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MEDITATION

The Glad Tidings Of Christ's Resurrection

"And the angel answered and said unto the women,
Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus, which
was crucified. He is not here: for He is risen, as
He said."
Matt. 28:5, 6a.

It is true that Paul determined with himself not to know anything among the churches, but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. However, the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ would not be the topic of so much joy and true gladness were it not for the fact that the crucified Lord was risen the third day. Without the joy of Easter because of the fact of the resurrection, the Cross on that Friday would be an enigma, a terrible symbol of abject failure.

But now we rejoice, for our Lord arose the third day, according to the Scriptures!

For He is risen!

That shall be the glad shout of the Gospel!

And that shout shall be repeated from mouth to mouth, from clime to clime, from people to people, until the whole world shall have heard the glad story of Easter, and time ended. For when the whole world shall have heard that story, then shall be revealed the second coming of that Lord of glory.

For He is risen!

Oh, God's ways are higher than our ways.

When the Godhead, in the depths of eternity, before the world was, decided and counselled who should hear the first edition of that glorious Gospel, their choice fell on Mary the Magdalene out of whom the Lord cast seven devils.

How differently we would have done that.

I think that the majority would have counselled to

gather the body of the Apostles of the Lord for the promulgation of the first edition of Easter. Were they not the representatives of the entire New Testament church?

But Mary, the Magdalene?

Oh yes, unto all eternity she shall be pointed out to you as the happy soul whose eyes first saw the foundation of the new heavens and the new earth: the Lord Jesus Christ in glory!

Last year we pointed you to that wonderful story in Holy Writ.

At this time we will hear the same Gospel: He is risen! But now as it was given to the women!

Again we are startled.

What? First to a woman who was known for the awful condition that seven devils dwelled in her?

And now we hear that the second edition of Easter will be given to women?

But, Lord, men are the leaders of women, are they not? And what about the government of the church? When shall, when will that body of office bearers hear the story from Thy own mouth?

But the Lord does not answer us with respect to His deeds. No one has heard it. We must guess.

The Lord is risen!

As told to the women.

* * * *

And yet, it is true to the style of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus He acted always.

He went to Galilee, not so much to Judea.

He called sinners, not the righteous to repentance.

He chose His sojourn with the humble, the meek, the lowly, the publicans and sinners.

He stretched His holy hands to the little children, taking them as an example for the strong, big men to follow, or to bless them, to bless them. . . .

His ways are higher than our ways.

Fittingly so, for He came to reveal the Father.

And the Father? He chose the lowly, the meek, the little ones, the simple, the ignoble, those which had

no power, in order to put to shame all that arises before Him in arrogance, in deep consciousness of their vaunted power, ability, nobility, riches.

He chose that which was not, in order to shame the things that are. . . .

And therefore, I think, the Lord shewed Himself in the second instance to a group of simple women.

Simple women?

Yes, and I can prove it.

They were even simple in their sinning.

Do you realize that we have but a few words of this company of women?

I have in mind the attempt of James and John to assure for themselves the seats on the right and on the left of the Lord when He should arrive in His glory of the Kingdom. And they used a woman for this proud gesture, their mother, the wife of Zebedee.

Do you know any other utterance of these women?

Well, they had come all the way from Galilee, not to talk, to converse, to talk theology with Jesus and their kinsmen, the disciples, but to minister to the wants of the men-folks, especially the Lord. They had gone along on the way to Judea to minister especially to Jesus' wants. They would wash His clothes, they would prepare the food by the wayside, and they would gently remind Him when it was time to rest. Oh yes, and they would take their little ones to Jesus, so that He would bless them.

Yes, I think they were simple women, and with the word, simple, I mean lowly minded, not given to manishness, quietness.

But how these women loved Him!

Note how they wept at the cross, how they prepared spices for His burial, how early they were at the sepulchre! Oh yes, they loved Jesus in their simplicity. And Jesus knew it. And God knew it. And God determined them and their loving hearts from all eternity. And at the same time He determined their reward. They would be chosen as the party of the second part to see the risen Lord.

For He is risen!

Hear, ye women that love and seek Jesus!

He is risen indeed! He is not here.

* * * *

For He is risen!

Yes, they sought the Lord, but it was the *crucified* Lord which they sought.

Attend to what the angel tells them: I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified!

But that crucified Jesus is risen from the dead!

In these words I have penned down the contents of the everlasting Gospel.

He was crucified.

That means that He *was dead*. Later, much later, He said as much to John: I am He that liveth, and *was dead*!

Yes, He arose from the dead. And that has wonderful significance.

It means for Jesus that He had the victory.

First, over all His enemies. Oh, how they had harassed Him. The whole world was arrayed against Him. Jew, Roman, and Greek reared their heads against Him, and it was the Jew first. Shades of Caiaphas and Judas.

Second, the devil with his devils are conquered. The whole of this foul world of devils were against Him. John on Patmos has given us the whole astounding story in the Revelation of Jesus Christ. There was a great red dragon standing before the woman for four thousand years to devour the little manchild as soon as it should be born. But when it was born, God snatched it away from his jaws. Jesus crushed the head of the devil on the accursed tree.

Third, the curse of the law is conquered. That curse clung to Him. It clung to Him so thoroughly and so tenaciously that the Holy Ghost, looking upon Him in the state of His humiliation, called Him a curse. Imagine it if you can: One of Jesus' names is the Curse! But Jesus suffered to be the curse, and He suffered so much and so intensely that all that curse is gone, annihilated. And in its place came blessing. His name is now Blessing of God.

Fourth, He overcame the grave, death and hell. He entered into them, and swallowed them unto victory. We have the attestation of that tremendous truth on every page of Holy Scripture, either in prophecy or as historical fact.

And note that this is the Gospel.

We are world, under the dominion of devils, under the rightful curse of God, because of our sin, and therefore on the way to the grave, death and hell.

But Jesus conquered them all, annihilated them all, never to return.

We are taken out of the world by regeneration and conversion; we are made enemies of the devil because God put enmity between us and him; we are saved from the curse of the law, and ever since such liberation the law is our great friend, our rule and norm of a glorious life of love; and we see through the grave a new way to heaven, we arose from death, and we do not have to go to hell anymore. Instead, we may go to heaven!

Is that not a glorious Gospel?

For He is risen!

He is not here!

* * * *

For He is risen!

What does that mean?

It means that Jesus is entirely changed now. He is not the same Jesus anymore.

He is completely changed. He is now heavenly,

spiritual, glorious, eternal. First He was, even as we are, earthly, flesh and blood, miserable, temporal, and mortal.

Jesus has received a life that is different from any life ever before manifested. He is different from the glorious Adam. His resurrection is different from the resurrection of Lazarus and others.

He is the very Personification of Eternal Life.

And that means that He is ever turning to the Father, approximating that Father unto all eternity.

For He is risen!

That glorious chant has even deeper significance: it means that the Triune God approved of the work He did. It means that God accepted the price He paid for His own. It means that God was even now taking this Holy Child to His bosom. It means that He would receive a Name that is above all that is named in this world and in the world to come.

For He is risen!

It is the chant that shall be repeated from age to age, until time is no more. And then it shall be translated in perfect language, song and music, and the same chant shall make heaven musical forever!

Oh yes, Jesus is risen, is risen indeed!

And the women saw Him!

Hallelujah!

* * * *

For He is risen!

Fear not ye!

Oh, that little word *ye*!

Do not overlook it. It has a charm that shall make your heart sing.

Fear not ye!

I think that when the angel uttered these words, he was looking at the foolish, impossible and wicked watch that ran for their lives towards Jerusalem, where they would utter the lie in committee. The leaders of Israel would place a lie in their mouths, and that lie has been repeated.

And when the angel looked at these watchmen running in deathly fear of the heavenly vision, and when the angel saw fear written in every attitude of these simple women, he said unto them: Fear not ye! And you may be very sure that there was a subtle emphasis on that last word. Oh no, do not ye be afraid. You need not be.

Fear not ye, for I know you, dear women. You have made history. You have ministered unto my Lord Jesus Christ during His sojourn on earth: we, angels, have watched all you have done for Jesus, for we also were around about Jesus.

Fear not ye, for we know that you are lovers of Jesus. You have proven your love for Him in many ways. But your very presence here at the tomb is proof of your love. You are seeking Jesus who was

crucified. You are seeking a dead Jesus, but you are seeking Jesus nevertheless.

And therefore you need not fear. I have a wonderful story to tell you.

And here it is. He is not here: He is risen from the dead.

Fear not ye!

You have no reason to fear, but on the contrary, you have reason to begin your song of gladness which shall grow longer and longer unto all eternity.

But why?

Here is the answer: their love for Jesus is a proof that God loves them. No, it is not the ground of God's love for them. How could it ever be? I am no original lover of God, or of His Son! I am an enemy of God by nature, and so were these simple women.

But our burning love in the heart is a proof that God put it there. And the Holy Bible tells us very plainly and very often that He only puts the love of God in His children, and they are those who are elect from all eternity.

These women are elect women, for they loved Jesus. It was a proof for themselves, the angel, and for us.

Oh ye women that seek a body of Jesus, be ye not afraid. You have the love of God in your hearts, and my testimony as an angel of the Lord is destined to make you gladder still. Come now, go to the disciples, and on the way you will be met by Jesus. He will show Himself to you, and then you will sing forever. To see Jesus in glory is to see God the Father.

And to see God is heaven itself.

Fear not ye!

* * * *

These women were no theologians.

A while ago I spake of our song becoming longer and longer; yes, and also deeper.

Jesus' resurrection means that we are justified before the great white throne. Our sins were upon Him on Good Friday. But when we see Him next, all our sin and guilt is gone. His glory in the garden of Joseph is proof that God accepted the price of His blood for all my sins and guilt.

Jesus' resurrection is also the power of a new life.

That means that the glorified, resurrected Lord Jesus will dwell in the hearts and minds of all His elect people. Paul would say later on: I live, but no more I: Jesus liveth in me! That is the life of the new birth, the life from above, the life of the resurrected Lord Jesus.

Jesus' resurrection is the pledge of our glory in heavenly places. If my Head is risen to be with God forever more, I, as His body with all God's people, cannot remain behind. Listen to Jesus Himself: where I am you will be also!

O glorious Easter!

G. Vos.

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EDITORIALS

Reply To The Reverend Van Raalte

At the close of his article the Reverend van Raalte writes: "I will answer the Reverend Hoeksema that the choice in favor of remaining faithful to the confession and the agreement of ecclesiastical correspondence (cooperation) in the Netherlands also means adherence to a small group. I think this must be sufficient for him to retract this supposition wholeheartedly."

The reference to what I am supposed to retract is in the following paragraph on "Once More: Advice to Immigrants" in the issue of our *Standard Bearer* of January 15, 1949: "Now. I ask in the hope that the Rev. van Raalte will serve me with a well-motivated answer: why is this? How must it be explained that he is so opposed to establish correspondence with the Protestant Reformed Churches, while he seeks such correspondence with the Chr. Ref. Church? I hope that the underlying motive for this difference in attitude with the Rev. van Raalte is not that our churches are small and despised."

My reply is that I will very gladly retract my suggestion (it was not even a supposition), on condition, however, that the Rev. van Raalte will answer my question. This he has not done as yet, at least not to my satisfaction.

My question was briefly this:

Considering that the Chr. Ref. Church accepts the theory of presumptive regeneration, while we do not accept this view; considering that the Chr. Ref. Church in 1926 officially accepted the hierarchical principle that classis and synod have power and authority over the local consistories, while we as Prot. Ref. Churches accept wholeheartedly the principle of the autonomy of the local congregation; considering that in 1924 the Chr. Ref. Churches accepted the doctrine of common grace in the well-known Three Points, while we repudiate that doctrine; finally, considering that the Chr. Ref. Church in America adopted in 1908 the Conclusions of Utrecht, which our Churches have never adopted: how is it possible that the Rev. van Raalte is willing to seek correspondence with the Chr. Ref. Church, while he is opposed to correspondence with the Protestant Reformed Churches?

The Rev. van Raalte writes that I make him say something that he has never witten, namely, that he is eager to have correspondence with the Chr. Ref. Church; that he wrote exactly in the opposite, that he strongly advised the immigrants in Canada not to join the Chr. Ref. Church in America. Writes he:

"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. GEREF. KERK!"

This is only partly true. The Rev. van Raalte did not write that the immigrants must *in no case* join the Chr. Ref. Church in America.

The fact that the Rev. van Raalte refuses correspondence with the Chr. Ref. Church and that he advises the immigrants not to join the latter is not a matter of principle, but is based on the practical consideration that the Chr. Ref. Church refuses to consider the Liberated churches as the true continuation of the Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands. If only they will change their stand and attitude in this respect, the Rev. van Raalte will be glad to establish correspondence and to advise the immigrants to join the Chr. Ref. Church. This, to my mind, is plainly expressed in the following paragraph from his article, "Advise to Immigrants":

"Misschien vraagt U, wat U dan naar onze meening moet doen?

"Dat is eenvoudig:

"In gehoorzaamheid aan Gods Woord Uwen weg gaan, gelijk gij dat in Nederland hebt gedaan; en daarbij, als het noodig is, alleen staan.

"Wil de synode der Chr. Ger. Kerk op haar besluit terugkomen, en de oude correspondentie voortzetten, dan verandert de zaak.

"Maar zij heeft reeds tweemaal het bewijs geleverd, dat zij dat niet wil, zoowel in 1947 als in 1948."

From this it is very plain that if only the Chr. Ref. Church will continue the former correspondence, the Rev. van Raalte is on his part prepared to do so; and in that case he will advise the immigrants to join the Chr. Ref. Church.

This is by no means a matter of principle.

And therefore I must still ask him to answer my question as stated above.

As far as the quotation from my *De Geloovigen En Hun Zaad* is concerned, to which the Rev. van Raalte refers in his article, I reply as I did to the Reverend K. Meima in the *Standard Bearer* of March 1, 1949:

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

"We can, therefore, on the basis of Scripture, as well as of the Reformed line, as it is especially indicated in the form for the administration of baptism, reach first of all this negative result, that the presentation of Prof. Heyns is to be rejected. The essence

of the covenant does not consist in a promise in the sense of a general offer. All the children of the flesh, or rather, all external children of the vocenant, all *covenant members* do not receive a certain life. God does not promise every child of believers the salvation in Jesus Christ. No more than there is a certain general offer in the preaching for every one that hears it, no more is there a certain general promise in the covenant of God. This view must be extinguished root and branch. It lies entirely on the line of Pelagius and Arminius.'

"I still maintain that this is true."

I want to remind the Rev. van Raalte that in my brochure, *De Geloovigen en Hun Zaad*, I did not attack the covenant view of the liberated churches, but simply the view of Prof. Heyns, which, to my conviction, is certainly Pelagian and Arminian. According to Prof. Heyns all the external children of the covenant receive a certain grace, a certain life, which enables them either to accept or reject their covenant obligation. If this is not Pelagianism applied to the sphere of the covenant, then I do not know what Pelagianism means. Nor do I believe that the liberated churches in the Netherlands accept this view of Heyns at all. In fact, the Rev. van Raalte himself writes in his article that he does not accept this part of the doctrine of Prof. Hyns. Yet, I want to remind him that this part is very essential in Heyns' doctrine.

Of course, when the liberated churches emphasize that the promise of the covenant is for all children of believers, elect and reprobate, carnal and spiritual, I certainly do not agree with them. The promise of God is sure, is yea and amen in Jesus Christ our Lord. God certainly will fulfill His own promise without a doubt. And that promise includes the gift of faith, which God certainly does not bestow on all the children of believers, but only on the elect. And as I said in my answer to the Rev. Meima, I still look for an explanation from any liberated theologian that squares the view that the promise of God is for all the children of believers with the Reformed confession that God bestows the gift of faith only upon the elect.

For the rest, it is a complete mystery to me how the liberated churches can adopt the view of Prof. Heyns and at the same time deny the theory of common grace. This involves a plain contradiction in terms. Really, Prof. Heyns in 1924 had the victory; and his view was adopted especially in the now notorious First Point adopted by that synod.

And as far as Canons III, IV, 8 and 9 and Question 6 of the Heidelberg Catechism are concerned, I would like to learn from the Reverend van Raalte how our teaching is in conflict with those parts of the confession at all.

If he will do so, I will certainly reply to them.

H. H.

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART TWO

Of Man's Redemption

LORD'S DAY 26

"Qu. 69 How are thou admonished and assured by holy baptism, that the one sacrifice of Christ upon the cross is of real advantage to thee?

"A. Thus: that Christ appointed this external washing with water, adding thereto this promise, that I am as certainly washed by his blood and Spirit from all the pollution of my soul, that is, from all my sins, as I am washed externally with water, by which the filthiness of the body is commonly washed away.

"Qu. 70 What is it to be washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ?

"A. It is to receive of God the remission of sins, freely, for the sake of Christ's blood, which he shed for us by his sacrifice upon the cross; and also to be renewed by the Holy Ghost, and sanctified to be members of Christ, that so we may more and more die unto sin, and lead holy and unblameable lives.

"Qu. 71 Where has Christ promised us, that he will as certainly wash us by his blood and Spirit, as we are washed with the water of baptism?

"A. In the institution of baptism, which is thus expressed: 'Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,' 'he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.' This promise is also repeated, where the Scripture calls baptism the washing of regeneration, and the washing away of sins."

1.

The Sacrament of Baptism in the Reformed Confessions.

The text here in our English translation is quite faithfully reproduced, except that in question 70 instead of the word "freely" we read in the original "*aus gnaden*", through grace.

For the importance of the subject it may be of interest to us to consult the rest of the Reformed confessions on the subject of holy baptism.

In the First Helvetic Confession, which dates from 1536, we read in Art. 21: "Die Taufe ist nach der Einsetzung des Herrn ein Bad der Wiedergeburt, welches der Herr seinen Auserwählten mit einen sichtbaren Zeichen durch den Dienst der Kirche, wie oben gesagt und erläutert ist, anbietet und darstellt.

"In diesem heiligen Bade taufen wir unsre Kinder darum, weil es unbillig wäre, dass wir diejenigen, die von uns, einem Volke Gottes, geboren sind, der Gemein-

schaft des Volkes Gottes sollten berauben, die doch durch das göttliche Wort dazu bestimmt und diejenigen sin, von denen man vermuthen soll, sie seien von Gott erwählt." Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, Vol. III, p. 224.

We may note here the following: 1) That baptism is here designated as the washing of regeneration, evidently with reference to Titus 3:5. 2) That it is a visible sign administered through the ministry of the Church. 3) That it is such a sign only for the elect. And 4) that children are baptized because they belong to the communion of the people of God and are presumed to be regenerated.

From the Second Helvetic Confession, dated from 1566, we quote the following: "There is but one baptism in the Church of God; for it is sufficient to be once baptized or consecrated unto God. For baptism once received does continue all a man's life, and is a perpetual sealing of our adoption unto us. For to be baptized in the name of Christ is to be enrolled, entered, and received into the covenant and family, and so into the inheritance, of the sons of God; yea, and in this life to be called after the name of God; that is to say, to be called a son of God; to be purged also from the filthiness of sins, and to be endued with the manifold grace of God, in order to lead a new and innocent life. Baptism, therefore, does call to mind and keep in remembrance the great benefit of God performed to mankind. For we are all born in the pollution of sin and are the children of wrath. But God, who is rich in mercy, does freely purge us from our sins by the blood of his Son, and in him does adopt us to be his sons, and by a holy covenant does join us to himself, and does enrich us with divers gifts, that we might live a new life. All these things are sealed up unto us in baptism. For inwardly we are regenerated, purified, and renewed of God through the Holy Spirit; and outwardly we receive the sealing of most notable gifts by the water, by which also those great benefits are represented, and, as it were, set before our eyes to be looked upon. And therefore are we baptized, that is, washed or sprinkled with visible water. For the water makes clean that which is filthy, and refreshes and cools the bodies that fail and faint. And the grace of God deals in like manner with the soul; and that invisibly and spiritually." Schaaf, *Creeds of Christendom*, Vol. III. pp. 889-890.

Note here: 1) That baptism is a sign and seal of our being enrolled and received into the covenant and family and into the inheritance of the sons of God. 2) It is a sign and seal of our being purged from all our sins by the blood of His Son and of our being adopted as children of God. And 3) it is a sign and seal of our inward regeneration and renewal through the Holy Spirit.

Our own Belgic Confession has a long article on

holy baptism from which we quote the following: "We believe and confess that Jesus Christ, who is the end of the law, hath made an end, by the shedding of his blood, of all other sheddings of blood which men could or would make as a propitiation or satisfaction for sin; and that he, having abolished circumcision, which was done with blood, hath instituted the Sacrament of Baptism instead thereof, by which we are received into the Church of God, and separated from all other people and strange religions, that we may wholly belong to him, whose ensign and banner we bear: and which serves as a testimony to us, that he will forever be our gracious God and Father. Therefore he has commanded all those, who are his, to be baptized with pure water, 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost': thereby signifying to us, that as water washeth away the filth of the body, when poured upon it, and is seen on the body of the baptized, sprinkled upon him, so doth the blood of Christ, by the power of the Holy Ghost, internally sprinkle the soul, cleanse it from its sins, and regenerate us from children of wrath, unto children of God. Not that this is effected by the external water, but by the sprinkling of the precious blood of the Son of God; who is our Red Sea, through which we must pass to escape the tyranny of Pharaoh, that is, the devil, and to enter into the spiritual land of Canaan. Therefore, the ministers, on their part, administer the sacrament, and that which is visible, but our Lord giveth that which is signified by the sacrament, namely, the gifts and invisible grace; washing, cleansing, and purging our souls of all filth and unrighteousness; renewing our hearts and filling them with all comfort; giving unto us a true assurance of his fatherly goodness; putting on us the new man, and putting off the old man with all his deeds." Art. 34.

Here it is said of baptism: 1) That it is instituted instead of circumcision. 2) That by it we are received into the Church of God and separated from the whole world, that we may wholly belong to God. 3) That by it God testifies that He will forever be our gracious God and Father. 4) That it is a sign of the washing away of the filth of our soul and of regeneration from children of wrath unto children of God. 5) That this is not effected by the external water, but by the grace of God "washing, cleansing and purging our souls of all filth and unrighteousness; renewing the hearts, and filling them with all comfort; giving unto us a true assurance of his fatherly goodness; putting on us the new man, and putting off the old man with all his deeds."

From the French Confession of Faith, dated 1559, Art. 35, we quote: "We confess only two sacraments common to the whole Church, of which the first, baptism, is given as a pledge of our adoption; for by it we are grafted into the body of Christ, so as to be

washed and cleansed by his blood, and then renewed in purity of life by his Holy Spirit. We hold, also, that although we are baptized only once, yet the gain that it symbolizes to us reaches over our whole lives and to our death, so that we have a lasting witness that Jesus Christ will always be our justification and sanctification. Nevertheless, although it is a sacrament of faith and penitence, yet as God receives little children into the Church with their fathers, we say, upon the authority of Jesus Christ, that the children of believing parents should be baptized." Schaaf, *Creeds of Christendom*, Vol. III, pp. 379-380.

Two elements here draw our attention: 1) That baptism is a sign and seal of our incorporation into that body of Christ and therefore of its resulting benefits, the washing away of our sins and the renewal by the Holy Spirit; and 2) that the grace of baptism is not limited to the moment when we are baptized, but lasts throughout our whole life.

The Scotch Confession of Faith, dated 1560, contains no separate article on the sacrament of holy baptism, but speaks in Article 21 of the sacraments in general; and in this article it has the following sentence concerning the sacrament of baptism: "No, we assuredly believe that by baptism we are ingrafted in Christ Jesus, to be made partakers of his justice, by which our sins are covered and remitted."

Here, too, baptism is presented as the sign and seal of our incorporation into the body of Christ and of the washing away of our sins. *Idem*, p. 468.

The Thirty-Nine Article of the Church of England, dated 1562, has the following article on holy baptism: "Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a sign of Regeneration or New-Birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the Church; the promises of the forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; Faith is confirmed, and Grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God.

"The Baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ." Art. 27. *Idem*, pp. 504; 505.

We note here that baptism is presented: 1) As a sign whereby the people of God are distinguished from the world. 2) As a sign of regeneration or of the new birth. 3) As an instrument whereby they that rightly receive the sacrament are grafted into the Church of Christ. 4) As visible signs and seals of the promises of the forgiveness of sins and the adoption unto sons of God by the Holy Ghost. And 5) as means for the confirmation and strengthening of our faith.

In the Anglican Catechism which dated originally from 1549, the child is instructed to answer as follows:

"Qu. What is your name?

"A. N. or M.

"Qu. Who gave you this name?

"A. My Godfathers and Godmothers in my Baptism; wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.

"Qu. What did your Godfathers and Godmothers then do for you?

"A. They did promise and vow three things in my name. First, that I should renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh. Secondly, that I should believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith. And, thirdly, that I should keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of my life.

"Qu. Doest thou not think that thou art bound to believe and to do as they have promised for thee?

"A. Yes, verily; and by God's help so I will. And I heartily thank our heavenly Father that he hath called me to this state of salvation through Jesus Christ our Saviour. And I pray unto God to give me his grace, that I may continue in the same unto my life's end."

And a little further we read:

"Qu. How many Sacraments hath Christ ordained in his Church?

"A. Two only, as generally necessary to salvation: that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord.

"Qu. What meanest thou by this word *Sacrament*?

"A. I mean an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof.

"Qu. How many parts are there in a Sacrament?

"A. Two: the outward visible sign, and the inward spiritual grace.

"Qu. What is the outward visible sign or form in Baptism?

"A. Water; wherein the person is baptized IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST.

"Qu. What is the inward and spiritual grace?

"A. A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness: for, being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace.

"Qu. What is required of persons to be baptized?

"A. Repentance, whereby they forsake sin; and Faith, whereby they steadfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that Sacrament.

"Qu. Why, then, are infants baptized, when by reason of their tender age they can not perform them?

"A. Because they promise them both by their Sureties; which promise, when they come to age, them-

selves are bound to perform," *Idem*, pp. 517, 518, 521.

This is rather interesting because it presents the truth concerning the sacrament of baptism from the subjective point of view, that is, from the point of view of the believing child. This, of course, is also the case in the Heidelberg Catechism when, in Question 69, it asks: "How art thou admonished and assured by holy baptism, that the one sacrifice of Christ upon the cross is of real advantage to thee?" So also in the Anglican Catechism the child is made to answer by faith, of course, that in baptism he was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. And hence, he is also presented as accepting his part of the covenant of God when he promises that he will renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of the wicked world and all the sinful lusts of the flesh, that he will believe all the articles of the Christian faith, and that he will keep the holy will of God and His commandments and walk in the same all the days of his life. And this is repeated in the question and answer concerning the inward and spiritual grace signified in baptism; for there the child answers that baptism signifies death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness; and he answers: "Being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace."

In the Irish Articles of Religion, dated 1615, we read the following article on the sacrament of baptism: "Baptism is not only an outward sign of our profession, and a note of difference, whereby Christians are discerned from such as are no Christians; but much more a Sacrament of our admission into the Church, sealing unto us our new birth (and consequently our justification, adoption, and sanctification) by the communion which we have with Jesus Christ." *Idem* p. 243.

This article adds nothing new to the confessions we have already quoted.

And finally, we quote from the Westminster Confession of Faith, dated 1647, which in chapter 28 contains the following paragraphs on holy baptism:

"I. Baptism is a Sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible Church, but also to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life: which sacrament is, by Christ's own appointment, to be continued in his Church until the end of the world.

"II. The outward element to be used in this sacrament is water, wherewith the party is to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, by a minister of the gospel lawfully called thereunto.

"III. Dipping of the person into the water is not

necesssary; but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person.

"IV. Not only those that do actually profess faith in and obedience unto Christ, but also the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized.

"V. Although it be a great sin to contemn or neglect this ordinance, yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it, or that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated.

"VI. The efficacy of baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered; yet, notwithstanding, by the right use of this ordinance the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost, to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God's own will, in his appointed time.

"VII. The sacrament of baptism is but once to be administered to any person." *Idem*, pp. 661-663.

Also in this Westminster Confession there is no new element unless it be that it by implication repudiates the theory that baptism is based on presumptive regeneration, and also that it, by implication at least, emphasizes the truth that the efficacy of baptism is experienced only by the elect.

H. H.

OUR DOCTRINE

The Attributes Of God

THE LOVE OF GOD

Another aspect of the generic concept, "Goodness of God", is the love of God. In his exposition of the communicable attributes of the Lord, Prof. L. Berkhof, in his *Reformed Dogmatics*, also discusses the attributes of God's love. On page 71 he writes as follows, and we quote: "*The love of God*. When the goodness of God is exercised towards His rational creatures, it assumes the higher character of love, and this love may again be distinguished according to the objects on which it terminates. In distinction from the goodness of God in general, it may be defined as *that perfection of God by which He is eternally moved to self-communication*. Since God is absolutely good in Himself, His love cannot find complete satisfaction in any object that falls short of absolute perfection. He loves His rational creatures for His own sake, or, to express it otherwise, He loves in them Himself, His virtues,

His work, and His gifts. He does not even withdraw His love completely from the sinner in his present sinful state, though the latter's sin is an abomination to Him, since He recognizes even in the sinner His image-bearer. John 3:16; Matt. 5:44, 45. At the same time He loves believers with a special love, since He contemplates them as His spiritual children in Christ. It is to them that He communicates Himself in the fullest and richest sense, with all the fulness of his grace and mercy. John 16:27; Rom. 5:8; I John 3:1."

Notice, in connection with this quotation of Prof. Berkhof, in the first place, that we again are confronted with that miserable distinction between a special and a general love of God: the love of God to His people (Prof. Berkhof designates them as believers) and His general love to the sinner in general. To declare that "He does not even withdraw His love completely from the sinner in his present sinful state (apart now from the word "completely")" would evoke from us no criticism if only the sinner be understood to be the elect sinner. If the Lord were not to reveal His love to the sinner in his present sinful state surely none could be saved. But it is plain from the rest of the quotation, as also from the word "completely" which appears in the same sentence, that the professor refers to the sinner in general, the sinner *in his present sinful state*, apart therefore from the Christ. On the one hand, to quote the professor, "since God is absolutely good in Himself, His love cannot find complete satisfaction in any obbject that falls short of absolute perfection." One might well ask the professor, "Does the Lord ever find an incomplete satisfaction, a satisfaction that is not perfect and complete but imperfect and incomplete?" And, on the other hand, He does not withdraw His love completely from the sinner in general. Prof. Berkhof teaches, therefore, a two-fold love of God.

This two-fold love of God the professor dares to teach in spite of the ever-recurring refrain in Holy Writ that the Lord hates the sinner and is angry with the wicked every day (mind you, every day, hence: always). We read in Psalm 5:4-6: "For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with Thee. The foolish shall not stand in Thy sight: Thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man." And in Psalm 7:10-16: "My defence is of God, which saveth the upright in heart. God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordained his arrows against the persecutors. Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood. He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch

which he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate. I will praise the Lord according to His righteousness; and will sing praise to the name of the Lord most high." And in Psalm 11:4-7: "The Lord is in His holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven: His eyes behold, His eyelids try, the children of men. The Lord trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence His soul hateth. Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup. For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness; His countenance doth behold the upright." And in Psalm 18:25-27 we read: "With the merciful Thou wilt shew Thyself merciful; with an upright man Thou wilt shew Thyself upright; With the pure Thou wilt shew Thyself pure; and with the froward man Thou wilt shew Thyself froward. For Thou wilt save the afflicted people; but wilt bring down high looks." And in verses 37-42 of this same psalm we read: "I have pursued mine enemies, and overtaken them: neither did I turn again till they were consumed. I have wounded them that they were not able to rise: they are fallen under my feet. For Thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle: Thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me. They cried, but there was none to save them: even unto the Lord, but He answered them not. Then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind: I did cast them out as the dirt in the streets." And in Psalm 59:5 we read the amazing prayer that the Lord show not mercy to any wicked transgressors: "Thou therefore, O Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, awake to visit all the heathen: be not merciful to any wicked transgressors. Selah." Besides these few passages from the psalms, this love of God to His people and His hatred of the wicked is the recurring refrain throughout the book of Psalms and also that of Proverbs.

Finally, in connection with Prof. Berkhof's quotation on the love of God, how must we understand his reference to John 3:16? What may be the difference between his quoting of that text and the reference to that particular passage of the Word of God as it is so common today in our arminian day and age? Obviously, this "general love of God to sinners" seeks more than merely their natural and temporal good. Its scope is surely wider than that theory of "common grace" as it was expounded by the late dr. A. Kuyper. He taught that "common grace" is purely natural and temporal, concerns itself only with the natural and earthly, does not reach out to the things heavenly and eternal, the things of our eternal salvation. But John 3:16 speaks of the love of God wherewith He loved the world and which consisted therein that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish but have everlasting life. Hence, the

love of God to the sinner involves the Christ, His Son, and the sinner's salvation. God's love to the sinner is such that He would save him, actually gave His only begotten Son for that purpose. This is unadulterated arminianism.

Concerning the love of God the late Prof. Bavinck writes as follows in Vol. II, 183, f.f. (we translate): "Moreover, the goodness of God reveals itself as love, when it does not merely bestow blessings, but itself. In the Old Testament there is not such repeated mention of this love as attribute of God; nevertheless, this mention is not wholly lacking, Deut. 4:37; 7:8, 13; 10:5; II Chron. 2:11; Is. 31:3; 43:4; 48:14; 63:9; Jer. 31:3; Hos. 11:1, 4; 14:5; Zeph. 3:17; Mal. 1:2. And not merely virtues and attributes, as justice and righteousness, Ps. 11:7; 33:5; 37:28; 45:8, but also persons are its (love, H.V.) object, Ps. 78:68; 146:8; Prov. 3:12; Deut. 4:37; 7:8, 13; 23:5; II Chron. 2:11; Jer. 31:3; Mal. 1:2. Much clearer is the revelation of this love of God in the New Testament, inasmuch as God hath now given Himself in the Son of His love. The Hebrew "אהבה," is not rendered "eros," which is the common word for the sensual love, neither by "philia," which is the word to denote the love between kindred, but "agapee," which is strange to the common Greek language and also does not appear in the writings of Philo and Josephus, but is exactly adapted to express the full, pure, Divine love, as is the Latin caritas (dilectio) in distinction from amor. The relation between the Father and Son is described as a life of love, John 3:35; 5:20; 10:17; 14:31; 15:19; 17:24, 26. But in Christ, Who loves Himself and verified His love in His surrender of Self, John 15:13, that love also reveals itself toward men, not merely the world, or the church in general, John 3:16; Rom. 5:7; 8:37; I John 4:9, but also individually and personally, John 14:23; 16:27; 17:23; Rom. 9:13; Gal. 2:20. Yea, God does not love, but He is love, I John 4:8, and His love is ground, source, example of our love, I John 4:10. It is true that one can speak in general of the love of God toward the creatures and toward men, philoktisia, amor complacentiae and philanthroopia, amor benevolentiae, but the Scripture uses for that purpose mostly the word, goodness, and generally speaks of the love of God, as it also does of His grace, only in relation to the people or congregation whom He has chosen. This love, now, is not in that sense the essence of God, in that it constitutes the center and the heart thereof and the other attributes are its modi. . . ., for all attributes are His essence equally; in God is no higher or lower, no less or greater. Nevertheless, love is surely identical with the Divine being. It is independent, eternal, unchangeable as God Himself. It has in Him its origin and also returns unto Him through the creatures"—thus far the quotation of Bavinck.

In connection with this quotation of Bavinck, we

should note, in the first place, that also this eminent theologian emphasizes the personal element in the attribute of the love of God. He writes that the goodness of God reveals itself as love *when it gives Himself*. Secondly, one more remark of the late Prof. Bavinck should not pass unnoticed. It is true that also he speaks of a general goodness of God (see our article on God's goodness); nevertheless he must declare that the Scriptures generally speak of the love of God, as it also does of the grace of God, as only in relation to the people or congregation which the Lord has chosen. Generally, therefore, the Word of God speaks of the love of God toward His people in Christ Jesus, the particular, irresistible, saving love of God.

A Current Conception of the Love of God.

God is love—this, is it not, is the ever-recurring refrain in our modern church day and age. God is love, for “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” God is love, and this means that He loves all men, seeks the good of all, pities them in their woes and distress. Hence, this loving God seeks man's welfare and not his death, his salvation and not his damnation. This conception also lies at the root of the sinner's wicked reasoning in Lord's Day IV of our Heidelberg Catechism, where we read in Questions 10 and 11: “Will God suffer such disobedience and rebellion to go unpunished?”, and the answer follows: “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”; and then: “Is not God then also merciful?”, and the answer: “God is indeed merciful, but also just; therefore His justice requires, that sin which is committed against the most high majesty of God, be also punished with extreme, that is, with everlasting punishment of body and soul.” Moreover, this conception of the love of God is surely the predominant note in all the so-called evangelical preaching of today.

This view of the love of God we reject, and it must be rejected upon the basis of the Word of God. In the first place, it is Scripturally untrue, finds no basis in the Word of God. Nowhere does the Word of God teach that God loves all men in the general and universal sense of the word. And this also applies to John 3:16, Matt. 5:44-45, and Luke 6:35-36. The first of these passages has already been quoted. In the first place, to maintain that John 3:16 speaks of a general, universal love of God because of the word “world” in that passage is surely unwarranted and reveals a sad lack of knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. Anyone who has any knowledge of the Word of God

must surely know that the word “world” does not always have the same significance in Holy Writ. When we read that Abraham became heir of the world (Rom. 4:13) or when the apostle, John, admonishes us not to love the world, it is quite obvious that the word cannot have the same significance in both instances. Or, when we are told in John 3:16 that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son and in John 17 that Christ prays not for the world, we all realize that the “world” of John 3:16 cannot be the same as that in John 17:9. To maintain, therefore, that John 3:16 speaks of a general, universal love of God because of the word “world” in that passage is wholly unwarranted. Secondly, Holy Writ ascribes a power, an efficacy to the cross which no arminian dares to attribute to that accursed tree. We are told, e.g., that God *purchased us* with His own precious blood—hence, on the cross of Calvary we were purchased, bought with the precious blood of Christ. Or, the Word of God tells us that we were *redeemed* by the blood of the Lamb of God—and to be redeemed implies that we were bought with a price. Again, the Scriptures inform us that the cross is the *power of God unto salvation*, and that the Lamb of God *took away* the sins of the world. That the Lamb of God has taken away the sins of the world certainly means that these sins are gone. If, then, these sins of the world refer to the sins of all mankind in the universal sense of the word, none can possibly perish; surely, a man cannot perish whose sins have been taken away. Such an one appears before the tribunal of God without sins, without guilt, without condemnation. Hence, the cross itself is the power of God unto salvation. It does not derive its power from us, but we from it; it does not owe its saving efficacy to our free will, but we owe our salvation to that cross. The cross does not save us because we believe, but we believe because the cross has redeemed us out of all sin and merited for us everlasting life. Hence, the “world” of John 3:16 is the world of God's love, of God's everlasting and unchangeable love (there is no other love of God), the world for which He gave His only begotten Son, which was redeemed by the blood of that Son, and which shall appear in everlasting perfection when that Son shall return upon the clouds of heaven to make all things new. This also enables us to understand the second part of John 3:16, namely: “that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Presupposing that Christ, as the arminian would have us believe, died for all men and, therefore, also for those who perish, why or how can anyone be assured of everlasting life just because he believes on Him? Did He not die for all men, also for those who are lost? How, then, can it be comforting to know and believe that He died for me? However, if the death of Christ be atoning, the blotting out of my sin and guilt and the meriting for me of

everlasting life, then, to believe on that Christ, to know that He died and shed His blood for me, assures me of everlasting life. Faith, then, is that gift of God whereby He having convicted me of sin and guilt and hopelessness and having united me unto the living Christ, enables me to cling unto that Christ, to embrace Him as the Lamb of God Who shed His blood for me that I might live and for that reason I also shall live even forevermore.

Neither do Matt. 5:44-45 and Luke 6:5-6 teach a universal love of God. In the first passage we read: "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father Which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." And in Luke 6:5-6 we read: "But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." We should note that the passage in Luke merely speaks of the unthankful and the evil (not the unthankful and thankful, the evil and the good), and this can surely refer to the people of God who, apart from the love and the mercy of God, are unthankful and evil. This characterizes all the people of God as they are of themselves. How could we possibly be saved if it were not for the fact that the Lord is kind to the unthankful and the evil. God loved us, indeed, as sinners; and it is only because of and through the love and mercy of God that we, sinners by nature, become saints. To quote Luke 6:35-36 as a proof for the universal love of God is, therefore, unjustifiable—this text can serve as a proof for the general mercy of the Lord only if it be supported therein by the rest of Holy Writ, and it therefore be shown that these "unthankful and evil" also refer to the reprobate unthankful and evil.

In Matthew 5 we are admonished to love *our* enemies (not God's enemies—this would involve us in a direct contradiction with Psalm 139:21-22), and also that the Lord causes the sun and the rain to shine and fall on the just and unjust, the evil and the good. We are not told in this passage that the Lord is merciful to the unjust and just, the evil and the good, but that He causes His sun to shine on them, etc. However, if this passage intends to regard this shining of the sun, etc., as a token of Divine love and mercy, then the text surely would compel us to conclude that one can receive too much of this mercy and kindness of the Lord. If our crops receive too much sun they may wither and die; and, on the other hand, if they receive too much rain, they may rot or be washed away. Matt. 5:44-45 would admonish us to love all *our* enemies, to

make no distinction among them. We must not simply love those who love us and hate those who hate us—that is characteristic of the publicans. Neither does the Lord love those who love Him and hate those who hate Him. If He did, how could He ever love us? Are we not, by nature, haters of Him? Of this love of God, which is never determined by the attitude of the sinner in the sense that our love toward the Lord determines His love toward us, the rain and sunshine are a figure. The sun shines not only upon the good but also upon the evil; the rain falls not only upon the just but also upon the unjust. This also characterizes the love of God. God does not simply love those who love Him; He also loves those who hate Him. Of course, and all of Scripture verifies this, this love of God, upon the evil and the good, the just and the unjust, nas for its objects, exclusively, the elect people of God in Jesus Christ, our Lord. That God hates the wicked every day, and that His curse is in the house of the ungodly, surely means that He hates them always and that His curse always accompanies them.

Secondly, this universal love of God is not only Scripturally untrue, but it is also rooted in a humanistic conception of the love of God. Indeed, God is love. However, the fundamental error of this view is that it humanizes this love of God, places man at the center of it; it is not God-centered, but man-centered. God is love. But, let us emphasize it with all the power at our command: GOD is love. And this means, fundamentally, that God loves eternally Himself. And His people He loves only as He sees and knows them, sovereignly, in Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord.

(to be continued)

H. Veldman.

YOUNG MEN — ATTENTION!

Young men who desire a limited Pre-Seminary course of instruction in our Theological School, are requested to meet with our committee the evening of April 22 in the Fuller Ave. Church. If, because of distance involved, you are not able to attend this meeting, write our Secretary before that date.

Young men who desire to attend our Seminary in September to prepare themselves for the Ministry of the Word of God, are likewise requested to be present at this meeting. They should come with a statement of health from a reputed physician and a testimonial from their consistory as to their membership and walk of life.

The Theological School Committee:

Rev. Gerrit Vos, Secretary
Hudsonville, Michigan.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

The Ascent Of The Ark Of The Covenant

As terrified by the stroke that the Lord had laid upon Uzzah, David had carried the ark aside into the house of Obededom the Gittite. But as reassured by the visible tokens of the Lord's favor toward Obededom's house because of the ark, David again made preparations to bring up the ark of God "from the house of Obededom into the city of David." The Chronicler gives a detailed account of all his preparations for the removal.

"He prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent." It was meant only as a provisionary sanctuary and modelled, we may suppose, after the old tabernacle that was still standing in Gibeon (16:39 f., 21:29; I Kings 3:4 ff.)

At the end of three months, it must be, when he had received the glad tidings of the Lord's blessings upon the house of Obededom, David said, presumably to his court personnel, "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." David was resolved that the former errors committed in transporting the ark be not repeated. His statement was a confession that it was unlawful to convey it upon a cart, as had been done.

David then gathered by their representatives all Israel together in Jerusalem, whether for the second time the text does not state. But it must be assumed that it had to be done anew as it is not likely that the people had kept to Jerusalem and its environs during the interval of the three months. The assembly included the natural representatives of the people — the elders and the captains over thousands — and the representatives of the priesthood and of the common Levites.

David now summoned into his presence the representatives of the priesthood and of the Levites, to counsel with them regarding the order of the solemnities (verses 2-15). "And David assembled the children of Aaron, and the Levites." Present were the two high priests, Zadok and Abiathar (verse 11). They were the sons of Aaron. The other members of the gathering were the six chiefs named in verses 5-10, with their brethren. They were the Levites. Represented were four Kohathite families to only one Merarite and Kohathite. The reason of the preference for the house of Kohath was that theirs was the task of conveying the ark.

Said David to Zadok and Abiathar and to the chiefs of the Levites, "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 the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not aright," 'approached him not in a manner prescribed by the law, had neglected to testify our reverential fear of him by observing the legal ordinance that only Levites should bear the holy things.'

In stating the reason of the Lord's anger David limited himself to their failure to seek God aright; he made no mention of Uzzah's rashness that had consisted in his taking hold of the ark. David's silence concerning that error can be explained. He was concentrating on the fundamental cause of the Lord's displeasure, which was the wrong attitude that had been assumed toward the ark as so glaringly revealed in their leaving the task of conveying that sacred vessel to men who had not been appointed thereto. In their ignorance they had used a wagon drawn by oxen and had thereby brought the ark into the kind of predicament that had occasioned the rashness on account of which the Lord had smitten Uzzah. Doubtless the majority of the people including David had acted in ignorance. The two high priests and the chief of the Levites had greater sin, they being the ministers of the sanctuary and the teachers of the law. Their inaction bespeaks a sad deterioration of the priesthood. They were well deserving of David's rebuke. But David was holding himself accountable. Said he not, "For *we* sought him not aright." It was well that he thus spoke. Being king, it was also his calling to make him a copy of the law and to read therein all the days of his life. So the Lord had commanded. But if David had been ignorant, he was now fully enlightened from personal study of the law and not because the priests or the chiefs of the Levites had instructed him. For he must instruct them, and besides admonish them to sanctify themselves, which consisted in keeping from their wives, from contact with the dead, and in washing the body and the clothes. As commanded by David, the priests and the Levites did sanctify themselves "to bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel".

Levitical singers were appointed for the solemnity with instruments of song to accompany the singing (verses 16-24). There were three classes: 1) guitars, called psalteries in our versions; 2) harps or lutes; 3) instruments that bore a name meaning "making to hear", perhaps cymbals. The purpose of these appointments is expressed by the clause, "to lift up the sound with gladness," to express joy. All the singers and musicians are mentioned by name. There were two ranks of them, divided into three choirs after the

musical instruments on which they played. The singers with the cymbals beat the time. They who had the psalteries sang in a high, clear voice, that is, soprano. The basso was sung by the harpist. There were sixteen singers in all. That was not a large number.

"And Chenaniah, the chief of the Levites, was for song: he instructed about the song, because he was skillful." The text in the Hebrew reads, "And Chenaniah, the chief of the Levites, for bearing; he instructed in bearing, for he was skillful." Some refer the phrase to the bearing of the ark, which is again in question in the following verses. Chenaniah supervised the business of bearing the ark. For he was thoroughly acquainted with the legal regulations relative the ceremonies of the law. But verse 27 shows that Chenaniah must be associated with the singers as their leader and instructor. The verse contains the notice, "and the singers and Chenaniah the master and the bearer with the singers."

"And Berechiah and Elkanah were doorkeepers for the ark." The references is to the guarding of the doors of the tent that gave access to the ark, and in the present solemnity to the guarding of the ark on the way. The following verse names Obededom and Jehiah also as the doorkeepers. The latter two must be regarded as following the ark and the former two as going immediately before it or on each side in the solemn procession. Seven priests blew the trumpet before the ark according to the prescription, Num. 10:1-10.

All this makes it possible to visualize the solemn procession in the order of its several parts. Leading the procession were the singers with their instruments of music arranged in three choirs. Following after them were the first two doorkeepers. After these marched the seven priests blowing the trumpets before the ark and close by it. Next in order were the second two doorkeepers on each side of the ark. The last place in the procession was occupied by David and the elders of Israel, and the captains of thousands. That, doubtless, was the arrangement of the several divisions. "So David, and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went up to bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the house of Obededom with joy" (verse 25). "And the children of the Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded according to the word of the Lord" (verse 15). And God helped, assisted without mishaps the Levites to convey the ark to its destination, so that they escaped the stroke that the Lord had laid upon Uzzah. As an expression of their humble gratitude, they offered seven bullocks and seven rams (verse 26). David, the Levites that bore the ark, and the singers with their leader, Chenaniah, were dressed

in a special attire for the occasion. All were clothed with a robe of Byssus (fine linen). "And upon David was a linen ephod." It formed the distinguishing part of the clothing of the king as the sovereign of the priestly people. "Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord with shouting, and with the sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a sound with psalteries and harps." It may be assumed that the shouting and the trumpeting and the music made by the three choirs—their playing and singing—alternated and also that the celebration did not begin until foot was set in Jerusalem. It is not likely that it was continuous from the time of the departure from the house of Obededom to the time of the arrival in Jerusalem. That David, now, too, sang and played and danced, leaped with joy before the Lord appears from the statement (verse 29) that Michal looking out of the window saw him.

The text at II Samuel 2:14 reveals that David danced before the Lord with all his might. His joy was unbounded and with reason. The ark came to him in the city of David conveyed thither by the Levites whom the Lord was helping. It was a wooden structure overlaid with gold. But it was the ark of the covenant of the Lord. As associated with the "cloud" and with the blood of the atonement as sprinkled upon its lid it was the cymbal of the glories of the triune Jehovah as revealed in the face of Christ over His people. There by the ark God was present in His power and love and grace and truth as active in the vindication of His holiness unto the destruction of His enemies and the salvation of His people to the praise of His name. This had become abundantly evident through the years of Israel's national existence. It had become evident in connection with the capture of the ark by the Philistines. Death had rioted in the enemy land wherever the ark had come. Death had rioted among the men of Bethshemesh because they had looked at the uncovered ark. And the stroke of God had fallen upon Uzzah because he had touched it. On the other hand, the house of Obededom and all that pertained to him had been blessed because of the ark. Where the ark was, there was God in the sense just explained. To play before the ark as contrite of heart trusting in God through Christ was to play before the face of God and live. To dwell with the ark in Zion was to dwell with God and live as the object of His redeeming love. David understood; and a great gladness flooded his soul which found expression in his dancing before the Lord with all His might.

Doubtless Psalm 24 in the psalter of David was the song that was sung on the way. It is clear from its content that it was composed against the background of the event of the removal of the ark. It is that event that the psalm plainly celebrates. Its introductory lines read,

"The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof;
The world and they that dwell therein.
For he hath founded it upon the seas,
And established it upon the floods."

The expression "its fulness" signifies all the earth's inhabitants but properly mankind. They belong to Him absolutely, He being their sovereign Creator. Hence, He doeth with the inhabitants of the earth according to His will, having mercy on whom He will have mercy, and hardening whom He will. The former approach the ark, draw near to God, ascend His holy hill, and live and are blessed. The latter do likewise and perish as did the Philistines and the men of Bethshemesh and Uzzah.

Who is the favored man that lives in God's presence? In the language of the psalm,

"Who shall ascend into the holy hill of the Lord?
Who shall stand in the holy place?"

In a word, by what is he known? What is the state of his heart? How does he order his life among men? This is an inquiry, perhaps of a single voice in David's choir. David had asked this question before but in his unbelief, and so, too, the men of Bethshemesh. *Their* question had been, "Who is able to stand before the holy Lord God?" (II Sam. 6:9). And David had asked, "How shall the ark of the Lord come to me?" (II Sam. 6:9). Being unbelieving, his reply had been as we have seen, "No one is able to stand before the holy Lord God." But as was stated, he was wrong. His lamentation was a denial of the atonement and of the love that God bears His people in Christ. But with his heart cleansed of unbelief, he now gave true answer,

"He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart,
Who hath not lifted up his soul to vanity,
Nor sworn deceitfully,
He shall receive the blessing of the Lord."

But are these words not destructive of all hope? Where is there to be found such a man? Attend to the answer of the inspired poet, "And righteousness from the God of his salvation," righteousness both imputed and infused, "which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe" (Rom. 3:22). "Upon all them that believe."

"This is the generation of them that seek him,
That seek thy face, O Jacob."

Jacob is Christ in the first instance and then the people that seek God through Christ.

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
And be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors;
And the king of glory shall come in."

These and the following lines form the second part of the two parts of the psalm. They are sharply divided. On this account some have regarded them as

two psalms. But that is not justified. The connection is obvious, and it is close. The question, "who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord," here receives its primary answer. The King of glory, who is enthroned upon the ark, and from whom the pure of heart receive blessing and righteousness—our Lord Jesus Christ—He shall come in. For He alone is worthy. Let the gates lift up their heads, let them be lifted up, that His entrance may be large.

"Who is the king of glory?
The Lord strong and mighty,
The Lord mighty in battle."

To what workings of his strength and might the psalmist could have directed attention,—workings of which the ark was the seat. It was the ark—it was the Lord,—who had led His people triumphant from Sinai, through the desert, across the Jordan and into Canaan. At the power of the ark, when it had encompassed the city seven days, the walls of Jericho fell down, the gods of the Philistines fell prostrate to the ground, and death devoured in their cities.

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
Even lift them up, ye everlasting doors;
And the king of glory shall come in.
Who is the king of glory?
The Lord of hosts, He is the king of glory."

The Lord of hosts is He, "the hosts of heaven", that He created, brings out, and calls all by their names by the greatness of His might (Isa. 40:26), the hosts of stars; then, the hosts of angels which surround the throne of God (I Kings 22:19); and lastly the hosts of His redeemed people, who war the warfare of the Lord by His mercy.

Who is the king of glory? In the language of the New Testament Scriptures, the Lord Christ who by His sufferings and death on the cross overcame the power of Satan, sin, and death and by His own blood entered into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption (Heb. 9:11, 12). It was the Christ that the psalmist in the final instance was saluting. It was His victories, as foreshadowed by the triumphs of the ark, that he beheld. It was of His ascent that he sang.

With the ark of the Lord set in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David pitched for it, Zion was the city of the great King, in whose palaces God was known (Ps. 48:2, 3). Out of Zion God shined now and henceforth, and from Zion He helped His people. In the gates of the daughter of Zion they showed forth all His praise and rejoiced in the God of their salvation. The true Jew loved Zion more than his chief joy. With their faces turned toward Zion the Jews in exile prayed; and when the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, they were like them that dream. Their mouth was filled with laughter, and their tongue with singing. (Psalm 126). But the church has risen with Christ.

She has come unto mount Zion, and the city of the living God, the Jerusalem which is above and which is the joy of the whole earth. And the things that she seeks are above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God in the highest heavens.

The solemn act of removal of the ark was followed by David's offering burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before the Lord whether through the priests is not stated; but it must be assumed that in all such cases the action with the blood by which atonement was made for sin was the work of the priest. When the offerings were ended and not before, David blessed the people in the name of the Lord Sabaoth and on the ground of the atonement of Him—this same Lord—from whom their righteousness was. It was not as to the form of its words the Aaronic blessing (Numbers 6:22 sq.), which might be spoken only by the high-priest, but like Solomon's (I Kings 8:55), a benedictory address to the whole assembly.

Before allowing the people to pass from his presence, David dealt among the multitude of Israel, as well to the women as to the men, a cake of bread, and a measure or cup (perhaps of wine) and a raisin-cake, (a mass of dried grapes compressed into a cake). "So the people departed every one to his house". And David returned to his house to bless his household as he had blessed the people.

G. M. Ophoff.

Michal's Contempt Of David

But there was a fly in the ointment of his spiritual joy. The fly was Michal, the daughter of Saul. As the ark of the Lord had come into the city and was passing David's house, Michal watched the procession through a window. It already spake ill of her that she had not joined the celebrating multitude and was keeping her to the house. She simply wasn't interested. She saw David dancing before the Lord as divested of his kingly robes and as clad in a linen ephod like all the rest of his servants. Perhaps he was the only one who danced. At least the text makes mention of him only as dancing with all his might. Michal's anger burned. Being a woman devoid of true religious impulses, and on this account unable to appreciate his enthusiasm, she despised him in her heart, looked down on him with malicious hatred. He was only putting on an act for political reasons. He wanted to ingratiate himself with the good men in his realm. It was his silly way of letting the people know that in him they possessed a king who was to them a brother among the brethren. But with such outrageous and degrading performances to his credit, how could he expect the people to pay him the homage due to a king. Her trouble was that, being a graceless woman, she

could not endure seeing him praise God. When he returned, she could not wait until he had set foot in the house to speak her mind. She went forth to meet him, and in words of biting sarcasm told him what a sorry fool he had made of himself. These were her words, "How glorious was the king of Israel today, who uncovered himself today in the eyes of the handmaids and servants as one of the vain fellows is wont shamelessly to uncover himself." These were words calculated to cut to the quick.

"It was before the Lord", was his reply to her, meaning, 'I was rejoicing in Him, and extolling His mercies'. He had leaped and shouted like a man delirious with joy. But there was a cause. In his own words, "It was before the Lord, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the house of the Lord, over Israel; therefore I will play before the Lord." And if it is vile to joy in the Lord, "I will yet be more vile than this, and will be base in mine own eyes." And if she must despise him on that account, it is well. The maidservants of whom she spake will understand, "and of them shall I be held in honour."

"Therefore Michal, the daughter of Saul, had no child unto the day of her death," not because David forsook her but because the Lord smote her with barrenness to vindicate his servants.

G. M. Ophoff.

SION'S ZANGEN

Eeuwige Goedertierenheid

(Psalm 107; Vierde Deel)

In het 16de vers beluisteren we de reden voor het gezang van Gods volk die uit banden verlost wierden: "want Hij heeft de koperen deuren gebroken, en de ijzeren grendelen in stukken gehouwen!

Dat is figuurlijke taal, maar o zoo duidelijk.

Zoo spoedig het menschedom zondigde, zoo spoedig vond de mensch zich in banden. Het zijn de banden des doods en de snoeren des verderfs die ons omknellen. En ge kunt zoo gebonden zijn en toch denken, dat ge als een vogeltje zoo vrij zijt. Dat komt hier vandaan, dat die banden ons binden in het hart! Als het hart gebonden is, zie, dan is het vreeselijk. Dan denken we vrij te zijn, maar het is het woelen in de atmosfeer van zonde en verderf.

Zoo staat de zaak met den mensch van nature, maar zoo gaat het soms ook voor tijd en wijle met het kind Gods.

Let er maar op in dezen psalm, dat er van die binding gesproken wordt ten overstaan van hen die eruit verlost worden, nadat zij tot God riepen.

We schrikken van de beschrijving die de Heilige Geest hier geeft van Gods verkoren volk: "De zotten worden om den weg hunner overtreding en om hunne ongerechtigheden geplaagd: hunne ziel gruwde van alle spijs, en zij waren tot aan de poorten des doods gekomen." Dat waren kinderen Gods die uiteindelijk naar den hemel gegaan zijn, doch hun naam hier is *zotten!* En zij bewandelden wegen van overtreding en ongerechtigheid. En ge kunt er wel bijvoegen, dat juist het wandelen op wegen van overtreding en ongerechtigheid hun zotten deed zijn. Hun zothed kwam juist hierin tot openbaring, dat zij de wegen der zonde bewandelden.

Een zot is iemand die het doel mist, omdat hij verkeerd schiet.

Een wijs man is iemand die de beste wegen en middelen verkiest tot het bereiken van het hoogste en heerlijkste doel.

Toegepast op den mensch, ingesloten het kind Gods, dat zeker zalig wordt, is het de man die alle dingen gebruikt tot de glorie van Gods Naam. Die man is wijs.

Nu staat er niet in den tekst wat verkeerde wegen liet waren, waarop dit volk wandelde. Maar het waren wegen van overtreding en ongerechtigheid. En dat zegt genoeg. Overtreding verwijst ons naar de wet Gods. Alle stappen die we doen moeten *naar* de wet Gods zijn. Overeenkomstig die wet Gods moeten we wandelen. Elke stap moet gedekt met den wil Gods voor ons leven, en dan van uit het hart. Elke andere stap is overtreding. En ongerechtigheid is datgene wat niet goed is. Een wandel der gerechtigheid is een wandel die *goed* is. Er waren kwade gedachten, woorden en werken bij dit volk. En zij leefden erin.

En toch was er een beginsel van de nieuwe gehoorzaamheid bij hen, want leest verder en ge zult hooren dat "hunne ziel gruwde van alle spijs, en zij waren tot aan de poorten des doods gekomen."

Ziet ge, de onwedergeborenen gevoelen zich alleen thuis op die kwade wegen der overtreding. Het staat er zoo slecht bij met hen, dat zij niet slapen kunnen indien zij *geen* kwaad gedaan hebben. Het kwaad en de overtreding is hun levenselement. Doch zoo is het met Gods ware volk niet. Als zij voor tijd en wijle op verkeerde wegen ronddwalen, dan ervaren zij de onlust des Heeren. Dan smaakt het voedsel niet, en dan klagen zij van het lange der nachtwaken. Dan zingen zij den treurzang: Ik lag gekneld in banden van den dood, waar d' angst der hel mij allen troost deed missen!

Herinnert ge het U wel hoe het er met U bijstond toen ge op zulke verkeerde paden gewandeld hebt in

het verleden? Hoe treurig Uw hart gesteld was? En hoe er zelfs geen gebed meer door kon? Er was zuchting en droefenis. Toen werd het bang. Ge zaagt voor Uw geestesoog de deuren des doods. Let om den tekst: "zij waren tot aan de poorten des doods gekomen!"

En wat gebeurde er toen?

Dit: "Doch roepende tot den Heere in de benauwdheid die zij hadden, verlost Hij ze uit hunne angsten: Hij zond Zijn Woord uit, en heelde ze, en rukte ze uit hunne kuilen."

Dat is mooi! Hier weidt mijn ziel met een verwonderend oog!

Ze riepen tot God uit hunne benauwdheid!

Hoe is dat zoo gekomen?

Dat zit zoo: als gij op verkeerde wegen wandelt, en dan ervaart des Heeren beschuldigingen in een bezwaard en benauwend geweten, zoodat Uw brood niet meer smaakt en gij niet slapen kunt vanwege het gruwel Uwer ziel, dan komt God tot u om U te verlossen. Want dat roepen tot God is ook van God. Dan zendt Hij U Zijn Heiligen Geest en die doet U roepen tot God. En als het zoover gekomen is, dat gij niet meer weet of durft, dan smeekt de Geest Gods in U met onuitsprekelijke zuchtingen.

Wie zal het vertellen wat angsten en benauwdheden David ervaren heeft vooraleer Nathan tot hem kwam? Ik weet het niet.

Maar als dit volk aan het roepen gegaan is, dan komt God nogmaals. En dan zendt Hij Zijn Woord.

Dat Woord heelt.

Dat Woord rukt U uit Uwe kuilen, de kuilen waarin ge storttet vanwege Uwe zonden.

Daarom gaat Gods volk gaarne naar de kerk.

Daarom verlangen zij des Vrijdags, en zekerlijk Zaterdags, naar het komen van den Zondag met zijn Woord van God.

Daarom moeten alle dominees er voor zorgen om steeds te luisteren naar hunne fundamenteele opdracht: Troost, troost, Gods volk!

De eeuwigheid zal openbaren hoe Gods volk vaak, o zoo vaak, naar Gods Huis gegaan is des Zondags. Vaak zijn ze moe geweest, doodmoe van hunne zonden. Vaak zijn zij naar Gods Huis gekomen nog in de kuil liggende. Vaak zijn ze Gods Huis ingeslopen gelijk de tollenaar.

Ik heb wel eens gezegd: Gods volk kan maar nauwelijks den Zondagmorgen halen. Zoo verlangen zij naar de uitzending van Gods Woord ter verlossing.

En zegt nu niet: Maar ik ben verlost!

Dat geloof ik wel, maar ik zou U willen antwoorden: Ge moet nog veel meer verlost worden!

O ja, ge zijt wel verlost, maar het gebeurt vaak, dat ge wandelt op wegen van overtreding en ongerech-

tigheid. En dat stapelt op, totdat ge tot nabij de deuren des doods toekomt. En dan wordt het bang. En dan smeekt ge tot God: Och Heer, och wierd mijn ziel door U gered! Waarom denkt gij dat die psalm U beschreven werd? Daarom denkt gij dat die psalm zoo gaarne door Gods volk gezongen wordt? Waarom denkt ge dat men bijna overal dien psalm kiest bij het gaan naar de tafel des Heeren?

Omdat die psalm een stuk is van Uw en mijn leven.

O ja, toen hoorde God en Hij zond Zijn Woord uit.

Wat denkt gij dat de inhoud van dat Woord is?

Staat mij toe, dat ik het nu eens heel eenvoudig zeg: Het Woord dat uitgezonden werd nu al voor bijna zes duizend jaren is dit: Ik heb U lief met een eeuwige liefde! En Ik zal net zoo lang arbeiden aan U, totdat gij, gelijk een duif door 't zilverwit, en 't goud dat op haar vederen zit, bij 't licht der zonnestralen, ver boven andere vogelen pronkt, zult pralen met uw schoonheid, omdat gij door 't Goddelijk oog belonkt zijt!

Ziet ge, dat wil Gods volk steeds hooren.

En daarom gaan zij naar de kerk.

Jesaja heeft ons een andere editie gegeven door den Heiligen Geest, maar het komt op 't zelfde neer: "en roept haar toe dat haar strijd vervuld is, dat hare ongerechtigheid verzoend is, dat zij van de hand des Heeren dubbel ontvangen heeft voor alle hare zonden!"

Jezus heeft Zijn Eigen editie: Zijt welgemoed, Mijn dochter, Uwe zonden zijn U vergeven!

De Bijbel is vol edities van Gods verlossing.

Ik zal er nog een noemen, en dan blijf ik zeer dicht bij den tekst in dezen psalm. Ge herinnert U dat deze tekst zegt: "Hij zond Zijn Woord uit, en heelde ze, en rukte ze uit hunne kuilen." Welnu, dat moogt ge ook zoo lezen: ". . . en het Woord is vleesch geworden. . . ."

Jezus is het uitzenden van Gods Woord. Hij is ook de heeling van alle smarten. Hij is ook het rukken uit onze kuilen.

Let op dat *rukken* uit die kuilen.

Dat doet mij denken aan de hoofdgedachte van den geheelen psalm die we nu bespreken: de eeuwige goedertierenheid Gods.

Ik zou een beeld willen gebruiken hier.

Stelt U een moeder voor wier kleine kind verdwaalde in een groot woud. De moeder strompelde immer voort in dat diepe woud, zoekende, zoekende haar lieveling. Eindelijk vindt zij haar kind, liggende in een kuil, al schreiende. Ik vraag U: wat zal die moeder doen? Zal zij dat kind uit die kuil oplichten op haar gemak, langzaam, aarzelend, ietwat

lui? O neen. Maar zij zal zich op dat kind werpen, en het kind met *al haar kracht uit die kuil rukken!* En nu tranen stortend van ongekend geluk, zal zij dit kind naar huis brengen.

Maar waarom dat kind uit die kuil *rukken*?

Omdat de hartstocht der onbegrijpelijke liefde aan het woord is.

En dat is nog maar een beeld.

Want God is God. En die God is bewogen met Zijn volk, dat schreiend tot Hem vlucht. En die groote God is groot van goedertierenheid. En dat is de zucht in God om Zijn volk goed te doen en goed te zijn tot in alle eeuwigheid.

En zoo kunt ge eenigzins zien, dat God u rukt uit Uwe benauwdheden.

Staat er niet in het boek der Openbaring, dat God het kleine Kindeke *wegruchte* vanuit de klauwen van dien rooden draak? Dat was Zijn goedertierenheid voor Jezus, het Kindeke Gods.

Laat Uw geest niet te kalm, te lui zijn in de overdenking van des Heeren hemelvaart. Het is snel, zeer snel in zijn werk gegaan.

En zoo is het, en zal het zijn met de Uwe.

Nu moeten we weer aan 't zingen.

En wie zou niet zingen bij het hooren, bij het ervaren van des Heeren eeuwige goedertierenheid?

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

Daarom is Gods Huis ook een Huis om den Heere te loven.

Even geleden hebben we U betuigd, dat gij maar ternauwernood naar Gods Huis kunt strompelen op den Zondagmorgen. Wij ervaren, dat we nauwelijks zalig worden.

Maar, in Gods Huis aangekomen, hooren we al spoedig van dien wonderen God, die Zijn armen over ons uitbreidt, en dan al maar zegent. We hooren van een God die goddelooze menschen rechtvaardigt. We hooren van het schoonmaken van zonde, van een wasching in het reine bloed van Jezus.

Zoo spoedig wij in de kerk komen, zien we een van Zijn gezanten op de preekstoel staan, en die man breidt zijn armen en handen uit in een gebaar van zegening.

En dan wordt het zeer stil in de kerk. Die man met zijn uitgebreide armen zal spreken als het mondstuk Gods, dat in Gods Naam tot Gods volk spreekt.

En dan zegt hij dit: Genade, barmhartigheid en vrede zij U van God, den Vader, en van Jezus Christus, den Heere, door den Heiligen Geest! Amen.

Dus geheel in het begin komt de verlossing. God weet wat van Zijn maaksel zij te wachten. Hij zag

hen komen met zwaren gang naar Zijn Huis. En daarom is er dien morgengroet van God in den zegen. Hij wil U direkt uit die kuil rukken. En Hij doet het ook. Alles in dien dienst is er op ingericht, dat gij de verlossing zult ervaren die in Christus Jezus is.

Zoo spoedig gij Gods Huis binnentreedt, zoo spoedig ziet en hoort ge van de verlossingen Gods.

Waarom, denkt gij, dat Gods volk hun beste kleding aantrok?

Omdat zij vooruit al weten, dat God hen verlossen zal.

In de Kerk Gods is het een en al verlossing!

Dat gaat zoo vast op, dat God Zijn volk leert om erop te vertrouwen. Zij vertrouwen er op als ze nog een eindweegs van Gods Huis zijn. Gedenkt hier aan dien verloren zoon.

En zoo zullen zij gehoorzamen als God hen toeroept: Gaat tot Zijn poorten in met lof, met lofzang in Zijn heilig hof! Looft Hem aldaar met hart en stem; prijst Zijnen Naam: verheerlijkt Hem!

Dat dan de menschen Gods Zijne goedertierenheid loven, en Zijne wonderwerken voor de kinderen der menschen!

G. Vos.

IN HIS FEAR

Training For Life's Calling

Training In The Civics Class.

With this installment of the general theme, "Training For Life's Calling" we will bring the series to a close. The last subject taught in Christian schools which we will consider and which ought to have a specific treatment is Civics. It is a subject which must be taught our children, though they are citizens of the kingdom of heaven. In fact we would say that they must be taught it just exactly because they are citizens of that kingdom. The citizen of that kingdom walks in obedience and righteousness even when he is still on this earth. And though by the marvelous work of regeneration we are born into that kingdom of heaven, we still remain as long as we are still on this earth the citizens of that particular kingdom of which we were citizens when the work of regeneration was accomplished. And God demands of the citizens of the kingdom of heaven that they obey the earthly authorities PERFECTLY. For, after all,

the authority they exercise is God's authority. It is the authority of the same God to Whose Kingdom they belong that is exercised through men, through kings, and rulers. In fact it is only the citizens of the kingdom of heaven who can *really* obey the temporal rulers. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews, in speaking of Enoch, says that it is not possible to please God *without faith* (Hebrews 11:6). Since then the authority exercised by kings and rulers is God's authority exercised through men, no man can *really* bow before that authority without faith. There may be compliance with the law. There may be heeding it outwardly to the last detail for carnal, earthly reasons, because it benefits society, insures peace and happiness among men, etc. etc., but there is never the heeding of laws because man would bow before God and is willing to do His bidding EXCEPT BY FAITH. Simply pleasing the earthly authorities does not even make a man a good citizen except by the standards of sinful men. But he who pleases God, Who exercises His authority through men, is truly a good citizen according to God's judgment, and there is no righteousness (and no civic righteousness) except that which God calls righteousness. And the citizen of the kingdom of heaven by faith obeys GOD and is pleasing unto Him. He is a good citizen. No man, no neighbour, no nation needs to fear violence at his hands. He will be called an obstructionist presently because he will not practice sin, but he is not a man that you need fear. He fears the Lord, and therefore you need not have fear of him.

But in order that our children may know how to serve our government, and thus God through the earthly authorities, it is necessary for the covenant child to be instructed in this subject we call Civics. As we stated before, training for life's calling is training for the eternal calling of God's child. His calling in this life is to serve God but it is also his eternal calling to do so. And in this Christian school the child is not simply given a little information about government and legislation. The duty of the Christian school in this branch of the curriculum is to *train* the child for his calling to serve God by obeying the authorities God placed over him. But let us consider the principles governing this subject which are drawn up by the Rev. Gritters. These principles are as follows:

1. Civics in the Christian school curriculum is the study which serves to acquaint us with the nature and function of our government in order that we may more intelligently and readily obey her.
 - a. When we deal with the government and our relation to any and all government, the teacher must ever bear in mind the doctrine of total depravity. Let us recall what Scripture says about

fallen man in relation to the governments that be. Fallen man is by nature a rebel against God and government. 2 Peter. 2:10. He is self-willed. Jude 8. He follows the example of Adam who in turn followed the devil. 1 Tim. 3:6. And he is not subject to the law of God nor can he be. Rom. 8:7.

(1) Natural man will comply with certain laws out of a sense of fear or favor, for utilitarian or self-defense reasons. But even then constant policing is necessary if there shall be even an outward semblance of obedience.

(2) All such is far beneath the dignity of the lofty calling wherewith the Christian is called. These facts the teacher can emphasize.

- b. The Man of God, regenerated by the Spirit of the Saviour and having the love of God in his heart, proceeds upon the new principle of the Scriptures which is as follows:

(1) All government is ordained by God. It is government OF GOD. This pertains to all government whether it be up from the father in the home, through the church and school to the masters and employers.

(2) This government touches us in various hundreds of ways, and civics ought to help acquaint us with the scope of it.

(3) We are absolutely called of God to obey this government FOR HIS SAKE.

(a) If the government leaves its proper domain and interferes with the things which belong to the church, we shall not obey her. See Dan. 3:16-18, and Acts 4:19, and 5:29.

(b) But in all other things pertaining to her domain we shall submit to her both in the punishment of evil doers and the protection of them that do well. We are called to obey UNCONDITIONALLY. See the Heidelberg Catechism question and answer 104.

2. Finally, however, we deal with the practical reality that civil government, as all other things in this life, stands in the sign of sin and corruption.

a. The office of government is of God, indeed, but Scripture shows us in the past history that the office is often filled by persons who themselves refuse to acknowledge God's law. The same holds true today.

b. This however may never induce us to disobey or attempt to overthrow the present existing form of government. Even when those who themselves do not acknowledge God's law are our law-makers, we must obey them. This is a fact that

the teacher will have to impress upon the minds of the youth, for in this domain our natural depravity exerts itself very strongly. For such examples of true obedience see: that of Christ Himself, Matthew 23:2, 3 and of Paul, Acts 23:2, 3, 5 and of Peter, 1 Peter 2:13, 14.

- c. But we must bear with its weaknesses (Heidelberg Catechism and ans. 104, be faithful in subjection, patient in persecution (Belgic. Confes. Art. 36 and James 5:7-19, ourselves be governed by the Spirit of Christ, to show fidelity to the powers for God's sake (Titus 3:1), "Put them in mind to be subject to the powers".

We have only a few remarks to make in this connection at this time. The space allotted us for these articles is more than filled. At another time the tremendous field of Civics as it ought to be taught in a Christian school may be treated. For the present we will simply make two general remarks.

First of all, of course, the class in Civics, though the teacher must prepare the lesson from the viewpoint of the truth of the total depravity of man, must not be a class in Dogmatics, and the doctrine of total depravity must not displace the subject of Civics, not even temporarily. The child must be taught Civics from the viewpoint of that doctrine, but he must not be taught Total Depravity as it reveals itself in the realm of civil things. And we may add, of course, that the school teacher who does not believe this doctrine of total depravity is not qualified to teach in a *Christian* school. In a *Christian* school we believe what *Christ* taught and must teach in accordance with His teachings. And Christ said that except a man be born again he cannot *see* the kingdom of heaven. How then shall he even do things righteous in the realm of civic things? That he can do things which *men* consider to be righteous and good, we will not deny. But righteousness is only what God calls righteousness. Righteousness is one of the characteristics of God's kingdom. Are we not told by Christ to seek the kingdom of God and its righteousness. Implied is, of course, that no other righteousness, whether it be of the Scribes and Pharisees which we must exceed (Matt. 5:20), or what the modern generation calls righteousness, has ANY value before God. And without regeneration Christ declares that we cannot even *see* that righteousness of God's kingdom. For if we cannot see the kingdom, we cannot see the righteousness thereof. How then shall the natural man DO the righteousness which God calls righteousness.

In the second place we wish to make the remark that NOW if at any time the Covenant Child should receive a specific training in this subject of Civics. We live in the midst not only of all kinds of philosophies and dangerous teachings regarding authority,

the power, the right of the State, but we live also in a time when these views can be widely propagated through press, radio and the like. Besides the world is so very small now. The nations live on top of each other, so to speak. And the result of all this is that in our land, as well as all over the world there is a growing spread of revolution. Men do as they please. They defy their government, and others even uphold them in their sin and maintain that we should have the freedom and right to defy our government. The covenant child today cannot be taught too often or too emphatically the principles of God's Word which reveal to us our proper attitude toward HIS authority as it is exercised through the State.

J. A. Heys.

FROM HOLY WRIT

The Office In The Church

The Special Office and the Office of Believers.

In our previous article we noticed that the office of ministers, elders and deacons is an institution of God. Furthermore, that those who are called to this office are undershepherds of the chief Shepherd Jesus Christ. Christ is the great office bearer. They are His servants and ambassadors vested with authority to speak and to act in His name. This was true in a very unique sense of the apostles in the early church after Pentecost, but this is no less true of the office bearers in the church today.

We now do well to note, first of all, that God calls to the office through Christ. Secondly, that Christ calls through the channel of the Church. And finally, that anyone who is called to the office must necessarily be called through the medium of the church.

1. Scripture always stresses that God alone calls to the office in the church. And since Christ is the exalted Lord, to Whom is given all power (authority) in heaven and on earth, God calls through Christ. Jesus instructs His disciples in Matthew 9:38, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest." And before His ascension to heaven He commissions them, saying, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you

always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Matt. 28:18-20.

2. But Christ calls through the channel of the church. When Christ commissioned His disciples He actually commissioned His church. The apostles were representatives of the church of the new dispensation. Through them the keys of the kingdom of heaven were entrusted to His church. And through them His church was instructed to preach the gospel to all nations. Thus Christ assures His church that He will be with her even until the end of time.

Even in the prophecy of Isaiah Zion is called the bearer of good tidings, that is, the preacher of the gospel. Isaiah 40:9, "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold, your God!"

In this connection we must consider that significant passage in I John 2:20, "But ye have the unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." The Holy One referred to in this text is Christ, the Chosen of God, Who is appointed from all eternity to be consecrated to God as the chief Servant in God's house. He is the Anointed of God (Christ means anointed) in Whom all the fulness of blessedness dwells and Who unites all things in heaven and on earth to the glory of the Father. When He came into the flesh He received of God the Holy Spirit qualifying Him unto the work He was called to do. This Spirit descended on Him in the form of a dove, signifying that He was ordained and fully qualified by God to carry out that work. He was able to witness of the Father as the great Prophet sent of God. He was capable of bringing the perfect sacrifice for sin as the most excellent High Priest Who laid His own life upon the altar. And He could fight the battle against all the forces of sin and darkness and overcome them. Therefore He was exalted at the right hand of God in heavenly glory. And there Christ again received the Holy Spirit in a measure that qualifies Him to carry out His work as our exalted Lord in heaven. From heaven He reveals to us the Father through His Word and Spirit. Before the face of the Father He intercedes for us as our Advocate. Moreover, He rules over all things unto the coming of the Day of the Lord and His return with the clouds of the heavens.

"Ye have the unction from the Holy One. The "unction" refers to the gift of the Holy Spirit which Christ bestows upon His church whereby they become partakers of His anointing in the office of believers. Therefore they are called Christians, according to Lord's Day 12 of our Heidelberg Catechism. Unction is a figurative expression reminding us of the manner in which certain persons were designated to the office

of prophet, priest, or king in the old dispensation. These persons were anointed with a special ointment of sweet fragrance as a sign that they were ordained of God and filled with a special gift of the Holy Spirit Who qualified them to the office to which they were called. We recall that Saul was anointed by Samuel and that shortly after this the Spirit came upon him, manifesting His presence in the fact that Saul began to prophesy. Thus even wicked Saul, much to Israel's shame and his own destruction, was appointed of God to be king over Israel and even qualified for a time to carry out this work. But God also ordained such men as Elijah the lone prophet in Israel, Aaron the first highpriest, and David the man according to God's heart. God revealed His will and counsel through the prophets. He qualified the priests to serve in His house. He gave authority and wisdom to the kings to sit upon the throne of Israel's theocracy.

The unction from the Holy One in the new dispensation is far richer than the office ever could be in the dispensation of shadows. In the first place not just a privileged few, but all the true believers receive that anointing. The Spirit Who dwells in the church of the new dispensation is the Spirit of the exalted Christ, Who shares all His blessings of salvation with her. God blesses Christ with all spiritual blessings in the heavens. Ephesians 1:3. And Christ in turn bestows those blessings upon His church. He is her Head and the church is His body, so that His life quickens her, His power governs her, His blessings belong to her as much as to Himself. Thus He shares His anointing, His office with His church. In the second place, every believer is endowed not with but a single office as in the old dispensation, but with all three offices. All believers are prophets, but they are also priests, and they are at the same time kings. Together they fill the office of believers as a prophetic, royal priesthood, in which each member holds his own unique grace of God in Christ Jesus. And finally, the church of the new dispensation has a much fuller and richer revelation than the church of the old dispensation was ever privileged to possess. In that sense the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John the Baptist. The apostle John assures us, "ye know all things." We no more live in the time of types and shadows, but in the dispensation of the fulfillment. Christ is exalted to the right hand of God in the highest heavens and reveals the Father to us from heaven through His Word and Spirit. We possess the full revelation of Jesus Christ concerning those things that eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, and never entered into the heart of man. Although we still behold all things only in the mirror of God's Word, we do know in principle all that we ever shall know, even when we shall see face to face and know as we are known.

This unction from the Holy One manifests itself in

the individual believer, but also in the church as institute. The believers come together for the communion of saints, for the ministry of the Word and the sacraments, for prayer and worship, for instruction and edification. Thus they form a congregation, an assembly of believers with their seed, a local manifestation of the body of Christ. Christ has instituted the special office among them. Thus through the office of minister, elders and deacons Christ dwells with them and blesses them. Christ ministers His Word and sacraments through His church by means of the office. Christ exercises His keypower among them through the church and by means of the office. And Christ also manifests His mercy through His church and the office. In one word, the exalted Lord always works through the medium of the church and thus through the office bearers who He calls.

3. Therefore anyone who is called to the office must necessarily be called through the medium of the church.

We must bear in mind, of course, the distinction between the office of believers and the special office of ministers, elders and deacons. Although all true believers have the anointing of the Holy One, God separates some out of the midst of His church to fulfill the special office. This is evident, for example, from I Cor. 12:28, 29, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." In passing it may be well to mention that some of these gifts are no more evident in the church today such as, prophecy, healing and diversities of tongues. These gifts were peculiar to the church immediately after Pentecost to make known to the believers the presence of the Holy Spirit among them. After the presence of the Spirit had become established these peculiar gifts disappeared with the office of the apostles. But we still have the abiding gifts of teaching and government. Although they are the property of the whole church, yet they are exercised by those who are called to the office. On the other hand, we should bear in mind that the office of ministers, elders and deacons can never be separated from the office of believers, or from the church.

Christ calls out of the midst of His Church. See Eph. 3:7, 8, "Whereof (God's promise in Christ by the gospel, verse 6) I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all the saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." Notice this, "According to the gift of the grace of God given unto me," and also, "who am the least (yet one) of all the saints."

Christ calls through the church. This is evident from Acts 13:2, 3, "As they (the five prophets and teachers who were in the church at Antioch) ministered unto the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."

Therefore no one is called unless he is called subjectively by the Spirit of Christ in His heart and objectively by the Spirit through the medium of the church. The subjective calling must be sealed by an objective calling through the church. Was that possibly what Paul was waiting for at Antioch? We need but refer further to John 10:1, 7, 8, "Verily, verily, I say unto you he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. . . . Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before Me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them." Or again as in Rom. 10:14, 15, "How then shall they call on Him Whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him Whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher. And how shall they preach, *except they be sent?*"

Summing up, we conclude that Christ calls by His Spirit through His church, so that Christ fulfills His office in the church by His Spirit through the church by means of the office bearers. Those who minister the Word and the sacraments, govern the church and officially bestow mercy can do so only in Christ's name and on His authority as ambassadors of Jesus Christ.

C. Hanko.

PERISCOPE

Report From Canada

In the March issue of *The Calvin Forum*, the Rev. P. De Koekkoek, Christian Reformed minister of Alberta, Canada, reports on Reformed church life in Canada. He speaks of the progress his Church is making and of the problems which are faced and solved. The concluding paragraphs are of especial interest to us.

" . . . just recently word reached us from Hamilton and Chatham, Ontario, pointing to conditions which disturb our hopes for a united Reformed church life

in Canada. We hear that a Reformed Church (U.S.A.) has been organized in Hamilton, by people drawn from the Christian Reformed Church and new immigrants there. This is an unpleasant surprise to us who understood that the Reformed Church (U.S.A.) had decided not to go into the Canadian field in which our church had so heavily and successfully interested itself. Also because in the past more than one conservative of the Reformed communion expressed to us the desirability of an eventual union of the Western wing of the Reformed Church with the Christian Reformed, and decidedly against the practise of establishing competitive churches where a church of either denomination was established. The new Canadian field offered a most beautiful opportunity to help realize this ideal. The rearing of competitive churches, supposedly of the same faith, does not seem to be calculated to bring about that desired result. Naturally, things are different if it is honestly believed and can be clearly proved, that people of the Reformed persuasion will not be safe in the bosom of the Christian Reformed Church in Canada.

"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 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."

On more than one occasion attention has been called to what the Rev. De Koekkoek calls "serious efforts toward healing the breach" in the Netherlands. A great deal has been made of this, in an attempt to

also use it as an argument for "unity" and "peace" in Canada and this country. Personally, we are inclined to question both the "seriousness" and "healing" qualities of these efforts. From reports as they come from the Netherlands, the movement could, perhaps, better be likened to an attempt to salve the wounds and bandage them up even though they may continue to fester underneath the covering. The process would have to be another strange compromise which could be satisfactory to none and give only a semblance of unity, as always, with the sacrificing of principle.

The attempt to heal breaches among Churches is not new; it is an oft repeated subject. The strange thing about so many of these trials is the common characteristic of deliberately passing by the history of the break. The pattern is usually the same: the break is deplorable (too bad, should never have occurred) and the call is made to re-unite as brethren in Christ who, as of the same faith, belong together. But the sins of discipline and deposition of faithful officebearers is ignored. These facts are usually relegated to oblivion and conveniently forgotten, or escaped by subterfuge, as though they mean nothing. And if union is accomplished in this manner, nothing is really healed; it's a patch-work affair.

A final remark is applicable to both this above and the article upon which we commented last time. These brethren, and many more in the Christian Reformed Church, are greatly concerned lately about "unity" and "peace" in Canada. But how strange that they have never sought to "heal the breach" of 1924 in their own Church. How is it possible that they can be so concerned while at the same time they make no effort towards those who, according to their judgment, have walked in the "error of the denial of common grace", while at the same time they give them the official testimony of being fundamentally Reformed?

Federal Council Meeting

Not long ago a meeting of the leaders of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, was held in Cleveland, Ohio. This liberal and modern organization supposedly represents 35,000,000 American Protestants. The four-day session concerned itself with the decision of Christian influence in international affairs.

Among the propositions before the meeting was a proposal for a conference on religious liberty among Protestant leaders and representatives of the Roman Catholic Church. The plan was conceived because "recent actions of the Hungarian government leading to the conviction of Cardinal Mindzenty (Catholic) and Bishop Ordass (Lutheran) have shocked the conscience

of freedom-loving men all over the world". The purpose of the Protestant-Catholic conference was stated to be "that clear understanding be reached as to what each means by religious liberty for all men. . . . and as to the methods whereby the full observance thereof should be sought".

The question of such a conference was not decided but the proposal was referred to the executive committee of the F.C.C. for further study. Although no decision was reached the affair nevertheless is significant. More and more it indicates the way in which the false prophet may arise!

Christian Giving

Faithful and proper christian offering is an indicative gauge of the spiritual life of an individual and Church. It's too bad that money for various Kingdom causes must often be "taxed", "wheedled" or "begged" out of us by many and various means and schemes. It is also a serious sign. True, the cash is raised somehow, but the blessedness that should accrue to the cheerful giver is often lost in the process. We were reminded of some of these things in connection with an editorial in the March issue of *The Presbyterian Guardian*, under the heading "Tithing". In the early part of the article it is pointed out that the present average American annual income is \$1500 per year. The writer then figures that in his own denomination the funds available amounted to less than half a tithe. It might be interesting and revealing to compute the figures for our own denomination. But the pertinent points are drawn in the last two paragraphs which follow.

"We ought not to base our giving, however, just on cold figures like this. We are to give to the work of the Lord, who loved us and gave Himself for us. We are to give that others may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, yes, and the fellowship of His suffering. Giving is an expression of our duty. It is also an expression of our love.

"The financial needs of the church are not effectively met on the basis of special 'campaigns'. We get sick and tired of 'campaigns'. It is a sign of spiritual inertia that we are dependent on the emotional uplift of a campaign to get needed things done. The financial needs of the church are most effectively met when there is regular, proportional and orderly giving, when the people are faithful in laying aside, at regular intervals, according as the Lord has prospered them, a sum for His work. This is the true course of faithful stewardship."

W. Hofman.

Report Of Classis East In Session April 6, 1949 at Hope Church

Rev. H. Veldman calls the meeting to order. After the opening exercises the credentials are received and Classis is declared constituted. According to rotation Rev. R. Veldman presides and Rev. H. Veldman officiates as clerk.

The minutes of the preceding classical meeting are read and approved.

Oak Lawn asks for classical appointments. The chair appoints the following committee to draw up a schedule for classical appointments: The Revs. J. Blankespoor, C. Hanko and Elder P. Ipema.

Later in the day they present the following schedule, which is adopted by classis:

April 10, Rev. J. A. Heys
April 17, H. C. Hoeksema
April 24, Rev. H. Hoeksema
May 1, Rev. G. Vanden Berg
May 8, Rev. J. D. De Jong
May 15, Rev. J. Blankespoor
May 22, Rev. R. Veldman
May 29, Rev. B. Kok
June 5, Rev. C. Hanko
June 12, Rev. G. Vos
June 19, Rev. H. De Wolf
June 26, Rev. H. Veldman
July 3, Rev. G. Lubbers
July 10, Rev. J. A. Heys

Oak Lawn asks for advice in regard to financial aid in connection with the moving of a minister from a great distance. Classis assures Oak Lawn that financial aid will be given if such an emergency should arrive.

Advisory vote is given to the Revs. A.

An appeal to Synod by the consistory of the First Church is read, dealing with Classis East's support of Rev. G. M. Ophoff's protest against said consistory. This document is received for information.

Classis decides to appoint a committee to draw up an answer to this document and to advise classis in this matter. The answer that was drawn up by this committee was adopted by classis and will be sent through to Synod together with all the other documents relative this question.

The consistory of Randolph advises classis to overture Synod to consider ways and means of establishing our own Normal Training School to train prospective teachers to teach in our own Christian schools.

Classis decides to send this instruction through to Synod without our recommendation.

Rev. G. Lubbers, who had been appointed to thank the ladies of our Hope Church for their catering services gives his report, which was received by classis.

The following brethren were elected as Church Visitors:

Primi: Rev. B. Kok and Rev. G. Vos.
Secundus: Rev. R. Veldman.

Rev. J. A. Heys is re-elected as member of the Classical Committee.

The next meeting of Classis will be held at the First Church of Grand Rapids, the first Wednesday in July.