

# THE STANDARD

*Bearer*

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XXVI

September 1, 1950 — Grand Rapids, Michigan

NUMBER 21

## MEDITATION

### The Prodigal Son

"And He said, A certain man had two sons, . . . ."

Luke 15:11-24.

Almost twenty centuries rolled past since our Lord Jesus first told a simple story. But all that time could not tarnish the glory and beauty of God's love for His erring child that throbs in its simple wording. It stands there still: a testimony of tender compassion, of a gentle, though irresistible power, the power of God unto salvation, coming to fruition in the miserable sinner, yearning for the home of his Father.

That story is relived time and again. It is re-lived wherever the light of God's countenance penetrated the darkness of sin, enwrapping the world in its deadly folds. In the broadest sense, it is the history of all the people of God. All you who know God and are by grace making merry before His face shall recognize your own auto-biography. O yes, you shall recognize the history of your wayward sinning, your experience of Father's irresistible drawing, your subsequent hunger and yearning for home and streams of living water, your return to God and the wonder of heaven's reception where your weary heart found solace in the arms of God.

And when your eyes may fondly rest upon the best robe you wear, you shall grow silent in humble acknowledgement that the pure white linen that clothes the Prodigal Son was washed in the heart's blood of the Lamb of God.



Yes, you have guessed rightly, it is the story, the parable of the Prodigal Son, related in Luke 15:11-24.

And He said, A certain man had two sons. . . .

It is not difficult to see who this father is, nor the identity of the two sons. Just read the introduction to the three parables of which this one is the climax. And also the parable itself shows very clearly who are represented here.

In the first two verses we hear that at this time of Jesus' sojourn all the publicans and sinners drew near unto Him for to hear Him. Those poor folk had noted that there was a very distinctive note and appeal in the words of the Lord. Irresistibly they were drawn to Him. One of their number was so touched by the Divine spark, that his name is enrolled among the 12 apostles of the Lord. His speech acted upon them like water to the weary and thirsty soul.

But do you notice the haughty company of Pharisees and Scribes? They stand afar off and they murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them! Poor deluded souls. Without realizing it their voice sounds the sweetest note of the Gospel. Yes, indeed, Jesus receiveth the sinners and eateth with them.

God be praised forever!

But they meant this speech as a cutting rebuke of the Lord's actions. Such low folk as sinners and publicans ought to be left alone. They were too vile to attempt to influence them for good. Jesus revealed what manner of man He was.

Note that this occasion moved Jesus to speak the parables of which the story of the Prodigal Son is the climax.

A certain man had two sons.

We recognize the three parties involved. The father is God; the older son is the pharisee and scribe; the younger son is the publican and sinner.

Do not overlook the fact that both sons are brought up in the house of God. Neither of the two sons is a citizen of that far country into which the younger son will soon travel. They are born in the line of the

covenant of God. Christ calls them in different places the children of the Kingdom.



But the younger son is heartily tired of the atmosphere in the house of God. Listen: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

Now what in the world could be that portion which God gives to the younger son, a portion which he is about to squander?

There is but one answer: it is lordship over self. This younger son had been under the discipline of father in the church of God from his youth. And in the house of God there is but one life: obedience to God in all their living. From morning to night there is but one speech in the fellowship of God and that speech is: Thus saith the Lord!

And the younger son was more than sick of it.

Note the callousness of his sinning. His thoughts become words: Give me lordship over self!

And not many days after the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

The thoughts of sin became sinful words and the words crystalized into deeds.

That far country is the wicked world. There everyone does as he pleases. No one wants to know the will of God. They are the captains of their soul and the masters of their fate. Riotous living is found there. According to the original word, it is a life that destroys life. That country is far from the point of view of the house of God. And its citizens are on the way to still greater distances. In the end of time their place shall be so far from the proper house of God, and that is heaven, that the place is called: outer darkness. A great gulf is fixed between that dreadful place and the abode of God.



And when he had spent all there arose a mighty famine in that land and he began to be in want.

There you have the first proof that his father had not forgotten him. We saw a son that went very far, but now we are going to trace a love that stayed very near. When this son had drunk to the very bottom of the cup of sin, there arose a famine. And if you would like to enquire into the nature of the hunger it produced, be sure to take into the account the 17th verse. This famine is a very particular famine: it produces hunger for the bread of father's house. Therefore we may rightly conclude that this famine is sent of God.

It is the work of regeneration wrought by God alone. When that new birth comes to the consciousness of the sinner, he begins to be in want.

But note now the wickedness of our carnal nature. Rather than co-operate with God we will always try to maintain our sinful course.

This younger son joins himself to a citizen of that far country. No, he had never become naturalized in the world. The distinctive marks of the covenant child remained. He joined himself to one of its representatives. And note also that this citizen knew no want. He had swine in the field. And over these swine he would set the son of father's house.

There you have the mercy of the wicked. The swine are the unutterable flesh to the Jew. This citizen revealed the attitude of the world over against father's child. Is it not typical of the attitude of the world to everyone who has done her bidding and is brought low and miserable in its service?

But he took the job. And when he would satisfy the craving hunger that was divinely wrought in the depth of his heart, he would fain fill his belly with the husks that the swine would eat. But no one gave unto him. There you have the tender mercies of the world.

Then he came to himself! A very nice and fine point here on the way to the heart of God! It means first of all that this boy was a stranger to himself.

How true. Every sinner is a stranger to himself. He does not realize what he really is according to the ordinances of his creator. Neither does he know what horrible caricature he has become in his sinning. Man who is to be brought to the home of God needs an introduction to himself.

Strange and striking: when he sees himself and realizes that he is a son of God, he also remembers his Father's house, the scenes of his youth.

Listen to him: How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

Indeed, that is the condition at home. There is the bread of life. There is the love of God and His tender care even over the hired servants!

But he will go deeper than that: I will arise and go to my father, and I will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son, make me as one of thy hired servants.

It is the speech of the converted soul: he begins to condemn himself. Oh do not tell me that this self-condemnation is the natural flower that grows in the garden of our carnal hearts. No mere sinner will ever come to this point of himself. It is the fruit of the Spirit of God. Ezekiel will tell you!

Here it is: A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you and I will take away

the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and ye shall keep My judgments and do them.

And *then* shall ye remember your own evil ways and your doings that were not good, and shall loath yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations! Ez. 36:26, 27, 31.

There,—that portion of the speech of God Himself is a nice commentary on the speech of the Prodigal Son. It shows that also the conversion of God's people is wrought by the Spirit of God. And only in that way will God receive all the glory. Jesus said it also in another place: No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me, draw him! O, always remember that our God must have all the praise for the way of salvation, because *of* Him, *through* Him, and *unto* Him are all things!



Well, the young man arose, and came to his father.

That was a difficult journey. The closer he came to the house of God, the slower he walked. And I can understand it and so can you if you have walked this same journey.

David would say: I dare not raise mine eyes! Shame does cover our faces. This father had been so wonderfully good to us and we were so abominably wicked.

But, o wonder, continue the story and you will sing of gladness: When this boy was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him.

What tender love of father! What wonders of compassion!

When he was yet a great way off.

Yes, father had never forgotten the son and we must notice the fine point here that father stood at the gate, waiting.

Oh, we know it, father knew he was on the way and expected him. And he evidently saw the slow approach, the shameful, embarrassed behaviour of the penitent.

Imagine, God running to meet you when you are ashamed to come to Him. And that embrace and the kiss of God is Jesus Christ the Lord. And that kiss of God is purchased by the blood of His heart.

Eternal love of God founded on the cross of Calvary. What miracle of grace and beauty!

Well, the boy begins to stammer his confession: Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son!

That confession is born of the love of God in his heart. But there is a pathetic contradiction here: he

confesses his unworthiness to be called a son of God, but he *does* address him as Father.

Ah, the boy could not do otherwise. Father dwelled within him; it is the Spirit of adoption through the which we cry :Abba! Beloved Father!

But the picture is not yet complete: Father will not even answer his confession, at least not to him. He is silent in His lovingkindness. But He does address Himself to the servants: Are they perhaps the angels? At any rate: What do you say, My son? No more worthy? Well then, I will give you the worth of another: Servants bring hither the best robe, the robe of priority: the fine white linen of justification which My Son Jesus Christ has earned for just such sinners as this, my boy. And again, get the ring of the sealed faith and put it on his hand.

And instead of being a hired servant in the house of his Father, he shall put on his feet the shoes of the service of his God!

Moreover, bring hither the fatted calf, slay it and prepare it and let us be merry, for this my son was dead and is alive again, he was lost and he is found!

Yes, my friends, and they did begin to be merry!

It is the merriment of heaven. The glee of the angels. The song of adoration before the face of God.

Is there someone among those who read this that is weary and heavy laden? Are you thirsty for living water or hungry for the bread of Father's house?

Are you?

Then this parable is especially for you. Arise and go to the Father: He shall run to meet you, fall on your neck and kiss you.

His gladness and the angels' gladness, together with the gladness of your marvelling soul shall make heaven musical forever!

G. Vos.

\* \* \* \*

#### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On August 25, our beloved parents

**Mr. and Mrs. Albert Rhoda**

celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary.

As each year goes by we realize the blessing that is ours in having Christian parents.

Our prayer is that in the years to come God's grace may richly dwell in them, and that they may have the peace of God which passeth all understanding.

Their grateful children:

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Rhoda  
Robert  
Jeanette  
David  
William  
Richard  
Ronald

Holland, Michigan

## *The Standard Bearer*

Semi-Monthly, except Monthly in July and August\*

P u b l i s h e d B y

The Reformed Free Publishing Association

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

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Communications relative to subscription should be addressed to Mr. J. BOUWMAN, 832 Reynard St., S. E., Grand Rapids 7, Mich. Announcements and Obituaries must be mailed to the above address and will be published at a fee of \$1.00 for each notice.

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

Entered as Second Class Mail at Grand Rapids, Michigan.

(Subscription Price \$2.50 per year)



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## EDITORIALS

### The Convention

Most of my readers know to which convention I refer in the heading of this editorial. It is the Convention of the Federated Young People's Societies in our Protestant Reformed Churches. It was the Tenth Convention.

The writer attended the Convention and would give you a brief report, and more than a report.

I can understand the expressed sentiment of the main speaker, the Rev. H. Hoeksema. He was about to give the inspirational address, the keynote speech. In other words, his speech was supposed to enthuse the convention, to inspire them, an inspiration which would outlast the convention proper, and send the delegates and visitors home to their societies with renewed zeal for our beloved Protestant Reformed principles. But, said he, the truth is that when I look upon this vast throng of Protestant Reformed young people, you enthuse *me!* You inspire *me!* And I feel the urge to speak *ex tempore*, being led by the wondrous inspiration you have given and now give me!

However, the speaker did not follow the impulse. He was convinced that it would be better to present his prepared speech. And he did.

As always, the speaker would present the young people with an *inspirational* address, but he did not believe in the silly notion that inspiration consists in a cheap moving of the superficial feelings and emotions: he would endeavor to give them the wholesome inspiration which the Word of God alone can provide, namely, inspiration with *contents*: the very contents of the sound doctrine of the Word of God.

And then he proceeded to unfold his theme. He was supposed to speak of the "Significance of the Power of Godliness". The latter phrase was the theme of the convention, and was taken from II Tim. 3:5: "Having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

The President of the convention, our genial colleague, the Rev. Bernard Kok, had read Dan. 6, the well-known history of Daniel in the lions' den, and from it the speaker took his point of departure. He pointed out that in that history we see a manifestation of the Power of Godliness. Daniel was so faithful in this virtue that even his enemies could find no occasion for accusation before the face of king Darius. And he pointed out that there can be no manifestation of this power of godliness without the essence of that power being present in a man. Then, after quoting several texts where this power is mentioned, he pointed out

that this virtue is found mostly in the pastoral epistles, showing that this virtue is severely practical. It refers to our living.

Our speaker spoke on the theme and developed three thoughts: 1. Godliness; 2. Its power; and 3. Its exercise.

Space forbids a detailed report, and therefore I will restrict myself to the highlights of the speech.

Under the first point he spoke on Godliness as being the Knowledge of God, of the *true* God, as manifested in our Lord Jesus Christ; a deep and abiding consciousness of this true God in Christ; reverence, fear and love of this God; and a practical manifestation of the above in every walk of life, and here he referred to that well-known and favorite motto of Calvin: *Coram Deo!* Standing before the face of God! Young People! in all the manifestation of your life, so live as standing before the face of God, in your church life, your social life, in your choice of life's partners, in business and in every walk of life!

Under the second point the speaker dwelled on this virtue as a *power*. And he highlighted this power in contrast to what the world calls power, emphasizing that this power is a *spiritual* power. The power of Godliness has nothing to do with natural power such as atom power, hydrogen power, electric, steam, air and sea power. All this power is as grass. And we must never seek this kind of power. Our danger always lies in the assumption of this natural power. We must definitely look away from this unto Jesus Christ the Lord. In Him this true power of Godliness had its beautiful climax. There never was any display of true power such as resided in Christ. He is the virtuous One par excellence. He always was faithful. In Him *Coram Deo* had its highest manifestation. He always stood before God's face consciously. And did all to His glory and honor.

Power of godliness is the power of contentment: a surrender to God's way always!

Power of Godliness is a quiet and peaceable life; no strikes or boycotts as we see around us in the industry and labor circles today.

The Power of Godliness causes us to stand before God's face so as to perform our part in the Covenant, as referred to in the Baptism form.

And finally, the speaker gave us his convictions on the third question, namely, the Exercise of this Power of Godliness.

It does not mean a weak, sickly, mystical contemplation or some such silly notion. The power of godliness is something severely practical: we must be conscious, active Christian Calvinists.

The words of admonition which lie in the text of the Convention is an appeal of the Word of God unto the work which God has begun in our hearts and minds. This power is not in words but in deed! Our

God calls us unto the working out of our salvation just because He worketh in us to will and to do of His good pleasure! Such was the sentiment expressed.

And then godliness is profitable for all things, then we can walk with God in all of our lives, then He is with us and then all things work together for us unto good! It is the God-ordained way unto eternal life!

It was truly inspirational. There was rapt attention.

I am sorry that space forbids me to give like treatment to the other two speeches. The Rev. L. Vermeer spoke on the Danger of Denying the Power of Godliness, and the Rev. Peter De Boer spoke on the Possibility of Possessing the Power of Godliness. Both speeches were well worked out and were listened to with profound interest by our young people.

The Rev. Vermeer sounded a grave warning against having the mere Form of Godliness while denying the power thereof. And he pointed to the context where eighteen sins are enumerated, sins which are committed by them who have the mere shell of godliness. Unhappy people!

Overagainst that we must shun them, and cling to the beautifully contrasted virtue, which is really the clinging love of God! We must, by the power of godliness, determine and purpose in our hearts not to defile ourselves, but to reach out for the Fountain of our life, and that is the God of our salvation, such as we see His Face in the Lord Jesus Christ!

Of great worth is the power of godliness!

The Rev. De Boer spoke at our banquet. And it was a treat for our young people and for us to hear him. He spoke of the possibility to possess the wondrous virtue of godliness.

He posed the question: How can I as covenant youth possess this wonderful virtue?

The answer he found in I Tim. 4:7, 8: "But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

He emphasized the two words *exercise* and *thyself*, and then enlightened the youth about this procedure by enumerating and explaining a few Do's and Don't's.

Do not lose self in bodily exercise, though good in itself.

Do not believe profane and old wives' tales, which is undoubtedly false doctrine.

Do take an active part in the institution of the preaching of the Word. Be always there, and actively listen to the glorious Word.

Do take active interest in society life. Exercise yourselves in the work of the society of young people.

Do practice the grace and the virtue of godliness

by the grace of God! In friends, companions, in all of your lives!

And all of this through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A word of appreciation for two persons or group of persons.

First for the outstanding leadership of our president, the Rev. Bernard Kok. To no little extent the success of the convention was due to his spirit of kindness, friendliness and loving devotion to the call that came to him in this presidency. He quitted himself of this task to an admirable degree. Personally I am sorry that we cannot have him as our perennial president. In one word: he is good!

And here my conscience strikes me: How about that fine young man, that personal friend of mine: Johnnie Hofman!? How must that foregoing statement make him feel? For you must know that he was chosen to take the place of the Rev. Kok.

No slight was intended!

Let me make amends, if needs be, by saying this: perhaps John will make an even better president than our friend Bern. If so, he will be a very good one. And we wish him and our beloved Protestant Reformed youth our Covenant God's choicest blessings for the coming season!

And finally, we must mention the group of persons of the Second Church with their able minister, the Rev. John Blankespoor! They spent many weary hours, before and during the convention, in order to make it the success we witnessed.

To them I would say: all that work, done as unto our God, shall not be without its reward. There is a reward which you have in our hearts. We value your work highly. And there is reward with Jesus: He carries it in His heart, and He shall reveal it in His glorious Day!

G. Vos.

\* \* \* \*

#### IN MEMORIAM

On the evening of the 4th of July, it pleased God to take unto His eternal home our beloved husband and father,

Peter Visser

at the age of 44 years and 7 days.

Our loss is great and painfully felt, yet we are comforted in the knowledge that death for him was gain, and that God doeth all things well.

The sorrowing family,

Mrs. Dena Visser

Mr. and Mrs. Harold De Groot

Joan

Arlene

Linda

## De Nabijheid Van Het Einde

Door velen, die uit de Schrift leven, en hunnen wandel "eerlijk houden onder de heidenen," en die ernst maken met de belofte van de toekomst van onzen Heere Jezus Christus, wordt onze tijd aangevoeld als in bijzonderen zin des woords eschatologisch. Ik zeg "aangevoeld", want de indruk, dat we leven in het laatst der dagen, dat het einde aller dingen niet ver kan zijn, en dat de Heere Zich haast om te komen, en te verschijnen in Zijne heerlijkheid, is niet zoozeer het gevolg van opzettelijke berekening, als van een spontaan "aanvoelen" van het bijzonder karakter van den tijd, waarin we leven door hen, die, levend uit Gods Woord, de verwachting van de toekomst van onzen Heere Jezus Christus als eene levende hope in de ziel dragen, en die met de Bruid aller eeuwen bidden: "Kom, Heere Jezus!" De geweldige dingen die rondom ons in de wereld geschieden, de openbaring der geesten, de zucht naar gelijkschakeling en vereeniging, de geestelijke oppervlakkigheid, die, allerwege zich openbaart, de toenemende liefde tot de wereld en tot de dingen die in de wereld zijn,—deze en andere kenmerken van den geest des tijds maken den indruk, dat we leven in de dagen, die onmiddellijk aan de komst van onzen Heiland op de wolken des hemels vooraf gaan. Luiders, en met sterker aandrang dan ooit roept de Schrift ons toe, door de dingen, die geschieden: "Het einde aller dingen is nabij; zijt dan nuchteren, en waakt in de gebeden."

De vraag komt echter op of deze indruk in het licht der Schrift te rechtvaardigen is, en of we ons van dit "aanvoelen" van onzen tijd als in bijzonderen zin des woords eschatologisch rekenschap kunnen geven. En bovendien, bijaldien dit werkelijk het geval mocht zijn, is het een niet minder ernstige vraag, welke beteekenis dit bijzonder eschatologisch karakter van onze dagen heeft voor ons leven in de wereld. Tot welke levenshouding dringt en roept ons de verwachting van de toekomst des Heeren?

Wat het eerste betreft, mag in het algemeen worden opgemerkt, dat de Schrift heel de tegenwoordige be-deeling doorgaans voorstelt als staande in het teeken van de toekomst des Heeren. Ze wordt door die toekomst beheerscht. Altijd worden de geloovigen geroepen om als in die toekomst te leven en te wandelen in het midden der wereld. In zijne prediking op den Pinksterdag verklaart de apostel Petrus de teekenen en wonderen, die de uitstorting des Heiligen Geestes vergezelden, als behoorende tot den aanvang van den dag des Heeren, waarvan reeds Joel had geprofeteerd. Heel deze bedeeing wordt daardoor vooral gekenmerkt, dat de Heere is komende op de wolken des hemels. Had Hijzelf niet getuigd voor den hoogepriester: "Van nu aan zult gij zien den Zoon des menschen, zittende aan de rechterhand der kracht Gods, en komende met



de wolken des hemels"? Matt. 26:64. Reeds in zijn dag riep de apostel Johannes het den geloovigen toe: "Kinderkens, het is de laatste ure; en gelijk gij gehoord hebt, dat de antichrist komt, zoo zijn ook nu vele antichristen geworden; waaruit wij kennen, dat het de laatste ure is." I Joh. 2:18. "De toekomst des Heeren genaakt," zoo schrijft Jakobus, en met het oog op het genaken van dien dag vermaant hij Gods verdrukte volk om lankmoedig te zijn tot de toekomst des Heeren. Jak. 5:7, 8. "Het einde aller dingen is nabij," zoo verzekert ons Gods Woord door den apostel Petrus, I Petr. 4:7. "De nacht is voorbij gegaan, en de dag is nabij gekomen. Laat ons dan afleggen de werken der duisternis, en aandoen de wapenen des lichts." Rom. 13:12. En "onze wandel is in de hemelen, waaruit wij ook den Zaligmaker verwachten, namelijk den Heere Jezus Christus." De Schrift leert ons dus, dat het einde aller dingen altijd nabij is. Bovendien vertraagt God de belofte niet. Er is geen stuiting der dingen. Christus komt haastelijk, Openb. 3:11; 22:12. In dezen algemeenen zin is het dus altijd waar, dat de dag des Heeren aanstaande is. Gods volk is niet slechts gerechtvaardigd, maar wordt geroepen in deze wereld altijd eschatologisch te leven, en zijn wandel te laten beheerschen door de verwachting van des Heeren toekomst. De drang naar het einde zit in alle dingen, die geschieden, heel deze bedeeling door. We zijn als passagiers in een trein, die het laatste tusschen-station is gepasserd: we zien uit naar het eind-station, en maken ons gereed om uit te stappen.

Dit neemt echter niet weg, dat deze toekomst-drang onzer bedeeling in sommige tijden veel sterker is dan in andere. En in zulk een tijd worden wij verwaardigd te leven. Niet alleen dringt het feit, dat we thans reeds weer bijna twee duizend jaren verder zijn dan toen Petrus eerst den grooten en doorluchtigen dag des Heeren aankondigde, tot een ernstiger uitzien naar de vervulling van dien dag; maar ook leert de Schrift ons in niet onduidelijke of dubbelzinnige woorden, dat de komst des Heeren zal worden voorafgegaan door gebeurtenissen, die vooral in onze dagen op het punt staan verwerkelijkt te worden. En het is vooral met het oog daarop, dat er metterdaad reden bestaat om onzen tijd te kenmerken als sterk eschatologisch getint.

Zoo weten we uit de Schrift, dat de dingen, die geschieden moeten, en die heel deze bedeeling door geschieden, zullen toenemen in intensiteit en omvang. Het boek der Openbaring spreekt van zeven zegelen, zeven bazuinen en zeven violen. Het zevende zegel lost op in zeven bazuinen, de zevende bazuin wordt geopenbaard als zeven violen. De zegelen openbaren ons de oordeelen Gods, zooals die altijd over de wereld voltrokken worden. Er is altijd oorlog, schaarschte en hongersnood, ook terwijl de olie en de wijn onbe-

schadigd blijft; en altijd wordt een zeker aantal menschen door den dood weggemaaid. De graad of intensiteit dezer oordeelen wordt dan ook aangeduid door "een vierde." Maar de bazuinen wijzen er op, dat Gods oordeelen in intensiteit toenemen. De verwoesting en ellende door deze oordeelen aangericht worden dan ook aangeduid door "een derde". En met het uitgieten der violen voltrekt zich Gods oordeel: de verwoesting is compleet. De dingen, die geschieden, nemen toe in omvang, en ook in intensiteit. De vervulling van deze voorstelling der Schrift hebben we in de laatste decennien met onze oogen aanschouwd. Alles heeft plaats op groote schaal. Vooral de laatste twee wereld oorlogen hebben het ons te zien gegeven, dat Gods geesel steeds feller striemt. Steeds meer volkeren worden in de oorlogen der wereld betrokken. De verwoesting door hen aangericht wordt steeds vreeselijker, de ellende door hen teweeg gebracht veel dieper, en de omwentelingen, die ze veroorzaken zijn steeds ingrijpend, en van blijvender aard.

Ook is het duidelijk uit de Heilige Schrift, dat de mensch der zonde, de antichrist, tot openbaring zal komen, en zijn rijk zal stichten, eer we de openbaring van Jezus Christus in heerlijkheid kunnen verwachten. Uit politiek oogpunt zal deze antichrist geopenbaard worden als staande aan het hoofd van een universeelen en alle levensverbanden beheerschenden Staat. Het zal den volkeren der wereld gelukken om voor een korten tijd zich te vereenigen onder één centraal gouvernement, één machtigen wereldstaat te vormen. Dien éenen Staat zal men verheerlijken. In dien almachtigen Staat zal men de eindelijke oplossing zien van de wereld problemen. Alle volkeren der wereld zullen zich aan hem onderwerpen. En deze antichristelijke macht zal alles beheerschen, alle levensverbanden in de maatschappij, handel, nijverheid, kunst en wetenschap. En men zal het beest aanbidden en in hem roemen. En uit geestelijk oogpunt is deze antichrist de valsche profeet. Want hij ontvangt zijne macht van den draak. Hij zal zich verheffen boven al wat God genaamd wordt. En hij zal ook van de Kerk onderwerping en aanbidding eischen. Tegenpraak zal deze antichristelijke macht niet dulden. Wie het beest en zijn beeld niet willen aanbidden, wie niet wil meedoen aan de verheerlijking van den mensch der zonde, en het teeken van het beest weigeren te ontvangen, zal uit de maatschappij worden uitgebannen. Hij zal niet kunnen koopen of verkoopen. Ja, de antichrist zal niet aarzelen het stalen zwaard te keeren tegen degenen, die het Lam volgen, waar Hij ook gaat. Het bloed der getrouwen zal nogmaals de aarde drenken, en dat als nimmer te voren.

Daarom zal dan ook het laatst der dagen gekenmerkt worden door grooten en algemeenen afval van het geloof eens den heiligen overgeleverd. Deze afval zal de komst van den antichrist voorbereiden. Want

niet uit het heidendom, niet uit de volkeren, die aan de vier hoeken der aarde wonen, maar uit hetgeen Christendom heet, zal deze antichristelijke macht opkomen. Daar waar de Kerk is, wordt de valsche Kerk geboren. Waar Christus heerscht, daar zal de antichrist zich tegen Hem stellen. Daarom leert ons de Schrift: "Doch de Geest zegt duidelijk, dat in de laatste tijden sommigen zullen afvallen van het geloof, zich begevende tot verleidende geesten, en leeringen der duivelen. Door geveinsdheid der leugensprekers, hebbende hun geweten als met een brandijzer toegeschroeid." I Tim. 4:1, 2. "En weet dit, dat in de laatste dagen ontstaan zullen zware tijden. Want de menschen zullen zijn liefhebbers van zichzelf, geldgierig, laatdunkend, hoovaardig, lasteraars, den anderen ongehoorzaam, ondankbaar, onheilig, zonder natuurlijke liefde, onverzoenlijk, achterklappers, onmatig, wreed, zonder liefde tot de goeden, verraders, roekeloos, opgeblazen, meer liefhebbers der wellusten dan liefhebbers Gods; hebbende een gedaante van godzaligheid, maar de kracht derzelve verloochend hebbende." II Tim. 3:1-5.

En eindelijk leert ons de Schrift, dat het rijk van den antichrist na een korten tijd verbroken en verwoest zal worden. Het zal zijn macht niet kunnen handhaven. Zijn grondslag is niet hecht. Zijn eenheid is slechts een schijn-eenheid. De volkeren, die aan de vier hoeken der aarde wonen, Gog en Magog, zullen zich van het centrum des rijks losscheuren, tegen het antichristelijke beest opstaan, en het vernietigen.

Zoo ongeveer teekent ons de Schrift de dingen, die haast moeten geschieden. Hoe zich dit alles in bijzonderheden zal ontwikkelen, zal de geschiedenis zelve moeten leeren. Profetie is geen van te voren beschreven geschiedenis. Maar dat de groote hoofdlijnen in de aangegeven richting loopen kan niet betwijfeld worden.

En wie nu uit de Schrift leeft en deze dingen weet, en dan let op de ontwikkeling der dingen in de wereld van onze dagen, vindt zeker overvloedige reden tot staving van de overtuiging, dat het karakter van onzen tijd sterk eschatologisch is. We bewegen ons snel in de richting van het einde aller dingen.

Letten we daartoe allereerst op het feit, dat vooral in de laatste halve eeuw de wereld, betrekkelijkerwijs gesproken, aanmerkelijk is verkleind, zoodat de verst van elkander verwijderde natiën thans elkanders burens zijn geworden. Vroeger liet het zich moeilijk voorstellen, dat heel de wereld zich ooit zou kunnen vereenigen onder één centraal bewind, en de mogelijkheid van een antichristelijken wereldstaat lag buiten onzen gezichtseinder. Thans is dit niet meer het geval. De nieuwste uitvindingen hebben heel het wereldbeeld als in een oogwenk veranderd. Telefoon en telegraf, de radio, en de verschillende middelen van vervoer,

hebben de verst van elkander verwijderde volkeren in onmiddellijke verbinding met elkander gesteld. En niet alleen is door de moderne uitvindingen een wereldstaat mogelijk geworden, het feit, dat de volkeren der wereld thans vlak bij elkaar wonen, zoodat schier geen natie zich meer in het isolement van eigen land en nationaal bestaan kan terugtrekken, is ook mede oorzaak, dat elke nieuwe oorlog heel de wereld in vlam zet, en dat de wereldmachten, beducht voor algeheele ondergang der zoo hoog geroemde moderne beschaving, hoe langer zoo meer de redding der wereld zoeken in de richting van federatie en volkenbond. We zeggen niet te veel, wanneer we beweren, dat onze tijd zich beweegt in de richting van het antichristelijk wereldrijk.

Tot dezelfde slotsom komen we, als we letten op den geest des tijds uit religieus oogpunt. De afval van het geloof eens den heiligen overgeleverd is schrikbarend. Het groote wereldleven wordt algemeen gekenmerkt door een zoeken van en streven naar de dingen, die gezien worden, de lust des vleesches en de lust der oogen, en de grootheid des levens. Leven uit beginsel is een schier ongekend iets. Ontzettend is de onkunde in betrekking tot de waarheid van Gods Woord. Wat Kerk heet is voor het meerendeel dien naam niet meer waard. Wanneer we uitschakelen dat groote stuk der nominale Kerk, dat reeds lang openlijk gebroken heeft met de belijdenis van het Christelijk geloof; en voorts van degenen, die nog wel tot eene belijdende Kerk behooren, hen niet meetellen, die met woord en daad hun belijdenis verloochenen, en met de groote wereld meelevende, dan krijgen we den indruk, dat het aantal van ware Christgelooovigen niet groot is. En men bekeert zich niet. Ook al striemt Gods geeseloede den rug der volkeren ten bloede toe, men blijft jagen naar den rijkdom en het zingenot der wereld. Het woord van Johannes is in onze dagen op groote schaal toepasselijk: velen zijn antichristen geworden.

Voeg daar aan toe, dat ook de volkeren, die aan de vier hoeken der aarde wonen, hoe langer hoe meer beginnen te ontwaken, en het beeld is compleet. De tijd van machtige koloniale rijken is voorbij. Die volkeren die nimmer een eigen rol speelden in de geschiedenis, zijn wakker geschud, en weigeren nog langer het juk eener hun vreemde mogendheid te dragen. De volken van den Orient staan op het punt hun eigen plaats in te nemen naast en onder de overige wereldmachten. Gog en Magog worden voorbereid om de hun door God verordineerde rol in het drama der wereldgeschiedenis te spelen.

En hoe snel is het tempo der ontwikkeling! Het wereldbeeld verandert zienderoogen. In de laatste eeuw hebben we meer geschiedenis gemaakt dan ooit tevoren. We vliegen daarhenen. Alles roept ons toe: "Zie Ik kom haastelijk, en Mijn loon is met Mij, om een iegelijk te vergelden gelijk zijn werk zal zijn."



En wat is, als het wel is, de vrucht van dezen indruk, dat het einde aller dingen nabij is, en van deze sterke verwachting van de toekomst des Heeren? Zeker niet, dat we nu maar lijdelijk gaan wachten op de komst van den Zaligmaker, en onze roeping verwaarloozen. Integendeel, met het oog op die komst zullen we juist als voor het aangezicht des Heeren leven, en in elke levensfeer onze roeping zoo getrouw mogelijk betrachten, overvloedig zijnde in het werk des Heeren, wetende, dat onze arbeid niet ijdel is in den Heere. Bovendien zullen we waken en bidden, en houden hetgeen we hebben, opdat niemand onze kroon neme. De Heere waarschuwt ons, dat er dagen te verwachten zijn, waarin zelfs de uitverkorenen verleid zouden worden, indien het mogelijk ware. Het past ons dus op onze hoede te zijn. Tegenover den geest onzes tijds, en de tendenz om alles te vervlakken en gelijk te schakelen, alle kerken te vereenigen ook ten koste van de waarheid Gods, sta ons ernstig protest, en houden we vast aan de waarheid van Gods Woord. Niet in verflauwing der grenzen, maar veeleer in de kennis van en het handhaven der goede belijdenis, moet onze kracht worden gezocht. We moeten aandoen de volle wapenrusting Gods, opdat we den geestelijken strijd tot het einde toe mogen strijden, en alles verricht hebbende staande blijven. En zonder den gordel der waarheid, zal die wapenrusting ons niet baten, noch ook zonder het zwaard des Geestes, het Woord van onzen God.

En voorts zal de verwachting van den dag des Heeren ons een spoorslag zijn, om onze kleederen onbesmet te bewaren in het midden der wereld. Want immers, het heerlijke van die verwachting is bovenal, dat we, als Hij komt Hem gelijk zullen zijn. En een iegelijk, die deze hope op Hem heeft, die reinigt zichzelf gelijk Hij rein is! Zoo dan, mijne geliefde broeders, weest standvastig, onbeweeglijk, altijd overvloedig zijnde in het werk des Heeren, als die weet, dat uw arbeid niet ijdel is in den Heere!

H. H.



#### MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The Annual Membership Meeting of the Standard Bearer will be held Thursday evening, September 28, in the basement of the First Prot. Ref. Church. Board members are to be elected, reports will be given by Secretary and Treasurer, and other business conducted that might come before the meeting.

Please reserve this date and plan to attend.

Reformed Free Publ. Ass'n.

## OUR DOCTRINE

### The Idea Of Creation. (4)

*The Creation Of The World, An Act Of God's Omnipotent Will.*

We noted, in our previous article, that the creation of the universe constitutes a difficult and unfathomable problem. Many questions have been asked with respect to the beginning of the world and various answers have been given. We concluded the article with the observation that the Lord does all things as He pleases and according to sovereign and unfathomable wisdom.

For the rest, it is neither wise nor edifying to concern ourselves with questions which are not answered in Holy Writ, and which are asked merely for the sake of our own personal entertainment and to satisfy our own personal curiosity.

*Furthermore, it is of the greatest importance to maintain that creation is an act of God's omnipotent will.*

In connection with this, we may call attention, first of all, to the fact that God's creative act has been generally defined as a making of something out of nothing. We read, for example, in Lord's Day 9, in connection with the first of the twelve articles of our faith: "That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who of nothing made heaven and earth with all that is in them. . . ." And in the twelfth article of our Confession of Faith we read, in part: "We believe that the Father by the Word, that is, by His Son, has created of nothing the heaven, the earth, and all creatures, when it seemed good unto Him giving unto every creature its being, shape, form, and several offices to serve its Creator; that He also still upholds and governs them by His eternal providence and infinite power for the service of mankind, to the end that man may serve his God." The definition of creation as that act of God whereby He made something out of nothing is therefore a very common definition.

Moreover, one must approve the reason why this definition was adopted. The fathers wished to express with this definition that the act of creation was exclusively Divine. The Lord, they would emphasize, is the Creator; He did not merely form or mold substances already present. This would imply an eternal materialism. God simply created out of nothing; there was nothing; the Lord simply called everything into being.

This does not mean, however, that this definition should therefore continue to be accepted without critic-

ism. We are able to lodge serious objections against it. First, it is purely negative and does not present to us the positive Scriptural idea. It does not inform us with respect to the true, actual significance of the act of creation. We are simply told that "to create means to make something out of nothing." But, the question remains: What, then, is the Divine act of Creation? Secondly, it is a fact that nowhere in Holy Writ does the word, create, have this significance. In Genesis 1 the act of creation is presented as an act of the Lord's almighty speaking. In Ps. 33:6 we read: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth." And in Romans 4:17 we read: "(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before Him whom he believed, even God, Who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were." And, thirdly, it is an undeniable fact that this definition does not apply to all the creatures which the Lord made. We know, e.g., that God did not make man out of nothing. And therefore this definition was altered, and to it was added the idea that to create means to make something out of nothing or to make something out of entirely unfit material.

As far as the words are concerned which are used in Holy Writ (to denote the act of creating) we would remark the following. The words which appear in the Hebrew Old Testament are: bara, yatsar, and asah, and in the Greek New Testament we have: poiein, platein, and ktizein. The words: bara and ktizein, mean literally: to split, to cut or carve, to cut off, and in that sense: to form, bring forth, create. The other words give us the more general conception of giving being and existence to something. They who would contend that the act of creation refers to the almighty power of God whereby He makes something out of nothing concede the fact that these words are not merely used in Scripture in that actual sense of the word but also in a secondary sense, when the Lord made use of material that was already in existence, but which could not of itself have produced the result indicated. If this latter be true, and it is, then we should certainly discard the definition that the act of creating is an act of God whereby He makes something out of nothing.

Bearing in mind that the words: bara and ktizein, mean literally: to cut, cut off, we would interpret the act of creating as that act of Jehovah whereby He by an act of His omnipotent will cut the things off His eternal counsel, thereby called them into existence, not as if they now exist independently of the Lord but nevertheless in essential distinction from His own Divine Being. We must bear in mind that before the beginning of the world God *is*, not that He was (to which we have already called attention). Also, there

was nothing outside of Him. He alone is from eternity. We must also remember constantly that the Lord is the all-sufficient God and the absolute Good, Who lacks nothing and is never in need of anything. In that infinite God the Son is the expressed Image of His Person and eternal existence, the eternal and perfect reflection and shining forth of all the Divine perfection and attributes. The Lord knows Himself eternally out of the Father, in the Spirit, and through the Son. In the Son God beholds Himself eternally in all the glory and beauty of His eternal perfection, sees and loves Himself eternally through the Son. The Son is the Word, the eternal and essential Logos or Word, the essential and eternal "Word" of God, in Whom the Father, in the Spirit, speaks of His own infinite perfections even eternally, so that the Son is the expression of all the thoughts of God, the eternal revelation of all the glorious perfections of God's infinite being. Hence, that Son, that Word is also the Wisdom (Proverbs 8), because it is in and through that Word that God sees and knows also eternally all the works of His hands. And it is in this sense that the eternal reality of all things, God's counsel, lies in the everlasting God, and that the Lord eternally sees and has before Himself the reality of all things.

To create, therefore, is that act of God whereby the Lord, by an act of His omnipotent will, slices off, cuts off the things which are eternally in His counsel, and gives them an existence, not independent of Himself, but nevertheless in essential distinction from His being, so that God does not become the creature, but God and the creature remain everlastingly distinctive. This is important. To create, we say, is an act of God's omnipotent will. Creation, therefore, has been called by that will of God into existence. Hence, the creation must not be viewed as an emanation of God, did not flow out of the Lord's very being, is not merely an extension of the Lord, or the Lord as He comes to Self-consciousness and manifestation—this pantheistic conception of the heavens and the earth is foreign to all the teachings of Holy Writ. Neither did God simply busy Himself with materials already present. We have already noted that also this theory of an eternal Materialism is contrary to the Word of the living God. It is simply a fact that the Lord, in the act of creation, *called*, omnipotently, the things into being and existence.

Besides, this idea of creating is surely according to the Word of God. That the act of creating is an act of God's almighty, omnipotent will, that all things owe their existence to this irresistible word, calling of God, appears first of all, from the Scriptural account of creation in Genesis 1. Reading this chapter we must be struck by the fact that repeatedly we read: "And God said". Moreover, this is also verified by the rest of the Word of God. We read in Ps. 33:6: "By

the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth." In Romans 4:17 we read: "(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before Him Whom He believed, even God, Who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were." And the same thought is expressed in Isaiah 48:13: "Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and My right hand hath spanned the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together."

Hence, when God created the heavens and the earth, and all the things that are therein, He called into being the things that are not as if they were. We, being creatures, call the things that are, speak only of the things that exist. The things must exist before we are able to speak of them. This lies in the nature of the case. We ourselves are creatures and can therefore only speak of the things that exist. Only, the same characteristic is often ascribed to the living God. Election, then, is the eternal love of God which is based upon foreseen faith, and Reprobation is based upon foreseen unbelief. God saw beforehand who would and who would not believe. He elected those who would believe and reprobated the others who would not believe. The point is, that the faith of some and the unbelief of others precede the Lord's election and reprobation. Man's faith or unbelief is first; the Lord's counsel of election and reprobation follows. Hence, the existence of things (the faith and unbelief of men) is first, precedes God's knowledge of them. This, we understand, is the arminian conception of God's counsel of election and reprobation. Man, we have noted, knows the things only after they exist. Now he proceeds to apply the same principle to the living God. Wicked man has simply made a "God" like unto himself. God, however, is God. His speaking does not follow upon the things but precedes them, is always first. He speaks the things and therefore they exist. His speaking precedes the things and is the cause of their existence. Thus it was in creation. God spake and the heavens and the earth and all the things that are therein received their being. This Divine speaking also applies to the preaching of the Gospel. Always through the gospel the Lord speaks and it is, He commands and it stands. Even as He spoke the light in the week of creation and that creature received its being, so the Lord also speaks light, spiritual light in the sin-darkened hearts of His elect people, life in their hearts of death, the love of God in their hearts of hatred and enmity. God calls, irresistibly, and we come unto Him. And even as the Lord works sovereignly and speaks irresistibly in the hearts of His elect people, so He also operates sovereignly in them whom He has hated and reprobated from before the foundation of the world, and works out His counsel of reprobation in them, even as He

realizes the counsel of His election in the others whom the Father has eternally given unto Him. Our speaking is always concerning the things that are; God's speaking is always creative, therefore wholly sovereign, and for this reason also strictly unconditional, exactly because this speaking of the Lord never follows upon the things, always precedes them, and is therefore never conditioned by anything. How is it possible to speak of "conditions" when the speaking of the Lord is irresistible and always first?

### *The Creator.*

*We must beware of the error of Tritheism.*

Tritheism is a word which means literally: three gods. The Father is indeed the Creator of heaven and earth, but this, then, must not merely be understood as referring to the first Person of the Trinity. That the Father created the heavens and the earth is readily understood, but this is often regarded as referring to the first Person of the blessed Trinity.

Neither is the error of Tritheism taught in our Confessions. It is true, that, reading them hastily and superficially, one might be tempted to draw this conclusion. We read, e.g. in Art. 8 of our Confession of Faith: "According to this truth and this Word of God, we believe in one only God, Who is the one single essence, in which are three persons, really, truly, and eternally distinct according to their incommunicable properties; namely, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Father is the cause, origin, and the beginning of all things visible and invisible; the Son is the word, wisdom, and image of the Father; the Holy Spirit is the eternal power and might, proceeding from the Father and the Son." It might appear from this article that the cause and origin and beginning of all things is attributed to the first Person of the Trinity. Besides, the first article of our twelve articles of faith reads: "I believe in God, the Father, Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth." Moreover, reading our Heidelberg Catechism superficially, one might be tempted to draw the conclusion that also its authors believed in a certain Tritheism. Answer 24, in connection with the question concerning the division of the twelve articles of faith, reads: "Into three parts: the first is of God the Father and our creation; the second of God the Son and our redemption; the third of God the Holy Spirit and our sanctification." And in Lord's Day 9, in answer to the question, "What do you believe when you say: I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth?", we read: "That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who of nothing made heaven and earth with all that is in them, Who likewise upholds and governs the same by His eternal counsel and providence, is for the sake of Christ His Son my God and my Father. . . ."

However, it is abundantly clear that our fathers did not believe in the error of Tritheism. Already in the same eighth article of our Confession of Faith which we quoted in part we read: Nevertheless, God is not by this distinction divided into three, since the Holy Scriptures teach us that the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit have each His personality, distinguished by Their properties; but in such wise that these three persons are but one only God." That the error of Tritheism is not taught in the Heidelberg Catechism is also abundantly clear. In Lord's Day 8, in answer to the question: Since there is but one Divine Being, why do you speak of three, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?, we read: "Because God has so revealed Himself in His Word that these three distinct Persons are the one, true, and eternal God." Obviously the purpose of this answer is to maintain that the three distinct Persons are the only true and eternal God, and that, therefore, these three Persons, although to be distinguished, are never to be separated in any work of God's hands. They do not constitute three individual gods (this would be Tritheism) but always the one only true God.

Besides, that the Heidelberg Catechism does not intend to teach the error of Tritheism is also evident from the explanation of the Heidelberg Catechism by Ursinus in his "Schatboek", his explanation of the Catechism, and we quote this quotation of Ursinus as it appears in the book of Rev. H. Hoeksema, "God's Way Out", pages 119-120. Ursinus, in his Schatboek, meets the following objection: "Creation is here ascribed to the Father, redemption to the Son, sanctification to the Holy Ghost. Therefore the Son and the Holy Ghost did not create heaven and earth; neither did the Father and the Holy Ghost redeem the human race; nor do the Father and the Son sanctify the believers." And this objection Ursinus answers as follows: "We deny the consequence which is here deduced, for creation is ascribed to the Father, redemption to the Son, sanctification to the Holy Ghost, not exclusively, i.e., in such a manner that these works do not properly belong to all persons. . . . By this distinction is merely indicated the order of operation proper to the persons of the Godhead. To the Father is ascribed the work of creation, not exclusively or to Him alone, but because He is the source of the Godhead, and of all the Divine works, and therefore also of creation. For all things He did, indeed, create out of Himself through the Son and the Holy Ghost. Redemption is ascribed to the Son, not exclusively or to Him alone, but because it is the Son Who immediately performs the work of redemption. For the Son only is become a ransom for our sins, He alone paid the price for us at His cross, not the Father, nor the Holy Ghost. Sanctification is ascribed to the Holy Ghost, not exclusively or to Him alone, but because it is the

Holy Ghost Who sanctifies us immediately or through Whom our sanctification is immediately affected." And in reply to a similar objection he writes: "The Divine works are indivisible, but the order and manner of operation or working proper to each of the three persons must be maintained. For all the Divine persons perform the *outgoing* works of God; but the following order must be maintained: the Father does all things of Himself through the Son and the Holy Ghost, the Son does all things of the Father and through the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost does all things of the Father and the Son through Himself. It follows therefore that all the persons create, redeem, and sanctify: the Father mediately through the Son and the Holy Ghost; the Son mediately through the Holy Ghost; the Holy Ghost immediately through Himself, mediately through the Son, in so far as the latter is mediator." This quotation speaks for itself. Ursinus declares here, e.g., that he rejects the conclusion which some deduct from the Catechism, namely, that creation is ascribed to the Father, redemption to the Son, and sanctification to the Holy Spirit in the exclusive sense of the word, so that each of these works belongs exclusively to the Person to which it is ascribed. This distinction merely indicates the order of operation proper to the Persons of the Godhead. That the Father is presented here as the Creator is merely because a creator reminds one of the beginning, from whom all things are; and whereas the Father in the Trinity is the source of the Godhead, therefore the work of creation is ascribed to Him. The Son is He Who personally assumes our flesh and blood, suffers and dies. And the Holy Spirit is He Who establishes dwelling in our hearts, to live within us and within the Church forever. But this does not mean, however, that all these works do not belong to all three Persons. The truth is surely that the Triune God creates, the Triune God redeems, the Triune God sanctifies. And this thought is repeated by Ursinus in the latter quotation. We read, do we not: "For all the Divine Persons perform the *outgoing* works of God. . . . the Father does all things of Himself through the Son and the Holy Ghost, the Son does all things of the Father and through the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost does all things of the Father and of the Son and through Himself. It follows therefore that all the Persons create, redeem, and sanctify." It is evident, therefore, from these quotations that the error of Tritheism was far from the minds of the authors of the Heidelberg Catechism.

H. Veldman.

#### NOTICE!

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches meets Wednesday, September 6, at Oskaloosa, Iowa, at 9:00 A. M. Lodging reservations to be arranged with P. T. Kelderman, R. R. 2, Oskaloosa, Iowa.

M. Gritters, S. C.

## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

### David's Adultery

David's fall was deep. He committed adultery and followed it up with murder. He committed those sins not alone in thought and inclination of heart, but in the deed as well. He could come to that only by deliberately stifling conscience and by voluntarily giving the reins to his awakened lusts. His sinning was gross. In degree of intensity, blood-guiltiness, and dogged opposition to God's law, it was a different sinning than that on which the apostle delineates when, speaking from experience, he complains, "For what I do I allow not: for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that I do (Rom. 7:15)." Reference here is to the involuntary riotings of the sinful flesh of the saints. The apostle must not be taken to mean that, despite his earnest endeavor to lead, by the grace of Christ, a godly life, he was walking in all manner of gross sins, which are a disgrace to the church, and worthy of punishment by the authorities. Any man can curb his lusts and live decently. That requires no grace. The ungodly do it right along, clean the outside of the platter, so to speak, out of considerations of self-advantage. But no man can stop sinning. The saints in this life cannot stop sinning. Despite their hatred of sin for Christ's sake, and all their efforts to be holy, they feel many infirmities and miseries in themselves. Their faith is imperfect. They lack zeal in the service of God. Sin, they find, works in them all manner of concupiscence, tainting all their good works. When they would do good, evil is present with them, as a law, a necessity, not to be repelled, bringing them against their will into captivity to the law of sin which is in their members. Such is their complaint.

But a man must be a saint, and the saint must be spiritual and not carnal so to complain, and to be allowed so to complain. Under the constraint of Christ's love, he must be putting on Christ. That David did not do at the time. On the contrary, he yielded himself to his lusts, and allowed them to sweep him into the deeps of sin and hell. What folly, what hypocrisy it would have been for him to have wailed at the time, 'what I would—live for Christ and walk in newness of life—I do not; but what I hate—appropriate in my carnality my neighbor's wife—that I do,' and then to have followed up that wail with the prayer, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death.' For a long time he refused to admit to himself and to God that he had done any-

thing amiss. How then could he have been taking upon his lips that language.

It happened in an evil hour on an evening. David had spent some hours in repose. Rising from his bed, he walked on the roof of "the king's house" which must have been built on the edge of Mt. Zion, so that one could thence look down into the court of the Lower City, where was the house of Uriah. David was not long up and about on the roof of his house when he looked down thoughtlessly, without evil intent, it should be supposed. But in the language of the proverb, he should have let his eyes look right on and his eyelids straight ahead (Prov. 4:25). For looking down he found himself peering, like some modern window-peeker, into exposed places of his neighbors' houses,—places exposed to his eye because of his elevated position. The result was that "he saw a woman washing herself." As a partial explanation of his reaction, the text reveals that the "woman was very beautiful to look upon." It must not be supposed that her purpose in bathing there was to attract his attention. For that would make her a profligate. Besides, there is no basis for such an assumption.

Seeing the woman, he wanted her for himself. But whose daughter was she? And, if married, who was her husband? He had need of knowing. So he "sent (his servant in waiting) and inquired after the woman" of the personnel of his court and not of the neighbors of the woman, it is best to assume. That the answer returned was in the form of a negative question may indicate that the woman was otherwise known. It also may denote surprise at the king's interest in her. They said, "Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah, the Hittite? On hearing this he did not lose interest in the woman and dismiss her from his mind. On the contrary, the relayed information caused him to take further and instant action. For the narrator goes on next to relate without a single interposing statement, "And David sent messengers and took her. . . ." that same evening, it may be. The notice, "And she came in unto him," negates the assumption that she was carried off by force. The use of force was not necessary. For there was no reason, known to the woman, why she should have refused to see the king. For David, certainly, was keeping his designs on her locked in his bosom. They were known only to himself. So the woman went to David in willing obedience to his summons as little suspecting what he wanted of her.

But if she was a virtuous woman, and it must be assumed that she otherwise was, how did David get his way with her? By a false emphasis on his royal authority, it must be, and by threats and flattery. There was no other way. And she as motivated by fear and perhaps by vanity and ambition, submitted herself to David with little, if any, opposition. And so

she participated in his guilt. For she could have disarmed his lust by right argument directed to the man of God in him. As a last resort she could have warned that she would expose him through crying out.

Uriah, so the text reveals, was a Hittite. Being a Hittite, the race of men to which he belonged was one of the group of several Canaanite nations originally marked by the ban of God for destruction. "Thou shalt utterly destroy them." So at Deut. 30:17. The nations named for extirpation include also the Hittites. All the humans without distinction of sex and age had to be smitten by the sword. No covenant might be made with these peoples. No mercy might be shown them. Marriages with them were strictly forbidden. And the reason given is "that they teach you not to do after their abominations (Deut. 7:1-4).

In the light of this data it is not hard to imagine the reasoning to which David resorted in his attempt to justify his appropriating Uriah's wife. Uriah was a Hittite under the curse of God. On this account his union with Bathsheba was invalid and non-existent in God's sight, and therefore any Jew could take her without clashing with the divine prohibition: Thou shalt not commit adultery. That such was David's reasoning is clearly suggested by the text. On learning that Uriah was a Hittite, so the text reveals, he in all likelihood the same evening sent messengers and took her.

But David's reasoning was false. From Uriah's head the ban of God had been lifted. For possessing, as he did, the circumcision of the heart he was a Jew in the true sense. His marriage, therefore, was a sacred thing. But this is not saying that if Uriah had been an avowed heathen, it would have been allowable for David to take his wife.

There is a reason why David tried to justify his doing before the bar of his conscience and before the tribunal of God. The reason is that he was filled with dread of God's anger. He wanted to enjoy the pleasures of sin with impunity and in peace of heart and mind, which, of course, is impossible as he was made to experience.

Yet, however unspiritual, David was not wicked at heart. He was not in his sinning seated in the chair of scorners, with his mouth set against heaven and with all his thoughts being that there is no God. On the contrary, though according to his sinful flesh he, in the words of Nathan, was despising God's commandment, he was a believer also in his fall. The love of Christ was in him, so that, as to the heart of his dispositions, he still feared God, delighted in His law, and hated sin, including his contemplated adultery. Even his vain attempt to justify in the sight of God his adultery, however carnal by itself, sustains this judgment of the man. He had not pursued sin; but he had been surprised by sin. He must not be put in

the category of wicked men of whom the prophet says that they assembled themselves by troops in harlots' houses; that as fed horses in the morning every one of them neighed after his neighbor's wife (Jer. 5:8, 9).

Yet, certainly, he was far from being a more or less innocent victim of his lusts. His eyes had lighted on the woman as by chance and not by the direction of his will. But from this point on he did voluntarily pursue sin. He looked on the woman again now with eyes filled with adulteries. Not only that. Setting his vile imaginings, his perverse thought-images, before his mind's eye, he held them there, and he thereby persisted in arousing and stimulating his lust, until, as overwhelmed by his lust, he could no longer resist the temptation to give it expression.

But why, if David was a believer, did he submit himself to his lusts and take the woman, instead of following the impulses of the man of God in him and getting himself in hand? To say that he was carnal is but to state the reason *in David*; it is not to give the full explanation of his fall. The always returning question is why, instead of opposing his carnal self, he allowed it full expression. It is plain that to adequately explain David's fall—his taking his neighbor's wife—we must end with it in God. God temporarily gave him up to uncleanness through the lusts of his flesh to do the thing not convenient. Why did God do that? In Rom. 1 we read of God giving up the heathen to uncleanness through the lust of their own hearts to dishonour their own bodies between themselves. We know why God did that. The reason is stated. They glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful. They changed the truth of God into a lie. . . . They did not like to retain God in their knowledge. Had David in some measure similarly been offending? The Lord had taken him from deepest obscurity and set him in a throne, even making him the head of the heathen, so that a people which he knew not served him and strangers submitted themselves to him (2 Sam. 22:44). His military successes had been astounding. He had overthrown all the nations that had been menacing Israel from north to south. On their ruins he had founded an empire as vast as any of the great kings of the East. Had David in the midst of this prosperity and glory exalted himself in his heart against God? Hezekiah, like David, excelled as a God-fearing king. "He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father did. . . . He trusted in the Lord God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him. For he clave to the Lord and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses" (2 Kings 18:2-7). This was Hezekiah. Yet it is also stated of him that, as healed and saved of God from the hands of the Assyrians, "he rendered not again



according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up." Not until the wrath of God was upon him did he humble himself for the pride of his heart (2 Chron. 32:24-26). David was a sinful man. Would it be so strange if his heart was lifted up?

Is there anything recorded of David that plainly points to this? There is. First to be mentioned is his polygamy. Knowing that one day the people of Israel was to be ruled by a king, Moses, speaking for God, had said, "Neither shall he—the king—multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away" (Deut. 17:17). Yet, in willing ignorance of this divine prohibition, when he perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and shortly after his removal of the seat of his government from Hebron to Jerusalem, he "took him more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem" (2 Sam. 5:12, 13)). His doing, besides showing that he was pampering his lusts, bespeaks pride. The pattern of his marital life had now become distinctly pagan.

Also to be mentioned is his entrusting the conduct of the war with the Ammonites to Joab, while he tarried in Jerusalem. His place was not in his palace but in the field with his soldiers. His inertness strongly suggests that he had become luxurious. He could not have been walking with God. For it was during this interval that he was overtaken by his adulteries.

Finally, his very adulteries—his summoning into his presence a neighbor's wife for purposes of adultery, while this neighbor was away risking his life on the battlefield for the cause of God, bespeaks not alone unbridled lust but colossal sinful pride as well. And what an insult to the face of the woman for him even to make mention to her of his adulterous design on her person. That alone required a good deal of brazen nerve.

David's heart was lifted up indeed. And so he had need of being humbled. And God did humble him. He gave him up to vile affections to defile his own body and that of his neighbor's wife. Thus he sinned aboundingly, even adding sin to sin in his effort to avoid being found out. But if sin abounded, grace did much more abound. For he repented and was forgiven. And he continued to repent the rest of his days even as God in His mercy continued to lay upon him His strokes in punishment of his sins. As seated in the sanctuary before God's face, he had once prayed, "Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?" By punishing sin in him with sin and thereupon magnifying His grace in him, the Lord taught him who he was: a sinner saved by grace. And he was no longer proud. But these are matters of which we must speak later.

We decry David's sins. We set them before us and are astonished; and we ask how a man making mention of the name of the Lord could do such wicked

things. It is well, if only the spectacle of David's vile doings does not cause us to say by ourselves: God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men. . . . or even as this David. That is what the Pharisee said. But let us instead smite the breast and say: God be merciful to me a sinner. For that is what David said later as a penitent. And David was justified. But the Pharisee went to perdition, though he may have been a paragon of virtue. Many of them were.

There are sins worse than David's adultery. To refuse to repent of sin is worse. Men go lost for that, however decent and respectable they may be. But they who repent and forsake their sins are saved, be they publicans and sinners.

Not like David? Paul did not say that. "I am carnal, sold under sin," is what he said. And he thanked God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Not like David? "By the grace of God I am what I am." Paul said that too. And Christ said "that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath already committed adultery with her in his heart." Loving sin, thinking, and desiring sin, we commit sin already in our heart, though for every reason except the one reason that we love God, we allow it no expression in word and deed. Yet we say we are not like David?

Then this other word of Christ to the effect that from within, out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness and defile the man. Is our heart cleansed? If not, then, truly, we are *not* like David. For his heart was cleansed, that is, he was a regenerated man, though in him, that is, in his flesh, there dwelt no good thing.

G. M. Ophoff.



## David and Uriah

Having according to the law (Lev. 15:18) washed herself from her uncleanness, Bathsheba returned to her home. But she conceived. Her sending David tidings that she was with child, was therefore a cry of distress and a warning to David.

But what was David to do? Their adultery could be concealed only by the employment of deceit, that is, by his passing off Uriah as the father of the child born in adultery, or, should that prove impossible, by his murdering Uriah and marrying betimes his wife. So David had but one choice. He must allow his adultery to become known; make public confession of it. There was no other right way out of his predicament. But David decided to conceal his adultery by the employment of wickedness. It can be explained. He could

allow his sin to become known only at great cost, perhaps at the cost of his life and of the life of Bathsheba. For in Israel adultery was a capital crime. "And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death" (Lev. 20:10. See also Num. 5:12-31; Deut. 22:22). But he should have believed that only by his willingness to lose his life could he save it. He should have considered, too, that though he should succeed in concealing his sin by the employment of wickedness, his sin would nevertheless find him out. For God is not mocked. And with Him there is no respect of persons.

His sin was secret. And his wanting to keep it secret would not have been wrong, if keeping it secret could only have been accomplished without the employment of wickedness. There is no virtue in making public a sin that is secret, if there be no necessity. But David was under necessity of God's own will as revealed in the divine prohibitions, "Thou shalt not bear false witness," and, "Thou shalt not kill". Despising God's commands, David chose the forbidden way out of his troubles.

His purpose being, as was stated, to pass off Uriah as the father of the child, David commanded Joab to send him the Hittite. David addressed to him questions bearing on the progress of the war, his aim being to hide from him the real purpose of his being called and to make it appear that he was summoned to render a military report. "And when Uriah was come unto him, David demanded of him how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered." Uriah could enlighten the king. For he was not a soldier of ordinary rank. He was one of David's mighty men." He had command in the army.

David finally dismissed Uriah to his house. He sent after him literally "something taken up"—doubtless a dish of honor for him to enjoy in his house. But Uriah did not act according to David's will but he remained in the door of his palace, where he spent the night "with all the servants of his lord," that is, with the royal court officials or the body-guard.

Hearing that Uriah had not gone down to his own house, David was much perturbed, better said, frantic. He was not getting his way with Uriah. Ordering him into his presence, he rather severely upbraided him for his strange behavior. He said to him, "Camest thou not from thy journey? Why then didst thou not go down to thy house? as much as to say: What ailest thee, Uriah. And Uriah replied, "The ark of God, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord—of my lord Joab, he means—are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house to eat and to drink, and to lie

with my wife? as thou livest and thy soul livest, I will not do this thing."

If Uriah was unsuspecting, which is not likely, his reply bespeaks a magnificent zeal of God's service. If he had heard whisperings and was filled with suspicion and distrust, his reply as to his own intentions was also an indirect denunciation of David's carnal way of life in time of war. For David was doing just that: he was eating and drinking and lying with his wives and with his neighbor's wife, with the ark and Judah and Israel abiding in tents and with Joab and the army of Israel encamped in the open fields.

Uriah had meant every word. It was no time for indulging life's pleasures. There was a war with the heathen in progress. He would return to the battle at once that same hour. But David restrained him. He would try to get him to go home by the employment of trickery. That required just a little time. One more day would do. "Tarry here today also," were his orders to Uriah," and tomorrow I will let thee depart. So Uriah abode in Jerusalem that day." David called him to his table and made him drunk in order thus to secure his spending the coming night with his wife. But the night found him lying on his bed with the servants of David. He had not gone down to his house. The wine may have stupefied his mind and dulled his senses; it had not broken down his determination not to cohabit with his wife. It almost compels us to conclude that he had been told of the affair with Bathsheba and was unwilling to be used as a tool.

But now David took recourse to a new artifice that made murder his minister. He commanded Uriah to return to Joab, and placed in his hand a letter in which he instructed Joab to place Uriah in the hottest of the battle and then to withdraw from him that he might be smitten and die. Thus Uriah had to be gotten rid of in such a way that would make it seem that he was the victim of the ordinary fortunes of war.

Why David wanted Uriah murdered is clear from the sequel of the narrative. He wanted to make Bathsheba his wife. And not alone that. He wanted also to make her his wife the sooner the better. Hence "it came to pass *in the morning*, that David wrote a letter to Joab. . . ." thus wrote this letter so soon as it had become clear to him that Uriah was determined not to cohabit with his wife. The reason for David's haste is obvious. He must be married to Bathsheba long enough to allow him to deny that the child was begotten prior to their marriage, begotten, in a word, in adultery.

As to Joab, though ignorant of the reason of the command, he obeyed and became a partner in David's murder. Joab observed the city, his purpose being to discover that part of it most difficult to defend. For there the valiant men would be to fight in the sally.

Having discovered such a place, Joab placed there Uriah and his company. The enemy went forth into the field. There was a battle in which a number of Israelites including Uriah were slain.

Joab rendered a report of the battle to David through the agency of a messenger. Joab feared that David's anger would rise at the hearing of the spilling of the blood of his own men. Joab's fear spake well for David. It shows that he really loved his men and was sparing of their lives in battle. Joab anticipated what David might say by way of complaint. He might ask why they approached so near the city and whether they did not know that the enemy might shoot from the wall. He might direct attention to Abimelech, the son of Jerubbesheth i.e., Gideon, who was killed by a millstone cast upon him from the wall by a woman. Should David thus complain, the messenger must tell him that Uriah too was dead.

The messenger came to David and rendered his report. The enemy went forth into the field but was beaten back by the Israelites who were upon them even to the entering of the gate of their city. The shooters shot from off the wall, and a number of Israelites were killed including Uriah.

The messenger knew nothing of the content of the letter. He thus believed that Uriah's death was chargeable to no one but to himself. Of his own accord he had approached too near the enemy wall, which, of course, was true.

This time David's wrath kindled not. Now that Uriah was dead, he was too relieved to be angry. We must take notice of his reply to Joab. "Let not this thing—the death of Uriah—be evil in thy sight." To get rid of Uriah David had to make the unscrupulous Joab his confidant in sin, at least to an extent. It was in reply to the condemning voice of Joab's conscience and also of his own, that he says, "Let not this thing be evil in thy sight," and adds, "for the sword devour-eth one as well as the other." Uriah's death had to be attributed to chance, to the fortunes of war. It was not a sin chargeable to David and to Joab. Such was his reasoning.

Now follows a word of encouragement. Joab shall make his battle strong against the city and overthrow it. With these words shall the messenger encourage Joab.

Uriah was now dead. Tidings were sent to Bathsheba. When the days of her mourning were past, David took her and she became his wife. And she bare him a son.

But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.

G. M. Ophoff.

## I Have Loved You

*"The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi.*

*I have loved you, saith the Lord."*

Mal. 1:2a.

It is the Lord who is speaking to His people. And the word that He speaks to them is the message they always have need of hearing. It is the message that He loves them. And he has been telling them so from the beginning of time, through the ages of the past. And He will be telling them so through the ages of the future and everlastingly. For this word of God to His people "I love you" is gospel; it is the essence of the gospel. And His gospel He had been proclaiming to His people from the beginning. Right after the "Fall of Man" He said, "I will set enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed, he shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel." That was gospel. It was the Lord proclaiming to the church—there represented by our first parents—saying to His ill-deserving and condemnable yet chosen people, who had just disobeyed the commandment of God and made common cause with Satan, that He loved them unconditionally and unfailingly, so loved them that He gave His only begotten Son, that believing they might have life abundantly. And everlastingly His word to them will be: my people I love thee."

No mere man could tell them, that God loves them, that is, tell them so that they know in their hearts that it is true,—no mere man, I say, whoever that man might be; no mere human preacher of the word, whoever that preacher might be, could tell God's people that He loved them. It is God who does so by speaking in their hearts His gospel of love and reconciliation,—the Gospel as preached by His servants called unto the ministry thereof.

So there is but one correct answer to the question: how does a man know that God loves him. And that answer is: God tells him. And that is the only reason that any man knows, can know. God tells him. And to this may be added that the only people who do know are the believers, the elect of God.

Here, I believe, we also have an answer to the question whether God loves the wicked. To avoid confusion I must speak here of reprobated wicked. Does He love them? Allow me to counter with this question: Lived there ever a reprobated wicked one with the testimony of God in his soul that God loves him? I can also state the question thus: is there one case on record of God telling a reprobated wicked through the preaching of the gospel as sanctified to his heart, or by direct revelation that He loved him? There is not such a case on record, is there? It has never happened,

has it? And it will never happen. Well then, let me ask: If God loves also the reprobated wicked, why doesn't He tell them? But He doesn't. All that He tells them is that He is angry with them every day, and that He is against them. And therefore they are afraid and have no peace. For they are wicked.

The only men who have in their heart the testimony of God that they are loved of God are the men who are not wicked. And these men are the believers, the elect of God in Christ. To these people, as speaking by His Spirit in their hearts, God says: I love you, and to these people only.

Christ said: Blessed are ye. . . . for thine is the kingdom. Did He say that to the wicked and to the pure of heart? Nay, but to the latter only. And whom does He comfort? Only they who mourn. Not also the wicked. And who inherit the earth? Only the meek. Not also the violent. And who shall be filled with righteousness? Only they who hunger and thirst. Not also the satiated. And who shall obtain mercy? Only the merciful and not also the cruel. And who shall see God? Only the pure of heart, not also the impure. And who shall be called the children of God? Only the peacemakers. Not also the warmongers.

It seems to me that, everything considered—and by everything I mean the Scriptures as corroborated by experience—God does not love the wicked (reprobated). God loves His people and He tells His people that He loves them. If He loves the wicked why does He not also tell them, too, that He loves them. But He never does. Does it not shut us up to the conclusion that He does not love them? that the love, the grace of God, is not common, but particular?

G. M. Ophoff.



## Contributions

Brother K. Feenstra:

In your contribution published in this paper last July 1st you wrote that the Rev. A. Petter has no right to write "Among Our Treasures" in Concordia, "for among our treasures is especially this one: namely, that we are unconditionally saved by grace alone, and through faith which is the power of God alone."

Where has the Rev. Petter ever even so much as hinted or suggested that he opposes this glorious truth?

I write this in the interest of keeping the records straight and in defense of one who himself maintains firmly like John Calvin the unconditionality of salvation.

Fraternally in Christ,

Rev J. W. Van Weelden,  
Sioux Center, Iowa.

## SION'S ZANGEN

### Verlost Uit Het Diensthuis

(Psalm 114; Slot)

Toen we de vorige maal stilhielden bij dezen psalm zagen we, dat Christus Jezus de *vervulling* is van het eerste en tweede vers. Hij is den Drie-Eenigen God geworden tot een heiligdom en Hij is Gode geworden Zijne volkomene heerschappij.

En Jezus is dat Gode geworden langs den bangen weg van eene onuitsprekelijke slavernij. De uitreding van Israel en Juda uit de klauwen van Egypte is type van de uitredding van Jezus uit den eeuwigen dood. God zegt in het Nieuwe Testament: Ik heb Mijn Zoon uit Egypte geroepen. En een beeld daarvan heeft de historie gezien toen het volk Gods onder het Oude Verbond al juichende uit Egypte toog.

Jezus is de groote Eersteling.

En indien gij van Jezus zijt, dan wordt ge in Hem en door Hem Gode tot een heiligdom en tot eene volkomene heerschappij. Dan begint ge te stamelen: Spreek, Heere, Uw dienstknecht of dienstmaagt hoort! Dat heeft Jezus volkomenlijk gedaan voor U en voor mij. En Hij leert ons door Zijn Woord en Geest om dat gedurig te doen in de heiligmaking.

Totdat de dag aanbreekt, wanneer we dat volmaakt zullen doen in het Nieuwe Koninkrijk. Daar wachten we op.

Nu verder.

"De zee zag het en vlood, de Jordaan keerde achterwaarts."

De Heere en Zijn Heilige Geest hebben haast in dit vers. Tusschen het vlieden der zee en het achterwaarts keeren van de wateren des Jordans liggen maar liefst veertig lange jaren.

En de gedachte is, dat alle veertig jaren dit wonderwerk van God gezien hebben.

Het is een wonderlijk werk, dat God werkt.

Het wonderlijke is, dat Hij het leven roept uit den dood. Dat hebben de wateren van de Roode Zee gezien.

Daar staat Israel. Ze zijn gekomen tot aan het Roode Meer. Voor hen liggen en dreigen de kokende golven. Op zij van dit martelaarsvolk verheffen zich de bergen, en achter hen briescht de duivel in de legers der Egyptenaren. Er is angst in het leger van Jakob.

Maar daar komt God!

O ja, er is het zwaaien geweest van den staf van Mozes. Maar ik zou U willen smeecken om U niet blind te staren op dien staf. Achter en boven dien staf is het blikken van God op de zee die Zijn volk bedreigt. Wie zou niet voor de kokende baren van de zee teruggedienzen?

Ik denk, dat die woeste soldaten van Farao geschreeuwd hebben van goddelooze blijdschap bij het zien van die twee millioen arme stakkerds die zoo in het eng gedreven waren. Alreede heffen zij hunne zwaarden op om dit volk te slachten bij hoopen.

Maar o wonder van God!

Hij zag de wateren aan, en ze zijn geschrokken van God. Dat is het beeld, dat hier gebruikt wordt. Zij zijn gevloten.

Als kleine kinderen hebben we ons die dingen al ingedacht, en we werden vervuld met de vreeze des Heeren. We hebben die wanden van vloeiend water gezien. Men kon zoo maar in de wateren blikken, ter rechter en ter linkerhand. O zeker, God is wonderlijk en groot van vermogen!

God baande door de woeste baren en golven een pad voor Zijn teederlijk beminde volk. Ik denk ze hebben gezongen bij het zien van de verschrikte zee.

Denkt nu weer eens aan Jezus. De Bijbel spreekt van de banden en de koorden des doods die Jezus omarmden met een eeuwige omarming. Maar ze konden Hem niet houden. De zeeën die eeuwig zijn en die den schuldige moeten omarmen, werden ontbonden, de eeuwige zee van rampen zijn geschrokken van God toen Hij kwam om Zijn Zoon te verlossen. Hij is opgestaan uit de dooden.

En zoo is het met alle Israelieten, met al het ware volk van God. God ziet op de zee van ellende en dood die ons van nature omknelt, en zij moet wijken, en wij staan op uit de dooden. We worden wederom geboren.

Hallelujah!

En zoo is het gegaan met den Jordaan. Hij is achterwaarts gekeerd.

Israel had veertig jaren gezworven in de huilende wildernis.

Mar ook daar was het wonder Gods steeds nabij geweest.

Er was een Rots die hen volgde en die Rots was Christus.

Het gevaar in de wildernis is gebrek aan water. Welnu, de stroomen van water werden hun uitgestort uit den Rotssteen. Ze zijn niet omgekomen. Ze hadden het dubbel en dwars verdiend vanwege hun zonden en ongerechtigheden. Maar God, schoon zwaar getergd, was hun genadig. Hij vergaf hunne zonden en Hij delgde uit hunne ongerechtigheden, en Hij bracht hen naar den Jordaan.

En zullen ze nu dan toch nog geweerd worden uit het land der belofte?

O neen.

Ziet sterk op Jozua. En Jozua is Jezus. Ziet sterk op den Zoon van God. Hij zal U leiden tot over dood en graf tot in het hemelsche Kanaan. We hebben het beeld gezien ten overstaan van Israel's scharen.

Ze kwamen bij den Jordaan. Maar die rivier kan hen niet tegenhouden. Hij keert achterwaarts. Er

komt een pad en zij marcheeren door het pad des doods naar de zalen waar eeuwig leven hun deel is.

Gods volk sterft om eeuwiglijk te leven.

Als ze hun laatste snik snikken op het sterfbed gaat het al hooger, totdat de Engelen Gods hen brengen tot voor den troon van God.

Ik heb stervende binderen Gods hooren zingen: Ik zal eeuwig zingen van Gods goedertierenheid.

"De bergen sprongen als rammen, de heuvelen als lammeren."

Dat is gebeurd bij de Wetgeving van Sinai.

Het is er vreeselijk naar toe gegaan bij Horeb.

Het volk werd er bang van. Ze smeekten Mozes, dat hij toch maar met God zou spreken, om dan terug te keeren en den Woorde Gods hen te verkondigen.

En toch, het was verkeerd om zoo te doen. Al dat scheuren der rotsen en dat springen der bergen is het effect op de geschapen dingen vanwege de wonderwerken Gods.

"Ik ben de Heere uwe God!"

O die Wetgeving was een bewijs van de eeuwige liefde Gods!

Hij liet de andere volken wandelen in hunne wegen. En zij hebben het verdorven door de eeuwen heen. De geschiedenis van alle goddelooze volkeren is een vreeselijke kommentaar op die woorden. God liet hen in hunne wegen wandelen. En daar liggen zij in hun vuil. Het is een vuil, dat niet geboekstaafd kan vanwege de gruwelen. De zonde wordt zonder die Wet gebotvierd. Het gaat van gruwel tot grooter gruwel, totdat de Heere hen omkeert als Sodom en Gomorrah. Ons hart gruwet, want wij zijn van nature niet beter.

Maar God doet Zijn wonderen ook bij Horeb. Hij zoekt Zijn volk op, en geeft hun de Wet. En de Wet is het eigen liefdeleven van God. Het alles van die Wet is de liefde Gods: hebt God lief en uw naaste als uzelf. En dat is goddelijk schoon.

Bovendien is die Wet altijd geweest een tuchtmeester tot Christus. Zij wees steeds naar Jezus Christus heen die in de volheid des tijds komen zou om die Wet te vervullen voor het ware Israel en Juda.

O neen, het is geen wonder, dat de bergen sprongen als rammen en de heuvelen als lammeren toen God Zijn volk op kwam zoeken. Het zou vreemd geweest zijn als zij het niet gedaan hadden.

Later, veel later hebben het de profeten gezien en verstaan, en zij klaagden bij groote verlating: Och, Heere, dat Gij toch nederkwaamt, dat Gij de bergen scheurdet vanwege Uw nederkomst!

Nog later is het nog eens weer geschied.

Toen Jezus de onbegrijpelijke liefde van God openbaarde door het moede hoofd te buigen en den geest te geven voor Zijn volk, toen zijn de rotsen gescheurd en toen is de zon verduisterd. Al te zamen teekenen van God. Er zullen getuigen zijn in den oordeelsdag, getuigen uit het brute schepsel tegen alle goddeloozen.

En die getuigen zijn vliedende zeeën, achterwaarts keerende rivieren, springende bergen en splijtende rotsen. En zij zullen de goddeloozen veroordeelen.

“Wat was u, gij zee, dat gij vloodt? gij Jordaan, dat gij achterwaarts keerdet, gij bergen, dat gij opspringt als rammen, gij heuvelen als lammeren?”

O, dat zijn goede vragen!

Waarom al die vreemde effecten in het rijk der natuur?

Er zijn er vele geweest in dat rijk, van het begin der openbaring in de historie tot op den huidigen dag toe. Ja zeker, ook tot op den dag van heden.

Er zijn zonsverduisteringen, aardbevingen, waterfloeden, wervelwinden en wat die meer zij. En zij zijn alle boodschappers van God.

En wel moogt ge die dingen vragen naar de reden van hun schrikken en woelen.

En het zal nog erger worden.

Hoe dichter we bij het einde der dagen komen, hoe vreeselijker zal de reactie der geschapen dingen zijn ten overstaan van de vervulling van het eeuwige mysterie. De zon zal geheel en al verduisterd worden, en de maan wordt dan als bloed. De sterren, alle sterren zullen van den hemel vallen, en de oceanen zullen bruischen en koken. Nog eenmaal, zegt Paulus, zal God de dingen doen bewegen, en die beweging zal onbeschrijfelijk zijn.

Wel mogen we vragen: waarom springt gij op, o bergen? Waarom al die beroering?

En het antwoord is in het volgende vers: “Beef gij aarde voor het aangezicht des Heeren, voor het aangezicht van den God Jakobs.”

God heeft een Aangezicht.

En dat Aangezicht is Zijn openbaring. En de lieflijkste openbaring is Jezus Christus, de Heere.

Maar dat lieflijke aangezicht is tevens verschrikkelijk. Het is lieflijk voor allen die geboren zijn in het bundelken der levenden. Want dat bundelken ontving genade in de oogen van God.

En vraagt mij nu niet waarom het zoo is en niet anders, want ik weet het niet. Waarom ontving Jakob genade in die oogen en Ezau niet? Ik weet het niet. Ik mag alleen nog maar één stap nemen, en zeggen: om 't eeuwig welbehagen! En daarmee is het uit. Verder kan ik niet wandelen. De verdere diepten doen mij duizelen. Ik ben niet beter dan de goddeloozen die verloren gaan. Erger nog: ik ben juist zoo schuldig en doemwaardig als dat arme, ongelukkige volk waarop de Heere vergramd is tot in der eeuwigheid.

Nu dan, datzelfde lieflijke Aangezicht (en dat is Jezus) is in gramschap gewend tegenover de verworpen goddeloozen. Straks zal deze tekst nog eens weer gezongen worden, maar dan in de eindelijke vervulling. En van dit Aangezicht zal men sidderende elkander toeroepen: Wie kan bestaan voor dat OOG?? En wie kan bestaan voor de grimmigheid van het Lam? Want

de groote dag Zijns toorns is gekomen en wij schreeuwen van angst, van angst!

Vreeselijk zal het zijn te vallen in de handen des levenden Gods!

Beef voor Hem nu!

Indien ge nu voor Hem beeft met een heilige beving die opwelt uit de vreeze Gods die rein is, dan behoeft ge niet te beven in den oordeelsdag. Voor die vreesachtigen is het dan voor eeuwig te laat.

Maar Gods Woord zegt, dat zalig zijn die geduriglijk vreezen! Het is het vreezen van eerbied en ontzag, van liefde en verbondsmin. O God, geef dat vermogen!

Want God zijt aanbiddelijk en vreeselijk van vermogen! Er zijn zoovele redenen.

De laatste woorden van dezen zang zal er ons één van melden: “die den rotssteen veranderde in eenen watervloed, den keisteen in eene waterfontein.”

Hier zit het gansche Evangelie in.

De rotssteen en de keisteen is wat we verdiend hebben:

Vrage: als ge Uzelven in de huilende wildernis vindt, waar het grootste gevaar is om Uw gehemelte te voelen barsten vanwege den dorst, wat is dan groote zaligheid? Stroomen van koel water!

Als de zonnestralen U branden en ge met heesche stem schreeuwt van dorst, wat is dan Uw eenig verlangen? Fonteynen van levend water!

Nu dan: van nature is ons deel de harde rotssteen en de keien die ongevoelig zijn voor mijn brandende dorst. Hier legt ge de grootste tegenstelling die klare taal spreekt. Inplaats van vloeiende stroomen van helder en koel water, de onbewegelijke steenen en rosten en keien.

Dat is de hel. In de hel is alles hard en onbeweeglijk en wreed.

Maar mijn eindelijke tekst spreekt van het groote wonder Gods: Hij verandert den rotssteen in een watervloed! Dat is hetzelfde als te zeggen: de dood wordt veranderd in het leven.

En dat is ook geschied! Hallelujah!

Mozes sloeg den Rotssteen op zekeren dag. En hij verwachtte niet, dat er water zou komen. Maar, o wonder van Goddelijke, onbegrijpelijke genade, er kwam een stortvloed van verfrisschend water. En Israel dronk. Dat is het kruis van Jezus. God heeft den Rotssteen óók geslagen met eeuwigen slagen en striemen. En door Zijne striemen is U genezing geworden. Er is koel, verfrisschend water, mijn broeder!

Er zijn stortbloeden en fonteynen geopend te Jeruzalem tegen de zonde en tegen de overtreding, mijn zuster! Laat ons dan toegaan door de vrijmoedigheid des geloofs, en laat ons drinken, drinken!

Door zulk drinken komt het eeuwige leven, en dat is God kennen door Jezus, den Liefhebber onzer zielen.

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

G. Vos.



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## FROM HOLY WRIT

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### Exposition of John 13:34-35

In this essay we would call attention to the words of Jesus spoken at the occasion of the institution of the Lord's Supper in the upper-room. We refer to the following from Jesus' mouth: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another."

It will not be gain-said by anyone who carefully reads the text, that the central and all-controlling subject of Jesus is: *love for one another*. We should notice that this content of the new commandment, namely, that we love one another, is not merely stated by Jesus in a very off-hand way. It is not a mere detail in the text, nor is it a fragmentary statement. On the contrary, it is a complete statement of the central and all-controlling commandment of Christ to His disciples, and to all who will believe through their word of preaching.

Attend to the following in the text.

In the first place notice that Jesus repeats this "love for one another" not less than three times. Says He: I give you a new commandment: *That ye love one another*. Again Jesus qualifies this love by adding: "Even as I have loved you in order that ye also love one another". And, finally, the Saviour adds: All shall know that ye are my disciples by this ear-mark: that ye *have* love one for another.

The commandment here is: the mutual love that believers in Christ have for each other, the love of those who gather as guests at the table of the fellowship of the New Testament in His blood.

Two matters stand forth in bold relief in this commandment of Christ to us. The first is, that Jesus, in here speaking of our *loving one another*, places His finger upon the very heart of the law of God, He touches upon the *spiritual covenant nature* of God's law. This is not a mere cataloging of precept upon precept, and of commandment upon commandment, here a rule and there a law, so that we can look it up in file number so and so. The commandment of Jesus does not at all allow for a division into greater and lesser commandments, nor does it allow for a sphere of indifferent things. (adiaphora). Nor is there left any room for a mere externalization of the commandments; a mere keeping of the *letter* of the law. All this is radically cut off by Jesus in this one commandment, that we love

one another. Indeed Jesus here refers to the very essence of the keeping of the law of God.

It is for this very reason that he does not give a *prohibition*. He does not come with the "thou shalt not", but rather with the positive: "Love ye one another".

The second matter that strikes our attention in this commandment of Christ is, that Jesus in speaking of the keeping of the law of God, directs attention only to the second table of the law: that we *love one another*, or: that we love our neighbor as ourselves. This fact is indeed noteworthy. Let us ask ourselves the question why Jesus here thus speaks.

It ought to be clear, first of all, that no one should jump at the hasty conclusion that Jesus in speaking of the Second Commandment forgets about the First Commandment. Pray, how could Jesus exclude from His teaching the First and Great Commandment, namely, that we love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength? Would Jesus standing here at the table of the New Testament in His blood disjoin in His High-priestly soul and in His prophetic mind, what He at an earlier occasion had shown to be joined together? Would that upon which all of "the law and the prophets" depend, simply be set aside here? To ask this question is to answer it.

Nay, the Son of Man does not forget any of all the words of God; least of all of the primordial relationship of the two tables of the law; of that law which He has a perfect ear to hear and which he at this moment is fulfilling in His humiliation to the Cross!

But, then, why does Jesus here not say: And this is the new commandment, that *ye love God above all*. Why not? Someone may remark that this is a dangerous question to ask. Then, too, it may be objected that it is impossible to answer such a question as to why Jesus did not express a certain thought-content. The latter we readily grant. Still we would like to determine from the Scripture just what the purpose and intent is of Jesus' words here spoken in the upper room. It is from this point of view that we ask: Why did Jesus say just these words here recorded in the text under consideration, and why did he, in the light of the correct interpretation of his words spoken, not speak differently. And so we inquire: why does Jesus here make the content of the new commandment: that we *love one another*?!

The answer is undoubtedly to be sought in the fact, that Jesus is here standing at the table of the New Testament in His blood. He is standing in the midst of His brethren. And they are brethren only because of what He is doing and because of what He shall do for them in this night in which He is be-

trayed. He will, by His blood, break down the middle wall of partition consisting in commandments and ordinances, and will reconcile all His brethren unto God, making them *one new man*. So he makes peace for all His own whether they be Jews or Gentiles, male or female, bond or free, Barbarian or Scythian. All are one new man in Christ, in which He is to be all in all.

Well, now, since Jesus thus stands here He speaks of the commandments to them as they are constituted the new manhood, the new creation of God in Christ. And He says: *love one another*. For in this loving of one another in Christ we know that we have passed from death into life. It is this brother whom we see that Jesus speaks of. In fact all the brethren see each other. Him we must love. Shall we then love God too? Yes, but we cannot be loving God whom we *do not see* if we do not love the brethren whom *we see*. I John 4:20. And to this John adds: And this *commandment* have we from him, that, he who loveth God, love his brother also! Jesus, therefore, does not separate the first and the second commandment, but He brings the matter of our loving God "down to earth" in His new commandment that we love one another.

Loving each other as brethren and sisters is an indication that we love God with hearts that are indeed purified from an evil conscience, by hearts that have been established before God by almighty grace and saving love. It is a remarkable fact, that Jesus, in instructing His disciples in the Sermon on the Mount, also teaches concerning the will of God for all who enter into the Kingdom. In Matt. 2:19 f.f., Jesus speaks of the righteousness that is more overflowing than that of the Pharisees and Scribes. Then He shows that He indeed did not come to destroy the law and the prophets by illucidating in detail upon the commandments contained in the *Second Table of the Law* of God. It is here among men that we are in the proving grounds of our being perfect; of our being children of our Father in heaven.

It is for this latter reason that Jesus here gives the content of the New Commandment to be that we *love one another*.

There is still another element in this word of Jesus to which I wish to call attention at this time. We refer, of course, to the fact that Jesus calls the Commandment that we love one another a *new* commandment. We ask: in what sense of the word is this commandment *new*? Does this imply that this is the first time that this commandment had ever been promulgated from the lips of Jesus, or from that of the prophets who came before Him?

When we look rather carefully at this commandment that we *love one another* it strikes us that it

really is the Second Commandment like unto the First and Great Commandment. It is a part of the Great Shamah, of the "Hear, Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord!" And taken in this sense it indeed is not a *new* commandment at all, but the *old* commandment of God. For is this not the commandment that was in the mind of God when He spoke by Himself, when He spoke in monologue: Let us make man after our image and likeness? And was this not the implied commandment to Adam in Paradise? And did not this commandment *stand*, even after the fall and before the Prot-Evangel was spoken to Adam and Eve in Paradise? And is this not the essence of the law for all men inside and outside of the covenant-sphere, even from Adam to Moses? And is it not the heart of the law given at Sinai, even though it is there accompanied with thunder, lightnings, darkness and tempest? Is it not the law as sung of by Psalmists, prophets, and by bards of old?

Surely, this must be the old, old Commandment.

Yet, Jesus calls it *new*. New it therefore must surely be. And we do well to give heed to this light of the Prophetic Word in a dark place. New commandment? What does it mean?

Probably the key to the proper interpretation is given us most clearly and unmistakeably in 1 John 2:7, 8. "Beloved, no *new* commandment write I unto you, but an *old* commandment which ye had from the beginning: the old commandment is the word which ye heard. Again, a *new* commandment write I unto you, which thing is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light already shineth."

Now in this passage we would notice especially the latter part, it sheds light on the notion of the "new commandment". This new commandment is the "thing that is true in the Church and in Jesus". It is the shining of the true light. It is the manifestation of the *love* of God through Christ in His church in the world.

But why is it called "new"?

The answer is no doubt, that Christ has come to take away all of the sins and the guilt of us who believe, the sins and guilt of all of His own given Him by the Father. In so doing God performs a new work under the sun. He makes all things new! All things are made new in the new Covenant in Christ's blood. He remembers our sins no more and He writes His law through the preaching of the Word and by the operation of the Holy Spirit into our hearts, so that we are a very *willing* people in the day of this His power. This willingness is a *new* willingness, it is a love and delight in the commandments and precepts of God. The redeemed, the renewed Church, the new creation of God sings: O, how love I Thy law, it is my meditation all the day.

Christ has made the law of God for us new, fresh, lovely. What the law could not do in that it was weak through sin Christ hath performed in the likeness of sinful flesh, condemning sin in the flesh, that the *just demand* of God be fulfilled in us.

And now this just command is the object of our love. It teaches us wisdom, we who are the simple. It comes to us as a command, indeed! Yet, it is a *new* commandment! For it comes to us as we are believers and it stimulates us to believing action of love. Of believing action of *having* love for one another. And so the newness of God's work comes to manifestation before the eyes of all men in this: that we have love one for another.

Standing at the table of the New Testament in His blood, Jesus preaches the Post-Communion Sermon. Well, may we emulate this sermon as the church has always done. Let us learn to love each other not merely in words, but to manifest it toward one another in very deed.

Loving one another we will silence the contempt of those who are without. We shall indeed be a peculiar people of the living God in the midst of this world. So let us keep this new commandment, whether we be rich or poor, great or small, owing each other nothing except to love one another. The new commandment entails a wondrous debt. It must always be paid and yet is still always owed!

G. Lubbers.



## IN HIS FEAR

### Called To His Praise

*Kings and Children of The King.*

The first line of the chorus of a rather well-known hymn reads thus, "I'm a child of The King, a child of The King". The stanzas which precede this chorus speak of all the glory and beauty of The King Whose children we are. And, of course, the implication is that since He is so rich in treasures of "wealth untold", we too are extremely rich and blessed as His children. Now this thought we do not wish to deny at all. All things are ours. The meek shall inherit the earth. And that which is prepared for us is pictured to us in the book of Revelation in such glowing terms that one is dazzled by the beauty of it all.

Sing then of your inheritance and praise God for it. For you are called to His praise! But at the same time

do not forget that other side of the picture. You are a child of The King. In His heavenly house you shall everlastingly dwell. Its blessedness you shall taste for evermore. But He has also made you to be a king. He has given you a realm over which to rule.

You may be an invalid who is not able to move a limb or finger. You may lie so very still with almost complete paralysis of your body, and yet you remain a king. Your realm may be very small. The subjects you rule may be very few in number, but through all your conscious life you remain a king. And as king you must rule every member of your realm with a rod of iron that there may be praise to the Living God.

Our kingdom varies, of course. You and I do not rule the same realm. The subjects of your kingdom are not those of mine. When we try to rule the subjects of another's kingdom warfare and strife result, and that is not to the praise of God. You have your own realm. Rule it well! What is your realm? Let us begin as closely to home as we can. Count the ten fingers on your two hands. They are your subjects. Your eyes, your ears, your mind and heart, yea, all the members of your body are the subjects you must rule to the glory of God's name. Rule them well with a rod of iron that they see no evil, speak no evil and hear no evil. The royal priesthood of God does not take those eyes and ears into the movies of the world. Of course not! But neither does God's priestly king take those eyes and ears and put them before the godless nonsense and filth of today's radio and television programs! Beware! You have been given those eyes and ears to use in the fear of the Lord to His praise. And as we wrote above, you may lie so very still on a bed of paralysis, but yet you have a realm over which you must rule, and your lot is not at all an easier one than he who is free to move and go about as he pleases. Watch that mind and heart! How we can rebel in our thoughts and desires, how we can murmur and complain about God's way with us! There is indeed a definite calling of the afflicted to rule well his mind and heart. A kingly priest he still is, and as such he must continue to function.

Of course, it has pleased God to give some a greater realm to rule than others. Besides our own individual lives and members which must be subjected to the law of God, we are given external, material things to employ in His service. To this one He gives houses and land, gold and silver. To another He gives other possessions which relatively are his. All is God's, and therefore must be used to serve Him. But relatively in the sphere of men there is individual possession of goods. It has pleased God to give things to one individual for his stewardship denying all others the right to take these things from him. All I have is God's, but all I have is not my neighbor's, and what God gave my neighbor to employ in His fear, He forbids me to

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take from my neighbor. Relatively, that is, in relation to our neighbor's and all other men, we do have private possessions. These, whatever and whichever they may be, are also the things over which we must exercise our kingship. We may not invest our money in a way which furthers sin. Our possessions may not be our idols which we worship and wherein we put our trust. In no way at all may our possessions be pressed into the service of the devil or his antichrist. You are a king over them to see to it that they are instrumental in the glorification of Him from Whom all things have been received and Whose all things are absolutely.

Did you ever stop to consider your kingship in the midst of your family? A king has rational, moral creatures over whom he rules, for whom he makes laws, whom he judges and upon whom he invokes the penalty for disobedience. In that relationship the father and head of the house stands over against his whole family. That family is his kingdom, and it is his responsibility before God to see to it that all these subjects, his wife and all his children live to the praise of God. This responsibility is taken so lightly today. We so quickly talk of the rights of the woman, of our children. And especially when our children have reached the years of discretion and begin to assert themselves, the parents so quickly concede that these young men and women in their homes do after all have their own rights and responsibilities. We like to wash our hands of the whole business and say that they are old enough to know for themselves. That is true, but as long as they are in *your* house, you are the king over them, whose calling of God is to insist that they walk in the fear of the Lord. Your calling is yet to rebuke, to admonish, to instruct and to point them to their calling. Just read I Samuel 3 and learn what the Lord says of Eli concerning his *married* sons with whom he labored daily. God declares to Samuel that He will destroy the house of Eli because ". . . his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not." By the way, this also applies to the men whom you have hired to work for you. You may, you *must* insist that they refrain from taking God's name in vain. You may well do, as is often done, place a sign in your establishment reading, "No profanity allowed", but then the violator must also be punished. If he continues and refuses to heed, you *must* refuse him work in your establishment. He may be a skilled mechanic you cannot replace, an excellent salesman or the like, but your business must be dedicated to the Lord by you as His priest and must be ruled over and carried on by you in His fear as His king. And surely must you do this in your home over your own flesh and blood. Insist on their faithful and regular Sabbath attendance. And in the months that lie just ahead of us be sure that as king that you insist that also the

older children in your *kingdom* not only attend their catechism class but also that they come knowing their lessons perfectly. As king you must insist that they take the time every week to learn their lessons. In fact, as king you should not allow them to leave your house the night of their catechism class without determining for yourself that they do know them! It is so easy for the king (the father) to let the queen (the mother) give all the instruction and teach the children their answers, but as king you must yet supervise and see to it that your children are also doing this which belongs to the fear of the Lord. They may be taller than you and have a better education than you have had, it makes no difference, before God you are their king. Do not abdicate, because God will still consider you the king and hold you as responsible as He did Eli. And let your children know that you are king for God's sake and that you rule them and insist on these things not to show your authority but for the glory of God. Do all things in love.

Of course, to do this all as God's king as His kingly priesthood you must be a prophet and priest of God. You must know Him and your mind must grow in the knowledge of Him for Whom you rule all these things. You must as His priest by His grace dedicate all these things in His service. Only when these are true will you rule them and employ them to that end. Mind, heart, and strength, these you have and all three must be united in the service of God. Then the man of God is perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work.

And the reward of this kingly priesthood for its faithful reign over the things entrusted to its care is the privilege to rule over more things in the New Jerusalem. In the parable of the talents Jesus declares that it is said unto the faithful stewards, "well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of the Lord." And again in the parable of the pounds it is said of the faithful servant, "Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in very little, have authority over ten cities." Note how the idea of authority and kingship are indicated in both these passages as the reward for faithful stewardship here below. Truly God's people is and in perfection shall be a kingly priesthood.

Called to His praise you are with mind, heart, and strength. Prophets, priests and kings of the Most High God you are by His grace. Walk worthy then of the vocation wherewith ye are called, so that all that which you do redounds to His glory. And by God's power and grace is His own word realized that, "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth My praises."

J. A. Heys.