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MEDITATIE

Het Einde

En het einde aller dingen is nabij; zijt dan nuchteren, en waakt in de gebeden.

I Petr. 4:7.

Oudejaarsavond. . . . een einde!

Maar toch niet *het* einde, want de laatste avond van het jaar is slechts de afsluiting van een kringloop.

Drie honderd vijf en zestig dagen vlogen weer voorbij. Drie honderd vijf en zestig malen voltooide de aarde haren rondgang om haren as, onvertraagd, onvermoeid rondwentelend. En in die drie honderd vijf en zestig omwentelingen rolde zij voort door 't firmament, en volbracht zij met razende snelheid haar bijna zes honderd miljoen lange tocht door het onmetelijke ruim des hemels.

Wat dreef dien wentelenden, voortsnellenden aardkloot in zijn loop? En waarnaar jaagde hij?

Drie honderd vijf en zestig malen wisselden dag en nacht elkander af, begon de zon haar loop, "vroolijk als een held om haar pad te lopen", en regeerde zij den dag, licht gevend op de aarde, om even zooveel keeren haar schepter te overhandigen aan de stille, bleke maan, de koningin des machts, of om gelegenheid te geven aan de sterren des hemels om hare heerlijkheid te doen fonkelen in den donkeren nacht. Waarom die regelmatige afwisseling? Wat werd er door bereikt? En waar is het einde van al dien rusteloozen arbeid?

En regelmatig ook, zonder zich blijkbaar bewust te zijn van het eentonige van haar werk, tikte de klok haar seconden af, zonder vertraging, ook zonder zich ooit te verhaasten, meer dan drie miljoen malen, versnipperend den tijd, of ook heel den dag ons waarschuwend om ons te haasten: "het einde is nabij!" Want "wij vliegen daarhenen"!

Maar waarheen? Wat zal het einde zijn?
Oudejaarsavond?

Neen, toch niet! Het is *een* einde, maar *het* einde is nog niet! Slechts werd er een kringloop volbracht. We zijn weer precies, waar we een jaar geleden ook waren. Er was winter; er kwam lente, zomer, herfst. Weer werd het winter. Het is avond geweest en morgen geweest, avond-morgen, avond-morgen, avond-morgen, drie honderd vijf en zestig avonden-morgens. Er werden menschen geboren, en er keerden levende zielen weder tot het stof. Er was arbeid, gezwog, veel zweet des aanschijs, zorg en kommer, ook blijdschap en vreugdebedrijf; er was gekrijt, maar ook gezang; er was vrede, maar ook, ja ook en veel oorlog; er was gevloek, maar ook gebed; er was ongerechtigheid, maar ook boete en berouw en de schreeuw van het tollenaarsgebed. . . .

En over alles spreidde de dood zijn donkere vlerken. . . .

En 't werd Oudejaarsavond!

Het einde?

Neen, toch niet! Want wel kan het niet verder. En wel kwam het ook niet verder. De dingen keerden zich om en om. 't Was alles herhaling tot alles doodmoe zou worden. Ijdelheid der ijdelheden, 't is al ijdelheid!

Maar 't kan toch opnieuw weer beginnen: dezelfde kringloop, dezelfde afwisseling van dag en nacht, hetzelfde eentonig, afgestemd klckkengetik, dezelfde rusteloze arbeid, hetzelfde lijden. . . .

Want morgen is 't Nieuwjaar, 't begin van hetzelfde, van altijd opnieuw hetzelfde!

Een einde, ja, is Oudejaarsavond. En ook zit er in dien laatsten avond des jaars de sprake van *het* einde.

Van het einde aller dingen!

Doch het einde is nog niet!

Het einde!

En dan wel: het einde *aller dingen*!

Ja, daarvan spreekt Gods Woord: "Het einde aller dingen is nabij; zijt dan nuchteren en waakt. . . . in de gebeden."

Het einde aller dingen, dat is van de gansche schepping, van heel de tegenwoordige wereld, van de hemelen en de aarde, zooals ze in den beginne door almachtige Scheppershand werden voortgebracht, zooals ze door den val van Satan en door de zonde van den eersten vriendknecht des Heeren in een nacht van lijden en dood en vloek gedompeld werden. . . .

Het einde, het laatste punt des tijds, de laatste tik der klok, waarna de klok voor eeuwig stil zal staan. Het einde van allen kringloop der aarde en der sterren, van dag en nacht, van zon en maan, van de afwisseling der seizoenen. Het einde van alle aardsche schepselen in hun aardschen vorm, hun aardsche leven, hun aardschen arbeid, van alle tijdelijke ijdelheid. Het einde van alle aardsche ontwikkeling, van het geboren worden en het sterven van menschen en beesten, van het ontspruiten van het groene kruid en het ontluiken der bloem, van zaaien en oogsten, van alle menschelijke kultuur, van handel en nijverheid, van kunst en wetenschap; van alle gejaag naar geld en goed, naar roem en eer, naar positie en macht, naar de lust des vleesches en de lust der oogen en de grootheid des levens. Het einde, waarop alles stilstaat, waarop alle snarenspeel en bazuingeclank verstomt, waarin de vloek in de keel versmoort, en waarin het gebed om verlossing een einde heeft. Het einde, waarin de hemelbollen losbreken van den band, die hen in hunne banen houdt, en waarin de hemelen zelf zullen worden opgerold als een dunne doek. Het einde, waarin de elementen brandende zullen vergaan, versmelten. . . .

Het einde!

O, ja, wel zeer werkelijk zal het een *einde*, het einde zijn!

Het zal niet maar een willekeurig gekozen oogenblik zijn, een ingrijpen in de dingen, die zijn en geschieden en zich ontwikkelen, dat vandaag of morgen zou kunnen geschieden, maar ook evengoed over tien duizend jaar kan plaats hebben.

Neen, neen: 't zal het *einde* zijn.

De omega!

Neen, niet zoo zal het zijn op dat laatste moment, dien laatsten klokketik, dat het ook nog wel een tijdlang had kunnen dóórloopen, dat er nog wel kans gezien wordt op een nieuw begin. Integendeel, dat laatste moment is zeer werkelijk het *einde*, óók in den zin, dat het dan niet verder kan, niet verder mag, en ook niet verder behoeft. Het kunnen, het mogen, het moeten aller aardsche dingen en aller aardsche geschiedenis en ontwikkeling heeft dan zijn uiterste bereikt. Er kan, er mag, er behoeft dan geen jaar, geen dag, geen uur, zelfs geen seconde meer toegevoegd aan den loop des tijds. Er kan, er mag, er moet ook geen mensch meer worden voortgebracht door ons geslacht. Er kan en mag en behoeft ook niemand meer te werken, te zwegen, te lijden en te sterven op aarde, te vloeken of te bidden, te zegenen of te verdoemen, onrein of rein te

zijn, gerechtigheid of ongerechtigheid te bedrijven. . . .

De mate is vol. . . .

Alle dingen zijn doodmoe! Uitgeput!

Want er is een mate bepaald voor alle dingen, en voor de ontwikkeling van alle dingen; een mate door Gods vrijmachtig welbehagen gesteld, in Zijn eeuwig welbehagen; een mate voor de verkiezing én voor de verwerping, voor de volheid van het lichaam van Christus én van den bolster der goddeloozen; een mate voor de ontwikkeling van ons geslacht en van alle kultuur; een mate ook voor de volheid van de gerechtigheid en van de ongerechtigheid; een mate voor het woeden der goddelooze, antichristelijke macht en voor het lijden van Christus, persoonlijk en in Zijne kerk op aarde. . .

En als die mate vol is, dan kan het niet verder, want op de omega dier volheid is de alpha aangelegd van den beginne: een oneindige ontwikkelingskracht en ontwikkelingsmogelijkheid is er in "alle dingen" niet.

En als die mate vol is, dan *behoeft* het niet verder, want de theodicee is bereikt: alle schepsel zal eigen leugen en Gods gerechtigheid moeten belijden.

En als die mate vol is, dan *mag* het ook niet verder, want alle dingen schreeuwen in dat moment om de openbaring van het rechtvaardig oordeel Gods!

Het einde aller dingen!

Maar daarom ook einde in de zin van doeleinde.

Want wel loopen de dingen in een kringloop, en komen ze niet verder. Het is al ijdelheid. En alle dingen loopen van zichzelf, in den weg van geleidelijke ontwikkeling, zeker niet uit op het koninkrijk der hemelen.

Maar toch dragen alle dingen vrucht. In den ijdelsten kringloop werken ze toch Gods raad uit.

De voldragen vrucht wordt straks gezien. Het einde aller dingen is nabij!

Gods einde komt!

Nabij is dat einde!

Altijd nabij is dat einde.

Reeds toen de Heilige Geest den apostel deze woorden deed neerpennen, eeuwen geleden, was dat einde nabij.

En thans is het nog nabij. In betrekkelijken zin, en naar de berekening van menschen, die den tijd meten naar seconden, minuten, uren, dagen en jaren, is dat einde thans wel nabijder dan toen, maar veel gewicht leggen de voorbij gesnelde eeuwen toch niet in de schaal van dit "nabij-zijn".

Verstaan we dit niet, dan gaan we straks aan het rekenen. Dan overwegen we, dat negentien eeuwen reeds voorbij vlogen, en nog is het einde niet. Dan gaan we klagen, als we althans hopen op de belofte en met den Geest en de bruid bidden om de haastige komst van Jezus en als we geen troost trachten te vinden in stuitende en vertragende gemeene-gratie-werkinkjes, dat God de belofte vertraagt. Of we gaan uitrekenen,

dat de apostelen het mis hadden, dat ze het einde veel eerder verwachtten, dan in de werkelijkheid het geval zou blijken. En we vergeten, dat het hier niet de apostel, de mensch Petrus is, die de toekomst voorspelt, maar dat het de Geest Gods Zelf is, Die de werkelijkheid der dingen van het koninkrijk Gods ons openbaart!

Nabij is het einde aller dingen, vlak bij ons, voor de deur. . . .

Want allereerst is het thans de laatste ure. Op het oudejaar van de tegenwoordige bedeeeling volgt geen nieuwjaar meer: de morgen der eeuwigheid wordt dan ingeluid. Er zijn andere uren geweest in de geschiedenis van alle dingen, ook uren, die uitliepen op een einde. Er was een ure der eerste wereld, die haar einde vond in den vreeselijken vloed. Er was een ure voor de geheele oude bedeeeling, die uitliep of op het oordeel des kruises en de verwerping van het vleeschelijk Israel. Maar altijd volgen er andere uren. Het einde werd gevolgd door een nieuw begin. De draad der geschiedenis liep altijd weer door. Doch thans is er niets meer te verwachten dan "het einde aller dingen" in den volstrekten zin des woords.

Wat nu volgt is *het* einde.

Het is nabij.

Bovendien zit juist dat einde in alle dingen. Zooals de dood nabij de geboorte ligt, altijd nabij is in het leven der menschen in de wereld, omdat immers de dood reeds in de geboorte werkt; zoo is en werkt het einde aller dingen in heel de geschiedenis dezer bedeeeling. Het is zeer nabij in alles, wat we zien en ervaren. Op dat einde stuwte alles aan. Want Christus is eenmaal gekomen, en door Zijn kruis en opstanding is de wereld geoordeeld; en Hij is verhoogd aan de rechterhand des Vaders, en heeft alle macht in hemel en op aarde. En Hij komt weer! Straks, aan het einde aller dingen, zal Hij geopenbaard worden in heerlijkheid, komende met de wolken des hemels. Maar Hij is ook komende! Hij komt in de vergadering der uitverkoren uit alle volkeren, in oordeelen over de wereld, in aardbeving en pestilentiën, in oorlogen en geruchten van oorlogen. En omdat Hij komende is, daarom zit het einde in alle dingen. Het is zeer nabij!

En Hij haast Zich om te komen!

Neen, God vertraagt de belofte niet. De dingen worden niet gestuit. Het vol maken van alle maten geschiedt zoo haast het kan. Christus komt haastelijk. Daarom moeten ook de dingen zich haasten. Heel de goddelooze wereld is in haast. Want de dingen moeten haast geschieden!

Hoemeer alle dingen hun einde benaderen, hoemeer de stuwkracht van het einde hen dringt om zich te haasten. . . .

En daarom is het einde aller dingen zeer nabij!

Het dringt op ons aan, het omringt ons, het zit in ons!

Zijn drang stuwt heel de wereld voort!

Ziet, Ik kom haastelijk!

Ja, kom, Heere Jezus!

Kom haastelijk; en kom met Uw loon, om een iegelijk te vergelden naardat zijn werk zijn zal!

En kom, o, einde aller dingen!

Want dat einde brengt mij het begin van den eeuwigen dag. Het einde dezer wereld is mij het einde des doods en het begin des eeuwigen levens, het einde der zonde en het begin van eeuwige gerechtigheid; het einde van den strijd is eeuwige overwinning; het einde van het aardsche is mij 't begin van eeuwige vreugde, van licht en leven, van Gods eeuwige gunst, van het zien aangezicht tot aangezicht, van de aanneming tot kinderen, van de verlossing mijns lichaams, van gemeenschap, van het wonen in Gods tabernakel. . . .

En bovenal, dat einde is de theodicee, de volkomene en openbare en eeuwige rechtvaardiging Gods en van Zijn zaak!

Kom, dan, o, einde, ja kom haastelijk!

Is dat uw bede? Zijt gij, ben ik, aldus bezig "in de gebeden"? Want dat is gebed! Het is het gebed van den Geest en van den Bruid, die den Bruidegom verwacht! En dat gebed van de Bruid, verlangend naar de komst van den Bruidegom en van het einde aller dingen, is het hart van alle waarachtig gebed. Neen, niet om alle dingen bidt de Bruid. Vooral niet de dingen dezer wereld zoekt de Bruid in haar gebed. Niet, dat God de dingen mag stuiten en haar een behoorlijk goed wereldleven mag bereiden hier, is de begeerte van de Bruid. Maar naar de openbaring van haren Bruidegom, naar het einde aller dingen, verlangt ze, en daarom bidt ze. En dat zijn ook "de gebeden" in dit woord der Schrift bedoeld. Het zijn de gebeden met het oog op "het eine aller dingen"!

Het einde aller dingen is nabij!

Zij uw begeerte, zij uw gebed in overeenstemming met die werkelijkheid!

Maar zal het alzoo zijn, en zal het alzoo meer en meer worden, dan behoort ge nuchteren te zijn, en te waken!

Zijt dan nuchteren en waakt tot het gebed, dat is, zoodat ge in staat moogt zijn om recht te bidden met het oog op de nabijheid van het einde. Zoo is de gedachte van den tekst. Nuchteren behoort ge te zijn in den geestelijken zin, niet geestelijk dronken. De geestelijk dronken mensch ziet alles verkeerd, waardeert vooral de dingen dezer wereld verkeerd, en is daarom dubbelhartig, of in den grond der zaak: wereldsch. En hij waakt niet, zoodat de vijand hem gemakkelijk vangt en hij van de wereld verwonnen wordt!

Zijt nuchteren! Waakt! Zijt voortdurend op uwe hoede!

Het einde is nabij!

Kom, Heere Jezus!

H. H.

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EDITORIALS

The War

Now our own country is involved in World War II, it may be of interest to pass in review the main events of this tremendous conflict.

The first year of the war was on the whole characterized by the "Blitzkrieg" of Hitler's forces in which the German mechanized forces scored brilliant victories, partly because of their overwhelming power and thorough preparedness over against the unpreparedness of Great Britain and France, partly because of repeated surprise movements of the German army in connection with a ruthless trampling under foot of the rights of smaller nations.

The war was started when Hitler ordered his forces into Poland on Sept. 1, 1939. The invasion of Poland became the occasion for a declaration of war against the German Reich by Great Britain and France, Chamberlain and Daladier being the prime ministers of those countries respectively at that time. Poland proved practically powerless against the onslaught of the German mechanized forces. The blitzkrieg there was soon finished, and Poland unconditionally surrendered on Sept. 27, 1939.

In the meantime Russia invaded Finland and started a war with that small but brave nation. At that time the Russian bear certainly did not leave the impression of great military strength and leadership. This war lasted until the early spring of 1940.

In the same spring Hitler launched a new series of surprise attacks. The allied forces appeared to feel rather secure behind the supposedly impregnable Maginot line. But the German government began to invade, occupy and establish so-called "protectorates" in the smaller countries along the west coast of Europe. Denmark and Norway were overcome practically without a struggle; the Netherlands put up a fight which was as bloody and brief as it was hopeless; and through the Lowlands Hitler united with his forces in Belgium and Luxemburg, which soon had to give up the struggle against the overwhelming power of the German army. This gave the Führer the opportunity to circumvent the famous Maginot line, and to meet the French and British forces, the latter of which were driven to Dunkerque, while the former were quickly overcome and forced to sue for peace. Soon after the German forces occupied Paris, marshal Petain became Premier of France, and on June 24, 1940 the terms of the German-Italian armistice were accepted and signed. German-Italian terms they were, for when France was

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almost defeated, on June 10, 1940, Italy had had the the very questionable courage also to declare war on France.

About this same time Russia became active again in eastern Europe and seized Bessarabia and Bukovina in Rumania. And on July 3, 1940 the British seized or destroyed a considerable part of the French Fleet, lest it might fall into the hands of the Axis powers.

It must not be forgotten that during this time Great Britain established a rather effective blockade of the continent of Europe, while German submarines wrought havoc with the British merchant marine and sent thousands of tons to the bottom of the ocean.

This may be considered the end of the first period of the war.

It marks practically the end of the German "blitzkrieg" methods. And it is not impossible that about this time, in August 1940, the German dictator made the great mistake that may ultimately prove to be one of the main factors in his defeat. We refer to the fact that he failed to invade Great Britain. At that time England was hardly prepared to resist a German invasion successfully, had it been attempted. A determined attempt to invade the British isles, however, was not risked by the German Government. Instead they began, in August 1940, a series of air attacks on England, which caused great destruction, but which failed to accomplish anything else than to strengthen the British morale, and to stiffen their determination to fight to the bitter end. In this determination they were encouraged and constantly upheld by the bulldog tenacity of their new Premier, Winston Churchill.

The "blitzkrieg" was over. Time was in favor of England, which from now on grew stronger every day. And the possibility of a successful invasion of the British isles became more remote, as the English defenses grew stronger. And in this she was soon materially aided by supplies from the United States.

In the fall of 1940 Japan, Rumania, and Slovakia joined the Axis alliance. The British began an offensive in northern Africa and scored a series of victories over the Italian forces there. By the early part of 1941 they had extended their victorious march in Lybia as far as Bengasi. Later the British were driven back into Egypt by the German-Italian forces. But recently, as we know, the British renewed the offensive and once more are victorious over the Axis forces in that section of the war area.

Defeat was suffered by the Greeks. This Balkan State was invaded by the Italian army on Oct. 29, 1940. But without the aid of the German military machine the Italians do not make the impression of a strong power; and, humanly speaking, they would have suffered complete defeat at the hands of the Greeks, had it not been for the aid of the Germans. However, against the combined attack of the German-Italian

forces the Greeks, even though aided by a small expeditionary force of the British, could not stand. The conquest of both, Yugoslavia and Greece was finished on May 28, 1941, and soon after the island of Crete in the Mediterranean was abandoned by the British.

From June 8 to July 12, 1941 the British invaded and conquered Syria.

In the meantime our own government slowly but surely forsook its original neutrality attitude. The slogan became more and more "all out aid to Great Britain." A tremendous step in the direction of our own involvement in the war was taken when the Lease-Lend Bill was passed and signed on March 11, 1941. On July 7 of the same year the United States occupied Iceland. A little more than a month later our President met Mr. Churchill and they announced to the world the eight point charter. When the Axis powers began to attack our ships, the President on Sept. 14 ordered the United States Navy to shoot at sight. Virtually we were already in the war, though officially no war had been declared.

Thus the second phase of the war was characterized by the absence of any brilliant successes on either side. It had become evident that the war would not be finished as it had begun, but that it might develop into a struggle that would last a long time, and that would ultimately be won by the side that could afford to abide the time when the other side would be exhausted.

Perhaps we may say that the war entered upon its third phase when Hitler began to invade Russia on June 22, 1941. And when the history of this war is written, it will probably call this attack against Russia another of Hitler's major mistakes. In the beginning of the Russian campaign and till recently this was not so apparent. It was hardly expected that Russia would hold out against the German war machine. Her campaign against Finland had not inspired confidence. Besides, little Finland saw an opportunity to regain some of her lost territory, if not to take revenge upon the Russian bear, and entered into the conflict as an ally of Germany. And although the Germans, no doubt, from the very beginning of the Russian campaign suffered heavy losses, both in men and material, they were, nevertheless, victorious and steadily advanced toward their objective. But in recent weeks the tide has evidently turned. Even though the Russian reports, no doubt, are exaggerated, the German forces are surely in retreat. Berlin announced several days ago that they abandoned the project of capturing Moscow before winter. But the Russians launched a counter offensive that has driven the Germans back for several miles. It can no longer be doubted that the Russian campaign is a failure, and may well turn out to be one of the decisive defeats of the war for the Germans.

The development of the war, then, seems to reveal

that the Axis powers are gradually but surely weakening. Blitzkrieg and brilliant successes were characteristic of the first period. A slowing down on the part of the Axis forces and an increase in strength on the part of Great Britain became noticeable in the second period. In Lybia the British are victorious. In Russia the Germans are retreating, and the Russian campaign appears to become an expensive failure for the Axis powers.

And now Japan has entered the war on the side of the Axis.

We all know of the peace talks that were carried on in Washington, and of the sudden and treacherous attack of the Nipponese on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 6 last.

Then, on Dec. 8 our government declared war on Japan. And a few days later Germany and Italy declared war on the United States. After the attack by Japan on Pearl Harbor, the war-declaration by the Axis powers hardly made an impression.

H. H.

The War And Our Calling

Even though we did not agree with the policy that led to the involvement of our own Country in the world conflict, now the Government has declared war, and has received declarations of war, the Christian citizen can have only one duty: obey for God's sake and for conscience sake.

When the Government calls upon our sons to go to battle, we will send them and they will go. And whatever burden the Government may think necessary to place upon us, we will bear without murmuring.

This does not mean that we have changed our personal opinion about this war in general; about our part in it in particular; or about our friendship with communistic Russia.

Nor does it mean that as Christians we are motivated by any false and superficial enthusiasm, or preach revenge and hatred; nor that we agree with humanistic ideals about a future world-peace.

It certainly does not mean that the Church as such is involved or may be involved in this war. Nor must the pulpit become anything else than a place from which the gospel of Jesus Christ is preached, the gospel of peace in the cross of our Lord and in His resurrection alone.

But it certainly means, that we believe that the Government holds the God-given sword for the punishment of evil-doers and for the protection of them that do well; that, therefore, the Government certainly has the right to wage war, just as well as she has the

power to inflict capital punishment. It means, moreover, that for the way the Government handles that sword it, and not the individual citizen or soldier is responsible before God.

And, therefore, the Christian citizen cannot hesitate to obey when the Government calls to battle.

And he will be strong in the conviction that thus it is the will of God!

H. H.

The Triple Knowledge

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

IV.

LORD'S DAY III

1,

After The Image Of God. (cont.)

However, man was originally created so that he actually possessed the image of God. He was not only formally adapted to bear the image of God, but he was also materially endowed with the spiritual ethical virtues of that image. These virtues are usually distinguished as true knowledge of God, righteousness and holiness. The Catechism in its answer to question 6 directly mentions only "true righteousness and holiness"; yet, the element of true knowledge of God is clearly implied in what follows: "that he might rightly know God his creator". Fact is, that true righteousness and holiness cannot be divorced from true knowledge of God. Without the latter the former are impossible, and without true righteousness and holiness true knowledge of God cannot exist. All three are often expressed in the one term: "man's original righteousness". It is that original goodness of man's nature, according to which it was wholly motivated by the love of God, and with all its faculties and powers moved in the direction of God, so that the operation of his heart and soul and mind and will and all his strength were in accord with the will of God. And this one virtue of complete integrity is distinguished as true knowledge, righteousness and holiness.

That this is, indeed, the contents of the image of God is evident from Scripture. For it presents man's

redemption and deliverance from sin as the restoration of the image of God in him, and the image of God as restored in the redeemed sinner is said to consist of this true knowledge of God, righteousness and holiness. Thus the apostle instructs us in Eph. 4:23, 24. that believers have so learned Christ and are so instructed by the truth as it is in Jesus (vss. 20, 21) that they are renewed in the spirit of their mind, and that they put on "the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." And the admonitions to the believers of Colosse in Col. 3:5ff. are based on the fundamental truth that they "have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." Col. 3:9, 10. And this is confirmed by all the rest of Scripture in so far as it has reference to the renewal of man through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are called to present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, and not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of their mind, that they may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God, Rom. 12: 1, 2. They must cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of God, II Cor. 7:1. For they were sometimes darkness, but now they are light in the Lord, and as children of light they must walk, Eph. 5:8. The Father bestowed the great love upon them that they should be called children of God. And now they are children of God, and it is not yet revealed what they shall be; but when it shall be manifest, they shall be like God, for they shall see Him as He is. I John 3:1, 2. Everywhere the Bible teaches that redemption and deliverance from sin restores the likeness of God in us, and that this likeness consists in a reflection of God's ethical perfections, particularly those of knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. For this is life eternal that they know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. John 17:3.

By these three spiritual virtues, that originally adorned the nature of man, the rectitude of his whole being in relation to God and all things is denoted. By holiness is meant, not any acquired purity, but that original rectitude of his nature, according to which he was consecrated to God in love with all his mind and heart and soul and strength. His whole soul yearned after the living God, and had its delight in His favor and fellowship. His righteousness was not an imputed righteousness, nor was it acquired, but it was that virtue of his whole nature according to which he was wholly in harmony with the will of God and that according to the judgment of God, so that he was fully capable of doing the will of God, and to do that will was his delight. And his knowledge of God was not a mere intellectual or natural knowledge of the Most High, so that He knew who and what God is; nor was

it a ready made system of theology or dogmatics with which Adam was endowed from the beginning; but it was that original rectitude of his mind by virtue of which He immediately and spontaneously knew God, both through the revelation of all the works of God round about Him, and through the direct Word of God that was addressed to him in paradise. And through this positive knowledge of God He had a living contact with the Most High, the fellowship of friendship, that was his life. And thus Adam was "good". He was so made that he was quite capable of serving the Lord his Creator, to be His representative in all the world, His prophet to know and to glorify Him, His priest to consecrate Himself and all things unto Him, and His servant-king to rule in righteousness over the works of God's hand, and thus to live in "eternal happiness to glorify and praise Him".

And even on this point the truth differs radically from the Pelagian errors, that teach "That the spiritual gifts, or the good qualities and virtues such as: goodness, holiness, righteousness, could not belong to the will of man when he was first created, and that these, therefore, could not have been separated therefrom in the fall;" and "that in spiritual death the spiritual gifts are not separated from the will of man, since the will itself has never been corrupted, but only hindered through the darkness of the understanding and the irregularity of the affections; and that, these hindrances having been removed the will can bring into operation its native powers, that is, that the will of itself is able to will and to choose, or not to will and not to choose, all manner of good which may be presented to it". Canons III, IV, Rejection of Errors, 2, 3. The fundamental error of Pelagianism in all its forms is always that it denies any other righteousness and holiness than that which is the result of the choice and act of the will of man. Hence, righteousness and holiness cannot be virtues with which the nature of man was originally endowed. Man could be either righteous or unrighteous, holy or unholy, according as he chose to be. Only the *deed* of righteousness makes a man righteous. And according to the same fundamental principle, man could never become corrupt in nature. It may have become more difficult for him to choose for righteousness and holiness because of the fall; but essentially he is the same as before the fall: a being that can be either righteous or unrighteous by the choice of his own will. And grace may "give him a lift" in his efforts to be righteous after the fall, it never is a radical change of his nature. Over against this Pelagian corruption, which is as superficial as it is pernicious, stands the plain truth of the Word of God and of our Confessions, that God created man good and after His own image in true knowledge, righteousness and holiness.

What became of this image of God in man must be

discussed in another connection. But even here we may be reminded of two facts: 1. that man did not possess this image of God as a treasure that could not be forfeited and lost; it was amissible; and 2. that it is not enough to say, that man merely lost this image of God, but that through the fall it was changed into reverse. As to the first, man was created lapsible. He was, indeed, the son of God by creation, but he was not the Son of God in the flesh. He could fall. He was free, but he had not attained to the highest freedom. His freedom consisted in this that he was capable of doing the will of God, for this alone is freedom; but he could, nevertheless, by an act of his own will subject himself to the slavery of sin. The highest freedom is the state in which it will be forever impossible for man to choose contrary to the will of God. But this is attainable only in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God united with our nature. Adam could lose the image of God. And as to the second, merely to state that through the fall man lost that image is not expressing the whole truth. Surely, he did lose it, and lose it completely. There is nothing left of man's original integrity, of his knowledge of God, righteousness and holiness. But it is equally true, that through the fall his rational moral nature became wholly corrupt. The spiritual ethical operation of his heart and mind and will and strength was put into reverse, so that his knowledge became darkness and love of the lie, his righteousness became rebellion and iniquity, his holiness became aversion to God and impurity in all his affections. The being that was designed to be the image of God changed into the image of the devil! And only through the grace of Christ, our only comfort in life and death, is this image restored and raised to a heavenly level and glory that can be lost nevermore!

2.

Man's Relation To God.

To the relation in which Adam stood to God the Catechism refers in the words: "that he might rightly know God his Creator, heartily love Him, and live with him in eternal happiness to glorify and praise him." That this relation is a covenant relation is not expressly stated, nor is it implied in the words that the relation between God and man in paradise was that of the so-called "covenant of works". Nor does Ursinus, in his "Schatboek" speak of this relation as a covenant-relation, still less does he mention a "covenant of works". And also the rest of our Confessions are silent on this matter. They all teach, to be sure, that the sin of Adam is the source of the corruption of the whole human race, and that by the fall and disobedience of our first parents our nature is become so corrupt that we are all conceived and born in sin. But

this refers to the relation between Adam and the human race, not to that between God and Adam. And of a "covenant of works" our confessional standards know nothing. A brief statement concerning this covenant is found in "The Irish Articles Of Religion", 1615, as follows: "Man being at the beginning created according to the image of God (which consisted especially in the wisdom of his mind and the true holiness of his free will), had the covenant of the law ingrafted in his heart, whereby God did promise unto him everlasting life upon condition that he performed entire and perfect obedience unto His Commandments, according to that measure of strength wherewith he was endued in his creation, and threatened death unto him if he did not perform the same." (Schaff: Creeds of Christendom, Vol. III, p. 530). And also the Westminster Confession expresses itself on this subject in ch. VII, 2 in the following words: "The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon conditions of perfect obedience." Here, therefore, we meet with the term "covenant of works."

But although this idea of a "covenant of works" was not incorporated into our Reformed Standards, it has become a rather common term, and the doctrine represented by it was developed in works on dogmatics and taught in sermons and catechetical classes, until it was quite generally accepted in Reformed circles as a part of the Reformed heritage. It is rather common to speak of the relation of Adam to God as being that of a covenant of works. A rather elaborate discussion of this covenant is found in Dr. Charles Hodge's *Systematic Theology*, II, pp. 117-122. He writes: "God having created man in his own image in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience, forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil upon the pain of death". p. 117. He admits that this statement does not rest upon any express declaration of the Scriptures." But he argues as follows: "It is, however, a concise and correct mode of asserting a plain Scriptural fact, namely, that God made to Adam a promise suspended upon a condition, and attached to disobedience a certain penalty. (Let us note here, however, that also this "plain Scriptural fact" that God made a promise of eternal life to Adam, again "does not rest upon any express declarations of the Scriptures". H.H.). This is what in Scriptural language is meant by a covenant, and this is all that is meant by the term as here used. Although the word covenant is not used in Genesis, and does not elsewhere, in any clear passage, occur in reference to the transaction there recorded (however, Gen. 2 does not speak of any *transaction* at all, H.H.), yet inasmuch as the plan of salvation is constantly represented as the New Covenant, new, not merely in antithesis to that

made at Sinai, but new in reference to all legal covenants whatever (it would be quite difficult to find Scriptural proof for this statement, H. H.), it is plain that the Bible does represent the arrangement made with Adam as a truly federal transaction. The Scriptures know nothing of any other than two methods of attaining eternal life: the one that which demands perfect obedience, the other that which demands faith. If the latter is called a covenant, the former is declared to be of the same nature." p. 117.

The elements of this "covenant of works", according to Dr. Hodge, are the usual "condition, promise, and penalty". Thus he writes: "The reward promised to Adam on condition of his obedience was life. (1) This is involved in the threatening: 'In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.' It is plain that this involved that he should not die, if he did not eat.' (This may be true, but this is quite different from saying that Adam would attain to "eternal life", if he did not eat, H. H.). (2) This is confirmed by innumerable passages and by the general drift of Scripture, in which it is so plainly and so variously taught, that life was, by the ordinance of God, connected with obedience. 'This do and thou shalt live'. 'The man that doeth them shall live by them.' This is the uniform mode in which the Bible speaks of that law or covenant under which man by the constitution of his nature and by the ordinance of God, was placed. (But again, that man shall live by obedience is quite different from the statement that he should attain to "eternal life", H.H.). (3) As the Scriptures everywhere present God as a judge or moral ruler, it follows of necessity from that representation, that his rational creatures will be dealt with according to the principles of justice. If there be no transgression there will be no punishment. And those who continue holy thereby continue in the favor and fellowship of him whose favor is life, and whose lovingkindness is better than life. (This is true, but still fails to prove that Adam would have attained to a higher state of life and glory, had he not sinned, or that God made such a promise to him, H.H.). (4) And finally, holiness, or as the Apostle expresses it, to be spiritually minded, is life. There can be therefore no doubt, that had Adam continued in his holiness, he would have enjoyed that life which flows from the favour of God." (Nor can there be any doubt that in the state of his original rectitude he did enjoy that life; but the question is: would he have attained to that higher glory which is "eternal life"? H.H.) p. 118.

This life, which was promised to Adam, according to Dr. Hodge, was "the happy, holy, and immortal existence of soul and body". pp. 118-118. Nor would perpetual obedience have been necessary as a *condition* of the covenant. For he writes: "The question whether perpetual, as well as perfect obedience was the condition of the covenant made with Adam, is probably to

be answered in the negative. It seems to be reasonable in itself and plainly implied in the Scriptures that all rational creatures have a definite period of probation. If faithful during that period they are confirmed in their integrity, and no longer exposed to the danger of apostasy. Thus we read of the angels who kept not their first estate, and those who did. Those who remained faithful have continued in holiness and in the favor of God. It is therefore to be inferred that had Adam continued obedient during the period allotted to his probation, neither he nor any of his posterity would have been ever exposed to the danger of sinning." pp. 119-120.

Hence, according to the presentation of Dr. Hodge, there would have come a moment in Adam's life, had he not sinned, when the period of probation was finished, and when the promise would have been fulfilled to him, so that he would have entered into immortality and eternal life. He would have been changed. What he understands by this promised change may be gathered from his commentary on I Cor. 15:45, where Paul compares Adam as a "living soul" with Christ as "the quickening spirit". Writes Dr. Hodge: "From what the apostle, however, here says of the contrast between Adam and Christ; of the earthly and perishable nature of the former as opposed to the immortal, spiritual nature of the latter, it is plain that Adam as originally created was not, as to his body, in that state which would fit him for his immortal existence. After his period of probation was passed, it is to be inferred, that a change in him would have taken place, analogous to that which is to take place in those believers who shall be alive when Christ comes. They shall not die but be changed. Of this change in the constitution of his body, the tree of life was probably constituted the sacrament."

Here, then, we have a rather clear and comprehensive exposition of what is commonly meant by the so-called "covenant of works". We may summarize the various elements as follows. 1. The covenant of works was an arrangement or agreement between God and Adam entered into by God and established by Him after man's creation. It was not given with creation, but an additional arrangement. 2. It was a means to an end. Adam had life, but did not possess the highest, i.e. eternal life. He was free, but his state was not that of highest freedom. He was lapsible. And the covenant of works was arranged as a means for Adam to attain to that higher state of freedom and eternal life. 3. The specific elements of this covenant were a promise (eternal life); a penalty (death); and a condition (perfect obedience). 4. In this covenant Adam was placed on probation. There would come a time, when the period of probation was ended, and when the promise would be fulfilled. 5. At the end of the period of probation Adam would have been translated

into a state of glory, analogous to the change of believers that shall live at the time of Christ's second advent. 6. The fruit of this obedience of Adam would have been reaped by all Adam's posterity.

H. H.

The Person of Jeremiah, the Prophet

Jeremiah was "the son of Hilkiah, of the priests that were in Anathoth, in the land of Benjamin." Anathoth was a city that belonged to the priests. It was situated approximately three miles north-east from Jerusalem. It is not probable, as some have thought, that Jeremiah's father was the same as Hilkiah the highpriest in the time of Josiah—the king that found the lost book of the law. Had this been the case, the fact would undoubtedly have been mentioned. Jeremiah prophesied under Josiah and his four descendants,—the last kings of Judah. He was contemporary with Daniel and Ezekiel, who were prophesying in Babylon, while he was delivering his messages in Jerusalem; also with Habakkuk, Zephaniah and Obadiah. He commenced his prophetic labors in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah. At this time he was but a youth. So, when the call came to him, he was afraid and said, "Ah, Lord God! behold I cannot speak, for I am a child." The Lord replied by giving him a solemn commission, "Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I will send thee, and whatsoever I command thee, thou shalt speak." We do not hear much of Jeremiah during the reign of the godfearing Josiah. Huldah was the prophetess to whom this king turned, whenever he had occasion to inquire of the Lord. It cannot be doubted, however, that Jeremiah supported by every method in his power the great reformation which followed the finding of the book of the law. It is certain that he delivered some of his most pungent reproofs at this time—reproofs that, in all likelihood, form the first twelve chapters of his prophecy. It is not strange that he should utter such reproofs, while the reformation under Josiah was still in progress; for he understood that the reformation was external and that with the removal of the constraint of kingly authority the nation would revert into its old idolatries.

Jehoahaz, Josiah's son and immediate successor, reigned but three months. When he was deposed by Pharaoh Necho, and carried into Egypt, Jeremiah calls upon the people to bemoan his captivity, the reason being that he shall see his land no more but shall die in the place whither they have led him captive. (chap. 32:10-12).

Jeremiah was not a little affected by the events of Jehoiakim's reign. In the weakness and disorder which characterized this reign, the work of Jeremiah became more prominent and difficult. The people were divided in their preference between the king of Egypt and the king of Babylon. Some were for the people's placing themselves under the wing of the king of Egypt; while others insisted that the only safety of the people lay in their accepting the supremacy of the Chaldeans. Jeremiah was of this conviction. By inspiration he discerned the signs of the times. It was revealed to him that the king of Babylon was destined to prevail over all resistance as God's instrument, doing His work. This he also proclaimed and thereby exposed himself to the charge of treachery. False prophets there were, who set their word—a word of which they, too, said that it had been put in their mouth by the Lord—against his. So intense was the feeling against him, that he would have been put to death, had not his friend Ahikim, the son of Shaphan, interposed for his rescue. All that he could do was to commit his cause to God and wait for the fulfilment of his prophecy.

In the fourth year of Jehoiakim, the battle of Carchemish put an end to the hopes of the Egyptian party. The Egyptian army under Necho was defeated with great slaughter by Nebuchadnezzar.

At this time Jeremiah was directed by the Lord to commit his prophecies to writing, which he did; and Baruch, his scribe, was sent to read them to the people. The king, upon hearing of it, was furious. He gave vent to his rage by cutting the prophetic writing in pieces, and burning it in the fire. But the prophecies were re-written, and severe denunciations were added respecting the impious king.

As the danger from the Chaldeans became more threatening, the persecution of Jeremiah became more severe. The people cursed him and sought his life. But he went on with his work, reproving king, and princes, and people, and warning all of the approaching destruction.

Jehoiachin, the king, was slain by the Chaldeans, and his body was left, for a time, without burial, as Jeremiah had predicted. Jehoiachin, his son, reigned in his stead; but he was soon taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, and was sent to Babylon in fulfilment of another of Jeremiah's predictions. His successor was Zedekiah, the son of Josiah and the last to sit upon the throne of Judah. If Jehoiachin had come to the throne as vassal of Egypt; Zedekiah was appointed by Nebuchadnezzar, and reigned under him. This perhaps accounts for it that, in distinction from Jehoiakim, he respected the prophet, feared him, and sought his advice; but he was the mere shadow of a king, powerless against his own counsellors, and in his reign the sufferings of Jeremiah were greater than ever be-

fore. Thinking he could no longer do any good, he at one time tried to escape from Jerusalem, and take refuge in his own town of Anathoth. Learning of his intention, his enemies accused him of intending to desert to the Chaldeans; and despite his avowal of his innocence, he was thrown into prison. The king would have released him, but the princes conspired against him, and he was plunged into a horrible dungeon. From this he was delivered by Ebed-Melek, an Ethiopian eunuch, and restored to his former place in the prison, where he had the company of Baruch the scribe.

Soon after, the city was taken by the Chaldeans; the temple was burned; the king and his princes went into captivity. Jeremiah was taken from prison, and permitted to have his choice either to go to Babylon, where he would have been held in high honour in the king's court, or to remain with his own people, that is, with as many of them as were not deported. He chose the latter; and Gedeliah, the son of his old friend Ahikim, was made governor over them that remained.

There was now a brief period of peace; but this was soon broken by the murder of Gedeliah by Ishmael, who was one of the former princes of Judah. Failing to establish his authority over the remnant of the Jews, he escaped and fled to the Ammonites. Johanan, the son of Kareah, now took charge of the people. Jeremiah counselled them in the name of the Lord to remain in the land, and be subject to the king of Babylon, but they rejected his counsel, and went into Egypt, taking the prophet with them. And here his words were sharper and stronger than ever before. He predicts the speedy conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar; utters a solemn protest against the idolatry of the Jews; and this is the last we hear of him. In all likelihood he died in Egypt.

So much on the more outward relation of Jeremiah. We must now concentrate on his prophecy as such. Because, as has already been explained, in connection with Isaiah, the discourse of the prophet reveals the man, reflects his individuality, bespeaks his natural and spiritual endowments. And it is in the man Jeremiah, that we are now interested.

There is still one remark that must be made before we turn to his prophecy. No two prophets were alike. Hence no two discourses are alike. Yet essentially, of course, the prophecies of all the prophets are the same. The reason is that all true prophecy is gospel—the gospel of Christ—a good message concerning the promise, the revelation of God concerning the redemption of His people, and thus turns on the same great themes, namely, sin, judgment and redemption through judgment. If now these discourses are at once so many living testimonies of the men through the agency of whom God brought these scriptures into being, then it follows, that in looking in the prophecy of Jere-

miah for Jeremiah, we must not expect to find a man that, as to his natural and spiritual endowments, differs greatly from Isaiah and from the rest of the prophets. All were men who loved God fervently and His people deeply and tenderly. All were men of courage. When the truth was at stake, all without exception were stern, severe and uncompromising. All, as they appear in their respective discourses, were men of true vision, who saw the promises afar off, “and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” Yet each prophet, as God's creature, was a distinct personality.

Let us now turn to Jeremiah's discourse in search of the man. One characteristic of the prophecy of Jeremiah is the prominence in it of the elements of sin and judgment and the relative inconspicuousness of the element of salvation. With the exception of four chapters (30-34) the entire discourse is formed of words of rebuke and warning, threatenings, denunciations of sin, predictions of judgments, and narration of doleful events, descriptions of Israel's evil-doings, calls to repentance, and lamentations.

The prophecy divides into an introduction, chap. 1; two main divisions, chapters 11-45 and 46-51 respectively; and the conclusion chap. 52. The first 29 chapters of the first division divides into nine discourses, each of which deals with a distinct theme. They are: 1) The apostasy of the nation; its wickedness, spiritual degeneration and debauchery. The Lord planted His people a noble vine, wholly a right seed; but they are turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto God. They cannot say that they are not polluted, chap. 11. 2) The impending judgments of God upon the nation for its perverseness—judgments to take a definite shape in the captivity of Judah and the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity, chapters 3, 4. 3) In this discourse the prophet calls for true repentance. He rejects the vain confidence of the people, threatens them for their idolatry, rejects the sacrifices of the disobedient, and exhorteth them to mourn for their abominations in Tophet, chap. 7-10. 4) The prophet proclaims God's covenant, rebukes the people's disobedience thereof, and prophesies evils to come upon them. He lamenteth the spoliation of the Lord's heritage and directs to the penitent a promise of salvation, chapters 11-13. 5) A grievous famine causes the prophet to intercede for his people; but the Lord will not be entreated for them. The lying prophets are no excuse to them. He again prays for them. He foretells the utter rejection and manifold judgments of the apostate people. Under the type of abstaining from marriage he foresheweth utter destruction of the nation and thereupon their return from captivity, which shall be stranger than their deliverance from Egypt. He foretells the captivity of Judah

for her sin, pronounces trust in man cursed and trust in the Lord blessed, and sets forth the salvation of God, chapters 14-17, 18. 6) The Sabbath to be kept holy chapters 17, 19-27. 7) Under the symbol of a potter the prophet shows God's absolute right to dispose of the nations as He wills. Under the symbol of breaking a potter's vessel he foreshews the desolation of the of the Jews for their sins. Pashur, smiting Jeremiah receives a new name and a fearful doom. The prophet complains of the contempt in which he is held by the people, of the treacherous dealing which they afford him and curses the day wherein he was born, chapters 18-20. 8) Zedekiah enquires of Jeremiah concerning the war. The prophet foretells a hard siege and a miserable captivity. He counsels the people to fall to the Chaldeans and upbraids the king's house, exhorteth to repentance, pronounces judgment upon Shallum, Jehoiakim and Coniah, prophesies a restoration of the scattered flock, their salvation by Christ and His rule over them, enveighs against the false prophets and the mockers of the true servants of God. Then, under the figure of good and bad figs he foreshews the restoration of them that were in captivity and the desolation of Zedekiah and the rest, chapters 21-24. 9) Jeremiah reproves the Jews' disobedience, foretells the seventy years captivity and the destruction of Babylon, foreshews the destruction of the nations, and exhorts to repentance. He is now apprehended by the wicked Jews, who want to put him to death. He is quit in judgment by the example of the prophets Micah and Urijah and saved from death by the hand of Ahikim. Under the figure of bonds and yokes he prophesies the subduing of the neighbor kings unto Nebuchadnezzar, exhorts them to yield and not to believe the false prophets and foretells that the remnant of the vessels shall be carried to Babylon. Hananiah utters a false prophecy. Jeremiah shews that the events will declare who are the true prophets, and foretells Hananiah's death. The prophet now sent a letter to the captives in Babylon, exhorting them to be quiet there and not to believe the dreams of the false prophets. He assures them that they shall return with grace after seventy years, foretellethe the destruction of the rest for their disobedience and shews the fearful end of Ahab, Zedekiah and Shemaiah, chapters 25-29.

Now follow the tenth and the eleventh discourses, rightly called the book of consolation and including chapters 30-33. The message contained in these two discourses is to the following effect: The Lord will bring the captivity of His people; Jacob shall be saved from afar off and be restored to his former glory by the Lord, whose love for His people is everlasting. The Lord, further, will have mercy on Ephraim; He will watch over Israel to build and to plant him. He will make a new covenant with His people to consist in His putting His laws in their heart. Israel can no

more cease to be a nation than the ordinance of heaven can depart from Him. In those days the Lord shall cause the branch of righteousness to grow up in David. He shall execute judgment in the land.

Chapters 34 and 35 form an appendix to the above collection of discourses in which is narrated the disobedience of Israel in contrast to the obedience of the Rechabites to their father.

Chapters 36 to 44 form a historical presentation of the most important events from the fourth year of Jehoiakim to the close of the prophet's ministry, including the promise made to Baruch.

The second main division includes the remaining chapters of Jeremiah's prophecy—46-52. This section is comprised of nine distinct discourses, foretelling the downfall of as many nations, namely, of Egypt, the Philistines, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Damascus, the Arabians, Elam, Babylon.

Such then is the substance of the prophecy of Jeremiah. What it brings out is that in this discourse the element of judgment is much more conspicuous than the element of salvation. From this, however, it must not be concluded that Jeremiah, in distinction from, let us say, Isaiah, was a man outstandingly stern, severe, forbidding, a man who welcomed strife and debate. Nothing could be further from the truth. In his prophecy he stands before us as a man conspicuously timid and sensitive, further as a man capable of great sympathy and deep feeling and thus of great sorrow. In his prophecy we see him, moreover, a man of unwavering faith in Jehovah and thus of absolute and overwhelming strength. Let us shew this.

Jeremiah was naturally timid, shy, unobtrusive, retiring. His timidity, or was it his simplicity, is seen in the way in which he shrank from his calling. Said he, when the call came to him, "Ah, Lord God! I cannot speak, for I am but a child" (Isa. 1:6).

Jeremiah was a sensitive soul. As constrained by the love of God and his people, he without reserve, proclaimed the dreadful word that the Lord put into his mouth, disclosed to the people what would befall them, if, instead of turning to the Lord, they continued to put their trust in the arm of flesh. He persistently counselled the leaders and the people to obey God through their falling to the Chaldeans. He told them that, doing so, they would live and not perish by the sword of the Chaldeans. But the people and their leaders would not hearken. They were for falling to the Egyptians and with their help resisting the invasion of the Chaldeans. Because of this clash between Jeremiah's foreign policy and their's, they tried to silence the prophet. Pashur, the son of the high priest, smote him and put him in the stocks. At another time they demanded of the king that he have the prophet put to death; "for," said they, "he weak-

eneth the hands of the men of war that remain in the city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words unto them: for this man seeketh not the welfare of the people, but their hurt." The offence of Jeremiah was great in the eyes of these leaders. They mocked him and clamored for his death. And how Jeremiah—this sensitive and naturally timid man—suffered under their attack. "Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth!" (15:10). At one time he actually resolves to keep silence. "Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name" (20:9). But he could not keep silence for long, because the word of God was in his heart as a burning fire shut up in his bones, and he was weary of forebearing, and could not stay, for he heard the defaming of many, and fear on every side (9:10). At another time the vexation of the prophet was so great, that as Job, he cursed the day of his birth, "Cursed be the day wherein I was born; let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed. Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father, saying, A man child is born unto thee; making him very glad. And let that man be as the cities that the Lord overthrew and repented not; and let him hear the cry in the morning and the shout at noontide; because he slew me not in the womb; or that my mother might have been my grave and her womb be always great with me. Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to set labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame" (20:14-18).

In his discourse Jeremiah reveals himself as a man capable of a great sorrow. The time during which he was Jehovah's spokesman, were days of darkness and disaster. The national movement was downward, the people sinking ever lower. The people rushed headlong to their final calamity. How the knowledge of what his people—a people whom he loved with the tenderness of a woman—were to suffer and the spectacle of this suffering, tore at his heart, "My bowels, my bowels!" he would cry, "I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled; suddenly are my tents spoiled" (chap. 5:19ff). O, that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of mine people" (9:1). Such are the lamentations with which he would interrupt his preachments of judgment and doom. And how he could plead with his people to repent in order that they might be saved. "Then said I, Ah, Lord God! surely thou hast greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying ye shall have peace; whereas the sword reacheth unto the soul. At that time shall it be said to this people and

to Jerusalem, A dry wind of the high places in the wilderness toward the daughter of my people, not to fan nor to cleanse, even a full wind from those places shall come unto me: now also will I give sentence against them. Behold, he shall come up as clouds, and his chariots shall be as a whirlwind: the horses are swifter than eagles. Woe unto us for we are spoiled. O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved" (4:10-14).

The prophet's sympathy, timidity and natural sensitiveness, did not prevent him from declaring the full counsel of God. He declared this counsel, the word that the Lord put into his mouth, with absolute courage—a courage the secret of which was his faith in God and the confident hope of a blessed future for penitent, the remnant left of the sword. The prophet believed in the restoration of Israel, "At the same time, saith the Lord, Will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people. Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel: thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt again go forth in the dances of them that make merry."

Jeremiah in his lamentings carries us back in our minds to the wailings, the expressions of disconsolate grief, of the man Job. But there is this difference to be noticed: Job's sorrows were caused by the hand of God resting heavily upon him personally. The cause of Jeremiah's great sorrow was the hand of God resting heavily upon the church. Jeremiah in his sorrow is to be regarded not as standing solitary but as one with the church. He was brought into being and prepared by his Maker to give expression to the sorrow in tribulation and confident hope of the church of his day and of all time. This was his peculiar function in distinction from all the other prophets of God. It was precisely through the agency of a man constituted as was he that the Lord gave to His church the discourse that bears his name and the Lamentations.

G. M. O.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On the 15th of December, 1941, our beloved parents

MR. and MRS. G. BLANKESPOOR—Driesen

celebrated their thirtieth wedding anniversary. Truly we must say: "Bless the Lord O my soul, and forget not all His benefits". May God's richest blessings also rest upon them in the future.

The children:

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Blankespoor
Rev. and Mrs. John Blankespoor
Henrietta
Rosella
and 4 grandchildren.

Orange City, Iowa.

Handklappend Gode Juichen

(Psalm 47)

Toen ik voor 't eerst een groote vergadering van heilsoldaten bijwoonde ben ik wel eenigszins geschrokken. Misschien is schrikken het juiste woord niet om mijn gewaarwordingen uit te drukken bij die gelegenheid. Ik was verbaasd, verwonderd, ook mengde zich afkeer in mijn gevoelens over hetgeen ik zag en hoorde. 't Was zoo geheel anders dan ik gewoon was in die stemmige Godsdienstoefening der dorpskerk waar ik van mijn jeugd af aan op moest gaan. 't Was in den zomer van 1914 in London. Er was een groot congress daar van het zoogenaamde Leger des Heils.

En die afkeer werd vooral geboren vanwege het luide handklappen der heilsoldaten. Zij liepen in een groote cirkel al zingende en handklappende. 't Was of alles in mij schreeuwen wilde tegen zulk vertoon. Ik was het zoo geheel anders gewend. Alles wat betrekking had op den dienst van dien grooten God moest gedaan in deftige stemmigheid en vredige orde en netheid. Als wij jongens den drempel van het Godshuis naderden daalde onze luidruchtige stemmen en waren we in het Huis stil als het graf. De eenige stem die zich dáár verhief was die des predikanten. En ook het langzame, zeer uitgerekte langzame van het psalmgezing. Doch alles ademde deftigheid, stemmigheid, netheid.

Doch, foei, hoe ruw klonk dat schelle stemgeluid der zingenden en dan dat handgeklap. Er was een glimlach op 't gelaat der soldaten onder 't zingen, neen, schreeuwen.

Ik keerde me af en ging terug naar mijn kosthuis.

Later heb ik hier vaak om gedacht.

En nu ik schrijven moet over den 47sten psalm kwam me die heele geschiedenis weer te binnen.

Er staat boven aan, dat alle menschen moeten handklappen in 't betuigen dat God de Koning is der gansche aarde.

Juicht, o volken, juicht;
Handklapt, en betuigt
Onzen God uw vreugd;
Weest tezaam verheugd;
Zingt des Hoogsten eer;
Buigt U voor Hem neer.
Alles ducht Zijn kracht;
Alles vreest Zijn macht;
Zijne majesteit
Maakt haar heerlijkheid,
Overt 't rond der aard,
Wijs en zijd vermaard.

Ja, en dat versje moet men toch ook vaak in Sassenheim gezongen hebben?!

Moeten we onzen eeredienst niet ietwat veranderen?

Zou het misschien beter wezen dat in elk geval de kerkeraad zoo nu en dan het zingen begeleidt met handklappen?

Ik denk dat het heel wat zou nemen om zulk een verandering er door te krijgen op onze gemeente vergaderingen.

Doch 't behoeft niet.

Ten slotte is het handklappen niet meer dan een uitwendige openbaring van 't geen in 't harte woont.

Of dan het volk Israels niet gehandkapt heeft? Ja, zeker, dat hebben ze wel degelijk. Ik ben er van overtuigd, dat als een gereformeerd ouderling uit mijn dorp er bij geweest was bij de godsdienstoefeningen in Israel, hij beslist niet op zijn gemak zou geweest zijn. Men had veel meer dingen en gewoonten in die godsdienstoefeningen waar zulk een ouderling zich aan zou ge-ergerd hebben. Het heeft een heele tijd genomen vooraleer men eenig soort van muziek toeliet in den eeredienst. En nog zijn er kerken waar men zonder orgel zingt. Sommige ouden heb ik het hooren zeggen: alle muziek is uit den booze.

Geleerden hebben ons verteld, dat zulk verschil in den eeredienst ligt aan den volksaard. Wij, noordelijk volk, zijn kalmer dan de oosterlingen. Daar ligt het verschil.

En wat dat handklappen van die heilsoldaten betreft geloof ik, dat het een opgeschroefde, onnatuurlijke vertooning is. Ik heb er nog een afkeer van. Het stemmige van onzen eeredienst bevalt mij veel beter.

Wat moeten we dan doen met dat handklappen van Psalm 47? Wel geliefden, gij doet dat ook. Doch gij doet het in 't hart. Daar juicht ge ook. Daar juicht ge, terwijl uw mond zich plooit in 't rustige, kalme, ongeëvenaard schoone psalm gezang, hetwelk de hollandsche diensten zoo aantrekkelijk maakt. Ge zijt wel kalm uitwendiglijk, doch in 't harte kan het soms bruischen en omstuimiglijk, verrukkelijk kwinkelen van geestelijk genot en vreugde.

Laat men den Heere maar voorstellen in de predikatie als de groote Held die neerkwam om al de vijanden van Gods volk te verdoen. Laat men maar getuigen van Zijn majesteit en heerlijkheid en groote liefde voor Israel. Laat men maar vooruitgrijpen naar dien heuglijken dag wanneer de Heere op Zijn troon gezeten zal uitgeroepen worden door al wat leeft als de groote en rechtvaardige Heerscher. Doet men dat, dan loopt ook Uw hart over en terwijl Uw lippen bevend prevelen: En gij, mijn ziel, looft gij Hem boven al! is er een vreugdegeroep en jubel des geluks in 't volle hart, hetwelk schoon past bij de troongeeften van God. Uw uiterlijk mag kalm en deftig zijn; Uw binnenste huppelt en handklapt, jubelt en kwinkelt.

Ik kan niet met zekerheid aantoonen wanneer of bij welke gelegenheid dit lied gedicht is. Velen zijn er die het verbinden aan de groote overwinning van Josafat over de kinderen van Moab, van Ammon en de

anderen die Jeruzalem en Juda bedreigden. De Heere was gekomen om voor Zijn volk te strijden. Met nadruk had de Heere door Zijn profeet het aan Juda laten verkondigen: Gij zult stille zijn en de Heere zal voor U strijden. Wel, dat was gebeurd. Het malle, goddelooze volk had elkaar vernield. Hun zwaard verteederde den bondgenoot en Juda had drie dagen noodig om den rijken buit te verzamelen.

Toen was men aan 't zingen gegaan. En men zegt, dat deze psalm die groote overwinning bezingt.

't Kan wel waar zijn. Doch ik weet het niet met zekerheid.

Wat we echter wel weten is, dat deze psalm gedurig weer vervuld wordt. En dat hij centraal vervuld is toen Jezus uit het graf verrees om straks ten hemel te varen. Als de Nieuw Testamentische gemeente haar Hemelvaartsdag herdenkt zingt ze meestal het 3de vers van dit lied: God vaart voor het oog, met gejuich omhoog. . . .

Zoo kan men ook het universeele karakter van dit lied verstaan. God is hier maar niet de Held van Israel, doch Hij is de groote Koning der aarde en alle volken en natiën worden toegeroepen om zich toch te buigen voor dien God. Meer nog. Alle volken worden voorgesteld als daadwerkelijk den Heere lovend.

De Heere, de Allerhoogste, is vreeselijk.

Past dat nu toe op de volle openbaring van God en dan ziet ge Jezus, met kracht en macht bekleed om alle vijanden ter neder te werpen. Vers 6 vertelt ons dat God met gejuich omhoog vaart. Welnu, dat veronderstelt dat Hij eerst is neergekomen. En dat nederkomen en dat strijden voor Zijn volk, voor de verovering van alle volken, is de vreeselijke God.

Zoo is Uw Jezus neergekomen eerst. En de vijanden waren de duivel, de zonde en schuld van Zijn volk en alle vijandschap en haat der wereld. Die vijanden hebben het allereerst ervaren dat Hij de vreeselijke is. De duivel heeft Hij overwonnen, want Hij vermorzelde zijn kop. De wereld werd door Hem overwonnen in de duisterste ure der kerk. Dat deed Hij toen Hij aan 't kruis hing. Daar heeft Hij alle machten en krachten en overheden uitgetogen en publiekelijk te schande gemaakt. Het voorspel van den grooten oordeelsdag. En de zonde en schuld van Sion heeft Hij daar vernield.

En toen dat alles afgelopen was is God met gejuich omhoog gevaren. Voor het oog Zijner jongeren.

Wilt ge, psalm 47 is ten volle vervuld op den Olijfberg toen Jezus voor het oog Zijner jongeren naar den hemel ging. En Zijn handen waren zegenende over Zijn kerk uitgebreid.

En nu moet gij allen ook psalm 47 zingen, want die handen zijn nog uitgebreid over U. De overwinning is volkomen. Vergeet nu maar Ammon en Moab en ziet den duivel overwonnen, de wereld veroordeeld en

Uw vleesch aan het kruis gestorven. Jezus is die groote Held van psalm 47.

Daarom jubelt de dichter: Handklapt alle gij volken! Het Evangelie is universeel.

In vers vier wordt ons gezegd, dat Hij alle volken en natiën onder onze voeten bracht.

Gedeeltelijk is dat nu alreede het geval. Overal waar de goddelooze wereld met ons in aanraking komt en overal waar zij de genade Gods zien in de kerk van Christus, daar zegt hun hart: Zij zijn glorieus en schoon. Zij zijn veel beter dan wij. Wij schuimen niet dan schande op. Wij hebben verderf in onze wegen, doch zij vertoonen de heerlijkheid Gods. Hun deugd schittert ons in 't oog. Doch wij haten het en zij zullen sterven.

Doch Jezus leeft en wij zullen leven.

En die aanvankelijk onderwerping in 't diepe hart, oordeel en geweten der goddeloozen zal voleind worden in den dag der dagen. Mozes jubelde van dien dag, zeggende: "En gij, o Israel, zult op hunne hoogten treden!"

Handklapt en getuigt! Want Uw toekomst is aan 't dagen, o volk van God!

Van die toekomst zegt dit lied, dat de Heere onze erfenis voor ons verkoren heeft. En die erfenis is de heerlijkheid van Jakob dien Hij beminde.

Wat dit beteekenen mag?

Vraagt het aan Petrus en hij zal het U vertellen. Die Godsman heeft gejubeld van de erfenis die in de hemelen bewaard wordt voor U. Hij zeide van haar, dat zij onverderfelijk, onbevlekkelijk en onverwelkelijk is. Paulus zag een heerlijkheid als der fonkelende starren in diep blauwe lucht. Sommige schitteren als der zon en der maan..

De heerlijkheid van Jakob ligt in de liefde Gods. De heerlijkheid van Jakob dien Hij beminde. Die beminning is zijn heerlijkheid. Heerlijkheid is schittering van deugd. En de voornaamste dier deugden is het vlammen der Goddelijke liefde. Moogt ge in die vlammen wandelen, mijn broeder, dan zijt ge heerlijk. Ziet ge die heerlijkheid van Jakob, die erfenis der heiligen in 't licht dat van Zijn aanzicht straalt, dan zal Uw vreugd ten hoogste toppunt stijgen. Ik ben zelfs geneigd om het letterlijke handklappen voor lief te nemen.

In elk geval, we moesten luisteren naar een der volgende verzen en niet moede worden wanneer we opgewekt worden tot viermaal toe om Gode te psalmzingen. Leest het maar in vers 7. Ik zal het afschrijven. Er zit de klank van den hemel in dat vers. "Psalmzingt Gode, psalmzingt, psalmzingt onzen Koning, psalmzingt".

Met den heilsoldaat ben ik begonnen. Ik zal ook met hem eindigen.

Ik heb toen gezegd, dat ik met een soort van afkeer

mij van zijn handklappen afwendde. Ik zal dat nu verklaren.

Let dan op het 8ste vers. Daar staat: "Want God is een Koning der gansche aarde; psalmzingt met een onderwijzing". Eigenlijk moest dat vertaald worden: "Psalmzingt met verstand of met wijsheid". Want dat is de gedachte.

En de beteekenis is, dat ge wel moet psalmzingen, doch laat het toch als 't u blijft geen ijdel geluid maken zijn. Want dat is het geval met die heilsoldaat. Dat is duidelijk uit hunne werken. Ze maken veel geluid, doch het is niet met wijsheid.

Met verstand en met wijsheid moet ge zingen, jubelen, handklappen.

Dat wil zeggen, dat al zulk geluid *waar* moet zijn. Het moet naar waarheid vertolken de groote vreugde die daadwerkelijk in Uw hart woont. En geen vertoon voor de menschen.

'k Denk aan mijn Heiland die zeide: Weent en klaagt en schreit in het verborgene en als ge naar buiten komt wascht U en zalft U. In elk geval, doe geen dier dingen om van de menschen gezien te worden. Het handklappen van die soldaten in London was voor mij bestemd. Ik heb het instinktmatig gevoeld en heb mij afgewend met afkeer.

Ten slotte, psalmzingt Gode, gij volk!

Het is het begin van de ervaring des hemels op aarde.

Uw popelend hart is 't vooruitgrijpen naar hemelsch vreudegeroep en lofzang.

Dan zullen de dorpelen der deuren bewogen worden en het Huis vervuld worden met rook. (Jesaja 6).

G. V.

IN MEMORIAM

On November 20, 1941, it pleased our heavenly Father to take from our midst our beloved daughter, sister and friend,

FANNY WASSINK

at the age of 27 years and 1 month.

Although our hearts are deeply wounded, we are comforted by the knowledge that her life was Christ and her death is therefore gain, for she now rejoices in eternal glory with her Lord and Saviour.

Mr. and Mrs. John Wassink
Minnie
Janet
Rose
Henry
Alvan Van Zee

Russy, Iowa.

Saul En Endor

I Samuel 28.

De geschiedenis van Saul, Koning van Israel, is één der meest bedroevende en, met het oog op haar einde, één der moeilijkste.

Die moeilijkheden vermenigvuldigen zich naar mate we het einde van Saul trachten in te denken. Zoolang de oude Samuel leefde, scheen alles nog zijn geregeld beloop te hebben in Israel, doch na diens dood ontwikkelt de zonde van den Koning zich zeer snel en vliegt hij met rassche schreden het verderf tegen.

Dit laat zich gemakkelijk verklaren, wanneer we bedenken, dat Samuel's persoonlijkheid en sterkte invloed had op Koning en volk en het uit de geschiedenis blijkt, dat Saul zich de mindere (indien niet de minderwaardige) gevoelde tegenover deze Richter-Profeet des Heeren.

Daaruit alleen kunnen we verklaren, de vrees van Saul voor den grijzen Samuel. Het leven dier beiden, nadat Saul tot Koning verheven was, ligt antithetisch door elkander gestrengeld. Deze beiden hadden dan ook in geen enkel opzicht iets met elkander gemeen. Saul was goddeloos en Samuel vreesde God.

Saul was, wat zijn karakter betreft, een bang mensch, indien niet een lafaard en zwakkeling, gelijk alreeds bleek aan het begin van zijn regeering, in zijn jaloesie tegenover David en in het zich wenden tot de vrouw te Endor.

Hij was dan ook geen man, die op eigen beenen stond, noch ook een diep besef van verantwoordelijkheid bezat. Dat zwakke in zijn karakter komt alreeds tot openbaring aan het begin, toen hij tot het koningschap geroepen werd. Zich te verbergen verklaren we alleen uit het feit, dat de vrees van niet in staat te zijn het koningschap uit te voeren, zal dadelijk een ieder opvallen en daaraan waagt hij zich liever niet. En daarom is dit zich verbergen niet, gelijk wel eens gezegd werd, een uitdrukking van vroomheid, doch een openbaring van eigen-liefde. Het ging van het begin tot aan het einde enkel en alleen om den persoon van Saul.

Wilt ge Saul verstaan, dan moet ge hem vergelijken met David.

Dat verschil tusschen Samuel en Saul zien we alreeds te Gilgal. Saul gevoelde wel, dat hij geduldig moest wachten op Samuel's komst. Daarom wacht hij dan ook zeven dagen, wordt ongeduldig, omdat hij ongeloovig is, gaat tegen het uitdrukkelijk bevel des Heeren in en bracht met eigen hand den Heere het offer. Ziet nu wat hij doet. Zegenend gaat hij Samuel te gemoet, als een doekje voor het bloeden, doch de geestelijke gesteldheid treedt aan het licht, als Samuel, in den Naam des Heeren, hem zijn verwerping van het koningschap aankondigt.

En zoo gaat het maar steeds voort.

Denk slechts aan het roekeloos eedzweren, geheel zonder eenige aanleiding of noodzaak, waardoor Saul, had de Heere door middel van het volk niet tusschen beiden getreden, zijn zoon Jonathan zou hebben vermoord.

Vervolgens, als Saul van den Heere de opdracht ontvangt, om de Amelekieten met alles wat zij bezitten te verdelgen, dan, na verkregene overwinning, betoont hij helder en klaar zich niet absoluut gebonden te weten aan de ordinantien Gods. Hij kruipt voor Samuel en treedt dezen tegemoet met het "Gezegend zijt gij den Heere, ik heb des Heeren Woord bevestigd". Als Samuel hem dan vraagt, wat is dat toch voor een stem der schapen en der runderen?, dan is zijn ontwijkend antwoord, waardoor hij zichzelven tracht te verschoonen, ja, ziet u, het is wel eigenlijk niet geheel en al in orde, maar die beste schapen en koeien heeft *het volk* zich geëigend en wil er nu den Heere een offer mee bereiden.

Hij, die als Koning alleen verantwoordelijk is (hij had de opdracht daartoe duidelijk ontvangen), tracht door een noodleugen, met een schijn van vroomheid, zichzelven te redden en er tenslotte het volk aan te wagen. En het wordt er voorwaar niet beter op, als hij het doel van Israels ongehoorzaamheid nogmaals wil verschoonen door op het te brengen offer te wijzen en dan zich verder te rechtvaardigen, door te beweren: "Ik heb immers naar de stem des Heeren gehoord en heb gewandeld op den weg op denwelken mij de Heere gezonden heeft; en ik heb Agag, den koning der Amelekieten, medegebracht, maar de Amalekieten heb ik verbannen"? En hoe die beiden elkanders gezelschap op prijs stelden blijkt wel uit het woord van Agag tot Samuel, nadat dezen tot Samuel gebracht was en geheel tevreden met zijn verhouding tegenover Saul, het blijde uitsprak, "Voorwaar de bitterheid des doods is geweken". Vrees voor menschen, in plaats van vreeze Gods, was de groote en grove zonde van Saul. En menschenvrees vindt altijd weer haar oorzaak in eigen liefde, ten koste van alles.

Eigenliefde, ten koste van al het andere, het oordeel Gods inclus.

Daartoe vraag hij dan ook Samuel, of hij zich niet wil voordoen op een wijze en door een houding, waardoor het voor het volk verborgen bleef, dat de Heere hem had verworpen. Ja, dan wil Saul ook nog wel tot den Heere bidden, indien Samuel door zijn tegenwoordigheid, hem Saul, voor de oudsten des volks en voor Israel wil eeren. Hem wil eeren, den grooten en zichzelven beminnenden mensch, in wien het geestelijk ideaal, om God alleen alle eer te geven, nooit tot uiting kwam. Samuel dient dan ook een verdere bestraffing toe, als openbaring van Gods heilig misnoegen, als hij den goddeloozen Agag in stukken houwte en aan het Gode oonteerd "vriendje spelen" tusschen

die beiden een einde maakt. Aldus werd op duidelijke wijze uitgebracht, wat het beteekende, dat gehoorzaamheid beter is en Gode alleen aangenaam, in plaats van het eigenwillig gedrag van den Koning en het offer van eigenwillige godsdienst.

Dat Saul altijd en enkel en alleen aan Saul dacht, voor Saul zorgde en over Saul bezorgd was, blijkt vooral uit zijn diepgewortelde haat tegenover David. De vraag mag gedaan, maar stond die haat tegenover David werkelijk in verband met Saul's zonde van eigenliefde? We antwoorden, ja! Niet, gelijk sommigen gemeend hebben, dat David in den strijd tegen Goliath, meerdere eere zou hebben ontvangen dan Saul. Was er niet meer geweest, dan zou dat niet zoo'n vaart geloopt hebben. Het zou alles van voorbijgaanden aard zijn geweest. Die lof hield spoedig op en gelijk het zoo vaak gebeurt, men had die heldendaad spoedig vergeten. Er was nog verderen strijd te voeren, want met Goliath was de strijd tegen de vijanden pas begonnen. Trouwens, Saul's geest was voor dien tijd al verward door den boozen geest, die hem verschrikte. Dit gelijk we zeiden geschiede niet in verband met de overwinning op Goliath, dat kwam later pas.

Dat hij dan toch met de spies David tracht te doorboren en aldus te vermoorden is niet zoo moeilijk te zien, de Heere, Die van Saul was geweken, was met David. De verhouding tusschen die beiden was dan ook, dat de één wandelde voorzichtiglijk met God, de ander vergramde zich op dien, die God vreest. Om een eenvoudige schaapherder rondom hem te zien, die een booze geest wat moet wegdrijven door gewijde zang, is voor Saul het teken, dat Jehova met dien harpspeler is en dat heeft hem met wrevel vervuld. Het had zeker uitgelopen op moord van den rechtvaardige, indien de Heere het niet had verhoed.

In de tweede plaats, het woord van Samuel "De Heere heeft u verworpen", en "De Heere heeft heden het koninkrijk Israels van u afgescheurd, en heeft het uwen naaste gegeven, die beter is dan gij", zijn juist het middel, om een toch al verwarde en verduisterde ziel een gemakkelijke prooi te maken van een boozen geest, die die beiden aanblaast en tot booze daden aanpoort, alsmede, om daarom ook allen te verdenken, die zich in de onmiddellijke nabijheid bevinden.

Argwaan, wantrouwen, bitterheid, verdenking, laatlunkendheid, zij zijn allen aanwezig in de ziel van den man, die Israels eerste Koning was. En schoon Saul, op het oogenblik dat David werd geroepen om voor hem op de harp te spelen, niet absoluut zeker was, *wie* zijn opvolger zou worden, wel *wist* hij, dat er iemand in Israel nu alreeds aanwezig was, die wellicht de opdracht had ontvangen, zijn opvolger te zijn. En die iemand, naar het woord van Samuel, was *beter* dan hij.

Ziet hij dan David voor zich, de man waarvan hij later zelf moest getuigen, ge zijt rechtvaardiger dan

ik, en die voor den Heere voorzichtiglijk wandelde aan het hof des konings, dan laat het zich wel verstaan, waarom ook David het voorwerp wordt van Sauls wantrouwen, wangunst, bitterheid en wraak.

Nu is het opmerkelijk, dat dit juist verergerde, nadat Samuel gestorven was. Was Samuels invloed op Saul dan niet van verrekenden aard? We meenen van wel. Eigenlijk was er niemand in Israel voor wien Saul zoo bang was als voor Samuel. Daar was allereerst het feit, dat Samuel ten uiterste toe getracht heeft, den koning te wijzen en te bewegen om taak en roeping te vervullen naar het bevel des Heeren. En schoon Samuel nooit week, om Saul met het Woord des Heeren te vermanen, ja, zeer streng den Koning zijn zonden voorhield, zonder iets daarvan te verheelen, Saul wist en gevoelde, het is om mijns bestwil.

Niet Sauls val, doch zijn welvaren, maar dan in den weg des Heeren, had Samuel op het oog. En Saul wist het. Hij wist niemand in Israel had het beter met hem voor dan die strenge boetprediker, Samuel.

Dat deze voorstelling geheel en al naar de Schrift is, blijft wel uit het feit, dat de Heere Samuel verbood, om verder over Saul leed te dragen. Hij mocht niet langer den stillen wensch des harten koesteren, dat het met Saul anders en beter zou worden.

Welnu, als dan Samuel er niet meer is en dus de gemeenschap tusschen die beiden is afgesneden en daarbij ook de Godsopenbaring zwijgt, wordt Saul een speelbal van zijn, door de zonde verduisterd en in de zonde ontwikkeld, hart en zijn geest hoe langer hoe meer onder den invloed komt van den boozen geest, moet dit proces tenslotte dienen tot en uitloopen op Sauls zelfvernietiging.

Van den tijd af, dat Samuel Saul verliet, om hem nimmer meer te zien, zal de profetie zwijgen. De harmonie tusschen het Koningschap en de profetie, waardoor Jehova Zijn wil openbaarde, was verbroken. En de uitnemendste drager daarvan was Samuel in dezen tijd geweest.

Toch als altijd, wil het ongeloof een boven-aardsch, een extra-ordinair antwoord ontvangen, ook al is er geen Samuel meer en geeft God geen antwoord in den door Hem verordeneerde weg "Noch door droomen, noch door de Urim, noch door de profeten". En wie, levende onder de Godsopenbaring, ongeloovig is, diens ongeloof zal zich spoedig in bijgeloof openbaren en zich daarop werpen, wat van Godswege ten strengste verboden is.

Dat Saul met het zich wenden tot de vrouw te Endor met zichzelf in tegenspraak komt is niet zoo moeilijk te verklaren. Ook al wordt hij dan tegelijkertijd belachelijk voor zijn mannen en voor de vrouw. Dit is alreeds niet moeilijk omdat de zonde altijd tot dwaasheid leidt en de zondaar een dwaas is.

Wel zien we hier het verschrikkelijke der zonde,

dat iemand die naar God niet wil luisteren en naar den levenden God zijn weg wil inrichten, zijn hoop zet op een dooden Samuel. Want Saul kon weten, dat als de Heere niet sprak Samuel niet spreken kon of mocht.

Trouwens, had ook Saul niet Mozes en de Profeten.

Daarom is de vraag, of één der vragen, heeft die vrouw werkelijk Samuel gezien? (Dat Saul hem niet zag is duidelijk, daar hij met het aangezicht ter aarde lag).

Een andere vraag is, was het waarlijk de stem van Samuel die sprak? Heeft dus Saul, die wel niets zag, dan toch de stem gehoord?

Was de verschijning, die van den booze, zooals sommigen willen? En was dan de vrouw niets meer dan eene, die met den duivel in verbinding stond?

Of was die vrouw, op de lijn van het Spiritisme, een medium, waardoor de toch alreeds gekwelde en verwarde ziel van Saul, gemakkelijk kon worden gebracht onder de macht harer hypnotese? Als dit laatste waar is, dan is er werkelijk niets anders gebeurt te Endor dan wat er geschied in de Seance der Spiritisten van ons eigen tijd en behoeft het voorval te Endor ons niet te verwonderen, daar dit dan grootendeels op zinsbedrog zou rusten.

(Wordt Vervolgd)

W. V.

MY JESUS AS THOU WILT

My Jesus, as Thou wilt,
Oh may my will be Thine,
Into Thy hand of love,
I would my all resign.

Through sorrow and through joy,
Conduct me as Thy own,
And help me still to say,
My Lord,—Thy will be done.

My Jesus as Thou wilt,
Oh may my will be Thine,
Let not my star of hope,
Grow dim or disappear.

Since Thou on earth hath wept,
And sorrowed oft' alone,
If I must weep with Thee,
My Lord,—Thy will be done.

The Value of Catechetical Instruction

The instruction of the Covenant seed in the Catechism deserves a renewed and special emphasis in our day.

In many circles, particularly in the American Churches, the Catechism is either completely ignored, or is relegated to an insignificant place among the Church activities. Slowly it is being supplanted by youth's activities and the Sunday School which receives all the emphasis and are regarded as of primary importance for the spiritual welfare as well as a gauge for the spiritual stability of the congregation.

The office bearers are often in no small measure responsible for this alarming condition. While they favor that other church activities be continued almost without interruption throughout the year the season allotted to the Catechism is very short and interspersed with numerous and uncalled for vacations so that it often happens that the classes do not meet more than twenty hours in a single year. The instruction itself, sporadic and limited as it is, is often so superficial and lifeless that it is certain to kill any interest that might still be aroused in it.

Forgotten is the fact that catechetical instruction holds a unique position in the Church, just because it is the ministry of the Word to the seed of the Covenant through the office which Christ has instituted.

Anyone who cherishes his Reformed heritage will immediately concede that the basis for catechetical instruction lies in the fact that God realizes His covenant in the line of succeeding generations. The promise came to Abraham as the father of all believers, Gen. 17:7, "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." That includes also Abraham's spiritual seed within that covenant, so that Peter can say to the believers on the day of Pentecost, (Acts 2:39), "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

From which follows that God entrusts to His people in the midst of the world the task of bringing forth the covenant seed. The church of the old dispensation fully realized that it was peculiarly burdened with bringing forth the Seed of the Woman, the promised Messiah, Who was to be born in the line of generations in the covenant. And we, too, as members of that organism of the Body of Christ, are instruments and co-workers of God in bringing forth the elect seed which is saved unto eternal life. The natural seed of believers make up the church of the future.

No less has God entrusted to His church the re-

sponsibility of rearing that covenant seed in the fear and admonition of the Lord. Ours is the calling to maintain, defend and develop the Truth as it is revealed in the Word of God, to preserve it and to pass it on to the future generations, showing "to the generation to come the praises of the Lord and His strength, and His wonderful works that He hath done." (Ps. 78:4).

We have a very significant passage in this connection in Gen. 18: 19, where God says of Abraham, "For I know him that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." Evidently this divine knowing whereby God knew Abraham is the eternal and sovereign knowledge of election. God knew Abraham because He had elected him from eternity, even to that position that he held as the father of all believers. From which follows that God also gave to Abraham the necessary grace to command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord and to do justice and judgment. Again, the very fact that these children did keep the way of the Lord and did do justice and judgment was also the result of God's irresistible and efficacious grace upon them. And the outcome is that God brings upon Abraham and his spiritual seed all "that He hath spoken of him." All of which can only mean that God uses believing parents to realize His covenant from generation to generation, even until the end of time.

Add to this that other fact, that the Church is comprised of believers and their spiritual seed. Believing parents present their children for baptism in their earliest infancy because also children are comprehended in God's covenant and must therefore receive the sign and seal of that covenant. They do not become members of the church only after they have reached years of discretion and have made public confession of their faith, but they belong to the organism of the body of Christ from birth. And as members of the Church they must be instructed through the office. The word of the apostle Paul in Romans 10:14 also holds for them, "How then shall they call on Him in Whom they have not believed; and how shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard; and how shall they hear without a preacher?"

The church is directly responsible for the spiritual and religious training of the children of the covenant. She is particularly interested in inculcating the fundamental truths of the Word of God in their minds and hearts, and thus laying a basis for a thorough understanding of the preaching of the Word in the public worship. She is determined to present the

Word of God to the covenant seed as the bread of life, the power unto salvation, and the norm and rule for a holy walk of life.

Christ is directly engaged in the ministry of the Word in the Catechism through the instrumentality of His ambassador, the office-bearer. That makes catechetical instruction uniquely distinct from any other form of instruction in the Church as the official ministry of the Word to the seed of the covenant.

And because it is unique, it is also essential.

In His infinite and unsearchable wisdom God has willed to entrust to the church the training of the CHILD.

Have you never stopped to consider that no stranger could intrude upon your hospitality as your child imposes himself on you. The little waif, just because it is your flesh and blood, makes bold to enter your home without a stitch of clothes on its back, hungry and utterly dependent, throwing itself upon your care and demanding all your attention. Yours becomes the responsibility to feed and clothe and care for it, but no less to rear it. Much depends upon the early training that child receives in your home. You determine where it will live and how, whether it will grow up as a child of one of moderate means or as a child of the wealthy, whether it will speak English or Dutch or some other language. You teach it practically all that it ever will know, you influence it in its attitude toward various problems of life, and you even play an important role in determining its vocation and position in life. Which is all as it should be.

But added to this is the fact that you are also held responsible for its spiritual, religious and ecclesiastical training. The parent determines whether the religious training will be Catholic or Protestant Reformed, and is daily influential in creating interest or a lack of interest in that training. The parent sends the child to catechism, urges it to be punctual and regular in its attendance, takes an interest in what it learns, helps it to prepare or makes sure that the child himself has well prepared its lesson.

It is beyond contradiction that this early training in the catechism makes an indelible and lasting impression. During the years of childhood the child is very receptive. It learns readily, absorbs easily and remembers well. It readily visualizes the Bible stories before its mind's eye. Sees the characters as if they were living and speaking and acting at that very moment, is stirred by what is happening and is deeply impressed by the significance of the account. From these historical accounts the child learns the fundamental truths about God, His covenant, His mighty works and dealings with men. The facts of Scripture must be presented to the child as they are, but they must also be placed in their proper light,

even as much as possible according to God's purpose in revealing these facts to us. The child must be inducted into the light of God's truth and revelation, or he will be led astray into dark channels of heresy, which can but tend to becloud his receptive mind and be a hindrance to him for the rest of his life.

Even as the child grows older the catechetical instruction is essential. The child in his teens may have lost some of his simple receptivity, but is no less a fit pupil for the catechism. He is filled with an almost insatiable inquisitiveness, determined to know the what, the how and the wherefore of things. At this stage he is ready to be instructed in the doctrinal truths of the Word of God as they must be interpreted to the youthful mind. The yearning of his heart to know the works and the might and the praises of the Lord must be aroused and satisfied. The foundation must be laid for a thorough understanding of the Scriptures in the years to come. And the child must be prepared for his place in the church, for the calling God entrusts to him, and for a holy walk as God's witness in the midst of the world.

Not as if mere catechetical instruction can replace the work of grace in converting the sinner. That is out of the question. Yet it must be granted that God's work of grace is not immediate, but always through the means of grace, the preaching of the Word and the sacraments. The instruction received in the church serves to enrich the covenant seed with a knowledge of the truth, but is also used by the Spirit to quicken the life of regeneration and bring the child to a conscious faith.

Which means that the catechism is mandatory, and that it cannot be ignored with impunity, neither by the church nor by the individual.

Needless to say, for those individuals who are instructed in the catechism, but come to years of discretion only to despise and reject all that is most sacred, that early instruction must prove to be a savor of death unto death. For one thing, it does prove that they are spiritually dead and void of all grace. For when all efforts which cause a good fig tree to bring forth an abundance of fruit are also expended on the barren fig tree, there can be but one result, the barren fig tree proves its worth. It shows that it never can and never will bring forth fruit. Why cumbereth it the ground?

Likewise, catechumens who are inclined to play truant, are irregular in attendance, late in arriving, lax in preparing their lessons and inattentive during the discussion, will necessarily suffer the consequences throughout the rest of their lives. Poor catechumens make poor timber for consistory members and leaders of the church, are even poor prospects as future parents in God's covenant, are far from promising as Christians, and will likely be poor church attendants

all their lives. They are the first to complain that the sermons are too difficult to grasp, too doctrinal, not nearly inspirational and appealing enough. They readily blame the preaching, while the fact is that they have no one but themselves to blame.

While on the other hand, childhood and youth are the time to absorb and to stow away for the future, the time to lay a sturdy foundation upon which a sound structure can be securely built. The child of today is the man of tomorrow. His preparation today will determine to a great extent what he will be tomorrow. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

And the church that ignores or even disregards sound catechetical instruction is on its way to a hasty ruin. Where sound doctrine is not taught in the catechism it will also have to be eliminated from the preaching, because no one will be in a position to understand or to receive it, with the result that even the preaching becomes superficial and the church dies of spiritual starvation.

While on the contrary, sound catechetical instruction prepares the covenant seed for sound expositional and doctrinal preaching, which alone is in harmony with the Word of God. The church that desires and can digest the unadulterated milk of the Word must flourish. It will be able to ward off every foe. Its future is secure, for the gates of hell will not prevail against her.

C. H.

How To Use The Radio

Knocking! Knocking!

At the doors of thousands of American homes, a few years ago. Also at the homes of reformed people.

It was the RADIO. Might he come in? Might he entertain the family? Might he connect your house with the wide, wide world? The worldly homes hailed him in at once. Into some homes he came secretly, he forced himself into other homes. But many of our reformed homes took a careful look at the stranger. Was it the right thing to do to let him in? It opened the doors to the wide world, it reminded of "garlic and onions".

But as the years went by the radio finally found its way into almost every home. So that the theme of our article is not whether it is allowable to have a radio in our home, but, How To Use The Radio:

I.—Necessity Of Observing Principles

The Radio is but a box, full of intricate and com-

plicated wire-systems and coils. But let no one minimize the tremendous things of which this little box is capable. We want to sum up some of these things, at the same time enumerate a few of the dangers incumbent upon the use of the radio and thus see how necessary it is for us as Christians to be guided by certain principles when we and if we use the radio.

First, the radio sets the doors open to let the powers and principalities and influences of the world rush into our homes. Time was when the family lived a more or less private and isolated life, but the telephone and the daily newspapers interrupted this privacy (if I may so say). More than either or both of these however, the radio penetrates into the very heart of the home and family life. Any power or influence which advances to such a position must be carefully guarded by an unyielding defence of biblical principle.

Secondly, the radio, by very virtue of its mechanism, easily becomes the chief entertainment, re-creation and education medium in the home. "Four and one-half million man hours are spent daily listening to the radio" said an eminent educator the other day. Far more attractive than the newspaper and more appealing than any book-reading, the radio captures the minds of youngsters and oldsters alike and wields a tremendous influence over them. Second only to the screen, the radio is the great medium of entertainment and education in the home. Such a tremendous thing! And that right in our very homes! It certainly is necessary that we control it by christian principles, lest it prove dangerous and destructive.

But, thirdly, the radio by and large wields a dangerous influence. It brings Broadway and Hollywood together, right to you on the sofa. It opens your doors to plays and scenarios that sink lower often than the detective stories and romances your drug store sells. It transmits things which poison the hearts of youngsters and oldsters alike. It flings upon you cheap jazz entertainment, lowers your standard of true entertainment, discourages reading profitable literature, destroys the family's calling to entertain itself, stifles the desire to meditate etc. etc. Since it is capable of all these things, it is reasonable to submit the use of the radio to definite reformed principles and apply them when we use the machine.

All of life must be lived out of the principle of the Word of God, let us not exempt the dial-turning of the radio.

II.—The Leading Principle

Although it is true that the having of a radio or not is up to the person himself, not to an outsider to dictate; by the same token however, it is equally true that in the matter of the use of the radio Scripture

dictates. And we shall follow that dictation or we walk contrary to the rule of faith.

The leading principle of the whole life of the Christian I find in I Cor. 10:31 where we read: "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God". A hard and fast rule for the believer. Let that thought sink into our souls a moment, at least also into the souls of us who stand so fast on the doctrines of the sovereignty of God. Fellow-christian, to do all to the glory of God is very difficult. It means to deny ourselves, to put down all other interests and aim only and above all at hallowing the blessed Name of God. It implies that the Christian wants to hear only such things as will make him sanctify God in his heart. Paul, elsewhere, speaks of "using as not abusing" (I Cor. 7:31), which means that if we use creation or its inventions for any other end than the glory of God we abuse it. Hence, if the radio shall be of "use" in our homes (not abuse) the dial turning must be prompted by your quest to advance the glory of your God in one way or the other. As believers we know it to be our calling to serve God with creation. The Belgic Confession in Art. XII so strikingly says concerning creation and providence that God upholds creation "for the service of mankind" and then "to the end that man may serve His God". The radio must be put to that use, while each believer is free to make it serve that end as he pleases.

III.—Concluding Principles

In connection with this leading principle follows the second principle which the dial-turning Christian must watch. I find that enunciated first in Ephesians 5:7-11. Here the Spirit exhorts that we are to walk as children of the light, proving what is acceptable to God, having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness and rather reproving them. The unfruitful works of darkness which so easily pour into our homes via the radio must be reprov'd, we conclude. Even a reputed moralist recently said "90 percent of what comes over the radio is an insult to a seven-year-old child". How greatly insulting then to the matured Christian? But notice also that Paul exhorts that we must have no fellowship with these works but rather reprove them. Which certainly implies that we cannot seek the glory of God by listening to radio-trash. If we reprove these works we must certainly turn off the radio, for light and darkness have no fellowship and the unfruitful works of darkness cannot be associated with the glory of God. And the positive side of this we find in Phil. 4:8: "brethren, whatsoever things are true. . . honest. . . just, pure, of good report. . . think on these things". That limits the field of our radio listening and bids us use the radio with discretion and discrimination.

And now the last companion-principle. I find this one uttered by the saintly Joshua in 24:15: "But as for

me and my house, we will serve the Lord". If the use of the radio in any way interrupts or intercepts or paralyzes the sacred duty of the family life toward God, it becomes dangerous and must be brought captive. Insofar as the radio promotes the family worship it serves a good purpose, but if it tends to make us and our family worldly-minded and world-conformed, alas. Hence, the radio, if it is used, must be pressed into service to help me and my family to serve God and seek His glory. And we must be on the alert that it do not destroy the family altar, supplant the storytelling by the parents, infringe upon the time to pray, to read, to study etc. etc. The head of the home must stand firm on the principle that he will allow into his home only such things as assist him in saying: "I and my house we will serve the Lord".

See there some general principles.

If you say, we cannot observe them, then you would admit that you cannot use the radio. It requires diligence and eternal vigilance.

Each of us is free how we wish to observe these principles. Each may practice it in his own way.

We have freedom to turn the dial.

But principles are eternal and cannot be ignored.

M. G.

GOD EERST

Begin den dag met God;
Zoek 't eerst Zijn aangezicht;
Hij slechts gaat veilig en gewis;
Die wandelt in Gods licht.

Laat God uw gastheer zijn;
Als ge aan den disch u zet;
Van Hem is 't aardsch en 't hemelsch brood;
Vraag beiden in 't gebed.

Laat, bij al 't geen gij doet,
God op den voorgrond staan:
Zoo zal uw dag gezegend zijn,
En 't werk voorspoedig gaan.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

It is with sincere thankfulness to God that we announce the 25th anniversary of our parents' marriage. On January 1, 1942

Mr. and Mrs. R. L. REGNERUS

of Oak Lawn, Illinois, will celebrate this happy occasion. We pray that God's blessing may follow them through many additional years of wedded life.

Mr. and Mrs. E. R. Bruinsma,
Mr. Louis R. Regnerus,
Mr. Jakob F. Regnerus.

The Class-Struggle And Unionism

The issue expressed in the superscription of this essay is very actual and concrete in the life of God's children in our day. Many of the readers of the Standard Bearer come face to face with this problem in the maintenance of their homes and in the earning of their livelihood. Due to the modern industrial world, the individual and his liberties are constantly being swallowed up by the interests of the class in which he providentially finds himself. The liberties of private property, and business and small industries are being curtailed on every hand. The class-struggle and unionism is a living, throbbing issue not only in our private lives, but it is inherent in the world-wide conflict now raging on the face of all the globe.

Consequently the burning question in the heart of God's children today is: What attitude must be assumed toward, and what position must we take toward this world conflict; the conflict between the classes, as it reveals itself in the phenomena of unionism. Life is one. The international conflict of nations with their respective aims, is but a broader manifestation of the conflict of the classes within the nation. In these circumstances one needs to retain the scriptural perspective to maintain his spiritual equilibrium.

In view of the stupendous issues involved in this question under consideration one hesitates to write. But our calling as the salt of the earth, and light of the world is clear, and we have no other choice. The line must be drawn properly, that is, consistent with the law of God, and thus in accordance with the worthiness of our high christian calling.

Upon attempting to study the question under consideration we discovered that there were many and involved questions which called for answers, were one to do justice to the subject. Far be it from us to pretend that such will do. If our essay can provoke some fruitful thought along these lines the writer considers the goal of these efforts attained.

Let us look at the subject somewhat more closely.

The first question to be answered is: what is the class-struggle?

To answer this question properly a word about the "classes" in our modern industrial technological society is first in order. In general it can be said that modern society divides itself into two classes, to wit, those who own property *making a profit* and those who don't. The dividing factor in our modern society is not the social distinction, but solely the economic factor. Those in possession of industrial capital we will designate as the "Privileged Class" and the laboring class as the "Proletariat Class". These two classes have always existed. The position of the proletariat was somewhat different in the time of ancient

Rome. They were regarded at that time as contributing nothing to society and the state but offspring; they were the lower classes, the peasantry. In the modern socialistic use they are the wage-workers collectively, regarded as the *creators* of wealth. It is but proper to bear in mind, that this latter is the argument of the modern proletarian class in the class-struggle. Of this more will be said presently, the "more-value theory".

We said that fundamentally there were but two classes in the modern industrial society. However the line of demarcation between these two is not sharply defined. There is a gradual descending scale. But as far as the "struggle" is concerned the matter boils down to these classes.

In "Moral Man And Immoral Society" Reinhold Niebuhr writes the following on this matter: "There will be minor distinctions, however, within these groups which tend to obscure the major division (the "haves" and the "have-nots" G.L.) when viewed under certain perspectives. Thus landholders may have interests which diverge from, and social policies which conflict with, those of the owners of industrial capital until the moment of crisis (think of the present war situation and the united(?) front of the nation, G.L.) when all property is under attack or until the two types of property and ownership merge. Industrial workers may find their proletarian class bifurcated (divided into two branches, G.L.) and the more privileged skilled workers may not on all occasions make common cause with the unskilled". p. 115.

Not all people fall sharply into these classes we quote. There is quite a large class standing between the owners of industrial capital and the laboring class. Writes Niebuhr in idem p. 115: "The class standing between the owners and the workers, composed of professional people, clerks, small retailers and bureaucrats, is ambiguous in membership and social outlook Modern economic classes are. . . less sharply defined than the social classes of the Middle Ages. The forces of a technological civilization, which gives classes organ of cohesion and self-expression, also tend to confuse the economic circumstances which create class distinctions, with an endless variety of differentiated function and corresponding differences of privilege".

It is of importance here to notice what natural organic position the believers in Christ Jesus occupy in this modern social economic set-up. Scripture teaches that God's people are the poor in the world, chosen to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom of heaven. Some may belong to the middle class enumerated above. But the general rule is that the church is composed of working laboring men. In fact, this is not shame, for Scripture enjoins the believers to work with their hands, Eph. 4:28. However, as we shall see

that this puts the believers as to their natural organic position in the camp of the proletariat.

That which is known as the "class-struggle" in our modern era is the struggle between these two classes. In this struggle it can be said, that the proletariat challenge the right of the privileged class to the percentage of the profit of their industrial capital. It is the contention of the proletariat that labor should equally share the profits of industry with capital. Hence, Labor is on the offensive in this struggle, and Capital on the defensive. And the Privileged Class has prestige and power by virtue of their economic position. The struggle between the two classes can be said to be as old as man-kind. But it has never here-to-fore assumed the proportions of our day.

What may be the occasion of this? It is due to the modern technological industrial world. Labor is brought closer together by the industrial world, than ever before. Before the modern machine age, men worked for individual owners of capital. The contact between labor and capital was direct and personal. Now this is gone. One now works for a corporation of stock-holders and this corporation functions through a board and president. The interest of the corporation is solely financial profits, and not the interests of the laboring-men. Labor feels this, and rebels. They see that it is through their energy and efforts that the raw materials acquire greater value. Take for example an automobile. The raw materials entering into it are not worth \$900.00. It might be worth but one tenth of this amount. What gave it its value. The present form and usefulness which it received in the hands of labor. Thus many examples to prove this point could be cited. But this will suffice.

Now who is it that reaps the lion's share of these profits? Labor through whose hands it acquires this value? No, the owners of industrial capital! And so the modern industrial world gives impetus to the struggle of the classes for economic privilege and all that this entails.

Another element brings the consciousness of mere financial profit to the foreground. It is the fact that the modern worker does not really make any one commodity as an individual. Modern technology and mass production has revolutionized the "Village Blacksmith" of the days of the poet. At that time the laborer really could see the fruits of his individual efforts. He could be a crafts-man and take pride in the product of his labors. There was more than mere "pay-check" to work for. The blacksmith in the days of yore could take pride in the fruits of his efforts. This loss of pride in the actual commodity has accentuated the struggle for equal distribution of the profits of industry.

That this last is true is not difficult to prove. Ask any number of people what they do, and they will tell

you: "We work in the factory" or "we work for General Motors". The individual is but a small cog in the industrial machine of man-power.

Out of this modern complex of the class-struggle is born what today is known as "Unionism". The collectiveness of labor has become the machine for its collective efforts in the struggle with the Privileged Class. It is the modern laborer organized into a corporation to bargain with capital as a corporation. As such it has the protection and recognition of the government. The C.I.O. and A.F. of L. has legal recognition, and are potent agencies of labor in the class-struggle with the owners of industrial capital.

In order to give our evaluation of Unionism and all that it stands for, we must first evaluate the "class-struggle". Is this class-struggle in its philosophy a matter of God's justice? No, God is not in the thoughts at all. Man is the *measure* of all things. The motive is not love the "neighbor as thy self", but it is purely selfish interest. This social philosophy has nothing in common with Christian ethics laid down on moral law. Oh, they may speak of the altruistic utilitarian ethics of the "greatest good for the greatest number", but that is because they belong to this greatest number. The moment these preachers of the "greatest good for the greatest number" are with the privileged class they are for capital to all practical extent.

The christian cannot bring this utilitarian principle in line with love for the neighbor. Our chief objection cannot be against the tactics employed by the unions in their strikes, boycotts, etc. If this be all the objection we have, we can join with orderly unions (if such there are). To our mind therefore the question of the christian attitude toward unionism is fundamentally the same as toward the christian's place in the class-struggle.

To make this position clear, would require more space that is at our disposal at this time. If the editor of the Standard Bearer wishes probably at some future day, we can write on that question under a separate heading. But let it be understood, that we are convinced that the question of unionism may never be discussed disjoined from the broader question of the class-struggle with its social philosophies.

G. L.

CLASSIS EAST

will meet in regular session Wednesday, January 7, 1942, at 9:00 A. M., at Fuller Ave.

D. Jonker, S. C.