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Meditatie

De Pelgrim Bij Het Graf

(BEGRAFENISPREEK, WEERGEGEVEN IN DEN VORM
EENER MEDITATIE, OP VERZOEK)

*Deze allen zijn in het geloof gestorven,
de beloften niet verkregen hebbende, maar
hebben dezelve van verre gezien, en ge-
loofd, en omhelsd, en hebben beleden, dat
zij gasten en vreemdelingen op aarde
waren.*
Hebr. 11:13.

De pelgrimsbelijdenis!

De belijdenis, dat we gasten en vreemdelingen op
aarde zijn!

Het is de belijdenis van Gods volk in de wereld, in
leven maar ook in sterven, in het huis der maaltijden
maar ook in het klaaghuys, bij de kribbe en bij het graf!

En van de kribbe tot het graf kondigen ze door deze
belijdenis de fundamentele houding aan, die ze aan-
nemen tegenover alle dingen hier beneden. Want het
is de belijdenis der hope, der levende hope, der hope,
die nimmer vergaat, der alles overwinnende hope!

Ze zijn immers in het geloof gestorven!

Daarom ligt er in deze belijdenis ook een antwoord,
een finaal, een volkomen bevredigend, een alles afdoend
antwoord op de sprake, die er uitgaat van het graf als
zoodanig. Er gaat immers ook van het graf sprake uit,
een sprake, die ook finaal schijnt. 't Is de sprake van
het einde, van het alles afsnijdend einde wat betreft de
dingen, die gezien worden, van het beslissend einde.
Het is de sprake van den dood, den "onverbidde-
lijken" dood, die ook in uwe leden is en knaagt aan uw levens-
wortel, die woelt en werkt en u met zijne vreeze achter-
volgt in elk moment van uw aardsche leven. Terwijl
ge 't omhulsel van uw dierbare in dat stille graf doet
neerdalen, roept datzelfde "stille" graf ook u toe: "het
einde aller dingen is nabij". Nog een korte wijle en
het graf verzwelgt ook uw verstijfde lijf! . . .

En wat zult ge antwoorden op die sprake van het
graf?

Uw antwoord hangt af van uwe beschouwing van,
van uwe houding tegenover de aardsche dingen.

Zijt ge burger dezer wereld, hebt ge uw tehuis op
aarde, dan zoekt ge de dingen, die beneden zijn, dan
is uw hart verkleefd aan de dingen, die alle door dat
graf worden afgesneden voor eeuwig. Dan hebt ge
geen antwoord op de sprake van het graf. Dan ver-
gaat daar, bij de groeve der vertering uwe verwach-
ting. Dan laat ge aan het graf het laatste woord.
Dan kunt ge thans wel in zinellooze en ijdele dronke-
mans-zorgeloosheid de leuze aanheffen: "Laat ons
eten en drinken, want morgen sterven wij", maar dan
staart ge toch in die donkere groeve in stomme wan-
hoop.

De verwachting der goddeloozen vergaat!

Maar de hope der rechtvaardigen is blijdschap!

Want die hope vergaat nimmermeer, ook niet bij
het graf. Dan toch gaat ge naar dat graf en be-
schouwt ge het in het licht van uw pelgrims-belijdenis:
ik ben een gast en vreemdeling op aarde. Dan verstaat
ge het, dat ge ook daar bij het graf ambtsdrager zijt
met eene roeping om als profeet Gods in Christus
Jezus te betuigen, te antwoorden op die sprake van
het graf. Dan laat ge aan het graf niet het laatste
woord, maar doet zijn sprake verstommen door uw
belijdenis: "Ge zijt wel het einde van de dingen, die
gezien worden, doch daardoor slechts het einde van
mijn vreemdelingschap, en het begin voor mij van de
vervulling der belofte, die ik van verre gezien heb, en
geloofd, en omhelsd. . . .

Dood, waar is uw prikkel?

Graf, waar is uw overwinning?

Gode zij dank, die ons de overwinning geeft door
Christus Jezus onzen Heere!

Meer dan overwinnaar zijt ge dan, ook over dat
graf.

Want het wordt uw dienaar, die u den weg moet
ontsluiten naar het eeuwig Vaderhuis!

Naar het beter Vaderland, dat is het hemelsche,

waarop immers uwe hope gevestigd was, werwaarts reizende ge gast en vreemdeling op aarde waart!

Ge zijt dan pelgrim tot aan het graf!

Belijdend uwe hope.

Gasten en vreemdelingen!

Dat ze dat waren was de belijdenis dergenen, die in het verband genoemd waren, met name Abraham, Izak en Jakob.

Zij stierven, bereikten het einde van hun tocht door de wereld, in het geloof, of zooals het eigenlijk wordt uitgedrukt in den oorspronkelijken tekst: *naar* het geloof, dat wil zeggen, naar de maatstaf, naar den standaard des geloofs, van dat geloof, dat een vaste grond is der dingen, die men hoopt, en een bewijs der zaken, die men niet ziet. Ze waren gestorven, zooals zij sterven, die de beloften gelooven en omhelzen, doch die ze niet verkregen hebben, die ze van verre gezien hebben, die belijden, ook nog op hun sterfbed, dat ze gasten en vreemdelingen op aarde zijn.

Gasten en vreemdelingen!

In den grond der zaak zeggen deze beide woorden hetzelfde. Beide duiden aan, dat zij, die dit belijden te zijn, niet thuis zijn. Ze hebben hun thuis elders. In het land of de stad, waar ze tijdelijk verkeerden, zijn ze vreemdelingen. Men kan het hun aanzien, dat ze van elders zijn. Ze hebben andere gewoonten, ze spreken een andere taal, andere banden en betrekkingen, andere idealen dan de burgers van het land of de plaats, waar ze tijdelijk vertoeven. Alleen maar bezien beide woorden deze zelfde werkelijkheid elk uit hun eigen oogpunt. Vreemdeling-zijn legt nadruk op het niet-thuis-zijn, het niet-ingeburgerd-zijn, terwijl gast-zijn ziet op het tijdelijk verzorgd worden en onderdak hebben in het vreemde land. En beide woorden bezien dit vreemdelingschap uit het onderwerpelijk oogpunt van degenen, die dit belijden. Ze *zijn* niet slechts vreemdelingen, maar ze gevoelen zich vreemd. Ze zijn geen menschen, die weliswaar nog niet ingeburgerd zijn in het vreemde land, maar voorts hun best doen, om zich bij de taal en gewoonten van het land hunner vreemdelingschappen aan te sluiten, en zich zoo spoedig mogelijk thuis te gaan gevoelen. Maar ze bedoelen niet anders dan vreemdelingen te zijn en gasten. Dat is hunne levenshouding. Ze zetten hun hart niet op de dingen van het tegenwoordige. Ze zoeken een ander vaderland. Ze reizen. Ze zoeken geen burgerschap in het land dat ze doortrekken. Ze moeten verder. . . .

Vreemdelingen en gasten op aarde!

Ze vinden het hier nergens!

Niet slechts in de "wereld" in den boozen zin des woords zijn ze vreemdelingen en bijwoners. O, zeker, dat zijn ze ook. Doch dat is hier niet de bedoeling. Immers, in die wereld zijn ze wel vreemdelingen, doch bijwoners en gasten zijn ze in de wereld niet. In de

wereld hebben ze ook geen tijdelijke banden en betrekkingen. Wat die wereld hun aanbiedt, kunnen ze niet aanvaarden. Wat hun door de wereld wordt voor-gezet kunnen ze niet nuttigen. Maar op aarde zijn ze vreemdelingen. Tegenover de aardsche dingen, huis en have, geld en goed, vrouw en kind, liefde en vriendschap, genot en blijdschap, zoowel als tegenover droefheid en smart, lijden en rouw, krankheid en dood en graf, nemen ze eene vreemdelingen-houding aan. Waardeerend hetgeen het aardsche hun biedt tot onderhoud op hunne reis, zetten ze toch hun hart er niet op. Het is hun slechts middel tot het doel: de bereiking hunnen bestemming, het hemelsch vaderland!

Op aarde gasten en vreemdelingen!

Neen, ze zijn dit niet van nature, niet krachtens de natuur, die ze met zich omdragen in het land hunner vreemdelingschappen.

Dan zijn ze aardsch uit de aarde.

Met duizend banden zitten ze aan de aarde vast. Ze hebben een aardsch lichaam en eene aardsche "ziel"; ze leven een aardsch leven, temidden van aardsche betrekkingen, verbonden aan vrouw en kind, aan broeder en zuster door banden van aardsche liefde en aardsche vriendschap. Vandaar, dat ze hier als *gast* kunnen vertoeven, en dat de gastvrijheid, die ze hier soms genieten, hen kan aantrekken. Vandaar, dat ze dikwijls van deze twee gedrongen worden: ze willen wel overkleed, maar niet ontkleed worden. Vandaar, dat het scheiden uit de aardsche woning, waar ze echter slechts als gast vertoeften, soms zwaar kan vallen. Bij het graf plengen ook zij een traan. Droefheid en rouw over aardsche verliezen is ook het deel hunner ervaring. . . .

Doch in die aardsche natuur dragen ze een ander levensbeginsel! God Zelf maakte hen vreemdelingen, reeds vóór de grondlegging der wereld in Zijn eeuwige verkiezing, waarin Hij hen verordeneerde om den beelde Zijns Zoons gelijkvormig te zijn.

En Hij gaf hun het beginsel van een nieuw leven, en riep dat leven tot bewustzijn door Zijn Geest en Woord. Dat leven is opstandingsleven!

Het is niet van deze wereld. Het is niet van de aarde. Het heeft zijn oorsprong en wortel niet hier beneden. Het is van boven. Het is een begin van het leven van het Nieuwe Jeruzalem.

Daarheen trekt nu hun hart. Ze worstelen op naar Sions top! Krachtens dat nieuwe leven zingen ze:

't Oog omhoog, het hart naar boven;

Hier beneden is het niet!

Of met den dichten van den honderd en negentien-den psalm:

Ik ben, o Heer, een vreemdeling hier beneen,

Laat uw gena op reis mij niet ontbreken.

Gasten en vreemdelingen. Op aarde!

Wonderlijke belijdenis!

Want ze zijn niet slechts gasten en vreemdelingen,

maar ze belijden, dat ze het zijn!

Ze leven in het klare bewustzijn van hun vreemdelingschap, en ze schamen zich haar niet. Ze spreken het uit voor elkander; ze verkondigen het in de wereld; ze leeren het hunne kinderen, dat ze hier op aarde gasten en vreemdelingen zijn.

Ze zijn bereid om rekenschap te geven van de hope, die in hen is!

Ze belijden het in alle omstandigheden des levens, op geheel hunnen weg door deze wereld. Ze spreken er van in voorspoed en in tegenspoed: daarom zijn ze in voorspoed dankbaar als gasten, en in tegenspoed geduldig als vreemdelingen, die immers een beter vaderland zoeken. Ze spreken er van in het huis der maaltijden en in het klaaghuys: daarom geven ze zich in het huis der maaltijden niet over aan den dronkemanswaan der goddelooze menschen, en daarom zitten ze in het klaaghuys niet in stomme wanhoop terneer. Ze belijden het bij de wieg van het pasgeboren kind, en bij het graf hunner dierbaren: daarom zeggen ze het reeds in hun doopsgebed, dat dit leven niet anders is dan een gestadige dood, en daarom jubelen ze nog bij het graf door de tranen heen. . . .

Ze belijden het in woord en daad.

Zoo deden het immers "deze allen". Abraham, Izak en Jakob "zeiden deze dingen", en betoonden daardoor klaarlijk, dat ze een vaderland zochten. Vs. 14. Zoo bekleed het de grijze Israel voor Egypte's vorst: "De dagen der jaren mijner vreemdelingschappen zijn honderd en dertig jaren; weinig en kwaad zijn de dagen der jaren mijns levens geweest, en hebben niet bereikt de dagen der jaren des levens mijner vaderen, in de dagen hunner vreemdelingschappen". . . .

En zoo belijden we het nog!

Want hier hebben we geen blijvende stad, we zoeken de toekomst! Daarom plengen we onze tranen bij het graf, doch we staan niet verstomd; want in het zoeken van de toekomstige stad kan ook het graf ons slechts dienen. We zijn meer dan overwinnaars!

En we belijden het met de daad!

Zoo immers deden het "deze allen". Want door het geloof is Abraham, geroepen zijnde, gehoorzaam geweest, om uit te gaan naar de plaats, die hij tot een erfdeel ontvangen zou; en hij is uitgegaan, niet wetende, waar hij komen zou. vs. 8. En komende in het land, dat hij tot een erfdeel ontvangen zou, ontving hij het niet, had hij zelfs geen voet gronds, dat hij het zijne kon noemen. Maar door het geloof is hij een inwoner geweest in het beloofde land, inwoner, ja, maar als gast en vreemdeling, met Izak en Jakob, want ze woonden in tenten! En toen hij op zijn einde lag, beleed hij nog hetzelfde, want, ofschoon hij niet ontving, wat hem beloofd was, is hij toch in het geloof gestorven, aldor belijvende, dat hij een gast en vreemdeling op aarde was. . . .

Waarom?

Omdat hij de stad zocht, die fondamenteen heeft, welker kunstenaar en bouwmeester God is!

Noch ook hadden ze, schoon ze in Kanaan woonden als vreemdelingen en bijwoners, ooit berouw er van, dat ze huis en maagschap, dat ze het oude vaderland verlaten hadden. Immers, hadden ze aan dat vaderland gedacht, ze zouden tijd gehad hebben om terug te keeren!

Zoo ook wij!

Getrokken uit de duisternis tot in Gods wonderbaar licht, getrokken uit de aarde tot in den hemel, tot in de gemeenschap van het hemelsche Jeruzalem, wonen we hier in tabernakelen. . . .

Neen, waarlijk niet in letterlijken zin, want ook het aardsche Kanaän is niet meer en keert nimmer terug!

Maar wel zoo, dat de aardsche dingen ons tenten zijn geworden, de pinnen waarvan we niet te vast in de aarde slaan, middelen op reis. . . .

Wel zoo, dat we niet zoeken de dingen, die op de aarde zijn, maar de dingen, die boven zijn!

Gewillig ook, om alles te verliezen voor het hemelsch vaderland!

Belijdenis der hope!

Door het geloof!

Het geloof, dat een bewijs der zaken is, die men niet ziet. Want ze hadden de beloften. En wij hebben nog altijd de beloften! Meer niet! Doch dat is genoeg, volkomen genoeg voor het geloof; want, Die het beloofd heeft is getrouw. En Die de beloften gaf, geeft ook het geloof! Al deze dingen zijn uit God!

De beloften!

In den grond der zaak zijn al die beloften één. Want het zijn de beloften Gods in Christus onzen Heere, beloften van gerechtigheid en vergeving, van verlossing en heiliging, van genade en gunst, van eeuwig leven en eeuwige heerlijkheid, van Gods eeuwige vriendschap en eeuwige gemeenschap in Zijn eeuwigen tabernakel! En die ééne belofte met hare velerlei beloften gaf de Heere God en bezwoer Hij met een duren eed aan de kinderen der belofte, heel de geschiedenis door, van het paradijs tot op Christus; en geeft Hij nog altijd aan ons. . . .

Want wel is de belofte ook vervuld. Het beloofde Zaad kwam. God kwam in het vleesch en heeft onder ons gewoond, heeft geleden, is gestorven, heeft gerechtigheid en leven aangebracht in Zijn dood en opstanding; en Hij is gezeten aan de rechterhand des Vaders. In Hem zijn al de beloften Gods centraal vervuld. Maar toch hebben ook wij ten finale de belofte niet verkregen. Zij zagen ze van verre; wij van naderbij. . . .

Door het geloof! Totdat Hij komt! En de belofte verkregen wordt!

In dat geloof gaan we ook naar het graf!

Om dat graf te overwinnen!

H. H.

Editorials

The C. L. A. And Strikes

It must be evident to all that there must be a *principal* difference between a *Christian Labor Alliance* and a "neutral" or worldly Union, if there is any reason for the existence of the former.

A difference in *degree* can never be a sufficient reason for a separate organization.

If there is only a gradual difference between the C.L.A. on the one hand, and the A.F. of L. and C.I.O. on the other, the inevitable result will be that the former will more and more approach the latter, co-operate with them, and be merged into them in the industrial struggle. The gradual difference will gradually be wiped out.

The C.L.A. must stand and operate on its own distinctive basis, or it must fall.

It must assume a standpoint fundamentally different from that of the worldly unions, it must have a different purpose, and, therefore, it must employ different methods.

Now, in what way does the fundamentally distinctive basis of a Christian labor union affect the methods it employs? My answer is: in this way that a Christian labor union *never* uses force to gain a certain end.

As soon as a Christian labor union assumes the stand that it will not employ force in a certain labor dispute *until all other means fail*, the difference between it and the worldly union is principally obliterated, has become one of degree.

Now, the editor of the *Christian Labor Herald* appears to agree on this point. He, too, condemns the employment of force. But we do not agree on the question whether or not the strike is a weapon of force that cannot and may not be employed by a Christian labor union. He defends the strike and denies that it implies the use of force; I condemn it and maintain that the very idea of any strike is to use force in order to gain one's end. It must be, therefore, that he and I differ, either in respect to our conception of the strike, or in our definition of force.

In my opinion, there are only three possible means to settle a given labor dispute, viz. 1. that of arbitration until the end; 2. that of intervention by the government; 3. that of the employment of force by the organized laborers. The first two are, of course, legitimate means; the last one is to be condemned.

A strike certainly cannot be classified with either of the first two possible methods; it falls under the third category.

By force I do not mean only the use of physical

violence, which is punishable by law; but I mean the employment of any means that is calculated to *compel* the employer to yield to the demands of the union against his will, and regardless of the question whether or not he agrees to the justice of the demands.

In such a case the laborer only decides what shall be considered just.

If we can agree on this definition of force, it will be evident that the strike must be considered a weapon of force in the hands of the union.

If it had no power to compel the employer to comply with the demands of the laborer, a strike would never be called. To exercise compulsion is exactly the purpose of a strike. It is exactly because this is the purpose of the strike that picketing is instituted to add force to the means whereby the employer is to be compelled to yield against his will. And that this is the real purpose of the strikers is evident, too, from the physical violence that usually accompanies a strike, especially if it is prolonged or the employer attempts to "break" the strike.

A strike is not the same as quitting one's job. It is not even an organized refusal to work under certain conditions. It is refusal to work with the claim that those who thus refuse to work have the sole right to the job they virtually quit. Those that strike do not mean to quit their job; they intend to keep it; they deny that they quit; and they deny that anyone has the moral right to take their places. If others declare their intention to take their jobs, or if some refuse to cooperate with the strikers and continue to work, they try to persuade them that they have no right to do so; if they persist they heap reproach on the "scab"; if this does not serve the purpose they try to prevent them from entering the shop by physical violence. This is the purpose of picketing a plant. The purpose of the strikers, therefore, is not at all to quit their job, but to *force* the employer to yield to their demands by making it impossible for the plant to operate.

The strike, therefore, does not belong to the category of moral persuasion, but must certainly be classified as the use of force.

Hence, it must be condemned.

It is based on the principle of the class struggle. It is unchristian.

The objection is often raised: "but if we openly declare that we will consistently refuse to strike, we will never gain anything at all".

My answer is twofold.

First, it all depends what end a Christian Labor Alliance has in view. If its ultimate purpose is material advantage for the time being, I admit that in this world the use of force will prove to be the most effective. If, however, it aims chiefly to be a Christian testimony and confession to the glory of God in the

industrial world, it certainly will realize its purpose and can only reach its aim by refraining from all employment of force.

Secondly, if a so-called Christian Labor Alliance seeks material things and attempts to obtain them by the employment of force, it will surely fail, not only as a *Christian Union*, but also as a *Union*, for the simple reason that it will always be too small in numbers and, therefore, too weak to enforce its demands. In a city like Grand Rapids a C.L.A. might probably amount to something from the viewpoint of power, if all Christian laborers could be persuaded to join its ranks. But what about their brethren in a city like Chicago? In such places a C.L.A. that aimed at influence by force, would amount to exactly nothing.

What, then, will be the result if the C.L.A. insists on employing methods of force?

This, that it will quickly reveal itself as being principally no different from any other union.

It will manifest itself as being no distinctively Christian union at all. Nor will it be strong enough to maintain itself as a union at all.

The salt will have lost its savor. It is good for nothing.

I was present at the funeral rites for the last remains of a former attempt at a Christian Labor Union in Grand Rapids. The funeral was held in the basement of the Bates Street Christian Reformed Church.

If the present C.L.A. will have the courage of its convictions and will stand on a strictly Christian basis, it will be a glorious confession in the midst of a world of sin, unrest, hatred and revolution, that is hastening to destruction. It will have power, spiritual power, and will always be victorious, regardless of its small numbers.

But if it does not have the courage to stand on a distinctively Christian basis, it will die.

And I don't think that I will be present at the funeral services.

H. H.

NOTICE

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The R. F. P. A. Board.

The Reformation And The Bible*

Tonight we celebrate the beginning of the Reformation of the church. We may, indeed, and often do speak simply of *the* Reformation, and every Christian that has any knowledge of the history of the Church knows that the Reformation of the sixteenth century is meant. Not, indeed, as if it were the only reformation of the Church in history. There have been others. In a sense we may even say that the Church is always, is continually reforming. But the Reformation of the sixteenth century concerns the entire Church in every land and of all the succeeding centuries. And, therefore, when one speaks of the Reformation without further qualification, it is understood that the movement is meant that was begun on the thirty-first of October four hundred and twenty three years ago.

It was on that night, the eve of All Saints Day, that Dr. Martin Luther nailed his famous ninety five theses to the door of the castle-church in Wittenberg, an act that was destined to have far greater consequences than its author even remotely surmised. These theses purposed to be nothing more than a protest against the sale of indulgences as it was conducted in those days. An indulgence, as you know, was a certificate of the forgiveness of sins signed by the pope. The pope, being in need of special funds for the building of the St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome, had conceived of the idea of issuing a large number of these indulgences and offering them for sale to the people. It so happened that a particularly shameless monk, Tetzel by name, conducted this sale in a manner that was especially offensive, in the neighborhood of Wittenberg, where Dr. Martin Luther taught and preached. And learning of the methods of this monk, and hearing of his approach to Wittenberg, Luther's fiery indignation was aroused, and he expressed this indignation in his ninety five theses, which on that night of the 31st of October, 1517, he nailed to the church-door, that on the following day all might read and catch the fire of Luther's indignation. Little did Luther himself realize the full implication of this act. Certain it is that he did not intend a break with the church. Yet such it was. The ninety five theses, which meant to be merely a protest against some of the corrupt practices of the church, was the beginning of the liberation of the church from the bondage of Roman Catholicism. It was in the truest sense of the word a declaration of freedom.

However, one who says this must needs say more. He must define this freedom of the sixteenth century. There are those in our day, who have long departed from the faith of the Reformers, who, nevertheless, claim them as their spiritual ancestors. They deny the Christ the Reformers confessed, they spurn the

righteousness in the blood of the cross Luther so earnestly sought and so strongly emphasized ever since he found it; they must have nothing of the authority of the Scriptures which the Reformers held high; yet they also speak of the Reformation as the liberation of the church. They present the matter as if what Luther did on October 31st, 1717, was but the beginning of the movement that found its climax in the declaration of the autonomy of man, of reason. Luther, they say, liberated us from the tyranny and domination of the hierarchical church; modern thought only continued the same movement and also freed us from the tyranny of the book, meaning the Bible. To examine this claim and to expose its falsity we can do no better than to speak to you on:

THE REFORMATION AND THE BIBLE. I will try to show you that the Reformation was:

- I. A liberation of the Bible;
- II. A liberation toward the Bible;
- III. A liberation according to the Bible.

I. Not infrequently the Reformation is confused with and placed on a par with what is known as the Renaissance, or the revival of learning and art. And it is a result of this confusion when the Reformation of the sixteenth century is described as the liberation of the human reason from the shackles of all authority. Arthur Kenyon Rogers makes this error in the following paragraph from his "A Student's History of Philosophy": "Beyond Italy the Renaissance took on a somewhat different form. In Germany, where it was grafted on a type of mind naturally profounder and more religious, and where the religious life had already been deepened by the mysticism of Eckhart and Tauler and the Brethren of the Common Life, its most characteristic product was the Reformation of Luther; even Humanism in its German form, as typified in Erasmus and Melancton, shows strong religious sympathies. But the Reformation is an expression of the same revolt against authority. By its doctrine of justification by faith apart from any external mediation, and by its appeal to immediate Christian experience, it stood for individual freedom as against the pretensions of the Church." p. 209-10.

It would be difficult to find a paragraph more crowded with errors than the one I just read. It presents the Reformation as a form of the Renaissance, which it certainly was not. It even declares that in Germany the Reformation was a product of the Renaissance, which it could not possibly be, even as light cannot be the product of darkness, grace of nature, faith of reason. Without further limitation it declares that the Reformation was an expression of the same revolt against authority as the Renaissance, which it certainly was not; in fact, with far more justice it

may be said that the Reformation was a return to true obedience and subjection to authority. Nor is it true, that the Reformation made an appeal to Christian experience, least of all the experience of the individual freedom as against the pretensions of the Church, even this individual freedom may not be interpreted as the autonomy of the human mind and reason. The writer of that paragraph may, from his own viewpoint, have understood the Renaissance, he utterly failed to see the significance of the Reformation.

What, then, was the nature of the liberating movement of the Reformation? My first answer to this question is, that it liberated the Bible itself. You may, perhaps, remark that this is a somewhat strange expression. You object, perhaps, that the Word of God is always free and that it is quite impossible to put it in bondage. And this is true, of course, if you mean by the Word of God, the almighty and efficacious Word God Himself speaks. That Word is irresistible and certainly is never bound. And it did its work all through the ages, even in the darkest of periods. It was the cause of those separate movements that prepared the Reformation, connected with the names of John Huss, John Knox, the Waldenses and Albigenses, and to an extent Savonarola in Italy, and the Brethren of the Common Life in the Netherlands. It also prepared the Reformation in the soul of Luther, before it finally broke forth into a blazing fire on that memorable eve of All Saints Day in 1517. But what cannot be done to the Word of God as God Himself speaks it, certainly may be and often is done to the Word of God as we possess it in written form, in the Bible. It can be put into bondage. And this was actually done as it still is done by the Roman Catholic Church. It was from this bondage that the Reformation liberated the Bible.

In two respects the Bible was put into bondage by the Romish Church before the Reformation. First of all, it was buried under a pile of tradition, by which the Holy Scriptures were gradually being replaced. Doctrines and institutions of men were placed on a par with the Word of God. By this accumulation of tradition we are referring to the teachings of the fathers, the decrees of the ecclesiastical councils, and the official declarations of the Pope in matters concerning faith and walk. These were considered to be of equal authority with the Scriptures themselves. They were appealed to as the end of all argument. And it can readily be surmised that gradually they occupied a place of more importance and greater authority than that of the Bible. It must ever be so. Even with us, who theoretically hold that the Bible is the last and only court of appeal, and that all human doctrines and institutions and declarations, even the confessions themselves must be judged by it, it proves to be extremely difficult to revise or recant a declaration by the

Church, once the Church has spoken. Witness the three errors of 1924. But how easy, then, it must be for tradition to gain the first place and the greater authority, when once it is admitted that it stands on a par with the Scriptures! Doctrines and practices of men took the place of the Bible; the latter was relegated to oblivion; its direct testimony was withheld and suppressed; and the Church, i.e. the Church Institute, i.e. the clergy culminating in the infallible Pope, became the final court of appeal! The authority of the Word of God had been subjected to the authority of the Word of Man!

As a necessary corollary to this first instance of putting the Bible into bondage, the Church also declared that she only, the Holy Mother Church, had the authority and the power to interpret the Holy Scriptures, and that all the individual members of the Church on earth were obligated to abide by that interpretation, to receive it as infallible, and never to believe or to teach anything repugnant to that interpretation by the Church. Free exegesis of Holy Writ was thereby strictly forbidden. Always one who would interpret the Bible, were he ever so able and learned, was bound to inquire, first of all, what was the explanation of a certain passage offered by the Church, and by it his own was bound beforehand. The result was, too, that the Bible was withheld from the laity. The Church, and by the Church Roman Catholicism ever means the clergy, the priest, the Pope, alone has the promise of being guided by the Spirit into all the truth. It is, therefore, dangerous for the common member of the Church as an organism to have the Bible in his possession, to read it and to study it for himself. Many passages are hard for him to understand, and without the guidance and authority of the holy Mother Church, he will readily distort them to his own destruction. Hence, it is better for him to come into contact with the Bible, not directly, but indirectly, that is, only through the interpretation of the Church, in whose infallible guidance he must have implicit faith.

Such were the views and practices of the Romish Church with respect to the Bible. That this is no mere Protestant opinion, but the actual stand of the Roman Catholic Church even today, may be gathered from the declarations of its councils and Popes. Shortly after the Reformation has become an accomplished fact the famous Council of Trent began its sessions, which were continued over a number of years. In its session of April 8, 1546 that body of Roman Catholic divines declared that: "seeing clearly that this truth and discipline are contained in the written books, and the unwritten traditions, which, received from the Apostles themselves, the Holy Ghost dictating, have come down even unto us, transmitted as it were from hand to hand: the Synod following the example of the orthodox fathers, receives and venerates with an equal

affection of piety and reverence, all the books both of the Old and of the New Testament—seeing that one God is the author of both—as also the said traditions, as well those pertaining to faith as to morals, as having been dictated, either by Christ's own word of mouth, or by the Holy Ghost, and preserved in the Catholic Church by a continuous succession". It goes on to enumerate the books that are considered canonical, including in them also the apocryphal books, and it declares at the same time, that only the Latin translation of the Bible known as the Vulgate shall be held as authentic; and it threatens with the curse all that refuse to receive as sacred and canonical this Vulgate edition of the Bible, together with all the traditions of the Church. Schaff: *Creeds of Christendom*, II, 81, 82. And it continues: "Furthermore, in order to restrain petulant spirits, it decrees, that no one relying on his own skill, shall,—in matters of faith, and of morals pertaining to the edification of Christian doctrine,—wresting the sacred Scripture by his own senses, presume to interpret the said sacred Scripture contrary to that sense which Holy mother Church,—whose it is to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Holy Scripture,—hath held and doth hold; or even contrary to the unanimous consent of the Fathers; even though such interpretations were never intended to be at any time published. Contraveners shall be made known by their Ordinaries, and be punished with the penalties by law established". *ibidem*, 83. We could quote more, but this is sufficient to establish the truth of our contention, that the Bible was subjected to and held in bondage by human presumption of authority.

From this human bondage of the Bible the Reformation liberated the Word of God by declaring and insisting upon two truths. In the first place it announced the sufficiency of Holy Scripture. By this doctrine the Reformers did not intend to despise tradition. They well understood that also the Church of the past was led by the Holy Spirit, and they were far from that undenominationalism and "open Bible Churchism" of today, that would pretend to act as if our generation were the first that approached Holy Scripture and interpreted it. But they certainly did emphasize that no other word than the pure Word of the Gospel was necessary unto salvation for any man. They rejected tradition as being of the same value and authority as the Bible. Clearly this is already annunciated in the Formula Concordiae, which declared in Art. I: "We believe, confess, and teach that the only rule and norm, according to which all dogmas and all doctrines ought to be esteemed and judged, is no other whatever than the prophetic and apostolic writings both of the Old and of the New Testament, as it is written (Ps. 119:105): 'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path'. And St. Paul saith (Gal. 1:18): 'Though an

angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you, let him be accursed'.

"But other writings, whether of the fathers or of the moderns, with whatever name they come, are in no wise to be equalled to the Holy Scriptures, but are all to be esteemed inferior to them, so that they be not otherwise received than in the rank of witnesses, to show what doctrine was taught after the Apostles' times also, and in what parts of the world that more sound doctrine of the Prophets and the Apostles has been preserved". Schaff, *Creeeds of Christendom*, III, 93, 94.

Clearly this is also expressed in the "Ten Conclusions of Berne", which in its second article declares: (translated from the German) "The Church of Christ makes no laws and precepts outside of the Word of God; whence it follows that all institutions of men, called Church-ordinances, cannot bind us except in so far as they are founded in and commanded by the Word of God." Schaff, III, 209. And in the First Helvetic Confession we read (Art. I): "The Holy, divine, biblical Scripture, which is the Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and proclaimed to the world by the Prophets and Apostles, is the very oldest, most perfect and most exalted doctrine, and it alone comprehends all that is conducive to the true knowledge, love and glory of God, to real and true piety, and to a pious, honorable and godly walk of life". And in the second article it declares that the Holy Scriptures shall not be interpreted in any other way than in its own light. It further declares in Art. III that we will esteem those holy fathers, that did not deviate from this sound rule of interpreting Scripture, not only as true interpreters, but also as chosen instruments of God through whom God spoke and worked. And in the fourth article of this confession all other teachings and institutions of men, leading us away from the living God, are declared to be vain and powerless, be they ever so beautiful and attractive, respected and venerable with age. And this is emphasized also in our own Netherland or Belgic Confession of Faith, which devotes an entire article to the sufficiency of Holy Scripture, as follows (Art. VII): "We believe that these Holy Scriptures fully contain the will of God, and that whatsoever man ought to believe unto salvation, is sufficiently taught therein. For since the whole manner of worship which God requires of us is written in them at large, it is unlawful for anyone, though an Apostle, to teach otherwise than we are now taught in the Holy Scriptures; nay though it were an angel from heaven, as the Apostle Paul saith. For since it is forbidden to add unto or to take away any thing from the Word of God, it doth thereby evidently appear that the doctrine thereof is most perfect and complete in all respects. Neither may we compare any writings of men, though ever so holy, with those

divine Scriptures; nor ought we to compare custom, or the great multitude, or antiquity, or succession of times or persons, or councils, decrees or statutes, with the truth of God, for the truth is above all; for all men are of themselves liars, and more vain than vanity itself. Therefore we reject with all our hearts whatsoever doth not agree with this infallible rule, which the Apostles have taught us, saying, Try the spirits whether they are of God; likewise, If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house".

And over against the Roman Catholic view that the Scriptures can only be interpreted by the Holy Mother Church, the Reformation proclaimed the principle of the perspicuity of Scripture. The Word of God is clear to all. It must be interpreted, not in the light of an officially established interpretation, but in its own light. Exegesis must be free. Not even dogmatics, not even the confessions of the Church may dominate exegesis. And the Bible is sufficiently clear to be given to and interpreted by all believers. No, indeed, the Reformers did not favor the view that every individual Christian must interpret the Bible apart from the Church of the present and of the past. They had a clear conception of the Church and of the calling of the Church to preach and preserve the Word of God. The individual believer cannot with impunity disregard his organic relationship to the Church. But the fact remains, that the interpretation of the Bible cannot be the privilege of a distinct class, even though they be the officebearers of the Church, but must be granted to every believer. The Church must not speak instead of the Bible, but must merely be instrumental in letting the Bible speak for itself. Hence, the Bible was translated into the language of the people, so that all might have access to its treasures. The Reformation conceived as a liberating movement, first of all liberated the Bible from Roman Catholic shackles!

II. The foregoing already suggests that the Reformation at the same time was a liberation toward the Bible. By this I mean to express the idea, that the Reformation meant to be a movement to subject all men and the whole man to the authority of the Scriptures. The very fact that they liberated the Scriptures from the shackles of human oppression, clearly shows this. Why did the Reformers consider it so important so paramount that the Bible should be permitted to speak for itself to the hearts and consciences of men? Only because they regarded the Scriptures as being the Word of God, and, therefore, as being the final court of appeal, as having absolute authority, to which man must subject himself.

It is here that the Reformation principally differs from modernism, and stands diametrically opposed to it. I have already mentioned that even the moderns of today claim to be sons of the Reformation. They

see in Martin Luther the herald of liberty, in whose steps they follow; they evaluate the Reformation as a great liberating movement, the work of which they, the moderns have carried on and still do carry forward. They look upon the Reformation as but another phase of the Renaissance. Both aimed at liberty. Both freed man from bondage, the latter in the sphere of science and art, the former in the sphere of religion. But they are mistaken, and the error they make is a very fundamental one. It is this: while the modernist declares the autonomy of Man, the Reformation insisted on the authority of Holy Scripture. The modern philosopher, scientist, preacher, will have nothing of authority. Man is the measure of all things. Freedom of thought means to him absolute independence of the human mind. But the Reformation insisted: "Das Wort sollen sie stehen lassen"! The Holy Scriptures were the sole criterion and source of our knowledge of God and salvation. It bound man's mind and conscience to the Book!

This philosophy of the autonomy of man, which makes man the measure of all things, which makes him the creator of his own world, the creator ultimately of his own God, received its most modern form in the preceding century, but is, nevertheless, very old. Always it found its adherents and prophets, that proclaimed it in some form or other. Principally it really dates back to the time when the devil subverted the Word of God into the lie: "Ye shall be like God". It reveals itself in three different, more or less clearly distinct forms, according as it declares the autonomy of the human mind, the reason of man; the autonomy of the human feeling, experience; or the autonomy of the human will or conscience. In the first form it is known as Rationalism; in its second appearance it is Mysticism; in its third manifestation it is Moralism.

Rationalism is the philosophy that seeks the source and principle, the norm and criterion of all knowledge and truth in the human mind. Reason is supreme. And it is independent. It may not be bound by any objective authority. It is its own authority. It will know only that which can and does arise in the mind of man. Whatever is contrary to reason, and whatever is beyond or above its scope of comprehension, it denies. It will have nothing to do with revelation. Its attitude to the Holy Scriptures is that of a superior. It does not submit but rule. It does not listen but judge. And whatever cannot stand before the bar of Reason in the Bible must needs be rejected. And as human reason is needs limited to the things that are seen and heard, and the Word of God deals with things which eye hath not seen and ear hath not heard, neither have arisen in the heart of man, it stands to reason that Rationalism is essentially and ends up in Agnosticism, which is Atheism. It is the philosophy of the fool, that saith in his heart: "there is no God". Needless

to say that the liberation of the Reformation has nothing in common with this licentiousness of Rationalism.

Mysticism also declares the autonomy of Man and finds the source of all knowledge and truth in the subject, but in distinction from Rationalism it makes feeling or experience the court of final appeal, whether it be the experience of the individual or of the Church. It declares that the letter, meaning the Bible, is dead, it is the Spirit that quickeneth. It has a wrong conception of the relation between the Word and the Spirit. It denies that God has once spoken His Word, that His Word of revelation is perfect and complete, and that now the Spirit does, indeed, speak and can only make that Word quick and powerful like a two-edged sword, but that He never speaks another Word than that which is revealed in the Bible. It also elevates the authority of Man above that of Scripture, denies, in fact, the authority of Holy Writ. And since also the feeling or experience of Man is limited to the things that can and do arise in the heart of Man, and the Word of God deals with those things that can never have their origin there, Mysticism like Rationalism terminates in the morass of Scepticism and Agnosticism. And again we say, that the Reformation of the sixteenth century stands diametrically opposed to modern Mysticism.

The last form this philosophy of the autonomy of Man assumes, we said, is Moralism. It also denies the authority of the Bible, and makes the sense of moral obligation, the conscience, the moral judgment the source of all knowledge and truth, the measure of all true religion. All men have an irradicable sense of obligation, the consciousness of a *must*. From this sense Moralism attempts to conclude that there must be a God Who causes this sense of obligation, Who says to all men: "Thou shalt". But from this consciousness they also derive the contents of their religion and worship of God. Man's morality is the source and criterion of all truth and goodness. The objective criterion of the Scriptures is denied. Only as a moral code or textbook can certain parts of Holy Writ, especially the Sermon on the Mount, be useful. Like Rationalism and Mysticism also Moralism declares the absolute autonomy of Man. And again, it is easy to see that modern Moralism falsely claims any affinity with the Reformation of the sixteenth century.

For, over against all these philosophies the Reformation loudly and clearly and very insistently proclaims the absolute authority of the Holy Scriptures. That the Bible is the Word of God, and that, therefore, the whole Church and every individual believer must unconditionally submit to the authority of Scripture, of the written Word, is the formal principle of the Reformation. It did not proclaim the freedom of Man from the Bible, but his liberty to subject himself to the authority of the Bible only. That was the clear-

cut truth the Reformers preached and which they never tired of reiterating. That was the strength of the Reformation. That was the ground of its unshakable conviction, even as it is the cause of the lack of conviction in our miserable age and of the modern church that they refuse to acknowledge the authority of Holy Writ! Many a passage from the official creeds of the churches of the Reformation I might quote in support of this statement, but I will limit myself to the following from the French Confession of Faith, Art. V: "We believe that the Word contained in these books has proceeded from God, and receives its authority from Him alone, and not from men. And inasmuch as it is the rule of all truth, containing all the rule of truth, containing all that is necessary for the service of God and for our salvation, it is not lawful for men, nor even for angels, to add to it, to take away from it or to change it. Whence it follows that no authority, whether of antiquity, or custom, or numbers, or human wisdom, or judgments, or proclamations, or edicts, or decrees, or councils, or visions, or miracles, should be opposed to these Holy Scriptures, but, on the contrary, all things should be examined, regulated, and reformed according to them." This was the formal principle of the reformation, and this principle we must maintain if we would be sons of that Reformation and perpetuate the liberty it inaugurated!

III. And thus I naturally approach my last point. For, the liberation of the Bible was accomplished, in order to restore the liberty toward the Bible, the liberty that consists in submitting to the sole authority of Holy Scripture; and this last liberation is necessary in order to make us truly free. There is no other liberty than that which is through the Word of God, and we have no other Word of God than that which we now possess in the Bible.

For what is true freedom? It cannot possibly be the same as human autonomy and absolute independence. It cannot be the state in which man is his own law, creates his own world, makes his own God, is the criterion of all things. It is not the condition in which man thinks as he wills, wills as he desires, acts as he pleases, without being limited and determined by any objective norm or standard. For man is not his own maker, but he is and remains a creature. He is not above, but under the law in the good sense of that word. And true liberty for him consists in this that with all his inner being and outward action, with mind and will and all his desires and powers he is in harmony with God. To please to do the will of God and to be able to do it,—that is liberty in the highest sense, nay, in the only true sense of the word.

But man has not this freedom. He is, on the contrary, in bondage. For he sinned and he is a sinner. He is in the bondage of condemnation, for he is guilty and is held under the sentence of death, and he knows

it. He has no peace, because he is not a free man. And he is in bondage under the dominion of sin, a slave of the devil. He will not, and he cannot, and he cannot will to will and to do the will of God. Nor can he ever liberate himself from the shackles of his bondage. For he can neither atone for his sin, nor deliver himself from corruption. All his life he is in the fear of death; and there is no way out!

Martin Luther was conscious, painfully conscious of this bondage of condemnation and sin. And he understood that only in righteousness could there be liberty, the liberty for which his soul yearned. Hence, it became the supreme question of his life: how can a man be righteous with God? And as he sought an answer to that urgent question, the Church confronted him. And as a faithful son of the holy mother Church he recognized her, and anxiously turned to her for an answer to his question: how can a man be justified before God? And the church answered: you can obtain forgiveness and righteousness by way of confession to a priest; and Luther did so, but found no peace. The church answered: you can obtain righteousness by doing the good works prescribed by the church; Luther did so, but his question still remained. The church said: seek righteousness in the way of self-denial and self chastisement; and Luther tells us that he tormented himself to death to make peace with God, but in vain. The church advised that he should make pilgrimages to Rome, and Luther went to the Papal city, only to find bitter disappointment. The church offered indulgences to bring peace to his troubled soul, but it was of no avail. And he tells us that although in those days he tormented himself, he found nothing but unrest and darkness.

The evangelical preaching of the town preacher at Erfurt had first brought him to a consciousness of sin and sent him in quest of righteousness and peace. That same preacher had boldly exhorted his readers to read the Bible. And Luther had gone in search of a Bible, but found none. For the Bible was an unknown quantity in those days, not only with the laity but with the clergy as well. And those that should have been preachers of the Word of God were deceivers, mockers, extortioners, lazily drifting along on the current of ecclesiastical tradition. The Bible was not to be found, and the question in Luther's soul became more urgent all the time, especially when a dangerous illness attacked him, and when a friend of his was struck by lightning at his side. It was the desire to find an answer to his question that induced him to abandon the study of law and to seek peace within the walls of the convent in Erfurt. There he found his answer, though he did not at once recognize it. And the answer came to him from an old Bible, which he found in the convent, locked to a chain and buried under the dust of years. From that volume of Scrip-

ture the wonderful words came to him and remained lodged in his soul: "The just shall live by faith"!

It was, however, not until later that the full significance of these words dawned upon him. In fact, only on his return from his visit to the seat of Roman hierarchy did the words strike him in their full force, and were they applied to his heart as an answer to his anxious question. In Rome he had been amazed and shocked by the corruption of the church as it was represented by the higher clergy. Thoroughly dissatisfied, and pondering all the time upon his spiritual problem, the old words rushed back into his consciousness, now, however, with all their peace affording power: "The just shall live by faith". Luther had found peace through the Bible as the Word of God, applied by the Spirit unto his heart; and, though at the moment he knew it not, God had prepared him at the same time for the work He had to do for him: to liberate the Bible from the bondage of the Church, in order that the Church might be called to return to the Bible, and through the Bible find liberty!

Another way to liberty there is not. For only if the Son shall make us free, we shall be free indeed. His cross and resurrection are the power to cut the shackles of our condemnation; by His Spirit He makes us free from the dominion of sin. And this liberty is not only proclaimed to us in the Gospel, but given unto us through that Gospel. The assurance that our sins are forgiven, and that we are righteous before God, set at liberty, cannot rest on anything less than the Word of God Himself. And that Word God by the Spirit of Christ speaks to us through the Word. To sweep away the hierarchical powers that would deprive the Church and the individual believer of that liberty which we have in Christ through the Word,—this is the great significance of the Reformation!

Let us learn the lesson. Let us be Reformed, indeed, but *Protestant* Reformed always, always zealously defending and jealously watching over the formal principle of the Reformation. Always the danger is lurking that the word of man, be it in the form of ecclesiastical declarations, creeds and confessions, private opinions and false doctrines, interposes itself between the Word of God and our faith. This may never be! Confessions are good and they are necessary. But never may they be more than means to bring to us and to preserve for us the Word of God. And always must they be tested by and judged in the light of the Word of God as we possess it in the Holy Scriptures. Then, and only then, shall we preserve the precious heritage God again bestowed upon His Church in the world through the Reformation of the sixteenth century: the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free!

H. H.

* Lecture delivered on Reformation Day, 1940

Hope Perfectly

I Peter 1:13.

Sounds rather unreal and impossible.

We live in a world without hope in spite of all the promises by leaders and leading men. Hope? The whole structure of civilization shakes and the soul of man is filled with horror, when he reads his newspaper or listens to the radio. There is seemingly no end to the destruction caused by this second war now fought in every part of the world and in every sphere of life. Let us forget the years of peace, for they were nothing less but the preparation of another war, and prepare ourselves for the final catastrophe—the end of it all. Thus speaks the man of the world.

Calmly, as always, the Word speaks of hope.

Hope, because there is an inheritance promised and kept in store for you. No, you cannot see it now, but it will be revealed in the day of Jesus Christ, when He returns upon the clouds of heaven. This inheritance is the complete and perfect salvation, promised to those who are strangers and pilgrims in the world. And as pilgrims they cannot be without this hope as long as the battle continues, otherwise they also will be swept away by the winds and tempests that rise against them. Their way leads them through the midst of many enemies who try to seduce them from the life of their pilgrimage and thus deprive them of their hope.

Necessary and fitting also with a view to their present condition. Yes, they possess the life of hope, but they possess it only in principle. Besides, the stranger must pass through many fiery trials and is inclined to lose courage. Hence, the admonition is closely connected with the life of grace: hope to the end. Grace it is to hope, because hope is closely associated with faith. Faith, the gift of grace, is the clinging of the soul to the infallible truth of the Word of God. And hope is the expectation that all shall be accomplished. Hope therefore, is one of the fruits of faith.

Live the life of hope, that is, live the life of sanctification. When walking in the ways of darkness, the pilgrim cannot hope. He is not able to lay hold on eternal life, nor on the eternal promises. While marching onward the pilgrim must not forget it. There is an inheritance in store for him. And the *object* of his hope, is, of course, the end of that journey, for, at the end his salvation will be complete and his joy shall know no bounds.

However, the way to the end is difficult. Seemingly, while here, he is in the midst of all kinds of danger. There are many enemies and temptations manifold. Satan, the world and his own flesh form a strong league to give him battle. Does not the prince of dark-

ness employ many means to draw him away from the object of his hope? Is not the world for evermore inviting him and extending its own joy in exchange of the promised salvation? His own flesh rather not fight and oppose the enemy, but drift along with the majority. He complains of his infirmities, his wavering and doubting. Shall he not give up?

Peter, as a matter of experience more than any of the other Apostles, knew about it and is capable to admonish. He knew about the sinful self-sufficiency, and, as a result, knew about wavering, fruit of his conceit resulting in disappointment.

Therefore, he exhorts: Hope to the end! Hope completely. Hope perfectly. He means to say: Let the life of faith be active. Exercise this hope. Let your soul and mind, your will and desires aspire to the full assurance and perfection of the hope. This is possible indeed, as an operation and fruit of the life of regeneration.

Regeneration, a beautiful word. It is a new life—a life of heaven and a life for heaven, a life for the present as well as for the future. That life longs for the end. Now the question may be asked: Does Peter mean to say, hope until you have reached the end, or, hope now perfectly, completely? The former is, of course, also necessary. No one of God's children can do without it until the end is reached. Nevertheless, the emphasis must be placed on the latter: Hope now! To be fully assured and to be able to give battle, demands the completeness of the hope, that should be attained. Now. Be not double-hearted or double-minded. James admonishes, a double-hearted man is unstable in *all* of his ways. He is like a floundering ship without a rudder, hence, without direction, hence, without making progress.

Needless to say, that with this expectation in mind and soul, the affections must be turned away from all other things. It is impossible to look to heaven and the things of heaven and at the same time to desire and to seek the things here below. The pleasures of below do not coincide with the treasures above, for they stand diametrically opposed to each other.

A man cannot hope and look for the revelation of Jesus Christ and at the same time cling to the things of the earth. If his hope is fixed upon the things of the present, his hope is imperfect and shall perish ending in disappointment, because all that is of below shall come to an end and he will pass away with it. There can be only one object to hope for and that object is the revelation of Jesus Christ as the Head of His Church, bringing with him the fulfillment of all that is promised you. Also, with a view to that coming, the promised inheritance is safe now and shall be yours then. Christ and all his benefits shall be, at the same time, the revelation of the sons of God. This consideration, to be revealed with him, is full of

comfort. At the present the children of God are strangers and pilgrims. They are the refuse of the world, an easy prey for the contempt of the enemy. As rubbish they are treated and it looks as though it will thus remain for ever. They are put to scorn, when they testify concerning the things of the other world, of which they speak. Besides, although objectively the inheritance and complete salvation is in Christ Jesus, the Lord Himself is hidden and therefore despised in this world. Power and glory, so they confess, but this power and glory are not as yet seen.

Hope needs to be hope indeed. The pilgrim must be assured of the coming of the Lord. Let the fact of that coming live in your soul *now*, Peter and the saints are fully assured of it. You are not mistaken and therefore, do not hesitate to say: He shall be revealed! Boldness? Why no, if living by faith you cannot speak any other language.

Take hold of it!

Hope and live by and out of that one great fact. Be fully assured, stranger, that at the revelation of Jesus Christ you shall not be ashamed, when he shall appear in the fulness of the brightness of his glory. You will be publicly vindicated and even the wicked must acknowledge in that day, your Lord and you are glorious indeed.

Hope to the end or hope perfectly!

Hope for the revelation of Jesus Christ!

Hope, because grace shall be brought unto you.

The question is, what is that grace? (Some read instead of grace, joy). Does Peter mean to say: "You shall receive grace at the end?" That would make it rather difficult to understand and it is at the same time inconceivable. The question presents itself, if grace was to be brought to God's child at the revelation of Jesus Christ, is the stranger without grace, while on his difficult journey? He finds himself in the midst of a sinful world surrounded by many enemies. Can he, without grace, fight the spiritual battle? All things are possible, but it is impossible for any man without grace to be a pilgrim and stranger in the earth. Just as impossible as to love the Lord. No one can see the Kingdom of God, unless God give him grace. Besides, Scripture tells us, "it is given you (by grace) not only to believe, but also to suffer for His sake". Without it no one can nor will be a stranger and a pilgrim. He cannot believe in nor suffer for Christ's sake, except when grace is given him.

Grace it is to believe, to suffer, to fight, to hope, to make sure of salvation, to be a light in the midst of darkness, in spite of all the miserable teachings of the free will of man (openly or otherwise). From our side, grace is unearned goodness and lovingkindness, ill-deserved, upward. Grace it is, when our sins are forgiven and the principle of the new life, given in

regeneration is manifested in conversion. And without this grace it is impossible to hope, to hope to the end or to hope perfectly.

Grace however, is much more. From our point of view, as a personal experience, grace is first of all, the forgiveness of our sins. And this of necessity. *I* must know whether or not my sins are forgiven. If that knowledge is wanting, it will leave one without comfort, trust and hope. For without it, sin remains and sin that is not forgiven, means separation from the living God and there will be no peace. Take away sin and the relation between God and the sinner is restored. Hence, not at the end, but at the beginning of the journey the pilgrim received grace. And that grace at the beginning is sufficient to fight the battle, to belong to the party of the living God, to be children of light in the midst of darkness and corruption. That is God's Word.

But that which is received in principle here, shall be completed and will be a finished product at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

The same grace at the beginning and at the end.

Moreover, if we read Scripture carefully, we will find that grace is closely connected with glory. In fact, grace is the beginning of glory and when it shall presently be completed it will reveal glory. We find it often difficult to distinguish between these two. They are inseparably connected, because when we speak of grace we speak at the same time of glory.

Hence, God's glory is the fullest manifestation of His divine attribute of grace. Thus we somewhat approach the meaning of this word, although we cannot comprehend it, nor can we express it adequately, as to its deepest content.

Sufficient to say, the God of grace is the God of grace in and for His people. Thus, His grace is His beauty, His glory and it shall be yours in the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Hope then, have your eyes fixed upon that grace—perfectly.

This implies, that, while you are delivered from your sins in principle, you shall be delivered of the body of sin and of corruption completely. The Lord does not stop half-way, but shall finish His own work. After the end being reached, perfect beauty and glory shall be revealed in you and through you. For, while through death the soul is made glorious, at the revelation of Jesus Christ, both body and soul shall partake of it in the day of all glory.

Therefore, be sober and gird up the loins of your mind.

Be sober, or, watch, is the requisite while the pilgrim is on his journey. A man who is not sober, is first of all unable to discern between the true relations of life. He is not capable to distinguish between right and wrong, because he is like a drunken

man who moves in an unreal world. Hence, he is not able to render good judgment. He may boast and speak much about his knowledge, his strength, but he is not living at the moment a real life. So it is with one who is spiritually drunk. He does not see the things as they truly are. Consequently, he is at a loss and cannot maintain himself in a crisis. Spiritual sobriety is indeed most necessary for the preservation of grace, that is, he must live out of the life of grace. The new life must be predominant, it must rule and guide him. It must be his criterion and with it he must turn to the Word of God and its promises. He must see and know more and more the true relation between the visible and invisible world, between the things of the earth and the things of heaven, his pilgrimage and the object of his hope. Therefore, he must know the relation between life and death, time and eternity and the ultimate purpose of it all. In pain and trouble, in time of peace and in the days of persecution he must evaluate all things with a view to the end. He must hope perfectly.

Girding the loins of the mind!

This figurative language refers to the loose robes that tangle a man's feet. This, to the athletes of the arena, was such a bother that they laid aside their garments, in order that the race may be won. In order that the mind may be concentrated upon the goal set before him, the runner could not be troubled in any way by his robe.

The pilgrim must not be troubled by the things of this present world. How often are the trivialities of the present an unsurmountable obstacle to him. He can worry and be troubled with the things that pass away. His mind becomes befuddled by what is really to his disadvantage.

Let your mind be willing to that it is called to do. Be not fooled by the things that are but for a moment. Distinguish and judge all things by the Word of God.

His promises are forever the same.

They shall be fulfilled to the full in the final promise: For the grace is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Hope perfectly!!

W. V.

Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly dove
With all Thy quickening powers,
Come shed abroad a Saviour's love
And that shall kindle ours.

Dedicatory Psalm And Song

(Psalm 30)

The superscription of this psalm and song tells us that it was occasioned by the dedication of the house. There we must put the period. What follows tells us who the author of the psalm and song is, namely, *David*.

Many expositors tell us that this song was composed by David unto the dedication of the temple. As such it was proleptical, that is, it reached forward to the time when Solomon would really and actually do what David here does in prospect. As Spurgeon puts it: "Glory to Thee for all the grace, I have not tasted yet!"

We will deny that such is possible. It is certain that David saw the House of God in prospect, by faith and hope. It is also certain that he conceived of the necessity of dedicating this future House unto the service of Jehovah.

Still, we are inclined to believe that David composed this song for the dedication of his own house. (II Sam. 5:11).

The reason for this inclination is the positive language in the superscription; also the contents of the psalm itself. It is very personal. As such it would fit admirably for the dedication of the dwelling where the composer would intend to live.

He would have his house dedicated.

A strange derivation has that word. Initially, it meant to stuff something unto the choking, straightening, closing of something.

Still, the meaning is clear. And also beautiful.

It meant that the people who dedicated a house, or later, the temple, would serve and sing and pray and petition the Lord to come and fill the dwelling or temple, so that it was entirely full of the presence of the Lord. The Arabians used the word for *to understand*, that is, to be filled with the knowledge of a thing.

At first flush, the content of the psalm does not seem to fit the exalted purpose. It seems a very strange dedicatory hymn. In it David speaks of the healing of his body, the snare into which he had fallen, the terror of God's absence and the gladness of the Lord's return unto him. He speaks of weeping at night and joy in the morning. He lauds the wonders of God's salvation wherein His anger is but for a moment, but where there is life in His favor. It all seems so narrow and personal. Inasmuch as the dedication of David's house would be a public affair, we are inclined to ask: Why not be a little more general, all-embracing, catholic in your dedicatory psalm, David!

As soon as we think such thoughts we are also sorry for them. It is not seemly. If those thoughts

arise, it is because we are blinded by nature to see the wonders of revelation.

David is the type of Christ Jesus, the Lord. Everything in salvation is very personal: it all centers around the wondrous Person of the Son of God. All the labor of His soul, all His grievous suffering and death, all the terrible battles He had to fight are the source of our salvation.

And David might live before and experience before this labor of Jesus. This is also the reason that the dedicatory psalm is so intensely personal in its scope.

David had gone through a very trying experience.

There was the grave, the pit, the depth; there was the anger of the Lord, weeping and trouble. There was a host of enemies that stood beholding. It is the Golgotha of David in miniature. Or better: it was the Golgotha of Jesus in prophecy.

This psalm is personal and the dedication is personal, because it concerns the dwelling of the King of Israel. And the house of the King on Mount Zion is the prototype of the House of God with its many mansions.

David sings this song when his troubles are over past.

O Lord, I will extol Thee, because Thou hast lifted me up! There you have the key-note of the whole psalm.

And the hated enemies shall not be able to rejoice over David. Many were his enemies. And they hated him with cruel hatred. They would have counted it blessedness to see David engulfed in the pit to rise no more. It seems that David suffered from a bodily disease so that he could not take possession of the house that was built for him at Jerusalem. Already the enemy rejoiced, but their joy was premature.

From out of the depth of suffering and trouble, David had called upon the name of the Lord. He had wept in the night-season. An echo of that agonizing cry we have in the 10th verse: Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me: Lord, be Thou my helper.

Sinful David had trusted in the strength of his mountain. God had helped him to get the ascendancy over the enemy and he was victorious throughout. Then he had forgotten.

But God is God and will not be forgotten by His creature.

He hid His face—and David was troubled. God hid His face and David's miseries multiplied. The evening found him weeping and spent. And so he went into the long night of darkness and suffering. It was for him as if he descended into a pit. The grave seemed to open her mouth in order to swallow him up so that he would rise no more. And from the depths he had cried unto his God: What profit is there in my blood? Shall the dust praise Thee, O Lord? Shall it declare Thy truth?

David realized that this darkness, this pit, that grave were all a revelation of the wrath of God's love. God had something better in store for David. But he must walk in the way of life. He may not sin. He must cease to be proud. Therefore the chastizing hand of God had gone out against him.

But note that David had a very strong plea with the God of His salvation. He wanted to praise God. There you have the secret of the great power that God's people have with their Father in heaven. Shall the dust praise Thee, O Lord? In that question David reveals the deepest motive of his big heart. He wants to praise God.

And God heard.

Attend to this: God turned his mourning into dancing; He took off his sackcloth and girded him with gladness. Beauty for ashes!

And the purpose is theological: to the end that my glory may sing praise to Thee and not be silent! There you have the end of God's people for evermore.

My glory unto Thy praise!

My glory is the sum total of all the blessings that God bestows upon me. And all these blessings make my life glorious, that is, I will shine of goodness and grace; of power and might that is spiritual.

And all that power and goodness, grace and might are given me but for one solitary purpose: I must return with them to the Fountain of all such beauties; I must be to the praise of my God forever!

David had learned his lesson. Listen to the very beginning of his psalm and song: I will extol Thee, O Lord!

To extol is to lift up on high. It means that you will enumerate all the virtues of your God. You will count them one by one and evaluate them aright. From morning till night you will catalogue all the wonderful praises of your Maker!

Moreover, you will turn to the right and to the left in the midst of the church of God and you will do all in your power to make these beauties known. Listen to David in verse 4: Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness! You will know that your way runs parallel with the ways of all God's people; you know that also they are inclined to forget the Rock of their salvation. Therefore you will stand at the crossroads and you will point forever to the great Source of all glory: the blessed Triune Jehovah who keepeth truth forever!

Yes, the end of your dedicatory prayer will be: I will give thanks unto Thee forever! My Lord and my God!

All this is fulfilled in Jesus.

For Him there was the night that was eternal and the weeping endured for that awful night. Hebrews tells us that He went to His God with strong crying

and tears. Oh, who shall be able to fathom the suffering of David fulfilled, and that is Jesus? The yawning pit and the open grave did close over His defenceless head. And out of the pit came the groaning of the Son of God. All the while the enemies stood beholding. They stuck out the lip and said: There is no help for Him with God! Where is Thy God, O Jesus of Nazareth?!

David told us of God's anger that endured but for a moment. That moment became pregnant with wrath that was eternal. Eternal death. Shall the dust praise Thee, O my Lord and my God! Why hast Thou forsaken Me?

And here is the victory of Jesus, my Lord: In the very depth of the pit He loved God and wanted to praise Him. He insisted in praising God from out of the yawning gulf of eternal death and misery. He loved God for the very virtues of righteousness and holiness which burned Him in untold suffering of hellish torment.

That is His victory.

And He arose. For God had lifted Him up.

Henceforth the better David lives to the end that His glory may sing praise to the Father, blessed forever! Such is the eternal life of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Do you now understand why this psalm and song is to the dedication of the House of the King? Properly, it is Golgotha and the morning in Joseph's garden.

Watch: Do you not see the Lord Jesus revealing His way to the heart of God?

Listen to Him in verse 4 of this psalm; He is speaking to you, my brother: Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness!

Henceforth that will be your life on earth and in the heavens above. Your glory shall be to the end that you may praise Him forever.

Oh, when shall we learn to perfection that all our happiness is in the service of the King Supreme?

G. V.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Young men seeking admission into our Theological School are requested to appear before the Theological School Committee at their next meeting, May 19, 1941, in the Fuller Ave. Church parlors. Aspirants must have in their possession a certificate of membership and recommendation from their consistory and also a certificate of health from a reputed physician.

C. Hanko, Sec'y.

Verstoken In Een Hut

(Psalm 31)

Het gebeurt soms, dat een kind bitterlijk weent. De liefhebbende moeder kwam dan en droogde de tranen, nam haar kind in de armen en fluisterde het troostelijke woordjes toe. Langzamerhand had het weenen en schreien uit en een glimlach kwam op het rood-geweende aangezichtje. De storm was over.

En toch gebeurt het, dat zulk een kind nog een paar malen snikt.

't Zijn de na-weeën van het doorgestane lijden; het doffe narommelen van den storm.

We denken daaraan als we dezen psalm bestudeeren.

Toen David dezen psalm dichtte was den strijd doorstreden. Hij was tot kalmte gekomen; rustte in de armen Gods. Zie maar de verzen 20-25.

En toch hooren we bij het lezen een krampachtig snikken.

De diepste oorzaak van de smarten van David was de zonde. Ge leest het in den psalm door slechts één woord, vers 11. Hij verbindt al zijn droefenis, al zijn jaren van zuchten, zijn verval van krachten en de doorknaging van zijn beenderen—hij verbindt het al aan "mijne ongerechtigheid".

O, het is de eerlijkheid van God. Het is de oprechtheid van den Geest des Allerhoogsten. Het is een goed kind dat naar zijn vader aardt. David is Gods kind want hij draagt den Heiligen Geest in het binnenste van hem. Door dien Geest spreekt hij billikheden. God bezocht hem; en David weet waarom. Hij wordt door den Geest eerlijk als God: "Ik Verzweeg geen kwaad, dat in mij werd gevonden!" Daar hebt ge het geheim van verhooring. Het einde van dien weenen-ellendige is 't verborgen van Gods tente.

Wat die ongerechtigheid geweest is weten we niet. Welke periode van David's lijden hier geweest is, is niet met zekerheid te zeggen. Niemand weet het dan God—en David. Ons is 't niet geopenbaard.

't Lijkt veel op de periode van David's leven toen hij vluchten moest voor het aangezicht van Saul.

Ja, David zegt het zelf, dat zijn ellende kwam om zijner ongerechtigheid wille.

En die ellende was tweeëlei. Subjectief en objectief. Van binnen en van buiten.

Van buiten was daar de ellende die hem van menschen overkwam. En ook die was tweeërlei. En de eerste soort was kwader dan de tweede.

Daar waren eerst de geheel en al goddeloozen. Ze worden beschreven in de verzen 12, 14, 18 en 19.

Dat soort menschen zijn de ellendigste aller schepselen. Het is het geslacht van Adams-kinderen die temidden van Gods volk wandelen. Ze bedrijven niet

alleen zonde met de dingen van Gods schepping, doch ook met de dingen van Gods koninkrijk.

In dit geval hadden ze het op David gemunt.

David zegt van hen in vers 12, dat hij (David) door middel van zijn wederpartijders een smaad geworden is voor zijn naburen en een schrik voor zijn bekenden. Die wederpartijders waren valsche menschen, vers 19, het waren menschen die hard spreken tegen den rechtvaardige in hoogmoed en verachting. Bedektelijk ook, want ze hadden een net gespreid in het verborgene. Ook hoopte men, dat David in dat net verwaard zou raken.

In elk geval, dat soort menschen had er voor gezorgd, dat Davids naam in het slijk vertreden werd. Het was zelfs zoo erg geworden, dat als men David aan zag komen in de verte, men een straatje om liep. Luistert maar: die mij op de straten zien, vlieden van mij weg.

Ook heeft het een tamelijk langen tijd geduurd, want David klaagt er over, dat men hem behandelde als een doode. Men was hem zoo aan 't negeeren gegaan, dat hij uit de gedachten des harten verdwenen was. Hij gevoelde zich eenzaam en verstooten. Men behandelde David als een bedorven vat, vers 13. Dat wil zeggen, men verwierp hem als geheel en al onbruikbaar. "They had no longer any use for David."

Door middel van dat ergste soort, was de geheele menigte van Davids kennissen tegen hem vervreemd. Luistert maar: Ik hoorde de naspraak van velen; er was vrees van rondom dewijl ze tezamen tegen mij beraadslagen.

Ook mede daardoor was er onvrede in 't diepe hart.

David spreekt van ellende, benauwdheid, bangigheid. In de eenzaamheid was hij gaan schreien, want zijn oog was doorknaagd van verdriet, mitsgaders zijn ziel en zijn vleesch. Zijn leven werd verteerd door droefenis en zijn jaren van zuchten. Al zijn kracht was vervallen en zijn beenderen doorknaagd.

Toen maakte David een verkeerde conclusie. Hij noemt het later dan ook een spreken in zijn haasten. Dit is wat hij uitsprak als de eenig mogelijke toepassing: O God! Ik ben afgesneden van voor Uwe oogen!

Laat ons echter niet te haastig zijn met ons oordeel.

Denkt U de toestand: Venijngevers vergiftigen al Uw naburen, zoodat men tezamen U verwerpt als een smaad en een schande. Men vervolgt U hittiglijk den ganschen dag. Ge hoort van alle zijden de naspraak van velen; spreekt men dan al tegen U zoo is het hardheid in hoogmoed en verachting. Men spuwt alle wrevel en wrok tegen U uit. Ook bemerkt ge dat men U lagen legt om U te doen struikelen. Wordt Uw naam dan al genoemd, zoo oordeelt men, dat ge nergens meer toe deugt: ge zijt als een bedorven vat geworden.

Zoudt ge U daarover niet berouwen en zeggen: God

heeft mij vergeten, heeft mij afgesneden? Denkt er om, dat David gewoon was om de dingen die hem overkwamen aan God vast te binden. God heeft gezegd: vloek David!

Doch David trok een verkeerde conclusie.

Want God had iets voor met hem. God wilde hem dichter en nader tot Zich brengen. En ook dit, en dat was de hoofdzaak: David moest een type zijn van den te komen Christus. Let er op, dat dezen psalm het laatste kruiswoord van Jezus bevat: In Uwe hand be- veel Ik Mijnen geest!

En toch kwam David terecht.

Hij is gaan roepen tot God.

Het volgende moment ter beschrijving is daarom het toevluchtnemend geloof van David. En dat schittert hier in dezen psalm.

O, wie denkt niet aan 't berijmde van een anderen psalm: 'k Zal tot God mijn Steenrots spreken: Waarom God verlaat Gij mij?

David is aan 't weenen gegaan. Ja, maar hij weende tot God. Siddert dan, gij Godvergetenen! 't Is doodsgevaarlijk om den rechtvaardige te benauwen.

Laat ons luisteren.

Hebt ge al gemerkt, dat David zeer onstuimiglijk te werk gaat? Hij kwam van de straten terug. Pas had men hem nog uitgekreten. De heftige en venijnige woorden klinken nog na in zijn ziel: hoogmoed en verachting in harde woorden. Hoogmoed: men had zich vergeleken met David en gezegd, hardelijk: David, zoo zou *ik* zeker niet gedaan hebben; *ik* ben rein zonder overtreding. David, wijk van mij, ik ben heiliger dan gij! Verachting: men had de verkeerdheid van David (doch het was valsch) breed uitgemeten; men had een beeld van hem opgehangen waar hij zelf van gruwde. En met een toneelspel van afgrijzen had men zich van hem afgekeerd. Hoogmoed en verachting: messen en zwaarden tot wreede en harde vervolging.

En David spoedde zich naar huis. Of was het een hol in de wildernis?

Onstuimiglijk begon hij te bidden: In U betrouw ik! Laat mij niet beschaamd worden! Tot in der eeuwigheid! Neig Uw oor tot mij! Red mij haastiglijk! Wees mij tot een sterken Rotssteen!

Zulk bidden is God aanloopen als een waterstroom.

Dat doet men eerst als alles week, als alles waar we eerst op vertrouwden ons ontnomen wordt. Dat is ook de reden, waarom we in het net gevoerd worden. We moeten bij den voortduur leeren, dat alle andere grond zandgrond is. Daarom komen die benauwde en enge tijden.

Zoo stond het met David er bij. Zijne vrienden en kennissen waren vervreemd. De vijanden hadden de overhand. Zijn oog, ziel, buik, beenderen waren vergaan. En hij smolt weg in tranen.

Doch dan zijn we aangekomen in den toestand waar we bij God passen. Stort dan Uw hart voor Hem

uit, o volk! Psalm 62:9.

En dat helpt. Hoort maar: In Uwe hand beveel ik mijnen geest; Gij hebt mij verlost, Heere, Gij God der waarheid! Vers 6.

David brengt alles tot God. Zijn vijanden, het net, zijn benauwdheid, zijn droefheid, tranen, smart, mitsgaders zijne ongerechtigheid—het alles wordt uitgesteld voor het vriendelijk aangezicht.

En hij doet dat op grond van Gods deugden. Hij roept God aan en smeekt Hem om hulp op grond van het Deugdenbeeld. Gaat het lijstje maar eens langs: Uwe gerechtigheid, vers 2; sterke rotssteen en vast huis, vers 3; om Uws naams wil, vers 4; God der waarheid, vers 6; wees mij genadig, vers 10; mijne tijden zijn in Uwe hand, vers 16; het lichtende aangezicht, vers 17; Uwe goedertierenheid, vers 19; Verbondsgetrouwigheid en veiligheid, verzen 20, 21, enz.

Hebt ge wel gemerkt, dat David God aangrijpt in Zijn deugden? En dat hij pleit op die deugden?

Weïnu, al die deugden zijn Jezus Christus. In Hem zijn al die deugden geopenbaard, typisch onder het Oude en op Golgotha onder het Nieuwe verbond. O, het bloed van Golgotha spreekt van heerlijke dingen, van betere dingen dan eenige deugd der menschen, al zou het ook de deugd van Abel zijn, die stamelt in zijn vergoten bloed aan den morgen der historie. Dat deugdenbeeld van God heeft vele namen. Het is met dat deugdenbeeld gelijk een geslepen diamant: elke zijde fonkelt van een andere kleur; het geheel is de schittering der eeuwige liefde Gods.

Verbindt ge nu een smeevende heilige in vindenstijd aan dien diamant, zoo hebt ge een geredde sterveling. Daar zingt men blij met dankb're psalmen: Des Heeren hand heeft groote kracht! Voor dezulken is Hij tot een Rots.

Toen werd David verstoken in een hut. God verbergde hem in 't verborgen van Zijn tent. Leest maar de verzen 20 en 21.

God maakte Zijn goedertierenheid wonderlijk aan David. Dat wil zeggen, dat David die goedertierenheid ervoer. Toen ging hij aan 't wonderen, zingen, jubelen. Toen zag hij, dat hij zelfs veilig was in de dagen van zijn wegsmelten in tranen. Toen David schreide tot God, waren zijn tranen en lijden dierbaar in Gods oog.

IJlings is toen David aan 't onderwijzen gegaan.

Hij begon met een loflied op God.

Geloofd zij de Heere! Want Hij is eeuwiglijk goed voor degenen die Hem vreezen. Goed is Hij want Hij draagt ze achter het voorhangsel tot in het binnenste heiligdom. Daar zijn ze veilig. De tong der leugenaars zal ze niet schaden.

Heeft God Davids's geestelijk oog der heerlijkheid van Sion doen zien, zoo begint Hij te ijveren voor God tegenover de goddeloozen en roept hij om de verdelging der goddeloozen, verzen 18 en 19.

En Gods volk zal hij leeren.

Luistert, gij Godsgezinden! David spreekt!

Hebt den Heere lief!

Geliefden! Daarin ligt alles. Hebt Hem lief, loopt Hem achterna den ganschen lieven dag—en het zal wel zijn. Hebt Hem lief en Hij behoedt U ten dage der bezoeking, wanneer de hoogmoedigen Uwe tent naderen. Hebt Hem lief, want Hij behoedt U tot in eeuwigheid.

Zijt sterk en Hij zal Uw hart versterken, gij allen die op den Heere hoopt.

Ja, het is waar, ge zult nog wel een paar maal snikken—de strijd was dan ook hevig; de duivel, de wereld, de inwonende boosheid—ze zijn allen gruwelijke en harde vijanden. Geen nood echter: ge zijt veilig in de armen Gods. Van anderen eeuwige armen!

't Zit alles vast op de vervulling van dezen psalm, toen Jezus het moegestreden en moegeschreide hart neervleide in 's Vaders armen en zeide aan 't einde van brullen en klagen in eeuwigen nacht: In Uwe handen, Vader, beveel Ik Mijnen geest!

En dat moogt ge Hem nabidden, mijn broeder!

Hier denk ik aan den eenvoud van kleine kinderen. En ook aan Jezus' woord. Hebt ge wel eens kleine kinderen hooren bidden? Ge moet eens luisteren, want het is heilzaam.

Luistert, de kleine bidt. 't Is avond geworden. "Zoo leg ik mijn hoofdje neer, opdat morgen bij 't ontwaken. . . ."

Groote, sterke, ferme man! Hebt ge Uw les geleerd? Wanneer zullen we dan eens klein worden bij God die groot is?

Vertrouw op Hem; Hij zal U versteken in Zijn hut.

Voorts: hebt Hem lief, o volk!

G. V.

IN MEMORIAM

The consistory of the Roosevelt Park Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids hereby wishes to express its heartfelt sympathy with our brother deacon R. Doornbush in the loss of his father,

Mr. J. DOORNBUSH

May our covenant God comfort the bereaved brother and his family and console them with the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

The Consistory of the Roosevelt Park
Protestant Reformed Church.

Marinus Schipper, Pres.
Peter Dykema, Clerk.

Miriam And Aaron's Revolt Against Moses

We read, "And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman."

The name of the woman is not revealed. Who might she have been? Calvin was addicted to the view that she was none other than Zipporah—a view which he founded upon the following consideration. "She had been brought back by her father, Jethro, only a little while before the delivery of the law, so that at that time she was still alive. Nothing is said of her death, so that it must be assumed that she had not died. If, therefore, this Ethiopian woman was one other than Zipporah, Moses must be charged with the reproach of polygomy. Besides, as an octogenarian, he would have been but little suited for a second marriage. Such a marriage would not have been practicable in the desert. Finally, the Ethiopians (in the original text the woman is called a Cushite) and the Medianites were the same people, so that the woman's being called an Ethiopian does not militate against the view that she was Zipporah."

These arguments are not conclusive. If the Ethiopian was Zipporah, it would have to be regarded as strange that she is referred to in Scripture merely as the "Ethiopian woman". Then, the marital union of Moses and Zipporah was one of long standing; and Zipporah was the mother of Moses two sons. It must therefore be considered most strange and unlikely that Miriam, so long a time after, would criticize Moses for his having married Zipporah. So the conclusion to which we are driven is that Zipporah had died, that the "Ethiopian" was one other than her and that thus Moses had married for the second time.

Why did Miriam object to the Ethiopian woman? Her reason was "the woman's being an Ethiopian." The sacred narrator makes this plain, "And Miriam . . . spake against Moses. . . . ; for he had married an Ethiopian woman". Just why did Miriam (and Aaron) disapprove of the woman and on her account speak against Moses? The sacred narrator does not go into details. However, the brief statement, "For she was an Ethiopian" makes it plain that all that Miriam could possibly hold against the woman was her being an Ethiopian, that is, a foreigner, a stranger, one not of Miriam's race, thus a non-Israelite. And the statement, "And Miriam spake against Moses on account of the Ethiopian woman," interpreted in the light of the statement immediately following, "for he had married an Ethiopian woman," tells us that *Miriam took Moses severely to task solely on account*

of his having married one who was an Ethiopian, possibly a negress.

Miriam did wrong, certainly in disapproving of the woman just because she was an Ethiopian. For the woman was, must have been, a God-fearing person, thus a *true* daughter of Abraham, though a foreigner—one who had said, “Thy people shall be my people, and thy God shall be my God.” If not, Moses would not have married her. In the old dispensation, the Jews were not God’s people, but God’s people were Jews and not only Jews but also Moabites and Ethiopians, the Ruths and the Rahabs, in short, as many of the surrounding nations as it pleased the Lord to transport out of the darkness of heathendom into the light of His kingdom. Though there is no ground in Scripture for saying that their number was large, yet they were there. And the law even made provision for them. If a stranger would keep the passover, he might, provided he and all his men-children be circumcised. Having received this sign in his flesh, he might come near and keep it. And he should be as one that was born in the land (Ex. 12:48). The coming to the light on the part of these “strangers” was predictive of the calling of the gentiles and thus an affirmation of the word of God to Abraham that in him would all the families of the earth be blessed. It was not wrong for an Israelite to marry an converted gentile. Why then did Miriam object to Moses’ marrying the Ethiopian? Simply because the woman was an Ethiopian, was thus a woman without standing with Miriam. To think that Moses should have selected that negress (a negress she may have been) for his wife. It was racial pride that had pitted Miriam against the woman. The spirit evinced by Miriam was like unto that which the Baptist found it necessary to rebuke, when he said to the multitude, “Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.” (Luke 3:8)

But it may not have been merely her racial and family pride. Miriam was truly a prophetess. But her position in the church was far inferior to that of Moses. He enjoyed prerogatives that she and Aaron did not have. Was this also perhaps one of her fundamental grievances? Was she envious of her brother and was she more or less unconsciously, without being fully aware of it using his having married the Ethiopian merely as a pretext, as a screen to hide the real reasons of her perturbation? It may be. And perhaps she was also envious of the Ethiopian woman. There must have been a strong bond of sympathy between Moses and this woman. This accounts for his having married her after Zipporah’s decease. She was to him a real helpmeet, so we may imagine, the true mate of his soul, a woman with whom he could have

fellowship on a high spiritual plane, a truly lovely person. The result was that after his marriage with this woman, he leaned more and more upon her and less upon Miriam and Aaron. It was in her that he was now wont to confide. Thus the woman had come to stand between him and Miriam. This was perhaps more than she could endure.

Now it must not be supposed that in admonishing and rebuking Moses, Miriam revealed to him the real reasons of her chagrin. Perhaps she wasn’t aware of them herself. There need be no doubt that she assailed Moses with a very pious-sounding argument. She may have chided him in this vein, “Moses, thy doing is evil in the eyes of Jehovah. What was the result of the sons of God taking them wives of all which they chose? The wickedness of man became great in the earth. Consider our father Abraham, I implore thee. Did he not make his servant swear by the Lord that he should not take a wife to Isaac of the daughters of the Canaanites? And thou hast taken a wife to thy self of the daughters of the Ethiopians. Shame on thee. Art thou not at this very juncture in the name of Jehovah forbidding the people of Israel, when they shall come into the promised land, to make marriages with the heathen races infesting that land? Yet thyself hath married this Ethiopian? Thou destroyest by thy example the good effect of thy words. Put the woman from thee!” So she may have spoken to him. And in giving expression to her chagrin, she may have imagined that she was being driven by the purest motives and that she spake even by divine inspiration, that thus her words of reproof had been put into her mouth by the Lord. Said she not to Moses, “Hath He (the Lord) not spoken also by us?” Yet, what drove her was pride and envy. This she herself, to be sure, would have denied. She would have insisted that she was being moved solely by religious considerations. And so it undoubtedly seemed to her at this juncture. She was too perturbed at the moment to perceive that her motives were sordid. Such perception is the fruitage only of calm reflection.

Miriam was a good woman—good in the true sense. She loved fervently Jehovah, His people and His cause. Being the kind of woman she was, she detested pride and envy also in herself. But here she was picking a violent quarrel with her brother, because the good woman he had married was not one of her race and all the while mistaking her sinful excitement for pure zeal of God’s house and her carnal words of rebuke to Moses for a message straight from the Throne. “The heart is deceitful more than any thing. Who shall know it?”

But would it not have been wiser for Moses to have married a woman of his own people? On what ground would it have been wiser, if the Ethiopian feared the Lord? And it must be assumed that she did, that she

was a woman of exceptional moral worth, a sister in the Lord to Moses. Should Moses then have permitted himself to be deterred by Miriam's false racial pride and by her envy? Perhaps one of the reasons Moses married the Ethiopian was to rebuke this pride and to shew her and his brethren in general that what had weight with God is not a man's being a Jew, but a man's true goodness. But Miriam persisted in denouncing the marriage. And the longer Moses held out against her, insisting that he had done well, the more vehement she became. Assuredly he ought to see and admit that he had done wrong. Why would he not be advised by her? Why was he esteeming her counsel for nought? Was he necessarily right and she wrong? If so, on what ground? On the ground that the Lord spoke only by him? If he thought so, he was deluding himself. She and Aaron were persons to be reckoned with as well as he. Their words had as much weight as his. Was not the Lord speaking by them also as well as by him? In the exact words of Scripture, "Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? Hath he not spoken also by us?" "Have a care Miriam. Consider that thou speakest against Moses, and that the Lord listeneth. Bridle therefore thy tongue. For in thy present mood thou mayest so easily offend by thy speech." The warning comes too late. Her saying to Moses, "Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses. . . ." is sinful. And the Lord hears it. And His anger is kindled. She had gone too far, said too much. Suddenly the Lord speaks—to Moses, to Aaron, and to Miriam. "Come out, ye three, to the tabernacle of the congregation." And the three came out. The Lord now comes down in the pillar of cloud. Standing in the door of the tabernacle, He orders Aaron and Miriam to come forth and to stand at attention. Trembling, they obey. The Lord again speaks. Hear now my words," He is heard saying to them, "if there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known to him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all my house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even clearly, and not in dark speeches; and also the similitude of the Lord will he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"

So the Lord speaks. His anger is kindled against the two of them, so much so that "he departed". Mark you, *the Lord departed*, that is, He forsook, withdrew from, the tabernacle and thus also from the entire congregation. In token of His departure, "the cloud departed from off the tabernacle." And behold—"Miriam leprous—as snow!" She is terrified. It cannot be. Let Aaron examine her skin and pronounce her clean. So Aaron "looked upon Miriam, and behold, she was leprous." Seeing, he, too, is afraid and crestfallen. He admits his and Miriam's guilt to Moses and be-

seches him that the life of both of them be spared. "Alas, my Lord," he wails, "I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned. Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb."

It is plain that a terrible sin—one of the first magnitude—had been committed by both of them. But Miriam had greater sin, as she was the instigator of the unholy opposition to Moses. Aaron, in his weakness, had allowed himself to be prevailed upon by his sister. What was their sin? The expression of it was precisely their saying to Moses, "Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? Hath he not spoken only by us?"

There can be no doubt that what brought these words over Miriam's lips was her feverish desire to induce Moses to heed her counsel and put away the woman. The sacred narrator tells us as much when he says, "And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses *because of the Ethiopian woman* whom he had married." There was then a real connection between Moses' having married the "Ethiopian" and Miriam's saying to him that she and Aaron as well as he were persons by whom God spake. Now if there was a real connection, it must be that the reason Miriam said to Moses what she said is that she wanted him to understand that she and Aaron were his equals *in order that* as so understanding he would not allow his being a prophet of God to stand in his way of heeding their counsel. It need not be supposed then that the reason she spake against Moses is that, as enraged by his doing, she was consciously bent on wounding his soul or undermining his authority or dislodging him in his exalted position in the church. To suppose this is to be driven to the conclusion that Miriam was an unprincipled woman, deliberately and knowingly mean, malicious and vindictive. Now this certainly she was not. Her speaking against Moses was representative of an effort on her part to compel him to listen to her and Aaron.

Not having spoken with the conscious and deliberate purpose of assailing Moses' position in the church, the life of Miriam was spared. Instead of being destroyed she was deeply humbled through her momentarily being smitten with leprosy. But this was not the end of the matter. In response to Moses' cry, "Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee," the Lord replied, "If her father had spit in her face, should she not be ashamed for seven days? Let her be put out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received again." So had she, for this length of time to be banished from the presence of God and His people, that in her solitude she might reflect upon her doing, come to realize her sin, repent of it and be forgiven and healed. She was brought, therefore, out

of the camp, with the token of her sin upon her body. "And the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again."

But just what was Miriam's and Aaron's sin? Her saying to Moses, "Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? Hath He not spoken also by us?" But why should this language have so displeased the Lord? Had not Miriam spoken the truth? She is called a prophetess at Exodus 15:20, "And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron. . . ." The sacred narrator goes on to say that Miriam with timbrels and with dances,—answered them thus, "Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; for the horse and the rider hath he thrown into the sea." The Lord was speaking by her, when she gave utterance to this song. And as to Aaron, upon his heart was the Urim and the Thummim. But it is plain from the language by which the Lord vindicated His servant Moses, that the real issue that Miriam had raised, through her saying to Moses what she said is not whether she and Aaron were prophets by whom the Lord was also occasionally speaking, but whether as prophets they ranked with Moses, or otherwise said, whether Moses as a prophet stood on their level. And the implication of the language employed by Miriam was that he did. The thrust of her speech was that there was as much reason for Moses to submit to her (and Aaron) as for her to submit to Moses. Now this could be true only on the ground that as prophets the three of them were of equal rank. This being her contention, she unwittingly, we like to think, in the realm of thought, actually unseated Moses in his exalted position of mediator of the Old Dispensation, and drew him down to her own level—thus to the level of ordinary prophet. She thus had spoken *against* Moses, uttered words derogatory to his singular position in the church, his unique office—the office of Israel's law-giver—and this he was instrumentally—and thus of founder and builder of the Old Testament typical economy, house of God. If what Miriam by implication had asserted were true, if Moses were but an ordinary prophet, then he was no such builder; and if not, then the law came not by but from him and the patterns of the institutions which he founded had originated in his mind and not in God's, then, finally, the house of God was not God's but Moses'. Miriam, it is plain, had uttered words fraught with possibilities incalculably dangerous. She had inaugurated a revolt against Moses and God anticipating that of Korah and his company. She was therefore deserving of the sternest rebuke. And this she also received.

In setting Miriam straight, the Lord directed her attention to precisely the one thing about Moses of which she was unmindful, namely, that among all the prophets of God, Christ excepted, he had no equal, that thus the position he occupied in the church was

again held by none other. The Lord makes this plain to Miriam by naming Moses' singular prerogatives. To all the other prophets the Lord communicates the thoughts of His heart in a vision and in a dream and by dark speeches; but with His servant Moses, who is faithful in all His house, He will speak mouth to mouth, even clearly and not in dark speeches. And Moses in distinction from all the others will behold the similitude of the Lord.

By the similitude of the Lord is to be understood not God's essence but a revelation of His virtues, glories so superior, so remarkably clear as to be entitled to the name *likeness*. Moses saw so much of Christ's God and of Christ—of His love, mercy and compassion—through the law that was communicated to him, that, on one occasion, the skin of his face shone with a heavenly light—the light that was the radiance of a great gladness that was flooding his soul. He had been with God on the mountain. He had seen God's *likeness*. The Lord had made all His goodness pass before him and had proclaimed to him the name of the Lord, "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgressions and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquities of the father upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and fourth generation." So the Lord had spoken. And Moses had made haste and bowed his head toward the ground and worshipped. He had seen the likeness of God and had spoken with Him mouth to mouth. Such were his high privileges. For he was faithful in all God's house.

In connection with his being spoken against by Miriam and Aaron, the sacred narrator remarks that "the man Moses was very meek, above all men which were on the face of the earth." Meekness and greatness went hand in hand in Moses remarkably well. The consideration of his high office, of his qualifications for that office, and of the privileges that went with it, did not go to his head, so that he became an impossible person to live and to deal with.

Meekness is the opposite of sinful pride. It is the will on the part of the believer to consider that he is saved by grace, that thus he is not his own but God's workmanship, created unto good works in Christ. Meekness in practice is for one to walk by God's mercy in Christ's footsteps in respect to injuries done to his person. Moses did so. Miriam and Aaron spitefully used him on account of the Ethiopian woman, whom he had married. But Moses reviled and threatened not again. Instead he prayed for them. His marrying the Ethiopian must also be regarded as a manifestation of the meekness of the man.

G. M. O.

Why Not Tithe?

So reads the caption of an editorial appearing in The Banner for April 11. Writes the author of this article (the Rev. H. J. Kuiper):

"A number of reasons can be advanced why Christians do well to practice tithing. We invite our readers to give special consideration to the following arguments in favor of this time-honored method of contribution to the needs of the kingdom of God."

Let us pause here.

I am a faithful reader of The Banner. So the invitation comes also to me. And I accept. I have given special consideration to the reverend's arguments in favor of tithing. The brother will bear with me, certainly, in my saying that I have some difficulty with these arguments of his. He will not object to my using our magazine to reveal these difficulties to him for him to remove. Let us then turn to these arguments of which there are six in all.

Argument 1. Tithing was practiced since the earliest times, even in the day of the patriarchs. Abraham and Jacob were tithers. Though the people of Israel were required to bring their tithes into the Lord's storehouse, it should not be regarded as a ceremonial law the significance of which ceased with the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross. Setting aside one tenth of our income for the Lord is not a purely ceremonial observance any more than setting aside one day out of seven for the worship of God."

My Difficulty. The term *ceremonial law* appears in the above excerpt. Now it was the ceremonial law that, as executed, resulted in the appearance of the symbolical-typical worship and institutions of the Old Testament. Hence, the two terms "ceremonial law" and "symbolical-typical worship and institutions" signify the same entity. Let us then speak of the *symbolical-typical worship and institutions* instead of the *ceremonial law* of the Old Testament. Now the reverend's argument, "Tithing, whereas it was practiced since earliest times, long before the coming of the law by Moses, is not to be regarded as a symbolical-typical institution that waxed old and vanished away with the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Hence, the New Testament believers should still tithe." Now if this reasoning were true, could we not with equal propriety conclude that the sacrifice by (animal) blood, whereas it was brought by the church since earliest times (Abel brought this sacrifice) long before the coming of the ceremonial law by Moses, was not a symbolical-typical institution, that vanished away with the death and resurrection of Christ, and that therefore the New Testament believers should still be bringing this sacrifice. But no person of reformed persuasion will say this. Are we then not driven to the conclusion that, whether

a certain practice or element in the worship of the Old Testament church was symbolical-typical, really has nothing to do with its having been or not having been existent since earliest times and that therefore this first argument of the reverend falls to the ground. The argument proceeds on the false foundation that before the coming of the law by Moses there were no ceremonial laws and no symbolical-typical worship. But there was. The worship of the patriarchs was, as well as that of the people of Israel, symbolical-typical. Their sacrifices by blood were symbolical-typical, were they not? Circumcision was likewise a symbolical-typical institution, and the command of God to Abraham, "circumcise all the males in thy house", a ceremonial law. The view that the symbolical-typical dispensation began with Moses is false. The worship of the people of Israel was but an expansion of the worship of the patriarchs. And the same must be said of the law of Moses. It was an expansion of ceremonial laws already possessed by the church.

This first argument, as to its phrasing, is ambiguous. Attend to the statement, "Though the people of Israel were required to bring their tithes unto the Lord's storehouse, it should not be regarded as a ceremonial law the significance of which ceased with the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross." This statement may mean, "It (tithing) was a ceremonial law indeed, but it was not a ceremonial law, the significance of which ceased with the death of Christ." Interpreting the statement in question in the light of the one immediately following it, we would say that this is the thought which it conveys. The statement immediately following reads, "Setting aside one tenth of our income for the Lord is not purely a ceremonial observance any more than setting aside one day out of seven for the worship of God." Here it is asserted in unequivocal language that setting aside one tenth of our income for the Lord and setting aside one day out of seven for worship is, though not purely so, a ceremonial observance, law, practice, that thus the giving of tithes and the Sabbath which we now hallow are at least in part symbolical-typical institutions. But Scripture teaches me that the symbolical-typical Sabbath of the Old Testament was, together with all the symbolical-typical institutions of the Old Testament, completely abolished and that the Sabbath we now hallow is the true rest, the rest eternal, that Christ entered with His people and which this people by God's mercy begin in this life. And in setting aside one of seven days, the New Testament believers satisfy the requirements not of a ceremonial law but of the laws of the Decalogue.

But the point is that, according to the latter statement, the church is still observing ceremonial laws and engaging in practices that are symbolical-typical, so that, when interpreted in the light of this latter state-

ment, the thought conveyed by the former statement (the statement, that tithing should not be regarded as a ceremonial law the significance of which has ceased) must be, "Tithing was a ceremonial law indeed, but it was not a ceremonial law the significance of which ceased with the death of Christ. Hence, it must still be observed. New Testament believers should still give tithes." So then, the reverend distinguishes between ceremonial laws, the significance of which ceased with Christ's sacrifice on the cross, and ceremonial laws, the significance of which did not cease with His death, and that therefore are still binding. Now it is something new to me that there are ceremonial laws still binding, typical-symbolical institution that did not wax old and vanish away with the death of Christ. Have we not to do here with a teaching that smacks of Judaism—that heresy treated, exposed and so vigorously denounced in the epistles to the Hebrews and to the Galatians? Verily we have.

However, if interpreted in the light of still other passages of the reverend's article, the thought conveyed by the statement, "Tithing should not be regarded as a ceremonial law, the significance of which ceased," may also be this, "All the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament waxed old and vanished away. Thus their significance ceased, so that they are no longer binding on New Testament believers. Tithing, however, was no ceremonial law, in fact it was no law at all, but merely a custom, practice, usage, that originated perhaps with the patriarchs, was later on sanctioned by the Lord—*sanctioned*, not *commanded*—and finally endorsed by Christ. Hence, whereas tithing was no ceremonial law and in fact was no law at all of any kind but simply a good usage that originated with the patriarchs, it follows that its significance did not cease. And the conclusive proof that its significance did not cease is: 1) It was never directly or indirectly repealed; 2) It was sanctioned by God; 3) It was finally endorsed by Christ."

This is the teaching that the statement in question yields, if it be interpreted in the light of certain other statements of the reverend's article, namely, the following, "It (tithing) has divine sanction, at least. We do not believe that the New Testament church should make tithing a law for its members" (Argument 4 of the article). "Tithing was endorsed by Christ" (argument 2). "If it be remarked that nowhere in the New Testament do we find a command to give tithes, we answer: this does not at all prove that God no longer expects His people to give at least one tenth of their income for His cause. The New Testament is built on the foundation of the Old Testament. An Old Testament principle or custom which the New Testament does not repeal, directly or indirectly, must be held to be still valid. If this were not so, we could never maintain the validity of Infant Baptism, since

there is nowhere in the New Testament a command to baptize infants of believers" (Argument 3). Tithing was practiced . . . even by the patriarchs" (Argument 1).

What is the teaching here set forth? Verily this: "Tithing in Israel was not a ceremonial law but simply a custom or usage that had originated with the patriarchs. But it was a custom that was sanctioned (not commanded) by God and endorsed by Christ. Therefore it is still valid. It was not a ceremonial law. In fact it was no law at all of any kind. This follows from the following circumstance: 1) It was a custom that arose with the patriarchs (statement contained in Argument 1); 2) It was sanctioned by God and thus not commanded; 3) It was endorsed by Christ and thus not commanded; 4) God "*expects* His people to give at least one tenth of their income," but He does not command it (teaching of Argument 4); the New Testament church should not make tithing a law for its members but simply recommend it. (Statement found in Argument 4). Such is the teaching.

Let us examine some of the propositions in the light of Scripture. 1. Tithing was no law at all in Israel. It was simply a custom, a method of giving, that had originated with the patriarchs and was later sanctioned by God. Is this true? It is not true. Tithing *was* a law in Israel. The Lord *did* command it by Moses. "And all the tithes of the land. . . is holy unto the Lord. . . . And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock. . . the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord. . . ." *These are the commandments* which the Lord commanded Moses for the children of Israel in Mount Sinai" (Lev. 27:30-34). This statement is to the effect that the people of Israel were *commanded* to give tithes, that thus tithing was a law in Israel. The position that the Lord in saying to His people, "All the tithes of the land are holy to the Lord," was merely sanctioning, endorsing, a time-honored custom with the intention of leaving it to His people to give or not to give tithes as they should choose—this position is a rather precarious one. What is there to prevent one, holding it, from consigning all the commands of God to the category of mere endorsements?

2. Tithing was a *ceremonial* law in Israel. The reverend denies this. But it can be proved that tithing was a ceremonial law, a symbolical-typical institution, "When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year. . . . Then thou shalt say before the Lord thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of my house. . . . and have done according to all that thou hast commanded me. Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven and bless thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land that floweth with milk and honey" (Deut. 26:12-15). What this prayer shows is that in the mind of the

praying Israelite and thus in the mind of God giving the tithes and the fulfillment of the promise of the typical Canaan, were associated. Israel, I once wrote in a former article, was a people that had been delivered by Jehovah from the bondage of Egypt. The typical Canaan was God's country, His rest, which He had entered with His people. He was the supreme Lord both of this land and of the people of Israel. This people dwelt in *God's* land. In agreement *herewith*, the Lord commanded His people to separate unto Him the tithes and the firstfruits of all their earthy gain and, to place them before His altar. What did they, through their doing so express. This is not hard to see. The firstfruits were representative of the entire harvest. As to the number *ten*, it is the symbolical number of completion, so that the tenths, likewise, stood for the entire yield of the ground. So, bringing their firstfruits and giving their tithes, the Israelite declared through this action, "Lord, the whole land is thine. Its entire increase belongs to thee. We are thy redeemed servants, stewards in thy house. What thou placest in our hands, we hold merely as a trust." That there might be to His people an instrument for giving expression to these truths, the Lord commanded His people to bring *firstfruits*, and tenths, not ninths or elevenths but tenths. What was brought up, went to the support of the Levites.

That such was the speech that rose from the offering of the tenth and the firstfruits we learn from what the worshipper had to declare while still standing in God's presence with His offering,

"A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty and populous:

"And the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us with hard bondage: ,

"And we cried unto the Lord of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice and looked upon our afflictions, and our labour and our oppression:

"And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs and with wonders:

"And hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey:

"And now, behold, I have brought the first-fruits of the land, which thou O Lord, hath given me".
(Deut. 26:5-10)

It is plain that the bringing of the first-fruits and the giving of the tenths concerned the typical land of Canaan and the typical commonwealth of Israel and this land and this commonwealth only and that tithing therefore belonged to the category of the symbolical-

typical institutions of the Old Testament. Tithing was thus a ceremonial law, an institution that vanished away with the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross. It vanished away, was thus repealed. Christ did not revive and endorse it, as the reverend contends. Wrote he, "Tithing was endorsed by Christ. He said concerning the Pharisees, who tithed mint, anise and cummim but neglected the weightier things of the law, justice, and mercy, and faith: "But these (the latter) ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone." Here the Lord grants that the scribes and the Pharisees did right in giving a tenth even of the little things which they raised in their garden."

My Difficulty. At the time that Christ uttered this language, the Old Dispensation, though drawing to a close, had not yet ended, as Christ had still to die on the cross. So, at that juncture, the believers were still under the ceremonial law, and therefore had to tithe. This being true, Christ said to the Pharisees, who it seems were diminishing their tithes, despite all their ostentations of piety, that they ought "not to have left the other (tithing, etc.) undone." So, the plain fact of the matter is that in uttering the words "and not to have left the other undone" Christ was reproving the Pharisees on account of their failure to do what the ceremonial law, by which they were still bound, required. But the reverend maintains that by the words "not to have left the other undone" Christ at once endorsed tithing for New Testament believers. This is not true.

(To be Continued)

G. M. O.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On May 15, 1941, the Lord willing, our dear parents,

MARTIN ZUIDEMA

and

MRS. MARTIN ZUIDEMA—Hamstra

hope to commemorate their 40th Wedding Anniversary.

We their grateful children thank our Lord for His grace and loving kindness in sparing them for each other and us these many years.

It is our prayer that He may continue to bless them and that we may enjoy their companionship for their remaining years.

Their grateful children

Mr. and Mrs. Albert Zuidema

Ruth

Donald Marvin

Sylvia Mae

Open House for relatives and friends 2-4 afternoon, 7-10 evening.
548 Baxter St., S. E., Grand Rapids, Mich.