although it is ever true that the sinner is in complete harmony with himself as a sinner), but we will as our heart is. God, however, is as He wills to be. He eternally wills Himself. There is in the Lord no discord, no disharmony between Himself and anything of or in His being. The Lord wills Himself exactly as He is and is in perfect harmony with Himself.

Finally, in connection with this righteousness of God, the Lord *is* righteousness. He is not merely righteous, does not merely possess righteousness. Righteousness is not something which simply cleaves *unto* the Lord, a virtue which He can exercise or lay aside, a perfection which can be divorced from His being. Righteousness is the Lord's being. He *is* righteousness. Every vibration of His eternal being is righteousness; were the Lord to cease being righteous He would cease to be God. The righteousness of the Lord is therefore the infinite and spontaneous activity of His holy and eternal Self, never to be divorced from Him in all His eternal and infinite existence.

Hence, as that righteousness God the Lord always reveals Himself in all His dealing with the children of men.

*This Righteousness of God Taught Throughout
Scripture.*

The Lord is Judge of all the earth and He will reward the righteous and the wicked, according to Gen. 18:23-25: "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?" And, although it is true that God's righteousness toward the wicked is not mentioned in Scripture as often as His righteousness with respect to the godly (often, however, the Word of God speaks of His wrath, indignation, etc., toward the wicked), yet, it is surely taught in the Word of God. He does not hold the guilty innocent, Ex. 20:5, 7: "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me . . . Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord wilt not hold him guiltless

that taketh His name in vain"; Nahum 1:3: "The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet;"—He does not excuse the wicked, Ezekiel 7:4, 27: "And Mine eye shall not spare thee, neither will I have pity: but I will recompense thy ways upon thee, and thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee: and ye shall know that I am the Lord. . . . The king shall mourn, and the prince shall be clothed with desolation, and the hands of the people of the land shall be troubled: I will do unto them after their way, and according to their deserts will I judge them; and they shall know that I am the Lord"; see also Ezek. 7:9, 8:18, 9:10—He does not accept a gift and with Him is no respect of persons, Deut. 10:17: "For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, Which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward"—He judges impartially, Job 13:6-12: "Hear now my reasoning, and hearken to the pleadings of my lips. Will ye speak wickedly for God? and talk deceitfully for Him? Will ye accept His person? will ye contend for God? Is it good that He should search you out? or as one man mocketh another, do ye mock Him? He will surely reprove you, if ye do secretly accept persons. Shall not His excellency make you afraid? and His dread fall upon you? Your remembrances are like unto ashes, your bodies to bodies of clay."; see also Job 22:2-4, 34:10-12, 35:6, 7—He is righteous and all His judgments are upright, Psalm 119:137: "Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and upright are Thy judgments," and Psalm 129:4: "The Lord is righteous: He hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked."—Also, the punishment of the wicked is repeatedly mentioned with His righteousness, II Thess. 1:5-10: "Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power, When He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day. Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power: That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ."; see also Ex. 6:5, 7:4, Ps. 7:12,

9:5-9, 28:4, 62:13, Ps. 73, 96:10, 13, II Chron. 12:5-7, Neh. 9:33, Lam. 1:18, Is. 5:16, 10:22, Dan. 9:14, Rom. 2:5.

Moreover, the Scriptures also teach us that the Lord rewards the righteous. Repeatedly the Psalms speak of this righteousness of the Lord toward the wicked.—“My defense is of God, Which saveth the upright in heart. God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day,” Ps. 7:10-11: “In Thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in Thy righteousness. Bow down Thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be Thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me”, Ps. 31:1-2; “Ye that love the Lord, hate evil: He preserveth the souls of His saints; He delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked. Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness.” Especially in the prophecy of Isaiah does the Word of the Lord speak of the salvation of God’s people in connection with the righteousness of God.—“And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; therefore His arm brought salvation unto him; and His righteousness it sustained him. For He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon His head; and He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke. . . . The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified”, Is. 59:16-17, 61:1-3. And also in the New Testament this righteousness of the Lord, which constitutes the ground of our salvation, is repeatedly taught. We read in John 17:25: “O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee: but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me.” And in II Tim. 4:8: “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.” And in I John 1:9: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” And we are surely acquainted with the fact that the righteousness of the Lord is indeed the keynote of Paul’s epistle to the Romans, as expressed, e.g., in Romans 1:15-17: “So, as much as in me is, I am ready to

preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”

*God is Constantly Righteous in all His Dealings
With the Children of Men.*

Hence, God’s righteousness toward the creature is the manifestation of the infinitely and perfectly righteous God as He always maintains Himself in all His dealings with the children of men. Because He is righteous He blesses His people and rewards them with eternal life for the sake of Christ Jesus and because of His perfect satisfaction of the Divine justice. And because He is righteous He always assumes an attitude of condemnation toward the wicked, whom He sees and has eternally willed as wicked and ungodly, and punishes them, temporally and eternally. This is clearly and undeniably taught us in Lord’s Day 4 and 5 of our Heidelberg Catechism. In Lord’s Day 4 the question is asked: “Will God suffer such disobedience and rebellion to go unpunished?” And the answer reads: “By no means; but is terribly displeased with our original as well as actual sins; and will punish them in His just judgment temporally and eternally, as He hath declared, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law, to do them.” Then, in Lord’s Day 5 this question appears: “Since then by the righteous judgment of God, we deserve temporal and eternal punishment, is there no way by which we may escape that punishment, and be again received into favor?” To this question the Catechism answers: “God will have His justice satisfied: and therefore we must make this full satisfaction, either by ourselves, or by another.” The teaching of “Common Grace” is that the Lord is also favorably inclined to the reprobate wicked in this temporal, earthly life but will reveal Himself exclusively in His wrath in the eternal hereafter. And the teaching of Arminianism is that the Lord would save all men, that His gospel is a Divine invitation to all men, and that therefore God would save all men regardless of the payment of their sin and guilt. However in Lord’s Day 5 we are told that the satisfying of God’s justice is the only possible way whereby we can once more be received into Divine favor. The salvation of the sinner is, therefore, impossible without the full payment of his guilt. And in Lord’s Day 4 we are told that the Lord punishes temporally and eternally, i.e., always. And this receives added emphasis in the question, whether the Lord will ever suffer such disobedience and rebellion to go unpunished. Never, therefore, does the Lord assume an attitude of favor toward the sinner whose sin and guilt is not

covered and blotted out by the blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Always the Lord is condemning the reprobate ungodly, visiting His wrath upon him, and causing all things to work together unto his eternal desolation.

That the Lord is always, continually punishing the wicked is clearly taught in Psalm 145:17 ff., where we read: "The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth. He will 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." Verse 9 of this psalm, we will recall, is quoted in support of a general favor of God to all men. We should notice, in this passage of verses 17-20, that the verses 18-20 are an explanation of verse 17. In verses 18-20 we are told that the Lord is nigh unto all men that love Him, call upon Him in truth, that He will fulfill the desire of them that fear Him, will hear their cry, and save them, that He preserveth all them that love Him, but *all the wicked He will destroy*. That the Lord will thus be nigh unto them that call upon Him in truth, etc., and will destroy all the wicked, is because He is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works. Hence, that He will destroy the wicked does not merely apply to the hereafter. This the "Common Grace" theorists would have us believe. They teach that, in this life, the Lord is also graciously inclined to them but that in the hereafter He will reveal Himself unto them exclusively in His wrath. Ps. 145, however, teaches us differently. The Lord, we read in verse 17, is righteous in *all* His ways, and holy in *all* His works. Hence, the Lord *always* is nigh unto all them that call upon him, etc., but He is also *always* destroying the wicked. Also with respect to the wicked He is righteous in *all* His ways and holy in *all* His works. Throughout the ages the Lord has condemned the world and His every act toward that world is an act of judgment, of condemnation, causing all things to work together for their condemnation, so that in all that they do they are gathering for themselves treasures of wrath in the Day of Judgment. God is righteousness. That He *is* righteous and always maintains Himself as such is a rock upon which the theory of "Common Grace" must necessarily suffer shipwreck.

God's Justice.

Intimately connected with the virtue of God's righteousness is His justice. The Lord's righteousness and justice are one. This is not necessarily true among men. Among men the one may be present without the other. Righteousness in distinction from justice, we would define as the objective right, that which is conformable to the law and should be done. Justice, in distinction from righteousness, is the enforcement of

that right. A just judge is a judge who not only knows what is right but also fearlessly enforces the right. We now understand that, among men, righteousness and justice do not necessarily include each other. Many judges know the right but wilfully pervert justice and ignore their high calling. This is particularly true in their treatment of the right as distinguished from the poor and also in the many industrial troubles and problems of our present day. Many judges do not proceed from the question, What is right?, but from the consideration of personal interest and self-aggrandizement. They are not interested in the right but in themselves. God's justice and righteousness, however, cannot be separated. They are always one. This is due to the fact that the Lord *is* His attributes, that He *is* righteousness, that He is therefore righteous in all His life, His thinking and willing, in all His being. He is always in complete and perfect harmony with Himself. Consequently, the Lord is always just. God's justice, in distinction from His righteousness (never separated from it), is that virtue of the Lord whereby He always manifests Himself as the righteous Jehovah, as the God Who always wills Himself and reveals Himself as such. Continually He maintains Himself. Hence, He is ever the God of salvation toward His people in Christ Jesus and for the sake of Christ Jesus, but He is also always the God of righteous indignation and wrath toward them who do not fear Him and whom He has not known in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

H. Veldman.

Attention

LEAGUE OF MEN'S SOCIETIES

Keep April 7 open for an important lecture by

PROFESSOR JOSEPH ZSIROS

who will lecture for us on Thursday evening, April 7th at 8 o'clock, at the First Prot. Ref. Church, at Holland, Michigan, on a very interesting subject:

"Communism and The Church"

This will be very interesting, for you will obtain news from behind the Iron Curtain, from the Christian point of view. Professor Zsiros is of the Reformed Churches in Hungary, and is now a guest professor at the Western Seminary at Holland, Michigan.

LET'S ALL BE THERE!

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

David Displeased

We are occupied with the transportation of the ark to mount Zion. There are some points in the narrative to which we must return. Stating that David with all the people that were with him went to Baal-Judah to bring up from thence the ark of God, the writer in anticipation of the events that he wants to relate continues, "whose name (the name of the ark) is called by the name of the Lord of hosts that dwelleth between the cherubim." The thought conveyed is that the Lord put His name upon the ark. The Scriptures identify the Lord's name with His glories, so that to declare God's name is to say that He "is merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin;" but it is also to say that "He by no means clears", that He is God righteous and holy whose eyes are too pure to behold sin, a consuming fire thus, the Everlasting Burning with whom no man—naked sinner—can dwell. Such are His virtues. And together they form the one, pure, white, light in the being of God that the Scriptures call His name. And by this name He called the ark. It was there, was this name, in the speech that rose from the blood of atonement that was sprinkled upon the ark's lid; it was there in that symbol, pledge and effulgence of His presence—the cloud—that hovered above its lid, His mercy-seat and throne. Here He dwelt in the midst of His people with His Word and Gospel and with His power to save and to destroy. Here He blessed His people in the blood of the atonement; but from here leaped also the fire of His wrath consuming the godless.

The ark was a thing of terrible holiness. If it became necessary to remove it from its place, it had to be carried by its staves as resting upon the shoulders of the Levites. For no man might touch it. So it was written in Israel's law. And when so born it has to wear a covering. For no man might look upon it. So, too, it was written in Israel's law.

They were taking that holy thing to themselves in Mount Zion. But they were an ill-deserving people. Could they dwell with the Lord in His holy hill? They did well in what they were doing. For the Lord had sworn truth unto David. It means that He had sworn truth unto Christ, for David was a prophetic person. But were they sufficiently aware that apart from the grace of Christ and the blood of the atonement they were depraved men and that it was the ark of Israel's holy God that they were transporting? They were putting on a great demonstration. They had

come supplied for that purpose with instruments of music of every description—with harps and psalteries and timbrels and cornets and symbols. And David and the house of Israel played on them before the Lord, and they leaped with joy. They made a joyful sound, that doubtless bore little resemblance to what in this modern age is called music. But the Lord looketh on the heart, so that He was pleased nevertheless. For that crowd of players included men whose hearts were true; and none was truer than David's.

But the Lord had fault to find with them nevertheless as is evident from the events narrated below. There should have been more of awe of God and of His ark in their rejoicing, and more of humbleness and contrition of heart. It had been well had they decried their national sins before the Lord before rushing to Kirjath to bring to them the ark that for seventy long years they had neglected. For one thing they had rejected the Lord that He should reign over them. That great sin had never been publicly confessed except under pressure.

The manner of treatment they afforded the ark is revealing. That holy thing was set upon a cart drawn by oxen and so brought out of the house of Abinadab. His two sons or descendants, Uzzah and Ohia, were the teamsters. The latter went before the ark and the former drove the cart. But they were employing a forbidden method of transporting that sacred vessel. As we have just seen, the law demanded that it be carried by its staves and not by any persons but by the Levites especially appointed to that task. And was the ark covered? It is best to assume that it was. For if it had not been wearing its covering most of that crowd playing before it at no great distance perhaps would have perished right there and then before the Lord as the men of Bethshemeth had perished for looking on the uncovered ark. But their inattention to the legal requirement that the ark be carried by the Levites is perplexing in view of the presence on the scene of David. And that crowd must have included many more worthies in Israel. It included priests and Levites and members of the prophetic schools and even the prophet Nathan perhaps. Had the knowledge of that requirement ceased, or must their wrong doing be ascribed to the thoughtlessness and indifference of sinful flesh? That they were not ignorant of the law is proved by the fact that later on in their bringing the ark out of the house of Obed-edom they return to the right method of transporting that sacred chest. The best conjecture is that they hoped the Lord would condone their deflection from the right line of action as considering that they had a long way to go and that it was much easier to convey the ark on a cart than carry it by its staves. But they were taking liberties with the Lord. Besides, couldn't they discern the reason back of the Lord's requirement? Transport-

ing the ark on a cart was fraught with danger for the ark, humanly speaking, especially the way that they went about it. They set the ark on a cart and forsook it. At least they could have ordered the Levites to hold it by its staves that it might not be shaken from the cart at the bad places of the strack. But no such precautionary measure was taken. Ohia went before; Uzzah drove the cart. That was deemed sufficient.

It all points to one thing chiefly. The ark had lost its sacredness for the people. That the ark was God's throne, that His name was upon it, had ceased to be for them a reality. It can be explained. Since its removal from the holiest place of the tabernacle, a whole generation had come and gone. The people must again be made to tremble before the ark. God and the ark must again become associated in their minds before He can take up His residence in their midst in Zion. With the enthronement of David the church had entered a new dispensation of grace. New light will be shed upon the promise. There will be new manifestations of God's mercy and grace and new favors shown all in connection with the ark. Hence, first the Lord must correct the attitude of His people toward the ark. First they must again be made to stand in awe before it and thus before Him. First it must be driven home to them that in the ark they have to do not with a dumb idol but with the very throne of the living God.

That the ark had lost for them its sacredness is also particularly evident from Uzzah's rashness. Arriving at a bad place in the road the oxen stumbled. So reads the text in our versions. But the Hebrew verb translated *stumble* is *shamat*. 1. *to let go*, 2. *to throw down*, *to break loose*, intransitive *to set one self free*. Doubtless the thought conveyed is that the oxen so behaved that the ark was in actual danger of being hurled from the cart. At least, so it seemed. The place was a threshing-floor and its owner's name was Nachon. The Chronicler gives his name as Chidon. The respective meanings of these names—smiting and destruction—may indicate that they are not to be taken as proper nouns but that they were given to the place after the event narrated below.

"Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark, and took hold of it." Did he not do well? The Lord didn't think so. For His anger was "kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God."

It must be assumed that David had seen everything. For he was playing before the Lord and following the ark at no great distance. His first reaction was one of anger. *Charah* is the verb contained in the Hebrew text. It is the same verb that is found in the first clause of the preceding verse, which reads, "And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah." David was angry (the translators toned this down to *dis-*

pleased), because the Lord had seized upon Uzzah: and he called the name of the place Perezuzzah, meaning *the seizing of Uzzah*. The Lord was angry with Uzzah on account of his error; but David was angry on account of the stroke that the Lord had laid on Uzzah. He couldn't justify the Lord's severity. What was Uzzah then supposed to have done? Allowed the ark to be shaken from the cart? Uzzah's solicitude was commendable. He had done well. The stroke was not deserved. So David reasoned by himself. He was justifying Uzzah rather than God. The patient Job did likewise in his troubles. So it is written. "For he breaketh me with a tempest, and multiplieth my wounds without a cause. (17:6). Such was his complaint. It expresses exactly the point to David's grievance. To his mind the Lord had smitten Uzzah without a cause.

David's reactions were *necessarily* sinful. For the Lord had done it and with him there can be no injustice. But this is the position of faith—a position that David in his heart was not occupying at the moment. Because he was unable to discern the rightness of the Lord's doing he was angry and critical of God. That was his sin. It is a sin into which we so easily fall. How prone we are to lay down the law for God, how inclined to judge him according to standards of our own making instead of considering that what he doeth is well done for the sole reason that He hath done it.

Indeed, God's dealing with Uzzah does raise questions. Assuming now that the ark would have tumbled from the cart had it not received the support of Uzzah's hands, what under the circumstances would have constituted right action for him? Should he have allowed the ark to be hurled from the cart and damaged without stretching forth a hand? That, it seems, was David's difficulty? But he should have perceived that Uzzah had deserved that stroke. Uzzah himself had necessitated his forbidden action by his inattention to the legal requirements for the safe transportation of the ark. Further, as was stated, the ark had been provided with staves for its transportation. Yet Uzzah, says the text, took hold of the ark. The meaning doubtless is that he took not hold of the ark by its staves. It all goes to show that Uzzah was not trembling before the ark. He had lived with it all his life, and it had ceased to be a sacred thing for him. He had taken hold of it, perhaps even by its staves, with as little dread in his soul as he had felt when handling the ordinary articles of furniture that stood in his house. And the sins of Uzzah were the sins of them all including David. Not one had raised his voice in protest at the method that was being employed in transporting the ark. Yet, the stroke had fallen only upon Uzzah. It pleased God to make an example of him alone. And that was His right. He could not

slay David as He had sworn truth unto him.

And now we can continue to ask questions, of course. We can ask whether *to all appearances* the ark actually was in danger of being overtaken by disaster. This seems to be indicated by Uzzah's sinful action, by David's displeasure, and by the behaviour of the oxen. The text states that they stumbled. We may also translate here, "The oxen kicked", or "became restive and threatened to run away". We may further ask whether Uzzah would have died had his attitude toward the ark been right. But his attitude was wrong. Hence, the question is pointless.

Finally, we can ask just what Uzzah should have done to escape the stroke of God. Undoubtedly this is what he should have done. As mindful of the prohibition that the ark be not touched, he should have withheld his hand by all means and cast the care of the ark upon God, while decrying before the face of God his great sin of having brought the ark in its present predicament by his intention to the requirement of the law that it be born by the Levites. But confession of sin is the fruitage of reflection upon the sins that must be confessed; it is the fruitage of earnest heart-searchings. But for this there was neither time nor opportunity. The ark was in danger. The moment required instant action. And Uzzah did act. Following a natural impulse, he, with a leap, laid his hands on the ark to hold it in place on the cart and paid for that forbidden doing with his life.

The sight of Uzzah's corpse lying there by the ark not only displeased David; it also terrified him. "David was afraid of the Lord that day," not ordinarily but at that particular time. He was not saying in his heart as on other days, "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength in whom I trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. . . ." His faith had suffered an eclipse, and the cry of his heart now was, "Alas, how shall the ark of the Lord come to me!" That reads like a lamentation. And so it was. The doleful events of the hour had saddened him as well. A deep gloom encircled his soul. Had the Lord not chosen Zion and sworn truth unto David? But if so, what meaneth then Uzzah's corpse lying there by the ark? That was God's doing. Wasn't it a clear indication that He had not chosen Zion, that, in a word, all was delusion? The Lord was making the transportation of the ark to Zion, the city of David, impossible. If Uzzah had to die—Uzzah whose only offence had been, if an offence it was, that he had shown solicitude for the ark—who could stand before the Lord! Should he take the ark to him in Zion? Would that not be courting death? David was afraid of the Lord. "And David would not remove the ark of the Lord unto him in Zion."

But the Lord had sworn truth unto David indeed

for Christ's sake. He had in His sovereign mercy chosen Zion. David will dwell with God in His holy hill, he and all his house. And he had God's testimony in his heart and in his life that he was Christ's and that Christ's God was his God. Had not the Lord in His mercy taken him from the sheep cote and made him ruler over His people? And had not the Lord been with him whithersoever he had gone and cut off all his enemies out of his sight and made him great in His love of His servant? Yet David was afraid of God "that day". His confidence toward God was gone. The sight of Uzzah's corpse caused him to tremble.

David's trembling can be explained. His posture was carnal. He refused to allow Uzzah's sin, which was the sin of them all including David and him by all means, as he was king, to stand out in his mind in its right light. But instead of engaging in earnest heart-searchings in the attempt to know his sin and confess it, David justified Uzzah and himself and all the people that were with him rather than God. Him he accused of undue severity. It can be expected that, such being his state of mind and heart, he should be afraid of God and cry out in despair, "How shall the ark of the Lord come to me!" In uttering that cry he was not in love extolling God's holiness and the inability of the *naked* sinner to co-habitate with such a God; rather he was criticizing God for what He had done to Uzzah. It was a cry that proceeded from sinful flesh. It was a cry of unbelief.

Such was David's posture not for a fleeting moment but for a whole day and perhaps for the greater part of three long months. That he was actually afraid of God is clear. He had the ark carried aside in the house of Obed-edom, and he told the people that had been playing with him before the Lord that they had better hasten home and put as great a distance between them and the ark as they knew how, before the Lord in His wrath kill them all. It's a wonder that the Lord did not slay him, too. But the Lord could not slay him for He had sworn truth unto him, but not for any goodness original in him, certainly.

But we would like to know more about Obed-edom. He showed an astounding courage. With David and all the people running away from the ark in terror he received it into his house. He was the only one not afraid of God. There can be but one explanation; the Lord had prepared his mind and heart for the reception of the ark at this moment. He must have been a true Israelite, one of God's worthies, to begin with. He must also have assumed co-responsibility for the wrong method that was employed for the transportation of the ark and confessed that sin before God and thus justified the stroke that the Lord had laid upon Uzzah. Thus he had a good conscience before God and was therefore not afraid to receive the ark into his house. But who was the man? Ex. 6:16, 18, 21

speaks of a Obed-edom who was a Levite of the stock of the Korashites, which was a branch of the family of Kohath, a son of Jeduthum. At I Chron. 16:38 he appears as a porter in Jerusalem. He may have been the Obed-edom of our story. But this is not certain. But there can be no doubt that he was a Levite. If he was one of the Korashites, it can be understood why the ark was carried to him. The Korashites were porters who bore the ark through the wilderness.

Three months the ark continued in the house of Obededom. David's misery and anguish of soul must have been great during all this time. In his unbelief he had taken the position that no man can stand before God and live. But he was wrong. The believers in Christ, the penitent and the contrite of heart, dwell securely with Him as saved from His wrath by the blood of the atonement. David was speaking ill of God. His lamentation was a denial of Christ; it was a denial of the love that God bears His chosen people. To instruct His servant and to rebuke his unbelief the Lord now did a significant thing. He blessed Obededom and all his house. There was gospel in that doing of God. With the ark in his house Obededom perished not but he lived and prospered. How could it be? He believed in God through Christ. He lived *because* of the ark, that is, on account of the blood of the atonement with which the lid of the ark was sprinkled. Thus it was not merely God but the God of Christ, Christ Himself, from whom David in the terror of his unbelief had run away.

"And it was told David saying, The Lord hath blessed the house of Obededom, and all that pertaineth unto him, *because* of the ark of God." It is really Gospel that they proclaimed to David—the Gospel of God—which the Lord simultaneously spake in his heart. Attend to the fruits of God's work in him. His heart was cleansed of its unbelief and carnal fear of God. He acknowledged and confessed His sin. He again had confidence toward God—the God and Father of Christ, and in that confidence he took to him the ark of the Lord, and thus again appropriated the Christ and the blessing of life in Him.

He confessed his sin. Said he to the people, "None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him forever. Charging the sons of Zadok, he said to them, "Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites, sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it. For because ye did it not at first, the Lord God made a breach upon us, for we sought him not after the due order" (Chron. 15). Again David dances before the ark with all his might but now with a wholesome awe of God.

G. M. Ophoff.

SION'S ZANGEN

Eeuwige Goedertierenheid

(Psalm 107; Derde Deel)

Het eerste vers, dat we moeten behandelen in dit stukje is vers 11; en dit vers geeft de reden aan, waarom Gods volk zoo vreeselijk moest lijden in het gevang en in het ijzer. Het vers luidt als volgt: "omdat zij wederspanning waren geweest tegen Gods geboden, en den raad des Allerhoogsten onwaardiglijk verworpen hadden." Er is een geveugeld woord onder hen die den Heere dienen in Nederland, hetwelk luidt: Op den bodem aller vragen ligt der wereld zonde-schuld. Ik mag misschien het gezegde niet geheel en al correct neerpennen, maar dat is toch de idee. En het is waar. We lezen het ook hier. Het vorige vers sprak van het volk dat in duisternis en schaduw des doods zaten, een uitdrukking die ons herinnert aan het eens gesproken woord tot onzen eersten vader: Ten dage als gij daarvan eet zult gij den dood sterven.

En zoo is het gekomen, dat wij allen van nature in de schaduw des doods verkeeren. Wij hebben gezondigd, en wij gaan voort te zondigen. Elke zonde die wij bedrijven zet het stempel van onze goedkeuring op Adam's zonde. We keuren goed, de heele wereld keurt goed wat Adam en Eva deden.

En de Heere zond duisternis, rondom ons en in ons. De dood, en dan vooral de geestelijke dood, is een akelige schaduw waaronder wij voortstompelen op het pad der zonde. De Bijbel noemt die wegen wegen des doods. En overal op die wegen ontmoeten we de onlust des Heeren. Overal is er een roepen van God: de ziel die zondigt zal sterven.

Laat ons het nog eens met nadruk zeggen: als we in duisternis zitten komt het vanwege de zonde-schuld.

En let er op, dat dit zitten in de duisternis en de schaduw des doods is nu nog maar een kleine voor-smaak. Als we niet bekeerd worden door God gaat het van kwaad tot erger. Het einde is de schaduw van den eeuwigen dood.

Dus de reden voor ons bange en angstige leven is "wederspanning tegen Gods geboden zijn." Ge kunt niet oproeien tegen God in. Het wordt een onmogelijk worstelen en zweeten voor een kleine stonde, en dan komen de eeuwige watervallen en draaikolken en maalstroomen. O wee! O wee!

Er is een kleine moeilijkheid in de tweede gedachte in dit vers: "en den raad des Allerhoogsten onwaardiglijk verworpen hebben".

De vraag die we ons stellen is deze: Kan een nietig menschenkind iets vermogen tegen dien raad Gods? En als we de vraag zoo stellen, dan kan het antwoord

niet moeilijk zijn. Want een andere psalm zegt: "Maar d' altoos wijze raad des Heeren houdt eeuwig stand, heeft altoos kracht; niets kan Zijn hoog besluit ooit keeren; 't blijft van geslachte tot geslacht!" En nu is het wel waar, dat in dit vers hetzelfde woord in 't Hebreeuwsch gebruikt wordt voor *raad* wat we ook vinden in teksten zooals deze: "Mijn raad zal bestaan en Ik zal al Mijn welbehagen doen". Evenwel, hier is de oplossing van deze kleine moeilijkheid: in dit vers staat niets wat op het *verijdel*en lijkt van dien wissel RAAD des Heeren. Er staat, dat zij dien raad "onwaardiglijk verwierpen", en dat is gansch iets anders dan *verijdel*en. Het beteekent dan ook, dat dit volk zich verzette tegen God, waar Hij ook maar verscheen met Zijn Raad. Overal waar God sprak en wrocht, daar stelde de zondige mensch zijn eigen woord en zijn eigen daad tegenover dien Raad Gods. En zulk doen was onwaardig. Waardig leven is zooals de Engelen Gods leven. Overal waar God spreekt en werkt daar zeggen de Engelen: Amen, Halleluja! En dat is het juist wat wij niet doen willen van nature. Laat mij u twee voorbeelden geven, het laatste voorbeeld veel vreeselijker dan het eerste. Eerst, hebt ge het voorbeeld in de Openbaring van Johannes. Daar staat, dat toen de goddeloozen zagen en ondervonden den raad Gods in oordeelen en pijnigingen, zij naar den hemel opzagen en den volzaligen God gelaasterd hebben vanwege de plagen. Ziet ge, dat is het wat dit vers ons geeft als een verdere reden voor het zitten in de duisternis en de schaduw des doods. Al vloekende tegen God gaat de goddelooze mensch voort, totdat hij aankomt op de plaats der eindelijke, en dan, eeuwige vervloeking. Tweedens, hebt ge het voorbeeld van Petrus die ons onderwijst in zijn bidden op den eersten Pinksterdag. Daar zegt hij, dat er een brutale vergadering gevonden werd *tegen* het Heilig Kind Jezus. Die brutale vergadering was zeer breed: Herodes, Pilatus, de heidenen en de volke Israels. Dat is het "verwerpen" van Gods RAAD. Immers, de verschijning van dit Heilige Kind riep schier allen toe: Ik ben de Raad Gods; Ik ben de Verlosser der wereld die Mijn Vader van eeuwigheid bemint! Maar de geheele wereld verwierp dien RAAD Gods en dat op een zeer onwaardige manier: zij kruisigden Hem wiens Naam is *Raad*, Sterke Gods, enz. Maar, o wonder! zelfs in dat verwerpen van dien RAAD volvoeren zij den Raad Gods, want Petrus gaat verder in zijn bidden en zegt, dat dit vergaderd zijn *tegen* het Heilige Kind is dit: "om te doen al wat Uwe hand en Uw *raad* te voren bepaald had dat geschieden zoude." Wondere mirakelen! De goddelooze menschen grijpen Gods geopenbaarden RAAD aan, en dat is Jezus. Zij grijpen Hem aan en nagelen Hem aan het Kruis, en. . . dat is naar Gods RAAD. Hoe geheel vreeselijk is Gods majesteit. Aanbidt dan, en verwerpt Zijn RAAD nimmer!

"Waarom Hij hun hart door zwaarigheid vernederd heeft; zij zijn gestruikeld, en daar was geen helper."

Men zou kunnen weenen bij dit vers.

Eigenlijk is het de geheele geschiedenis van het menschdom, een geschiedenis van het wereldgebeuren in 't klein.

Uw hart is dierbaar. Uw hart is het begin van Uw bewustzijn, en het gaat zelfs nog dieper dan dat. Uw hart is ook het onderbewuste. Het is zoo dierbaar, dat de Heere U aanraadt om dat hart toch te bewaren boven elke andere schat.

En waarom?

Omdat uit dat hart de uitgangen van Uw leven zijn.

Daar zit veel in. Evenwel, voor mijn huidig doel wil ik alleen maar letten op die uitgangen van ons hart zooals zij een bestemming hebben. Dat zit in het woord uitgang. Het moet ergens heen met Uw hart. En er zijn slechts twee bestemmingen voor den Wandel vanuit het diepe hart. Ge gaat of naar God of ge gaat met den duivel naar den duivel. En dat is uiteindelijk de hel. Doch gaat ge vanuit het hart naar God heen, dan komt ge uiteindelijk in den hemel.

Nu dan, de wandeling naar God heen, van uit Uw diepe hart is een wandel des geluks. Daar hebt ge een licht hart, een zingend hart, een jubelend hart. Gods vriendelijk Aangezicht geeft *vroolijkheid en licht voor alle oprechte harten*. Jesaja zegt: Gij ontmoet den vroolijke en die gerechtigheid doet.

Later, veel later, zou Jezus van Nazareth zeggen: Mijn juk is zacht, en Mijn last is licht!

Maar als we Gods Raad verwerpen, dan komt er *zwaarigheid des harten*. O, een zwaar hart is vreeselijk. Een zwaar hart maakt, dat alle licht omfloerst wordt door donkere wolken. Een zwaar hart is een hart dat in de schaduwen wandelt. Ik heb oude menschen hooren zeggen: De duivel is een harde meester! Hij drijft zijn slaven voort, immer voort, op het pad der zonde, dat eindigt in de hel. Hij mag gaarne menschen moorden.

En door die zwaarigheden van het hart, werd de mensch vernederd.

Dat zal waar zijn.

De gerechtigheid adelt en verhoogt. Maar de zonde en de schuld vernedert.

Ziet het voor Uwe oogen in de wereld. Men wentelt zich in het slijk en den modder der zonde. Men is zoo laag in de wereld, dat Paulus zegt, dat zij hun buik tot een god hebben, en dat hun hemel de schande is, want hij zegt: zij roemen in hun schande. Laat mij slechts één voorbeeld mogen noemen: ziet het aan de afbeeldingen van de tooneelspelers die glimlachend U aanstaren op het papier: zij waren voor de zoo-veelste maal getrouwd, na evenzoo veel scheidingen.

Er is een fundamenteele wet bij God: die zich verhoogt zal vernederd worden. Adam verhoogde zich

in het eerste Paradijs en wilde als God zijn: en in plaats van te klimmen, of zelfs te blijven op de hoogten waar hij zich vond na zijn schepping, viel hij en sleurde de gansche wereld met zich in de diepten van schuld, zonde en dood.

O ja, God gaf vernedering in een zwaar hart.

Zij zijn gestruikeld, en er was geen helper.

Wie zou niet weenen?

Te struikelen is erg, maar te struikelen, om U heen te zien, en geen helper te hebben is vreeselijk. Het eenigste wat ge kunt verwachten in zulk een staat is een eeuwiglijk liggen in de diepten, de diepten! O, de hel is zoo bang en angstig, en lang, zoo vreeselijk lang.

Maar, o God! hoe wonderlijk is Uwe goedertierenheid! Ik lees verder: "Doch roepende tot den Heere in de benauwdheid die zij hadden, verloor Hij ze uit hunne angsten: Hij voerde ze uit de duisternis en de schaduw des doods, en Hij brak hunne banden."

Wie zou hier niet zingen?

Lel er toch op, dat het hier gaat over zondige menschen, o ja, zij waren zondige menschen die door God bemind waren van eeuwigheid. En daarom maakte Hij hen aan 't roepen naar God. O zeker, zelfs het willen en het doen is naar Zijn welbehagen. Hij kwam neer in hun duisternis, dood en benauwdheid, en Hij maakte hen aan 't roepen. In al hun benauwdheid was Hij benauwd, maar dat was in Jezus Christus, den Heere. En toen zij riepen tot God, toen heeft Hij hun geantwoord door hen uit den dood te brengen in het leven. En dat is Jezus. Hij brak hunne banden, en weet ge hoe God dat gedaan heeft? Door Jezus in banden te brengen. En dan moet ge maar vergeten die banden van het ruwe volk in den hof van Gethsemane. Vergeet die banden maar, want ik zal U verhalen van andere banden, van banden en koorden des doods die Uw Jezus omklemden in den eeuwigigen dood.

De zaak staat zóó: de banden die U eeuwiglijk moesten omknellen in de hel, de dood die U moest doen sterven in den poel des vuurs, de benauwdheden die U moesten benauwen tot in alle eeuwigheid, al die banden zijn gelegd op het Lam Gods, dat de zonde der wereld wegdroeg.

En toen is het gebeurd. Ge zingt ervan: welzalig is de mensch wien't mag gebeuren.

Toen is het gebeurd: ge zijt uit de duisternis gekomen tot in het eeuwig Licht. Ge zijt verlost van de banden: Gij slaaktet mijne banden! Nu staat ge in de vrijheid waarmede Jezus U heeft vrijgemaakt.

En nu moet ge aan 't zingen.

"Laat ze voor den Heere Zijne goedertierenheid loven, en Zijne wonderwerken voor de kinderen der menschen!"

Dat is dan het besluit van deze phase in den psalm.

Ge moet aan 't zingen.

En de nadruk valt op de phrase: "voor den Heere".

Dat wij dit toch altijd voor de aandacht houden. Er is zooveel lof, zingen, dienst, dat strikt genomen geen godsdienst is. Men zingt en looft "voor den mensch". Ziet het voorbeeld van den farizeër. Zooals hij bad, kan men voor God niet bidden.

Neen, maar voor des Heeren aangezicht, en dan aan 't zingen en loven.

En de inhoud van Uw lof is de goedertierenheid.

En de goedertierenheid is de zucht van God om U goed te doen, om U goed te zijn, om U het goede te geven.

Negatief is die goedheid bezongen in het voorgaande vers: Hij verloorste.

Positief is het een opsommen van al het goed hetwelk de Redder Israels schonk.

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

Voor de kinderen der menschen. Dat beteekent niet, dat ge Uw lof moet vertellen voor de kinderen der menschen, ten aanhoore van de menschen. Dit moet ge ook wel doen, maar dat is de gedachte hier niet. De Heilige Geest roept U hier op om de goedertierenheid Gods te bezingen die Hij getoond heeft, en gewrocht voor de kinderen der menschen.

Er zijn velen verlost. Zij maken te zamen een volk, een volk dat zoo groot is, dat zij vergeleken werden door God Zelf bij de starren des hemels en bij het zand aan den oever der zee in menigte.

Hij heeft voor velen wonderwerken gewrocht. En die wonderwerken aan millioenen moeten bezongen worden.

Leest het in het eerste hoofdstuk van Richteren hoe het er naar toe gaat als men het werk Gods niet meer kent, en er dan ook niet meer van zingt. Dan kent men wel werken, maar zij zijn der menschen werken, of des duivels werken. Daar buigt en looft men de Baäls en de Ashteroth.

Wat dan?

Dit: ge moet staren op het verlossingswerk van Christus, Zijn komen, Zijn lijden, Zijn sterven, Zijn verrijzenis, Zijn opvaring ten hemel, en Zijn huidig regeeren over alle dingen, met al de heilsweldaden die daauit voortvloeien.

En dan aan 't zingen.

Ge zegt: Uit den treure? Ook goed, als ge maar zingt. Al zoudt ge door Uw tranen heen moeten zingen. Zingt, looft, prijst Hem alom.

Hij is het zoo waard, zoo eeuwiglijk waard!

G. Vos.

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.

IN HIS FEAR

Training For Life's Calling

Training In The Arithmetic Class.

That a Christian School is not merely a school which opens with a word of prayer and has a little "Bible lesson" is plain when one places oneself honestly before the question: and how shall arithmetic be taught to God's covenant children? A Christian school teacher and a Christian school board is not satisfied merely to know that classes are opened with prayer and to know that sometime during the day God's Word is read and perhaps explained and applied. But a Christian school is surely an institution wherein the covenant child is trained for his life's calling in every subject wherein he receives instruction. And training in the arithmetic class is not then merely conducted to train the child to count and to take his place among men without being cheated and deceived and so lose his material things because he does not "know numbers". He must even in this subject see His Maker and learn to serve Him through the instruction he receives in the arithmetic class. Hence arithmetic will have to be taught according to specific *Christian* principles.

Without a doubt the subject of arithmetic is the most difficult to present from a distinctly Christian viewpoint. The difficulty is not the same as that in the history class where events must be interpreted and properly evaluated in the light of God's Word. In the arithmetic class the difficulty is to apply this abstract subject with a Christian application. But it can be done as the Rev. Gritters clearly indicates in the principles which we will quote presently.

In the light of the principles presented arithmetic is seen to be a very valuable subject for the covenant child and one that is tremendously beneficial for his training. And the subject of arithmetic, without which no normal child can get along in this world, shows us clearly that no unbeliever CAN, to say nothing of MAY, instruct God's Covenant children in this subject. Consider the principles which follow and then ask yourself whether the school where your children attend, granted that they open with a word of prayer and have a little "Bible lesson", brings to the attention such fundamental and beautiful truths as these to which arithmetic lends itself, nay, God in His wisdom has made it adaptable. And no *Christian* school wilfully neglects teaching the child these things in the arithmetic class. We present below the principles drawn up by the Rev. Gritters for your consideration and enjoyment.

Arithmetic

"Arithmetic is an exact science dealing with the order and arrangement which God has given us in the world of numbers. Although the distinct Christian treatment of this subject is more difficult and abstract than some others, the Christian teacher will adapt herself to use this branch of study also in the consistent scheme of "Thoroughly furnishing the man of God".

1. Let us view Arithmetic first of all subjectively. We see:

a. That however endless the variations and combinations of the numbers may be, they are founded on and related to one another upon the basis of divinely established truth.

(1) If 2×2 should suddenly cease to be four, the whole world of numbers would end in chaos and confusion. If you read one word wrong, you still stand a chance of getting the rest of the paragraph right. But have one number wrong and the whole immediately and automatically becomes wrong. In arithmetic there is no such thing as "about right" or "almost right". Here everything is *absolute*.

(2) Further we deal with unchangeable truth. We deal with the matter of *exact Fact*. Pi-R square is *always* the area of a circle. And 2 Pi-R is always the circumference of a circle. We cannot change that, and we will always come out wrong if we do not proceed on that truth.

(3) Hence the teacher can bear in mind two facts: (a) that it is God Who establishes this truth, and (b) Truth is absolute, more exact yet than arithmetic. As well as in arithmetic, so in our entire life we are wise and proceed wisely only when we proceed on the basis of the truth as God has revealed it to us. God's truth knows no compromise. It is ONE, and it is EXACT.

b. Secondly, however varied and multiple may be the combinations, the world of numbers presents us one grand unity. There are nine basic numbers. From all these we can make endless variations, yet all is one grand unity. The unity of these numbers is again, TRUTH, FACT. The variations show us the unchangeableness and permanence of the truth. The teacher can and should emphasize this in various ways as appropriate.

c. Thirdly, we are called to handle these numbers,

to work with them. We must think logically and apply the divinely established rule to these numbers. It requires careful thinking. It is a step by step application of the truth. Each step must be accurate or the product is wrong. Not along the way of intuition, nor of imagination but along the way of truth—directed thinking—will we arrive at the correct conclusion. And the teacher can emphasize that we must likewise follow God's thoughts as they are revealed to us in the Bible, and only when we proceed according to the truth (His Truth) will we arrive at the right conclusions anent this life and its problems. Our arithmetic book has "problems". Life also has its problems. They must be solved as far as they can by Faith and in the way of Truth. The wicked never come out right in their conclusions of this life. They say: "There is no God". Psalm 14:1. For Scripture they submit philosophy, Col. 2:8. And adding up their foolish figures they conclude, "Let us eat, drink and be merry", and their inward thought is that their houses stand for aye, Psalm 48:11. The product is all wrong. The children of God however with the wisdom from on high say, "This God is our God", Psalm 48:14, and "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet", and "learn to acquire a wise heart by counting aright thy days", Ps. 90. Also, they redeem the time because the days are evil, Eph. 5:16. And they even acquire wisdom to count the number of the Beast. Rev. 13:18.

2. Subjectively viewed we find the following:

- a. The use of numbers is necessary for us to take our place in the calling which we have in the world. To do any business successfully we must be able to use numbers rightly. We may by no means let arithmetic be taught only as a means to worldly success, but the "man of God" must be efficient in his calling here below.
- b. It must assist us in the quest for honesty and fair dealings and giving everyone his just dues. We realize that the ability to use numbers as such does not make for honesty, for crooks and thieves are also very adept at numbers and use this skill in the way of their evil practices. The wicked are incapable of any thing which is good, says Titus, neither can they use the numbers aright. But the man of God must be fully equipped to deal justly and honestly with his fellow man.
- c. Finally, it helps to remind us that we are stewards. We keep numbers, but the things thereby represented are God's. We must remember that

we employ all things for His sake. We must remember and account for what we do with His goods. Our balance sheet must tally. We must be wise, good and careful stewards of God's things. The care we must exercise in an arithmetic problem reveals to us what care and exactness we must exercise as God's stewards over all the things of this earth."

J. A. Heys.

PERISCOPE

WHAT AUTHORITY???

In the February 11 number of *The Banner* the Rev. A. Persenaire discusses the always important question of the authority of Synodical decisions. At this time we will not go into all the incidental applications and implications of the article but will remain with the main questions. We will quote from the article rather freely and add a few remarks.

The Reverend writes: "Both in the Netherlands and among us there has been much talk of late about the proper scope and authority of Synodical decisions. In the old country this talk has centered about the meaning and import of Article 31 of the Church Order, Related to these two interpretations of Art. 31, are two divergent views of Church Polity, which give evidence of being in diametrical opposition most clearly, when the question is asked: 'May a Classis or Synod depose a consistory?'

"Whatever position we ourselves may favor, the fact remains that, both in the Netherlands and in this country, Synods, whether rightly or wrongly, have not hesitated to depose officebearers, and even consistories, finding their authority to do so by supplementing Art. 31 with Articles 36 and 79 and 80 of the Church Order (compare Acts of Synod, 1926, Art. 104, p. 142).

"Hence, we may conclude, that one of the burning issues facing both the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands and our own Christian Reformed Church is the question: what is the authority of Synodical decisions?

"First, the authority of a Synod to make binding decisions is derived, not original. Ultimately this authority proceeds from the consistories, who have delegated their authority to the Classes, and through the Classes to the Synod. Consistories, in distinction from "major assemblies" have received their authority directly from Christ. All this does not imply, however, that therefore a Synod has no authority over

consistories. On the contrary, Art. 36 plainly states that it has."

Here we should insert a few remarks for this is an important point. Although in respect to Art. 36 the Rev. Persenaire acknowledges that it implies a difference of authority on the part of the Clasis and Consistory, yet he is vague in his clarification of this difference. In fact, he seems to imply in his last statement that the nature of the authority of both Classis-Synod and the Consistory is the same. To clarify this point and bring out the actual difference in the nature of their respective authority, we can do no better than to quote from "The Church Order Commentary", by the Revs. I. Van Dellen and M. Monsma, who by the way, are fellow office-bearers with the rev. Persenaire in the Christian Reformed Church. While discussing Art. 36, they write on pages 161-163 as follows: "The authority which the government exercises over its subjects is juridical authority. The authority which the Reformed Churches have attributed to their major assemblies in relation to their minor assemblies is not juridical, but moral and spiritual. In Dutch we distinguish in like manner between 'rechterlijk gezag' and 'zedelijk, geestelijk gezag'."

And in further clarification of this principle they continue: "A major assembly cannot force a minor assembly to accept and execute its decisions. A minor assembly, if it feels that a decision of a major assembly is unBiblical, should appeal to the next gathering of the assembly, or to the assembly next in order. In the meantime the appealing body should submit, unless it cannot do so because of great conscientious objections before God. If the objections are not removed, and if the decision stands, then the brethren concerned should, if at all possible, submit if need be under continued protest and always with the clear understanding that the burdened parties have a full right to retain their own convictions. . . ."

"These fundamental principals should never be lost out of sight. If the Church of Christ ever does lose sight of these all-important principles, she will suffer for it. And sometimes very severely. . . ."

"It is also well to remember what Dr. Bouwman tells us in his previously quoted and very valuable work. Says he: "All ecclesiastical authority, given unto His Church by Christ, resides in the particular Church. The keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, given to the Apostles by Christ, and in them to the congregation were, when the Apostles passed from the scenes of life, exercised by the office-bearers who had been chosen under their guidance in the particular Churches. This ecclesiastical authority consists of three things: Authority to administer the Word and Sacraments; authority to elect ecclesiastical office-bearers; and authority to exercise ecclesiastical discipline. There is no other authority in the ecclesiastical sphere. And

this three-fold authority does not pertain to the Major Assemblies, but to the office-bearers of the particular Churches." (Bouwman: Geref. Kerkrecht, 1934, II, 21). . . ."

"There is a distinct difference between the authority of Major assemblies over minor assemblies, and the authority of Consistories over congregations. For this reason Article 36 does not speak of this authority of Consistories over congregations. (Notice here that the article exactly does not state that the Classis has the same jurisdiction over the Consistory as the Consistory over the Congregation. W.H.) Consistories have an independent existence and do not exist for the sake of the major assemblies. But the major assemblies do exist for the sake of the particular Churches, namely, to minister to their welfare with good advice and wise guidance."

We return and continue to quote the Rev. Persenaire: "In the second place, the authority of Synodical decisions is limited. They should be in harmony with the Word of God, and the Articles of the Church Order. When they are proved to be contrary to the above, they should be repealed at once. No synodical decision has the compelling force that we attribute to the Scriptures. But even when, for example, on some minor point of doctrine or Christian ethics, a Synod should make a pronouncement, which, according to one's own opinion, is contrary to the Scriptures, does one then immediately have the right to repudiate the same, and to take actions whereby he seeks to nullify such a decision?"

"Some people are quite ready to answer 'Yes' to this question. Here in Canada, for instance, a few Art. 31 families have broken with our Church, which they had but recently joined, because they feel that the 'Three Points' of 1924 on Common Grace are in conflict with the Scriptures. They have done this, however, without even taking the trouble to look into the Acts of Synod. The mere idea of 'binding', which has been suggested to them by certain Protestant Reformed ministers, has made them see red. Without even a cursory examination of the 'Three Points', as proved by the Synod, and without offering a shred of evidence that these are contrary to the Scriptures and the Confessions, they have at once rejected them, and separated themselves from our Church.

"Such action is plain anarchy, as it would permit the invalidation of all Synodical decisions. These people never seemed to sense the possibility that their lack of knowledge concerning what really happened in 1924 might at least incline them to acquiesce in Synod's decisions, until such time that they might be able to seek their rescision in the proper ecclesiastical manner.

"Yes, even then, if such a rescision would not take place, it is still a question whether they should not

continue to acquiesce in Synod's decision under protest, rather than break off fellowship with a Church which clings to all the fundamentals of the Reformed faith. Should not a small minority, if at all possible, without violating their consciences, be humble enough to assume that their interpretation of the Scriptures and the Confessions may be faulty, and that of the majority may be correct."

There are so many implications in these last few paragraphs that it would hardly do to let them go unchallenged. For example, when the Reverend writes of "minor points of doctrine or Christian ethics" upon which "a Synod should make a pronouncement", he attempts to revert it all to the realm of insignificance and irrelevance. If that is true of any question a Synod should never even deign to discuss it; cf. Art. 30 of the Church Order. And if that was true of 1924 what a shameful and disgraceful basis it was to depose office-bearers! The same implication is evident when the writer speaks of "according to one's own opinion". A question of the interpretation of Scripture may not and cannot be a matter of "opinion". And what is the implication of the phrase, "what really happened in 1924"????

However, the two main questions concern the deposition of a Consistory by Classis or Synod and the meaning of Art. 31 of the Church Order. In answer to the first, we will quote again from the Church Order Commentary referred to above. Though the authors are careful in their expressions, since they are clearly contrary to the current stream of official Christian Reformed Church polity, yet their discussion is clear and to the point. On page 327 the authors ask the question: "May a Classis depose Elders and Deacons?" and state: "Some have contended that a Classis may depose Consistories. The present authors feel that no major assembly, according to Reformed Church polity and the Church Order, has the right to depose a minor assembly. The deposition of a Consistory, for example, by a Classis or Synod would seem to be a violation of the integrity and of the rights of the particular Church concerned, whereas the Church Order in more than one article speaks to safeguard this integrity and these rights. (Cf. Article 30, 84). Moreover, Reformed Church government does not tolerate group-disciplining. Discipline, according to our Reformed conception, is always individual and never communal."

And a bit later on pages 328 and 329: "It is true that Article 30 specifies that matters which cannot be finished by minor assemblies, though rightfully belonging to their domain, become the business of the major assemblies. But in view of the fact that the disciplinary articles of the Church Order clearly specify how discipline regarding office-bearers is to be exercised and in no way intimate that Elders and

Deacons can be suspended or deposed by the major assemblies, we do not believe that the appeal to Article 30 is justified. We believe that it is reasonable to assume that the early Synods at which our Church Order originated purposefully refrained from incorporating a provision in the Church Order which would allow our major assemblies to suspend and depose Elders and Deacons. As has been pointed out before, the early Reformed Churches were eager to safeguard the integrity and the rights of the particular Churches. The significant 84th article of our Church Order used to be Article 1! Let us recall that it was not until 1581 that the Churches decided that henceforth no Consistory would suspend or depose an Elder or Deacon without the concurrent judgment of its nearest neighbor Consistory. Furthermore, it cannot be denied that the question of deposition of Elders and Deacons is an important one. It is not unreasonable to assume that a provision permitting major assemblies to depose Elders and Deacons was left out of Article 79 purposefully. For notwithstanding the fact that Article 79 tells us how Elders and Deacons shall be deposed it does not provide for the deposition of Elders and Deacons by Classes or Synods. And yet the same Article does specify that Ministers shall be deposed by the judgment of the Classis.

"We believe, moreover, that it can be contended successfully that the deposition of minor assemblies by major assemblies constitutes a negation of the general office of all believers, which should begin to function when certain abnormal situations arise, and that it likewise should ever be held inviolate by the Church of God.

"We realize that both during the formative period of the Reformed Churches and during their more advanced history, Classes and Synods have sometimes deposed Elders and Deacons and even Consistories. But no one would dare to claim that the Reformed Churches have always been true to themselves in matters of Church government and that they have always interpreted their own Church Order correctly. Precedents do not decide this issue either one way or the other. We should seek to determine the basic principles fundamental to Reformed denominationalism, and we should seek the correct historical and exegetical interpretation of the various articles of the Church Order which concern this question. Then we should draw our conclusions as to what is proper and improper."

The second question concerns the meaning of Art. 31 of the Church Order. The Article reads as follows: If anyone complains that he has been wronged by the decision of a minor assembly, he shall have the right to appeal to a major ecclesiastical assembly, and whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote shall be considered settled and binding, unless it be proved

to conflict with the Word of God or with the Articles of the Church Order, as long as they are not changed by a General Synod.

The point in question regards the binding power of this declaration especially in connection with the exception: unless it be proved to conflict with the Word of God, or with the Articles of the Church Order.

It is quite evident that the Rev. Persenaire knows the correct and proper answer to this question. But it is also evident that he doesn't like that answer and attempts to belittle the matter again. The first is clear when he states that a decision should be respected "if at all possible" and "without violating their consciences". That expresses what the Article does and is certainly the proper answer and also the position of the Liberated Churches in the Netherlands and our own Churches in this country. Therefore, when this is not possible and decisions do bind one's conscience, Rev. Persenaire should, upon his own ground, honorably admit that those who disagree have a right and calling to act according to the dictates of their conscience. But he belittles this action; implying that it is due to pride and ignorance and even condemns it as anarchy. This is being neither honest nor fair; neither with himself nor with those who hold that position. Moreover it is a negation of his own interpretation of the Church Order and, hence, a contradiction and condemnation of the Reverend himself against his own better judgment.

Here also we would like to quote once again from the Church Order Commentary. On page 146 the author states: "The question is sometimes asked: To whom must it be proved that a certain decision is in conflict with the Bible, before a Church or an individual may count that a matter is not settled and binding? Must the ecclesiastical assembly which made the decision first declare that the unBiblical nature of the decision has been proven, before any one may withhold submission? Or may a Church or individual withhold submission when that Church or individual is fully convinced that the conclusion reached is unBiblical, even before the assembly concerned has reversed its conclusion? The latter by all means. The Church or the Churches cannot bind the conscience. The Bible only, as God's infallible and authoritative Word, can do this. If one is convinced that the Churches bid him to do one thing, and the Bible another, he must follow what he believes to be Scriptural. . . .

"If after due consideration the assembly concerned decided that its decision is unBiblical, then instant reversal is naturally in order. If, however, the appellant cannot persuade the assembly, and the assembly fails to persuade the appellant, and the appellant does not feel free before God to submit and conform himself,

then the Churches must bear with the aggrieved brother, if at all possible. If, however, the matter be of far-reaching import, then the aggrieved brother should be asked to conform and submit as long as he remains to be a member of the Church concerned. If his conscience will not at all permit this, he should ultimately affiliate with a Church not so binding his conscience."

Finally, the Rev. Persenaire speaks of seeking re-cision of disputed decisions in the proper ecclesiastical manner. But at the same time he shuts the door for any action by reminding his readers that the Three Points have been "proved" by the Synod. And does he forget, that in respect to the questions of 1924, the Synod's of the Christian Reformed Church have, on at least three different meetings, officially refused *even to discuss* the matter, when approached in the official ecclesiastical manner?

W. Hofman.

IN MEMORIAM

The Men's Society of the Fourth Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, hereby expresses its sincere sympathy to the family of one of its members, Mr. George Stuursma, whose brother

JACOB STUURSMAN

passed away very suddenly the morning of Wednesday, March 16. May the bereaved family experience the comforting nearness and sustaining grace of our covenant God in abundant measure in this hour of sorrow.

R. Veldman, Pres.

A. Haan, Sec'y

* * * *

IN MEMORIAM

The Mary-Martha Society of the Manhattan Protestant Reformed Church, wishes to express its sincere sympathy with one of its members, Mrs. Harry Leep, in the loss of her father,

WILLIAM ALBERDA

May the God of all grace comfort the bereaved with His own blessed presence, and cause them to rest in the assurance that His ways are perfect and that there remaineth a rest for the people of God.

Rev. P. Vis, Pres.

Mrs. M. Vander Molen, Sec'y.

Report of Classis West Convened, Mar. 2, at Edgerton, Minn.

Rev. A. Cammenga calls the meeting to order. After the usual preliminaries the credentials are forwarded and approved and the meeting is declared constituted. Rev. L. Doezeema now functions as chairman and Rev. A. Cammenga as secretary.

A letter from Rev. J. Blankespoor, the former stated clerk of Classis West was read, in which he expresses farewell to this Classis inasmuch as he leaves for Classis East. Classis decides to answer this letter expressing our appreciation for work done in Classis West.

Church visitors from Iowa-Minn. report; likewise from California. Both reports are encouraging. Classical committee renders report of work done during the interim. Doon congregation requests three classical appointments, two are given her. Doon likewise requests that she be allowed to call one of the missionaries but Classis decides not to grant this request because the reasons given are not preponderant.

The Sioux Center church expresses its appreciation for financial aid in years past. Classis sends this expression of gratitude on to the Synod. The Bellflower church presents an overture, the thrust of which is to send a communication to the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church, composing a testimonial to this Church in re the issues of Common Grace and related matters. Classis West adds various suggestions to the overture and then sends it on. The Hull Church requests Classis to overture Synod to obtain a missionary at the earliest possible convenience to labor among the immigrants in Canada. Classis adopts this with slight changes. Classis overtures Synod to obtain a Holland-speaking missionary who can labor among the Dutch immigrants.

Classis considered the matter of subsidies and decided as follows: Orange City \$2800.00 per year; Doon (in event they receive a minister) \$450.00 per year; Pella, \$1000.00 per year.

Classical appointments were arranged as follows: For Doon—March 20 S. Cammenga; March 27 J. Van Weelden; April 10 M. Gritters; April 24 J. Howerzyl; May 8 A. Petter; May 23 P. De Boer; June 19 and 26 P. Vis; July 10 A. Cammenga; July 24 S. Cammenga; August 7 P. De Boer; August 21 A. Petter; Sept. 4 J. Van Weelden.

Classis West voted as follows: Rev. J. Van Weelden is elected as member of the Classical Committee to fill the unexpired term of Rev. J. Blankespoor; Rev. M. Gritters as Deputy Ad Examina to fill the unexpired term of Rev. J. Blankespoor; as stated clerk Classis voted Rev. M. Gritters.

Here follow the delegates chosen to represent Classis West at the forthcoming Synod:

MINISTERS

Primi:	Secundi:
P. De Boer	J. Howerzyl
A. Cammenga	A. Petter
M. Gritters	L. Vermeer
P. Vis	L. Doezeema

ELDERS

Primi:	Secundi:
T. Kooima	J. Broek
C. Vander Molen	J. Kuiper
C. De Vries	H. P. Van Dyken
B. Gritters	Wm. Vis

In connection with this delegation Classis decides that the alternate with the highest number of votes becomes first choice for alternate for any of the primi, the others to serve as second, third and fourth delegates.

Since both Oskaloosa and Sioux Center invite Classis to hold its next session there Classis had to choose which pleasure to adopt. Decided to meet in Oskaloosa, first Wednesday in September.

The usual questions Art. 44 of D.K.O. are asked and satisfactorily answered. In the meantime Rev. Van Weelden had been dispatched to thank the Edgerton ladies for the fine meals they served Classis which work he carried out graciously. The rough minutes are read and accepted.

After singing Psalm 89:1 Rev. Petter closes the meeting with thinksgiving to God.

REV. M. GRITTERS (stated clerk).