

THE STANDARD *Bearer* A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XXVII

May 15, 1951 — Grand Rapids, Mich.

NUMBER 16

MEDITATION

De Genezing Van Bartimeus

“En zij kwamen te Jericho. En als Hij en Zijne discipelen, en eene groote schare, van Jericho uitging, zat de zoon van Timeus, Bar-timeus de blinde, aan den weg, bedelende. En hoorende dat het Jezus de Nazarener was, begon hij te roepen en te zeggen: Jezus, gij Zoon Davids, ontferm U mijner! En velen bestraften hem, opdat hij zwijgen zoude; maar hij riep zooveel te meer: Gij Zoon Davids, ontferm U mijner! En Jezus stilstaande, zeide dat men hem roepen zoude, en zij riepen den blinde, zeggende tot hem: Heb goeden moed, sta op, Hij roept u. En hij zijnen mantel afgeworpen hebbende, stond op en kwam tot Jezus. En Jezus antwoordende, zeide tot hem: Wat wilt gij dat Ik u doen zal? En de blinde zeide tot Hem: Rabboni, dat ik ziende mag worden. En Jezus zeide tot hem: Ga henen, uw geloof heeft u behouden. En terstond werd hij ziende, en volgde Jezus op den weg.”

Markus 10:46-52.

Er is een schril contrast in het verband van dezen tekst.

Johannes en Jacobus waren tot Jezus gekomen en hadden Hem gevraagd of zij mochten zitten aan Zijne rechterhand en de andere aan Zijne linkerhand, wanneer de Heere zou gekomen zijn in Zijne heerlijkheid.

Toen waren de andere tien zeer boos geworden. En in de woorden van onzen tekst zien we den Zoon des menschen die Zijn heerlijk werk volbrengt: Hij geneest den blinde.

De Heere had dan ook die twee van Zijne jongeren ernstiglijk berispt. Hij had hen gewezen op de fundamentele wet des Koninkrijks: “Doch alzoo zal het onder u niet zijn; maar zoo wie onder u groot zal willen worden, die zal uw dienaar zijn.”

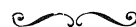
Dat is de wet des Koninkrijks: door groote nederigheid tot verhooging. Juist andersom dan het er in de wereld naar toegaat. Daar heerschen de grooten en oefenen macht uit over het volk.

En de Heere zal hun een voorbeeld geven van de dienende liefde van Jezus: Hij zal een armen blinden man genezen.

Deze geschiedenis speelde zich af een week voor Jezus' kruisdood. En de schaduwen van al de smarten van Jezus liggen op Zijn aangezicht.

Hij wordt beschreven als buitengewoon vastberaden zooals Hij voortschrijdt naar Jeruzalem. Hij weet wat Hem daar wacht. En Zijne jongeren hebben het gezien, want we lezen, dat zij “verbaasd” waren en dat zij Hem volgden.

Hij zette Zijn aangezicht naar Jeruzalem, den dood tegemoet. En het vreeselijke kruis wierp zijn schaduw over dat vastberaden gelaat van Jezus.



We zouden zoo zeggen: dat kruis zou Hem in dier mate vervullen, dat Hij geen tijd zou hebben voor kleinigheden. Hij zal toch geen tijd hebben voor een schreeuwenden bedelaar.

De vreeselijke angsten die aan 't komen zijn, en de groote heerlijkheid daarna volgende zal Hem geheel en al vervullen.

En daarom: Zwijg stil, Bartimeüs! De Heere heeft geen tijd voor u!

Maar neen: Jezus stond stil. Hij had een stem gehoord.

Het was een blinde bedelaar, Bartimeüs genaamd. Die man had van Jezus gehoord. Hij had het hooren vertellen hoe die wonderlijke Rabbi van Nazareth velen, o zoo velen genezen had van alle hunne smarten en ellenden.

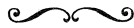
Dat is zeer duidelijk uit den tekst. Toen deze blinde man het geluid van een groote schare hoorde deed hij navraag aan de omstanders, en ontving het antwoord, dat Jezus van Nazareth voorbijging. Dat was genoeg voor hem om hem aan 't roepen te zetten.

Dus die man had van Jezus gehoord, en ook van Zijne wondere daden, anders kunnen we dat aan-

houdende roepen van dien blinden man niet verklaren.

En, let er op, dat toen de schare hem bestrafte en tot hem zeide, dat hij den Heere Jezus met rust zou laten, begon hij nog luider te roepen: Gij Zone Davids, ontferm U mijner!

Die man had van de wonderdaden van Jezus gehoord. En het moet ons ook niet ontgaan, dat deze blinde man Hem bij den schoonen naam van Zone Davids aanroept. Daaruit blinkt zijn geloof. Straks daar meer over.



Maar de Heere Jezus stond stil.

Gij hebt zeker wel eens van dat schoone lied gehoord: Jezus van Nazareth gaat voorbij!? Die dichter van dat lied maakte een groote fout toen hij alzoo dichtte.

Hij had de hoofdlijnen van dat lied moeten maken: Jezus van Nazareth stond stil! Want gij zult mij allen toestemmen, dat het feit dat Jezus stilstond op den weg het groote heil voor Bartimeüs introduceert.

Bovendien, een Jezus die voorbijgaat is een vreese-lijke waarheid. Als ik het versje hoor zingen, dan gaat er een siddering door mijn leden.

Een Jezus die voorbijgaat is de hel voor ontelbare millioenen. Maar een Jezus die stilstaat om naar het gebed van Zijn volk te luisteren is de hemel.

Dat is het schoone in deze geschiedenis.

En zoo: Jezus stond stil op den weg.

Juist dat genezen van dien blinden man is Zijn versterking op den weg. Dat was Zijn eten en drinken. Tot dat doel was Hij in de wereld gekomen.

Deze Bartimeüs was één van de gekenden des Vaders die aan den Zoon gegeven waren met het bevel, dat Hij er niet één van zou verliezen. En als temidden van het groote lawaai der wereld de stem van één dier gekenden weerklinkt dan hoort Jezus en herkent de stem die geboren wordt uit de genade Gods.

Wat een groote kracht ligt er in het verlangen om door Jezus genezen te worden. Wat ontzettende kracht ligt er in het gebed van een rechtvaardige.

Geen duivel of macht der hel kan Jezus doen stilstaan op den weg naar het kruis. Tegen iedere poging om Hem van dat pad af te voeren of te doen aarzelen op den weg naar het kruis zou Jezus gezegt hebben: Laat af! Gaat opzij! Ik moet van deze aarde verhoogd worden!

Indien geliefde vrienden getracht zouden hebben om Hem van dat kruis terug te houden, dan zou Hij hen bestraft hebben. Denkt hier aan Petrus: Dat zal U geenszins geschieden, Heere!

En dan zegt Jezus verontwaardigd: Ga achter mij Satanas! Gij zijt mij een aanstoot!

Maar het geschrei van één der gekenden op den weg naar het kruis doet Hem stilstaan. Het gebed des Geestes weerklonk op dien weg, en Jezus gehoorzaamt.

Hij hoort achter en in dien kreet van Bartimeüs het gebed van Zijn Vader in de hemelen. Wacht wereld! Wacht Jood! Wacht Rome! Wacht kruis! Ik heb werk te doen op weg naar Jeruzalem.



Ge kunt U voorstellen, dat er veel leven op den weg was: er waren vele schuifelende voeten, en er waren vele stemmen der menigte die zich op den weg verdrongen.

Maar de stem van één bidder doet Hem stilstaan.

Er is een oceaan van groot geluid in de wereld in alle tijden. Maar temidden van dien oceaan van geluid hoort Hij mijn stem!

Hoe wonderlijk en hoe groot. Dan staat God stil en dan komt Hij tot mij. En dan schijnt het alsof alles wachten moet, alsof we met zijn tweeën zijn in het groote Heelal.

En zóó is het met elk gebed en met elken waren bidder.

O, dit was een gebed van den Heiligen Geest. Er is geen twijfel aan. Niets minder kan Jezus stil doen staan. En wat een kracht blijkt uit die bede. De drang des Heiligen Geestes zit achter het verlangen van den blinde.

Luistert slechts: Gij Zone Davids!

Hij zag in Jezus den beloofden Messias. Dat is overduidelijk. En daarom hoort Jezus dan ook. En staat stil.

En niemand behoefde te lijden vanwege dat stilstaan van Jezus en van God. Als gij druk zijt met God en Hij met U door den Heiligen Geest in Uw bidden, dan lijdt niemand daardoor. Het toont hoe groot Uw God en Zaligmaker zijn.

Niet één roept ooit tevergeefs. Al die duizend, duizend samen roept de Heer bij hunne namen en niet één ontglipt Zijn oog!

Hebt ge dat liedje wel eens hooren zingen?



Hier is een les voor ons, mijn beste vrienden. God zegt tot Zijn volk: Houdt aan in het gebed. Als blinde Bartimeüs geen succes heeft bij zijn eerste roepen en schreien, roept hij des te luider om Jezus. Hij blijft roepen ook dan wanneer men hem toeroept om toch op te houden. Er staat in den tekst, dat men hem bestrafte. Hoe wreed is de mensch der zonde. Dat is ons deel in den tekst. Het zet onze onverschilligheid en onaandoenlijkheid in het licht. O, als wij zelf in de

narigheid zitten, als we zelf in angst en vertwijfeling geen uitzicht meer hebben, dan hebben we groot medelijden met onszelf. Maar wie is met ontferming bewogen over den naaste? We hooren in de verte van duizenden en duizenden die vallen, sterven, sneuvelen, vreeselijke pijnen moeten lijden, en wat uitwerking heeft het op ons van nature harde en ongevoelige hart? Gij hebt het antwoord alreede gegeven. Het is ons opgeschreven in dezen tekst: we bestraffen den armen Bartimeüs. Houdt toch stil man! Maakt toch zoo'n kabaal niet! Laat Jezus toch met rust. Hij heeft wel wat anders te doen dan om Zich te storen aan een armen bedelaar.

Wat dan? Wel, wij moeten een arm, een hand en een voet zijn voor den ellendige. Dat toont Jezus door Zijn stilstaan, door het tot Zich roepen van dezen ellendige, en door Zijn vraag: wat wilt gij dat Ik u doen zal? Een les voor ons om te luisteren naar den kreet van den ellendige. Roept hem tot U. Laat hem toe om al zijn smart uit te weenen voor ooren die medelijdend zijn, voor ooren die gaarne willen luisteren naar al de smart en al de angsten die Uw broeder lijdend moest. Weet ge wel, dat het bloote vertellen van al onze smarten voor het medelijdende oor al heel wat helpt? O zeker, Jezus heeft ons in deze geschiedenis een belangrijke les geleerd. Hebt ge het gehoord? Bestraf dan den schreiende niet meer, maar leg Uw oor te luisteren naar al de smart van Uw broeder.

Let er op hoe wispelturig de schare is. Dezelfde menschen die den armen Bartimeüs eerst bestraffen, komen nu op hem toegelopen, en zeggen heel minzaam: Heb goeden moed, sta op, Hij roept u! Walgt ge niet van die grilligheid? Eerst bestraffen ze den armen stakkerd, en nu zoo lief doen? Wat een waar-schuwend les voor ons.

Doch Bartimeüs let nauwelijks op de schare. Hij spoedt zich tot Jezus. En voor Hem staande hoort hij Jezus zeggen: Wat wilt gij dat Ik u doen zal? Even te voren hebben we eenzelfde vraag van de lippen van Jezus gehoord. Dat was in antwoord op de vraag van de zonen van Zebedeüs. Toen had de Heere Jezus ook gevraagd: Wat wilt gij dat Ik u doen zal? Maar de vraag van die broeders was niet van den Heiligen Geest. Het was hun te doen om de dingen van deze tegenwoordige wereld, al is het ook, dat zij vragen om een zitplaats vlak naast Jezus in den troon Zijner heerlijkheid. Zij willen het Koninkrijk Gods genieten naar den maatstaf van het vleesch en tot verzadiging van het vleesch. En zoo werden ze dan ook absoluut afgewezen. Ze ontvangen hunne begeerte niet. En dat was ook gelukkig voor hen.

Doch hier is het anders.

In dat gezegde van Jezus ontvangt Bartimeüs de sleutel van het Goddelijke schathuis. Hij mag nu

maar nemen naar hartelust. Het is veilig om hem nu toe te laten, want het is duidelijk, dat hij van Jezus het ware geloof ontvangen had. En Jezus weet het ook. En daarom kan Jezus hem gerust laten kiezen. Indien waarachtig geloof ons deel is, en wanneer we uit dat geloof leven en vragen en smeeken en bidden, dan kan Jezus ons gerust laten kiezen, want dan gaan we zekerlijk het goede begeeren. Ziet het in Salomo. Hij vroeg niet om rijkdom of eer, de overwinning van zijne vijanden of iets dergelijks. Hij vroeg om de deugd Gods der wijsheid, opdat hij het volk van God zou mogen kunnen regeeren tot lof van God. En dat hij zulks deed komt vanwege het geloof. Als het waarachtig geloof ons deel is en werkt, dan zorgt God er Zelf voor, dat we het goede kiezen.

Hoe dat zit? Wel, het is al Gods eigen werk. Hij wil slechts in Zijn eigen werk verheerlijkt worden.



Rabbonni, dat ik ziende mag worden!

Daar is het antwoord des geloofs. Hij zegt hiermede, dat Hij die voor hem staat bij machte is om dit groote goed hem te geven. Hij belijdt de almachtige kracht van den Middelaar.

Bovendien is het onze overtuiging, dat deze arme blinde man om meer vroeg dan net maar zijn natuurlijk gebruik der oogen. Want indien Bartimeüs net maar om het natuurlijk gezicht zijner oogen bad, past het antwoord van Jezus niet. Jezus gebruikte in Zijn antwoord een woord, dat doorgaans in de Heilige Schrift ziet op de behoudenis der ziel. Neen, wij voor ons gelooven, dat deze man om beide bad, én om het natuurlijk zien zijner natuurlijke oogen, én om de behoudenis van zijn ziel en leven.

En wat de deur dicht doet is wel dit: hij volgde Jezus op den weg. Dat toont, dat hij meer ontving dan het tijdelijk gebruik zijner oogen. Deze man is zekerlijk behouden, voor tijd en eeuwigheid. Indien gij die naar mij luistert een kind van God zijt, dan gaat gij Bartimeüs straks zien in den hemel, daarboven bij God. Ik twijfel er geen oogenblik aan.

En nu? Wat zoudt gij kiezen? Wat hebt ge alreede gekozen? Bij Gods voorzienigheid kwamen deze woorden tot U. En ze hebben een doel. Wat wilt gij, dat Jezus U doen zal? Kiest ge, of hebt ge alreede de aardsche schatten verkoren? Dan zult ge met die schatten verloren gaan in den dag wanneer alles zal versmelten en verbranden.

Kiest ge Jezus' behoudenis? Dan doet ge dat door het geloof, dat Bartimeüs en al de gekenden van voor de grondlegging der wereld ontvangen. Dan zult ge Jezus volgen op den weg. En die weg leidt tot de eeuwige genieting van Zijn trouwverbond! Amen.

G. Vos.

THE STANDARD BEARER

Semi-monthly, except monthly in July and August

Published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association
Box 124, Station C., Grand Rapids 6, Michigan

EDITOR — Rev. Herman Hoeksema

Communications relative to contents should be addressed to Rev. H. Hoeksema, 1139 Franklin St., S. E., Grand Rapids 7, Michigan.

All matter relative to subscription should be addressed to Mr. J. Bouwman, 1350 Giddings Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids 7, Michigan. 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 the subscription to continue without the formality of a renewal order.

Subscription Price: \$3.00 per year

Entered as Second Class mail at Grand Rapids, Michigan

EDITORIALS

Individualism?

In the same number of the *Reformed Journal* from which we quoted in our last issue, the Rev. Daane has a second article under the heading "Common Grace versus Individualism". In that article he expresses the very much mistaken idea that our conception of grace is individualistic. To do him justice I will quote rather extensively from his article.

"The history of religious thought shows that the doctrine of common grace has arisen only in the area of Reformed Theology. It did not, and could not, arise in Liberal or Fundamentalistic Christianity, for the simple reason that neither Liberalism nor Fundamentalism believes in the covenant. Both these versions of Christianity believe that God deals with men exclusively *as individuals*. Where God's dealing with men is regarded as a strictly individual affair, there is no question as to what the elect and the reprobate have in *common*. There is here no question of common grace.

"Reformed theology, however, takes the idea of the Covenant seriously. It believes that God, as Triune, is covenantal in His very nature; that man, created in God's image, is also covenantal in his very nature; and that God, in harmony with His and man's nature, always deals with mankind in terms of a covenant. Thus, God deals with the whole mass of mankind through the Covenant of Works, and with a large group of people through the Covenant of Grace. From this it is plain that God deals with mankind not first of all as so many individuals, but as a group.

"But Reformed theology believes also in election and reprobation. This means that within the large group there are both elect and reprobate,—individuals whom God intends to save and individuals whom God does not intend to save. At this point the question of common grace arises. God deals with mankind in terms of a group and has a general attitude toward the whole group. Yet the group contains elect and reprobate, toward each of which He has a special attitude. What, then, do the elect and reprobate, *as members of a common group*, have in common? This is the question of common grace—a question that can arise only within a theology that takes seriously both the doctrine of the Covenant and the doctrine of election and reprobation.

"Rev. Herman Hoeksema claims to believe in the Covenant of Grace. Nevertheless, in common with the Fundamentalists and the Liberals, he believes essentially that God deals with mankind as individuals. For, in Hoeksema's thought, God does not *first of all* deal with

CONTENTS

MEDITATION—

- De Genezing Van Bartimeus 361
Rev. G. Vos

EDITORIALS—

- Individualism 364
Correction, Please 369
Van Boeken 369
Rev. H. Hoeksema

OUR DOCTRINE—

- Days or Periods 370
Rev. H. Veldman

CONTRIBUTION—

- Our Calling is to go Forward 374
J. H. Kortering
- Once More — The Promise 375
Rev. G. M. Ophoff

FROM HOLY WRIT—

- Exposition of Romans 6:1-14 379
Rev. Geo. C. Lubbers

IN HIS FEAR—

- Church Membership in His Fear 381
Rev. H. C. Hoeksema

PERISCOPE—

- Church Union 383
Rev. J. Howerzyl

elect and reprobate together, *in their covenantal historical relatedness*. God has no *common* attitude toward *both* elect and reprobate. Consequently, Hoeksema denies both common grace and a common wrath. God *only loves* the elect, and He *only hates* the reprobate.

"It is a fact, however, that in the actual history of the covenant (and the Church), the elect and reprobate are related to each other. They are a *group*. But for Hoeksema that means nothing with respect to God's attitude. According to Hoeksema's thought, God does not deal with a group, but only with elect and reprobate individuals. Hence, for him, the "promise" is particular, and not general. It is only for the elect person; not for the reprobate. For that reason the question as to what baptism can mean for the reprobate infant would appear to be most disturbing for Hoeksema. And though it may be submerged, it is the very present question in the controversy now going on about "conditional theology" in the Protestant Reformed Church.

"Against this religious individualism—which Hoeksema shares with both Liberalism and Fundamentalism—Reformed theology maintains that God deals with mankind first as a group and only secondly with the individual *as an individual*. And even then He deals with the individual *as a member of the group*. This, Reformed theology maintains, is taking the covenant seriously. To think of the individual apart from the group, and to think of the elect and the reprobate out of the relationship to the covenant, spells an unbiblical individualism."

How the Rev. Daane can write this is a mystery to me.

Individualism is nominalism. And to nominalism we always have been opposed. Individualism is Pelagianism. And Pelagianism we hate. If anyone has always been opposed to individualism, and instead proposed the organic idea, it is I. This I have always emphasized. This can be plain already from the definition of the problem of common grace which I offered in the preceding issue of the *Standard Bearer*. Even there we define the problem of common grace as concerning the question of God's attitude over against and influence upon the whole of created things and their mutual connection and development in time, in connection with and in harmony with God's counsel in general, predestination, with election and reprobation, the realization of God's eternal covenant, etc. Always I emphasized that the problem of common grace concerns our conception of the attitude over against and operation upon of God with respect to the organic whole of temporal things, in connection with the counsel and good pleasure of God. I certainly, therefore, have no individualistic, particularistic conception of the tremendous work of redemption by the

grace of God. Neither do I involve merely the church of God, as the body of Christ, which itself is already an organic conception, as the new mankind. This is indeed done by Dr. A. Kuyper. He does have an eye for the fact that God did not elect a number of individuals, to redeem them as severed branches of the tree of our race, but that the organism, as body of Christ, as the actual mankind, is saved and glorified by God. But he does not further apply this thought to the organic whole of all creatures. It is for that reason that Dr. Kuyper really presents the history of the world dualistically. On the one hand, He saves His church, the elect. But on the other hand, God also realizes what he calls His original creation ordinance. He presents the matter as if a breach, an essential breach, was made by Satan in the work of God, and that sin and death would actually hinder God in the realization of His original creation ordinance, were it not for the fact that at this juncture common grace intervened restrainingly. Unto this end he presents God as concluding a covenant of friendship with the ungodly world outside of Christ, in order that sinful man may choose God's side against Satan. This is, according to him, really the covenant of God in Noah. Because of this, man may live a relatively good world life from the principle of a certain righteousness which was left him by common grace. All of history really becomes an interim. God carries out the covenant of His election, and saves the new mankind; but parallel with this line of the realization of God's eternal covenant runs the line of common grace, along which God realizes His original creation ordinance. This is not individualism, but it is nevertheless dualism. And overagainst this we include all creatures in mutual connection and relation within the circle of the organic conception, and then make the distinction between the elect kernel and the reprobate shell. We maintain that upon the whole of created things in organic connection with each other an operation of God's grace, but also of His wrath, proceeds according to the counsel of His will and according to the nature of the creature in its own place in the whole.

Hence, our conception is certainly not individualistic.

On the contrary, we proceed from the Scriptural idea that all creatures are one. God in the beginning did not create an aggregate of individual creatures, independent of one another, but a world, a kosmos, a harmonic, organic whole. God is One. The world is also one. In the midst of the earthly creation stood man, who had been formed after God's own image, so that in a creaturely way he resembled God in true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. This man stood at the head of creation, as being over the earthly world. And, he stood in God's covenant of friendship from the beginning. This covenant certainly was not

a certain covenant of works, in which man could merit and attain to eternal life on condition of obedience. But it was a living relation of friendship, in which God was the Friend of man, and man was the friend-servant of the living God. In that covenant relation man stood as the friend-servant of the Most High, to represent Him in the earthly creation, take up in his own heart the praise and honor of all creatures, to interpret and express that praise and honor before the face of God, love the Lord his God with all his heart and mind and soul and strength, and, in the name of the Lord his God and according to His will rule over all creatures. He was officebearer, prophet, priest, and king,—with the commission, the command, and also the right, the power and also the authority to subject creation unto himself, and to cultivate it. In the heart of man lay the spiritual, ethical center of God's creation. And through that central point the entire creation was united in love with God Himself. Also the creatures, each according to its nature, were taken up in God's covenant of friendship and shared in the good favor of the Lord. And also those creatures, sustained by God's omnipresent power, stood through man and each in its own place and according to its own nature in the service of God. All creatures must serve man as their king, in order that man may serve his God.

In this harmonic, organic relation of things to God a breach was struck by sin. Only we must immediately emphasize the truth that the breach was struck in the spiritual, ethical center of the earthly kosmos, that is, in the heart of man. Man violated the covenant of God. The break is therefore spiritual, ethical in character. An essential change in the relation of things was not brought about by sin. Sin can never have as its result that creation would be annihilated, neither that the mutual relation between the creatures and the relation of the creatures to man would be essentially changed, so that, for instance, creation would have been turned into a chaos, if common grace had not intervened, as Dr. Kuyper would have it. To be sure, the creature bears in connection with man the curse of God in this present time. It is subject to vanity. But the unity of creation was certainly not broken. The natural organic affinity continued undisturbed. To be sure, fallen man became very limited in his gifts and powers and natural light, so that he has retained merely a remnant of that natural light. But even in his fallen state he retained his position as the head of creation. And although it cannot be said that he is still officebearer of God, and that therefore he has the power and the right and the privilege to serve in God's house, he certainly continues to stand before the demand in his position in creation and with all his gifts and means to serve the Lord his God in love. However, he cannot, will not, and cannot will to serve

his God in love. For a spiritual, ethical breach was made in the relation of man to God. The life of his heart was subverted into its very opposite. The working of the image of God, whereby he with mind and will and heart and all his strength went out to God in the state of rectitude, was turned into its reverse. It is not quite correct merely to state that man through the fall lost the image of God. It is far less correct to say that he lost that image only in part. If this last thought is the result of the distinction of the image of God in a narrower and broader sense, it is better to abandon this distinction. But it is correct to say that the image of God turned about into its very opposite. His light became darkness. His knowledge changed into the lie. His righteousness became unrighteousness. And His holiness became impurity in all his affections and rebellion in all his willing and inclinations. His love changed into enmity against God. Sin is not merely a defect or lack, but *privatio actuosa*. And the servant and covenant friend of the Lord became a friend and covenant ally of the devil. Also thus, however, the Lord continues to sustain and govern creation by His providential power. And the entire organic existence of things remained essentially unaffected. If now in this state of things no further change is brought about, then the final result of history will be that the completed spiritual, ethical fruit of the life of creation is the opposite of that which it should be according to God's creation ordinance.

However, although all this was effected through the wilful disobedience of the first man, it must never be forgotten that it all took place according to the counsel and the will of God. Accidents, from the viewpoint of God, never occur. God is God. He is in heaven, and does all His good pleasure. Not merely in spite of the attempts of Satan and sin, but even through those wicked attempts, at all times He proceeds directly to His goal. History is no interim. Never is God hindered by the creature. With Him there is no change or shadow of turning. Also the fall, therefore, is wholly according to the counsel and will of God, and it serves Him in the realization of His purpose. He had provided something better for His people. His objective, His final objective, was not attained with the rest of creation, with the rest of the seventh day. That rest was but a figure of the eternal rest in the heavenly tabernacle of God, in the eternal kingdom, in which all things will be united in Christ as their Head, when all things in heaven and on earth will eternally be concentrated in the heart of Christ. For He, according to the epistle to the Colossians, 1:15-20, is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creatures, and that, to be sure, as the first-born from the dead, as the head of the body, the beginning, in order that in Him all things should be united, and that He in all things should have the preeminence.

And through Him all things were created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, all things were created by Him and for Him. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all the fulness dwell. Thus it is according to God's eternal good pleasure. The eternal covenant of friendship must be established in Christ and be realized by Him unto its final, eternal and heavenly destiny, when the tabernacle of God shall be with men. Therefore God immediately at the fall maintains His covenant in spite of Satan and sin, but that covenant now as eternally firmly established in Christ. Through the realization of that covenant immediately after the fall the friendship with Satan in the heart of man is brought to nought. And through the operation of grace enmity is wrought in the heart of man against Satan. Here, however, we face the decree of predestination. Not all the children of Adam have been predestined to enter into the eternal covenant of God's friendship. Grace follows the line of election. Only the kernel is affected by grace. The shell is rejected. It is exactly through this that the antithesis is realized in the midst of the world. Fact is that also now the creatures in the natural sense continue to exist in organic relationship and connection. Also grace, even as sin, does not bring about an essential change in the temporal existence of things. Out of one blood God created the entire human race. From a mere natural viewpoint all men are one. They are not mere individuals. Man ever continues to stand in organic connection with the whole race and with the entire kosmos in the midst whereof he moves and develops. There is, therefore, no individualism. Nor is there dualism. Nature and grace are no contrasts. And even now we may remark that grace can never become the cause for man who became partaker of it to go out of the world. To be sure, the antithesis of sin and grace is called into being by the breach of sin and by the entrance of grace, the latter developing along the line of election. All things continue to exist and develop according to their own nature, sustained by God's almighty power, in natural affinity with one another. But amidst this temporal existence of things there arises and develops the spiritual, ethical antithesis of sin and grace, of light and darkness, of the love of God and enmity against Him, of life and death, of heaven and hell. And through all this God does His own good pleasure, and He leads all things to their eternal destiny, the eternal separation of chaff and wheat, the eternal realization of His covenant of friendship.

From all this it ought to be perfectly evident to the Rev. Daane that we do not teach a certain individualism, but are quite averse to this conception, and emphasize the organic relationship of all things. The

Rev. Daane asks the question: "What, then, do the elect and reprobate, as members of a common group, have in common?" Our answer is: they have all things in common in this present world, except grace. This is the truth of Scripture, as I am ready to prove. And this is also the plain truth of our Reformed Confessions. Grace is never common. The sinful and corrupt creature can *qua talis* never be pleasing to God. But outside of Christ he is the object of His dislike, wrath and indignation, hatred and curse. Only as that creature has been incorporated into and is eternally beheld in Christ, can it be pleasing to God and the object of His sovereign favor. Only from that eternal counsel of election can the grace of God in Christ go out to him. That this is true is very evident from all that our Confessions teach. In the Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 10, we read: "Will God suffer such disobedience and rebellion to go unpunished? By no means; but is terribly displeased with our original as well as actual sins; and will punish them in his just judgment temporally and eternally, as he hath declared, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law, to do them.'" And again, in Canons III, IV, 1-3, we read: "Man was originally formed after the image of God. His understanding was adorned with a true and saving knowledge of his Creator, and of spiritual things; his heart and will were upright; all his affections pure; and the whole man was holy; but revolting from God by the instigation of the devil, and abusing the freedom of his own will, he forfeited these excellent gifts; and on the contrary entailed on himself blindness of mind, horrible darkness, vanity and perverseness of judgment, became wicked, rebellious, and obdurate in heart and will, and impure in his affections."

"Man after the fall begat children in his own likeness. A corrupt stock produced a corrupt offspring. Hence all the posterity of Adam, Christ only excepted, have derived corruption from their original parent, not by imitation, as the Pelagians of old asserted, but by the propagation of a vicious nature."

"Therefore all men are conceived in sin, and by nature children of wrath, incapable of saving good, prone to evil, dead in sin, and in bondage thereto, and without the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, they are neither able nor willing to return to God, to reform the depravity of their nature, nor to dispose themselves to reformation."

And do not say that this doctrine of total depravity and of the natural man being nothing but a child of wrath is changed by the so-called "glimmerings of natural light" which man after the fall still possesses. For in the same article of the Canons, III, IV, 4, which speaks of these glimmerings of natural light, we are taught as follows: "But so far is this light of nature

from being sufficient to bring him to a saving knowledge of God, and to true conversion, that he is incapable of using it aright even in things natural and civil. Nay further, this light, such as it is, man in various ways renders wholly polluted, and holds it in unrighteousness, by doing which he becomes inexcusable before God." And not only this, but also Scripture teaches the same truth throughout. To quote only Romans 1:18: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness."

We claim, therefore, that while the organism of the human race as such, outside of Christ, is the object of His displeasure and wrath, the church, the body of Christ, the organism of the elect, is the object of His favor and good pleasure in Jesus Christ our Lord. There proceeds out of the eternal good pleasure of God in Christ an operation of grace upon the elect kernel of our race, in connection with the organic whole of all creatures. And by that wonder of grace that elect kernel in Christ, always in connection with the whole of things, is redeemed, saved, liberated, glorified, lifted up out of darkness and guilt and sin and death and curse and vanity into the state of heavenly glory, the glory of God's covenant of friendship. On the other hand, as we said, the wrath of God abides upon the reprobate shell, outside of Christ. And an operation proceeds from God's wrath, indignation, and repulsion and hardening, whereby this reprobate shell becomes ripe for destruction.

In all this God proceeds directly to His goal. He never takes a detour. He never retraces His steps. His work is never frustrated. His purpose is never thwarted at any moment in history. This development and operation of God's grace and aversion, drawing and casting off, blessing and cursing, softening and hardening, continues constantly according to His eternal good pleasure and in connection with the operation of His providence and the organic development of our race. In the actual sense of the word one can therefore never speak of a checking of this process. To be sure, the end does not appear immediately at the beginning. The development, or, if you will, the process of grace and sin is according to God's good pleasure and connected by His providential management with the organic existence of all things. But that process is not restrained. It proceeds as rapidly as possible. For Christ comes quickly, and His reward is with Him, to give unto every man according as his work shall be.

It ought to be plain to anyone that can read that this conception is quite contrary to the idea of individualism. Instead we offer the organic development of all things in connection with the final goal, the eternal covenant of friendship, when the tabernacle of God shall be with men. And we maintain that upon

the whole of created things in organic connection with each other an operation of God's grace, but also of His aversion, of election, but also of reprobation, proceeds according to the counsel of His will and according to the nature of the creature, each in its own place in the whole.

In that sense we also understand that God loves the world in its elect kernel, so that whosoever believeth shall be saved, but the wrath of God abideth upon whosoever believeth not. Thus we understand that Christ is the Head of the church, but also the beginning of the creation of God, and therefore also the end, the firstborn of all creatures and the firstborn from the dead, in Whom all the fulness should dwell, and by Whom and for Whom all things were created. In that sense we understand that God purposed by Himself to gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on the earth. Eph. 1:10. Then we can also understand the covenant with Noah, which certainly is no separate covenant with the world outside of Christ, but God's eternal covenant of friendship revealed to the church as recently delivered by the flood. With the elect kernel in Christ, in connection with the whole of created things, Noah becomes heir of the world by the grace of God. The sign thereof we have in the all-embracing rainbow, painted by the sunlight upon the dark clouds. The covenant of friendship in Christ Jesus our Lord is established with the organism of the elect.

From the above it ought to be perfectly plain that the Rev. Daane errs when he accuses us of individualism.

And now, once more I invite a discussion with the Rev. Daane on the subject of common grace, provided he bases his discussion with me on the ground of Scripture and our Reformed Confessions.

H. H.

* * *

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

The Lord God Jehovah has been with us! It is therefore with gratitude and praise to our Covenant God that our beloved parents,

Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Van Spyker, nee Schuchardt
may have commemorated their 35th wedding anniversary on May 4, 1951.

Innumerable are the joys and blessings which God showered upon them. And though grievous trials came and went, the Lord proved faithful and merciful. May the Lord continue to be with them in grace and lovingkindness. This is the prayer and wish of their grateful children.

Mr. and Mrs. Meine Van Fleeren
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Vander Kolk
Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Van Spyker
Miss Marian Van Spyker
2 grandchildren.

Route 3. Zeeland, Mich.

Correction, Please

The Rev. De Boer writes in *Concordia* that he is afraid that at our next Synod the decision concerning the Declaration of Principles will hinge upon the question whether a president is chosen from the delegates of Classis West or from those of Classis East. He argues that seeing that the president cannot have a vote, and seeing that the delegates from each classis have their minds made up concerning the Declaration, and seeing that the president that is to be elected cannot vote on the Declaration, therefore it is possible that the Declaration will pass by a vote of 8 to 7.

Now, in the first place, I hope that the Synod will not prove to be a mere voting machine, but that the delegates, however they may have made up their minds before the Synod, will listen to arguments from the Confessions and Scripture, as well as from the Church Order, and that these arguments will be carefully weighed and the final result will be accordingly. I would suggest that at the Synod we either have a couple of stenographers or, better still, have a couple of wire recorders to record all the arguments, in order that they can be weighed even afterwards.

But, secondly, I do not believe that the argument of the Rev. De Boer is quite correct. I know that it is usually understood that the president of synod or of any gathering cannot have a deciding vote except in case of a tie. And of course, a tie could not possibly occur at our synod, where there are 16 delegates, and therefore 15 outside of the president. However, I do not believe that this traditional view is correct. No delegate, not even the president, can be deprived of his right to vote. And he has that right, not only in case of a tie, but even if his vote should cause the result of a tie.

It is well that this be understood. For otherwise we might even have trouble in electing a president, since no one would accept that position on condition that he could not vote, especially on the Declaration. In that case we will probably have to elect a president by lot.

But seeing this is not the case, no one needs to hesitate to occupy the chair at our next synod.

H. H.

How shall the young direct their way?
What light shall be their perfect guide?
Thy Word, O Lord, will safely lead,
If in its wisdom they confide.

Van Boeken

DE KOMST VAN HET KONINKRIJK

Prof. Dr. Herman Ridderbos. Uitgever J. H. Kok, n.v. Kampen Nederland. f.12.75.

Dit lijvige boek (447 paginas) is een werk van veel en grondige studie en we bevelen het gaarne aan bij de meer geletterden onder ons Hollandsch lezend publiek. In dit werk behandelt Dr. Ridderbos de idee van het koninkrijk der hemelen, het feit van zijn gekomen zijn, het evangelie des koninkrijks, koninkrijk en kerk, de komst van het koninkrijk en het avondmaal, en de toekomst van het koninkrijk der hemelen.

Dr. Ridderbos omschrijft de idee van de komst van het koninkrijk der hemelen als "die van de koninklijke zelfhandhaving Gods, van de realizeering van zijn rijk, van zijn komen tot de wereld om Zich in zijn koninklijke majesteit, koninklijke kracht en koninklijk recht te openbaren." Deze puur theocentrische omschrijving van het koninkrijk der hemelen is o.i. al te abstract en koud, en doet geen recht aan de plaats van Christus, zijn vernedering en verhooring, noch ook aan den rijkdom van het koninkrijk als koninkrijk der hemelen. Het boek zelf is echter rijker dan bovenstaande definitie.

Wat m.i. dit boek vooral rijk maakt is de vele aanhalingen uit de Schrift, dikwijls vergezeld van een korte verklaring. Echter was, m.i. de beperking tot de synoptische evangeliën niet noodig geweest.

Vraag: is het waar, dat het des duivels (en der demonen) doel is Gods schepping te verwoesten? p. 110.

Gaarne aanbevolen.

H. H.

* * * *

PROFETISCHE VERGEZICHTEN

Ds. J. Overduin. Uitgever J. H. Kok n.v. Kampen, Nederland.

Dit boek, geschreven door den onder ons niet onbekenden schrijver van "Hel en Hemel in Dachau", behandelt de bekende profetische zegeningen uitgesproken door de stervenden Jakob over de patriarchen van het oude verbond. Het is geschreven in zeer helderen en puntigen stijl, vol van allerlei tegenstellingen en paradoxen, voor ieder verstaanbaar, zoodat we het hierom en ook om zijn inhoud gerust en van harte kunnen aanbevelen bij allen die Hollandsch lezen kunnen.

In een inleidend woord schrijft Ds. Overduin, dat hem bij het bestudeeren van de behandelde stof vooral drie dingen zijn opgevallen: 1. Dat Jakob alleen door inspiratie heeft kunnen zegenen zooals hij deed. 2. Dat Gods Woord gesproken door dezen ouden patriarch zeer actueel is voor dezen hyper-modernen tijd. Dit laatste doet het boek zeer duidelijk uit-

komen. Het bevat veel meer dan "profetische vergezichten." Het biedt tevens een psychologisch geestelijke beschouwing van de diepste roerselen van het menselijk hart, dat arglistig is en geheel boos, en legt de vinger op vele wondeplekken in het moderne leven. 3. "Dat naar mate de profetische vergezichten zich openen, naar die mate wij alles kunnen samenvatten in enkele woorden: Dit is het Evangelie van Gods soevereine genade in Christus. God alles en wij niets." Ook dit laatste doet Ds. Overduin duidelijk uitkomen in dit mooie boek.

Wat Ds. Overduin schrijft over Jozef als een verwend jochie wil mij, ofschoon hij gewoonlijk zoo wordt voorgesteld (ook door Calvijn) ,niet aan.

Hartelijk aanbevolen.

H. H.

* * * *

LANGE'S COMMENTARY ON THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. Joshua-Ruth and I Samuel, two volumes. Price per volume \$3.95.

Again we heartily recommend to ministers, teachers, and all who are interested in the study of the Holy Scriptures, this priceless set of commentaries. They do contain, of course, a good deal of scholarly material, but not to such an extent as to make the work inaccessible to the general public.

The commentary on the book of Joshua was originally prepared by the Rev. F. R. Fay, pastor in Crefield, Prussia; that on Judges and Ruth by professor Paulus Cassel of Berlin, a converted Rabbi; while the commentaries on the two books of Samuel was written in German by the Rev. Dr. Erdmann.

Interesting and valuable often are the notes by the translators. Cf. for instance the rather elaborate discussion of Saul's visit to the witch of Endor.

H. H.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On May 21, 1951 our beloved parents and grandparents,

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Bastianse

hope to celebrate their 35th wedding anniversary.

We render thanksgiving unto our God for the many blessings which we have been privileged to share with our parents for these past thirty-five years in Christian fellowship. Our prayer is that He may spare them for each other and us many more years, in subservience to His holy will.

Their grateful children:

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Huls
Mr. and Mrs. Peter Vander Loon
Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Kingma
Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Jonker
Mr. and Mrs. James Van Dam
and 8 grandchildren.

Grand Rapids, Michigan.

OUR DOCTRINE

Days or Periods

3.

THE CONCORDISTIC THEORY

We concluded our preceding article with the statement that we obtain a strange conception of the creation and development of the world if we subscribe to the theory which views the days of Genesis 1 as lengthy periods of time. Surely, we, the Church of the living God, are living even now at the end of time. This we do not merely mean in the sense that we, as of the Old Dispensation, are living in the last hour. This is also true. Scripture speaks of the New Testament as the last hour. The history of the world and the development of God's covenant can be compared to a clock. This history of the development of the Lord's covenant is characterized by various dispensations or periods. These periods do not differ essentially but each constitutes an advancement upon the other as far as the light of God's revelation is concerned. Each period, then, is represented by an hour upon that world-clock. And we, of the New Dispensation, are living in the last hour. The clock of the world has already struck eleven. However, we are not only living in the last hour, but also towards the end of this hour.

Many things establish the fact that we are living near the end of time. There is, first of all, the sign of the preaching of the gospel. The Lord had commanded that the gospel must be preached to all creatures. This, we understand, does not mean every human being, head for head. All creatures must be understood here in the representative sense of the word. The gospel must be preached to every nation, land, tongue, and people. Has this occurred? Another sign of the Lord's coming is that of wars and rumors of wars. Is it not an amazing thing that the peoples of the earth are preparing themselves for another war and that so soon after the recent global conflict? Each war is an advancement upon the preceding one in scope and intensity. And, these wars are following so quickly upon each other. Any one who is somewhat familiar with the history of the United States must realize that wars have been fought in 1776, 1812, 1848, 1861, 1898, 1917, 1941. What does this mean? Fact is, each succeeding generation has been involved in some kind of war. And how terrible these wars are becoming? And now, not five years after the close of the most recent conflict, warfare is again going on in Korea, and who will venture to predict what the outcome of this fighting will be? Apart from the coming of the Lord of lords, Who will make

all things new, it is simply a fact that the world herself is hastening to her own destruction. People today are speaking of the imminent destruction of the human race and of the earth. One dreads to think of the probable intensity of the next global conflict. A third sign of the end of the world is the Lord's prediction that the love of many shall wax cold. This we do not interpret in the sense that the real, true love of the people of God shall wax cold. This is obviously impossible. The work which the Lord has once begun in us He shall complete until the day of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. This word of the Lord must be applied to professing Christians, to those who profess to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and possess the love of God. How cold today is the "love" of many professing Christians. The churches never had as many upon the church rolls as today. And, yet, what an astounding lack of true love, of God and of Christ, and of His Scriptures! Surely, we are living towards the end of time, and the end of the ages is rapidly coming upon us. This means that the existence of this world may total some six to seven thousand years.

Besides, even if we are not so near the end of the world (and all signs point to the conclusion that we are), we obtain a very strange and unproportionate view of the origin and development of the world. Let us presuppose that the birth of Christ stands in the very center of the world's history, and that we reckon this from the fall of man. This world, then, will continue to exist for another two thousand years, having existed four thousand years prior to Christ's coming into our flesh. Then this world, from the moment that Adam fell unto the end of its existence, will have existed some eight thousand years. With this in mind, we must have a very strange conception of the world, if the theory of periods is to be maintained. Then we can say that a world which was thousands and millions of years in the process of construction is to be destroyed after some eight thousand years of existence. To speak in terms of architecture and construction, an architect and designer and contractor builds an edifice of one story above the surface of the ground with thousands of floors below the surface of the earth. The Lord, then, must have been busy for millions of years in the formation of a world which, proportionately speaking, will exist but a very few years. No earthly architect or builder proceeds along these lines; and it is doubly certain that this does not characterize the heavenly Architect and Builder Whose Name is: The Everlasting God. Fact is, this entire theory of periods, which would interpret the "days" of Genesis 1 as long periods of time, simply belongs to the conception of modern evolutionists who do not reckon with the return of Christ upon the clouds of heaven.

Therefore we must and do reject this entire conception and believe in the literal and natural interpretation of these "days" on Genesis 1. It is not, first of all, the question whether we are able to harmonize our conception of Scripture with the so-called findings of an equally so-called modern day science. Science may never dictate to us the interpretation of Holy Writ. We must bow before the Word of the living God. We must permit the Lord to teach and instruct us out of His Word and testimony. We may never assume a so-called neutral attitude toward the Scriptures. God's Word, or the Bible, must ever be for us the Word of God, the one and only inspired Word of the alone living Jehovah in Whose light we alone are able to see light. And besides, there is absolutely no reason why we should interpret Genesis 1 as teaching a long, drawn-out evolutionistic conception of the origin of the world. There is no reason to believe this in the things round about us. And, even if this were apparently true, there is yet no reason why the days of Genesis 1 are not ordinary days of twenty four hours duration.

* * * *

THE HEXAEMERON OR CREATION-WEEK

(1)

Genesis 1:1-2.

We read in this passage: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

Some opinions regarding this passage.

First, the question arises: Must Genesis 1:1 be regarded as a superscription or title of the entire narrative of creation, or must this text be regarded as occurring at the very beginning, the first moment of time. If the former be true, then Genesis 1:1 gives us a brief synopsis of that which follows. If the latter be true, then this particular work of God in these two verses precedes all that which follows.

Secondly, others would read Genesis 1:1-3 as follows: In the beginning when God created the heaven and the earth—the earth now was without form and void, etc.; . . . then God said, Let there be light. According to this interpretation, in verse 2 the earth as without form and void is presupposed, and was already in existence when God proceeded with the work of creation. That is, the Lord created the heaven and the earth when the earth was without form and void.

In connection with these "explanations" we wish to remark the following. On the one hand, the second

interpretation is surely impossible. Presuppose that the earth, be it without form and void, was already in existence when the Lord created the heaven and the earth. Why, then, should we read in verse 1 that God in the beginning created the heaven and the earth? Was not, according to this interpretation of Genesis 1:1-3, the earth already in existence? Besides, there is no reason whatsoever, grammatically, to interpret Genesis 1:1-3 in such a way that the earth without form and void must be presupposed as already existing before the creation of the heaven and the earth. And, on the other hand, we also reject the first suggested explanation of this passage of Holy Writ. Then we have in verse 1 a brief summary of the creation narrative in Genesis 1 and 2. However, reading these chapters we notice, I am sure, that nothing more is said about the creation of the heavens. How, then, can verse 1 be a summary of Genesis 1 and 2 when nothing is said in these chapters of the creation or existence of the heavens?

But one possible interpretation remains.

"In the beginning" must refer then to the very first moment in history, the first moment of the first hour of the first day, etc. That God, "in the beginning," created the heavens and the earth means or refers to that act of God when He, at the very beginning, made in principle, the heavens and the earth. Then the material was formed, the basic substance. And also at that moment time was created.

Even so, however, Genesis 1:1-2 teaches us several interesting things.

First, this world as it exists in time had a beginning. We need not again enter into a detailed discussion of the tremendous truth that the world, the world as we see and know it, had a beginning. That the Lord "in the beginning" created the heavens and the earth surely implies that before that moment nothing was in existence. We merely wish to repeat that Gen. 1:1-2, therefore, denies an eternal substance; an eternal materialism or matter; it denies that God merely formed things and did not create them, that the Lord simply worked with a substance already present. Before this beginning, therefore, there was nothing, and whatever exists was called into being by God's almighty and creative word.

Secondly, this "beginning" was also created by God. The Lord here created time. Time, we have already remarked in this series of articles, is not to be confused with, is not a part, be it ever so small, of eternity. Eternity is not endless time. It is not true, therefore, that God "waited" until finally this particular moment arrived before He began to call the heavens and the earth into existence. Time itself is a creature, created by God, and may be defined as the

peculiar and necessary mode of existence for the creature, that which is created by the Lord. The creature is characterized by time. It constitutes his peculiar mode of existence. The creature is characterized by development and change, goes ever and irresistibly forward. Time, which we cannot see or hear or feel or touch, is that mysterious and real "thing" which causes us to move ever forward, causes us to advance from year to year, subjecting us constantly to change and development. When the Lord, therefore, in "the beginning" created the heavens and the earth, He also created that beginning, called Time into existence.

Thirdly, that God created the heavens and the earth "in the beginning" also implies, therefore, not only that the world began, but also that it *began*, and that for that very reason the universe now stood at the beginning of a certain process and development. To be sure, the original creation of the Lord was also characterized by a marvellous oneness, unity. Fact is, God created the heavens and the earth. The one God, therefore, is the Supreme Creator of all things. Presently, having created at the first moment of history (and that first moment included) all things substantially and basically, the Lord will proceed to call into existence, out of that lump, as it were, an amazing variety of creatures, in the heavens above and upon the earth beneath and in the waters under the earth. This does not mean, we understand, that all these creatures will simply assume their own peculiar form, that the things of themselves will develop in their own strength; but they will be called into being by the same almighty and irresistible and creative word of the living God. And, created by the one God, these creatures will be characterized by an amazing unity. They will be wonderfully adapted to each other, to serve one another, and together they will reach their apex in man, and, in man, the living God, so that all things, in and through man, will serve and glorify the living God.

But, this "beginning" also implies that God's creation stood upon the threshold of a history, and that it was adapted to serve that Divine purpose of the Lord. This means that the creation of the world was adapted to run the course of suffering and death, of sin and grace, of darkness and light which the Lord had sovereignly willed before the foundation of the world. Indeed, that all things were created good, according to the word of the Lord in Gen. 1:31, does not merely imply that all things were created without defect (this is also true), but also that the creature was adapted unto the purpose which God had sovereignly ordained so that it could become the sphere of the fearful struggle between light and darkness, life and death, righteousness and unrighteousness, the seed of the serpent and the Seed of the woman. This, we understand, does not apply to the creature as it shall enter

into the eternal glory. The heavenly Jerusalem shall be characterized by immortality, and this means not only that we shall never again die, but also that we shall never again be able to die. Immortality, however, was not characteristic of the original creation; it stood at the beginning of history; and it was adapted to serve the purpose of the Lord also as far as the struggle between light and darkness, life and death was concerned. This glorious truth alone can comfort us also in connection with the awful phenomenon of sin and death, of misery and woe, of the fact that this world at present is one huge vale of tears. God alone is at the helm and He created the heavens and the earth exactly with a view to these things.

For this reason we may also declare that God created the heavens and the earth as a symbol of the heavenly renewal of all things. The first man was surely lord of the earthly creation under God, servant of the Lord, God's covenant-friend, the Lord's prophet-priest-king to know the Lord and to proclaim His virtues and declare the Name of the living God. However, he was of the earth earthy, the first Adam, and surely a figure of Him Who was to come, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord out of heaven, Immanuel, the Second Adam, the Second Adam also in the sense that He is the end, the final Adam, unto Whom the first Adam was adapted. As such he is a figure of the Christ, of Him in Whom man would be recreated to serve Jehovah God in immortality, in blessed, heavenly life, never again to die and never again to be able to die. And not only is Adam a figure of the Second Adam that was to come, but also all things are a figure of the things that are to come. The earthly Paradise is a figure of the heavenly, also as far as the Tree of Life is concerned which stood in the midst of the garden. That Tree of Life was Adam's sanctuary where the first man exercised fellowship with the living God. And the fact that that tree stood in the midst of the garden emphasizes the truth that the blessed fellowship and communion with the Lord constituted for Adam the very heart and core of the original Paradise. And when we read that the Tree of Life also appears in the very midst of the heavenly Jerusalem, the implication is surely that also of the heavenly Jerusalem the fellowship and communion with the Lord is the very heart and center. Yea, the entire creation was one tremendous symbol of the heavenly; in fact, the universe speaks one tremendous symbolic language. In the world of colors we have such colors as red, white, blue, etc., which colors occur repeatedly in Holy Writ, also in connection with the tabernacle and temple of the Old Dispensation. That the numbers 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 12 and their various combinations have significance in Holy Writ none would deny. The sun is a mighty symbol of the Sun of Righteousness, the moon and the stars symbolize the

Church of the living God. Among the animals we have the lion, the lamb, the sheep, the eagle, etc. We are all acquainted with the symbol of the seed that must die in order to bring forth its fruit, of the bread and the water and the wine. The calm night, the stormy night, the calm and the stormy sea speak a language with which we are all more or less familiar. Attention could also be called to the various relationships in human life, that of the father and his son, of the mother and her daughter, of the employer and his employee, of the bride and the bridegroom, etc. All things were created as a mighty symbolism of the heavenly and better Jerusalem. Indeed, in the beginning the Lord created the heavens and the earth, and this surely implies that the universe was perfectly adapted unto the unfolding of God's eternal counsel.

This truth is also emphasized in a text as John 1:1-3: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." Notice particularly in this text: In the beginning was the Word. We do not read: Before the beginning, but: *In* the beginning. To be sure, this "Word" is the everlasting and eternal Son of God, and as such He *is* before the beginning of the world. But the Word of John 1:1-3 is also the Christ, Who is, to be sure, the eternal Son of God, but also the blessed Savior and Head of His Church. This is He of Whom we read in Col. 1:15-20: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him: And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the Head of the body, the Church: Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." This Christ is the Firstborn of every creature. In God's eternal counsel He stands at the center; all things serve Him. Supralapsaristically, He is before all things; sin and misery and death are sovereign means in God's good pleasure, with a view to Christ, the glorious Head of the Church. That Word was "in the beginning"—that is, when God created the heavens and the earth, He did so with a view to Christ. Christ is not merely a remedy, one who simply does what Adam could have done but failed to do. Christ is God's eternal Objective. The earthly was first historically, but the heavenly is the Goal. Adam was first, historically, but he

must prepare the way for the second Adam, and the Lord made all things so they could serve the heavenly renewal of all things in heavenly glory. This truth we must constantly bear in mind. Then nothing happens by chance. And if nothing happens by chance, but all things occur, also sin and death, according and by the sovereign will of the everlasting God, then all is well, and the Church of God may have at all times the perfect and unspeakably glorious assurance that she is always more than conqueror through Him that loved her, the everlasting God in Jesus Christ her Lord. We have then the victory, not only in spite of all the forces of sin and death, but also through them, inasmuch as the Lord uses all things unto our eternal salvation, also the sin of Adam and the subsequent fall and corruption and death of the human race.

H. Veldman.



Contribution

OUR CALLING IS TO GO FORWARD

Below follows a copy of a letter that the writer wrote to one of his dear friends in our midst on Jan. 15th, 1950. And since the text of this letter is more fitting even today after only one year of history, he ventures to proclaim it to all our Churches as a testimony that the Synod of 1951 is in duty bound to go forward and adopt the proposed declaration of principles.

Your welcome letter of Dec. 24th last was received and we were very glad indeed to receive it. Old friendships as they are based upon the tie that binds certainly must continue. And as we stand within the walls of the Protestant Reformed Churches, where unity of faith and confession must manifest itself, where old friendships ever remain fresh and new. For the Old Fathers so truthfully taught that when heresy enters in at the door, love flies out through the window, and schism is always the result of heresy. And the fact that men do fail to think alike upon the cardinal confessional standards of the Church Institutional always results in disunity and schism.

That is why I am thoroughly convinced that it is God's will that barriers and sharp lines of demarcation continue to exist at the four corners of the denominational life and confessions of our own Protestant Reformed Churches, and that we shoulder to shoulder continue to develop the truth as we have received it, in the historical lines of the Reformed Churches.

Beautifully do you state when you say in your letter that maturity develops the consciousness of

the extremely high calling of the Church. True it is especially when we view the Church from the universal holy catholic aspect, in which the universal body of Christ lies hidden in the denominational churches in the midst of the world. The picture often rises in my mind of a thermometer, an upright glass with a hollow center through which some medium sensitive to heat and cold flows. The more sensitive the Church is to the truth, the higher the plane of confessional truth, and thus the higher the record-ind registers upon the denominational thermometer. The question then comes, what is our calling, for we confess, I confess that we belong to the Protestant Reformed Churches, because we believe that in their confessional standard they are nearest to the truth as it is revealed in God's Word. Right we are and as such we are thoroughly convinced that we are at the top of the ladder in the confessional standard of the Church, and that it is our calling to continue to develop this truth as God has revealed it to us.

Thus our calling never ceases to be, but always continues to be to call our Brethren to repentance, and to come out from among those who ecclesiastically and confessionally are erring from the truth, and to come to the full confession of the truth as we have it in our Churches, for the Scripture says that in unity of confession the Holy Catholic Church comes together. We therefore never come to a stage in which we can say, our calling is completed, no more do we need to cry against the errors of those who stand lower on the confessional thermometer, who are sinking deeper and deeper into error, it is now time that we forsake them and go to the heathen.

Neither are we as Protestant Reformed Churches called to fuse into one, and knit together that which on the confessional thermometer lies on different range scales. For therein exactly God calls the Church, the Institutional Denominational Churches whom He placed on the highest confessional scale to be faithful in calling the whole Church out from among error, from all the churches, that there may be unity of confession, and that the Holy Catholic Church may come together in one confession. This calling is never realized by fusing all the denominational churches into one church at the cost of truth and by compromising with the confession.

The strength of a denominational ecclesiastical communion of Churches lies exactly in its unity of confession. That is why all the Reformed Church Fathers always warned against heresy and disunity of confession which destroy love and bring schism in the Church.

We are thus thoroughly convinced that all the officebearers signatory to the formula of subscription of the Protestant Reformed Churches are bound to faithfully defend teach and preach the confessional

standards as they are based upon the Word of God, in the Protestant Reformed Churches. And they are called to do this with all their might inside of and outside of our Churches.

Secondly, since it is the peculiar calling of the Protestant Reformed Churches, to develop the doctrine of Sovereign Grace, as God sovereignly bestows this upon His elect children only, in distinction from the false doctrine of common or general grace upon the wicked reprobate, which the Christian Reformed Churches elevated into an official dogma. By this action the Christian Reformed Churches became guilty of a great schism in the body of Christ, and occasioned the organization of our Protestant Reformed Churches.

Therefore our very organization was based upon a denial of the three points or tenets of doctrine which the Christian Reformed Church dogmatized as their official doctrine. Our very organization was a protest against these three false tenets with all that was implied in both the preaching of the word and the sacraments. We became a protesting Reformed church, protesting that the confessional standard of the three forms of unity of the Reformed Churches as these are based on the Scriptures, had no room for these three false tenets adopted by the Christian Reformed Churches.

Now after 25 years of history in the development of our Churches in which we deny the principles embodied in the three false tenets adopted by the Christian Reformed Church, we hear clamorings and see writings in which men want to understand the Liberated when they teach that God wellmeaningly promises, to all children head for head, in baptism, the objective right to the forgiveness of sins and eternal life, conditioned upon accepting the promise by faith.

Here we have the same false doctrine of 1924 again raising its head, only from a slightly different viewpoint. Then the lie centralized around common or general grace, and the well-meant offer of salvation on the part of God to all that hear the preaching of the Word. Now it centralizes around the promise in baptism, but essentially they are one.

If it is true, and I am thoroughly convinced that it is true, upon the basis of Scripture, that God hates the wicked every day, is never favorably inclined to them, causes the sunshine and the rain and all the fatness of the earth to work to their destruction, then it is equally true that He does not promise them what the Liberated try to establish in their dogma of baptism, when these same reprobate wicked receive the sacrament of baptism in infancy.

Our calling as Protestant Reformed Churches is to go forward. Not to go backward. Not to deny what we have already established as truth at the cost of our separation, and which has become the cause of

our existence as a separate communion of Protestant Reformed Churches.

May God give grace and wisdom to the delegates of our 1951 Synod, upon whose shoulders rest the burden of preserving our precious heritage as Protestant Reformed Churches.

J. H. Kortering.



Once More — The Promise

1. According to the Confessions and the Scriptures the promise of God as to the Form of its words is not an if-clause sentence. Hence, such a sentence as, "If you believe, you will be saved," is not the promise. But the promise is simply, "I the Lord will save you, my people."

According to the Confessions. Canons chap. 11, art. 5, "Moreover, the promise of the gospel is, that whosoever believeth in Christ crucified shall not perish but have everlasting life," meaning, all, everyone that believeth will be saved without a single exception. In a word, God will save the elect, historically the believers. Such is the promise. It is not, according to the Confessions, an if-clause sentence.

According to the Scriptures. First, let us take notice of the promise as first proclaimed by the Lord Himself by His own voice immediately after the fall. Said the Lord to our fallen and disobedient first parents: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; and it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise its heel."

This is a simple sentence. It is all promise.

The protevangel is the seed of all the promises spoken thereafter. Hence, nowhere in all the Scriptures is the promise of God as to the form of its words such an if-clause sentence.

In proclaiming to Noah the promise, God said not to him, "I will establish my covenant with you, *if you believe*". But he said, "I will establish my covenant with you." period. And then the Lord went on to say among other things, "I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: and I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth." This is the promise as it came to Noah.

What was the promise to Abraham? Said the

Lord to him, "I will make of thee a great nation, and will bless thee, *if* thou believest, *if* thou walkest before my face and art upright?" Nay, but this was the word of God to Abraham, "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." and here the Lord again put the period. This is the promise as it came to Abraham. The writer of the Hebrews tells us that it is the promise. Says this writer, "For when God made promise to Abraham," mark you, *promise*, "because he could swear by no greater, he swore by Himself, saying, 'Surely, blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.' Such is the promise as it came to Abraham.

And what said the Lord to Jacob in the vision, to the ill-deserving Jacob on his way to Padan-aram fleeing from the results of his sin? It is this, "I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all the places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken unto thee." No such if-clause as, "if thou believest", once appears in this entire communication. For it is the promise that Jacob hears.

And so again to Jacob by the voice of the prophet (Isa. 44), "Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel whom I have chosen; thus saith the Lord that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; fear not, O Jacob, my servant, and thou, Jesurum, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses," and in a like vein in the chapter immediately preceding (43) "But now thus saith the Lord who created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame be kindled upon thee," and so on through verse 7. And so again to Jacob—the church of God—by the pen of the apostle Peter, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus

Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you (1 Pet. 1). And finally this word of promise (Col. 3), "For ye are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

The promise of the gospel is not an if-clause sentence. It is not a sentence the apodasis of which is the promise pivoted on some such if-clause as, "if you believe". As was stated, "if you believe, you will be saved," is not the *promise*.

This, of course, is not denying that such statements as, "If you believe you will be saved," do not occur in the Scriptures. Fact is that the Bible is replete with them. We have Isaiah declaring in the name of the Lord to the Israelites indiscriminately, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land, but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured by the sword." And so Paul to the brethren of the church at Rome, "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For *if* ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but *if* ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live" (8:12, 13). Certainly, this must be declared unto every man, reprobate and elect alike, to whom God sends the gospel. That certainly is the duty and calling of every human preacher of the gospel, namely, to declare unto all persons promiscuously the command to believe, and further also to declare unto all persons promiscuously that the believers have eternal life, so that, if a man believes he will be saved, but that, if he believes not, he will be damned.

Let us take notice: if a man believes, that is, *in case* he believes, but not certainly "*op voorwaarde*", *on condition*, that he believes. The above message places every man who hears the gospel under the obligation to believe. What is more, it throws all the blame on the disobedient for the fact of their perishing to their unbelief, and it thus completely exculpates God.

But to call this "if" statement—if you believe, you will be saved—the promise is a serious error. And the reasons are the following:

First, consider to whom the promise is given. The promise is given to Jacob. (See the Scriptures quoted above). And who is Jacob? Jacob is Christ, and secondarily the church of the elect, historically the believers. Think then what it would mean, were this "if" statement—if you believe, you will be saved—the promise, actually the promise. It would mean that God through the ages addressed and is still addressing and will continue to address through the ages to come, to Jacob, that is, to Christ and the church of the elect, historically the believers the following speech: "But now thus saith the Lord who created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, fear

not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by name, that is, if thou believest, but if thou believest not, thou, Jacob, Christ, the church of the elect are damned." And further, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame be kindled upon thee, that is, if thou believest, Jacob, but if thou dost not believe, thou shalt be damned." And further, (Isaiah 43:3) "For I am the Lord thy God, the holy one of Israel, thy Savior, that is, if thou believest, Jacob, but if thou believest not, thou shalt be damned." And further, (verse 4) "Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee, that if, if thou believest, Jacob, but if thou dost not believe, thou shalt be damned." And finally, "Therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life, that is, Jacob, if thou believest, but if thou believest not, thou shalt be damned."

It ought to be clear that the promise to Jacob cannot be pivoted on some such "if" clause as "*If* thou believest." That ought to be clear. It ought to be clear that as pivoted on such an "if" clause, the promise to Jacob is not any longer a promise. True it is that in addition to declaring to Abraham, "I am thy God and the God of thy (spiritual) seed, the Lord also commanded him: "Walk before my face and be upright." But this command coming, as it always does, to God's redeemed and spiritually living people, must not be converted into an "if" clause, and as so converted added as a pivot to the promise thereby making it to read, "Abraham, I am thy God—the God of thy salvation—, *if* thou believest; but *if* thou dost not believe, I am thy adversary to destroy thee." This is not the promise, no matter how that "if" be interpreted.

In the first place, such a declaration could not possibly serve the purpose of a promise. Let us consider that the believer has need of knowing that he is a saved child of God. And there is but one who can tell him so that he believes and is assured—and that one is God. And God does tell him in connection, of course, with his fruitbearing as a regenerated person,—thus in connection with his penitance and contrition of heart, in connection with his steadily fixing his eye upon the crucified, risen and glorified Christ, the only hope for a condemnable, lost and undone sinner, in connection with his crucifying his members which are upon the earth and his putting on Christ, and in connection with his fighting the good fight of faith as bearing the reproach of Christ. In connection with this his fruitbearing—the work of Christ's Spirit in him,—the believer receives from his God the testimony in his heart that he pleases God and is saved for Christ's sake, which is but another way of saying that in the language of Paul, the Holy Spirit beareth

witness with his spirit that he is God's son.

But there is now this question: From where does the Holy Spirit derive the content of His witnessing with the spirit of the believer that he is God's son? There is but one answer. From the Holy Scriptures and from the Scriptures alone, and thus also from the sermons of the human proclinator of the Gospel, if he truly proclaims the gospel and proclaims it purely.

And this brings us to the question: what is the proper content of this witnessing of the Spirit? The proper content of this witnessing is not the command to believe in Christ. True, the Holy Spirit is in the need of this command to save His people. By speaking this command in their hearts, he fixes their gaze steadily upon Christ. And as looking to Christ and to Christ only, they receive in their hearts the testimony of God that they are justified and saved. Yet, certainly, this command to believe is not the promise. It is not therefore the proper content of this witnessing of the Holy Spirit. For the Spirit speaks this command also in the hearts of the reprobated, but unto their damnation. By this command He hardens them in preparation of their everlasting destiny.

Neither does this "if" declaration, "If you believe in Christ, you will be saved," form the proper content of this witnessing of the Holy Spirit. True, as proclaimed, it is a joyful sound in the ears of God's believing people. But it is to them such a joyful sound only because they have received of God testimony that they are His children. And let us consider that the Holy Spirit speaks also this "if" declaration, "if you believe, you will be saved, but if you do not believe, you will be damned," in the hearts of the reprobated, His purpose being, as already has been explained, to render them responsible and without excuse in the final day of judgment.

What then is the proper content of this witnessing of the Holy Spirit? Precisely this "if-less," this unconditional promise of God, "I am the God of thy salvation."

You have a son of let us say eight years who on a day comes home from school looking very sad because the boys at school have been telling him that he is an adopted son of yours, and thus not your very own flesh and blood. Would you think to reassure your child by some such statement as "You are our son, flesh of our flesh, if you behave, otherwise not." That would be a cruel answer. What assurance would there be for the child in such a statement? None whatever. Well do you realize. So as a good parent you look down into the eyes of your child, and say to him, "Believe me, my child, you are our son, our very own flesh and blood," and right here you put the point, and your child believes you.

It would be a sad thing indeed, wouldn't it, if all that the Heavenly Father had to say to His children is,

"If you believe, you are my sons. If you do not believe, you are damned."

But God does have more to say to His own children, to His redeemed ones. In the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation, the Holy Spirit sets before Him these children. He sets before Him the elect, historically the believers, and directs to them the promise, the "if-less" and on this account the unconditional promise—for there is none other. "I am your God," He says to them, "your Father in Christ, the God of your salvation." And here He puts the period.

But He does more than this. He commands His servants, the human preachers of the gospel, to follow the example that He sets them in the Scriptures. Thus He commands them that they, too, set before them in their sermons the elect of God, historically the believers, and address to them the promise of God, the "if-less", the unconditional promise of God—there is none other. These servants, of course, do not know who the elect are. But it does not matter. The Spirit does. For He knows the heart. And the Spirit, who is the only preacher of the Word, speaks this promise, this "if-less," unconditional promise—there is none other—in the hearts of His children. So, by speaking this "if-less," conditional promise—other promise there is not—in the hearts of His people, does the Spirit bear witness with their spirit that they are the sons of God.

And as it is the duty and calling of the human preachers of the Word to set before him the elect, so is it likewise his calling to set before him in his sermon the wicked and the reprobated and speak to them the very word that the *Spirit* directs to them in the Scriptures.

It raises the question whether the human preacher of the word must come with two messages, one for the elect, historically the believers, and another for the wicked and impenitent. Indeed he must. So our Confessions teach.

Qu. 83 of the Catechism. What are the keys of the kingdom of heaven?

Ans. The preaching of the Holy Gospel, and Christian discipline, or excommunication out of the Christian church; by these two, the kingdom of heaven is opened to believers and shut to unbelievers.

Qu. 84. How is the kingdom of heaven opened and shut by the preaching of the Holy Gospel?

Ans. Thus: when according to the command of Christ, it is declared and publicly testified to all believers, that, whenever they receive the promise of the Gospel by a true faith, all their sins are really forgiven them of God, for the sake of Christ's merits; and on the contrary, when it is declared and testified to all unbelievers, and such as do not sincerely repent, that they stand exposed to the wrath of God, and eternal condemnation, so long as they are unconverted:

according to which testimony of the Gospel, God will judge them, both in this, and in the life to come.

The human proclinator of the Word must proclaim the Gospel as the Holy Spirit proclaims it in the Scriptures. Setting before him in His sermons both the elect and the reprobated, the believers and the unbelievers, he must direct to each the message that the Spirit in the Scriptures directs to each. Then only does he preach the Gospel, the full-orbed Gospel, but not otherwise. Then only is his preaching what it must be—a two-edged sword. Then only is the kingdom of heaven opened to the believers and closed to the unbelievers. Then only are God's believing people being assured, comforted, instructed and built up in the faith.

The task of the human preacher of the Word is plain. His task is to preach sermons from which the Holy Spirit can derive plentiful content for His bearing witness with the spirit of the believers that they are the children of God and also sufficient content for His testifying in the consciousness of the unbelievers that "they are exposed to the wrath of God, and eternal condemnation, so long as they are unconverted."

From all that is presented above it ought to be plain that the promise of God is and must necessarily be "if-less", and therefore of necessity unconditional, and a gospel, a good news, for the elect only. To them only is the promise.

And how about such "if" statements as "if you believe, you will be saved?" As was stated, the Scriptures is replete with them. And they must be preached for a reason already stated. But certainly there is no need at all of making the "ifs" in such statements to mean "condition", "voorwaarde". These "ifs" are not conditions. And nothing is gained by making them so. Certainly it need not be done for pedagogical reasons. Making these "ifs" to mean conditions is only loss. What is lost is the truly reformed position.

Nor must these "if" declarations be called promises of God. For according to the Scriptures and the Confessions, the promise of God bequeaths upon those to whom it is given a legal claim upon salvation and accordingly the right to hope for it. Hence, whereas these "if" declarations are personal addresses directed to all, reprobate as well as the elect, it follows that to call these declarations promises of God is to say that they bequeath also upon the reprobated a claim upon salvation and accordingly the right to be saved.

But this raises questions.

First, how can God bequeath also upon the reprobated a claim upon salvation, if Christ died only for the elect?

Second, if God bequeaths upon the reprobated the right to be saved, why then do they perish? There can be but one answer: either God is unfaithful to

His promises regarding the reprobated, or he is powerless to save them, which would mean that God is not the sovereign Lord of the perverse will of the creature, but this will the lord of God.

What then are these "if" statements, if they are not promises? They are simply statements of the fact that if a man believes he will be saved, but that if he believes not, he will be damned.

I place this article in this issue of the Standard Bearer with a view to our coming Synod. As a delegate to Synod I shall go to Synod as armed with the argument of this article. Let the brethren—delegates to Synod—make a study of it, and, if they can, overturn it. If they can't overturn it, the Declaration certainly should be adopted. For if this argument is true, then nevertheless to reject the "Declaration" is to open wide the doors of our churches to most serious doctrinal errors, talk as we may.

And let us not imagine that in arguing the points involved is to be wasting time in what is called hair-splitting argument. The issue on which our present controversy turns is truly fundamental. It is very actually none other than this, namely, whether there really is such a thing as a Gospel of God, and if so, whether this Gospel is to be or not to be in our circles. As I see it, the view according to which the promise of God is pivoted on an "if" cuts the very gospel out of the Scriptures conceptionally and thereby renders them absolutely "gospel-less". If I am mistaken, let the brethren then make this plain to me on the coming Synod by overturning with the Scriptures the argument of this article.

It will not do of course to distinguish between *the* promise of God and *a* promise of God, and then to maintain that *the* promise of God is this "if-less", unconditional declaration, "I am the God of thy salvation in Christ Jesus," and that this so-called *a* promise of God is this "if" statement, "If you believe you will be saved." To so reason is simply to smuggle into our churches through their backdoor the very view of things that was first cast out through their front door; it is to retrieve what was first repudiated. It is a doing like that of a dog returning to its vomit.

G. M. Ophoff.

* * * *

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan expresses sincere sympathy to its fellow members Mr. George Vink and Mr. Louis Vink, in the loss of their mother,

Mrs. Cornelius Vink

May they have the blessed assurance that she has entered into the eternal rest

H. Hoeksema, Pres.
J. M. Faber, Clerk.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Romans 6:1-14

II.

The main thrust of our former article on Romans 6:1-14 was, that the redeemed and justified believer indeed experiences, that where sin abounds grace does much more abound; however, this in no way establishes the erroneous principle of antinomism in the christian, so that his life and practice is to sin in order that grace may abound, or to state it from the viewpoint of the believer: let us remain in sin in order that grace may become more abundant in our lives.

Overagainst all this we have seen that the very opposite is the truth of the Gospel in Christ, and that the very opposite is also true in the redeemed child of God. It is impossible, that they, who are ingrafted into Christ by a true faith, should not bring forth fruits in thankfulness for such great redemptive love! Such is the very outcry of faith. It is faith's abhorrence of sin as it clings to Christ our righteousness.

That was the main thrust of our former article.

Let us now proceed.

First of all we would remark, that although it is true, that in our former article we gleaned the truth contained in the verses 3-7 of this chapter to show the Christological background of this "God forbid", we nevertheless did not enter into the teaching of these verses themselves. And, therefore, the task of giving a brief exposition of the Apostle's argument still awaits us; we still must demonstrate from these verses how that it is utterly impossible from the standpoint of living faith to ever will to walk and remain in sin that grace may abound.

The verses 3-7 read as follows, "*Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin; for he that died is justified from sin.*"

First of all we would call attention to the implication of the teaching of the apostle in verse 3. We would call attention to the following elements here:

In the first place, we should notice, that the apostle here asks a very pointed question; it is a question which would prove very embarrassing, if not worse,

to anyone who would be necessitated to answer it in the affirmative. Forsoothe he, who would say: I was indeed ignorant of the implication of baptism, will feel that he has never understood as a living experience the passionate "God forbid!" of the apostle. Such a person has never felt the holy disapproval in his soul at the very suggestion of reveling in iniquity in order that forgiving grace might abound. Indeed, this question of Paul is arresting to say the least. It calls us to our spiritual senses! Then too there are various aspects of this question that we ought to study a bit more closely. We should surely notice, that Paul makes the matter of the believer's attitude toward sin and grace from the very outset depend on reality of the truth as it is in Jesus, and of our new relationship to this Jesus, as we have been baptized into Him. Paul appeals not to the old man, he does not seek his point of contact with the "common rationality", but he seeks the point of contact in the solid work of Christ. He seeks his point of departure in the reality that has come to be our portion in baptism. As many as we are baptized into Christ we have been baptized into His death!

Such is the point of departure of the apostle in this closely interwoven argument. As many as we have been *baptized into Christ Jesus*, we have been *baptized into His death*!

The second element here in this argument of the apostle is that he refers to our having been baptized into Christ as tantamount to baptism into the vicarious and sin-destroying death of Christ!

We ask: what does the apostle mean here when he speaks of baptism? Does he refer merely to the rite of baptism, or does he refer to that which is signified and sealed in baptism?

To this we answer, that we are convinced that the apostle *does here not distinguish between the symbol of baptism and that which it represents*. It is important to notice this. The Holy Scriptures never "dogmatize" in the sense that we do. We always are inclined, with our learned(?) heads, to seek between the sign and the thing signified. That is what our "platonic", our abstracting minds do. It pulls apart what God has joined together. And, let me add, that I believe that this is not only a great and vain evil under the sun, but it is a great evil of the theologians. However, Paul does not here thus dogmatize, neither does he thus *theologize*! Paul simply lets the sign of baptism and the reality of it stand in its unbroken unity. Shall we do so too?

What then?

Someone may say: but is it true then that everyone, who receives the rite of baptism, which obsignates the dying with Jesus, and the rising with Him in newness of life, also really is baptized into Christ and

partakes by a living faith of all His benefits? I would answer: of course not! But I hasten to add: let us not get off on a tangent. Let us hew closely to the line drawn here by the Spirit-led writer. And then I would call attention to the following in this connection:

1. I would make a couple of remarks of a negative nature. If it is true that Paul does not distinguish between the sign and the thing signified in this passage, then we must not come with the objection: but all who are baptized do not really receive the benefits of Christ. Such an objection is entirely beside the point from an exegetical viewpoint. Let us put that objection entirely out of our minds. On the other hand, we should also be careful not to read more into the apostle's keeping the sign and the thing signified in its wondrous unity, than what the Holy Spirit intended.

2. And now let us look at the text. In the first place let us notice, that the apostle does not speak here in the third person when he says "as many as we baptized. . . .", but that he is speaking in the *first person*. He says: *we*! That makes this saying of Paul very concrete. What he says of baptism has really taken place to all those here spoken of. Paul does not here say: As many as have been baptized with the *external rite* have been raised with Christ! He says: as many as we have been baptized *into Christ Jesus*, we have been baptized into His death! What Paul here says is true in the following counts:

a. Paul is here speaking of the faithful church, the true believers, including himself as one in whom the grace of God became manifested. Says Calvin in regard to this matter in his Commentary: "Farther, it is not to the point to say, that this power is not apparent in all the baptized; for Paul, according to his usual manner, where he speaks of the faithful, connects the reality and the effect with the outward sign; for we know that whatever the Lord offers by the visible symbol is conformed and ratified by their faith." Also Calvin regards the apostle as addressing the church as the faithful ones, who understand by faith the implication of grace, as this excludes the incentive to sin.* Sign and thing signified belong together. Let us not pull apart what God has joined together.

b. He is speaking of this faithful church as she has been not simply baptized, but as she has been *baptized into Christ*, and thereby baptized *into His death*. Someone may interpolate and say: there you have it! Sign and thing signified are not separated by Paul, and hence he who has the sign, the symbol, also has the things signified. But I answer: that does not follow, and what is more Paul does not say this. Let us not carry our hastily and erroneously drawn

conclusions into Paul's meaning. As for us, we believe that the text simply emphasizes the fact, that the sign and the thing signified in the case of everyone that is *baptized into Christ by a true faith*, means that he is baptized into the death of Christ.

c. It is also noteworthy that Paul employs a tense from the verb in the Greek, that emphasizes the factness of what had taken place in the baptism of every one who believes. He is baptized into Jesus Christ. That is a fact. And in this baptism into Christ we are baptized into Jesus Christ. That too is a fact.

To this there are no exceptions. "*As many as we were baptized into Christ, we were baptized into His death.*" There are no exceptions to this rule. It is not thus, that some can appeal to baptism into Christ as though this were not a baptism into Christ's *death*, as the *destruction of sin*. The rule is universal!

From this vantage-point, from this solid point of departure the apostle can state what we read in verse 4, namely "*We were buried therefore with Him through baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.*"

The very opposite of walking, of continuing to walk in sin is the case with as many as were baptized into Christ. It means that we were buried with Christ through baptism. Through the operation of the Holy Spirit sin with its attendant guilt has gone into the grave. It is the proof that in our evaluation of self we have really died. And this is obnoxious in baptism. Oh it was magnificent power that raised us up from the grave. It was the almighty power of God. For the almighty power of God brought forth Jesus from the grave. That power is the manifestation of the "glory" of God. Such a display of Divine glory also was operative in us when we were spiritually brought forth from the grave with Christ. It is by virtue of this power that we walk in newness of life.

This newness of life is not a mere keeping of the law as of necessity. It is the keeping of the law from thankfulness that constitutes this walking in "newness of life". Old things have indeed passed away, and all things have become new.

Of this we must not be ignorant.

Lest we be ignorant of this, we write on this truth. The more we are cognizant of the implication of our baptism, the more we shall also aspire to walk in newness of life. Being raised with Christ by faith to a new consciousness we shall surely seek the things above where Christ is. No one will then want to return to sin like the washed sow to her wallowing in the mire!

Geo. G. Lubbers.

IN HIS FEAR

Church Membership In His Fear

12.

WHERE?

Worshipping the Institute.

In regard to the question under discussion, "Where must I join myself as church member?" there are others who assume an attitude of implicit trust in the particular church of which they are members. They take the position that the particular church to which they belong cannot make a mistake, and they simply take their stand without question on whatever happens to be the position of that church. They trust in a certain institution. They were born in that church; their parents and grandparents before them were members of the same church. They could not possibly think of leaving that church. Their church is right and that is the end of the argument.

Of course, if you put the matter in that language, you probably would not find so many that admit that to be their position, that is, outside of the Romish Church. We all recognize at once that this is essentially the position of the Romish Church, in which the pope is infallible in matters of doctrine, and in which many other sources are recognized as infallible for faith and practice besides Holy Scripture. But although you might find few who would bluntly state that their particular church is infallible, yet in actual practice there are many who take that position, or tend to take it. They are more or less ignorant of their church's doctrinal stand. They don't take the time, or they lack the ambition or—what is more to the point—the interest to investigate any issue. They assume that their leaders, their minister, their theologians, must certainly know. And especially if a minority takes a different position, they simply conclude that when so many important leaders, scholars, theological giants say something, it must be true, and the minority can't be right. The minority is castigated as troublesome, schismatic, and what have you. And the church is to all practical intents and purposes upheld as infallible. Sometimes you will find people who drift along with their church so lifelessly that they have not the slightest acquaintance even with controversial issues.

Add a little sentiment to this position, and the woeful picture is complete. "I was born and reared in this church. Here I was baptized. Here I had all my catechism. Here I made confession of faith. And I have been member here, lo, these many years. Be-

sides, all my family is here. They have grown up in this church, intermarried with its members, and are well established here. It would be so hard for me to leave. They wouldn't come along with me. Even my wife wants to stay here. So I had better stay too." By such one is almost moved to tears of pity, and would well-nigh advise the poor man to stay.

Now, we certainly must not be imbued with a revolutionary and anarchistic spirit in this matter of church membership. It certainly must be admitted and emphasized that there is enough lack of respect for the church institute in our day without adding to it. There is already too much of the spirit of "What right has the church to tell me what to do?" There is far too much rust collected on the keys of the kingdom, on the one hand; and on the other, there is too much scorn for the power of those keys.

But our respect for the church institute must be a *wholesome* one. If in our subjection to the institute we cannot say that essentially we are being subject to Christ, as He is revealed in His Word, then we become guilty of idol worship. Whoever assumes the attitude that their particular church is infallible, is guilty of putting his trust in men, in an institution, in a certain church organization. And to put our trust in anyone or anything next to or beside the one true God as He has revealed Himself in His Word is idolatry. Hence, while those who freely and thoughtlessly and carnally work schism in the church or jump denominational boundaries without a care are certainly to be censured, those who refuse to admit that their particular church could err are equally guilty of lack of respect for *the church* institute.

For all of history teaches us, from the time of the apostles onward, how easy it is for a certain church in the world to err, to apostatize from the faith, and even to become wholly corrupt. Was it not Jerusalem already in the time of our Savior's sojourn that had become Babylon, and had denied the Son of God Himself, nailing Him to the accursed tree? The whole doctrine of an infallible institute is brought to ruin at Golgotha. And one needs but to consult the various epistles to find numerous examples of churches, particularly local congregations that erred and apostatized. It is Jerusalem especially, as she is on earth, represented by a local church or denomination, that becomes Babylon, and that then denies the truth, persecutes the faithful, and gives rise to the Antichrist. *That* Jerusalem, and her children with her, shall perish!

Traditionalism.

Closely allied to the above attitude is that of those who are members of a church tradition. These too are usually ignorant of the stand of the church to which they belong. They were not interested in being

instructed in their youth, perhaps; and they grew up ignorant. Or they came into the church from the outside, possibly for the sake of family peace when they were married. They cared not for the truth ever. But they "went along". Or else they belong because it is the fashion to belong to some church or other. Or possibly they don't want to be ostracized by their own family. Or there may be other reasons, a hundred and one.

But such are traditionally indifferent. They don't want to investigate. They don't care whether they belong here or there. They don't even assume that their church is right,—or wrong, as the case may be. They don't put their trust in anything, not even in God. They are simply church members. Maybe the church can serve them at the time of baptism, marriage and death. It's a convenient thing to be a church member.

The spirit is more rampant than we are aware sometimes. And to mention it is to criticize it. For the trouble with this type is that there is not the question of my title, "Where?"

They are traditionally indifferent.

Pious Indifference.

There is another type of indifference, however, which sometimes appears to be more insidious, because it is more alluring. It is the attitude of those who recognize the question, "Where"? but who belittle its importance. To them it really makes no difference to what church one belongs. They simply want to believe in Christ, and do not want to limit salvation to a peculiar church denomination. People from every church will be saved. And we certainly, so they often speak, do not want to condemn everyone to hell who does not belong to our church. And so: "What's the difference?"

One very obvious difficulty presents itself when this position is applied to those who belong to a church that denies the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. And if, in the light of this difficulty, the position is nevertheless maintained that also in such a church people are saved, then the whole doctrine of the church lies in ruin, is at loose ends. Then there is no need of a church at all anymore.

But a more serious and less understood objection to this view is that the question of salvation is after all not the *primary* question in this whole matter of the church. There is far too much of that utilitarianism with regard to salvation. Everything is viewed from the standpoint of the question: "How, in last instance, can I avoid hell-fire?" It is this that we shall have to see, as we proceed, that this question of the church is not first of all one that concerns your and my individual salvation, but one that concerns the church itself. And that is, as we shall see, one of

the main lines of our Reformed confessions on the score of the church.

But even now we may note with regard to these various wrong attitudes and criterions of church membership, that we are not always free of them ourselves. O, no, we would not jump the denominational boundaries easily. But within us lurk some of these same thoughts. Thoughts they are that stand in conflict with Scripture and the Confessions. Thoughts they are that are not in harmony with the fear of the Lord. And thoughts they are which do not stand in the service of the church of Christ, but which oppose His cause. Thoughts they are, which, under the strain and stress of various circumstances (marriage, worldly aggrandizement, persecution) might very well be translated into sinful actions, the actions of working in the direction of the false church.

H. C. Hoeksema.



PERISCOPE

Church Union.

Some time ago we reported that negotiations were at present underway toward the eventual union of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (The Southern Presbyterian Church) and the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church.

In the latest number of the "Southern Presbyterian Journal" the proposed plan of union is set forth, which will be considered by their respective Synods this year.

It must be remembered of course that the things which separated these two groups lie far back in history. Their original separation lies in the background of the old continent. These were carried over into the new world but to a large extent lost their point, especially as much of it concerned government interference with church procedure, etc. During the separate history of the Southern Presbyterian Church they have absorbed several segments of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Churches. Today the one difference seems to be the stand of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church that only Psalms may be sung in the worship services while the use of hymns is almost universal in the Southern Presbyterian Church.

Rather interesting in these days of doctrinal indifference and lack of dogmatic basis in the union movement is the "creedal statement" in the "Proposed Plan of Union".

We quote:

"1. The doctrinal standards held in common by these two Churches, namely, the Westminster Confes-

sion of Faith, as revised by the Presbyterian Church of the United States, the Larger Catechism and the Shorter Catechism, shall be the doctrinal standards of the United Church.

"2. These standards are to be interpreted in their natural and obvious meaning, and no one shall be ordained to teach or preach in the United Church who cannot give an unqualified assent to the doctrinal system contained in these standards.

"3. The Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in the United States shall be the basis of government. worship and discipline, in the united Church.

"4. In the ordinance of praise it is agreed that while the Psalms of the Bible are accredited for permanent use, other forms of hymns true to the spirit and teaching of Scripture are properly employed. Each congregation in the united body shall be allowed the same liberty which it now enjoys in the matter of congregational singing. It is hoped that in the next Manual of Praise issued by the united Church a considerable number of Psalms may be included."

Interesting also is the matter of Church Property, especially interesting because it is now an issue in the Southern Presbyterian Church which is agitated with the question of union with the Northern Presbyterian Church (Presbyterian Church in the USA).

We quote:

"Any particular congregation which belongs to the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church prior to the proposed union may determine by means of a duly called congregational meeting to dissent and remain outside of the United Church. Proper notice of such meetings shall be given publicly from the pulpit of such a congregation at regular services of worship on two successive Lord's Days and by the mailing of a notice of the meeting, stating its purpose, to all communicant members of the congregation not less than fifteen days prior to the date of meeting. One-third of the communicant members of the congregation shall constitute a quorum for such a meeting, and only communicant members present shall be entitled to vote. The question shall be put: 'Shall this congregation dissent from the Union of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church in the United States?' The vote shall then be taken by secret ballot, and a two-thirds majority of all members present shall be required to dissent from the union. . . . Insofar as any claim to ownership of local church property by the General Synod is concerned, congregations so dissenting from the Union shall retain or receive from the General Synod by deed of gift, ownership and custody of their property. . . ."

From Here and There.

Some time ago we informed you that a suit was

being brought in Federal Court against the University of Minnesota charging that by maintaining a Divinity Faculty in the university it was violating the principle of the separation of Church and State. The Federal department of justice has notified the atheist who requested the suit that it does not plan to take criminal action against the University of Minnesota on his complaint, maintaining that the McCollum case and this are not sufficiently similar to warrant institution of proceedings on the authority of that case. It is intended to bring the civil suit however.

* * * *

The Dutch Reformed Church in the Transvaal has voted to join the World Council of Churches and has asked other Dutch Reformed synods in South Africa to do likewise. How it is possible for this church to be member of the thoroughly modern World Council and of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod at the same time is hard to imagine.

* * * *

The Church Today?

"The Northwest United Protestant Church here, which is sponsored by the Disciples of Christ, has just completed its social hall—the first of a group of four buildings which will cost an estimated \$250,000. The completed unit contains a large hall for social gatherings with a stage for plays, a modern kitchen, lavatories, a parlor and a basement. A unique feature is an outdoor patio, with a fireplace and barbeque pit." (I wonder if there is an auditorium and a pulpit-JH?)

* * * *

The Reformed Witness.

In an article in which he opposes the present Christian Reformed stand on membership in the NAE, Rev. George Stob gives a beautiful expression of the calling of the church in this world. We quote it not to mingle in the debate which he enters but for its beauty and its application for every child of God:

"Let it be said again and again that the heart of our calling to the American world is to bring to it the power of a full and undiluted Reformed witness. We can scarcely in good conscience unite for that purpose with those who do not share our Reformed convictions.

"It is said that we face the Goliaths of Secularism and Modernism. And we are small.

"But we do not increase either size or strength by taking the armor and the sword of Saul. They do not fit us. They hinder our freedom, limit our movement.

"You are little, David.

"Well, then, take your littleness, and your simple weapons; and enlarge yourself with a clear witness, courageous decision, and faith in God.

"Then go, and fight the Goliaths of Modernism, Catholicism, Communism, Secularism.

"You will find that you are not alone. . . ."

* * * *

Whither?

Interesting, to say the least, is the debate that is going on at present in the Christian Reformed Churches regarding the status of Calvin College. Also for us, this is important, at least in as far as many of our young people avail themselves of the opportunity of studying there.

This struggle is by no means new—I mean the debate which centers in the question whether the church has the right to maintain a college. This is again brought to the fore by the recent agitation over a Christian University and its relation to Calvin College.

Interesting are some of the questions raised. In the first place the basic question of jurisdiction. Many are that maintain that in so doing the church steps outside her own domain. Some rather pointedly call to mind the recent agitation over political and social views and insist again that the church does not have the mandate nor the right to judge and evaluate such conceptions—that it shows clearly that the whole matter is out of order.

But on the other side are those who, while maintaining the possibility of a Church-supported college, find their greatest support in the accomplished fact and in the financial situation.

Entirely apart from the question involved or its final settlement I believe we find here something of value in many problems. We see how difficult it is for even principle to win over an accomplished fact and we see the power of the utilitarian argument.

J. Howerzyl.

—:—

NOTICE!

Young Men desiring to prepare for the ministry of the Word in our Churches, and therefore seeking admittance into our Theological School are requested to appear at the next meeting of the Theological School Committee on the evening of May 18, 1951 at Hudsonville, Mich., at 8 o'clock. Applicants must present a certificate of membership and recommendation from their own consistory and a certificate of health from a reputed physician.

The Theological School Committee,
Rev. G. Lubbers, Secretary,
1304 Maude Ave., N. E.
Grand Rapids 5, Michigan.