

# THE STANDARD *Bearer* A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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## MEDITATIE

### Een Laatste Ontmoeting

*En als Herodus Jezus zag, werd hij zeer verblijd; want hij was van overlang begeerig geweest Hem te zien, omdat hij veel van Hem hoorde; en hoopte eenig teeken te zien, dat van Hem gedaan zou worden. En hij vraagde Hem met vele woorden; doch Hij antwoordde hem niets. En de overpriesters en de Schriftgeleerden stonden, en beschuldigden Hem heftiglijk. En Herodus met zijne krijgslieden Hem veracht en bespot hebbende, deed Hem een blinkend kleed aan, en zond Hem weder tot Pilatus. Luk. 23:8-11.*

Twee eerstgeborenen!

De Eerstgeborene naar de verkiezing, en de eerstgeborene naar de verwerping.

De Eerstgeborene naar den Geest, en de eerstgeborene naar het vleesch: Jezus en Herodus!

En als altijd, naar Gods wonderlijk, vrijmachtig bestel, staat de eerstgeborene naar de verwerping, naar het vleesch, op de plaats van den Eerstgeborene naar de verkiezing, naar den Geest!

Zoo immers moet beschouwd worden deze ontmoeting van Jezus en Herodus, willen we haar zien in het licht der Schrift, dat is, in het licht van Gods raad. En dit laatste is noodig. Och, zoolang we het program van Jezus' lijden eenvoudig beschouwen als de heel gewone geschiedenis van een zwaar en bitter lijden, is het misschien wel interessant om van stap tot stap dezen Man van smarten te volgen op Zijn lijdensweg; interessant ook, om te letten op al de verschillende personen, die een rol speelden in het drama van dit lijden: Judas, (en, ach, ook Petrus!) Annas en Kajaphas, Pilatus en Herodus; maar in het eigenlijke licht der openbaring zien we dit lijden dan toch niet; en ook verstaan we dan niet, waarom de Heiland op Zijn *via dolorosa* al deze verschillende personen moest ontmoe-

ten. Doch het program voor Jezus' lijden is opge-maakt in de eeuwigheid. Het is het program van Gods wijs bestel. Daarom staat daarin elke bijzonderheid op haar eigen plaats, en heeft alles zin en beteekenis. En dan zien we in deze ontmoeting van Jezus en Herodus niet maar een willekeurige appendix aan het lijden van den Heiland, maar een laatste ontmoeting van de twee eerstgeborenen, die heel de Schrift door worstelen om de plaats der eerstgeboorte!

Jezus staat hier als de Eerstgeborene!

De eerstgeborene heeft groote beteekenis in de Schrift. Hij is degene, "die de baarmoeder opent", en alzoo de wegbereider is voor zijne broederen. Op hem viel dan ook de bijzondere verbondszegen, en hij nam de eerste plaats in onder en over zijn broederen. Hij was heerscher; zijne broederen moesten hem dienen.

Maar alle eerstgeborenen in de Schrift ontleenen hun beteekenis uitsluitend aan den Christus. Van Hem waren ze typen en schaduwen. Hij staat aan het hoofd van de vergadering der eerstgeborenen. Want Hij is de Eerstgeborene bij uitnemendheid. Eerstgeborene is Hij als de Christus, de Gezalfde des Heeren. In den raad des Allerhoogsten is Hij de eerstgeborene aller creature, haar wegbereider en hoofd, om Wien alle dingen gemaakt zijn, in Wien alle dingen tezamen bestaan. In Hem worden dan ook straks alle dingen vereenigd, die in den hemel en die op de aarde zijn. Eerstgeborene onder vele broederen is Hij, Die ook der broederen weg bereidt in Gods Huis, en die eeuwiglijk onder hen de eerste plaats inneemt, als hun Heer en Hoofd. En als zoodanig is Hij ook de eerstgeborene uit de dooden, Die Zich een baan breekt door de baarmoeder des doods tot in het heerlijke leven der opstanding, en dat alweer als de wegbereider voor Zijne broederen.

Erfgenaam is Hij aller dingen!

Koning der koningen, Heer der heeren! Voor Hem moet alle knie zich buigen! Hem moet alle tong belijden!

Dat is Zijn plaats, de plaats Hem toegewezen in

Gods eeuwig raadsbesluit.

Maar op die plaats staat Hij hier thans, voor Herodus, niet!

Integendeel, Hij staat hier op de tweede, neen, op de laagste plaats: gebonden, als gedaagde, voor den rechterstoel van den koning Herodus, den eerstgeborene naar het vleesch, den verworpen eerstgeborene!

Altijd was het, naar Gods vrijmachtig welbehagen, zoo geweest in de geschiedenis. Want Christus was uit het huis van David. En ook David was de eerstgeborene naar de verkiezing, en in zijn geslacht werd altijd de eerstgeborene Gods gevonden. Doch David stond naar zijn geboorte uit Isaï niet op des eerstgeborenen plaats: hij was de laatste onder zijne broeders naar het vleesch. En David was uit Juda. En ook Juda behoorde tot de eerstgeborenen naar de vrijmachtige verkiezing, zijn geslacht was een geslacht van koningen, die heerschen zouden totdat Silo zou komen. Maar Juda stond niet op de plaats der eerstgeboorte naar het vleesch: hij was de vierde uit Israels lendenen. En Juda was uit Israel. En nogmaals was Jakob de eerstgeborene naar de verkiezing der genade, en nogmaals staat hij op de tweede plaats in de geboorte, en staat de verworpene op de plaats der eerstgeboorte. . .

Ezau, Edom, de Idumeeër, Herodus! . . .

Want Herodus was een Edomiet!

Men meent soms, omdat immers de profetie aangaande den scepter van Juda vervuld moest worden, dat men in Herodus nog een laatste en verre afstameling van David moet zien. Maar Israelietisch koningsbloed was er in Herodus' aderen geen druppel. Herodus Antipas, die regeerde over Galilea en Perea, was zoon van den gruwelijken Herodus den Groote, en deze was de zoon van Antipater, gouverneur van Idumea, het land ten zuiden van Juda, door de Edomieten sedert de ballingschap ingenomen en bewoond. En Idumea is slechts een andere naam voor Edom. Idumeeërs waren Edomieten. Koning Herodus, wat mengeling van bloed er ook in zijn aderen gevloeid moge hebben, is officieel Edomiet!

Jezus voor Herodus!

De Eerstgeborene naar de verkiezing en de eerstegeborene der verwerping!

Maar nogmaals staat de Eerstgeborene der verkiezing hier op de laagste plaats!

De twee eerstgeborenen!

Jezus voor Herodus!

Een laatste ontmoeting. . . in de historie althans!

't Moge niet zoo schijnen, maar hier wordt geworsteld, hard gestreden door den Eerstgeborene naar de verkiezing om Zijn Hem van God aangewezen plaats als koning te veroveren!

't Is het einde van een lange en bange worsteling tusschen Jakob en Ezau!

Reeds in Rebekka's schoot was deze worsteling be-

gonnen. Want daar reeds worstelde de verkiezing met de verwerping om de koningsplaats. En als Rebekka heen gaat om hierover den Heere te vragen, wordt haar door het Goddelijk antwoord een worsteling voorspeld, niet maar tusschen de twee zonen, die uit haar geboren zullen worden, maar tusschen twee *volken*, tusschen de verkiezing en de verwerping de eeuwen door, eene worsteling, het einde waarvan zijn zal, dat de meerdere den mindere zal dienen! En als straks de kinderen geboren worden, heeft die "mindere" den "meerdere" bij de hielen, worstelende reeds om de koningsplaats! . . .

Jakobs worsteling met Ezau om Gods verbond!

Doch in Jakob openbaart zich een arm des vleesch. Zeker, o zeker, als Ezau zijn eerstgeboorterecht verkoopt, dan openbaart hij zich als den profane, den onheilige, den hoereerder, maar dan laat Jakob toch aan God niet de eer, en dan heeft het toch al den schijn, alsof Jakob zichzelf plaatst op den koningstroon. En zoo schijnt het nog weer, als Jakob met bedrog den zegen tracht te verkrijgen. Eerst bij den Jabbok, wanneer deze Jezus, die thans voor Herodus staat, met den vleeschelijken Jakob worstelt, leert deze het verstaan: "Niet door kracht of door geweld". . .

Gods koning moet door *God* en in *Gods* weg, als Gods knecht, op den troon worden verheven!

De *verkiezing* moet overwinnen!

God zal Zijn eer aan geen anderen geven!

En de worsteling, in Rebekka's schoot begonnen, zet zich voort door heel de geschiedenis heen. Want Edom haat Israel, de verwerping haat de verkiezing. En die haat openbaart zich ten einde toe. Amalek kwam reeds bij Rafidim tegen Israel om hem te verdelgen, en nog weer bij Kades, toen het vleeschelijk Israel tegen alle Goddelijke openbaring in optrok om het land Kanaän in bezit te nemen. En hoe men overigens ook Gen. 14:7 verklaren moge, ook de Amalekieten waren Edomieten, want Amalek was een zoon van Elifaz, den zoon van Ezau. Gen. 35:12.

En altijd is het Edom, die door zijn zwaard Seïr had verwonnen, die met bitteren haat zich stelt tegen zijn broeder Israel. Door zijn land wil Ezau zijn broeder niet laten trekken, als deze het land der belofte nadert. En als Israel zijn erve van den Heere heeft ontvangen, leeft Edom met hem op den voet van voortdurenden oorlog. Zoo was het gedurende de regering van Saul, David, Salomo, Jehosafat, Jehoram, Amazia en Uzzia. En als straks de wereldmacht onder den trotschen koning van Babel Jeruzalem verwoest en het volk der eerstgeborenen gevankelijk wegvoert, dan verheugt zich Edom over zijns broeders vernedering en roept met woord en daad den geweldenaar van Babel toe: "Ontbloot ze, ontbloot ze, tot haar fundament toe!" Ps. 137:7. . .

Straks wil Haman het koningszaad uitroeien tot den laatste toe! En Haman is de Agagiet, de Amale-

kiet, de Edomiet!

Voor een wijle wordt Edoms macht verbroken door de machtige Makabbeeën.

Doch lang duurde deze glorie niet.

En onder de sluwe Herodianen, die van Rome's Caesar wisten te verkrijgen, door kuiperij en vleierei, wat ze door de macht van het zwaard niet vermochten te veroveren, komt Edom zelfs op Davids troon!

En zoo staat Edom hier in Herodus voor Jezus!

Een laatste ontmoeting!

Herodus de koning!

De eerstgeborene naar het vleesch op den troon!

Ziet hem grijnslachen! Want heeft hier niet de verwerping de eindelijke overwinning op de verkiezing?

O, Jezus, Die immers Gods program van Zijn lijden kende, verstaat het zeker wel op dit oogenblik, dat hij als de Knecht des Heeren hier staat voor Edom, den verworpene, en dat deze thans de plaats inneemt van den eerstgeborene.

Maar verstaat ook Herodus, die "vos", er althans niet iets van, dat deze Jezus is de Koning der Joden, de verwachting Israels, de eerstgeborene naar de belofte Gods? Heeft dan zijn gruwelijke vader hem niet verhaald, hoe deze Koning der Joden te Bethlehem geboren heette te zijn, en hoe hij al de kinderkens in de stad Davids ombracht, om te voorkomen, dat deze Eerstgeborene hem van den troon zou stooten? Of hoe kwam hij, deze Herodus Antipas, er dan toch bij, om deze Jezus straks het spotkleed van een koning om de schouderen te hangen, als het niet in zijne bedoeling lag om te spotten met Israels hope, en, in beginsel althans, triump te vieren over den Eerstgeborene der verkiezing?

O, hij verheugde zich zeer, deze "vos"! Reeds lang had hij een satanische begeerte gekend, om dezen Jezus eens te zien. Meer dan ééne reden had hij voor dit verlangen. Want, ofschoon hij in ongerechtigheid bij zijn goddeloozen vader niet onderdeed, en ofschoon hij dezen in sluwheid misschien nog overtrof, was hij toch, zooals zoovele wreedaards en goddeloozen, een lafaard. Hij was in zijn hart niet rustig over dezen Jezus. Zijn door gruwelen verward brein had reeds uitgerkend, dat Jezus wel Johannes de Dooper kon zijn, uit de dooden weergekeerd! . . .

En dan, men vertelde toch, dat Jezus naar het koningschap dong, en dat Hij een grooten aanhang had!

Slechts enkele dagen geleden had men Hem triumpantelijk in Jeruzalem als koning uitgeroepen!

En men beweerde, dat deze Jezus een groote wondermacht bezat!

Doch nu verheugt hij zich!

Want met één oogopslag vergewist hij zich, dat hij van dezen armen verschoppeling niets te vreezen heeft!

Ziet Jezus daar staan! Gebonden en machteloos! Bleek en uitgeput van de vermoeienis van den voorbij gegane nacht! De sporen van het bloedzweet, in den hof uitgedrukt, nog op Zijn gelaat. Er is aan Hem metterdaad geen gedaante noch heerlijkheid! Als men Hem aanziet, is er niets begeerlijks in Hem! En zeker boezemt hij, naar de maatstaf der wereld, en naar alle Ezau's berekening van Herodus, geen vrees in!

Doch om volkomen geruststelling te verkrijgen doet Herodus Hem vele vragen, die zeker met het rechts-geding hoegenaamd geen verband hielden. Dan grijpt hij moed, om dezen Jezus, den Koning der Joden, den Eerstgeborene naar de verkiezing der genade, met behulp van zijne krijgsknechten te verachten en te bespotten, drukt zijne verachting en duivelsche blijdschap uit in het konings-spotkleed, dat hij den Heiland om de schouderen werpt, en zendt Hem terug naar Pilatus! . . .

De triump der verwerping!

De verworpene op de plaats des verkorenen!

Jezus voor Herodus!

Doch neen! . . .

De verkiezing verwint!

Gods Eerstgeborene worstelt hier voor en met Herodus, en heeft de overwinning!

Want Hij antwoordt den koning met geen enkel woord! En Hij weigert beslist om ook maar een enkel betoon van Zijne macht hier te geven! En juist in dat stilzwijgen, juist in die passieve houding, juist in die lijdelijke ootmoed ligt Zijne overwinning! Zeker, Hij zou op dit oogenblik Zijne macht kunnen openbaren, met een blik Zijner oogen den koning en Zijne trawanten aan zijne voeten kunnen leggen, of met een woord uit Zijnen mond Zijne vijanden kunnen verdoen. . . .

Doch neen, dat mag thans niet!

Niet door een arm des vleesch es mag de strijd nogmaals worden bedorven. Het is de strijd des Heeren, die moet gestreden, ten einde toe.

Herodus moet zijne "ure" hebben!

Maar de Eerstgeborene der verkiezing moet Zijn koningschap en koninkrijk ontvangen van God alleen, en daarom in den weg van Gods recht! En die weg ligt over het kruis. Op dat kruis heeft Hij ook thans Zijn oog gericht. Van den weg van dat kruis laat Hij zich niet afvoeren, ook niet als Hij in eene laatste ontmoeting Edom op Zijnen weg tegenkomt! Daar, aan dat kruis zal de worsteling om Gods verbond worden beslecht. . . .

En daar heeft de Eerstgeborene de volkomen overwinning! Daar moet alle eerstgeborene naar het vleesch het onderspit delven!

Straks staat Hij op in heerlijkheid, wordt Hij met macht bekleed in de hoogste hemelen! . . .

Christus Triumfator!

H. H.

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**EDITORIALS****Gog And Magog Awaking?**

The Christian is naturally interested in the events that are taking place in the world today.

And although his interest does not exclude, but rather include, things temporal, such as the social problems, the economic situation, the political setup, it is not centered on these things as such, but considers these in the light of and with relation to something that far transcends them all: the kingdom of God.

Even in and through the present world crisis and universal madness of the nations, the believer is mindful of the word of the Lord Jesus: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all other things shall be added unto you."

And the chief question in the mind of the Christian is: how do the present world events stand related to the coming of the kingdom of God and the "day of the Lord"?

That they are related to that day, there is no doubt. The Christian believes that all things that take place in this present time belong to the coming of Christ, and must culminate in His final manifestation in glory, His coming on the clouds of heaven. Hence, for him the events of this present time are especially of interest as "things that must shortly come to pass" with a view to that final coming.

The world is looking for, and even now speaking of a new world order, an order in which justice and righteousness shall dominate all relations, in which there shall be freedom and abundance for all, an order of abiding and firmly established peace. And, indeed, there can be but little doubt that the structure of the present world order, socially, economically and politically, is crashing over our heads. It is quite safe to say that, whatever may be the outcome of the present world struggle, the old order is doomed. It will never return. Whether the dream of a new world order will be realized, and what form this realization will assume, is still an open question.

The Christian, too, looks for a new world order, but it is an order that in every sense transcends the present, so that it cannot be conceived in the line and as the ultimate outcome of the historical development of the present order. It, too, is an order in which righteousness prevails, but it is not the righteousness of Man, but the righteousness of God. It, too, is an order that is characterized by permanent and abiding peace, but it is not the peace of Man, established by

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treaties and maintained by force; but it is the peace of God in Christ that dominates that order. It is not of this world. It is strictly universal, for it embraces the whole creation, heaven and earth; and it is heavenly, not earthy: concentrated in the heavenly, resurrected Christ. Therefore, it cannot come by way of historical evolution: it will come through the final Wonder, the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is regeneration!

But, although the present events cannot possibly give birth to that eternal kingdom of heaven, the Christian knows that somehow they lead up to the moment of the regeneration of all things. The measure of all things must be made full, before that "hour" can come. God's alphabet must be read through, every letter of it must be historically realized, from the *alpha* to the *omega*, before that abiding order can be ushered in. And it is in this light that the Christian is chiefly interested to view the events of this present time, especially when these assume gigantic proportions and acquire special significance, as is the case in the present war.

Of course, as he attempts to interpret these events in the light of the kingdom that is to come, and of the end of the present world, he must be careful. Surely, Scripture reveals to us "the things that must shortly come to pass". But even so it does not describe to us in detail the history of the world before it is realized. It gives us "signs", that we may believe. And as the things do come to pass, the believer may recognize them in the light of prophecy, not to satisfy his curiosity, but to strengthen his faith and quicken his hope.

And so the question may be asked: is there even now something to be recognized of this realization of the purposes of God in the present conflict?

As we consider the present stage of the world conflict, things look still rather dark and confused.

In Europe and Africa the period of the German blitzkrieg, with its surprises and quick brilliant victories, appears to be definitely ended. On the other hand, the Russian counter-offensive did not result in cracking the German line, and as soon as weather and ground conditions permit we will probably witness one of the bloodiest battles of the war. In the meantime Japan is carrying on a blitzkrieg of its own in the southern Pacific, and, no doubt, has given the allied nations the surprise of their life by the manifestation of their power and the extent of their preparedness. In quick succession they conquered the Philippines, Singapore, the Dutch East Indies, and southern Burma. In the meantime our own country is exerting all its efforts and using all its resources to get ready. But the picture is still too confusing to venture any definite predictions as to the possible outcome of the war. Besides, the present line-up of the nations may be

deceiving. Can it be expected, in spite of the momentary military alliances, that there is a fundamental basis of unity between Japan and Germany; or between the democratic nations and Russia? Humanly speaking, one can visualize all kinds of possibilities developing in the future.

Yet, it seems as if gradually something definite emerges from the confusion even now.

We know from the Bible that the time will come when the "nations that live on the four corners of the earth", Gog and Magog, will awake. The devil shall be loosed with respect to these nations, and he will go forth to deceive them and to gather them for the battle of the great God. This implies that these nations, that for a long time lived outside of the pale of history, will gain their independence and unite. To these nations, I am convinced, belong especially the yellow peoples, the millions upon millions of the Asiatic nations, Japan, China, India. For centuries the white race dominated the world; the yellow races were considered inferior and brought into subjection. Their riches and resources were exploited by the white man. What would the British empire, what would Holland and other nations of Europe be, without their colonies?

There are signs that all this will be permanently changed through the present conflict. The allied nations anxiously look toward India, and are deliberating upon the question what can be done to align its millions and its fabulous riches on their side in the struggle against Japan. Already Sir Stafford Cripps was sent to that country to see what can be done about it. Gradually it begins to dawn upon the allied nations, even upon Great Britain (reluctant though Mr. Churchill evidently is to admit it) that India's favor can be bought only at the price of her freedom and independence.

Reflecting upon an article by Edgar Snow in the Saturday Evening Post, the editor of that magazine writes:

"Edgar Snow asks on another page whether the United Nations can hope to defeat Japan unless we have the native peoples of Asia wholeheartedly on our side. The price of their help, he says, is their liberty. That would mean the end of the white man's imperialism in Asia, but that is ended anyway, he believes.

"The American people have had a hard lesson in geography in the past three months. They have learned, and in a way they will remember, where their rubber, tin, silk, tea and spices came from. They have learned abruptly that the Asiatic is not an inferior fighting man, because we have seen what the Japanese can do against us, what the Filipino and the Chinese can do for us.

"There is another lesson yet unlearned, one which Mr. Snow is teaching out of a firsthand knowledge of

Asia as intimate as that of any living American. The lesson is that the curtain fell on December seventh upon a two-century era in Asia; dropped finally, regardless of the outcome of this war. From 1700 or thereabouts to 1941 the white man, the pukka sahib, dominated much of Asia, dealing with the natives as inferior and subject peoples. This white man's Asia has had a great fall, and all our men and all our planes cannot put Humpty Dumpty together again, even if we wished.

"This is a fact the American people must face in the midst of war, so that they may understand what we are fighting for in the Pacific. We are fighting first of all to defeat the Japanese, of course, because Japan has stepped into the white man's shoes with a vengeance, and is creating a huge Asiatic empire which directly threatens all America, Australia and New Zealand. Whipping Japan, then, is our immediate objective in the Pacific.

"But what of our long-range objective? When Japan is smashed, fenced back inside her little island world, what then? Do we intend to ask our Chinese allies to return to the white man the colonies and concessions which the Japanese have taken over temporarily? And what would be the Chinese answer? Are we committed to restore the white man's Asia in China, Indo-China, Malaya, the Netherlands East Indies, Burma, India?

"The sooner we face these questions, the better, because our answers may have an important effect upon the outcome of the war, certainly upon its duration. If the Asiatic peoples, the Filipinos included, get the notion that this is a war to determine whether the white man or the Jap shall rule them, they might decide that it is immaterial to them who wins, a choice of frying pan or fire. These Orientals will die on our side only if they are convinced that our victory will be their victory."

And again:

"Pearl Buck, another American who knows the East's head and heart, told a New York audience in February, as Singapore was falling: 'The peoples of Asia want most of all in this war their freedom. Japan aims to show them that if the United States wins, they will not have it. We cannot win this war without convincing our allies that we are fighting for freedom everywhere.'

"If it is true, as we believe, that the white man's Asia is gone forever, outmoded in time, then the quicker Great Britain and the Netherlands realize and act upon this fact, the better for them and for us. It is easy to give away other people's empires, but what is the alternative?"

According to Edgar Snow, the Chinese realize rather clearly that the independence of the Asiatic peoples is one of the stakes in the present world-conflict. He quotes a Chunking spokesman as saying:

"The battle of the Southwest Pacific is a battle for the freedom of the Asiatic peoples. It is a battle to decide whether Chinese, Indians, Malays, Filipinos and other Asiatic peoples can have a future of free independent development."

We are not trying to predict definitely what will be the outcome of the war. But it is easy to see that one of the results may be the end of many colonial empires and the beginning of the freedom and self-government of millions upon millions of the yellow race.

And this certainly would mean to us that the Scriptures are being fulfilled rapidly with respect to the "nations that live on the four corners of the earth."

There is reason to ask: Are Gog and Magog awaking?

H. H.

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## As To That Mysterious Reply

The previous issue of the *Standard Bearer* sent many of our readers on a wild goose chase for an article to which they found a reply in our paper, but which they could not find. Some took the trouble to look through the preceding issue. Others wondered whether it could have appeared in the *Church News*. All in vain.

Now, it is not, and never will be, the policy of our paper to publish replies to articles that are not printed.

Nor is it our custom to print replies first, in order to print the original articles later.

That the latter happens this time is simply due to a misunderstanding. And with apologies to Mr. B. Veldkamp we publish his article in this issue.

The reader will understand that the editor is not responsible for any other contributions that appear in our paper than his own. Criticism of articles he sends to the contributors concerned.

Of course, he may use his authority to close a debate when he deems it advisable.

But even this he will not do, unless it becomes strictly necessary.

But he cannot assume responsibility for the contents of contributions or criticisms outside of his own departments.

H. H.

# The Triple Knowledge

## An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

### IV.

#### LORD'S DAY III

#### 4.

#### Total Depravity. (cont.)

No less explicit and clear are the Canons of Dordrecht on the truth of the depravity of the natural man. In 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. . . . 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." It is true that in the first half of Art. 4 of the same chapters of the Canons they declare that "There remain, however, in man since the fall the glimmerings of natural light, whereby he retains some knowledge of God, of natural things, and of the difference between good and evil, and discovers some regard for virtue, good order in society, and for maintaining an orderly external deportment." But that the fathers of Dordt did not mean by this declaration to attribute any good whatever to fallen man, may be seen from what immediately follows in the same article: "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 in unrighteousness, by doing which he becomes inexcusable before God."

This was the doctrine that was developed and defended over against the enemies of the truth by the great men of God throughout the history of the Church.

It was this truth that was emphasized by Augustine over against the polished and superficial Pelagius and other opponents. According to him the will of fallen man is free only in the sense that it does not act by compulsion from without. Man still acts as a free agent: he considers, prefers, chooses, and acts according to the choice of his will. But this does not mean that the will is free to choose and to do that which is good. Fallen man is not free to choose both good and evil. We must remember, thus he teaches us, that the will itself is either good or evil, and that the ethical condition of the will determines its choice for good or for evil. Sin or grace determines the condition of the will. And in the natural man it is the sin of Adam that determines his will for evil. Fallen man does not even have a remnant of the original righteousness of Adam in the state of integrity. All righteousness he lost. He is free from righteousness, even as in the state of integrity he was free from sin. He is nothing but a *peccati servus*, a slave of sin. Ench. ch. 30. He does, indeed, serve sin according to the choice of his own will, but never can he choose anything else than evil. He has, therefore, indeed a *liberum arbitrium*, a free will, but only *in malis, ad peccandum*, to evil and to sin, not *ad agendum bonum*, to do the good.

It might be expected that Pelagius c.s. pointed to the virtues and noble deeds of the heathen and ungodly, in opposition to the doctrine of total depravity as defended by Augustine. Highly these virtues of the ungodly were extolled by him, even as is often done today by those that defend the theory of "common grace". But Augustine explained that these virtues were in reality nothing but vices and sins. In the ungodly there is often a conflict of sinful motives and desires, so that one sin restrains another. This is very evident by such men as misers, but may even be discovered among the great Romans. When often they repressed their sinful lusts and accomplished things that are praiseworthy in the estimation of men, they were motivated by their love of honor and sinful ambition. The so-called virtues of natural man may better be called vices. Sin is not checked, "*sed aliis peccatis alia vincuntur*", some sins are chained by other sins.\*

Calvin emphasizes the same truth. It is true that the defenders of the common grace theory often appeal to Calvin for their view that the natural man is able to do good by virtue of the influence of a common, non-regenerating grace. They do this in order to defend their right to the name of Calvinists! And it may readily be granted that the term "common grace" is often found in Calvin, while at the same time he explains the so-called virtues of the ungodly in the Augustinian way. The fact that man after the fall

\*De Predestinatie-leer van Aug. Thom. v. Aquino en Calv. Dr. A. D. R. Polman, p. 77.

retained his reason and the remnants of natural light, he ascribes to the general grace of God. It is true, he writes, that some are born idiots and stupid, but this does not obscure the general grace of God: "Nam quod nascuntur moriones quidam vel stupidi, defectus ille generalem Dei gratiam non obscurat." Inst. II, 2, 17. He even designates as *special grace* the fact that in these natural gifts one is more excellent than another: "Unde enim alius alio praestantior, nisi ut in natura communi emineat specialis Dei gratia, quae multos praeteriens, nemini se obstrictam esse clamat?" He even seems to teach a certain grace whereby corruption in the sinful nature of fallen man is somewhat restrained, so that it does not break forth in all possible sin and violence. He notes that in every age there were some that throughout their life strove to be virtuous. By this they furnished proof that there was an element of purity in their nature: "honestatis studio documentum ediderunt, nonnihil fuisse in natura sua puritatis." But to explain this, we must remember that in the corruption of the human nature there is still a little place for the grace of God, not to remove, but to restrain the corruption: "Sed hic succurrere nobis debet, inter illam naturae corruptionem esse nonnullum gratiae Dei locum, non quae illam purget, sed intus cohibeat." Inst. II, 3, 3. However, we must remember: 1. That Calvin never teaches, that any positive good proceeds from the fallen and corrupt human nature. In this respect his use of the term "common grace" has nothing in common with the modern conception under that name. With Calvin the natural man remains corrupt in all its parts; it is never improved. Man has lost all his excellent gifts. Only of his natural powers he retained a remnant, so that he is still a rational being. But even these natural gifts are corrupted. These natural gifts as such are ascribed by Calvin to the Holy Spirit, who distributes all gifts and talents even as He will. But he agrees, nevertheless, with Augustine, that the natural man corrupts and defiles even these natural gifts, so that he derives no praise from them for himself: "ita naturalia haec quae restabant, corrupta fuisse docet (i.e. Augustinus, H.H.). Non quod per se inquinari possint, quatenus a Deo proficiuntur: sed quia polluto homini pura esse desierunt, ne quam inde laudem consequatur." Inst. II, 2, 12-17. 2. That Calvin explains this so-called restraining grace in a way with which we can heartily agree, and which makes the *term* grace a misnomer. For at the end of the same paragraph in which he speaks of this restraining grace, he explains that some are restrained by shame, others by fear of the laws from breaking out in all kinds of corruption, even though for the most part they do not try to cover up their pollution (utcumque suam magna ex parte impuritatem non dissimulant); some lead an honest life because they consider it profitable for themselves;

still others rise above the common level in order that by their majesty they may keep others into subjection. And thus God by His providence restrains the corruption of the nature, that it does not break out in iniquity. But He does not purge the nature from within. Inst. II, 3, 3. All this quite agrees materially with the views of Augustine, even though one may object that the use of the *term* grace is to be condemned as improper in this connection. For it certainly cannot be called grace when one is restrained by his own sinful and selfish motives from breaking out into certain sins. 3. That with Calvin this explanation of the "virtues" of the ungodly, which he, too, like Augustine, ultimately condemns as vices (see Inst. II, 3, 4: the more excellent one was, the more he was motivated by his carnal ambition, so that all the so-called virtues of the ungodly lose their pleasantness before God. Therefore whatever appears praiseworthy in ungodly men must be considered of no worth: pro nihilo ducendum est quicquid laude dignum apparet in hominibus profanis.), never occurs as a main doctrine, but only as an appendix to his doctrine of total depravity. Anyone who reads the Institutes will admit that Calvin would never have thought of deposing ministers from their office because they insisted that the natural man is incapable of doing any good, as did the Christian Reformed Church in 1924! 4. That, as far as the employment of the term "grace" by Calvin is concerned (communis, generalis, specialis, specialissima!), we must not forget that our reformer was still in his twenties, and not long out of the Catholic Church, when he wrote his Institutes, and that it was hardly Calvinistic blindly to adopt even the terms which he employed, especially since these terms with him have an entirely different meaning from their present connotation! We conclude, therefore, that Calvin taught the truth of total depravity in all its implications, and that the modern emphasis upon the goodness of natural man is certainly not Calvinistic.

Calvin was not the only reformer who emphasized this doctrine of the total depravity anew in the sixteenth century. Nor are the teachers of this truth at that time limited to his associates. Martin Luther taught the same truth with equal emphasis, and with all the vehemence of his ardent nature defended it against opponents. This may be shown from his polemic against Erasmus' "Diatribes": "The Bondage of the Will." Writes he: "As to the other paradox you mention,—that, 'whatever is done by us, is not done by Free-will but from mere necessity'—Let us briefly consider this, lest we should suffer any thing most perniciously spoken, to pass by unnoticed. Here then, I observe, that if it be proved that our salvation is apart from our own strength and counsel, and depends on the working of God alone (which I hope I shall clearly prove hereafter, in the course of this dis-

cussion), does it not evidently follow, that when God is not present with us to work in us, everything that we do is evil, and that we of necessity do those things which are of no avail unto salvation? For if it is not we ourselves, but God only, that works salvation in us, it must follow, whether or no, that we do nothing unto salvation *before* the working of God in us. But by *necessity* I do not mean *compulsion*; but (as they term it) the *necessity of immutability*, not of *compulsion*; that is, a man void of the Spirit of God does not evil against his will as by violence, or as if he were taken by the neck and forced to it, in the same way as a thief or cut-throat is dragged to punishment against his will; but he does it spontaneously, and with desirous willingness. And this willingness and desire of doing evil he cannot, by his own power, leave off, restrain, or change; but he goes on still desiring and craving. And even if he should be compelled by force to do any thing *outwardly* to the contrary, yet the craving will *within* remain averse to, and rises in indignation against that which forces or resists it. But it would not rise in indignation, if it were changed, and made willing to yield to a constraining power. This is what we mean by the necessity of immutability:—that the will cannot change itself, nor give itself another bent; but rather the more it is resisted, the more it is irritated to crave; as is manifest from its indignation. This would not be the case if it were free, or had a ‘Free-will’. Ask experience how hardened against all persuasion they are, whose inclinations are fixed upon any one thing. For if they yield at all, they yield through force, or through something attended with greater advantage; they never yield willingly. And if their inclinations be not thus fixed, they let all things pass and go on just as they will.” pp. 72, 73.

Or consider the following from the same work: “Where are you now, friend Erasmus! you, who promised ‘that you would freely acknowledge that the most excellent faculty of man is flesh, that is, ungodly, if it should be proven from the Scriptures?’ Acknowledge now, then, when you hear, that the most excellent faculty of man is not only ungodly, but ignorant of God, existing in the contempt of God, turned to evil, and unable to turn towards good. For what is it to be ‘unrighteous’, but for the will (which is one of the most noble faculties in man), to be unrighteous? What is it to understand nothing either of God or of good, but for the reason (which is another of the most noble faculties of man) to be ignorant of God and good, that is, to be blind to the knowledge of godliness? What is it to be ‘gone out of the way’, and to have become unprofitable, but for men to have no power in one single faculty, and the least power in their most noble faculties, to turn unto good, but only to turn unto evil! What is it not to fear God, but for men to be in all their faculties, and most all in their noblest

faculties, contemners of all the things of God, of His words, His works, His laws, His precepts, and His will! What then can reason propose that is right, who is thus blind and ignorant? What can the will choose that is good, which is thus evil and impotent? Nay, what can the will pursue, where the reason can propose nothing but the darkness of its own blindness and ignorance? And where the reason is thus erroneous, and the will adverse, what can the man either do or attempt, that is good!” pp. 334, 335.

The same teaching is found in Ursinus’ “Schatboek”, who under Question 8 of the Catechism discusses various degrees of freedom, and writes of the freedom of the natural man as follows: “The second degree or step of freedom of the will is the will in fallen man, born of corrupt parents, before regeneration. In this state the will acts indeed freely, but is only led to evil and can do nothing but sin. The reason for this is that the fall of man was followed by the loss of the knowledge of God in man’s intellect, and of the inclination to obedience in the will and in the heart; and that instead he entailed on himself blindness and aversion to God, which man cannot put off unless he is regenerated by the Spirit of God. In short, after the fall there is in man only the capability of choosing evil.” p. 82.

Here follows an objection to the doctrine of total depravity, answered by Ursinus:

“*Objection 1*: Nothing is easier, Erasmus says to Luther, than to refrain the hand from theft. Yea, even Socrates, Aristides and others did many virtuous things. Hence, there must have been with them a free will to do good before regeneration. *Answer*: 1. The description of the free will as freedom to do a good work, or the power to exercise obedience well-pleasing to God, is erroneous. This freedom the unregenerate do not possess. Even though they refrain from committing external sinful acts, within them rage the evil passions. 2. God by His providence directs also the hearts of the unregenerate; but from this it does not follow that they can easily perform inner obedience. This cannot be present with them, seeing they were not regenerated.” p. 83.

Ursinus, too, discusses the so-called “virtues” of the unregenerate, and in some instances uses language which we would avoid, but he never hesitates to declare that these “virtues” are *sins*. He distinguishes between acts that are as such sinful, and acts that are sinful through “secondary causes”. These latter are: “the deeds of the unregenerate and the hypocrites; and they are indeed commanded by God, but they displease Him nevertheless, because they are done without faith and conversion to God; thus also the *adiaphora* that give offense. ‘And all that is not of faith is sin,’ Rom. 14:23. ‘But unto them which are defiled and unbeliev-

ing is nothing pure.' Tit. 1:15. 'But without faith it is impossible to please God.' Heb. 11:6. All the virtues, therefore, of the unregenerate, such as the chastity of Scipio, the courage of Julius, the faithfulness of Regulus, the righteousness of Aristides, etc., even though they are in themselves good deeds commanded by God, become sins through something additional and they displease God; both, because the persons that perform them do not please God, and because they are not done in the way and with the purpose required by God, viz., not out of faith and not to the glory of God; and these certainly are the requirements for any good work; without these even the best deeds are sins; so that it is sin when an ungodly man or hypocrite prays, gives alms, offers sacrifices, etc., because he does not do these things out of faith and to the glory of God. 'The hypocrites do alms in the synagogues and on the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward.' Matt. 6:2. 'He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as he that offereth swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.' Isa. 66:3." p. 61.

The most faithful of the leaders and teachers of the Church, therefore, have always emphasized the truth that after the fall man is totally depraved. And when, by way of answering objections, they spoke of the so-called "virtues" of the ungodly, this part of their teaching was considered so accidental and unimportant, that no trace of it can be found in the Reformed Confessions! And it was considered quite sufficient to declare: "Are we then so corrupt that we are wholly incapable of doing any good, and inclined to all wickedness? Indeed we are; except we are regenerated by the Spirit of God." But in 1924 the Christian Reformed Church extolled the virtues of the wicked, and did not hesitate to depose ministers that refused to join in the praise of what is an abomination before God!

H. H.

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## The Day Of The Lord In Old Testament Prophecy

This article is a continuation of the article appearing in the previous issue under the title "The Prophets". The title should have been the one appearing above this article.

In these articles I address myself to the task of ascertaining:

- 1) The doings of the Lord in "that day".
- 2) The significance of "that day".
- 3) Its successive and final appearing.

What was that day to these prophets? It was the *day of the Lord*, thus a day filled with His doings. And these doings were the fulfillment of all the predictions of each and every prophet of God. In this day *all* their prophecies were realized. The truth of this statement is born out by the fact that in their discourses the expression *that day* is associated with all their predictions.

As the doing of the Lord to be accomplished in "that day" are, as was said, the very events foretold by each and every one of God's prophets, showing what these doings are is a task that consists in setting forth at least the substance of the predictive sections of the discourses of the prophets of God. We came up to the content of the prophecy of Obadiah.

The date of Obadiah's prophetic activity cannot be determined. This prophet announces the utter destruction of Edom on account of his hostile purposes against Judah, the deliverance and exaltation of the Church and Jehovah's universal sway.

According to the heading in 1:1, Micah prophesied in the days of Hezekiah, commencing his labors before the dispersion of the ten tribes in 741. In his discourse he sets out with announcements of judgments, which he directs against the ten tribes and Judah. He predicts the utter destruction of Samaria and Judah, but also the return of a purified remnant under the leadership of Jehovah, and further the healing of the dispersed, the revival of the kingdom of David, the destruction of the enemy, and the birth and reign of the Messiah. He, too, holds forth to God's people the promise of a glorious restoration, and ends with a song of praise to Jehovah, Who alone is God.

The date of the prophetic activity of Nahum must remain a matter of uncertainty. The prophecy decrees Nineveh's doom, holds forth the promise of Judah's deliverance, and depicts the universal exaltation over the fall of Nineveh.

Habakkuk must have prophesied about 625 B.C., thus before the exile of Judah. The book expresses the prophet's perplexity over how Jehovah can justify

His indifference of the wickedness and violence of His apostate people. The reply of Jehovah is that He is not indifferent but that a fearful judgment to be executed by the Chaldeans is about to overtake the sinful people. This gives rise to a new perplexity on the part of the prophet. How can a holy God employ a godless agent? Jehovah's reply is that the Chaldeans, though temporarily victorious, will meet with certain doom and that the righteous, though temporarily afflicted, will live forever. The discourse closes with a prayer in which the prophet extols Jehovah's mighty works of the past and voices his confidence in Jehovah, the God of his salvation.

As to Zephaniah, the title of his book places his prophetic activity in the reign of Josiah, that is, between 639-608. This prophet forecasts universal judgment. There are judgments coming against Judah and Jerusalem and against the nations, to wit, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Ethiopia, Assyria. But Zion is exhorted to rejoice for her salvation by the Lord.

The prophecies of Haggai were uttered in the second year of Darius, that is, in 520 B.C. The prophet rebukes the religious indifference of the Jews who returned from exile, with the result that the temple is built. When once completed, the prophet promises the overthrow of the nations, the establishment of the Kingdom of God, and the exaltation of Zerubbabel.

As to Zechariah, also his prophecy is placed by its title in the second year of Darius. This book predicts the final conflict and triumph of the kingdom of God. Ephraim and Judah will be rejuvenated. The exiles will be restored from Assyria and Egypt. Jerusalem will be captured and delivered. The hostile nations will be destroyed. The whole land will undergo a most remarkable fertility and felicity. The remnant of the nations will be converted. And Judah and Jerusalem will be holy unto Jehovah.

We may gather from the prophecy of Malachi that also this prophet began his labors after the captivity of Judah. The prophet declares Jehovah's love of His people in reply to their inquiry: "Wherein hast thou loved us?" He condemns the people's neglect of the service of God, their mixed marriages, and their religious indifference and skepticism, and foretells the utter destruction of the wicked and the exaltation and glorification of the righteous. His closing word is an exhortation to faithful observance of the law, and an announcement that the Lord will send them Elijah before the coming of His great and terrible day to turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to the fathers.

As these sketches indicate, there is remarkable agreement between these discourses, and this of necessity as each foretells what will come to pass in *that day*. All therefore have in common the same great

themes. Their collective contents are comprehended in three expressions: judgment; permanent redemption of the church through judgment; the everlasting glory and blissfulness of her heavenly existence.

As to the character of *that day*, it is a day of terrible wonders. In it the Lord will cause the sun to go down at noon and he will darken the earth in a clear day (Amos 8:8ff), show wonders in the heavens and in the earth (Joel 3:21). The land shall tremble and every one mourn that dwelleth in it (Amos 8:8). The Lord in that day will come forth out of His place, and will come down and tread the high places of the earth; the mountains shall be molten under him, and the valleys shall be cleft (Micah 1:3, 4). The superficial and unbelieving populace, deceived by the false prophets, liked to contemplate it as a day to be desired. But in contrast to this unbelieving attitude, the true prophets of God affirmed its terribleness. Every decisive event or combination of events, by which the ends of God's kingdom are promoted, must be a sifting of the Lord's people, a thorough purging of His floor. Hence the day of the Lord is one of great judgment for His people. *In this day* God will send fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem (Amos 2:5). Against the family of Israel He will revise evil from which they shall not remove their necks (Micah 2:3). He will send the Assyrian, the rod of His anger, and will give him charge to take the spoil and to tread them down like mire of the streets (Isa. 1:6).

For the true Israel the day of the Lord is characterized by hope and joy ultimately. God will bind up the breach of His people, and heal the stroke of her wound (Isa. 30:20). The day of the Lord will be a day of terrible vengeance against Israel's enemies. All the despots who oppressed Israel shall be broken. The day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen; as they have done, so shall it be done to them. Their reward shall return upon their head (Obad. 15). Jehovah will come from His holy mountain in all the glory and majesty of the tempest. He will march like a lion before His people. He, the great king of all the earth, who possesses all nations, will come to dwell on Zion, to set up His royal throne there over the whole earth, and manifest His glory, so that all nations may know that He is king forever.

As the above sketches indicate, the day of the Lord is the greatest turning-point in the history of the Church and of the world, when heaven and earth are finally set in motion and when all relations are completely changed, so that, among all the days of time, this is the day which God has and creates for Himself and His great work, of which He speaks and in which He is glorified. (Isa. 29:17-24; Haggai 11:6, 22; Ezek. 30:3; Zech. 14:1; Zech. 3:8; Ezek. 34:13).

So we are finally confronted by the question: When

did this day come? It came when the Lord came in judgment against Israel and Judah and the foreign nations and when he redeemed His people from Babylonian captivity. Yet the transpiring of these events, however dreadful, does not satisfy the predictions of God's prophets. This is clear from the consideration of the following scriptures of which the discourses of the prophets are full: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together. . . . They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountains: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:10). For behold I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people, and the voice of weeping shall no more be heard in her, nor the voice of crying. . . . (Isa. 65:17, 18). Malachi continues to prophesy of the coming of God's terrible day with Judah again in Canaan.

Thus these prophecies call for still another coming of the "day of the Lord". The "day of the Lord" has once again come, truly come. It did so when God sending forth His Son "made of a woman, and made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, put Him to grief for our iniquities, engulfed Him by the billows of His wrath on account of our transgressions. Then was Zion redeemed with judgment. Then, too, was the judgment of this world on account of its having crucified the Lord of glory. So, raising up His Son unto the justification of His people, God exalted Him by His right hand. And He reigns now, does Christ—reigns in the midst of His enemies—the kings of the earth who set themselves, and the rulers who take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He breaks them with a rod of iron and dashes them in pieces like a potter's vessel—He, God's true anointed King upon His holy hill of Zion, the Jerusalem that is now above (Ps. 2). So has the terrible day of the Lord truly come.

And yet, even with the transpiring of these events the Holy Spirit by the mouth of the apostles continues to speak of the coming of *the day of the Lord*. God's believing people, they say, "know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape" (I Thes. 5:3). "And the heavens shall pass away then with a great noise and the elements shall melt with a fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be

burnt up" (II Peter 2:10). And there will be new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness (II Peter 3:13), thus an earth cleansed from the race of men that now corrupt it. Then will God's tabernacle be with men." This will be the last of the greatest of judgments, the final world-catastrophe, the consummation of all things. Then all the requirements of all prophecy, comprehended in the promise as first revealed by the Lord to the first parents of the human family—the promise: "I will set enmity—will be fully satisfied. Then all Christ's enemies—those who, while in the flesh, derided Him and denied His existence—will be made—actually made—His footstool in that place of everlasting desolation. As subdued and humbled sinners, they will say to Him: "Truly, Thou were and art Lord".

So will the day of the Lord once more certainly come, as it has come again and again; first through the destruction of the world by the flood; second, through the devastation of Egypt by the ten plagues, the slaying of Egypt's first-born, the drowning of Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea, and the extermination of the Canaanites; third, through the destruction of the neighbouring nations of the people of Israel; fourth, through the final destruction of Jerusalem; fifth, through the last judgment.

But the judgment came also against Christ through His being bruised for our sins. This judgment was foreshadowed first, by the deluge; second by Pharaoh's oppression of God's Son, the people of Israel; and, third, by the great grief to which God put Israel, His Servant, through the agency of the Syrian, Assyrian, and the other heathen conquerors. So was the day of the Lord, as often as it came, a season of greatest grief first for God's people and this on account of their sins, and then for the enemies who had oppressed them. But their Redeemer lives—He, who through His bearing the grief of God's terrible day, atoned their sins. Through the sufferings of God's terrible day He therefore leads them to the glory. Out of all their troubles He will deliver them in the day of His appearing. So, looking out upon the career of the church as set before us in the Scriptures, we see in them five greatest judgments and deliverances, each of which marks the end of one epoch, dispensation or day and the beginning of another. The last great judgment and the final deliverance marks the commencement of the day eternal.

G. M. O.

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#### ANNOUNCEMENT

The Mid-West Radio program of our Protestant Reformed Churches, sponsored by our Young People's Societies, will commence April 5, at 4:00 P. M., over Station K-S-O-O, 1140 on your dial.

## Communication

A brother send the following questions for me to answer.

Rev. G. M. Ophoff,

Dear Brother:

I read with considerable interest your article, in the February 15 issue of the *Standard Bearer*, entitled, "The Author of the Book of Ecclesiastes".

In general, I agree with your conclusions, especially in regard to the Solomonic authorship of the book. I believe that the article is very instructive and therefore serves toward a better understanding of the book of Ecclesiastes. There are, however, a few questions that I would like to have answered. They are as follows: In the first place, how must we explain Solomon's experiment from the ethical-moral point of view? Could he give his heart to know madness and folly without committing sin? Or was he in some way excusable? In the second place, was not this whole experiment incompatible with his great wisdom? Did not even the most simple child of God in the Old Dispensation know that madness and folly implied sin? May we not then conclude that Solomon, with all his profound wisdom, knew that far better and that therefore such an experiment was entirely unnecessary either for him personally or for our instruction? Finally, how are the questionable actions of Solomon to be explained in the light of his wisdom which God gave him? I refer now to such things as over-taxing the people for the sake of maintaining his extravagant way of living, his marriage of so many wives and especially his turning away from the Lord to serve the idols of his heathen wives in the last years of his life.

I realize that it is impossible to answer all the questions which might arise in simply one article. I am also aware of the fact that the matter in question does not categorically fall under the heading of your article. They are, nevertheless, questions which arise in the study of the book of Ecclesiastes and therefore closely related to the subject about which you wrote. Would you therefore kindly consider these questions and answer them in the *Standard Bearer*? I would appreciate it very much and I believe it would be profitable to the readers.

Your Brother in Christ.

### REPLY

A thoughtful reading of our book does indeed provoke just such questions. My correspondent desires that I answer them. I herewith do so the best I know how.

Question: How must we explain Solomon's experiment from the ethical-moral point of view? Could he give his heart to know madness and folly without committing sin?

Reply: My correspondent does certainly not mean to ask: Since Solomon, in common with all believers had but a small beginning of true obedience and thus was always increasing his guilt even in the performance of the very best of his works, how could he perform that very good work of giving his heart to folly and madness that in his own language "he might see what was good for the sons of men", without at all sinning.

If this were the thrust of the question, my answer would be simply: No, assuredly, he could not. For the best works of God's believing people are tainted with the issues of the flesh.

The stand of my correspondent is, it is plain, that Solomon's doing, his giving his heart to know madness, was as such sinful, even deeply sinful perhaps, like murder and theft, so that what he wishes to know is: How could Solomon with impunity, be it for the purpose of advancing true knowledge (that is, seeing what is good for the sons of men), make experiments *as such* sinful and that thus involved him in sin? May a man ever experiment with sin, however good his purpose? May he abandon himself to a life of iniquity to see whether such a life is spiritually profitable? Is this even possible either for a believer or for a wicked man? Would the wicked one actually be interested in seeing what is truly good for the sons of men and could the believer get himself to revel in sin that he might see? My correspondent's answer to these questions is, of course, an emphatic *no*. And this is also my answer. Well then, if the experimenter of our book should have to be found guilty of this, how, in this case, could it be maintained that he is a firm believer in God, a man of deep religious convictions? How could it then be accounted for that our book was given a place in the canon of the Scriptures? Such and similar questions arose in the mind of my correspondent in his study of our book. This can be expected. As I just said, the doings of our experimenter provoke just such questions. Let us see if we can remove the difficulties that here present themselves. I believe this can be done by a careful examination of the preacher's report concerning his experiments and in the way of setting forth *these experiments* in their true light.

The preacher tells us that he proved his heart with mirth (chap. 2:1). He withheld not his heart from any joy. Whatsoever his eyes desired he kept not from them, his purpose being to see what was good for the sons of men (2:10).

The first question confronting us is whether the Preacher is here telling us that what he did was to

follow pursuits, drink of pleasures, indulge in gratifications, *as such* sinful and therefore forbidden. In answering this question, we must allow the Preacher to tell us just what his proving his heart with mirth and his laying hold on folly consisted in. It consisted, according to his report, in the following actions: giving himself to wine; making him great works; building him houses; planting him vineyards, making him gardens and orchards, and planting trees in them of all kind of fruits; making him pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees; getting him servants and maidens, and having servants born in his house; having great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before him; getting him also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces; getting him men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts (2:3-8).

Were these doings of the Preacher, was this his labour and the joy that he derived from it *as such*, sinful? According to the Preacher, nothing could be further from the truth than to say of it that it was. Of the rejoicing of his heart in this labour he says that it was his portion in it (2:10); that there is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour (2:24); that this was from the hand of God (2:24); that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of his labour; *that this is the gift of God* (3:12, 22; 5:18, 19, 20); that an untimely birth is better than the man who begets an hundred children, and lives many years, yet without his soul being filled with good (6:3). He even commends mirth, because a man has no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and be merry; "for that shall abide with him of his labour the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun" (8:15). This series of thoughts—thoughts that pervade the whole book—is comprehended in a final copious conclusion that reads: "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works. Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun. Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" (9:7-10).

Such is the counsel of the preacher, which he himself also lived, through his having kept himself occupied in a manner described in chapter two. And of this counsel as well as of all the teaching contained in our book, he says (12:9, 10), "And moreover, because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people know-

ledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: *and that which was written was upright, even words of truth*". How far from the truth then that in the Preacher's own mind his occupations and the pleasures which he derived from them—those doings of his which he names in chapter two, in a word, his experiments or tests which he relates in this chapter—stood out in his mind as being in themselves sinful and thus forbidden. According to the Preacher, these doings formed a labour that was by itself altogether lawful in God's sight. It was a work that the Lord had given him to do; and the pleasure which it yielded him was a good gift of God. And his counsel to his fellowmen is that they, too, make their soul enjoy good in *their labour* and regard this good as God's gift to them.

So if this labour and the pleasure it afforded was actually sinful by itself, then the Preacher was a man who abandoned himself to a disreputable way of life not only but who in addition was so lacking in moral sense that he perceived not that he did wrong and that the resultant pleasures were sinful. Or if he did have understanding of this, he deliberately falsified as a teacher of men. Then his counsel is not only bad, but it is a counsel of which he knew that it is bad. Then his statement to the effect that what he wrote is upright, even words of truth, is not only false but a deliberate lie. It all comes down to this that if this labour by itself is sinful, we are simply at a loss to know how to explain the inception of our book into the canon of the Scriptures, unless we want to say that *the church* made a grave mistake. But if so, what becomes of the promise of Christ that He will lead His church into all truth.

So the question confronting us is this: Was this labour and its resultant pleasures *as such* sinful? The thing for us to do is to subject the Preacher's narration of his labour to a careful analysis; then we will know. Says the Preacher: "I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was good for the sons of men. . . ." (2:3). The text in the original reads: "Then in my heart I made deep search, to rein my flesh in wine, my heart guiding in wisdom. . . ." All interpreters are agreed that what the Preacher here tells us is that he did not plunge himself into unbridled sensuous intoxication, but that he behaved himself with wisdom and thus in his use of wine certainly practiced the required moderation and this in order that he might not disqualify himself for testing with calm reflection and in a composed way whether real contentment was to be secured by sensual joy. Now a moderate use of wine certainly is not *as such* sinful. According to Scripture, Wine is a good gift of God; and likewise the sensual pleasure

which a moderate use of it affords. It is only the immoderate use of wine and the resultant drunken madness that Holy Writ denounces as sin.

Such then is the construction to be placed upon the above-cited statement. It shows that these other statements—I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure—may not be taken to mean that the Preacher indulged in *forbidden* sensual pleasures or that, though these pleasures by themselves were lawful, the Preacher, in pursuing them, failed to control himself but, overstepping his bounds, *wholly abandoned* himself to a life of sensual gratification and that *this* was his sin. Had he lost himself in these pleasures—pleasure by themselves lawful—he would have destroyed himself. Then what would have become of his resolution to see, through these experiments, what was that good for the sons of men? As to the other occupations of the Preacher that he tells us about—His making him great works and the like—not one of them was *as such* sinful. Certainly such doings as building houses, planting vineyards, getting servants and maidens, and gathering gold and silver are not *as such* sinful. In the case of the Preacher, it was a labour that his hands were finding to do. It was a labour of which he was persuaded that it had been laid upon his hands by the Lord. And so it had. Because Solomon had not asked for himself riches, wealth and honour, but wisdom and knowledge that he might judge the people of Israel, God gave him, in addition to wisdom, riches and wealth, such as none of the kings had had that had been before him, neither any of the kings after him would have. In agreement herewith, the Lord had increated in the Preacher's nature such traits as a love of wisdom, sense of the beautiful in nature and art, and a love of splendour and dignity. It was to these traits that he gave expression in all his enterprises. This certainly was not *as such* sinful of him.

So if this labour of the Preacher was nevertheless sinful, it was this solely on the ground of his not having performed it out of faith. And if his pleasures—the sensual delight that his moderate use of wine and food afforded him—were sinful, they were this because, being a child of darkness, he was not thankful. But the Preacher was a believer. His very experiments were works not of skepticism but of faith—of the faith that affirms that “the whole of man is to fear God”. Upon the foundation of this truth he proceeded. It must not be supposed that he began as an atheist and ended up as a believer; that, after having tried out everything else and found them wanting, he concluded that the best he could do for himself is to fear God and, as so concluding, just simply believed.

Why then did the Preacher call these labours and pleasures of his vanity, folly, madness, vexation of spirit? Not because *as such* they were works and

pleasures of sin but for another reason. It is precisely because the preacher wants this strictly understood that he affirms over and over that a man's labour and the pleasure it affords him is the gift of God. The doctrine contained either in this book or in any other book of the Bible is not that to reach a high state spiritually and intellectually the normal occupations and lawful pleasures of this earthy must be abandoned; but the teaching is that these occupations and pleasures must be retrieved from the sphere of darkness and restored to the service of God. Therefore the counsel of the Preacher is not only, “Rejoice, O young man in the days of thy youth. . .” but also, “but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment,” and “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil” (11:9; 12:14). Herewith the first question of my correspondent—the question: “Could he give his heart to know madness and folly without committing sin?”—has, I believe, been answered. The Preacher could and did give his heart to know folly without committing sin because *this giving his heart to know folly* did not bring him under the necessity of abandoning himself to a way of life in itself sinful and forbidden. All that it required of him is that he perform the work that his hands found to do and that he test the lawful pleasures that this work afforded him.

Now sin, the sinful way of life of the godless, the works of unprincipled men, is, to be sure, folly, madness. But the message of our book is not that *sin* is madness. What the Preacher has before his mind, when he exclaims, “Vanity of vanities; all is vanity, madness,” is the whole busyness of life, the practicing of trades and crafts, the cultivation of science and art, the pursuit of wisdom, in a word, all human endeavour and achievement of whatever character of unbelievers and believers alike. All this labour even apart from its moral worth, is in itself vanity, folly, vexation of spirit, that is, according to the text in the original, a feeding upon or desire after the wind. And it is this because it is essentially profitless, gainless, devoid of true progress, and thus utterly futile (chap. 1:3). Therefore, speaking now of himself, the Preacher declares that he causes his heart to despair of all the labour which he has taken under the sun. He hates life; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous to him: for all is vanity and a feeding upon the wind (2:20, 27). Mark you, it is man's busyness *under the sun*, of which the Preacher speaks; namely, of the earthly busyness of *this life*.

Why now is all this labour—the Preacher's own and that of mankind in general—so profitless and thus so vain, futile? The preacher advances several reasons, the principal one of which he states in this language: “That which is crooked cannot be made straight: and

that which is wanting cannot be numbered" (1:15). The parallel passage reads: "Consider the work of God: for who can make that straight, which He hath made crooked?" (7:13). Thus the straight is crooked, God making it so, how and on account of what, the Preacher does not say. The teaching of our book must be rounded out here by a reference to the facts of the fall, of the doom of punishment, and of the subsequent operation of the curse of God in the sphere of this earthly. Some tokens of the presence of this new and perverse order of things, observed by the Preacher, are: all the oppressions that are done under the sun; the oppressed being without a comforter, and power being on the side of the oppressor (4:1); the violent perverting of judgment and justice (5:8); a just man perishing in his righteousness, and a wicked man prolonging his life in his wickedness (7:15); just men, unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; and wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous (8:14); one event—going to the dead—coming alike to all—to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean; to him that sacrificeth and to him that sacrifices not (9:2); the race not being to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither bread to the wise, nor yet riches to the men of understanding, nor yet favor to the men of skill; but time and chance happening to them all (9:11); folly set in great heights and the rich sitting in low places (10:6); and finally, servants riding upon horses and princes walking as servants upon the earth (10:7).

So has the straight been made crooked indeed. And man by all his labours does not rectify what is unjust in this world, deliver from the curse of God, free human existence from the wrath of God by which it is pervaded. For God has made crooked the straight. Despite all man's efforts, the curse of God continues to stalk the earth and the revelation of His wrath from heaven persists. Thus human effort attains to no true success either in a practical or theoretical relation. Neither does it attain to enduring wealth of happiness. For everything that is accomplished under the sun is subjected to the curse of temporality. And at this stern barrier all efforts after the attainment of durable happiness utterly fails. The satisfaction that is striven after is as the wind. The happiness sought is but a momentary delusion. The great void in human existence remains. This being true, to what real purpose then is all man's labour? To no purpose whatever. It is utterly vain. This is the message of our book. Not to see this is to miss the point in the whole argument.

But if matters stand thus, if all the works that are done under the sun are vanity and vexation of spirit, why should a man work at all? Because he must. It is his portion, his lot. It is doing that which his hand finds to do. True, it is vexation of spirit, is all this

labour; but "this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be afflicted therewith" (1:13), in order that man, His believing people, may in the school of experience come to realize more and more keenly that all this labour and the pleasure it yields is *in itself* vanity indeed, that by it man attains to no true success and happiness, that thus the whole of man is to fear God. Certainly, it is not necessary to show from the Scriptures that it is exactly in the school of hard experience that God's people learn all their great and valuable lessons, and that the prophets and apostles of God received their great revelations. So does God make all this labour, by itself vain, to work together for good to them that love Him. As they develop spiritually in this school they say with growing conviction and understanding: "Truly, the whole of man is to fear God. The language of the Preacher ceases to puzzle them. They know whereof he speaks when he says: "I said of laughter, it is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it?" and "I looked upon all the works that my hands have wrought. . . . and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit. And all their labour, however vain in itself, is a good work of which the Lord will not be forgetful. And they may count themselves co-workers with God in the sphere of His covenant. This, I believe, answers the second question of my correspondent. The third question I will answer in the next issue of our magazine.

G. M. O.

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## Een Boeteling

(Psalm 51)

Laat mij het maar direkt aan het begin zeggen: ik voel mij aangetrokken tot den persoon of personen die dezen psalm op mijn gezet hebben. Met een half oor kan men merken, dat hij ingekomen is in de smart en het berouw van David. De melodie is langzaam, treurend, klaaglijk. En zoo bleef het tot het einde. In 't Engelsch zou men het een "dirge" noemen. Een "dirge", en dan nu geen lijkzang, doch een treurzang, een klaaglied. En nu moogt dat "lijkzang" ook wel voor lief nemen. Als ge er dan maar aan denkt, dat dit "lijk" uiting geeft aan de vernielingen en verderfelijkheden van den geestelijken dood.

Moet ik de geheele geschiedenis van David's zonde met Bathseba en Uria aanhalen? Moet ik het doen, omdat er misschien onder mijn lezers zijn die er nooit van hoorden? Ge glimlacht, en terecht. Ik denk, dat er niemand is onder ons die de droeve geschiedenis niet weet. Van zijn kinderjaren af aan.

Indien ge er lust toe hebt, leest dan maar II Sam. 12:1-25.

Daar zult dan te doen krijgen, niet zoo zeer met de bloote geschiedenis van moord en van wellusten, doch daar leest ge diezelfde geschiedenis uit het oogpunt van het hemelsch licht dat van God's aanzicht straalt. Daar hoort ge van den wandelaar die tot David kwam. En die wandelaar was belust op een oilam. Doch David verschoonde te nemen van zijn eigen oilamieren. Hij had er vele. O neen, hij sloeg zijn oog op eens ander oilam. Ook wordt dat andere oilam ontroerend omschreven. Het was Bathseba, het oilam van Uria. Zij was een eenig klein oilam, dat hij gekocht had. En hij was arm. Daarom was er niet, dan dat eene oilam. Hij had haar gevoed, dat zij groot geworden was bij hem en bij zijne kinderen tegelijk: zij at van zijne bete en dronk van zijne beker, en sliep in zijne schoot, en dat oilam, die Bathseba, was hem als eene dochter.

Doch er kwam tot den rijken David een wandelaar. Zijn wellusten werden opgewekt, en in plaats van om te zien naar zijn eigene kudde, verschoonde hij dezelve en sloeg zijn hand aan het oilam van den arme. Er moest iets bereid worden voor den reiziger, doch het geschiedde ten koste van de liefelijke sprake van God: Gij zult in de relatie der sekten schoon en aanvallig leven!

Doch toen die reiziger zijn sporen achterliet, moesten die uitgewischt met het hartebloed van Uria. En de wijze van wasschen en uitwisschen is de wijze die gevolgd wierd door Satan. Het moest een weg zijn van leugen, veinzing, bedrog. Kom, Uria, ge zijt moede en mat van het krijgen! Ga in uw huis en neem rust. Doch toen was het oilam alreede gestolen en verscheurd.

En we hooren de sprake van Nathan, neen, van God Zelf: David, gij zijt die man!

En aangaande Mijn straf, David? Gij hebt dit alles gewrocht in het verborgen en het duister. Doch Ik zal het vergelden voor gansch Israel en voor de zon.

Toen zeide David: Ik heb gezondigd tegen den Heere.

En Nathan zeide tot David: De Heere heeft ook uwe zonde weggenomen, gij zult niet sterven. . . . Eerder had de profeet de boodschap al uitgesproken: Het zwaard, David, zal van uw huis niet wijken. . . .

En David is stille, zeer stille, weggegaan. God ontnam hem de eenzaamheid niet. Dat was een gave Gods. Eén woord was er bij geweest, hetwelk de opening is voor de treurzang die volgen moest. En dat ééne woord was dit: Waarom hebt gij, David, het Woord des Heeren veracht, doende dat kwaad is in Zijne oogen? En later was dit woord herhaald geworden: "daarom dat gij Mij veracht hebt!"

David is gekomen tot de binnenkamer.

Daar zullen we hem niet storen om Godswil.

Want God zal hem opzoeken met den Geest des lichts en der waarheid.

We zullen wat wachten.

En daar komt hij weer te voorschijn. Hij heeft 21 verzen gedicht. Wij noemen het den een-en-twintigsten psalm.

Het is wel, als we voorts dien psalm maar vaak in de eenzaamheid lezen. En bidden.

Toen David uit zijn binnenkamer kwam met dit lied en toen hij de hoveligen vroeg naar den opperzangmeester, moest hij vaak zijn roodbekreten oogen uitwisschen. Ik moet hier denken aan Petrus, die bitterlijk weende in diepen nacht.

Toen ik klaar was met de studie van die lied, dacht ik: Wat is God toch onbegrijpelijk eerlijk en oprecht!

Hier is de man naar Gods hart. In die dagen leefde er geen mensch waar de Heere meer van hield dan van David.

Doch de Heere stelde al deze zonde in 't volle licht van Israel en van de zon. Zelfs de goddelooze wereld heeft gelegenheid gehad om de rooving en vernieling van het oilam te zien. Eenige verachtelijke lieden maakten er een toneelspel van. En de Engelen Gods moeten wel hun aangezichten bedekt hebben toen men speelde de vreeselijke geschiedenis van het kleine, teedere oilam.

Daarna vraagde ik: en wat zullen wij nu doen met deze smartelijke geschiedenis?

Er zijn er geweest die van voorlang hun antwoord klaar hadden.

Ziet ge, in allerlei schakeeringen herhaalt zich deze geschiedenis in alle landen en volkeren. Ik heb het zelf veelmalen gezien. Ik ben er bij geweest als de Davids ontmaskerd werden door de Nathans.

En toen heb ik ook een soort menschen gadeslagen die het woord vroegen. En toen ben ik getuige geweest van het schelden en razen derzulken. Ik ben er bij geweest wanneer zulk een David prooi werd van verachtelijke behandelingen, van gruwelijke scheldwoorden, van hoon en van spot en van venijn. Er zijn er geweest die de woorden van Jezus beantwoord hebben met daden. Die Jezus zeide: Wie van U zonder zonden is die werpe de eerste steen op haar! En dat soort menschen hebben ijlings die steenen aangegrepen. Zij omklemden die steenen met macht en wierpen ze naar het betraande aangezicht van die Davids.

En wat zullen we hiervan nu zeggen?

Ik kan geen ander antwoord vinden dan de woorden van Jakobus: Dit moet, mijne broeders, alzoo niet geschieden!

Neen, we moeten wat anders zeggen. En dat andere zal God Zelf U op de lippen zetten. En dat andere is de een-en-vijftigste psalm.

Dat is dan ook de reden waarom die psalm opgenomen is in den Bijbel. Die psalm is daar omdat het

hoereeren en moorden van David, mitsgaders zijn bedrog, veinzen en leugen, bakens zijn in de zee des levens.

Als David begint om met zijn bevende stem, een stem die nu en dan overgaat in snikken, zijn lied te zingen, geduriglijk staande voor het aangezicht van geheel Israel en de zon, dan moet gij, mijn broeder, naar David toegaan. Dan moet ge hem beleefd verzoeken om wat opzij te treden. En moet ge naast hem gaan staan om met hem zijn lied te zingen.

Het zal dan niet lang meer duren, of ge zult bemerken, dat Uw stem stukt, heete tranen zullen in Uwe oogen opwellen, terwijl het harte langzaam breekt. Uw aangezicht zal vuurrood worden van schaamte, en—o wonder, het zal net zijn alsof ge Uw eigen lied zingt en klaagt en treurt.

En als er nu nog zijn die voortvaren om te zeggen: Pardon, maar ik kan zulks niet zien, noch verstaan; dan zullen we U moeten wijzen op het zevende vers. Daar staat: "Zie, ik ben in ongerechtigheid geboren, en in zonde heeft mij mijne moeder ontvangen!"

Och, mijn broeder, daar bemerkt gij toch wel, dat er een vreeselijke harmonie is tusschen David die voor Israel en de zon staat en U die zoo verre schijnt van het snikkend gezang: hij zal U wijsheid leeren. Gij zijt óók in ongerechtigheid geboren en in zonde heeft ook Uwe moeder U ontvangen. Die zonde kwam in andere vormen misschien tot openbaring. De vruchten, de vieze vruchten, verschillen, doch de vuile bron van David's zonde en de Uwe zijn homogeen. Psalm 51 behoort door U gezongen, totdat geen maan meer schijnt. De Heere gaf die treurzang aan Zijn kerk met dat doel. Hij wil ontdekkend werken.

Nog hoor ik stemmen die zeggen: Dat mag allemaal waar wezen, doch het is ook waarheid, dat ik mij nooit te buiten ben gegaan met het oilam van mijn broeder. Werkelijk, menschen, ik heb nooit iemand al liegende vermoord om mijn schande in 't hoereeren te bedekken.

Dan zou ik willen zeggen: Ga toch bij David staan! Ik wil gaarne gelooven, dat wat gij zegt waar is.

Doch tweeërlei moet U geantwoord.

Eerstens, misschien is er nooit die vreeselijke reisi-ger bij U gekomen om onderdak en verzorging. En als hij wél kwam, dan heeft God Zijn Engel gezonden, bijtijds, om U te weerhouden van te doen naar den inspraak van de ingeboren zonde of neiging tot zonde.

Tweedens, luister naar het wonder-wijze woord van Jakobus: "Want wie de geheele Wet zal houden, en in één zal struikelen, die is schuldig geworden aan alle." Ge hebt dus nooit gehoereerd en nooit gemoord? Ook niet in het diepe hart, waar de uitgangen des levens zijn? Ge hebt nooit gehaat? En dat is de wortel van den doodslag. Ge zijt niet homogeen met de zonde van David? Doch hoe staat het er bij met de andere geboden? Er is een heirleger van vreeselijke

reizigers die aankloppen. Aankloppen om met vriendelijke stem U aan 't werk te zetten. Een werk, dat door God genoemd wordt: zonde en ongerechtigheid!

Dus zijt gij schuldig met David. Verander dan de woorden maar die betrekking hebben op schande van hoererij en moord, doch behoud het snikken en tranen om der zonde wil. En het zal wel zijn.

En nog steeds staat David daar voor ons, voor geheel Israel en de zon. Ge herinnert U, dat de Heere hem daar neerzette, nu zoovele jaren geleden.

Doch neen, als we weer eens zien, dan verliezen we David bijna geheel uit het oog. Ik zie David. Doch hij staat daar te midden van een schare die niemand tellen kan.

En die schare hieven hunne stemmen op en weeneden.

Ze weenden den onvergetelijken treurzang van den een-en-vijftiger.

Doch ik smeeek U, vertel het mij toch, wie is die gestalte die daar te midden van de weenenden staat? Zijne gestalte is als de gestalte van een Zoon der Goden!

En het snerpande en het grievende dat de ziele wondt, beluisteren we in Zijn klaagzang gelijk nooit te voren. Zijne huilende en brullende stem doorklieft het geheele heeal.

Ik zal het U zeggen, mijn broeder.

Het is Jezus Christus, de Heere.

De God des Verbonds heeft David's hoereeren en moorden, zijn liegen en veinzen op het Lam Gods gelegd. Herkent ge Uw aandeel ook? Alle ongerechtigheden zijn alle op Hem aangelopen.

En toen dezelve geëischt werd, zie, toen is Hij verdrukt.

Hij heeft Zijn eigen editie van den een-en-vijftiger. Hij weent alsof Hij het zelf gedaan heeft. God doet alsof de Groote Onschuld het Zelf gedaan heeft. Wijze menschen noemden het de Toerekening.

God heeft dat bloedende Lam, met de zonde van David beladen, ten toon geteld voor geheel Israel en voor de zon.

Later bedekte de Heere de zon voor Hem en moest Hij voortsnikken in den donker.

Jezus heeft de treurzang gezongen tot het bitter einde. Ge kunt de snikken niet vertalen, nooit verstaan. Zijn snikken is ervaring van de wanhoop des eeuwigen doods. Man van Smarten.

Zie dan sterk op Jezus. Hij staat voor geheel Israel en de zon.

Neen, God heeft David niet verdoemd om de zonde van Bathseba en den moord op Uria.

Toen God die zonde zag, vernielde Hij ze in Zijn Eigen Eenig Oilam.

David's rood-bekreten oogen zijn afgewischt. Zijn smarten hadden een einde. Terwijl ik schrijf, zingt hij zijn hallels voor den troon en het Lam.

Terwijl onze stem nog ietwat beeft.

Als ge zoo tersloops er op letten wilt, o vreemdeling, welke de bladzijde toch mag zijn van 't openliggend boek, dáár op de palm des zangers, dan zult ge lezen: "Een psalm Davids, voor den opperzangmeester, toen de Profeet Nathan tot hem was gekomen, nadat hij tot. . ."

Pijnigt ons niet door 't spottend vragen: Waarom, pilgrim, waarom weent gij?

De zuchten en tranen der bidcel zijn heilig land. Daar waart de Geest Gods rond met balsem in Zijn vleugelen.

G. V.

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## Public Opinion

This general expression scarcely needs introduction because of its familiarity. However in general we may and usually do use it to differentiate and to express the general, the peoples' view of things as distinct from the private opinion, that is, the opinion which private persons hold for themselves, of the initiates the opinion of persons who are in a position to know what the general public does not.

The possibility of public opinion lies in the fact that people, men taken together are an essential unity, created to live in relation to each other and to be mutually or to have fellowship in the use of the one body of knowledge.

Immediately, as we begin to look at this the problem arises, what now is the normal and what is the abnormal because of sin. We could easily let ourselves be mislead by our observations on the subject, due to the fact that all observation would be taken from an abnormal world, from an abnormal humanity that has been ruined by sin where the lie corrupts all.

So we must first see our question in a normal world not yet marred by the influences of sin.

There we would find no distinction between private and public opinion in the sense that the two were in opposition to each other; neither would we have a private opinion that was not made for public enjoyment.

The normal world is the world living according to the norm ordained for it. For the rational moral creature that means living according to the law of sinlessness, living in the law of love to God and the neighbor. To get some idea of this we look usually at the record of man's creation in Genesis and to the mandate there prescribed for him, and also to the relations in the New heaven and earth insofar as we can gather them from Scripture.

Thus all opinion would be one; leaders in opinion

would have no reason or motive to withhold it from the public. The purpose is to impart this knowledge to all, without restraint, without holding this knowledge in respect for the public enjoyment.

This we may even consider to be reflected in the standpoint of the living, believing church over against all heathen worship with its secrecies in its cultus, whereby the real mysteries are for an esoteric (inside) group in distinction from an exoteric (outside) multitude.

Also against the Roman Catholic Church with its doctrines of faith in two different senses this normal function of organic knowledge stands opposed. The Roman Catholic conception namely is that there is an inner circle, the Holy Church, which is able to define the doctrines of belief while there is also the multitude that cannot understand these things but believes them by a so-called implicit faith. It does not know. It does not need to know, it simply trusts that the Church's knowing is sufficient.

For this forming thereof course many means in the world. The first would of course be hard to define. Perhaps the first is simple speech. But we then immediately come upon the art and gift of public speaking. By this gift multitudes are moved to adopt certain principles or plans of action, and without reflecting further as to the root. Next comes the art of printing by which the fruit of the mind can be multiplied to flood the market and sweep along the opinion of the public. We only need to think of the Middle Ages when the art of printing became known. It was one of the mighty factors to give impetus to the flood of the Renaissance and the Reformation of the Christian church of the Middle Ages. It explains how a few men like Luther and Calvin could move the masses of men of the middle ages to break away from the shackles of the great institution of the Roman Catholic Church.

This field was for several centuries held by the public press with its manifold forms of adaptability. Some of the copy is designed to catch the eye of the scanning reader, other copy is written for the news reader, and some is meant for more careful reflective reading. Nearly every one reads a daily paper and several dailies number their readers in millions. So the newspaper can become a mighty factor in moulding public sentiment. This is often heightened when a considerable group of papers in various sections of the country are all under one powerful head of control. Think of the many Hearst news papers, which are often said to be the rulers of public sentiment in our land, especially under certain administrations.

A fourth power is the radio, which is a very fast-growing and developing institution. Also this is a very powerful factor in the moulding of public opinion. It is of course closely related as to methods of propagating public opinion to the newspaper. Striking

phrases and slogans are coined and in the hands of the unscrupulous these phrases and slogans often bristle with hidden falacies, equivocations, false suppositions. One is often reminded of the words of the seedy tramp who wrote to a soap manufacturer, "Two years ago I got a bar of your Kleeno Brand soap and I have not used any other since".

Because of the close relation of the radio and the newspapers especially as they are coordinated by the government in a time of crisis, we may expect them to mould public opinion after a definite pattern. So it is that men with great God-given talents are able to move the masses and initiate crusades.

And therefore if it is in the service of truth, the men who have received gifts of leadership will be able to communicate the visions and insights and convictions and enthusiasm to those dependent upon them. That ideally would make for a happy world.

But the bitter fact is that these great agencies of communication are employed in the service of sin and Scripture teaches us that they will be increasingly so used. That means that private opinion and public will not be of the same content. This of course in a relative sense. That is to say: the men who give leadership in thought will not speak their honest conviction. They will have a more initiated view themselves, but for public consumption they will speak lies in hypocrisy, although it is true that in those false prophets there will be an element of self-deception.

Let us try to realize what it will mean when all those means of knowledge will be controlled by the power of sin. No one may speak unless he places himself in subservience to the power of sin and anti-christ. That all-suppressing power of the censor can be somewhat seen in the totalitarian state of our day, and of course it will reach its full effectiveness only in the following generation, when even the remnants of the truth that still lingered in the heart of the former generation has been starved out by systematic suppression or the means of religious communication, in sermon, in literature, in letters perhaps, yes, even in secret communion of two or three who are gathered in the name of the Lord.

In that great and complex world there will also be christians. Somehow or other they must have the Word of Life. How will they receive it? How will it be brought to them? The answer may be difficult to give. But we know that Christ is the great Prophet; He is the one great Source of knowledge. But He does not possess that knowledge as a private opinion. Does He not as the Immanuel, the exalted Man possess all that knowledge precisely that He may impart it to His brethren. Scripture abundantly testifies to this. No man hath seen God at any time, the Only Begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him. John 1:18. Verily, verily, I say unto you to

speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen. And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven even the Son of man which is in heaven, John 3:14.

So it is when men try to silence the testimony that speaks about the Kingship of the Messiah. He answered and said unto them, I tell you if these should hold their peace the stones would immediately cry out, Luke 19:38-40. I have given them Thy word. . . . sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth. Father I will that those whom thou hast given me be wit me, John 17:14, 17, 24. Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world then would my servants fight that I should not be delivered unto the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from thence. . . . To this end was I born and for this cause came I into this world that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice, John 18:36, 37. So further, Jesus saith to Peter: Feed my sheep. . . . Feed my lambs, John 20. So again, To me is given all power in heaven and on earth. . . . Go ye therefore and teach all nations. . . . Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world. Amen. Matt. 28:19.

These passages could be multiplied and though at first glance they do not seem to the point, yet a little reflection will convince us that in the midst of the greatest totalitarian suppression of the truth, Christ, the Great Prophet, the Great Witness, the Heaven sent Minister of publication will know His own given Him of the Father, and He will make known to them everything He desires to have them know. And although all other public opinion will be moulded by the power of the lie, He will have His people in the world and also then they shall know the truth and the truth shall make them free.

A. P.

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#### IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies Aid of the Protestant Reformed Church of Hull, Iowa, hereby expresses its sympathy to their fellow members, Mrs. G. Oostenink and Mrs. P. Vander Schaaf in the loss of their father,

HENRY RIKKERS

May the God of all grace comfort the sorrowing families in their bereavement, and may the blessedness of those who die in the Lord assure us of God's unfailing promises.

Mrs. P. Vander Schaaf, Secr.  
Rev. A. Cammenga, Pres.

## The Influence Of Modern Literature

Jesus frequently used expressions such as, "Have ye not read", or, "Have ye never read?" or, "Have ye not so much as read?" this or that passage from the writings of God.

These passages are explained by that one upbraiding word of the Lord, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures".

Have ye not read?

The world is full of literature, but "have ye read". We fairly stumble our way through a jungle of literature, but, "have ye read"?

The capacity to read is the work of God whereby He adapts us to as well as confines us to His written revelation. Consequently, any reading which does not lead us to the more thorough acquaintance with His writing, is purposeless and vanity of vanities. Really it is not reading. Modern literature has led us to gloat over the non-sense of men's writings, has induced us to thrill to the imagination of mere men, and in so doing leads us away from the writing which God has given.

This only by way of introduction.

Modern literature covers a big field. We cannot put all of today's literary productions on one shelf neither can we therefore pass one criticism over them all. There is good literature, there is supposed-to-be-good literature, and there is bad literature. I am no Painter on Elements of literary criticism, nor yet am I a book reporter, but maybe for convenience we could put all of today's literature on those three shelves. While I should then urge the reading of good literature, exhort moderate and critical reading of the supposed-to-be-good literature, I would nevertheless confine myself in this article to the influence of this world's modern literature, its influence on us and our children.

It is Saturday evening. You are in the local drug store filling a prescription. In steps a young man. He looks over the display of magazines on the book stand. He has before him what one might call Modern literature. Rows and rows of magazines, confessions, romances, western, detective etc. etc. The young man selects one of these and it goes home with him for his Sunday reading. Needless to say, that literature he carries home with him carries a wealth of influence.

We might cite this as a concrete case and use it to illustrate our whole point.

What influence now does this literature have upon the reader. First of all the reader fills his spare time with reading things from which he certainly draws no benefit. The immediate result of which is that it takes the place of profitable reading. Instead of using his spare time to engage in something of value, he uses his spare time to engage in vanity. Soon enough his vain literature takes the place of all edifying habits and his

spare time is viewed as a license to indulge in the base things. Consequently, he will never have time to read anything that is worthwhile. The family does have a library, father has seen to that, and that was wise. But son never touches any of those books. His spare time is consumed in a lust for foolish things and he does not edify himself. This brings him further than ever away from the reading of the writing of God. The thrilling, the sensually sensational non-sense of vain man captures his lust as the forbidden tree in Eden captured the lust of Eve, until finally she saw only that tree. The writing of God is put away and vanity comes in its stead. Modern literature promotes this apostacy. If the pastor appears with an elder for family visitation and asks "have you never read" he must admit that he has not and does not read. . . . God's writing. And that is apostacy. That is wilful blindness. That is using the God-given capacity to read in order to by-pass God's writing and read that which is base and vain.

Secondly, however, the bulk of modern literature has sensual appeal. It seeks to satisfy a certain morbid curiosity, it appeals to the sex-lust, to the wander-lust, adventure-lust, and so many other lusts which fill our by nature so depraved lives. Modern literature seeks to give us a thrill. It wants to bring us excitement. Quietly sometimes it lifts the curtains aside and lets our eyes feast on vanity and corruption. Besides the damage these things do to our spiritual life (one surely is not making his calling and election sure by so doing) they also influence our reading taste. The result is that the person develops a crave for the sensual and develops a positive dislike for the spiritual. Spiritual literature no longer appeals to him, to him it is so "dry", so "long" and so boring. Rather than read the article on Esther he would read about the flirtations of Greta Garbo, Robert Montgomery appeals to him much more than the sincere striving of the Wittemberg monk. If the Standard Bearer and the comics come in the same mail, in the mad rush for the comics the religious periodical is trampled under feet. The crave for the sensual, as fostered by sensual modern literature, is really also a vicious circle. The more one engages in the sensual appeal the more the lusts develop which seek that appeal, until one is wholly engulfed in the flood of sensuality. Wholesome literature is flung aside, it makes no appeal. And naturally not, for the things of the spirit, of truth, do not feed lust but they condemn lust. If the things that are true, the things that are honest, the things that are pure, if they no longer appeal to us, it is high time that we examine ourselves and ask whether the influence of modern literature has not already lured us down the broad way that leads to destruction.

But, thirdly, modern literature also has a formative influence on our lives. Indeed this is more true per-

haps in the case of young readers but the fact holds for all of us as well. The characters your modern literature brings you in print become very much alive, so alive that you begin to keep company with them. You begin to associate with them. The more your literary characters live for you the more and the better you enjoy it. Witness, for instance, how true this is in the matter of the children and the comics. And as your characters become alive you associate with them. You ride the plains with your hero, with him (her) you spend the Saturday night at the tavern, with her you visit the Mardi Gras, with her you engage in illicit loves and intriguing romances, etc. etc. They become your friends. And the end of it all is that you conform yourself to the world, you become what they are. There are many cases on the court records of boys and girls whose life of crime was a copy of the crimes they read about in modern literature. Many a police court gets its own detective stories full in the face, enacted by youthful thugs, who in turn were tutored by book thugs. And so we might continue.

We would not condemn such reading as affords clean entertainment or gives edifying amusement, neither would we condemn reading a controlled amount of clean fiction (Dr. A. Kuyper, however, says we should not read more than a few in a year), but, by way of conclusion we would seek to emphasize two things.

First, we should not let entertainment take too great a part in our lives. That we need a certain amount of entertainment I will not deny, but to give that phase of our lives so much emphasis is entirely wrong. But when we do and if we do read for entertainment it must come under the rule of "Whatsoever is true, whatsoever is pure, whatsoever is wholesome, think on that" and read that. Whenever then the soul-searching Gospel of the Lord asks us "Have ye read?" we can answer, "Yes, Lord".

And secondly, we should cultivate reading such material as has lasting, spiritual value. We should be engaged in reading such material as serves to equip us with the necessary armaments to fight the good fight of faith. We ought to read that which can give us the triple knowledge we so much need. And what ought we to know? We ought to know God in what He has revealed of Himself. Then we ought to know ourselves, what we are and what is our calling. And we ought also to know the world, what it is, and where it is going and what is our calling in the midst of that world.

Parents, get a library where your children may learn to read that which is wholesome.

All of us, meet the bad literature and its influence with the good influence of good literature.

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

M. G.

## Contribution

Creston is one of the churches in our Protestant Reformed group that neither receives nor gives much publicity. Although we are a little star in the church firmament, we still remain a light amidst a crooked and perverse generation. Being small in number (for we count only about twenty-five families) and young in years as yet, nevertheless we are making history.

So it was, that on July 28, 1941, our pastor, the Rev. H. Veldman, made known that he had received a call from the Protestant Reformed Church of Kalamazoo, which he, after prayerful consideration, accepted. On September 21 of that year he preached his farewell sermon, and thus the tie between pastor and congregation was severed. Before the Rev. Veldman left us the consistory made a trio, from which Rev. P. De Boer of Holland, Michigan was elected by the congregation. After the disturbance created by the leaving of our pastor, we were disappointed by the fact that Rev. P. De Boer could not accept the call extended to him. But we were not discouraged, and soon another trio was made, from which Rev. J. De Jong of Hudsonville, Michigan was chosen. With anxiety of heart we awaited the outcome. At the appointed time the good tidings were received: "I will come over and help you". It is unnecessary to say what our reaction was, for what is a flock without a shepherd? So our vacancy was not of extended duration.

On December 19 our new pastor was installed by our counsellor, the Rev. H. Hoeksema, assisted by Rev. P. De Boer of Holland. Rev. Hoeksema preached from II Tim. 3:1-5; Rev. De Boer read the Form of Installation. The next Sabbath our pastor preached his inaugural sermons, in the morning from II Cor. 4:5-7 and in the evening from Eph. 6:18-19.

On Old Year's Day, just preceding a severe snow storm, our pastor and family moved into the parsonage which the congregation had purchased a few weeks previously. Up to this time the congregation had rented a house for its pastor.

On the evening of January 15th the congregation came together to welcome and get acquainted with the pastor and his family. A program was given, a good lunch was served by the ladies, and we all returned home with gladness of heart and thanks to our God who had made all things well.

We hereby wish to extend a word of thanks to our counsellor, Rev. H. Hoeksema, and all those who helped us in word or deed during our vacancy.

May the Lord our God watch over us to the end that His name may be glorified in the history which we are making as a church.

The Consistory.

## A Problem And A Solution

Dear Mr. Editor,

Please allow me some space in our Standard Bearer to comment on the article of S. D. V., appearing under the heading "News From Our Churches" in the issue of February 15.

Permit me first of all to express that I fully agree with Mr. S. D. V. in regard to his feeling that what he writes is really not news. Surely there must be sufficient news that could be gathered from our churches to fill the space allotted to him. If that were done the department would answer its purpose and Mr. S. D. V. would not have to fall into the error of writing on a subject about which he evidently has very little knowledge. The greatest portion of the article on which I am commenting was devoted to a discussion of the union problem, and the stand of our churches in regard to membership in the C. I. O. or A. F. of L. Now I wish to make clear at once that I am fully in agreement with the position of our churches on that question. But, I object to the manner in which it is presented by S. D. V., who makes no distinction whatever between unions, makes unwarranted statements, and finally dismisses the problem with a pious admonition to accept the discipline of the church in love—without offering any solution to the very practical problems which are presented to many Christian workers. It is very easy to do that for those who do not come into daily contact with the power of the unchristian unions, but it is another matter for one like myself who must constantly bear that cross and has a large family to support. Mr. S. D. V.'s reasoning is rather mysterious. He states in one place that readers may comment that the decision that members of our churches cannot be members of the labor union is "tough", because we must live. He replies that of course we must live, but that in that way we cannot live because the wages of sin is death. How bright! To thus brush aside a remark concerning physical life with a reference to spiritual death is amusing, but also very confusing and far from enlightening.

He continues that kind of logic by stating that even materially the unions don't gain anyone much, and that, anyway we are not interested in that because we have a rich Father in heaven who will take care of us! Strange reasoning! Of course we have a rich Father in heaven who has promised to take care of us, but we have also the responsibility to work for it. We cannot sit still. We are not fatalists! And we are interested also in material things. They may not be first in our lives, assuredly not. But, I am interested in earning sufficiently so that I can properly take care of my family, give my children Christian instruction, contribute to Kingdom causes, etc., thus rendering unto God

that which is God's.

I wish to state here also that the writer's remarks in regard to the union not bringing much material gain, being oath-bound, etc., are not well-founded. It is an undeniable fact that through labor unions working conditions have been greatly improved. Wages have been brought to a level where a family can live as it ought to, and labor conditions in our modern mass-production plants have been placed under control so that a man is not simply regarded as a piece of machinery but is again treated as a human being. Those things must be appreciated. We cannot ignore them. And it is not true that all unions are oath-bound organizations, or that their Constitutions and By-laws are very innocent documents. That they do not recognize God as sovereign is true. Let that be emphasized. Above all, let's remain honest and true in our charges.

It amused me also to note how Mr. S. D. V. charges some with making the sweeping statement that the church should also "tackle" members of the Associations (evidently businessmen's associations are meant. B.V.), then proceeds to argue that the unions and the Associations cannot, because of the difference in them, be mentioned "in one breath", and finally ends up by stating as his conviction that there is in principle no difference between them, thus turning the accusation of making a sweeping statement against himself! One cannot help wondering whether Mr. S. D. V. really knows his own mind. This is my position: that a Christian may be a member of an organization that does not in its expressed purposes and practices violate Christian ethical principles of life, based on the Word of God. Also, that as soon as any organization, be it a labor union or a businessmen's association, violates those principles there is no longer any place for a Christian in it. For that reason also I am convinced that membership in unions affiliated with the C.I.O. and A. F. of L., both of which have given abundant proof that they are unchristian in many of their practices, is not compatible with a Christian life. That conviction has sustained me in enduring oppression, ridicule and persecution over a period of years, imposed by a C.I.O. affiliate. I thank God that He has given me strength to endure it.

But the practical problem is thereby not yet solved. Some day the shop in which I am employed may become a closed shop. Then I have no choice except to quit. My family must be supported. It is easy to say that the Lord will provide. I believe that too. But God uses means also. And it is my duty to see to it that I do all within my power to hold my job and, if I must lose it, to put forth every effort to secure another. For one that may not be so hard, although it can be, but when there are many more in the same position the problem becomes just that much more difficult. If we

do not find other work is Mr. S. D. V. going to take care of us? Or is he going to point us to the church, or perhaps to other means of support? Able-bodied men, anxious to work, should not be supported by the church. But, if the time comes that shops everywhere are closed to us, and the building-trades as well, what are we going to do? Mr. S. D. V. may answer that we are not that far yet, and that we must place our burdens upon the Lord, which would be characteristic, but that doesn't answer the problem. The time is coming when we will have that situation, unless we wake up and fight it with all our might.

Right here I must find fault with Mr. S. D. V.'s method of placing all unions on the same level, and presenting it as if our church has condemned all of them. That is not true. It has endorsed the Christian Labor Association, of which I am proud to be a member. If we want to do something for our Christian workers let's strengthen that organization. It has been the means in the hand of God to prevent the closed shop in the factory in which I am employed, that I surely believe. And it is continuously opposing it, not only there but in many other places as well. That organization is also trying, very hard, to get the labor laws of this country changed so that unions will be forced to recognize each other, so that in that way Christian workers may get recognition as organized labor in their own unions. What are we doing to help it in that great battle? Is Mr. S. D. V. a member of it?

I am as strong in my convictions concerning the C. I. O. and A. F. of L. as anyone. I agree with the stand of our churches, allow me to repeat that. And I am not saying this as one sitting in an easy chair, but as one who has been in the very midst of the fight for several years. This also I must say: there are many in the C. I. O. who do not want to be there. They were forced into it. That must be figured with. Let's not be too hasty in our condemnation of such people. Labor with them, yes, and make it very plain to them that they must break their affiliation with the unchristian organization. But, give such people also the assurance that if they are thrown out of employment that then there will be provision made for them, if at all possible in the form of another job. That's important. Urge them also to join the C. L. A., to fight for their rights as Christian workers through that organization. And, prevail upon Christian businessmen to form a Christian employers organization, especially for the purpose of providing work for those who become the victims of the C. I. O. and A. F. of L. closed shop policy. Such an organization could also join with the C. L. A. in fighting for changes in labor legislation, against the closed shop, etc.

That, Mr. Editor, is my contribution to this problem for the time being. I have tried to present a pro-

gram as a solution. It is the only way as I see it. May God grant that all of us may see it, and that we may unite in fighting this evil which is becoming such a serious threat in our present day.

Mr. Ben Veldkamp.

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### ARE YOU RESPONSIBLE

that our boys in service are not receiving reading material that will edify? Send his name and address now to Mr. R. Schaafsma, 1101 Hazen St., S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan, and we will mail the Standard Bearer to him gratis.

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

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### IN MEMORIAM

Whereas, it pleased our Covenant God to take unto Himself our brother-Elder

HENRY G. SCHUIL

who fell asleep in Jesus the last day of February, 1942, the Consistory therefore decided to express herewith publicly its heartfelt sympathy with the bereaved family.

While the Consistory itself took courage and was strengthened to continue in the work of the Lord which our departed brother loved with all the devotion of his heart and mind.

The Consistory of the  
Redlands Protestant Reformed Church.

Redlands, California.

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### CLASSIS EAST

will meet in regular session Wednesday, April 1, at 9:00 A. M., at Fuller Ave.

D. Jonker, S. C.

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### !—NOTICE—!

All Announcements and Obituaries must be sent to Mr. R. Schaafsma, 1101 Hazen St. S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan, and will not be placed unless the regular fee of \$1.00 accompanies the notice.

PLEASE do not send notices to the printers.