

THE STANDARD

Bearer

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MEDITATION

The Power Of Exaltation

. . . . And set him at his own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.

Eph. 1:20b, 21.

O, that this prayer be ours!

And that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ may hear us!

This prayer of the apostle in behalf of the Church at Ephesus, which is after all, the prayer which the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ wrought in his heart, in his mind, and through Him in the written Word, in order that we, too, might learn to know what to pray for as we ought. . . .

For of what avail can it be that someone prays in our behalf, even though he be an apostle, or though he were an angel in heaven, unless God's answer of that prayer become effective and manifest first of all in that our hearts, too, yearn and cry out for that very blessing from heavenly places that is the contents of the intercessory prayer?

Let, then, the prayer of the apostle be answered from heaven in the opening of our hearts and the earnest petition on our part for the spiritual blessing he invokes upon the Church!

That we, too, may utter this prayer!

This prayer that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ may give unto us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, and that he may so enlighten the eyes of our understanding, that we may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of his glory of his inheritance in the saints; that we may know, too, what is the exceeding great-

ness of the power of God to usward, yea, *into* us, of that divine power that even now is operative in the saints, and that will not cease to work until it has made us heirs of the eternal glory, that power of God, the standard of which is the mighty power which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead; yea, still more, the power of God which was wrought in Christ, when He set him at His right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that of the eternal future. . . .

O, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! let this prayer be the constant prayer of the Church!

For, how else shall we know and understand and be victorious and rejoice in this world?

The natural man understands not these things. For not only is he carnal and darkened in his understanding, so that he loves and pursues after the lie, but he is also a mere living soul, of the earth earthy, and these things are spiritual, heavenly, eternal; they belong to the category of things which eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard, and which have never and could never have arisen in the heart of man!

Only through the revelation of the Spirit of Christ can they be understood.

And that revelation can be apprehended only by him, whose eyes of the heart have been enlightened, so that he may discern spiritual things spiritually!

And that wonder of enlightenment is wrought only through the grace of prayer!

May that mighty prayer be ours!

Marvellous power in us!

For, if you would know what is that power of God that is operative in believers even here in this world, that power whereby they were called out of death into life, out of darkness into light, then you must consider the mighty power of God that exalted Jesus Christ!

Jesus is exalted!

He stands at the pinnacle of all created things!

He rules over all in the name of God, and has an everlasting dominion in heaven and on earth!

For this and no less is the significance of the figure that is implied in the words "set him at his right hand in heavenly places." Earthly kings would sometimes exalt someone at the right hand of the throne of their earthly power and majesty. And this would imply, not that the king himself had abdicated, but he had empowered and authorized the one thus exalted with the actual execution of his rule in the kingdom. The whole kingdom would be subjected unto him as unto the king himself. Thus Christ is exalted at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. The dominion is His under God and in God's name. All power in heaven and earth is given unto Him!

All power!

In that He is far exalted even above the first man Adam in his state of integrity in Paradise. The latter, too, had dominion. He was king under God. But he was made a little lower than the angels. His throne was on the earth, and his dominion was limited to the scope of earthly things. But Christ is exalted at the right hand of God, and that in heavenly places. His power and dominion are universal. He stands at the pinnacle of all created things in heaven and on earth.

He rules over all!

For he is exalted far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion. And this includes all authority and might, wherever they may be found. For principalities, and powers or authorities, and mights and dominions are, first of all, the angels that stand before the throne of God and see His face; the heavenly spirits from the viewpoint of their various ranks and orders: also in the angelic world there is order and degree of power and authority. The reference is principally to them. But this does not exclude any other principalities and powers. Also the wicked spirits, that once rose in rebellion against Him that sitteth on the throne in heaven, under the leadership and by the instigation of their evil chief, are called principalities and powers. Col. 2:15. And, besides, there are mighty powers and rulers in the earth. Above them all stands Christ, the Anointed of God!

Far above them!

Their authority and power cannot even be compared with His. They cannot reach up to His exalted position. They are utterly in subjection to Him. Under His feet they are. Him they must obey. Against Him they can never prevail.

And His power is over every name that is named in all creation. Many are the names that are named in this world. And these names denote the creatures in their nature and position, their power and might, their relative significance and purpose, in relation to

God and to one another and to the whole of created things. They have been determined and fixed by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, "of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." Eph. 3:15. The creatures, small and great, in all their power and significance, their operation and strife in all the universe, are subjected to the Christ of God.

He has received a name which is above all names!

And that forever!

For, not only in this world, but also in the world to come, that name remains far above all names! He will never be dethroned. Even though in the world to come He will deliver His kingdom to the Father, that God may be all and in all, He will maintain His position at the head of the kingdom of glory, far above every name that is named in the new heavens and the new earth in which righteousness shall dwell forever.

God exalted *Him*!

The Christ, the Anointed, the Servant of Jehovah, and that in His human nature. It is not the Son of God in His divine nature that was so highly exalted. Nor is it divine power with which Christ is invested at His exaltation. The divine nature cannot be exalted, and divine power cannot be conferred upon any. As the Son of God in His divine nature He is co-equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit, almighty, exalted over all, with absolute authority and sovereignty over every name that is named. In that nature He could not be exalted. But this Son of God assumed our flesh and blood, was seen in the form of man, humbled Himself into the deepest reproach of shame and suffering of our death and condemnation. And that Son of God in that humiliated human nature is now exalted far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named.

In Him the promise is realized.

In His exaltation the Scripture is fulfilled: "What is man that thou art mindful of Him? and the son of man that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou hast made him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." Ps. 8:4-6.

Man in the first Adam goes down in order that man in the second Adam may be crowned the lord of all!

Now we see not yet all things put under him.

But we see Jesus, who also was made a little lower than the angels. . . .

For the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour!

Glorious exaltation!

Mighty power of God!

For let us not forget that this is the real subject of the revelation of the Word of God in this passage.

Indeed, the text speaks of the amazing and glorious exaltation of Jesus Christ at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens; yet only as a manifestation of a mighty divine power that wrought this exaltation.

It is the working of the mighty power which God wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in heavenly places, that is the main theme of the divine revelation here. God revealed Himself, the mighty God of our salvation is revealed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and in His exaltation at the right hand of God. This the Church must know!

More: it must know the power of God that is operating in her, in the Church, in the hearts of the saints, the mighty power of grace, whereby they have been regenerated and called from death into life, from darkness into light.

For knowing that power, they will know the hope of their calling.

And to know this power that operated within them, they must know the power of God that wrought in Christ, when He raised Him to immortality and exalted Him to everlasting and heavenly glory and power. For the latter is the standard of the other. *According to* the power, which God revealed in the resurrection and exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ, He also works into the saints!

Divine power wrought upon Christ to exalt Him!

And how exceeding great is that power!

It is a power over death and hell and shame and reproach! It is a power that is mightier still than the power whereby all things were called into existence from the beginning; or rather, let us say, it is that same divine power of omnipotence, but now revealed in still greater glory than in the work of creation!

For Christ had emptied Himself! He had no name left in all the world! He had descended into the deepest darkness of death and of hell. He had removed Himself in perfect obedience as far away from this heavenly glory as it is possible to be removed, into that abyss of despair whence there seemed to be no conceivable return. And into that depth reached the power of God. From that depth of nameless despair that exceeding great power of God drew Him. That amazing power of God changed death into life, mortality into immortality, reproach and shame into honour and glory, utter powerlessness to highest power, the reproach of hell into the position of glory at the right hand of the Majesty into the heavens, the position in which He had a name below all names into that in which He has a name above every name that is named.

Exceeding greatness of the divine power!

And this power He wrought not only *upon* Christ, so that He personally is exalted.

It also works *within* Him.

For in His exaltation Christ received the promise of the Spirit as the Head of the Church, of all His own, whom the Father had given Him, so that He became the quickening spirit.

And through that Spirit the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ causes that same exceeding great and mighty energy, the power to quicken, to raise from the dead, to deliver from shame and to exalt to glory, to operate in the exalted Christ.

So that He is able to subdue all things even unto Himself.

Impart His own life and glory unto us!

And we may be like unto Him!

Amazing power!

Blessed riches of grace!

For the contemplation of the mighty working of God's exceeding great power in the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus Christ from the dead is designed to cause us to know what is the hope of our calling, and what is the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints. . . .

And what is the exceeding greatness of His power into us who believe!

It is that power, that wrought upon Christ to exalt Him from the lowest hell to heavenly glory, that power that now operates through the Spirit in Christ, which also works in the Church. For He is the Head of the Church, which is His body. And His own are ingrafted into Him, become one plant with Him, and through His Spirit that dwells in the Head and in the body they partake of the power of His death, but also of the mighty power of His resurrection and exaltation into highest glory.

Death is vanquished; eternal life reigns!

Hell is overcome and swallowed up; glory and power and dominion are ours in Christ; with Him we are set in heavenly places!

It is true that all this is ours only in beginning, in principle, as long as we are in the body of this death. But if we know the exceeding greatness of the power of God into us, which He wrought in the resurrection and exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, we will also know the hope of our calling: with Him we shall be glorified!

That mighty power cannot rest until by it we shall have been made like unto Him, in body and soul!

And reign with Him forever!

Blessed hope!

H. H.

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EDITOR — Rev. H. Hoeksema

Contributing editors—Revs. J. Blankespoor, A. Cammenga, P. De Boer, J. D. de Jong, H. De Wolf, L. Doezeema, M. Gritters, C. Hanko, B. Kok, G. Lubbers, G. M. Ophoff, A. Petter, M. Schipper, J. Vanden Breggen, H. Veldman, R. Veldman, W. Verhil, L. Vermeer, P. Vis, G. Vos, and Mr. S. De Vries.

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

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EDITORIALS

De Oorlog En Zondagsarbeid

Het is vooral in tijden van oorlog, dat er voor den Christen vele vragen oprijzen, gewetensvragen, waarop hij, indien hij het leven voor God ernstig neemt, een antwoord zal moeten hebben, een antwoord naar den Woorde Gods, opdat hij overeenkomstig dat Woord zijn levenswandel mag kunnen richten, en vrede hebben voor zijn gemoed.

Gewoonlijk staan die vragen in min of meer onmiddellijk verband met de roeping om Gode meer te gehoorzamen dan de menschen.

Oorlog is nu eenmaal een werkelijkheid, die geheel en al uit de zonde opkomt, die daarom tot deze wereld behoort, en die mede daarom eigenlijk lijnrecht indruischt tegen den vrede van het Koninkrijk der hemelen. En daarom komen er, vooral als de overheid, aan wie ook de Christen gehoorzaamheid verschuldigd is, zoo gemakkelijk conflicten tusschen de wijze waarop de overheid werkt en het zwaard hanteert en des Christens geweten, en is het metterdaad niet altijd gemakkelijk een afdoend antwoord te vinden op de vraag, wanneer het beginsel van toepassing is, dat men, ook tegenover de eischen der overheid, Gode meer moet gehoorzamen dan de menschen.

Eén dier vragen, die voor sommigen onzer mannen, die werken in fabrieken, waar men oorlogsmateriaal vervaardigt, reeds een zeer concreten vorm aannam, is wel, of men de overheid zal moeten gehoorzamen, wanneer deze eischt, dat ook op Zondag zal worden gewerkt.

Ons land werd, zooals wel te verwachten was, in den vreeselijken tweeden wereldoorlog gewikkeld. En er zullen zeker onder ons niet worden gevonden, die niet verstaan, dat het zwaard aan de overheid in handen gegeven is, en dat wij daarom niet hebben te oordeelen over het al of niet rechtvaardige van den oorlog, of ook van dezen bepaalde oorlog, maar hebben te gehoorzamen, wanneer de overheid ons ten strijde roept. Dat dit de positie is, die de Christen heeft in te nemen, is duidelijk genoeg uit Gods Woord, en is daarom tevens de eenig mogelijke positie, die den Christen vrede kan geven voor zijn geweten. Hij gehoorzaamt en laat de verantwoordelijkheid voor den krijg geheel over aan de overheid.

Maar nu komen er allerlei andere kwesties op. En één dezer vragen is wel die van den Zondagsarbeid.

De zaak is namelijk, dat deze oorlog onze natie plaatst voor een geweldige taak.

En de werkelijkheid is ook, dat we voor die ge-

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weldige taak nog volstrekt niet klaar zijn. We hadden ons op den oorlog niet voorbereid. We hadden het eigenlijk maar wat gemakkelijk genomen in dit opzicht. Niet alleen hebben we geen groot genoeg en sterk genoeg en wel geoefend leger, maar er is ook gebrek aan allerlei oorlogsmateriaal, waarvan zich de vijand reeds voor jaren had voorzien.

Vandaar, dat deze voorbereiding tot den strijd voor een goed deel thans geschieden moet, terwijl we reeds in den oorlog gewikkeld zijn.

En vandaar ook, dat deze voorbereiding zoo spoedig mogelijk en in der haast plaats zal moeten hebben. Alle krachten moeten worden ingespannen. Alle productiemiddelen moeten zooveel mogelijk in dienst van den oorlog gesteld worden.

En vandaar, dat de eisch gesteld zal worden, en hier en daar ook reeds gesteld wordt, dat in die fabrieken, waar men oorlogsmateriaal vervaardigt, zeven dagen in de week, en dus ook op Zondag zal worden door-gewerkt.

En zoo komt dan de Christen voor de zeer werkelijke vraag te staan, of hij ook in dit opzicht zal moeten gehoorzamen, dan wel of hier het beginsel zal moeten worden toegepast, dat hij Gode meer zal moeten gehoorzamen dan de menschen.

Zoo toch zal de vraag moeten gesteld. Op die vraag die principieele vraag, zal hij een antwoord moeten hebben.

Zeker, het is ook een praktische kwestie. Afgedacht nog van het al of niet moeten gehoorzamen aan de overheid, zal de Christen niet gaarne en niet gemakkelijk den wekelijkschen rustdag opofferen aan de wereld. Ook als hij tot de overtuiging komt, dat het zijne roeping is om onderdanig te zijn aan de overheid in deze zaak, zal hij toch alles in het werk stellen, om zooveel mogelijk den Zondag vrij te houden. En als hij aan den Zondagsarbeid niet ontkomen kan, blijft het hem toch een oorzaak van leed en lijden, dat hij, inplaats van te kunnen opgaan met de gemeente des Heeren naar het bedehuis, zal moeten werken tot het vervaardigen van werktuigen van verwoesting.

Maar toch, voor en aler het nog toekomt aan die praktische zijde der vraag, is het een kwestie van beginsel. Mag het? Is het roeping om ook hierin de overheid te gehoorzamen? Of moeten we gehoorzaamheid weigeren? Grijpt hier de overheid niet in op een terrein, dat haar niet toebehoort, en waarop Gods Woord ons gebiedt om Gode meer te gehoorzamen dan de menschen? Is deze vraag eenmaal bevredigend beantwoord, dan lossen zich de praktische bezwaren wel op.

Hier en daar werd de vraag reeds besproken. En ze werd op verschillende wijze beantwoord. Sommigen meenden, dat hier conflict bestaat tusschen den eisch der overheid en dien van Gods Woord, en dat het daarom de roeping van den Christen is, om gehoor-

zaamheid aan de overheid te weigeren en dan de gevolgen te dragen. Anderen waren van geheel tegenovergesteld gevoelen, en zagen hoegenaamd geen bezwaar om ook hier de overheid te gehoorzamen, ook al werd die gehoorzaamheid dan slechts noode bewezen. En ook ontmoette ik sommigen, die twijfelen, en gaarne meer licht hadden over de kwestie.

Misschien zou het niet verkeerd zijn, dat de kerken in het gemeen door de synode een verklaring opstelden. Dan namen we in elk geval een gemeenschappelijk standpunt in. En daardoor konden de broederen, die praktisch voor zichzelf in deze zaak hebben te beslissen, worden gesteund en geleid.

Intusschen geef ik gaarne mijn eigen gedachten ten beste.

In den grond der zaak staat deze vraag in verband met de sabbatskwestie in het algemeen. Het antwoord, dat we op de onderhevige vraag gevn, hangt af van onze beschouwing van den Zondag in het algemeen. We kunnen de vraag aanstonds wel zoo stellen: Is werken op Zondag als zoodanig zonde? Is het zonde om bezig te zijn met aardschen arbeid op den rustdag, in denzelfden zin, als waarin b.v. afgoderij, vloeken, doodslag, hoererij, en wat dies meer zij, zondig is? Indien ons antwoord op deze vraag bevestigend is, dan mogen we op Zondag nimmer werken, en dan moeten we beslist gehoorzaamheid weigeren aan de overheid, als deze van ons eischt om op Zondag mede te werken tot het vervaardigen van oorlogsmateriaal.

Dat spreekt wel vanzelf.

Gods gebod mogen we nimmer overtreden, ook niet op gezag der overheid. Of beter gezegd: de overheid kan nooit met gezag van ons eischen, dat wij zondigen tegen God. Doet ze dit wel, dan is ze geen overheid meer in dien bepaalden eisch, maar eenvoudig een groep menschen. En dan zeggen we: we moeten Gode meer gehoorzamen dan de menschen.

Is het dus het standpunt van Gods Woord, dat werken op Zondag als zoodanig, en dus in alle gevallen zonde is, dan weigeren we gehoorzaamheid.

Doch zoo staat de zaak niet.

Dat is niet het standpunt van Gods Woord. En dat is nimmer het standpunt der Gereformeerden geweest.

De Heiland heeft het standpunt, dat sabbatsheiliging eigenlijk bestaat in het vieren van een dag, en dat wel door niets te doen, zoo scherp mogelijk veroordeeld. Hij heeft ons geleerd, dat de mensch er niet is om den sabbat, maar de sabbat om den mensch. Dikwijls "werkte" Hij met opzet op den sabbat, en deed hij dingen, die hij overigens evengoed op een anderen dag had kunnen doen. Met opzet genas Hij op den sabbat den man, die reeds acht en dertig jaren in Bethesda krank gelegen had, en droeg hem bovendien op om met zijn beddeken op den rug door de straten van Jeruzalem huiswaarts te gaan. En als Hij hierom door de Joden werd aangevallen, wees Hij

er op, dat men op den sabbat behoorde goed te doen, en herinnerde Hij er aan, dat als het maar aankwam op het behoud van eigen os of ezel, men deze wel uit den put haalde op den sabbat.

Ceremonieele beteekenis heeft de sabbat dan ook niet meer. De gemeente van den nieuwen dag onderhoudt geen "dagen en maanden en jaargetijden", om daarmede Gode een dienst te doen. Zij viert niet den Joodschen sabbat. Ze rust ook niet op den sabbatsdag der schepping, zooals de adventisten. Ze viert den dag des Heeren, en dat wel als staande in de vrijheid, waarmede Christus haar heeft vrijgemaakt, en weigert ook op den sabbat om weer met het juk der dienstbaarheid te worden bevangen.

Geen gereformeerde heeft er dan ook ooit aan gedacht om werken op Zondag per se zonde te noemen.

Wel was er verschil onder hen. Er waren, die meer "rekkelijk" waren, zoowel als die meer strengelijk op Zondagsheiliging stonden.

Maar ze waren het toch wel eens hierover:

1. Dat de positieve heiliging van den sabbat op den voorgrond moest staan, daarin bestaande, dat men op dien dag ijverig bezig was in den dienst des Heeren, in de dingen van Gods koninkrijk.

2. Dat dit principieel gold, niet alleen van den sabbat, maar dat we al de dagen onzen levens van onze booze werken behooren te rusten, den Heere door Zijn Geest in ons behooren te laten werken, "en alzoo den eeuwigen sabbat in dit leven" behooren aan te vangen. Heid. Cat., Zondag 38.

3. Dat juist om bezig te kunnen zijn op den dag des Heeren in de dingen van Gods koninkrijk in bijzonderen zin, het noodig is, dat we zooveel mogelijk allen aardischen arbeid staken.

4. Dat er daarom nog wel dingen overblijven, die ook op den sabbat niet kunnen worden stil gezet. Er zijn "noodzakelijke dingen", zoowel als werken van barmhartigheid, die op Zondag, zoowel als in de week behooren te geschieden. Een boer verzorgt zijn vee op Zondag, een dokter verzorgt zijn patienten voor zoover dit noodig is. Men sprak daardoor natuurlijk uit, dat een zeker werk nog geen zonde is, omdat het op den sabbat verricht wordt.

Op grond nu van deze beschouwing van den rustdag meen ik te moeten concludeeren, dat, wanneer de overheid van ons eischt, dat we in bepaalde gevallen, dat is, wanneer de overheid oordeelt, dat er noodzaak is, ook op Zondag zullen werken, er geen conflict kan zijn tusschen dezen eisch en het Woord Gods en den wil des Heeren.

Het behoort zeker tot de roeping der overheid om het zwaard te hanteeren, ook in den oorlog. Maar dan behoort het ook tot hare roeping om dat zwaard te wetten, om het land in een staat van verweer te stellen, en zelfs gereed te maken tot den aanval op den vijand, indien dit noodzakelijk mocht blijken. En is

er dan gevaar, dat ze niet spoedig genoeg voorbereid kan worden tot den strijd, tenzij dat ze den eisch stelt van Zondagswerk, dan kan dit zeker worden gerangschikt onder "noodzakelijke werken". De soldaat kan ook op Zondag de wapens niet neerleggen, als de vijand aanvalt.

Over de wijze en het rechtmatige van het hanteeren van dit oorlogszwaard oordeelen we niet. We laten dit aan de overheid over.

Of het beslist noodzakelijk is ingegeven gevallen, dat er op Zondag wordt gewerkt, kunnen we ook aan het oordeel der overheid overlaten, zoolang als het werk geldt, dat op haar terrein verricht wordt, en dus op haar gezag.

We kunnen de overheid ook petitioneeren, om toch vooral niet meer werk te laten verrichten op Zondag, dan hoogst noodzakelijk blijkt.

En verder kunnen we trachten om lokale regelingen te maken, zoodat ons althans de tijd overblijft om eens per Zondag den dienst des Heeren bij te wonen.

Maar als ge mij vraagt: moeten we hier den regel toepassen, dat we Gode meer moeten gehoorzamen dan de menschen? dan is mijn antwoord: neen, die regel past hier niet.

Gehoorzamen is hier, m.i. beslist eisch.

H. H.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

1917 — 1942

On the 2nd of January, 1942, our beloved parents

MR. WILLIAM VIS

and

MRS WILLIAM VIS — Vermeer

commemorated their 25th Wedding Anniversary. May the Lord Who has wisely led and wonderfully blessed them in the past, continue to do so in the future, and so cause them to be a further blessing to us.

Rev. and Mrs. P. Vis

Mr. and Mrs. C. Zevenbergen

Gertrude

Henrietta

Edward

Catherine

Gerrit

Walter

Nellie

John

Cornelia

Margaret

and 2 grand-children.

The Triple Knowledge

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

IV.

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2.

Man's Relation To God. (cont.)

Many and serious objections may be raised against this rather generally accepted doctrine of the "covenant of works". That the relation between God and Adam in the state of righteousness was a covenant relation, we readily admit. But that this covenant should be an established agreement between Adam and his Creator, consisting of a condition, a promise and a penalty, and that it was essentially a means whereby Adam might work himself up to the higher state of eternal life and heavenly glory that is now attained by the believers through Christ, we deny. First of all, there is the chief objection that this doctrine finds no support in Scripture. We do read of the "probationary command" prohibiting man to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and of the penalty of death threatened in case of disobedience. But nowhere do we find any proof in the Scriptures for the contention that God gave to Adam the promise of eternal life if he should obey that particular command of God. It is true, of course, that Adam would not have suffered the death penalty if he had obeyed. But this is quite different from saying that he would have attained to glory and immortality. This cannot be deduced or inferred from the penalty of death that threatened. Adam might have lived everlastingly in his earthly state; he might have continued to eat of the tree of life and live forever; but everlasting earthly life is not the same as what the Scriptures mean by "eternal life", and that Adam would have attained to this higher level of heavenly glory, that there would have come a time in his life when he would have been "translated", the Scriptures nowhere suggest. Besides, this giving of the probationary command and this threat of the penalty of death are no covenant or agreement, constitute no transaction between God and Adam. The latter simply receives a command and is threatened with just punishment if he disobeys. Such a command might conceivably be connected with the covenant relation, but that it is the covenant Scripture does not even suggest. A command is no covenant.

Nor is the command imposed on man in the form of a *condition* unto eternal life. It is true, of course, that elsewhere in Scripture it is emphasized that obedience and life are inseparably connected: "the man that doeth them shall live in them." But even this does not mean that man by the keeping of the law could ever attain to the higher level of heavenly life and glory. In vain does one look in the Word of God for support of this theory of a "covenant of works".

But there are other objections. First of all, it is quite impossible that man should merit a special reward with God. Obedience to God is an obligation. It certainly has its reward, for God is just, and He rewards the good with good. But obedience has its reward in itself. To obey the Lord our God is life and joy. For "the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward." Ps. 19:8-11. Sin is misery and death; life and joy there are in obedience. To keep the commandments of the Lord is a privilege. But the covenant of works teaches that Adam could merit something more, something special by obeying the commandment of the Lord. And this is quite impossible. What the Lord says to His disciples is applicable to man in relation to God always: "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." Adam was God's with all his being and life in the world. To consecrate himself with all things in love to the living God was simply his obligation. He could do nothing for God. He could work no overtime with God. He could never earn anything extra. The privilege of serving God was all his. Suppose that Adam had served the Lord in perfect obedience a thousand years, could he possibly have felt that it was about time that his God should reward him with something special? Suppose the Lord had inquired of him at that time: "Adam, thou hast served me faithfully all these years; how much do I owe thee? What would Adam have answered? He would have said this: "Thou owe me, o, Lord my God? All these thousand years Thou hast filled me with Thy goodness; pure delight it was to me that I might live before Thee and serve Thee in love; I owe all to Thee, but Thou canst not possibly owe me anything at all!" Suppose this conversation had continued, and the Lord would have inquired of Adam: "But wouldest thou not rather be taken out of thy earthly paradise and be translated into another glory?" What would the

earthly first man have answered? Conceivably this: "No, Lord, I do not like to be unclothed. I am perfectly satisfied here in the earthly paradise. And I am serenely happy here by the tree of life. I cannot long for anything else than that I may stay here forever and live with Thee in the friendship of Thy covenant." And suppose further that the Lord would have asked: "But hast thou not merited another thousand years in this earthly paradise by thy faithful obedience?" What would have been the inevitable answer? This: "Thou Lord art my benefactor every day anew. Surely, I could never earn my next breath. If Thou shouldest drop me back into nothingness, Thou wouldest do no injustice." No, indeed, as long as Adam obeyed, God could not in justice inflict upon him the suffering of death; but this does not mean that He owed to His creature another moment of existence at any time of his life. Never can man merit anything with God. Nor is there any indication in Scripture that God voluntarily placed man in a position in which he could merit eternal life.

Besides, how must we conceive of this promise of eternal life to Adam? Suppose that Adam would have obeyed the commandment of God. Then, according to the covenant of works doctrine, he would have been glorified and raised to a heavenly plane of immortal life. The question arises: when would this have happened? The usual answer is that the matter would have been decided within a comparatively short time, perhaps soon after Adam and Eve had resisted the temptation of the devil. At any rate, it is usually supposed that this moment of Adam's reward would have come before there would be any descendants, because Adam stood in paradise as the representative of the whole human race. But what then? Adam and Eve would have been translated to a kind of immortal, heavenly glory. Would they have brought forth the human race in that state of glory? This seems quite impossible, for the propagation of the human race and the replenishing of the earth appears inseparably connected with the present earthy state of man in his physical body. In heaven they do not marry or bring forth children. And what of the earth and all the earthly creation? Would it also have been glorified, or would Adam simply have been taken out of it? Someone might object to this way of argumentation that we speak of things that did not actually happen and that, therefore, were not in the counsel of God. True, but I claim that God's promises are sure, and that He does not promise anything that is not even possible of fulfillment within the economy of His counsel and the whole of His works. It is, of course, quite conceivable that Adam would have obeyed, and that in the way of obedience he would have continued and perpetuated his earthly life and happiness. It is also conceivable that in this earthly state

of perfection he would have represented the whole human race and brought forth children. But the theory that Adam had the promise of God that he would inherit eternal life had he obeyed the probationary command does not fit in with the rest of Scripture nor with any possible dogmatic conception.

This conception, moreover, presents the covenant relation as something incidental and additional to man's life in relation to God. It is a means to an end, not an end in itself. It is not given with man's creation and, therefore, it is not a fundamental and essential relationship, but it is an agreement established sometime after man was called into being. The question, how long after Adam was created God made this agreement with him, is quite irrelevant. Whether it was a week, or a day, or even an hour after he was created that the probationary command was given him, the fact remains that this covenant was imposed upon the relation Adam already sustained to God by reason of his creation. And the question arises: what, then, was Adam's relation to God apart from this "covenant of works"? However, the Word of God does not present the covenant relation as an accidental relationship, but as fundamental and essential. It is not a means to an end, but an end in itself. In its highest perfection, that is, in Christ, it is life eternal itself. For this is life eternal that they know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. John 17:3.

Finally, from the viewpoint of God's sovereignty and wisdom, this theory of a "covenant of works" appears quite unworthy of God. It presents the work of God as a failure to a great extent. Even though God may be and will be victorious in the end and the devil will suffer defeat, the latter, nevertheless succeeded in inflicting heavy damage upon the works of the Creator, if this theory were true. Consider that according to the covenant of works conception, Adam stood in a position in which he could attain to eternal life and glory, and merit that same glory and life for all his posterity, by obeying God's command. The glory he could inherit for himself and all his descendants was the same or similar to that believers now receive in Christ. But now it is attained only through the deep way of suffering and sin and death; now it is merited only through the death and perfect obedience of the Son of God in the flesh; and now it is attained only by some, the elect, while the majority of the race perishes. But will this not everlastingly appear as a failure on the part of God? Or rather, can this possibly be true in view of the wisdom and absolute sovereignty of the Most High? If eternal life and glory could have been attained in the first man Adam, would God have chosen the long and deep way through the death of His Son? He would not. And the fact is, that it was quite impossible for Adam

to attain to the heavenly level of immortal life. Immortality and heavenly glory are in Christ Jesus alone, and outside of the Son of God come into the flesh they were never attainable.

However, even though the first three chapters of the book of Genesis do not mention the term "covenant", there can be no doubt that the relation between God and Adam was such a covenant relation. This truth does not have to be based upon a single text such as Hos. 6:7, although this passage certainly may be quoted with reference to this truth. The Lord in that passage accuses His apostatizing people that they have transgressed the covenant "like Adam". Some prefer here the translation "like man" instead of "like Adam". Although the former is most probably correct, it does not make a great deal of difference with respect to the question we are now discussing. If "like man" or "like men" is considered correct, the text speaks in a broad sense of the relation between God and man as fundamentally a covenant relationship; if the rendering "like Adam" be preferred, it refers directly to the covenant relation between Adam and God. But all of Scripture proceeds from the truth that man always stands in covenant relation to God. All God's dealings with Adam in paradise presuppose this relation, for God talked with Adam and revealed Himself to him, and Adam knew God in the wind of day. Besides, salvation is always presented as the establishment and realization of God's covenant. By the flood God destroys the first world and saved His Church in Noah and his seed, and with these He establishes His covenant embracing all creation. With Abraham and his seed He makes His covenant as an everlasting covenant, and gives them the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness which is by faith. Gen. 17:7ff. And this covenant could not be disannulled by the law which came four hundred and thirty years later, so that the covenant of Sinai is essentially the same covenant as that with Abraham and his seed, even though for a time the law is superimposed upon that relationship. Gal. 3:17. And in the new dispensation God establishes a new covenant with His people, a higher realization of the same covenant as the old, based on the blood of Jesus, and consisting in this that He will remember their iniquities no more, and that He will write His law upon their hearts and minds, that all may know Him. Jer. 31:21ff.; Heb. 8:8ff.; 10:16.

Moreover, the Scriptures often refer to this covenant relation without expressly mentioning it. Thus we read that Enoch walked with God, Gen. 5:22. And the same is said of Noah. Gen. 6:9. Abraham is called the friend of God. Isa. 41:8; Jas. 2:23. The tabernacle and temple foreshadow the truth that God dwells with His people under one roof, in the same house, as a Friend with His friends. And this cove-

nant relationship is centrally realized in the incarnation of the Son of God, for "the Word was made flesh and dwelled among us." John 1:14. And through the death and resurrection and exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ and the outpouring of His Spirit upon the Church, the latter is become "the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God and they shall be my people." II Cor. 6:16. And the highest realization of the glory God prepared for them that love Him is expressed in the words of Rev. 21: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God." Indeed, all Scripture presents the covenant relation as fundamental and essential, and if the work of redemption and that of creation are related to each other, there can be no doubt that Adam stood in covenant relation to God in his state of integrity.

For the same reason, however, this covenant relation is not to be conceived as something incidental, as a means to an end, as a relation that was established by way of an agreement, but as a fundamental relationship in which Adam stood to God by virtue of his creation. It is not essentially an agreement, but a relation of living fellowship and friendship. It was given and established by Adam's creation after the image of God. For fellowship, the intimate relation of friendship requires likeness as its basis. Like knows and can have fellowship with like. For this reason the ultimate covenant-life is to be found in God Himself, and is based on the Trinity. Being essentially one, yet personally distinct, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost live in eternal covenant friendship with one another. And for this same reason, that reflection of God's life of friendship which is found in God's covenant with man, is realized when Adam was created in the image of God, that creaturely likeness of God, which consisted in true knowledge of God, righteousness and holiness. From the very first moment of his existence, therefore, and by virtue of his being created after the image of God, Adam stood in that covenant relation to God, and was conscious of that living fellowship and friendship which is essential of that relationship. He knew God and loved Him and was conscious of God's love to him. He enjoyed the favor of God. He received the Word of God, walked with God and talked with Him, and he dwelled in the house of God in paradise the first. And as he stood at the pinnacle of all created things on the earth, the whole creation through him was comprehended in that covenant relation of fellowship. In Adam's heart the whole creation was united to the heart of God!

In this covenant relation Adam was the friend-servant and officebearer of God in all creation. He was God's co-worker. And this calling of Adam in

the state of righteousness is to be understood very concretely and realistically. His life is not to be vaporized in our imagination into a sort of mystical enjoyment of sweet communion with the Lord under the tree of life. He had work to do. He had a very definite mandate. God had blessed Adam and Eve and said to them: "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth". Gen. 1:28. And when the Lord God prepared for man the garden of Eden and placed him in it, He gave him a specific commandment to dress the garden, i.e. to cultivate it, and to keep it, which probably meant that he had to guard it against the inroads of the devil. He, therefore, had a very definite task to perform. But in all his life and work he was to be busy as the friend-servant of God. Not as a slave that works from the motive of fear for the whip; nor as a wage-earner who puts in his hours merely for his wages; but freely, from the love of God, as His co-worker and being of His party, as the friend of God he was to function as God's superintendent over all the works of God's hands. As such he must replenish and subdue the earth, cultivate and keep the garden, and bring to light all the wonders and powers of the world. And the pure delight of it in the favor of God was his reward.

Thus we may truly say that Adam was God's representative in the earthly creation, His office-bearer, His prophet, priest and king. In general this implies that he had the calling, the mandate, but also the privilege, the right, the ability, but also the will to be the servant of God. The *must*, and the *may*, and the *can*, and the *will* to be God's co-worker were in perfect harmony with one another in him. As God's prophet he knew his God in all the earthly creation and praised Him in a "great congregation." As priest he would dwell in God's house and consecrate himself and all things to Him. And as king he would declare and maintain the will of God in all the earth. All things served him in order that he might serve his God!

H. H.

HE IS ALL IN ALL

In His love I am abiding,
 Everything to Him confiding;
 'Neath His wing my soul is hiding,—
 He is all in all to me.

Elijah and Elisha - The Baptist and Christ

The relation that Elijah sustained to Elisha was similar to that sustained by John the Baptist to Christ. What Christ said of John in comparison with himself can be said of Elijah in comparison with Elisha. Said Christ, "For John came neither eating nor drinking. . . The son of man came eating and drinking. . ." (Matt. 11:18, 19). So, too, Elijah and Elisha; the former came neither eating nor drinking. The latter came eating and drinking.

He came neither eating nor drinking, did John. The wilderness was his abode, and his meat there was locusts and wild honey. And he had his raiment of camel's hair, and about his loins was a leathern girdle. The rigor of John's manner of life was in full agreement with and also expressive of the character of his prophetic function. In his preaching the element of judgment was prominent; and this of necessity, as he preached exclusively repentance. The substance of his discourse was: The kingdom of God and its King are at hand. Woe to them who will not have forsaken their sin and turned to God, when this kingdom is come. For the fan of its King is in His hand; and He will thoroughly purge His floor and gather His wheat into the garner but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. And now also the ax is laid unto the root of every tree: therefore every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. Repent ye therefore and live. John, in a word preached "repentance for the remission of sin" and entrance into the kingdom, and for unbelief he preached utter destruction. His discourse was, to be sure, truly merciful, yet stern and even terrible when addressed to the leaders in Israel—the Pharisees and Sadducees. To them he said, when he saw many of them coming to his baptism, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Matt. 3:1-9).

John's indignation is understandable. Being a Nazarite, he had separated himself from his people, and taken up his residence in the desert also to encourage the spiritually disquieted in Israel, the earnest seekers of eternal life, to quit the society of their unbelieving countrymen and join themselves to him in his solitude,—the solitude where the prophetic word had come to him and where he came forward as a preacher of great power, though he performed no miracles. The presence in the wilderness, of this man, whose manner of life and attire and awful eloquence,

recalled the person of Elijah, bore the desired result. Quoting the sacred narrative, there went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan. And they were baptized of him in the Jordan, confessing—mark you, confessing—their sins. We are to think here certainly of a true conversion on a large scale, and thus of the fulfillment of the prophetic word of Malachi, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Mal. 4:5, 6). And also the realization in the lives of these penitent ones of the command of God, declared by the mouth of Isaiah, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight" (Isa. 40:3). So did the labors of John produce such fruit as to justify his bearing the title of "forerunner of Christ", "Preparer of the way of the Saviour". The great and terrible day made mention of by Malachi is the New Dispensation. It is called a great and terrible day on account of all the terrible and dreadful events that are made to come to pass in it, such as the crucifixion of Christ, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the destruction of Jerusalem, the judgments of God that overtake the nations through the ages of this dispensation and the ultimate passing away of this world and the appearance of the church with Christ in glory.

When John saw also many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, his anger waxed hot. For he knew what drove them, namely, not the love of God—the love that forms the essence of a true conversion—but love of self, carnal fear of the judgment to come. They would escape this judgment but would bear no fruit worthy of repentance—such fruit as true sorrow of sin, works of true faith and mercy. John had no patience with these persons, "O generation of vipers—and they were this truly—who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come. . . .

Christ in distinction from John came eating and drinking. He lived a normal life. He mingled freely with his fellows, supping with them in their homes and eating whatever was set before Him. Indeed, so far removed was His manner of life from that of John, so free His intercourse especially with the lowly and despised, that His enemies saw fit to sneeringly refer to Him as a winebibber and a glutton, a friend of publicans and sinners. Christ's manner of life bespoke what was characteristic of His prophetic function in distinction from that of John. Assuredly there was no essential difference between Christ's preaching and that of John. He, too, preached repentance for the remission of sins. He, too, made room in his discourses for the element of judgment. The preacher who fails to discourse on subjects such as these is a false pro-

phet. Yet Christ's preaching was fuller and richer by far and much more comprehensive and thus more gracious and appealing to God's people than John's. Even His enemies were struck with amazement by the loveliness of His words. Never, said they, had they heard a man speak as He spake. Christ preached Himself as the true bread and the living water, as the One who gives rest to the weary; seeks, as the good shepherd, the lost; carries the lambs in His bosom, and lays down His life for His sheep. It is from Christ and not from John that we have the sermon on the mount and the parable of the lost son. It is Christ and not John who wept over Jerusalem and prayed for His enemies. Who is capable of this but He who was wounded for our transgressions, bore in His soul all our sorrows? It is Christ who went through the land, raising the dead, and opening the eyes of the blind, and causing the deaf to hear. John through His ministry and manner of life showed forth the avenging justice of God, yet also His mercy. But it was Christ, who, through His words and deeds, His obedience both active and passive, showed us the heart of the Father. It is in His face that we see God as He is. Yet, John and Christ belong together. The labors of both form one divine work. Together, in their respective labors, they deprived the carnal Israel, the generation of vipers, engaged in filling its measure of iniquity, of every excuse in the day of vengeance. This seed rejected first John. Their excuse was that, coming as he did, neither eating nor drinking, he certainly had a devil. So Christ came eating and drinking. But Him, too, they rejected. And this time their excuse was that, coming as He did, eating and drinking, he was a glutton and a winebibber, and thus not God's Christ. It shows that the true reason of their unwillingness to believe either John or Christ was their carnality, their perverseness of mind and heart. But the children of wisdom believed both John and Christ. believing they were saved. So was wisdom justified of her children. As to the others, they perished in their sins. In their rejecting John, they made themselves especially guilty of mocking the severity of God, His avenging justice. In rejecting Christ, they committed the sin of despising the love, mercy and compassion of God.

Elijah, too, as John, whom he prefigured, came neither eating nor drinking. He appears in Scripture as living much of the time alone in solitary companionship with God. Clothed, as he was, with a mantle of sheepskin or hair-cloth, his attire was identical to John's. Being the type of a man that he was, it must be that at no time did his daily meal include much more than a few and simple articles of diet. During the great drought he quenched his thirst with the waters of the brook, and ate the food which the ravens deposited amid the cliffs. The rigor of his manner of

life was also indicative of the character of his prophetic ministry. He, too, preached exclusively repentance for the remission of sins by word of mouth not only but especially by what he was able to accomplish through fervent prayer. His saying to the wicked king Ahab and to the apostate nation at large, "As Jehovah the God of Israel liveth, there shall not be dew nor rain these years but according to my word," was really a call to repentance and is therefore to be paraphrased thus, "The hand of God will be upon thee on account of thy grievous sins (king and people were using His gifts in the service of Baal); Humble thyself under that hand of His. Repent of thy sins. forsake thy abominations and turn to God, lest thou be consumed by His fierce anger." Preaching, as he did, repentance, the element of judgment was conspicuous also in all his ministry even to the degree that it would not be amiss to bestow upon him the title "prophet of judgment". He prayed for the immediate operation of the curse of God in the people's fields. At his command the five hundred prophets of Baal were slain. In the solitude of the wilderness, whither he had fled to escape the wrath of the queen, he, after having been encouraged by the Lord, received the command to anoint Hazael, the scourge of Israel, king over Assyria; Jehu, the extirpator of Ahab's house, king over Israel; and Elisha prophet in his room. Having found Elisha and anointed him, he remained several years in retirement, when he was again called forth to confront Ahab, who had plundered and murdered Naboth the Jezreelite, and announce to him the judgments of God by which he and his house were to be overtaken. After the death of Ahab, he again went into retirement. When he was at length called forth, it was to repeat to Ahaziah, who had succeeded to his father's throne, and who, having met with an injury, had sent to consult with Baalzebub, the god of Ekron, in regard to the issue of his disease, the denunciation, which he had before given. For their impudence, the two bands of fifty, which Ahaziah had sent for Elijah's apprehension, were consumed with fire from heaven in response to the prophet's prayer. Having crossed in company with Elisha the Jordan, whose waters were divided to let them pass, "there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them asunder, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven". The chariot and its horses were the emblems of the holy warfare of God—a warfare which Elijah had persecuted with such uncommon zeal during his life-time. So did he ascend into heaven with the full military honors of a spiritual warrior. Even several years after his transition, there came from him a writing to Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, reproving him for his wickedness and pronouncing upon him the sorest judgments (2 Chron. 21:12).

Elijah performed but a few miracles of mercy.

When the people renounce Baal, slay his priests and return to the Lord, Elijah, through prayer, again brings rain. At his word, the barrel of meal and cruse of oil of the poor widow with whom he lodged during the latter part of the famine, are not suffered to fail. Her dead son is also restored to life at the word of Elijah. Certainly, the career of this prophet of God, in so far as it is set before us in the Scriptures, justifies the statement that in this career especially the righteousness, the avenging justice of God is revealed, yet also His mercy. As was said in the previous article on this subject, the theophany at Horeb—the great and strong wind that rent the mountains, the earthquake and the fire, symbols of divine judgment and wrath—were indicative of the means by which he would turn the hearts of the people to God. And, though Elijah in his deep gloom imagined that he had labored in vain, yet, through his ministry, the hearts of the people were turned back again. The cry of the people "as to Jehovah, He is the God"—a cry occasioned by the spectacle of the burnt-offering being consumed in the fire of God from heaven—is to be construed as indicating a conversion on a large scale. The prophet had prayed for this, "Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their hearts back again." On account of this fruit, which his labors were made to bear, Elijah, as the Baptist, whom he pre-figured, was a "forerunner" a "preparer of the way" not, as the Baptist, directly of Christ, but of Elisha his successor. Malachi was made to understand this, as is evident from a declaration contained in his discourse and already quoted. What this prediction indicates is that in the mind of this prophet (Malachi) Elijah and the Baptist stood out as having this in common: both through their ministry turned the hearts of God's people back again; thus both were forerunners, the former of Elisha, the latter of Christ. It is also and especially on this account that Elijah stood out in Malachi's mind as the type of the Baptist.

If Elijah came neither eating and drinking, Elisha, Christ—to whom he, in his manner of life and ministry, stood closer than Elijah—came eating and drinking.

As Christ, he lived a normal life. After Elijah had gone to heaven, he became a man of the city and had a house in Samaria, where he dwelt among his people, rendering his person accessible to them at all times. He was dressed as other men, and ate what they ate. Elisha's manner of life was indicative both of the character of the man and of his ministry. If Elijah was stern and severe, he was gentle and affectionate. As was already pointed out, when he beheld Hazael and was mindful of what his people would have to suffer at the hands of this man, whom he

anointed king over Syria, he burst into tears. He sent away his enemies—the Syrian generals—as satisfied with bread and thus, as has already been remarked, translated into action the teaching of Christ, “Love your enemies. . . .” His ministry, too, was one of mercy. Not many predictions of judgment and doom passed over his lips. When he opened his mouth to speak, it was to announce deliverance. Miracles were wrought by him as they had been by Elijah. But they were all miracles of mercy. He filled the valley with water, and saved the armies of Israel, when they were perishing with thirst (2 Kings 3:20). He saved the widow of one of the prophets, and her family, by miraculously increasing her pot of oil (2 Kings 3:4). He healed Naaman of his leprosy; he caused the iron ax to swim; he cured the unwholesome waters; he healed the deadly pottage; and satisfied a hundred men with twenty loaves; he relieved Samaria in time of siege and famine; and even after his death, a dead man was raised to life, by being thrown into Elisha’s grave (2 Kings 13:21). See how close his ministry stands to that of Christ? But let us not misjudge the man Elisha. There was nothing of weakness about his kindness. As Christ, he, too, could be terribly severe. He cursed the children that mocked him and they were destroyed by bears (2 Kings 2:23, 24). He, too, as well as Elijah, was a man of implicit faith in God, of strict obedience and overwhelming courage. However painful to him the knowledge that Hazael was to do his people much harm, he nevertheless anointed him king over Syria, as the Lord had commanded.

Yet Elisha was plainly the prophet of mercy. His ministry was calculated to reveal God’s love of His people, to declare that the mercy of the Lord is over them that fear Him and keep His covenant. As the Baptist and Christ, so Elijah and Elisha; the two belong together. The labors of both form one divine work. Together in their respective ministries they deprived the carnal seed in Israel of every excuse in the day of vengeance. What this seed said of the Baptist, they said of Elijah, namely, that, coming as he did, neither eating nor drinking he had a devil. What it said of Christ they said of Elisha, namely, that, coming as he did, eating and drinking, he was a glutton and a winebibber. Though this is not stated in the Scriptures in set language, it is true. But wisdom, also as she took on flesh and blood in Elijah and Elisha, was justified of her children.

G. M. O.

Make me pure, Thy grace bestow,
Wash me whiter than the snow.

Sion, De Schoone

(Psalm 48)

Er zijn ge’eerden, die in hun titel voor dezen psalm spreken van Sion, de onverwinklike; of Sion, de sterke. Evenwel, als we den psalm aandachtig bestudeeren is het juist die onverwinklikeheid en de kracht van Sion die hem zoo schoon maakt. En het is die schoonheid van Sion die hier bezongen wordt door Israel, dat is, de Kerk van God. Alle deugd is ook schoonheid, lieflikeheid.

Wanneer deze psalm gedicht is weet ik niet. Dezelfde geleerden spreken hier ook weer van den strijd die Koning Josafat streed tegen de geconfedereerden Moab, Ammon en anderen. ’t Kan best waar zijn. Er is veel overeenkomst. Evenwel, dat is de hoofzaak niet. Al zouden we daar zeker van zijn, dan moeten we toch haar eindelijke vervulling zien in Jezus, den Held Gods. En dat is altoos de hoofzaak in ’t verklaren van God’s Woord.

En dat hoofdthema is duidelijk hier, overduidelijk.

Sion is de schoone, aanvallige, lieflike.

Die schoonheid, aanvalligheid en lieflikeheid van Sion wordt veroorzaakt door het feit, dat de Heere daar woont.

En daarom sluit dan ook de psalm met het geruste, vredige, op God vertrouwende “Deze God is onze God! Hij zal ons immers geleiden tot den dood toe!”

Dit alles wordt ons verklaard in de volgende verzen.

Eerst wordt het eenvoudig als een feit gekonstateerd, dat God, de Heere, groot en zeer te prijzen is in Sion. Dit Sion is de stad onzes Gods, de berg Zijner heiligheid.

Die laatste clause wordt verder verklaard in vers 3: Schoon van gelegenheid, eene vreugde der gansche aarde is de berg Sion, aan de zijden van het Noorden.

Jeruzalem was gelegen op den berg Sion; en op de Noord-Oostelijke helling was de Tempel gebouwd. Als men Jeruzalem van het Noorden naderde zag men eerst de Tempel-heuvel.

En waar Sion schitterde vanwege het feit, dat de stad Gods op zijn kruin rustte, daar was het hart van Jeruzalem de Tempel Gods.

Dit Sion, Jeruzalem, Tempel was “schoon van gelegenheid, eene vreugde der gansche aarde.”

Hoe zit dat?

Om de idee van die schoonheid te verstaan moet ge het verklaren in verband met de laatste clause van het voorgaande vers: op den berg Zijner heiligheid.

Het woord dat vertaald wordt door “gelegenheid”

vertolkt ons dezelfde idee als "berg". Er wordt daar nadruk op gelegd, dat Jeruzalem, Sion, Tempel in de hoogte ligt, dat het door God opgetrokken is, een verhevenheid is. Daar hebt ge tevens de grondgedachte van het Evangelie. Let er toch op, dat de wereld, de aarde, het menschdom van nature, neder-geslingerd werd door God in de diepten der verdoemenis, der duisternis, van het booze, van den vloek des eeuwigen doods. Dat is een historisch feit. Toen de mensch Gods zondigde is hij stervende gestorven en dat proces gaat door totdat het voleindigd wordt in den poel die brandt van vuur en sulfur.

Doch God, de Heere, is de God des verbonds. Van eeuwigheid heeft Hij gedachten des vredes gehad ten overstaan van die wereld, die aarde, dat menschdom. En om Zijns Zelfs wille grijpt Hij die wereld, die aarde, dat menschdom aan en ligt het op om het op de duizelingwekkende hoogte van den berg Sion te zetten, opdat zij eene vreugde zij der gansche aarde. De uiteindelijke vervulling daarvan ligt nog in de verte der tijden. Zij zal geschieden als God zal roepen: "Ziet, Ik maak alle dingen nieuw!" en de nieuwe hemel en de nieuwe aarde zal te voorschijn treden om de dragers te worden van de stad Gods: het eeuwige, hemelsche Jeruzalem. En in 't midden daarvan zal de Tabernakel Gods zijn, d.w.z., God zal te midden van Zijn volk wonen.

Daarom staat er in vers 4, dat God in hare paleizen is; daar is Hij bekend voor een hoog vertrek. Straks komen we terug tot dat hooge vertrek. Eerst echter iets anders.

Ge moet dan weten, dat die verhooging van het menschdom, van het volk Gods, door de eeuwen heen geopenbaard is. De algeheele vervulling wacht, zooals we zooeven zeiden, tot de vernieuwing aller dingen. Doch door alle eeuwen heen heeft God daar openbaringen van gegeven. Die openbaringen zijn veel en velerlei. Centraal kunt ge die verhooging zien in de altaren. De idee van het altaar is de verhooging en verheerlijking der aarde. Daarom is een altaar een hoopje grond of steenen. Daarin hebben we een beeld, een plaatje van wat op den dag van den Heere Jezus Christus vervuld zal worden.

Later, veel later, wordt die idee van verhooging in het altaar nog heerlijker geopenbaard. Want Mozes moet den Tabernakel bouwen. Heerlijker, zeiden we. Ziet ge, het altaar sprak van verhooging, doch de tabernakel was niet alleen verhooging. Neen, er komt het schoone en lieflijke bij. Leest maar de beschrijving ervan. Het is alles goud en schoone kleuren en vormen. Het verhoogde menschdom zal heerlijk en lieflijk en glorieus zijn.

Nog weer later bouwt Salomo den Heere een huis. En dat is de Tempel. En was de tabernakel Gods heerlijk, de Tempel Gods wint het weer in heerlijkheid van den tabernakel. Het wordt de eeuwen door steeds

duidelijker dat de Heere een schoon en heerlijk werk doet.

Nu moet ge echter niet uit het oog verliezen, dat het eigenlijke van tabernakel en tempel gezocht moet in het altaar, te weten, de idee van heerlijke verhooging.

Doch ook dan zijt ge er nog niet. Nog één ding moet er aan toe gevoegd. En dat ééne is het Bloed.

Het altaar is niets zonder het bloed. En dat bloed beantwoordt een bange vraag. De vraag, namelijk, hoe kan God die goddelooze en gevloekte en ter dood veroordeelde aarde verhoogen? Hoe kan God door middel van altaar en tabernakel en tempel met Zijn volk onder één dak wonen?

Het antwoord is: door middel van het Bloed. Dat Bloed spreekt van heerlijke dingen. Van de dingen van Gods eeuwige liefde en genade.

Nu hebben we het volle beeld. Het altaar, de tabernakel, de tempel Gods, waar God met Zijn volk gemeenschap oefent en zij met Hem. Door middel van het Bloed van Jezus.

Begrijpt ge nu waarom Jeruzalem op een berg gebouwd moest worden? Jeruzalem, de stad Gods, is één groot altaar den Heere. En door de eeuwen wachtte dat altaar op het Bloed, dat betere dingen zou spreken dan het bloed van Abel.

Centraal is dat vervuld toen Jezus stierf op Golgotha.

Hebt ge er wel eens over nagedacht, dat Jezus stierf op een heuvel?

Het was de profetie die Johannes zag. Het nieuwe Jeruzalem, schoon van gelegenheid, een vreugde der gansche aarde. Nooit schitterde de heerlijkheid en schoonheid van Gods liefde en gerechtigheid en genade heerlijker dan toen Jezus Zich offerde op het altaar van Golgotha. Dáár was de vervulling centraal van al de altaren, van den tabernakel van Mozes en den tempel van Salomo.

Doch vooraleer de vervulling van al die heerlijkheid U getoond zal worden in den dag van onzen Heere Jezus Christus is daar de bange geschiedenis.

Leest slechts de verzen 5 to 8. Daar hoort ge van de koningen die vergaderd waren. Die goddelooze en malle koningen waren tezamen doorgetogen. In hun land hadden ze gezegd: Komt laat ons in den nacht naar Jeruzalem optrekken. Laat ons hare paleizen verwoesten en haren tempel met vuur verbranden.

Die Koningen zijn de goddeloozen die altijd rondom Jeruzalem gelegerd zijn. Zij haten God, Gods Zoon en Gods volk en daarom haten ze ook de verhooging der aarde in Jezus Christus. Ze willen gaarne de kerk van God vernielen.

Doch luistert nu aandachtelijk toe. Die koningen kwamen tot Jeruzalem, dat is het altaar, dat is het Bloed, dat is Jezus op Golgotha. "En gelijk zij het za-

gen, alzoo waren zij verwonderd, zij werden verschrikt, zij haastten zich weg; beving greep ze aldaar aan, smart als eener barende vrouw!"

Hebt ge het nu goed gezien? Komt, geliefden, komt met mij en ik zal U dat bange schouwspel toonen. O dat Bloed! Dat vreeselijke Bloed van Jezus! Zintuiglijk waarneembaar was dat bloed weggevloeid. En ook voer de zintuigen van hen die daar rondom dat kruis stonden was het donker geworden. De Man van smarten was echter die bange duisternis doorgeworsteld. Nog wat roepen, nog wat drinken en Hij boog het moede hoofd. Het was volbracht. Inmiddels was het spotten overgegaan in benauwd zwijgen. Doch God donderde. De koningen waggelden op hunne voeten. De rotsen openden zich en het voorhangsel scheurde. En nu komt het. Ziet toch die menigte aan. En leest dan weer psalm 48. Doch leest ook Lukas 23:48. Daar staat: "En alle de scharen *die samengekomen waren om dit te aanschouwen*, ziende de dingen die geschied waren, keerden weder, slaande op hunne borsten." O, die Koningen! Zij kunnen het niet staan om het eeuwig mysterie van Gods liefde te zien. Ze hebben een vreeze en schrik van Jeruzalem die niet uit te spreken is. Later zult ge het weer zien. Als Jezus uit het graf zal komen, haastten zij zich weg. Smart als eener barende vrouw bezielde die wacht bij het graf.

Met een Oostenwind verbreekt God de schepen van Tarsis.

Dan zingt de zoete zanger Israëls: Zoo verga het alle Uwe vijanden, o Heere!

Nu moet gij echter niet alzoo handelen. Och, ik behoef U niet eens te waarschuwen, want zoo doet gij zeker niet. Neen, gij doet anders. Leest maar het vervolg.

O God! wij gedenken Uwer weldadigheid in het midden Uws tempels! Dat staat er van U, geliefden! O dat midden des tempels! Ziet ge nu wel, dat ik het bij het rechte eind had, toen ik U zeide, dat het altaar, de tabernakel, de tempel eigenlijk niets anders beteekenen dan het Bloed Golgotha, den stervenden en verrijzenden Jezus Christus? En dat is, Immanuel, God woont met ons onder één dak: Hallelujah!

Ja, in dien laatsten kreet van mij vindt gij Uw bestemming, kerk van Christus! Hallelujah. Dat volgt eigenlijk ook in den psalm. Er staat: Gelijk Uw naam is, o God! alzoo is Uw roem tot aan de einden der aarde. Daarom zijt gij kinderen Gods geworden. Daarom is Jezus voor U gestorven. Daarom is Hij verrezen en bracht U naar Bethania. (Herrinnert ge U dat schoone versje in Nederland? Zwijg nu, treurend Golgotha!)

In het midden Uws tempels, o God!

Begrijpt ge nu, dierbaar volk, waarom ge naar de kerk toe moet? Ge moet Jeruzalem zien. Ge moet

zeer sterk zien op Jezus. Want ge moet den roem des Heeren kunnen vertellen over de gansche aarde. Uw eeuwig zingen van Gods goedertierenheeden moet aanvangen hier op aarde. De Koningen zijn in smart als eener barende vrouw, want ze zagen Jezus op Golgotha. Doch gij jubelt van zielsverrukking, want ge hebt het Lam gezien, staande als geslacht. En dat is Jezus op Golgotha. Is het dan wonder dat zeker dichter zong: *Oh Jesu, ich liebe Dich!?*

Ja, daarom gaan we naar de kerk. Gij moogt het ook zóó zeggen: daarom gaan we naar den hemel. We willen de wonderwerken Gods zien.

Dat is ook de reden voor de verzen 12-14.

In die verzen zien we het kerkelijk, het goddelijk leven. Gaat rondom Sion en omringt het; telt zijne torens; zet Uw hart op zijne vesting; beschouwt onderscheidenlijk zijne paleizen!

O ja, Jezus Christus mag gezien worden. En niets verkeerd aan Hem. Alles aan Hem is gansch zeer begeerlijk. Let maar gerust op Jezus en alle de bijzonderheden van dat Goddelijk werk in Jezus.

Straks zullen de duivelen en goddelooze menschen dat ook doen in den oordeelsdag. God zal alle duivelen dwingen om dat te doen. Ze moeten God zien mitsgaders Zijn Zoon. Ze moeten onderscheidenlijk het altaar zien met het Bloed. God zal ze dwingen om scherp te letten op de Bruid die gekocht en gewasschen is door dat Bloed. Alle goddeloozen zullen de paleizen des hemels zien die bereid zijn door de hand van Jezus.

Doch er zal geen vlek noch rimpel haar ontsieren.

't Zal alles glinsteren en schitteren van Goddelijke schoonheid.

Weest dan ijverig en gaat rondom Sion.

Ge hebt toch óók kinderen. Er is een navolgend geslacht. Als het nog maar kleine kleuters zijn moet ge al heel vroeg gaan zingen van Jezus die hen omving met Zijne armen en zegende. Houdt dat vol langs bezaaide en onbezaaide wegen. Want het schouwspel van Sion, Jeruzalem, Tempel en Bloed is zoo verrukkelijk schoon.

En God is het waard.

Doet ge dat en doet ge dat geduriglijk?

O, dan zult ge zalig zijn in dit Uw doen. Dan zult ge zoo gewoon worden, zoo zaliglijk gewoon worden om van Jezus en van Zijn Vader te spreken en te zingen, dat wanneer Uw geslacht rondom Uw stervensponde staat, ze Uw laatste stemme zullen opvangen. Die laatste stemme is dan het laatste vers: Deze God, lieve kinderen, is onze God; Hij zal ons geleiden tot den dood toe!

En de Engelen die U haalden, zeiden eerbiediglijk: Amen, ja, amen!

G. V.

The Person Of The Prophet Daniel

The angel Gabriel was wont to address our prophet as "A man greatly beloved" (Heb. man of desires)—beloved certainly of God. Of all the prophets, he was the only one who was given this title. There was reason. The written history of his life shows that he was a man of unfaltering faith, uncompromising obedience in the face of the most trying circumstances, sterling integrity and unselfish devotion to his calling.

The name *Daniel* signifies "judge of God", that is, one who pronounces judgment in the name of God. Some interpret the name by "judge through God," while still others render it "God is my judge". Some have identified our prophet with Daniel the Levite of the house of Ithamar, one of the companions of Ezra, and whose name appears at Ezra 8:2. Against this is the too considerable distance in time. The notice at chapter 1:3 (of the book of Daniel) "And the king spake unto Ashpenaz. . . .that he should bring of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes. . . .such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace. . . ."—seems to indicate that Daniel was of royal descent. As a youth he was acquainted with suffering and privation. In his person the prophecy of Isaiah to Hezekiah was fulfilled, "Of thy sons which shall come from thee shall they take away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon" (Isa. 39:7). To Babylon with several others Jewish youths he was taken when yet a boy, and placed in the care of the chief of Eunuchs to be educated in all the learning of the Chaldeans. The force of Isaiah's prophecy to Hezekiah may be that Daniel became a eunuch in the proper sense. This view is confirmed by the usage of oriental courts according to which only eunuchs were admitted to personal offices near the king.

Daniel's name was changed as well as those of his three companions. The purpose was to destroy the memory of their home and of their God and to show them that they now belonged to another master. All of them had names reminiscent of their God. Daniel "Judge of God". Hananiah, "The Lord have grace." Mishael, "Who is like God". Azariah, "The Lord helpeth". These were changed into names commemorative of the king's idols. Nebuchadnezzar himself discloses the signification of Daniel's new name, "Daniel, whose name is Belteshazzar, after the name of my god" (5:8).

Daniel was taken to Babylon in the third year of Jehoiakim. He was then about 14. The three years that were occupied with his being taught *the learning and tongue of the Chaldeans*, brought him to 17. It was in all likelihood at this age, in the second year

of Nebuchadnezzar's reign as king, that he entered upon the king's service. He was, then, about 14 when in his youth obedience to the law of his God, he resolved "in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank. . . ." The king's meat, being connected with idol-sacrifices and the animal food thereof being killed with the blood was forbidden by law. It was most difficult to avoid this food, as Hosea's prophecy shows, "*they shall eat unclean things in Assyria*" (9:3). By Ezekiel God said, "The children of Israel shall eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles whither I will drive them" (4:13, 14).

Daniel trusted that in his obedience to the law of his God, God would sustain him as well through the *pulse* as through the forbidden food. So "he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself" (1:8). The chief of the eunuchs did not at first yield; but he did deign to reason with Daniel about the matter; *for God had brought him into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs*" (1:9). He said to Daniel that he feared his lord and king, who had appointed their meat and drink. In the event their countenance bespoke the ill effect of their living upon food so simple, they would be responsible for his having endangered his head to the king. Daniel proposed that they be proved, ten days. Then let their countenances be looked upon, and the countenance of them that eat the portion of the king's meat. And as he shall see, so shall he deal with them. So he consented to them in the matter, for he loved them tenderly. God answered their faith. Amid abstinence of the vices that surrounded them, God gave power of mind and body, knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom "ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm" (1:20). Among them all was found none like Daniel and his three companions. So the king discovered, when he communed with them.

In his faith, Daniel obtained from God understanding in all visions and dreams (1:6), in particular knowledge of Nebuchadnezzar's dream and its meaning. It was this gift of God to him that saved his life. In the second year of his reign, the king was greatly vexed by a dream he was unable to recall. The magicians were summoned and commanded to declare both the dream and its meaning. Failing in this, they would be destroyed together with their houses. The magicians remonstrated with the king. They insisted that never before had a king asked a thing so unreasonable. Daniel is sent for and he tells both the dream and its interpretation and thereby saves his own life not only but the life of his companions and of all the magicians as well.

In his allegiance to God, he (and his companions)

could be moved not even by the threat and prospect of death. He continued to pray three times in the day, openly, when the penalty was the den of lions. Darius had appointed 120 princes to rule over the kingdom and placed them all under the supervision of Daniel and made them responsible to him. The princes, long envious of him, began to plot his fall. To their disappointment, they could find nothing to criticize in his administration of the king's affairs. Aware of his singular devotion to God, they induced the king to establish a statute to the effect that for thirty days no one should direct a petition of any kind to any god, save the king, and that the penalty for disobedience should be the lion's den. Daniel could have reasoned with himself that under the circumstances he would be committing no sin, should he for the time being cease to pray in full view of spying eyes. But he did not so reason. He continued to expose himself in his worship. And he received testimony from God that he did well. The mouths of the hungry beasts that would devour him, were closed by the invisible power of God.

Daniel's calling was to reveal and extol his God *in a heathen court*. How worthily he walked of this calling. When the secret of Nebuchadnezzar's dream is revealed to him, how he blesses the God of heaven, "blessed be the name of God forever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: and he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that knoweth understanding. . . . I thank thee, and praise thee! O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast made known unto us the king's matter" (2:20, 21). And to the king he said that the secret which he had demanded, the wise men of his realm could not show him; "but," quoting his own words, "there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets. . . ." How he depreciates himself before the king, "But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any vision that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart." The king himself must understand that "the God of heaven hath given him a kingdom, power, and strength and glory. . . ." (2:36). When the king had heard, he said, "Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets. . . ." (2:47). In his edict upon his restoration to reason, the king again praises and honours the King of heaven, "And at the end of the days I. . . . lifted up mine eyes unto heaven and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and

his kingdom is from generation to generation. . . ." (4:34).

They were dreadful messages with which God sent Daniel to the monarchs in whose palaces he stood. The decrees of God he declared to them. He withheld nothing. Yet he was careful to show a subject's respect. How amazed and troubled he was for Nebuchadnezzar's sake, when he was made to perceive the meaning of the dream, that foreshadowed his impending insanity. For a whole hour he stood speechless. When finally, after being encouraged by the king, he opened his mouth to speak, it was to give expression to the wish that the dream might be to his enemies. With what gentle words he pleads with him to break with his sins, that the chastisement might be averted, "Wherefore, O King" he said to him, "Let my counsel be acceptable to thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; it may be a lengthening of thy tranquility." To the impious Belshazzar he had to announce that God had numbered his kingdom, and finished it; yet then too with what longing remembrance does he look back to the days of Nebuchadnezzar, his greatness, glory, honour, humiliation and acknowledgement of the rule of the most High in the kingdom of men.

Daniel loved God's people and the land that He had chosen for His people. It is told us incidentally in connection with the decree of Darius. "When Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house, and his window being open in his chamber *towards Jerusalem*, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." In those two words "*toward Jerusalem*" there lies a deep yearning for the city of Jerusalem; and those closing words, *as he did aforetime*, bespeak a life of longing prayer. For Jerusalem was the city that God had chosen for His name. The intensity of his soul, when the 70 years of his captivity were nearly accomplished. "O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from the city of Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us. Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. O my God, incline thine ear and hear; open thine eyes and behold our desolation and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplication before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies."

In the providence of God, Daniel was raised to a high position of power in a heathen court for the sake of God's people—a position which he occupied during

the Babylonian exile of this people. Already as a lad of 17 he sat in the king's gate, presiding over all the colleges of the wise men. And he "continued even unto the first year of King Cyrus." Amid all the intrigues and all the envy toward him, a captive in high office, *he continued*, because God was with him, he being faithful. "The president and the Satraps sought in vain to find any occasion against him concerning the kingdom; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was any error or fault found in him." He continued faithful. He survived in uncorrupting greatness the 70 years, was honoured during the 43 years of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, and owned by the conquering Medo-persians. He was the protector of His people during the years of exile. He perhaps wrote the decree of Cyrus which gave leave for the longed for restoration of his people, whose re-entrance in their land he did not share. The presence of such a man of God in Babylon has with reason been appraised as converting the chastisement of God's people into the riches of the Gentiles.

G. M. O.

BEDE

Eigen krachten te verachten
 Wordt op Jezus' school geleerd,
 Lust en zinnen te overwinnen
 Past een ziel die daar verkeert,
 Zich om schatten af te matten
 Wordt van Jezus afgekeurd,
 't Zondig haken naar vermaken
 Wordt in deze school betreurd.

Nauw te letten op de wetten
 Die Hij aan zijn posten sloeg,
 Alle dagen 't kruis te dragen
 Achter Hem, die 't zwaarste droeg;
 Door gelooven 't hart naar boven
 Te verheffen uit het stof,
 En door hopen blij te loopen
 't Enge pad naar 't hemelhof.

Hem in 't sterven aan te kleven,
 Zoo in vreugd als droefenis,
 Wordt bevolen in de scholen
 Waar de Heere Jezus is,
 Dierbre Heiland, leer mij sterven
 Aan mij eigen zin en lust,
 Dat ik toch uw heil niet derve
 Maar blijmoedig in U rust!

Proper Cooperation Between Parents And Teachers

Healthy, intelligent, helpful co-operation is necessary wherever and whenever two or more persons or groups are called upon to work together toward the accomplishment of a joint task.

This is a well-known fact and admitted as an established truth by everyone that stops to think only for a moment. In our large industrial plants, for example, all the departments must interrelate, they must coordinate their work. Efficiency demands that nowhere along the line of production should there be any interruption. If one part of the production line comes to a halt it not infrequently brings the entire plant to a standstill. There must be coordination of every machine, of every department, of employers and employees. All must work with united effort toward the common end of production. All-out production demands such coordination.

As it is in industry, so also it is with the war machine itself at the present time. Industry must cooperate to the full and supply the tools of battle; but the armed forces also must cooperate. The sea power, the air power and the land power must work together. If each goes its own way, without supporting the others, the result will be destruction to all. Yes, so necessary is cooperation and coordination, that the allied nations feel that they must support one another; they must aid one another, join their forces, and cooperate to the full. Division of strength, lack of cooperation implies a consequent lack of power. In unity there is strength.

But cooperation is everywhere necessary wherever two or more persons are called upon to work toward the accomplishment of a joint task. It is necessary in the local congregation; there must be unity of thought and spirit, but also unity of action. If each seeks his own instead of the things of Christ, the members will bite and devour one another. They must take heed and repent or they will destroy one another. The church can only forge ahead when its members are unified in one mind and spirit, and cooperate together toward the coming of the kingdom of Christ.

All this applies also in the field of education. In the training of the covenant youth, parents and teachers must cooperate to the full extent. The more they cooperate together, the more you can expect the training to be as it should be. If the teacher breaks down what the parent is building, how can there be anything but confusion? The child is sure to suffer, and pay dearly for the lack of unity. The parents must be of one heart and mind themselves, for if they present a divided front the situation is indeed hopeless. If, for example, a father does not care a whit about God and

His Word, and the mother seeks to inculcate into her child the fear of God, it is for her an almost impossible task. Again, even though the two be one in their spiritual aim, if the one parent permits the child to do one thing while the other forbids it, what must the child do? To say the least, the training such a child is receiving is far from the ideal. Parents must cooperate together. Especially they, for their training at home is the most basic and has the most effect upon the child. The training of the church and the training of the Christian school cannot accomplish their purpose unless the training given at home harmonizes. To my mind we should ever keep before us that of the three: church, school and home, the latter is the most important. A church and school training may be ever so good, but if the training at home be fundamentally bad, church and school can accomplish exactly nothing. By all means: Keep the home fires burning!

However, the primacy of home training does not take away the importance of the training received in the church and in the school. Parents should be vitally interested also in these, and give a healthy and intelligent cooperation to the teachers that take a part in the education of their children. Church and school must coordinate with the home; there should be no basic conflict between them. And it is of especial importance that the teachers that give training outside the home be chosen carefully, with a view to their ability and desire to train the child in the way he should go. A Christian parent with the best interest of his child at heart will, therefore, also send his child to the Christian school; he will, furthermore, do all in his power to see to it that the teacher employed is spiritually and naturally qualified for his task; and finally, he will seek to cooperate with that teacher to the best of his ability. He will do this because the best interest of the child he loves demands it. That parent will do the same toward the catechism teacher; he will see that his child is in catechism, that he is there on time, that he knows his lesson that he behaves in a becoming way.

On the other hand, also the teachers on their part will seek to take their places as much as possible. A teacher that fully cooperates will seek to train that child in the fear of God. He will give himself to the work and take an interest in it, and seek to make it interesting. And, finally, he will seek to keep contact in various ways with the parent, and keep the parent informed in regard to his child.

The best interests of the child demand cooperation to the full extent between the parent and the teachers.

Such is the ideal, the ideal toward which we must strive. It is an ideal, I said. The reason for calling it thus, is due to the fact that the reality not infrequently is far from the ideal. Parents themselves

do not always cooperate with one another as they should; father and mother each pull on the oars in an opposite direction. More frequently, parents do not cooperate fully with the teachers to whose care the children are entrusted so many hours of the day. Sometimes teachers do not cooperate with the parents as they should. By and large, however, I believe that parents fail to cooperate with the teachers as often, if not more frequently, than vice-versa. Occasionally there are examples of an entire lack of cooperation on the part of parents with the teacher, both in school and in catechism, the fruits of which become evident as time goes on.

Let me give you an illustration of a very bad cooperation, of a situation that is bound to work havoc on all concerned and not the least upon the child. My example is imaginary, but concretely true to life. Such examples indeed occur, even to the degree I have imagined it.

Johnny was an only boy, ten years old. He was not a little spoiled. Johnny had been very ill, and during the period of his recuperation the parents had catered to him and spoiled him no end. After he was well he clearly showed the evidences of insisting on his own way, and he continued to get it. The parents pampered and petted him, and danced to his pipes. Johnny was the little lord on the throne. When Johnny began school his teachers soon realized that he was not a little spoiled. But what to do? Johnny's parents would hear no ill of their little idol. As time went on the situation became worse. His fifth grade teacher especially experienced difficulty. She understood her calling, and was determined that she would not cater to his likes and dislikes; Johnny should know who was in authority in her room. So she used a firm, but kind hand. Johnny chafed under it and rebelled. In school he tried to get away with things, but it wasn't easy. Teacher kept him after school when he disobeyed the rules of order, and for failure to finish his work if he whiled away his time. Consequently, Johnny disliked his teacher very much. He did not hesitate to tell his parents so, because he knew they lent a sympathetic ear to his complaints. His ills were magnified, of course, but still they believed Johnny. The parents even criticized the teacher in Johnny's presence, and consoled him with his low marks, blaming it on the teacher. The teacher's side was forgotten; neither did they make any attempt to see her side. And when the teacher once called on them, she could not fail to feel that the whole situation was viewed as her fault. What could the teacher do? No matter what she tried, no matter how much effort she expended to win Johnny without catering to his whims, the boy remained aloof, recalcitrant and incorrigible. Where to lay the blame? Not with the teacher, not even with the boy, but with the parents. They failed

to cooperate; their love for the child was the kind that destroys.

The same situation, fundamentally at least, existed in the catechism class. The parents did not particularly like the pastor, and Johnny had more than once heard them openly criticize him, even his catechetical work. Johnny took advantage of the situation. He was not attentive, and the pastor reminded him of it, even made him stay. In such instances Johnny did not fail to tell his parents of his unjust treatment on the part of the pastor. Neither did he ever know his catechism lesson any too well. He complained the memory work was far too hard. The parents believed it, and were satisfied if Johnny knew his lesson but half. They felt you could hardly expect Johnny to memorize thoroughly lessons that were so hard. The minister and the consistory were convinced the lessons were not too hard, not even for Johnny, and so the pastor did not hesitate to keep Johnny occasionally after class if his recitation had been extra poor. But the parents reacted still more unfavorably to this procedure. They were angry, and made up their mind to tell the pastor something at family visitation. Neither did they hesitate to let Johnny stay home for almost any and every reason. And so the child grew up without any thorough catechetical instruction, simply due to the parents' lack of cooperation.

In Sunday School the situation was no different. Johnny hardly ever knew his text, showed no attention, and only created confusion in class. Although he had ability, he could never be made to take part in the Christmas program. But, of course, this attitude came from home. Johnny's parents didn't have much respect for the Sunday School teachers. The teachers were simply no good. It was always criticism of others, of all the teachers, that Johnny heard.

And time went on. Johnny grew up. He was gradually approaching young manhood. Now his parents had their problems at home, and that full blast. They could do nothing with him. If they had not had themselves to blame, they would have had this comfort at least that they had done their duty. But now they began to realize somewhat, although they did not admit it as they should have, that Johnny's attitude was the fruit of their training. No one could do anything with him. Thus they had trained him. They had never given intelligent, healthy and helpful cooperation toward those that were assisting in training him. On the contrary, they had supported him in his opposition. An Eli's child was their reward, a reward according to their works.

What a warning example! It is only too often true to life.

Parents, cooperate with the teachers of your child! Give them wholehearted support. Seek to cultivate respect in your child for those in authority, and never

criticize teachers in the presence of a young child—it will only harm the child. For their welfare, their spiritual welfare! That is implied in the fifth commandment, which is the first commandment with promise.

Cooperation is necessary everywhere. Not the least in the field of education. The welfare of our children demands united effort toward the common end. "Divine and conquer" also applies to the training of our children.

P. D. B.

MORE LOVE TO THEE, O CHRIST

1.

More love to Thee, O Christ,
More love to Thee!
Hear Thou the prayer I make
On bended knee:
This is my earnest plea—
More love, O Christ, to Thee,
More love to Thee!

2.

Once earthly joy I craved,
Sought peace and rest,
Now Thee alone I seek,
Give what is best:
This all my prayer shall be—
More love, O Christ, to Thee,
More love to Thee!

3.

Let sorrow do its work,
Send grief and pain,
Sweet are Thy messengers,
Sweet their refrain,
When they can sing with me—
More love, O Christ, to Thee,
More love to Thee!

4.

Then shall my latest breath,
Whisper Thy praise,
This be the parting cry
My heart shall raise:
This still its prayer shall be—
More love, O Christ, to Thee,
More love to Thee!

Attention

To arouse the child's interest and hold his attention once awakened is a major problem in the sphere of instruction. What is attention? How can it be enforced? Volumes have been written on this subject. This question confronts us with a problem also from the purely natural, psychological point of view. The teacher, in school or in catechism, must cope with this difficulty. One must know not only what to teach but also how to teach it.

This question also asserts itself in the realm of the spiritual. We refer to instruction in the things of God's Word and covenant. How can the catechism teacher command attention in his class? What must be done in our young people's societies to awaken and maintain their interest and attention? This question is often asked in our present age. Attention in catechism and, especially, in society life leaves much to be desired. It seems so difficult to arouse interest in the things of God's Word and covenant. How difficult it is for many of our young men and women to engage in a profound study of Scripture and also to become more and better acquainted with the history of our churches which we believe to represent the cause of God in the midst of the world! Or, is it impossible? What must be done about it? Can anything be done about it?

What is attention? Attention to an object, is what takes place whenever that object most completely occupies the mind. Attention and interest, we understand, are inseparably connected. To say that an object is interesting is only another way of saying that it excites attention.

Interest, also in the natural sphere, can be awakened and cultivated but not created by means of instruction. Of children we know that their interests, that which occupies their attention, lie altogether in the sphere of sensation, the things they see and hear and touch and taste. The grimace that Johnny is making, the spitballs that Tommy is about to throw, the dog-fight in the street, or the distant fire-bells ringing and the blowing of a train whistle—these are the rivals with which the teacher who would be interesting, must incessantly cope. A child will always attend more to what a teacher does than to what the same teacher says. Consequently, the teacher of young children will keep in touch with her pupils by constant appeal to their natural interests. Instruction must be carried on objectively, experimentally, anecdotally. The black-board-drawing and story-telling must be constantly used. This must be a self-evident truth. We must bear in mind that we emphasize the thought that a child's interest and attention lie exclusively in the sphere of sensation. This is a natural, psychological

fact. Spiritually, no amount of objective and experimental instruction will interest one child in the things of God and of His covenant.

Moreover, still viewing interest and attention from a natural point of view, interests can be cultivated also among adults. There is, according to leading psychologists, a simple law which reads: Any object not interesting in itself may become interesting through becoming associated with an object in which an interest already exists. A few illustrations will serve to establish the truth of this rule. Surely, the most naturally interesting object to a man is his own personal self and fortunes. Hence, the moment a thing becomes associated with his own self or fortunes it immediately becomes a thing of interest. Lend a child a book and pencils or give them to him and note then the difference in his care and treatment of them. In mature life, all the drudgery of a man's business or profession, intolerable in itself, becomes highly significant and alive with interest when associated with his personal fortunes. How interesting can an uninteresting object as a railroad time-table become when it suddenly can serve our own personal interests, whether we wish to travel somewhere or merely desire to "kill" time. To arouse and awaken interest and attention we must begin with a person's personal or natural interests and instruct him so that everything can be viewed by him in the light of those interests.

However, the law or rule as given above is worthy of note also for another reason. Note, please, that an object must exist in which a person already has an interest. This is true even in the natural sphere. We may be able to cultivate and nurture interest and attention. We cannot create or instill it. It is a pertinent fact that worldly psychologists recognize this fact. All men cannot be carpenters or doctors or lawyers. To inculcate the intricacies of law or medicine into one who simply is not interested in law or medicine would surely fail to arouse his interest and attention. Is it not, in this connection, a parent's duty to discover the mental tendencies, likes and dislikes of his child, and then to encourage that child to pursue that line of endeavor to which he is adapted? We know this to be an indisputable fact. We must learn to know the object in which he has a natural interest. Only then will it be possible to awaken his interest and attention to subjects which he must learn to attain unto his goal.

What does this teach us as far as the spiritual sphere of the development of God's church and covenant is concerned? Of course, we can distinguish, also in these spiritual matters, between natural attention and spiritual attention. Spiritual attention is spontaneous, signifies that our heart and mind are occupied with the things of God's Word and covenant, that the beauties of God's Word fascinate us and have

become the object of the love of our heart and mind. On the other hand, it is possible to conceive of one who will, for the time being, give his attention to the Word of God, although himself not spiritually interested. Concerning this temporary, intellectual (in distinction from spiritual) interest we may safely declare that it will cease as soon as his own personal interests are threatened. In this brief article as now applied to the things of God's Word and covenant, we refer specifically to attention in the real, spontaneous spiritual sense of the word. Only then, when we are actually, truly interested in the Word of God, be it during the preaching of that Word or in society activity, will our attention (also intellectual) to the truth be assured. Only then will our society activity serve to help us grow in the knowledge and grace of Christ Jesus, and will our discussions be interesting and beneficial.

Attention to, spiritual interest in the Word of God is possible only when that Word of God has become the object of our love. What is a recognized fact in natural life and recognized as such by leading psychologists of the world, certainly applies to the realm of the spiritual. The truth of God, the development of His covenant, the history of Jehovah's dealings with His covenant people can captivate our attention and interest only when we have been led to recognize and see their beauty and significance. As long as other matters, the things of time and which are below, have the love of our heart, spiritual interest in and attention to the spiritual matters of God's covenant and Word will be impossible. Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of heaven. One may avail himself of every pedagogical ingenuity, particularly when dealing with children (and we do not deny the usefulness of these means); yet, attention, wholehearted interest in the works of God must be preceded by the work of the Holy Spirit whereby He leads us spiritually into the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven.

However, this is exactly the point of contact which the preacher of the Word and Christian instructor must ever bear in mind. We must believe that the holy Spirit not only must work this interest in our heart but also that He does. Besides, this work of grace is revealed in the Scriptures, also in the sense that that which is effected within us is the truth of God's Word. Hence, to obtain true attention, we must not deviate from the truth but adhere strictly to it. We must not try to make the Divine worship, school-life, society activity attractive apart from the beauty of Holy Writ. Many such external attempts are made today, particularly in our modern and Arminian evangelical(?) churches, to arouse the interest of the people and draw their attention. These so-called evangelists will engage in all sorts of acrobatics for the

purpose of arousing their people out of their spiritual stupor and lethargy. We must remember that spiritual interest and attention can be aroused and maintained only through the instrumentality of the unadulterated truth of the Word of God. This is an undeniable fact for the simple reason that the Holy Spirit operates within the hearts and consciousness of men only in connection with the truth of God. It is exactly this work of the Holy Spirit which constitutes the point of contact for all Christian instruction. The Lord will establish His covenant with us and with our children.

Hence our calling is clear. The preaching in Divine worship, the discussion at our society meetings, the instruction in our Christian schools must be in harmony with the Word of God. We must proceed, the preacher of the Word and the Christian school instructor, from the belief that we must not make people of God or form Christian characters, but that we must prepare and equip the man of God unto every good work. We will believe then that God operates by His Spirit in the hearts of His people and their children, and that the Holy Spirit will indeed apply the instruction to the consciousnesses of the children of God. We must indeed proclaim the beauties of the Word of God and God's people will be attracted to it. Interest in and attention to the beauties of God's testimony will then be permanent and abiding. And we can further maintain that interest and hold that attention by continuing to hold fast to the Word of God as the only lamp before our feet and the light upon our path. True preaching, true instruction will always arouse true interest and attention. There, where the Word of God is purely preached and taught, God commends His blessings and establishes His covenant, the Spirit operating mightily within the hearts of His own. With this instruction we must begin not in the school, not when a child has become a young man or young woman, but at home. Our children must be trained in this truth of God from infancy on, and we need have no doubts but that spiritual interest and attention will be safeguarded and assured.

H. V.

De Keuze Van Een Zendingsveld

Enkele jaren geleden werd er door de Classis onzer kerken, eene commissie benoemd om de taak der Classicale Inwendige Zendingscommissie te omschrijven. Uit het rapport dezer commissie, dat door de kerken werd aangenomen, blijkt duidelijk, dat wij, als Protestantsche Gereformeerde Kerken, het onze taak en

roeping achten om zending te drijven onder de verstrooide en afgedwaalde Gereformeerden van ons land. Het dunkt ons niet onnut, om in verband met ons boven genoemd onderwerp, dit rapport eenigszins breedvoerig aan te halen. Het luidt als volgt: "Door zending verstaan wij, in dit verband, dien ambtelijken arbeid der Kerk, waardoor zij het getuigenis der waarheid uitdraagt en verkondigt voor degenen, die nimmer de waarheid hoorden, zooals de Heidenen, of ook voor de verstrooiden en afgedwaalden. Het eerste, name'lijk de zending onder de Heidenen, ligt thans buiten ons bestek. We hebben het dus te doen met den arbeid onder verstrooiden, die om de een of andere reden van de geïnstitueerde kerk verwijderd geraakten; en onder degenen, die van de waarheid afdwaalden. Het doel dezer zending moet altijd zijn, in de eerste plaats, de eere van onze God en Koning, door de verbreiding Zijner waarheid, en de verkondiging van Zijnen Naam; in de tweede plaats, de vergadering en tot openbaring brengen van het lichaam van Christus, door het tot stand brengen van de geïnstitueerde kerk; en eindelijk, de terechtbrenging van verstrooiden en afgedwaalden.

"Nu gaat het in ons rapport over inwendige zending, in onderscheiding van heidenzending. Het terrein is door den term "*inwendige*" dus beperkt. De vraag komt daarom onvermijdelijk op: welke kring wordt door deze term bedoeld? Hoe wijd is deze kring? Hierop kan allerlei antwoord worden gegeven. In den allerergsten zin van het woord ziet deze term op den kring van Protestantsche Gereformeerden. Te arbeiden onder verstrooiden en afgedwaalden in eigen kring, onder degenen, die vooral in de tegenwoordige tijd, door de nood der tijden, of ook om andere redenen, verhuisden, en geen contact kunnen houden met een Protestantsche Gereformeerde Kerk, is, naar deze opvatting, de taak der Inwendige Zending voor ons, als Protestantsche Gereformeerde Kerken. Hiertoe behoeven we ons echter niet te bepalen. Uitgaande van de overtuiging, dat we door den Heere verwaardigd zijn, om in dezen tijd van velerlei verslapping en afval, vast te houden aan de zuivere Gereformeerden, in de tweede plaats. Zij staan, wat de formeele belijdenis betreft, het dichtst bij ons. En als wij daarbij ook de historie in aanmerking nemen, kunnen wij hieraan nog toevoegen, dat buiten den engsten cirkel van eigen kring, allereerst de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken ons zijn aangewezen, als ons zendingsveld, daarna ook de Dutch Reformed Church. De eersten zijn in 1924 officieel afgeweken van de waarheid der Heilige Schrift en der Belijdenis, en mogen daarom met recht als afgedwaalden worden beschouwd; de laatsten zijn officieel de Dutch Reformed Church van 1628, en vormen een kerkverband, dat zich kenmerkt door allerlei afwijking en verslapping in leer en leven beide. En in den breedsten zin

van het woord kunnen we door inwendige zending verstaan den ambtelijke arbeid door de Kerk van de verbreiding en verkondiging van de waarheid in heel den kring der Christenheid, onder alle verstrooiden en afgedwaalden. Uit praktisch oogpunt is het echter verkieselijk, dat we als Protestantsche Gereformeerde Kerken vooralsnog onzen arbeid beperken tot eigen kring en den kring onzer afgedwaalde Gereformeerde broederen, beide in de Christelijke Gereformeerde, en Dutch Reformed Kerken. Men te bereiken, door hen persoonlijk op te zoeken, door prediking en redevoeringen, door boek en pamphlet; hun de waarheid te verkondigen, en, zoo ze door Gods genade tot overtuiging mogen worden gebracht, zooveel mogelijk tot openbaring te brengen als zuivere, dat is, als Protestantsche Gereformeerde Kerken,—ziedaar den arbeid en het doel der Inwendige Zending."

Uit het boven aangehaalde blijkt duidelijk, dat wij als kerken wel terdege onze roeping en plicht verstaan, om Inwendige Zending te drijven onder *alle* verstrooiden en afgedwaalden, in heel den kring der Christenheid, maar ook dat wij dezen arbeid hebben te beginnen in eigen kring, en in den kring onzer afgedwaalde Gereformeerde broederen, vooral die der Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken, omdat die uit historisch oogpunt het dichtst bij ons staan.

Dit kon ook niet anders. De nood werd ons opgelegd. In strikten zin kon men eigenlijk niet spreken van een *keuze* van een zendingsveld. Het was eenvoudig onze plicht en heilige roeping om allereerst den twist voort te zetten tegen onze moeder, die van de waarheid der souvereine genade afweek, ja zelfs verloochende. Hadden wij niet plechtig beloofd, voor God en voor Zijne gemeente, dat wij deze waarheid zouden handhaven, en ook alle dwalingen daartegen zouden verwerpen en bestrijden? En daar het onze heilige overtuiging was, en nog steeds is, dat de leer der "Algemeene Genade" zooals die ligt uitgedrukt in de "Drie Punten" van 1924, in strijd is met Gods Woord, en met onze aloude Gereformeerde belijdenis, daar werd de nood ons opgelegd, om deze dwaling te verwerpen en met alle krachten te bestrijden. Hier was niet te kiezen óf te delen.

En het treurige feit dat de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken ons hebben uitgeworpen, omdat wij ons strikt hielden aan de waarheid van Gods souvereine genade, en de dwaling der "Drie Punten" van 1924 verwierpen en bestreden, onthief ons niet van deze dure roeping en plicht, maar daardoor werd zij juist verscherpt. Het was juist daardoor dat wij als een aparte op zichzelf staande Kerkengroep zijn geworden, om in onderscheiding van de Kerken die ons uitwierpen, de voortzetting te zijn van de aloude Gereformeerde Kerken. En daar wij vroeger van binnen uit de strijd voerden, werden wij nu geroepen om van buiten af, haar toe te roepen om deze ernstige

dwaling verre van zich te werpen, en om toch terug te keeren naar de oude en beproefde paden. Daar ligt allereerst onze roeping als kleine kerkengroep. Het ligt toch voor d hand, dat wij als kerken niet de roeping hebben om allereerst de heerlijke waarheid van Gods souvereine genade uit te dragen, en te verkondigen, onder degenen, die nog nimmer deze waarheid hadden gehoord, terwijl onze eigene moeder van deze heerlijke waarheid afweek, en vele van hare kinderen van deze waarheid waren verstoken. Waarlijk wij mochten als kleine kerkengroep ons arbeidsveld niet verder zoeken dan om te twisten tegen moeder, en om in haar midden te strijden en te getuigen voor de waarheid van Gods souvereine genade.

En niemand zegge, dat dit een strijd is van minder belang, óf dat wij een al te zware strijd strijden. Het gaat om het heil van Sion, om leven óf dood. Immers is de leer van Gods souvereine genade, van verkiezing en verwerping, het hart der Kerk. Loochen deze waarheid, en de kerk kwijnt en sterft. Voeg in plaats van deze waarheid, de dwaling van een algemeen welmeenend aanbod van genade, en de kerk vervalt in Arminianisme, Humanisme, en Modernisme. Daarom is onze taak, om tegen deze dwaling te strijden, zoo ernstig. Daarom ligt ons arbeidsveld niet allereerst in 't heidendom, maar hier in Jeruzalem. Daarom gevoelen wij, als Protestantsche Gereformeerde Kerken, dat de kring der Christelijk Gereformeerde Kerken de eerste van Gods ons aangewezen plaats is, om zending te drijven.

Het is vooral dit feit, dat wij ons arbeidsveld zochten onder de afgedwaalde Gereformeerden, dat zeer veel tegenstand en vijandschap tegen ons heeft veroorzaakt. Keer op keer moesten wij het in onzen zedingsarbeid hooren: Waarom werkt Ds. Kok juist in de kring onzer kerken? Waarom niet onder degenen die nog nimmer de waarheid hebben gehoord? Waarom gaat hij niet naar de heidenen? Het was vooral vanwege deze wijze en methode van arbeiden dat wij veel en bittere tegenstand moesten ondervinden.

En toch is het juist deze wijze van zending drijven die beide door de Heilige Schrift en de Kerkgeschiedenis wordt bevestigd. Alzoo handelden de apostelen des Heeren. Volgens des Heilands bevel liep de lijn altijd weer: Jeruzalem, Judea, Samaria en tot aan het uiterste der aarde. Ook zij werden bevolen om te twisten tegen hunlieder Moeder, beginnende van Jeruzalem. Lukas 24:44-49. Nimmer weken zij van deze methode van arbeiden.

Het werd ons door den redakteur van de Banner, de Rev. H. J. Kuiper, en anderen, zeer kwalijk genomen, dat wij in onzen arbeid ons herhaaldelijk wendden tot de kerken, waarin wij waren geboren en getogen, toch die ons zoo onrechtvaardig uitwierpen, omdat wij getrouw wilden blijven aan de Gerefor-

meerde waarheid. Men vond deze wijze diep zondig en beschuldigde ons van sectarisch gedoe en scheurmakerij. En toch als wij de Handelingen der Apostelen nagaan dan is het steeds terugkeerende in hun arbeid dit: "En op den Sabbat gingen ze naar de Synagogue en verkondigden aldaar het Evangelie". Zie Handelingen der Apostelen 3:1; 9:20; 13:5; 13:14; 14:1; 17:1, 2; 17:17; 18:4; 18:19; 18:26; 19:8; 21:27; en nog meerdere plaatsen. Het was juist door deze wijze van arbeiden, die hun door den Heiland werd bevolen, dat zij de bittere vijandschap der Joden veroorzaakten. De eenige vraag voor de apostelen, alsook voor ons, is alleen, zooals onlangs werd uitgedrukt in "De Reformatie"; "Nu zou ik niet durven beweren, dat elke beweging, welke verdeeldheid en onrust in de gemeente teweeg brengt, te veroordeelen is. De geschiedenis der Kerk leert anders. Dikwijls was het God zelf, die de kerkelijk rust verstoorde om tot nieuw leven op te wekken. Bij de beoordeeling van een beweging mag alzoo *niet* de vraag overheerschen, of zij onrust verwekt, *maar moet worden nagegaan of zij den toets van Gods Woord kan doorstaan.*" Ja, zeker, de taak der Zending moet van huis uit beginnen, naar het voorbeeld der Apostelen, en naar het bevel van onzen Heiland.

Zoo was het ook in geheel de geschiedenis der kerk. Ook de mannen der Reformatie, Huss, Luther, Calvijn, Zwingli, Knox en anderen, richtten zich altoos weer, in hunnen arbeid, tot de kerk waarin ze eens een naam en plaats hadden. Ook de mannen der Afscheiding zochten hun arbeidsterrein, niet in het verre heidendom, maar juist in de kring der kerken die hun een plaats hadden ontzegd. Alzoo was het ook in de dagen der Doleantie, onder Dr. Abraham Kuiper.

En niet anders stond de zaak onder de voorgangers der hedendaagsche Christelijk Gereformeerde Kerken. Is men zoo spoedig eigen geschiedenis vergeten. Is men in het begin der uittreding dadelijk gegaan naar het Indianenveld, naar China, óf naar Africa? Immers neen! Dat kwam pas een vijftig jaren later. Men wendde zich allereerst tot de, naar hun opvatting, afgedwaalde Gereformeerde broederen.

Volgens Gods Woord en de geschiedenis der Kerk, staat het daarom vast, dat het werk der Zending altijd weer van huis uit moet beginnen. Het is waar, daar eindigt onze roeping niet, maar daar begint ze toch wel volgens het opdracht van onzen Heiland, en het voorbeeld der Apostelen, en alle Reformatoren.

B. K.

To live apart from God is death,
'Tis good His face to seek;
My refuge is the living God,
His praise I long to speak.