

THE STANDARD *Bearer* A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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MEDITATION

Exceeding Great Power

And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power (that working of the strength of his might, R.V.), which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead. . . .

Eph. 1:19, 20a.

That ye may know!

That the Church of Jesus Christ may have knowledge, spiritual knowledge of spiritual things, is the fervent desire of the inspired apostle.

With a view to that he prays for them: he ceases not to give thanks for them, always, continually making mention of them in his prayers to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory. He prays that this Father of glory may give unto them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, now, continuously, in an ever increasing measure. For without that Spirit the eyes of their understanding cannot be spiritually enlightened so that they may be able to discern the spiritual things of salvation spiritually. And, therefore, without that spiritual discernment they cannot possibly know. . . .

Yet, it is paramount that they know!

Know they must what is the hope of his calling, that is the glorious object of the hope unto which they are called: the glory of his inheritance in the saints, the great and manifold riches of that glory.

And, again, in order to know the exceeding great riches of their hope and of God's inheritance among the saints, they must know what is the overwhelming greatness of the power which He wrought into (thus literally) us.

And the measure or standard of this exceeding

great power is the working of the strength of his might, which He wrought in Christ!

Revealed, first of all, in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead!

Amazing power!

Wonderful God!

And exactly in Him, Who is God and, therefore, doest wondrous things, is our hope of salvation, of eternal glory.

How utterly impossible appears the matter of our salvation apart from Him, from any mere human viewpoint.

More impossible, if we may speak in comparative terms here, than even the humanly impossible and inconceivable work of creation is the work of redemption and salvation. When God creates He calls the things that are not as if they were, the things that do appear from nothing; when He redeems and saves He causes the light to shine out of darkness, life to issue forth out of death, glory out of shame, heaven out of hell! . . .

How exceedingly beyond all human conception!

How impossible, how hopeless as far as man is concerned!

We lie in the midst of death. There is a sentence of condemnation upon us to the justice of which all and everything testify that it is just and irrevocable: the law, our conscience men, the devil and all the powers of darkness. Children of wrath we are. Sin hath dominion over us. Death reigns over us. Enslaved we are to the devil. Death rules within and death encompasses us on every side; and there is no way out, no avenue of escape. The sole way out of our present death is the way that leads to eternal desolation.

And from that hopeless state of condemnation and wretchedness of death, we are to be raised to the highest pinnacle of righteousness and glory and bliss! That is salvation! It is the change of the sentence of condemnation into one of eternal righteousness. It is the adoption of objects of divine wrath unto beloved children of God. It is the deliverance out of hopeless

imprisonment into a state of perfect liberty. It is the victory over the mighty power of death. It is the assumption from deepest hell into highest heaven. It is the transmutation of deepest woe into heavenly joy. . . .

It is resurrection!

It is the highest revelation that God is God: His name is Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father. . . .

The God of our salvation!

How, then, can some degrade this amazing work of redemption and salvation into a work of mere, puny, miserable man, or even make him participate in it? How can it be in any wise dependent upon man whether he shall be saved? Does creation depend upon the will of the creature? And is it not far more absurd (if it be possible to make comparisons here) to insist that resurrection depends on the will of the dead? How can salvation ever be conceived as an offer, the realization of which is determined by the acceptance of man, dead in trespasses and sins?

It is resurrection!

And, therefore, it is the revelation and fruit of the operation of an exceeding great power, a power to accomplish things, that exceeding great ability, that mighty power of the God of salvation even now is operating in the Church. For such is the meaning of the words of the text. It does not speak of a power "to usward", of a power in respect to us, or in our direction, of a power that probably has us in view and that will ultimately reach us too. Literally the text speaks of "the exceeding greatness of his power into us". The power of God that becomes manifest as resurrection power has even now become operative in our very hearts, whence are the issues of life, and from that center it has wrought its marvellous transmutations in our mind and will, our desires and longings, in the direction and manifestation of our whole life.

Exceeding greatness of His power into us!

The power whereby we were drawn out of death into life, transmuted out of darkness into His marvellous light.

The power whereby our carnal mind which is enmity against God and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be, is changed into the spiritual mind that seeks the kingdom of God and His righteousness and the things that are above.

The power, the amazing power, that transmuted the proud and rebellious sinner, who haughtily lifted his fist in the face of the Almighty, into a humble contrite, heart-broken penitent, that does not dare to raise his eyes and cries out: God, be merciful to me, a sinner!

The exceeding great power, whereby damned sinners, exiled from God's house, are translated into living, righteous, holy, loving and beloved children of

God, conformed to the image of His Son; and whereby they are made heirs of the riches of the glory of God's inheritance among saints!

The adorable power that continues to operate until all things are made new and the former things have passed away, and the tabernacle of God is forever with those same men that were once banished from His presence. . . .

That exceeding great power it is that is manifest in the work of salvation.

And that all-victorious power is now working in us! Wonderful God of our salvation!

That ye may know!

Yes, but how can we even now know the greatness, the amazing and exceeding energy of that power which He even now is working within us?

Can our own experience of the working of this mighty power within us be the criterion whereby we may judge of its limits?

How could it? Can you know the greatness and majestic strength of the oak by looking at the acorn? Or is it not true that the fruit of this mighty operation of God's exceeding great power in us, is as yet only a small beginning of the new life and righteousness and obedience and glory? O, even so, the change wrought is marvellous enough. But the fact remains that it is but a small beginning that is wrought. Still the distance from our present state and position in this world to the riches of glory that will be ours when the inheritance of God will be realized to His saints, seems immeasurable!

Can it be traversed?

Will that final glory ever be reached? Will the hope of our calling ever be realized?

Yes, we are living children of God even now, but we also still lie in the midst of death. We are righteous, indeed, but our own conscience accuses us that we still increase our guilt every day. We are delivered from sin and dominion, but that "other law in our members" is incessantly warring against the "law of our mind", so that we do not what we would, but find ourselves doing that which we hate. And we are still in the body of this death. We are earthy, not heavenly; mortal, not immortal; corruptible, not incorruptible; weak, not in strength; in dishonor, not in glory; flesh and blood we are, not spiritual. And flesh and blood, we know, cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither can corruption inherit incorruption!

Is, then, that exceeding great power of God in us, that began to work the transmutation, able to finish it unto the end?

How can we know?

By considering that same power of God as it is wrought in Christ Jesus the Lord!

Notice, that this is the meaning of the text. The

Church, having the eyes of her heart and understanding enlightened by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, must know what is the exceeding greatness of God's power into us, that is, she ought to know the nature of that power, the full extent of the mighty energy that began to work in her. But in order to obtain some conception of the greatness of this power, she must understand that its operation is "according to the working of the power of His might, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead!" The same power that worked in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, is even now working into you. If, then, you would understand what this power of God that already operates in you is able to accomplish, you must look at the glorified Christ, and consider what it means that God raised Him from the dead.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ and His subsequent exaltation to glory is the greatest revelation of the exceeding greatness of His power!

He was in death. In deepest death He had descended, freely, voluntarily, in perfect obedience, for the love of God and His righteousness. Death's power took hold of Him, though freely He surrendered Himself to it. Death's darkness engulfed Him. Hell closed its doors behind Him. Or did it? For this Christ, as He voluntarily sought the deepest darkness of hell and entered into the lowest parts of the earth, trusted in God to justify and deliver Him! He knew the exceeding greatness of the power of God, and confiding in it, fully relying on God's power and faithfulness, He was assured that God would deliver Him. And He was not put to shame. For God raised Him from the dead!

He raised Him!

No, He did not merely deliver Him from the power of death to bring Him back into "the likeness of sinful flesh", into flesh and blood, into mortality and corruption: He raised Him! No, He did not even cause Him to return to a former state of righteousness and earthly life, perfect yet lapsible, living yet mortal, blessed yet earthy: He raised Him! He changed His shame into glory, His mortality into immortality, His corruption into incorruption, His weakness into strength, His flesh and blood into the spiritual body, His earthy image into the image of the heavenly!

In Christ God changed hell into heaven!

He transmuted eternal death into eternal life!

From lowest hell He lifted Him. To highest glory He elevated Him!

Yes, there was a working of the power of God's might in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead!

Notice, how the words are accumulated to impress us with the greatness of this mighty power: "the working of the power of His might"!

"The 'might' denotes the strength or virtue as

such, the kind of might referred to, in this case divine might; the "power" refers to the working capacity and efficiency of this might, in this case: resurrection-efficiency; and the "working" is the living energy, the active operation of this resurrection-efficiency.

The operation of this resurrection-efficiency of the divine power God wrought in Christ.

And according to the standard of this same operation His exceeding great power also works in us.

Contemplate, therefore, the power of God in the resurrection of Christ.

That ye may know!

Blessed knowledge!

And blessed assurance of the hope of our calling!

To know that the divine power of grace that is even now wrought in us by the God of our salvation, is not only like the power that raised Jesus from the dead, but is that same power!

For the working of the power of God's might was wrought in Christ! And this signifies, no doubt, that it was wrought in *His case*, that it began working in Him when He had obeyed even unto the end, when He could announce "It is finished", and that it never ceased working in Him, until the power of death in Him was completely vanquished, and He issued forth as victor over death and hell into the glory of His resurrection life. Indeed, in Him that exceeding great power was wrought to the glorious end!

Yet it means more.

For, Christ is not an individual, a man among men. He is the Son of God come into the flesh, and the Head of the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that worketh all in all. And as the Head of the body, not as an individual, He entered into the depth of death and hell. And for the members of His body, not for Himself, He stood in the place of judgment in the hour of wrath, bearing the sins of many. And as the Head of the body He merited righteousness and eternal life, and was justified. As such He was raised, in order that He might impart the glory of His resurrection-life to all the members of His body, the Church.

And, therefore, the mighty power of God was so wrought in Him, that it continues to work.

He received the Spirit of promise, and Himself became the quickening Spirit.

And by that Spirit He works by His mighty resurrection-power in all them that believe. Hence, it is into them that believe, and who, by the bond of faith are united with Him, that the exceeding great power of God unto salvation is operating. And also in them the working of that power cannot cease until they have become like Him, their Lord!

Then the hope of their calling shall be realized.

Riches of glory! His inheritance in the saints!

Blessed assurance!

H. H.

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EDITORIALS

Een Les Uit De Historie

Ex-president Herbert Hoover is bezig om een drietal artikelen te schrijven in *The Saturday Evening Post* over ons aandeel in den eersten wereldoorlog en het sluiten van den vrede van Versailles. Hij had destijds de gelegenheid om van nabij kennis te nemen van het verloop der dingen, daar hij terstond na het sluiten van den wapenstilstand in Europa was als administrateur voor de verspreiding van levensmiddelen onder de half uitgehongerde volkeren der oude wereld. Genoemde artikelen zijn dan ook een paar hoofdstukken uit zijn eigen gedenkschriften uit die periode. Oorspronkelijk waren ze niet bedoeld voor publicatie dan tot na den dood van den schrijver. Doch waar ons land op het punt staat nogmaals in een soortgelijk conflict te worden gewikkeld als in 1917, daar meende Mr. Hoover, dat het niet ondienstig kon zijn, om althans een gedeelte dier gedenkschriften thans in het licht te geven. Een herinnering uit het verleden zou ons tot waarschuwing kunnen zijn.

De artikelen zijn dus bedoeld als eene les uit de historie.

Immers: een ezel stoot zich geen tweemaal aan denzelfden steen.

Als titel koos Mr. Hoover "Amerika's Eerste Kruistocht".

Dit opschrift werd natuurlijk gekozen om uit te drukken, dat de schrijver een overeenkomst ziet tusschen ons aandeel in den eersten wereldoorlog en de bekende kruistochten uit de middeleeuwen.

En wie het eerste van Mr. Hoover's artikelen heeft gelezen vermoedt gemakkelijk uit welke oogpunten de schrijver zulk eene vergelijking zou treffen.

De kruistochten waren een openbaring van een soort van religieus idealisme. Er was een edele bezieling voor een gansch onbaatzuchtig ideaal; er was hoog gespannen enthousiasme; alles was in rep en roer; er was veel opoffering; en het einde was bittere teleurstelling. Met wereldoorlog No. I was het niet anders, wat betreft ons aandeel daarin althans. Ook toen mikte men op een verheven doelwit: men zou de wereld bevrijden van de tyranie eener militaristische macht en veilig maken voor de democratie! Dat mag niet het ideaal van allen geweest zijn, maar het was zeker het doel, dat President Wilson zich had gesteld. Ook toen waren de geesten gespannen en liep de bezieling hoog, opgezweept door allerlei Engelsche propaganda en door de vreeselijkste verhalen van Duitsche wreedheden en schelmstukken, die meestal hun oor-

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sprong hadden in het vruchtbaar brein van John Bull en Co., en die door goedgebloovige Amerikanen voor zuivere waarheid werden aangenomen. Ook toen getroostte ons volk zich vele opofferingen, niet alleen in geld, maar ook in het bloed van duizenden jonge mannen, die hun leven lieten op de Europeesche slagvelden, en van de vermindering van nog veel meer duizenden, die naar hun vaderland terugkeerden om toch een vroegtijdigen dood te sterven. En ook toen liep alles op een totale mislukking en bittere teleurstelling uit, althans voor hen, die ernstig gestreefd hadden naar het bereiken van het ideaal.

Er kwam letterlijk niets van terecht.

Men had hier gemeend, dat ook de "democratische" machten van Europa naar een ideaal streefden. Och, zoo had men zich ook meer dan eens uitgelaten, toen men meende, dat men daardoor Amerika kon wikkelen in den oorlog. Maar toen het er op aan kwam, en men om de vredestafel te Versailles zat, bleek het Europeesche ideaal toch weinig anders te zijn dan dat van een verschrikkelijke rooversbende, die bovendien ook nog beheerscht werd door een geest van bittere wraakzucht.

Zoo ongeveer stond het Mr. Hoover voor den geest, toen hij tot opschrift voor zijn artikelen koos: "De Eerste Amerikaansche Kruistocht".

Mr. Hoover geeft in deze artikelen hoofdzakelijk een overzicht van de geschiedenis in verband met den vrede van Versailles en wat daarmee verband houdt: de bekende veertien punten van President Wilson, de wapenstilstand, die op de basis dier veertien punten tot stand kwam, de later onderhandelingen, waaraan President Wilson persoonlijk deelnam, en de valsche houding van de leiders der geallieerden, die meer en meer tot openbaring kwam, en waarop Mr. Wilson's idealisme schipbreuk leed.

Vóór den wapenstilstand, zooals natuurlijk ook vooral Amerika in den oorlog gewikkeld was, speelde men "aap wat heb je mooie jongen" met ons gouvernement en met ons volk. "Uncle Sam" was immers de rijke en goedgeefsche oom, die over groote sommen gelds te beschikken had, en van wien men maar "leende", zonder zich er veel om te bekommeren, of er ooit een tijd komen zou, wanneer men aan terugbetaling zou kunnen denken! En bovenal, indien immer mogelijk, moest Amerika worden overgehaald, om zich aan de zijde der geallieerden in den oorlog te werpen met man en macht. Het stond er niet zoo rooskleurig bij met de zaak van Engeland en Frankrijk in 1917. Het scheen lang niet zoo onmogelijk, dat ze het onderspit zouden moeten delven. Maar als "Uncle Sam" in de bres wou springen, zie, dan was er hoop. Vandaar, dat men het toen hartelijk eens was met de idealen van President Wilson.

En het is niet te ontkennen, dat Mr. Wilson een idealist was.

Hij meende werkelijk, dat hij een nieuwe orde in Europa kon scheppen. Hij sprak (zoo herinnert ons Mr. Hoover er aan, en wie de speeches van President Wilson uit die dagen nog eens overleest, kan zich er van vergewissen) gedurig van recht en gerechtigheid, van vrijheid en democratie. En hij leefde in de oprechte verbeelding (hoezeer het ook verbeelding was, die wel op bittere teleurstelling moest uitloopen!), dat de leiders der geallieerden ook naar zulk een hoog en nobel ideaal streefden.

"Mr. Wilson had echter maar weinig kennis" zoo schrijft Mr. Hoover, "van de mannen, met wie hij zou moeten onderhandelen, en van de machten, die hen beheerschten".

Maar vóór het tot den wapenstilstand kwam van Nov. 1918, waren de groote mannen van Europa het hartelijk met Mr. Wilson eens!

Op Juli 5, 1918 sprak Lloyd George als volgt:

"President Wilson heeft gisteren duidelijk gemaakt, waarvoor we eigenlijk strijden. Als de Keizer en zijn adviseurs de voorwaarden door den President gesteld willen aanvaarden, kunnen ze vrede hebben met Amerika, vrede met Groot Britanje, vrede met Frankrijk, morgen aan den dag. . . . Waarom strijden we? Niet omdat we ook maar een voet gronds begeeren van Duitschland, niet omdat we het Duitsche volk willen berooven van hunne rechten. We strijden voor de groote beginselen, waaraan President Wilson uitdrukking gaf".

Wel, zoo verhaalt Mr. Hoover, op 6 October 1918 stelden de Duitschers den wapenstilstand voor op grond van de "veertien punten" van President Wilson, of liever, op voorwaarde, dat de vredesonderhandelingen op die basis zouden plaats hebben. Nadat President Wilson op 23 October 1918 nogmaals de Duitschers hiervan verzekerd had, stelde hij dezelfde basis voor aan de geallieerden. Deze aanvaardden de "veertien punten", die eigenlijk tot vijf en twintig waren uitgedijd, behalve het tweede punt, dat de "vrijheid der zeeën betrof. En op dien grond kwam de wapenstilstand werkelijk tot stand.

Maar, ach, hoe veranderde de houding van de leiders der geallieerden, toen eenmaal de wapenstilstand gesloten was, en men om de vredestafel geschaard was, om "de nieuwe orde" in Europa te realiseeren!

En hoe werd President Wilson wreed ontnuchterd!

Daar, om die vredestafel, kwam het tot openbaring, dat men, inplaats van beziel te zijn met het Wilsonisch idealisme, door haat en nijd en wraakzucht werd beheerscht, en door de begeerte om ieder voor zich zoo veel mogelijk van den buit te trekken, om Duitschland voor goed en kopje kleiner te maken; en bovendien waarden daar in de rijke spiegelzaal te Versailles nog een duizend booze historische geesten uit het verleden

rond, die zeker van geen Wilsonisch droombeeld iets wisten, of ook maar iets moesten hebben!

Men keek Wilson met schuine oogen aan.

Al aanstonds was men bevreesd, dat Amerika een een al te groote rol zou spelen in de vredesonderhandelingen. Dat "Uncle Sam" zoo goed was om den geallieerden geldelijk te steunen, en ten slotte voor hen de kastanjes uit het vuur had gehaald, nu ja, dat was wel aardig geweest, maar dat was toch tenslotte zijn zaak! Dat Amerikaansche volk was, als het er op aan kwam, zoo heette het nu in den mond van Lloyd George, "een dwaas volk, dat gemakkelijk door de schrandere Engelsche propaganda te bewegen was" (a foolish people, pliable to the ingenuity of Allied propaganda)! Maar ze moesten niet al te veel te zeggen hebben bij de vredestafel. Clemenceau bespiedde President Wilson daar te Parijs, als een wachthond, die een vreemden hond op 't erf ziet loopen. Als het er op aan kwam, zoo meende men, had Amerika eigenlijk niets betee-kend in den oorlog. Op 't laatste nippertje was het ook nog even komen kijken, toen de geallieerden eigenlijk den oorlog al hadden beslist. Opofferingen had Amerika niet behoeven te maken. Integendeel, "Uncle Sam" was eigenlijk maar rijk geworden ten koste van den oorlog. Wat recht van meespreken had dan eigenlijk die Amerikaansche President in het vaststellen van de vredesvoorwaarden?

Bovendien, die Amerikaansche president was eigenlijk maar een droomer. Als het aankwam op de werkelijke toestanden in Europa, wist hij er eigenlijk niets van. Hij kon wel mooi filosofheeren over "recht" en "vrijheid" en over de "salvation of mankind", maar wat had daar eigenlijk mee te maken in Versailles? Over die "salvation of mankind" ging het heelemaal al niet. De hoofdvraag was eigenlijk, hoe men voor altijd de Duitsche macht den kop kon indrukken, en zelf de macht in handen krijgen en houden. En dan was daar ook nog de vraag, hoeveel buit er te behalen viel, en hoeveel ieder daarvan naar zich kon trekken. Natuurlijk was het uit één oogpunt wel aardig, dat die Amerikaan ook bij de vredestafel zat: men kon hem dan in elk geval even laten gevoelen, dat men eigenlijk zich niet verplicht rekende om al die oorlogsschulden te betalen!

En wat nu die "veertien" of "vijf en twintig punten" betrof, op grond waarvan het tot een wapenstilstand was gekomen, ja, Lloyd George kon zich nog wel herinneren, dat President Wilson ze eerder had genoemd. Als men de "notes" van Mr. Wilson aan het Duitsche gouvernement eenigszins nauwkeurig las, dan scheen het wel, alsof de Duitschers op grond van die punten tot den wapenstilstand hadden besloten. En als zij, de geallieerden, vooral Lloyd George en Clemenceau hun stem daar niet tegen verhieven, nu Wilson aan die punten herinnerde bij de vredestafel, dan moest men haast wel den indruk laten, dat ook zij aan

die punten zich gebonden hadden. Maar in elk geval, aldus Lloyd George, "wij hebben ze nooit officieel aangenomen, en ze hebben nooit een deel uitgemaakt van het officieele program der Alliantie."

En men werd er al spoedig zat van, om naar de kleine preekjes van den Amerikaansche droomer te luisteren, die zichzelven blijkbaar beschouwde als een zendeling onder de arme Europeesche heidenen, om hen te bekeeren van hun aanbidding van de valsche vuurgoden, en die altijd maar weer sprak van zulke eenvoudige beginselen als recht en gerechtigheid!

Alsof men dat zelf ook niet wist!

En alsof het daar nu over ging!

Zoo ging het er destijds naar toe te Versailles, volgens Mr. Hoover, een oog- en oorgetuige.

En hij bedoelt ons volk een les in te prenten, een les uit de historie.

De les is: "Pas op, arm ezeltje, je loopt regelrecht weer aan op denzelfden steen!"

Zou't helpen?

Of zou Lloyd George toch gelijk gehad hebben, toen hij zeide dat naar zijn bescheiden meening "Americans were a foolish people, pliable to the ingenuity of Allied propaganda"?

Het lijkt er veel op!

H. H.

The Triple Knowledge

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

III.

LORD'S DAY II.

2.

Prone To Hate.

Normal for man, who is made a rational, moral creature, is that he love God with all his heart and mind and soul and strength. Such is the living will of God for him. It is the great commandment. All other commandments are implied in this. Even the love of the neighbor is "like unto it". For you may love the neighbor only for God's sake, even as you may love yourself only as existing and living unto Him. Hence, love of the neighbor is impossible if you do not love God. The love of God is and remains

the one great commandment. And this means that the law of God is not merely concerned with our outward deeds, or even with our inmost thoughts and desires, but that it points its finger at our very nature, for love is a matter of the heart, whence are the issues of life, and, therefore, concerns the very condition of our nature from a spiritual-ethical viewpoint. If we love God, it indicates that our nature is sound: that we are normal. If we hate God, it is because our nature is corrupt: we are abnormal. And if the latter is the conclusion that must be reached when we apply the norm of the law of God to ourselves, this abnormal condition of our nature and of our whole life is, at the same time, the explanation of our misery. For within the scope and sphere of the law God deals with us in His favor and blesses us with His friendship; but outside of that sphere we meet with His wrath on every side, and He curses us. And that wrath and curse of God is unspeakable misery.

And now the Heidelberg Catechism, in the fifth question and answer, applies this norm of the law of God, makes the comparison between it and man "by nature" and so comes to a diagnosis of the real misery of man "in life and death". The application is made personally. The fifth question, like all the preceding, is addressed to the individual Christian. It is he that is asked by the instructor to compare himself with the law of God and to express the result of this comparison: "Canst *thou* keep all these things perfectly?" And it is he that replies: "In no wise; for I am prone by nature to hate God and my neighbor." The natural man, as long as he lives in the sphere of the lie in this world, will never admit this naked truth. This does not mean that he cannot see the truth of it. Intellectually he can very well understand what it implies that the law of God demands that we shall love Him and love the neighbor for His sake. And intellectually he is also able to make the comparison between himself and that perfect law of God, and to discover that instead of love there is hatred in his heart. Ursinus writes in his "Schatboek" (I translate): "The conscience causes all men to make such a syllogism. For conscience is nothing else than a practical syllogism in the spirit of every man; of which syllogism the prescription of the law of God is the major premise, while the minor premise is the thought of our departure from that law. The conclusion is the acknowledgement that the law is good in its condemnation of us on account of sin". p. 33. That the natural man is capable of making this comparison, is due to the fact that there remains in him "since the fall, the glimmerings of natural light, whereby he retains some knowledge of God, of natural things and of the difference between good and evil, and discovers some regard for virtue", etc. Canons of Dordrecht, III, IV, 4. He does not even have to be acquainted with the law of the ten com-

mandments in order to make this comparison and draw this conclusion. For even the "Gentiles, which have not the law do by nature the things of the law" (the Revised Version offers the correct translation here). This does not mean, of course, that they do "the things contained in the law", that they keep the law of God, but that they do themselves what the external written code of the law did in Israel: distinguish between good and evil with application to themselves. Hence, they "are a law unto themselves" and they "show the work of the law written in their hearts". Again, this does not imply that the law of God, the law of love, is written in their hearts, but the "work of the law", that standard, that criterion, that norm according to which they must needs judge themselves and their whole life, is always present with them, in their very hearts. And so it happens that "their conscience" is also "bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another". Rom. 2:14, 15.

We may go a step further, therefore, in the light of Scripture, and assert positively, not only that the natural man is *capable* of making a comparison between himself and the law of God and to draw a fundamentally correct conclusion of self-condemnation, but also that in his deepest heart he also actually makes the syllogism of which Ursinus speaks in the lines quoted above. He cannot possibly escape the necessity of doing this. For God always judges him. He judges every man. He writes his sentence of condemnation, through the "work of the law" and by His convicting Spirit in the heart of every man. And in the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God, "when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ" (Rom. 2:16) the books of the consciences will be opened, and all men will be compelled to confess that God is righteous when He judges.

In fact, all men plainly reveal, in spite of themselves, that they constantly make this comparison. For although they refuse to admit that they are enemies of God and of one another when it concerns themselves, they constantly pass this very judgment upon one another. It is of this very corrupt but also very revealing business among men that the apostle writes in Rom. 2:1-3: "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?" Life is full of this. It was thus among the Jews. They taught others, but failed to teach themselves; they preached against stealing, but stole themselves; they condemned adultery and com-

mitted it; they abhorred idols and committed sacrilege; they boasted in the law but dishonoured God by breaking the law. Rom. 2:17ff. And the same sordid business is going on in the world today, both among individuals and nations. At gossip parties men and women will indignantly condemn the gossip and backbiting of someone at the very moment that they are engaged in the same sinful activity. Business men berate the underhanded dealings and shady transactions of others which they themselves practise. Nations are horrified when another nation applies the same ruthless methods of warfare followed by themselves. We cry out in indignation, when Germany violates our "neutrality" and sinks our ships that are intended to carry aid to Great Britain. And so on. We condemn in others what we practice ourselves. And by so doing we clearly reveal that we are able to make the syllogism of which Ursinus speaks, and agree with the righteous judgment of God.

Yet, the natural man would never give the answer which the Heidelberg Catechism puts in the mouth of its pupil in reply to the fifth question: "I am prone by nature to hate God and my neighbor". He is even offended at this truth. He far prefers his own philosophy. Man may fail occasionally. He may blunder. There may even be some that habitually sin. But inherently he is good. And he loves to extol his own virtues and sing the praises of his good deeds in public. Only, it must be understood that this lie concerning himself, this closing of his eyes to the righteous judgment of God, is not due to any lack of natural light. The lie is an ethical one, not an intellectual mistake in judgment. Just as the "fool saith in his heart" that there is no God, so he persuades himself of his own goodness. Man lives in the sphere of the lie, both with regard to God and with respect to himself.

Hence, the answer of the Catechism to the fifth question is the reply of faith, given in the light of revelation that is caused to shine in the heart of the believer by the Spirit of truth. It is, therefore, the answer of him in whose heart the love of God is already spread abroad, and who in principle loves God and His precepts. For the same reason, there is more in this answer than a cold syllogism, more than a mere logical conclusion. The believer who answers here is discovering and characterizing his misery. And he now finds that his misery is his corruption, his guilt and sin, his hatred of God and of the neighbor. It is this sinful condition that troubles him. With a spiritual judgment of the mind and heart he passes sentence upon himself, declares himself corrupt and guilty. He stands, therefore, on God's side in passing sentence on himself. And he does so as being of the party of the living God. He condemns himself and repents in dust and ashes.

Let us look a little more closely at the question and

its answer. The Catechism asks: "Canst thou keep all these things perfectly?" Perhaps you say, that the phrase "all these things" is hardly proper here. Had not the Catechism summed up the law in just one thing: the love of God? But let us remember that this love of God is the principle of all the commandments of God, and that we must love the Lord our God with all our heart and mind and soul and with all our strength, i.e. all the time and in our whole life and all its relationships. It is with a view to this, that the catechism now puts the fifth question in this form. "Canst thou keep all these things?" that is, canst thou live thy whole life, with body and soul, with mind and will and all thy powers, all the time and everywhere, in home and church, in school and office, in the shop and on the street, from the principle of the love of God; and from that same principle canst thou always love thy neighbor? "All these things", therefore, it must remain. And notice that the adverb "perfectly" is added. Canst thou keep all these things *perfectly*? That is: canst thou keep them without flaw or blunder, without ever being motivated to the slightest degree by anything else than the love of God? dost thou wake up with that love of God in thy heart and mind in the morning, and dost thou go to sleep with it in the evening? Does it motivate thee in thy eating and drinking, in every thought of thy mind, in every desire of thy heart, in every word thou speakest, in every deed thou performest? Yes, it must be that or nothing. For this adverb "perfectly" is not added in order to suggest that it is possible that you keep all these things imperfectly; but on the contrary, to emphasize the fact, that you must either keep them perfectly or cannot keep them at all. For it is a question of *love*, and that of the love of *God*. And love is a matter of the heart. Hence, here you cannot compromise; you must choose. It is "either—or", not "both—and". It is "Yes" or "No"; never "Yes" and "No". And, what is more, here there is no possibility of neutrality. You cannot evade the issue. If your answer is "No", you say "No" to the living God, to the Lord of all, and that means that you hate Him, and hate Him perfectly, with all your heart and mind and soul and strength. Thus the question must be put. What is your answer?

The answer of the Christian, who stands on God's side and in His light when he passes judgment upon himself, is absolute and uncompromising: "In no wise; for I am prone by nature to hate God and my neighbor." Every word here has its weight. "In no wise": this is the direct reply to the question as to my *ability* to keep all things perfectly, i.e. to love God. Mark you well, it is a question of *ability*, of *capability*, not merely of *activity*. It is an answer to the question; *Canst thou?* not to the totally different question *Dost thou?* The answer, therefore, means: *I cannot!* The Catechism, therefore, here teaches *total incapability* to love

God. And that emphatically: "in no wise"! Keep all these things perfectly? Impossible! I could not even begin to keep them. And this impossibility is due to incapability. I have not the power to love God. And this incapability is not a physical defect, it is ethical, moral, spiritual. I cannot, I will not, I cannot will. I have not the light in my mind; I have not the inclination in my will; I have not the desire in my heart to love God and to keep all these things! Yes, such is the implication of the verdict the Christian passes upon himself. "Canst thou?" . . . "In no wise"!

And notice that the rest of this verdict which the believer passes on himself as he compares himself with the law, is a reason or ground for the opinion or conclusion expressed in the words "in no wise". Often the words: "for I am prone by nature to hate God and my neighbor" are understood as if they stood in adversative relation to the first part of the answer. If that were correct the sense would be: "No, I am not capable of keeping all these things, but, on the contrary, I am prone by nature to hate God and my neighbor". But that is not the meaning. The last sentence is put in the form of a reason: "*For* I am prone", etc. It answers the question, why I am incapable of keeping the law of God. It is because I am prone by nature to hate. The reason for my incapability must be found in the condition of my nature. The words "by nature" refer to the condition of my mind and will and heart as they are apart from grace, as they are by virtue of my birth and my being part of the human race, the human nature as such. Later, indeed, the Heidelberg repeats virtually the same question: "But can those who are converted to God perfectly keep these commandments?" And then the answer is principally different from the one we are now discussing: "No; but even the holiest of men, while in this life, have only a small beginning of this obedience; yet so, that with a sincere resolution they begin to live, not only according to some, but all the commandments of God." Qu. 114. But this small beginning, and this sincere resolution, are "by grace", not "by nature". By nature, i.e. as far as my condition is concerned apart from grace, "I am prone to hate God and my neighbor". And because of that condition of my nature I cannot possibly love God or will to love Him.

Now, this is important. To hate is the very opposite of to love. To love God is to have my delight in Him, to hate Him is to abhor Him, to dislike Him with all my heart. To love God is to seek Him, His revelation, His Word, His precepts and His fellowship; to hate Him is to depart from Him, to flee far from Him, to gainsay and oppose His Word and to trample under foot His commandments. To love God is to stand in relation of intimate friendship and fellowship to Him; to hate Him is to be an alien, a stranger to Him and

His house. To love God is to reverence Him, to glorify Him and be thankful; to hate Him is to curse Him and to destroy His name, if possible, from the earth. And even as "by nature" I am prone to hate God instead of loving Him, so I am also prone to hate my neighbor. My neighbor is the one that lives next to me in this world, with whom I share my name, my position, my honor, my possessions, my business; the one that rubs elbows with me, that crosses my path. It is of him that I must think in this connection. It is true, that in a very wide sense all men are my neighbors. But if I would feel the force of this answer of the Heidelberg, I must not think in general of "all men", nor of the poor Chinese whom I never see, and whom to love seems rather easy; but I must bring before my mind the man with whom I come into contact daily, and because of whose existence I am limited in my place in the world. Well, my nature is such, that I am prone to hate God; and, therefore, also to hate my neighbor. As my neighbor who crosses my path and who limits my place, I dislike him, and like to destroy him. If that neighbor is my employer, I simply try to get my wages out of him; if he is my employee, I try to keep those wages down as far as possible; if he is in the same business I am in, I try to force him out of business; if he is my competitor for a certain job or office, I do all in my power to disqualify him and spoil his reputation. If he is in authority over me, I rebel against him; and if he is subject to me, I lord it over him. These and many other things are daily manifestations of this hatred of my neighbor.

And do not misinterpret the words of the Heidelberg. When we read in this fifth answer that *we are prone* to hate God and our neighbor, the purpose of these underscored words is not to weaken the sense. They have often been explained as if they were a mitigation of the severity of this judgment. The meaning of the words in that case is supposed to be that we are, indeed, somewhat inclined to hate God and to hate the neighbor, but this does not necessarily imply that we always actually hate them. It is true, that if we just follow the inclination of our nature, we reveal ourselves as enemies of God and of one another. But we can restrain this inclination, and then we appear rather loving and lovable. But this is a corruption of the sense of the Heidelberg, certainly no interpretation of it. The word "prone" denotes here a state of departure from a certain standard, a decline, a state of non-conformity to a certain criterion. In this case, it denotes that our nature has fallen away, declined from its upright position, is perverse, contrary to the standard of the law of God. This proneness, therefore, is such a corruption of my nature that it is impossible for me to keep the things of God's law of love, and that I do indeed hate God and my neighbor!

When the believer gives this answer and expresses this verdict upon himself, he is taught by the Spirit, Who instructs him in the Word of God. For that this is, indeed, the teaching of Scripture concerning "man by nature", no one can deny. In proof of this the "Schatboek" refers to several passages of Holy Writ, such as Rom. 3:10, 20, 23; I John 1:8, 10; Rom. 8:7; Eph. 2:3; Tit. 3:3, etc. No, indeed, there is none righteous, no not one. There is none that seeketh after God, they are all become unprofitable; their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways. That is the testimony of Scripture throughout. And that testimony is amply corroborated by actual experience as well as by the history of the world. But in the fifth answer of the catechism it is the confession of the Christian, whose only comfort over against this evil of "life and death" is that he belongs to his faithful Saviour Jesus Christ!

H. H.

The Significance of Samuel for Old Testament Prophecy

To bring this subject to a successful issue, answers must be given to the following questions: What is to be understood by the prophetic office and by prophecy. What is a prophet.

The prophetic office implied the right and the capacity to receive and impart a divine communication. As to the prophet, he was a friend of God authorized and qualified by His grace to know and to communicate to men God's counsel and through this engagement to build and set in order God's house. The first person in the Holy Scriptures bearing the name of prophet is Abraham. He was a friend of God. The secrets of the Lord were with him and the Lord shewed him his covenant.

The essential properties of the true prophet are the following: He speaks words put into the opening of his mouth by the Lord God. Such was his calling. However, his discourse had to be the Word of God dwelling richly in him and springing forth from his soul as a living testimony. He thus had to be a friend and a true servant of God.

The rule that the prophet was the friend of Jehovah had two notable exceptions, namely, Balaam and Caiaphas. Both were devoid of grace, yet both were prophets of God, and the former consciously so. Balaam was made to bless a people whom he hated; necessity was laid upon him to give utterance to a discourse that was descriptive of the glory and the blessedness

of a people whom he wanted to curse. Israel was about to enter the promised land of its abode, and join battle with the godless races of men by which this land was corrupted. There was need of some tangible evidence of an extraordinary character that there was no cause for fear in that battle was the Lord's. This evidence was forthcoming in the person of Balaam. Because, though the desire to curse God's people was strong in him, he blessed this people, his utterances were like meat coming from the eater and thus formed the clearest evidence that all creatures are so in God's power, that, despite themselves, even the wicked declare His praise and the praises of His people, if He so orders.

The message of the prophet. The view that the utterances of the prophet had to be predictive in the *strict and narrow* sense in order to deserve the title of prophecy, is, in the light of the above observation, a mistaken idea. Christ was pre-eminently a prophet—He was our chief prophet—yet a comparatively small part of His discourses were prediction in the aforesaid sense. The prophet was a revealer of the secret counsel of God concerning man's redemption. He thus revealed God—His mind, His will, His praises. He championed God's cause. He arose to the defence of God's law. He brought men under God's yoke. He dealt with men in God's stead in the interest of truth, of righteousness, of God.

In a broad sense it is indeed true that all the discourses of all the prophets of God were predictive. They were this as they set forth either directly or indirectly by word of mouth and (or) type and symbol, the promise, the hope of God's people, the heavenly. In distinction from the prophets of the world, who prophesy of bread and wine, the prophets of God spoke exclusively of things that eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God has prepared for them that love Him and reveals unto them by His Spirit. Rightly considered, the whole of Scripture is one grand prophecy, prediction. The Bible is an other-worldly book.

What then is prophecy? In the broad sense it is the Gospel of Christ, a good message concerning the promise, the revelation of the counsel of God concerning the redemption of His people. We distinguish between Old Testament and New Testament prophecy. Old Testament prophecy foretells by type and in typical language the first coming of Christ, His atonement, and also His reign in glory and the regeneration of all things. New Testament prophecy foretells the second coming of Christ in judgment, the salvation of the Church through judgment, and the appearance of the Church with Christ in glory.

The Old Testament prophecy again varies, according as it is definite or general. Definite prophecy foretells definite, specific and particular events. Its char-

acteristic is precisely this that it is general. The promise of God that it sets forth is first successively fulfilled before it is finally fulfilled. An example of prophecy of this character is the blessing of the dying patriarch that concerned Judah, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the nation be." An example of definite prophecy is Noah's prediction respecting the flood. This is really the first specific prediction recorded in Scripture. All the communications of the great prophets had a bearing on the future, not because they were always predictive in the narrow sense, but because, as was said, they set forth heavenly and eternal truths and dealt with the realities of faith and hope and the great principles of duty. Particular prophecy did not become copious until the two centuries preceding the exile. There was reason for this. The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple and the exile of the church to Babylon could not be permitted to overtake the people of God as unannounced. The removal of so much that was typical, called for a reiteration and exposition of the promise. Without additional light, the people of God would have been driven to the conclusion that it had been permanently forsaken by their God. The Lord therefore raised up prophets through the agency of which He told His people what He was about to do with them and held before them the promise of salvation for them to live by while they passed through the valley of the shadows. The people of God had to be told that they had a future, an expectation that extended beyond their grave. This foretelling of the exile and of all the events attending it, was specific prophecy.

We can now, in the light of these observations, ascertain the significance of the prophet Samuel for Old Testament prophecy—for particular and general prophecy alike.

Samuel was the first great prophet of the period from Moses to Hosea. He was the one to originate the prophetic schools of the Old Dispensation. However only a small part of his utterances were definitely predictive. Such a prophecy was the one that concerned Eli's house. From time to time this was followed by others of a like character. Samuel's prophetic labors had to do with his present. His energies were spent in directing the life of the nation in the proper theocratic channels and in supervising the execution of imposed duties. To search and reveal the hidden mysteries of God was not his task but rather to awaken and perpetuate interest in the principles of truth contained in the revelation already given, which he did through the establishing of prophetic schools. The age in which he lived called for an activity of this kind. Samuel then was a watchman on Zion's walls. His task was to supervise the life of the nation with

a view to encouraging piety and detecting and reprov-ing the tendencies to apostacy. Like Elijah he was not pre-eminently a man of profound thought and lofty speech but of heroic action.

The significance of Samuel's prophetic labors for Old Testament prophecy is seen if these labors be contemplated in connection with those of Moses. Moses was the principle builder of the house of God under the Old Testament. (Hebrews 3:1-5). For the tabernacle and the furniture of it, he received its pattern from God and gave direction for its building unto the utmost pins. Secondly, the ordinances and institutions of worship were wholly of his appointment. He received them by revelation from God, but he prescribed them to the church, on which account they are called the law of Moses. Every one who labors by God's appointment for the edification of the church, is a builder, a ministerial builder; and those who are employed in that work in an especial manner are master builders. So was Moses in the house of God.

Now unto the building of the house of God, three things are necessary. First the giving of the design and pattern of it in laws and ordinances, and institutions, that it may answer the purpose whereunto it was designed. Second, the preparing and fitting of the materials of it and the fitting of them together, that they may grow up into a house, a holy habitation of God. Third, the solemn entrance of the presence of God into it.

The first then was that the pattern was prepared and revealed to Moses on the mount, "Make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show thee, the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it". (Ex. 25:8, 9). And further, "Look that thou make them after the similitude, which thou wast caused to see in the mount"—vs. 40. God caused Moses to see the pattern of the house and also the laws, ordinances, and institutions of the worship of God that belonged to it, for all these did God show and declare to Moses in the mount. Secondly, Moses prepared all the materials fit for that fabric by the free-will offerings of the people; and by the skill of Bezaleel and Aholiab. The glorious presence of the Lord entered into the tabernacle so erected, and God dwelt there, "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle". (Ex. 40:34).

"And Moses verily was faithful in all his house—the symbolical-typical house of God—as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; . . ." (Heb. 3:2). Moses was faithful in *his house*, in that service which is of nearest concernment to him. He was employed and thus faithful in *all his house*. All things, for the use of all ages, until the time of reformation should come, were

ordered and appointed by him. "For a testimony of those things which should be spoken after." This *being a testimony*, refers to the whole faithfulness of Moses, which extended itself to the whole service of the house wherein he was employed, as well in the building of the tabernacle and institutions of ordinances as revealing the will of God in the law. So in his ministry he was a testimony. By what he did in the service of the house he gave testimony—to the things that were afterwards to be spoken, namely, in the fulness of time, the appointed season, by the Christ,—that is, the things of the gospel. And this was the proper end of all that Moses did or ordered in the house of God. And through his being a testimony in his ministry, Moses also instrumentally built the *true* house of God, the church, symbolized and typified by the tabernacle. In the final instance, the house in which he was faithful was not that wooden structure, known as the tabernacle—but the house of Israel, the Israelitish commonwealth, the church.

Now Samuel was not the builder of the house of God as was Moses. He was not the one to receive the pattern for God's house. The ordinances and institutions of worship were not of his appointment. He was not the one to receive them by revelation from God. He reared not the house of God. When he appeared upon the stage of sacred history, this house of God, the tabernacle, the Israelitish theocracy, was already standing. It was in this house that he, Samuel, was born. As Moses, he was appointed to labor in it. He did so. And as Moses he was faithful in all his house—the house of God. He showed a remarkable zeal. In his zeal he held the nation to the law of God and thus perpetuated instrumentally the existence of the typical house of God and of all its symbolical-typical institutions and ordinances of worship. And herein precisely lies his significance for Old Testament prophecy. By what he did in the service of God's house, he, too, as Moses, gave testimony to the things that were afterwards to be spoken, namely, in the fulness of time, by Christ. As this typical house of God was the shadow of which Christ was the body, and as Samuel instrumentally, through his labors, perpetuated the existence of this house, it may in truth be said that by him *the very* prophecy—prophecy in the general sense—was perpetuated. He was even instrumental in bringing into being a new typical institution, namely, the kingship, when, in obedience to the command of God and in agreement with the clamor of the carnal seed he anointed Saul and later David king of Israel. But he also had significance for definite, particular prophecy that became so copious during the two centuries that preceded the exile. By prolonging the existence of God's typical house, he provided the prophets of that epoch with the language for their prophesying. Had it not been for the labors

of Samuel, God's house would have disappeared from the face of the earth. In this case the prophesying of the four great and the twelve minor prophets of God could not have been.

G. M. O.

The Nazarite

As was pointed out, the second thing demanded of the Nazarite was that he see to it that no razor come upon his head all the days of his consecration. As was said, this element in the Nazarite institution has been variously explained. According to one view, the long hair was the symbol of the power of God under which the Nazarite stood, and thus a sign of his subjugation to the authority of God. It was shown that there is seemingly some ground for this explanation at I Cor. 11:10. Here the apostle says of the woman that her long hair was given her by nature for a covering as a sign of subjugation to her husband. But the man, having no earthly superior, should have his hair cropped. Hence, it was counted a shame for the man to grow long hair. "But", it is said "the Nazarite, who gave himself up by a solemn vow of consecration to God, and who should therefore ever feel the authority and the power of God upon him, most fitly wore his hair long, as the badge of his entire and willing subjection to the law of his God". (Fairbairn).

There are still other conceptions of this symbol. A sign of mourning. A sign of more perfect freedom. The symbol of the spiritual power of the life of regeneration.

Just what may be the point to this part of the Nazarite institution? It is this, that the hair of the devoted one *might not be cut*. This is plain from the language employed in Num. 6, "All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head. . . . he shall be holy, and *shall let the locks of his hair grow*." If words have meaning then the mandate to the effect, "There shall no razor come upon his head", is equivalent in meaning to the command, "he shall let the locks of his hair grow," that is, he shall refrain from cutting his hair. The clue to the correct interpretation of this element in the Nazarite institution is the command, similar in character, and given in respect to the altar, "And if thou make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone—mark you, *hewn* stone—: for if thou wilt lift thy tool upon it—that is, if thou wilt make it of stones that were hewn with thy own hands, the hands of man—thou hast polluted it." (Ex. 21:25). We must now consider in this connection what is asserted of the

stone seen by Nebuchadnezzar in his dream. This stone, by which the great and bright image was smitten, was cut out of the mountain without hands. The signification of this figure is evident. Christ, the stone, was, as to His human nature, brought into being not through human, but solely through divine agency. Though hewn out of the rock, that is, though of our race, though born of the virgin, the hands that made Him were those not of man but of God. He was exclusively God's Christ. He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and the Spirit of the Lord rested upon him—the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord" (Isa. 2:2). He was solely the product of the power of God's love,—He and likewise His people, the sheep for whom He laid down His life. There can be no doubt that this is precisely the truth signified by the Nazarite's walking before his brethren with his hair uncut. Cutting his hair, the Nazarite, as to his appearance, would have been a man, made with man's hands. But with hair and beard uncut, thus long and flowing, because unhampered in their growth by the application of the shears, the Nazarite, as to his outward man, stood before his brethren as *God* made him, as a man made with God's hands,—thus stood before his brethren as the walking signification of the truth that the believer is solely the spiritual creation of God, His exclusive workmanship.

If the point to the prohibition, "There shall no razor come upon his head," is, 'Being a sinful man, the Nazarite uses the razor to his own hurt, cutting with it his hair. Hence, let him put this instrument far from him,'—if this were the construction to be placed upon the command in question, it is hard to see why the hair should be singled out. Aside from the fact that a man does himself no physical harm, when he cuts his hair, there are many other ways in which a man may injure himself with a razor. So, if the thought that was meant to be conveyed is, that, whereas man, being sinful, cannot use the razor and tools and instruments in general otherwise than to his own hurt, the Nazarite may not have these things in his possession, while performing his vow, it shall have to be admitted that the language employed by the sacred writer is misleading. For, what he, according to the form of the words employed, says is simply and plainly this, "The Nazarite shall wear his locks long, that is, he shall not cut them."

The last element in the Nazarite institution was the necessity of avoiding all contact with the corpse. The common Israelite, too, might not deliberately defile himself with the body of a dead man, except the man be of his kin. If, due to no fault of his own, he was defiled, the law required that he purify himself with the water of separation on the third day and be unclean seven days. If he failed in this, he had to be cut

off from his people" (Num. 19:9-11). Thus no one among the Israelites might purposely touch the dead. In respect to the dead, the common Israelite found himself under the same necessity that was laid upon the Nazarite. The former as well as the latter was holy unto the Lord. The only difference was that as applying to the Nazarite, the law was most strict. As the highpriest he was even forbidden to defile himself for the dead body of his nearest kin.

The significance of the command that the Nazarite touch not the body of any man, is evident. The corpse is the symbol of the natural man in his spiritual death and pollution. But in distinction from the wine, the physical corpse symbolized the principle of sin as it riots not within a man but in the world by which he is surrounded, in the men that constitute this world. Thus the prohibition in question is at bottom a mandate to the effect that the servants of God in a spiritual-ethical sense be separate and live alone; it is a command that God's people see to it that they are not defiled by the evil works of the unprincipled men whom they daily must contact in the local sense. Thus the Nazarite as separating himself and as actually separated from the dead body, stood before his brethren also as the walking symbol of the believer separating himself and also actually separated in principle from the world that lieth in darkness, from the evil works of this world,—as a walking symbol of the believer pitted against sin as it riots in his own nature and in the world round about him. But the Nazarite institution had also a positive side to it. The Nazarite was one holy unto the Lord. The law reads, "And he shall be holy. . . ." (Num. 6:5a). The thought contained in this brief clause is wholly positive. The Nazarite was thus one wholly given unto God in heartfelt service. The law of God was his delight, and his desire was to run the way of God's commands. His calling was to live the truth symbolized by the commands under which he had been brought.

When the days of his separation were fulfilled, the Nazarite offered his offerings unto the Lord—a he-lamb for a burnt offering, a ewe-lamb for a sin offering, a ram for a peace offering, and unleavened cakes for a meal offering. A ewe-lamb for a sin offering. Thus the Nazarite, during the period of the performance of his vow, had sinned. Wherein had he sinned? In respect to the outward commandments by which he had been bound? Had he at intervals drunk wine or defiled his head with the razor? This cannot be. His vow would then have been broken. Yet he had sinned. As has already been explained, his calling was to so live and walk that he stood before his brethren as the reality of the symbols that he bore upon his person. His duty was to love the Lord with all his heart and mind and will and with all his strength and to walk as a true child of grace among his brethren. This was

in the final instance his calling. But in this he had failed largely as do all God's believing people. Hence, having performed his vow, he brought his sin offering. Despite his best efforts he had sinned. And his sins called for his death. Therefore he brought his sin offering. And in connection with his offering, he received witness that he was righteous.

The question finally is whether the prohibition in question placed the Nazarite under the necessity not only of keeping himself unspotted from the world but also of separating himself from his world physically and locally. The Nazarite had to live alone in spiritual separation from the ungodly and be wholly consecrated to God. This, certainly, must have been the matter, the reality, signified by the symbols that he bore upon his person. But the question is whether this spiritual isolation was to be achieved through the Nazarite locally withdrawing himself from the world of man in which he ordinarily moved. If this be affirmed, we must certainly be on our guard against imagining that the prohibitions in question root in the philosophy that matter, being as such corrupt, is the seat of sin and the teaching that what causes a man to sin is not his sinful nature, flesh, heart, but the things that he holds, such as is wine and bread, and the wicked that he must daily contact—the wicked, their bad examples, their evil practices and ways, their sinful set-up of life, the fair promises or threats by which they attempt to destroy the faith of the believer, in a word, all the temptations to which man is subjected by the godless whom he daily contacts. True it is that a man cannot become drunken, unless he have wine; that he cannot slay himself or his neighbor unless he be supplied with a weapon; that he cannot make a glutton of himself, unless he have food; that he cannot steal, unless he have access to his neighbor's possessions. Without these things the sinful thought, desire, imagining, resolution, cannot express themselves outside the man in deeds. But from this it in no wise follows that a man succeeds in living a consecrated life, through his separating himself from the earth and its fulness outside of him, from bread and wine. For the cause of a man's sinning is his evil heart, the sinful flesh. Hence, the thing to do for a man, who wants to be holy, is not to separate himself from wine and bread, and in the local and physical sense from his fellow men, is not to throw away his implements, but to mortify, slay, annihilate his sinful self and to pray God to empower him by His grace to use God's bread and wine in moderation and to keep himself unspotted from the world of men in which he has been placed. Christ does not say, "If thy eye offend thee, separate thyself from or destroy the thing upon which thy sinful eye is feasting," but He says, "If thy eye offend thee pluck it out, namely, thy eye," that is, 'in thy sinning, turn not upon the thing that occasioned thy sinning—the bread and

the wine—but upon thyself. Thou art at fault. The evil fountain of thy lusting lies within thee.' If the three commands to the Nazarite that he separate himself from wine, the shears and the corpse that defiles are at bottom so many instructions to the effect that he attain to a higher plain of spiritual living through such practices of self-denial, we have to do here with three commands, the only ones of their kind in all the scriptures.

Yet, fact is, that just because a man is sinful, bread and wine, and the temptation to which the wicked subject him, though they do not cause him to sin, do occasion his sinning, his stumbling, his fall. As living in isolation, a man is free from all external corrupting influences, from the temptations of life that come to him from without. Did therefore the Nazarite also withdraw himself locally from the world of men of which he formed a part in order to keep from sinning? Did his desire to live a consecrated life cause him to seek the solitude of uninhabited regions? If so, did he do so because the *law* placed him under this necessity? Was this physical isolation also the matter that was actually meant to be signified by the signs of the Nazarite institution?

(To be continued)

G. M. O.

Een Lied Der Liefde

(Psalm 45, Eerste Deel)

Een onvergetelijke doode heeft meermalen tot mij gezegd: "Psalm 45, mijn jongen, is het Hooglied van Salomo in 't klein!"

'k Heb het toen toegestemd, doch nu, bij 't bestudeeren van dit wonderschoone lied, ben ik in dit geloof versterkt.

Ik schreef hierboven: een lied der liefde. Het is een van de opschriften des Heiligen Geestes. Er zijn er vijf. Dat zal zeker komen vanwege den rijken inhoud van het lied. De orde dier vijf opschriften zooals de Engelsche vertaling geeft is de juiste: Voor den opperzangmeester, op sosannim, onder de kinderen van Korach, eene onderwijzer, een lied der liefde.

Het manuscript werd overhandigd aan Heman, den Ezrahiet, aan Asaph of aan Ethan: zij waren de opperzangmeesters in Israel.

Op sosannim kan slaan op de wijze waarop het lied gezongen moet, of het muziek-instrument hetwelk voor dit lied benodigd moest. Letterlijk beteekent het: de leliën.

De kinderen van Korach waren de gezegende lieden die dit lied moesten instudeeren, de muziek der leliën (?) leeren, om straks, ook den vijf-en-veertigsten

psalm in den dienst van Jehova te zingen.

Eene onderwijzing. Ja, dat zal zoo zijn! Ook komt men nooit uitgeleerd. Het is gelijk aan het Hooglied, de liefde van God bezingende. Ook hierin is de eeuwigheid.

Een lied der liefde. Het woord voor liefde staat in 't Hebreeuwsch in het meervoud. Reden, waarom in de Engelsche Bijbels staat: A song of loves. De geleerde Delitsch wil hier een enkelvoudige idee inzien en dan vertalen: het liefvallige. Ik denk, dat we de idee van 't meervoud moeten behouden. Als er een meervoudsvorm gebruikt wordt, dan heeft het ook de idee van het vele, het menigvuldige. En als we dan afgaan op hetgeen in 't vers der liefden bezongen wordt kan het een van tweeën beteekenen: de liefde van velen, d.w.z., de liefde van God tot Zijn Zoon, door Hem tot Zijn bruid, de kerk, en eindigende in de liefde van de kerk (een schare die niemand tellen kan) tot God in Christus. Dan hebt ge een veelheid van liefde. Ook kan het slaan op het menigvuldige van de liefde zelf. Dan ziet men de liefde als een veelzijdige diamant die zijn stralenbundel van veelkleurig licht doet fonkelen en schitteren. Misschien mogen we de twee ideeën verbinden. In elk geval zou ik het meervoud van liefde willen handhaven. Het staat er letterlijk: een lied van liefden; of van liefvalligheden.

Dat we hier een onuitsprekelijken rijkdom hebben wordt duidelijker als we luisteren naar de inleiding van den dichter. Hij zegt van zichzelf, dat zijn hart aan 't koken is, dat het een goede rede opborrelt, gelijk het water onstuimiglijk te voorschijn treedt in de fontein.

Het beeld van een Koning heeft zijn hart in vlammen gezet. Zijn tong wordt heftiglijk bewogen vanwege het volle hart. Hij vergelijkt zijn tong met de pen eens vaardigen schrijvers. Ik kan dat beeld eenigzins begrijpen. Ik heb maar éénmaal in mijn leven een vaardigen schrijver gezien. 'k Zal zijn naam niet noemen. Nooit te voren zag ik zulk een schoone harmonie van vlugge beweging en schoone letters. Het geheel mocht werkelijk vergeleken worden bij een stroom waters die uit den bron vliet.

Zoo is het gesteld met den dichter. Hij heeft het schoonste beeld aanschouwd dat ooit het geheele heelal vervullen zal tot in der eeuwigheid. Hij zag de bruidstoet van Gods Zoon en Zijn Kerke. Toen is hij aan 't dichten gegaan. Het lieflijk gezang der leliën vloede van zijn lippen.

Merkt op, dat hij direkt het beeld schetst van den Koning der koningen. Hij ziet Hem en spreekt Hem toe. Dit sprekend zingen tot Jezus, den Zoon Gods gaat voort tot het tiende vers.

Die Koning is mensch en toch weer meer dan mensch; zelfs onder de menschen is Hij gemakkelijk de schoonste. Ja, die menschen zijn Zijn broeders, doch Hij heeft een naam verkregen die boven allen naam

verheven is. Schoon is die Koning vanwege de deugden Gods. Straks hoorde hij de koning spreken. En dan getuigt hij ervan: genade is op Uwe lippen uitgestort. Later, veel later, zal de Evangelist ervan getuigen: Men verwonderde zich over de genadige woorden die Hij in Nazareth sprak. Genade op de lippen: wat is het anders dan schoone woorden, lieflijke woorden, woorden van waarheid.

Ook heeft de dichter de oneindige bron gezien. Al die schoonheid van den Koning komt van God. God heeft dien Koning gezegend in eeuwigheid. God heeft Hem door den Heiligen Geest vervuld met alle deugd. Hij is vol van de goedheid des Heeren. En nooit heeft die zegening schooner geschitterd dan toen Hij aan het kruis van Golgotha hing. En al is het ook, dat wij onze aangezichten verbergende waren voor Hem, de engelen Gods hebben gejuicht. Ze zagen de groote, onbegrijpelijke liefde Gods. Ze zagen in bloed en tranen en zweeten en brullen, het geopende hart van den God der liefde. Dat wondere deugdenbeeld mocht in Jezus, den Koning, wonen. God zegende Hem in eeuwigheid en tot in eeuwigheid. Ziedaar de Bron van de schoonheid van dezen Koning.

Gord nu maar Uw zwaard aan Uwe heup. Geleerden en geschiedenis-vorschers hebben ons verteld, dat we hier te doen hebben met een plechtigheid onder de Oostersche hoven. Als een Prins verhoogd werd tot Koning mocht hij onder 't juichen zijner hovelingen het zwaard des rijks aan zijn heupen hechten. 't Was een plechtigheid bij de kroning van een koning. Het was een zinnebeeld van de kracht, majesteit en zeggenschap die voorts op zulk een koning rustte.

Zoo is 't ook met Jezus gegaan.

Door den Heiligen Geest kwam er zeggenschap en macht op Jezus. God riep van den hemel tot de menschenkinderen: Deze is Mijn geliefde Zoon in dewelken al Mijn welbehagen is! En de Heilige Geest kwam neder van den hemel en rustte op Hem in de gedaante van een duif.

Toen heeft Jezus, als de Held Gods, het zwaard des rijks aan de heupen gegord.

Dat zwaard is Zijn majesteit en heerlijkheid.

Daarna is die Held gaan strijden. Het wordt Hem hier in den psalm toegeroepen: Rijd voorspoediglijk in Uwe heerlijkheid, op het woord der waarheid en rechtvaardige zachtmoedigheid!

En o, daar had de wereld zoo ontzettend veel gebrek aan. Die held stond temidden van leugenaars, En Hij moest gaan strijden tegen den vader der leugen, den duivel.

Het woord der waarheid en rechtvaardige zachtmoedigheid is de bovenmenselijke kracht van dien Koning.

Waarheid! Die waarheid moest de Bruid vrijmaken. Ze zat in het gevang der leugen, aan de leugen onderworpen. Een slavin, een gewillige slavin der

leugen. Leugen trekt alle verhoudingen krom. De waarheid is de rechte verhouding. De waarheid is die deugd waarin men is zooals men wezen moet krachtens zijn wezen en krachtens het doel waartoe men geschapen wierd.

En toen Gods wereld daar ter neder lag in 't gevang der leugen, is er een woord der waarheid van Zijn lippen gevloeid. En dat Woord is Jezus. We hoorden Hem immers zeggen: Ik ben de weg, de waarheid en het leven?

En als die Held nu te voorschijn treedt in het strijdperk om tegen de leugen te strijden, om den duivel aan te tasten en hem zijn prooi te ontnemen, dan is zulk strijden een rijden op de rechtvaardige zachtmoedigheid. Jezus verslaat zijn vijanden door de rechtvaardige zachtmoedigheid. Zijn rechterhand zal Hem vreeselijke dingen leeren. In deze taal is het lijden des eeuwigen doods. Hij is de zachtmoedige: Hij zal veel kracht nodig hebben om te kunnen lijden. Die zachtmoedigheid wordt gekenmerkt door de rechtvaardigheid, dat is, de wil tot het goede. We kunnen hier slechts van stamelen.

Uwe pijlen zijn scherp, volken zullen onder U vallen; zij treffen in het hart van des Koning's vijanden

Daar hebt ge de overwinningen van Koning Jezus.

Ter eener zijde verslaat Hij zijn tienduizenden als Hij ze te pletter stoot met zijn zwaard. Dat zijn de verworpenen.

Ter anderzijde verslaat Hij zijn vijanden door Zijn pijlen van liefde. Dan wordt den ouden mensch gedood en gaat zulk een volk leven het leven der liefde van Koning Jezus. Dat zijn de uitverkorenen.

Voorts ziet de dichter Koning Jezus in Zijn Goddelijke kracht. Hij mag, door Goddelijke wijsheid vermaand zijnde, iets zien van het wonder der vleeschwoording van God. Hij heeft het bemerkt, dat Koning Jezus der Goddelijke natuur deelachtig is. Hij redeneert er niet over, hij stelt de zaak eenvoudig. Hij zegt: Uw troon, o God is eeuwig en altoos, de schepter Uws koninkrijks is een schepter der rechtmatigheid. Gij hebt gerechtigheid lief en haat goddeloosheid: daarom heeft U, o God! Uw God gezalfd met vreugde-olie boven Uwe medegenooten!

Deze woorden werden opgevangen door den schrijver aan de Hebreëen. En dezelfde Heilige Geest die vaardig werd over den dichter hier, inspireert den Nieuw-Testamentischen schrijver. Deze verzen worden neergepend om te bewijzen, dat Jezus Christus de levende Zoon van God is, het uitgedrukte Beeld Zijner zelfstandigheid.

Jezus is gezalfd door God om een vreeselijk werk te doen. Doch Hij is de Held die alles volbracht heeft en mag Hij nu voorts in vreugde en groote blijdschap de reien leiden in het eeuwig gezang des hemels en der aarde. Het is het lied der overwinning.

Die vreugde-olie (beeld der zalving des Heiligen Geestes) heeft tot vrucht dat Zijn kleederen gelijk mirre, aloë en kassia zijn. Deze drie stoffen werden gebruikt tot bereiding der allerkostelijksten nardus. De zalf-olie doordrong Zijn gewaad en hare reuk doorademde Hem geheel en al.

Alles beeldspraak, hetwelk ons de heerlijkheid en majesteit van dien Koning beschrijft.

Ook die elpenbeenen paleizen spreken van de schoonheid en kostbaarheid van Koning Jezus. Elpenbeen werd gebruikt om gebouwen te sieren; doch hier wordt een Huis gezien, dat geheel en al van elpenbeen opgetrokken is. Het laat ons iets zien van de duizelingwekkende schoonheid en kostbaarheid, heerlijkheid en majesteit van den Goddelijken Koning.

Doch er is meer.

De dichter ziet drommen van gelukkigen die den Koning omringen. Ter zijde van Koning Jezus staat Zijn bruid. Haar naam is Koningin. De eereplaats die zij mag bekleeden is ter rechterhand van Jezus. Nooit is er een Koningin geweest die zoo geheel aan haar Gemaal toe behoorde. Hij heeft haar gekocht met Zijn dierbaar bloed. Vreeselijke dingen heeft Zijne rechterhand Hem geleerd in 't verkrijgen van Zijn schoone duive.

Dezelfde bruid uit een ander oogpunt wordt nu ook gezien. Dochters van Koningen ziet de dichter. Dat is dezelfde kerk van Christus, doch nu uit het oogpunt van de individueele geloovigen. Dan zijn ze allen dochteren van God, die Hij als een geschenk van Zijn Vader ontving. Hij ontving ze van eeuwigheid. Zij zijn een kostbaar volk: de Heere Heere heeft ze bemind van eeuwigheid. Hij heeft hun beeld gezien in Zijne handpalmen. Zij zijn schoon en kostbaar in die handpalmen. Daarom zal dan ook het einde zijn, dat ze in 't fijnste goud van Ofir aan Jezus' rechterhand komen te staan.

Ziedaar het beeld van Koning Jezus. De Held Gods. De Bruidegom van de kerk des Heeren. De gemaal van de Koningin die Hij uit 't geweld des doods moest verlossen. En Zijn zwaard en pijl, Zijn kracht en macht was de eeuwige liefde Gods. Die liefde wordt rechtvaardige zachtmoedigheid in 't strijden en lijden. Ze wordt heerlijkheid en majesteit in Zijn overwinningen.

En die Koning is van Israel's God gegeven zoodat wij allen Hem mogen toebehooren en zien, Hem toejuichen en beminnen.

De dichter heeft er iets van gezien en wij zien het ook, gelijk in een spiegel, een duistere rede.

Het weinigje dat hij ziet doet hem koken in 't diepe hart. Zijn tong wordt gelijk aan de pen eens vaardigen schrijvers.

En het duistere beeld dat wij opvangen is alreede zoo schoon en heerlijk, dat wij straks zullen eindigen met den dichter en zingen zooals hij: Ik zal Uw naam,

o Koning Jezus, doen gedenken van elk geslacht tot geslacht: daarom zullen U de volken prijzen eeuwiglijk en altoos.

O, wanneer zullen wij het volkomen leeren, dat alle geluk en jubel enkel en alleen ligt in 't bewonderen van 't eeuwig deugenbeeld?

De koningin, de staatsdochteren, het volk van God eindige: "Hier weidt mijn ziel met een verwondrend oog!"

G. V.

The Christian And Social Evils

Social evils refer to the principle of evil as it manifests itself in the relations of man to man, in the life of men among men. For "social" or society means a body of persons joined or living together. More particularly social evils refer to evils as they crop up in the community. In one community this evil, in some other community another evil is on the foreground. And the idea of this article will not be to catalogue a series of such evils, but rather to try to show what attitude the professed Christian has to take toward the evils as they appear in his social world.

I.—*Aware of Social Evils*

"Son of Man, dig now into the wall" said God to Ezekiel, (Ezek. 8:8). So the prophet dug into the wall and behold, a door. The prophet was commanded to go in and there he beheld such abominations as were sufficient to make him shudder. But Ezekiel was commanded to inspect these "chambers of imagery" still further, and he beheld still greater atrocities. As if that were not enough he had to penetrate still further into the hidden recesses of Judah's abominations and the further he penetrated the more horrible were the evils he saw. If this is what the very house of Judah does in the dark, what shall be our judgment of the world? If by penetrating into the chambers of imagery the prophet saw such indescribable evils in the very house of Judah, what shall we see if we descend into the chambers of the imagery of the world? Paul, in his divine revelation emerging from these chambers said, "for it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret" (Eph. 5:12). While in Rom. 1:28-32 Paul exposes that world in all its horrors when he says that it is "filled" with fornication, envy, murder, debate, etc.

The Christian must know that such is the social world in which he lives. Then he knows what to expect and is not shocked beyond measure when he sees these horrors manifesting themselves in his very community.

It is necessary also that the Christian know the essence of this evil. There is a triple depravity which lies at the basis of all social evils. First of all is the fact that the natural and fallen man is a hater of God. Not only does the Scripture show that the fallen man is an enemy of God, but the Catechism says that man is by nature "prone to hate God". In the second place fallen man also hates his neighbor. God is One and His Law is ONE, if man hates God he hates also his neighbor for the Law is one. Toward God man is a depraved creature, toward his fellow man quite the same. For the carnal mind is enmity against God and is not subject to the Law of God neither indeed can be. And this double stranded principle of consistent hate and disrespect for both God and his fellow man is augmented by still a third factor and that is that natural man is ever a lover of self, he is selfish. Over against his duty toward God and the neighbor which is the duty of love, he ever places his lustful selfishness. He seeks his highest good in attaining his selfish ends. Can he use God's Law as a stepping stone to achieve personal gain, he will do it; can he use his fellow man as a tool to advance his own ends he will be "nice" to his neighbor, but his criterion is always self. The first moment he notices that God's Law hinders his selfish efforts or impedes his progress he says of God "there is no God" and of his fellow man he says "Am I my brother's keeper"?

This triple depravity underlies the social life of any given community and everywhere one can see how social life is lived out of this wicked principle. The Christian must be aware of this. He sees this principle of depravity in concrete social evils round about him. The city has a theatre, for instance. What of it that they show pictures which glorify what God condemns? What of it that they poison the souls of fellowman? . . . as long as men satisfy carnal lusts and realize financial returns. In the domestic sphere, what does the philandering husband care about the God of the seventh commandment, what does he care about his own wife, what does he care about the man whose wife he illegitimately courts, the home he ruins, the children he turns out into the streets as waifs, what cares he as long as he may satisfy his own lusts? And what cares Reno as long as there is financial gain in it? In the sphere of economics and labor, the employer disregards his Master in heaven, disregards the starvation-wage of the employee and aims at making his fortune. And the employee, in return, disregards the authority of God, fills his soul with revenge, and in total disregard for anyone else stages strike, riot, bloodshed, etc. Enough to show concretely what the Christian is to understand by social evils.

II.—*Realizing His Position*

What attitude shall the Christian assume toward

the social evils he sees round about him? His attitude is determined by the position in which His God has placed him.

Christian, be humble! Remember, Scripture describes the Christian thus: "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient—hateful and hating one another". It was when the kindness and love of God appeared that we were changed. It is the grace of God which made us Christians. For Christ paid the price of our guilt and through His Spirit He united us to Himself. By foregone decree of election we were given to Christ, we became Christ's—Christians. And the new principle of the life of Christ has transformed us so that although we are still in the world and thus still part of that corrupt society, we are wholly different.

The Christian's mark of distinction is principally that he stands in the world and fights. That is first of all his position. Does not Scripture speak repeatedly of the spiritual warfare, of fighting the good fight. Scripture exhorts him "ye that love the Lord hate evil." The Catechism also in Ans. 32 gathers this together and says the Christian is one who with a "free and good conscience fights against sin and Satan in this life". Wherefore in Holy Baptism the church prays that this child when come to years may "manfully fight against and overcome sin, the devil and his whole dominion". Hence we may say that the position of the Christian is that of antithesis. He fights against and opposes sin because he hates sin. The moment he acquiesces in the presence of evil, grows accustomed to it, disregards it or, positively speaking, countenances it, associates with it or enjoys it, he is Christian no more. His position is to fight.

And together with that his position is to stand in the midst of his social world and show himself as the Party of the living God. As Covenant-friends of God it is our calling and position to bear out the prophecy of the Truth. To hold before others the Word of truth and apply that Word on all sides of us. In order that we may be a testimony in the world, a testimony that we are of God. "Ye shall testify of Me" said the Christ as He departed to heaven, that is the distinction of the Christian. "Ye are the light of the world" and we are light-children among the children of men. That is the position which we are assigned by God. Not to assume this position is at once to be traitors to God's Cause and deniers of our very baptism.

Let the Christian, standing among the ever-appearing social evils, realize that such is his position. The world is no playground, mere rendezvous or social circus, but the world is the battlefield of the saints and the social evils are so many challenges for him to stand up and fight and lift high the emblem of His Party.

III.—*Maintaining His Position*

In diligence the Christian ought to maintain his position in the face of the social evils round about him.

This implies in the first place that the Christian must fight back these evils as they penetrate and tend to penetrate into the very Camp of the Saints. That was primarily the Old Testament position of the Saint. The Israelite had to beware for the infiltration of the Philistine or Assyrian worldliness and he had to fight it back. This position is unchanged in the New Testament. Paul, for instance, does not instruct to rebuild Rome, to reform Athens or reconstruct Thessalonica, but he bids the church keep itself from the accursed thing. The social evils rampant in the world may not even be mentioned among the saints or in their Camp. And this warfare is to be waged along no less than four fronts. In the Christian's own personal life he is to beat back evil and overcome evil with good. In the church he is to fight the good fight, keeping the church pure as possible. In the home he must be on guard lest the social evils round about him make inroads into his God-given sanctuary. And finally the same is true for the Christian School, where also it is our expressed calling to stand and fight back the world-conformity which always lurks around our doors.

But, we must not let it there. The Christian is as well a member of society and in the midst of that society he must be consistently Christian. And this implies, among other things the following: First of all it is his privilege and calling to reprove and condemn these evils when the occasion presents itself. We cannot grant that evil has the right of existence, our position is that we shall condemn evil, in the light of the Truth. But secondly, it is our calling to urge and exhort others, especially also those who hold authoritative positions in the community, to reckon with the Scriptures and especially the Decalogue and centrally the second table thereof. Did not David sing "thy truth before the kings of earth with boldness I will speak"? And did not Paul protest before Felix, Festus and Agrippa of righteousness, temperance and judgment? And, finally, it is our calling, with other Christians, when the opportunity presents itself, to register concerted protest against or come with united action to stamp out certain threatening evils. And thus we shall show ourselves as "manfully fighting" the good fight.

And now in conclusion. The Christian must maintain his position and be of good courage. For he will see that evils will not be stamped out, for they, like cancer, will break out elsewhere. He will see that he cannot touch or reach but a few of the myriad of evils round about him and can touch only the surface. And he will likewise see that his attempts will

bring unpopularity and very enmity. The Christian must be of good courage for His God has shown him the course of the antithesis and the outcome of his warfare. Evils will remain, always, even until the end, for God has ordained the way of the antithesis until the end. Nay, more yet, evil men will wax worse and worse.

Victory is there—but it lies in faith. Centering in the final return of Christ in judgment. Victory lies not here, but yonder. When the judgments of God have swept away all evil and the Redeemed Family emerges from the Ark, then they shall attain to the new heaven and the new earth in which dwells righteousness.

M. G.

The Proper Place of the Sunday-School

What is the proper place of the Sunday School? That is the question which we shall seek to answer in this paper. We might understand our subject to assume that the Sunday School does indeed have a place and consider it only to be our task to discover what this place is. We may also take the subject a bit more broadly, and then it demands an answer also to the question, Does the Sunday School really have a place among the covenant youth? In the more general sense we have looked upon the subject.

* * * *

Among the children of the unchurched, there, to my mind, the Sunday School is first of all in its proper place. Sunday School is for those children whose parents fail to provide a Christian home, school and catechism instruction for them. It is for children born and reared outside of the church and covenant of God. To such children it should direct its attention first of all.

Such was the original intention of Robert Raikes who is generally considered to be the founder of the Sunday School movement. When Robert Raikes saw how the children of the unchurched, especially of the poor, profaned the Sabbath and grew up in total ignorance of God and His Word, he was deeply moved and finally conceived the plan of organizing Sunday Schools to provide some training for the "little heathens" and to take them off the streets on the Sabbath. That was in the year 1780. When the Sunday School movement grew by leaps and bounds, not only in England but also throughout the world in general, the Sunday School gradually forsook its original purpose and became an instrument for instructing the

covenant children. However, even to this very day, especially in America, the Sunday School in a measure still seeks to provide instruction for the children of the unchurched. Most Sunday Schools welcome into their midst the children of the community at large, and seek to include them with the children of the church.

To my mind the Sunday School should remain true to its original purpose, and its proper place is first of all among such children. However, I do not believe that we ought to follow the example of American church in general in bringing the children who are not of the covenant into one Sunday School with those who are of God's covenant. For obvious reasons. First of all, the method of approach necessarily differs. The children of the covenant should be treated as covenant children, while the others cannot and may not be. Furthermore, the children of God's covenant brought up in Christian homes, in the Christian School and enjoying catechetical instruction certainly cannot be expected to study the same lesson the others study. The former have much greater knowledge to begin with than those who have not received this instruction. It is as pedagogically impossible to put them in the same Sunday School classes as it is to put an eighth grader in the same class with a beginner. And, finally, there are grave dangers connected with bringing the children of God's covenant into one class with the children of the unchurched. Dangers of intermingling, of friendships, of the children of the church losing their distinctiveness and learning the ways of the world, and that in the shadow and under the supervision of the church. Hence, we ought to object strenuously against the practise of bringing all children promiscuously into one and the same Sunday School.

The Sunday School for the children not of God's Covenant ought to be separately organized, at least there ought to be separate classes. And Sunday School is first of all in its proper place among such children. There can be no objection to such Sunday Schools. They are even desirable.

* * * *

Lest you misunderstand my position, let me add at once that I do not mean that the Sunday School has no place at all among and for the covenant children. I admit that I do not believe its place is nearly as large as that frequently assigned to it, especially in most of the denominations of our day. Neither do I believe that its benefits anywhere near compare with the instruction of the Christian School, nor with those of catechism. However, neither am I of the opinion that the Sunday School has no place at all among the covenant youth, that it is really an evil. Some oppose the Sunday School for the covenant youth, many

merely tolerate it; it is my position that we ought to support it.

It is a fact that there are those in our Protestant Reformed Churches that look upon the Sunday School with apprehension and fear, who oppose it or at best merely tolerate it.

Their position ought not to be misunderstood. By and large, they certainly do not assume this attitude of opposition and aloofness because they underestimate the task of the training of our children in the way they should go. On the contrary, they on the whole, are people that are strongly Christian School and Catechism minded and that fear the Sunday School will substitute School and catechism. They usually present the following arguments:

1. There is a grave danger that the Sunday School will usurp the place of catechism and perhaps the Christian School, especially in our American world where Christian School and catechism are slighted and opposed and the Sunday School is nurtured as a bosom child. This danger is certainly not imaginary. It is a fact, for example, that in the Reformed Church of America the Sunday School has largely replaced the catechism. According to the official statistics given by Dr. E. Romig in his address on the state of religion in the Reformed denomination, delivered at the General Synod in 1941, there are 29,729 children enrolled in their catechism classes while the Sunday Schools have an enrollment of 138,092. In other words there are five times as many children in Sunday School than there are in catechism. Dr. Romig also stated that in the Synod of Chicago the catechism attendance was fast falling off. For a man Reformed in his convictions, and not merely in name, it is distressing to see the official instruction of the catechism be replaced by the instruction of the Sunday School. It represents a distinct loss. For the instruction of ministers and elders comes an instruction of teachers only too frequently poorly versed themselves in the knowledge of God's Word. Instead of the doctrinal knowledge gained in catechism comes the interpretative-practical knowledge gained in the Sunday School.

We should feel for this argument even though we cannot agree with the conclusion. By no means ought we allow any instrument for the training of our children threaten either the Christian School or the catechism. These above all. But still I do not agree that because the Sunday School has replaced catechism in other denominations, it therefore should be opposed also in our midst. We ought to oppose any attempt to take the place of catechism. But that does not mean that the Sunday School *itself* must be opposed. Because the Sunday School is frequently misused, it does not necessarily follow that it is an evil in itself. Not at all, no more than liquor in itself is an evil because many misuse it. To my mind the Sunday

School can serve a purpose, a purpose of its own. We ought to foster and not to oppose it. But of this later in the article.

2. A second argument used against the Sunday School is that there is no room for this instrument in the Reformed "set-up". We have the Christian home, the Christian School and the catechism. These three, each in its own place, fill the whole need of child-training. The Sunday School can add nothing; it can only repeat what was learned before elsewhere.

We would answer that even if it were true that nothing new could be learned in Sunday School—which is by no means necessarily true—then even mere repetition would be valuable. Repetition is a large part of training, let us never forget. But, we do not believe that there is no place at all for the Sunday School. If it true it can never accomplish in forty-five minutes what the School accomplishes in daily periods of that length; neither should it teach the doctrines and doctrinal viewpoint, which is the duty of catechism. But we claim that if the Sunday School adheres to the method of the interpretative-practical-inspirational it can fill a place all of its own, and add its bit in the training of our children.

Hence, I believe the Sunday School should not be opposed, it should not merely be tolerated, but it should be supported. Indeed, not as *the* instrument of the training of the youth, but as another instrument, be it that its value is relatively less than that of catechism and Christian School.

I believe there is a place for the Sunday School for the covenant youth also for the following reasons: First, our children can never receive too much instruction, especially not in our day. Secondly, we do not have Christian Schools of our own (with the exception of Redlands) and the general tenor of school instruction our children receive is Christian Reformed. As long as this is true, the Sunday School can aid us in presenting the Protestant Reformed viewpoint. Thirdly, it provides, if it remains true to its character, the interpretative-inspirational viewpoint which is an asset for the children.

* * * *

In conclusion, I wish to remark that to my mind the Sunday School should:

1. Adhere to the method of interpretative-practical instruction, and not attempt the doctrinal viewpoint. The latter is the task of the catechism.

2. Never place itself on a par, as to value for the covenant children, with either the Christian School or the catechism.

3. Be under the close supervision of the consistory. The more because it is an organization controlled, not by the parents, not by the consistory, not by the pupils,

but by the teachers. Besides, it is busy in the serious business of the training of the children. Finally, since the consistory is better qualified to know the character and ability of prospective teachers than the Sunday School, all nominations of prospective teachers should be submitted to the consistory for approval.

4. Direct its efforts also toward the instruction of the children of the unchurched by organizing separate schools and classes.

* * * *

Let us give the Sunday School an intelligent, healthy Reformed support.

P. D. B.

The Evil of the Modern Movie

A word of introduction regarding the title of this article may not be out of place. The reader will notice that it is not entirely correct, and perhaps somewhat confusing, to speak of "The Evil of the Modern Movie". The expression may leave the impression that not all movies, but merely the modern movies are evil, and as such to be avoided. In the first place, the movie itself is a comparatively modern invention and institution. And while we are perfectly aware of the fact that the movie-camera itself is not an evil thing, it is also very evident that the institution that has developed from it is, and always has been, evil.

In the second place, permit me to state that I am not at all in agreement with the sentiments of the writer of an article which appeared recently in "The Standard Bearer". I refer to the article under the caption "Is Christian Drama Possible". And although it is not my intention to enter into a public debate with the author of that article, at least not in this present writing, I cannot refrain from expressing my dissatisfaction and disagreement with the arguments and the conclusions of that essay. We make these remarks only because we feel that the two subjects are very closely related. For if Christian drama is even remotely possible, then the movies need not necessarily be evil, and we should have to allow for the discernment between "good" and "evil" plays or movies advocated by various church leaders. Without entering into a detailed debate with the author of "Is Christian Drama Possible", permit me to point out some of the inconsistencies found therein. After the author has weighed some of the objections to Christian drama and found them wanting, he states "I feel that in the face of these many arguments which oppose the two main objections against the drama, a blanket condemnation of the drama is not valid." Then, antici-

pating that some people, especially our youth, would say "Goody, now I can attend a drama occasionally!" he warns, "I am advocating the hard way! You had better reserve your elation, for you may never find a drama which you could or would attend". We find this to be very inconsistent, for the simple reason that, if Christian drama is possible, then it should not be difficult to arrange for plays, dramas, or even movies which are fit for our young people. In fact, we are convinced that it would even be our calling to see to it that such opportunities for entertaining and instructing our youth are provided for. It would be a very effective means of combating the evil of the modern movie, and the also prevalent evil of drama and plays that are unfit for our covenant youth. It is therefore our conviction that the writer was not advocating the difficult way, but a very simple way out of the problem.

However, we are concerned in this essay with the movies. From what we have stated above, the reader may know that he is convinced that all drama, even so-called Christian drama, is wrong. It is for that reason also the conclusion of the writer of this article, that the movie as we know it in our day can never be anything else but evil, since the movies are photographic reproductions of the drama. But it is our intention in this article to point the reader to the sinful character of the movie-industry in our day. It is a well-known fact, that the actors and actresses who perform in them are godless men and women, who care nothing at all for the Kingdom of God and its righteousness. Not only do they "act" in the movies the life of the ungodly, but they themselves are such. They trample under foot all of the holy institutions of God, including that of matrimony. Divorce among these people is almost as popular as marriage itself. To have one's fifth or sixth husband or wife is not at all unusual among them. They even openly boast of these things, which ought to be their shame. And, because of the almost fabulous sums of money they are paid for their roles on the screen, they are able to live lives of luxury and ease which are almost unbelievable. Let us eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die! is certainly their philosophy of life. There is no God, and if there is, what of it?

The plays which are dramatized upon the screen are of an equally sinful character. This we can know without attending the movie-theatre, simply from the advertisements and publicity given the movies over the radio and on the billboards, in newspapers and magazines galore. And what publicity! What pictures are posted to advertize these movies! Pictures that are suggestive of all that is sinful and corrupt in human nature. The very titles of many movies immediately strikes one's attention. Such as "100 Men And A Girl", "Our Wife", "Bachelor Mother", and

many others too sickening to mention. The plays themselves present sin and corruption in all their horrible detail. Murder, robbery, divorce, godless comedy and passions are portrayed to entertain the countless millions of movie-goers. A play is accounted a big "hit" in proportion to the sin and iniquity which the so-called "stars" dramatize upon the screen. The most astounding sacrilege, the dragging of the most holy things into the mire of sinful passion is by no means uncommon. Nay, it is the rule, rather than the exception. In one word, we can sum up the entire movie as horrible ungodliness. Sin and vices are glorified, and men and women are deified.

What must be our attitude, then, overagainst this modern evil? Shall we recognize it as an evil, and then compromise with it? This seems to be the attitude prevalent in the Church today. As early as 1928 the Christian Reformed Churches adopted this attitude. Both in speeches and in practice the people of these Churches were told that movies are not necessarily bad. They were told to differentiate between good and bad movies. One such "good" movie was introduced among the young people in Chicago, Illinois. It was the moving picture "Dr. Martin Luther". And not only was this picture shown, but leaders in the church congratulated the young people for their accomplishment. The natural outcome of such compromise will be that the church becomes more and more movie minded, of course. The youth of the church may then be warned against the "bad" movies, but, pray, how can they distinguish unless they first go to see various pictures. And we certainly must not advise the leaders of the church to visit these movie-theatres in order that they will be able to enlighten the people as to which plays are good or bad. How astoundingly ridiculous!

Shall we thus compromise?

No, a thousand times, NO!

But what, then, must be our attitude over against this terrible evil? Our answer is, and can only be, a "blanket of condemnation". We must be in entire agreement with the sentiment of an article which appeared in our paper on April 15th 1927. In this article the author branded the movie as positively and principally wrong. And so it is. It is principally wrong, because the drama is also wrong. These two go hand in hand. There is no Christian theatre or movie possible, for the same reason that there is no concord or agreement possible between Christ and Belial. Light and darkness cannot walk together. And this is for us sufficient evidence that the movie-theatre may not be condoned by us. Mark well, we do not say that the movie camera is an evil thing. Many of our young people own and operate one of these cameras. They are no more evil than any other camera. These are all perfectly good gifts of God. But when sinful man gets

hold of these good things, they are, of course, used in sinful ways and to sinful ends. Against this we must warn again and again. And we cannot do this by saying: The drama is alright, and some movies are good. We ought rather to say with the author of "A Compromise On Movies", that there is no good movie. And the same author says, and I quote, "And the reason is, that you cannot play with life and be acceptable in the sight of the Lord. Certainly it must be evident, that no child of God is able to appear on the stage or on the screen, playing the part of an ungodly man. To be an ungodly man and to live an ungodly life is admittedly an abomination in the eyes of Jehovah. But to play such a part is no less abhorred by Him."

But it is equally sinful to dramatize things holy. Recently a picture was shown in this territory. This was one of those supposedly good movies. It was called "Golgotha", and portrayed the sufferings of Christ upon the cross. This picture was heralded far and wide as "instructive and "uplifting". It also was recommended by various church leaders. Think of it! A movie depicting the awful sufferings of Jesus our Lord. Who could ever act this role? Who knows the awful depths of the suffering Christ under the wrath of the living God? And then to have such pictures recommended by leaders of the church.

Finally, let us combat this evil of the movie with all our might and main. Let us instruct our youth to abhor it. Let us teach them really to prove what is the good and well-pleasing and perfect will of God.

Then we will be advocating the right way.

J. V. D. B.

THANKSGIVING DAY PROGRAM

A Miscellaneous Thanksgiving Day Program sponsored by the Talitha Society of Fuller Ave. Church will be rendered in the First Protestant Reformed Church at 8:00 p. m., November 20. Plan now to spend this holiday evening in true christian fellowship.

The Committee.

SALVATION'S SCHEME

Long ere the sun began his days,
Or moon shot forth her silver rays,
Salvations sheme was fixed, 'twas done
In covenant by the Three in One.

Current Events

Religious Freedom In Russia

Recently the President has evoked a storm of criticism from religious leaders in the country by his statement about religious freedom in Russia. He cited the Russian constitution, article 124, which pledges freedom of religious worship and of anti-religious propaganda. Article 124 of the Russian constitution reads as follows: "In the object of ensuring to the citizens freedom of conscience, the church in the U.S.S.R. is separated from the State and the school from the church. Freedom of service of religious cults and freedom of anti-religious propaganda is acknowledged for all citizens." This, said the President, resembles the rule obtaining in America, where anyone can mount a soapbox and preach religion or rail against it as he pleases.

It was, however, not only criticism that the President's statement aroused. Many others advised the President to make this the price of Lend-Lease aid to Moscow. One of the nation's leading Catholics welcomed the move to open up religious freedom in Russia. The White House also intimated that such was its intention and had instructed W. Averell Harriman to discuss the religious question with the Stalin government. The official statement of a Russian spokesman was a disappointment to religious leaders and government officials in our country.

Mr. Roosevelt's statement caused us all undoubtedly to ask some questions and make some reflections about religious freedom in Russia and in the world. For it is especially from this angle that we view the present chaos. We will often ask ourselves the question, what significance has the present struggle for the cause of the Church of Jesus Christ? Though we cannot see it oftentimes, we believe that all world events, current events, take place only under the direction of Christ and only for the development of His Church.

The history of the Russian religious persecution dates back to 1917, when the Bolsheviks came into power by a revolution. They had two reasons for destroying religious worship as well as political freedom: 1. because of their belief in the teaching of Karl Marx, who said, "religion is the opium of the people", and 2. because they determined to destroy the political power of the church. The Communists, as is well known, almost destroyed all their foes, political as well as religious. Thousands fled the country. Their secret police, called the *Cheka*, was just as effective as the German *Gestapo*. They jailed, exiled and executed priests and bishops by the thousands and confiscated all the property of the Greek Orthodox church, which was the established church of the Tsar govern-

ment. Besides attempting to destroy religious worship, they gave semi-official backing to the league of the Militant Godless.

It cannot be denied, of course, that the hatred against the church was partly due to its political power and intervention in affairs that do not belong to it. Nevertheless, it is essentially much more that the Communists hate. They hate teachings of Christianity just as the Nazis. In one of their Protocols we read, "We must extract the very conception of God out of the minds of the Christians. . . . We must destroy all professions of faith." Why do the nations rage so furiously together? It is against the Lord and His anointed.

The Russian fury underwent a continual modification it is true. In 1936 the article 124 took effect. Because of these modifications many leading church men took a different stand over against Russia in late years. For that reason we also have many who seek something we have in common with Russia in order to rally support to fight that beast Hitler. It is my conviction that there is absolutely no fundamental difference between Communism and Nazism as far as their attitude towards religion and Christianity is concerned.

What is the religious situation in Russia today? There is religious worship in churches which are left of the destructon. Foreigners estimate that there are only about 30,000 active congregations still in Russia. But there is absolutely no religious freedom, no right of free propaganda, as there is in our country.

This present discussion of religious freedom should cause us to be reflective. We must not be deceived. It is my observation that religious freedom is granted today largely because of selfish and pragmatistical reasons. Freedom is granted for political or intellectual reasons. It also seems that the loss of religious freedom goes hand in hand with the rise of dictatorial powers today. Presently such shall be the case in the Antichristian power of the beast.

Church Union

In the *Christian Century* of October 15 there appeared an article about a movement for Church union in England. The following is a quotation which explains what is taking place in England.

"While the war has temporarily clogged the worldwide movement toward Christian unity, launched at Oxford and Edinburgh in 1937, it may actually release and facilitate the impulse for the union of churches in a single nation. In England it appears to be working out in this way. There the Free Churches are drawing together under the powerful stimulus inherent in the situation which the war has brought about. A manifesto issued a month ago by some 75 prominent leaders of the Congregational, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Baptist denominations called upon their people to consider the providential opportunity and to explore the possibility of merging their separate bodies in one United Free Church."

The article explains that the Federal Council of Free Churches has the proposal in hand now. It also gives its comment upon the attempt at Church union as such. In the main the gist of the writer's arguments for Church union are: 1. Differences between churches are insubstantial and trivial. 2. Union will help churches confront difficulties. For divided and obscured testimony will hinder establishment of the new Christendom after the war. Disunion has a bad effect upon mission work in foreign lands. And problems of reconstitution can better be faced Unitedly.

There can be no question about the desirability and the necessity of Church unity. Because the true Church, the body of Christ, is one, it must strive for unity. The Church must manifest the command of Christ to love one another. This love of one another is based upon the love of God which has been spread abroad in our hearts. If we love God we will love one another.

Such reasons do not appear in any discussion of the present movement for Church union. The reasons are always utilitarian. The Churches seek power and safety in these times in union. It is the idea of man always to protect himself. It is not considered whether the union of the church is based upon the love of God and His truth. It should be the attempt of the Church to fulfill her calling to speak God's Word. If it causes strife and hatred and disunion that must not deter the Church from speaking the truth.

The writer of the article ignores fundamental differences that have caused the divisions in churches. He calls them insubstantial and trivial. Because the true church represented by the people of God in its history has fought for the truth of God's Word in all its purity it has suffered from the hands of the false church, which oftentimes was in the majority and therefore deposed the minority from its communion. The process of departure from the truth did not always appear in its final stage. For that reason we have the many almost innumerable divisions in churches. Sometimes because of reluctance to go the way of the consequence of their first departure there remained a certain conservative group in the group that first departed. A more liberal group arises and again causes a rumpus and another division results. Large groups probably remain who have finally reached the stage of complete departure from the truth. It only speaks a social gospel of man and for man. Probably if we look at the history in that way we can agree with the writer, however, when he summarizes the differences as trivial and insubstantial. Probably in none of those groups mentioned is there that love for the truth and a walk in the way of their own confession handed down from their ancestors. It is evident that the writer is a modernist who ignores the guidance of the Spirit in the church in the past,

and the essence of Christianity because he speaks of the "New Christendom".

The Labor Mess

Ever since the country was being geared for the "defence of demoncracy" and became "the arsenal for the demoncracies" it has enjoyed the feeling of the lack of sufficient labor instead of the oversupply of man power. Along with the rise in "prosperity" came the labor trouble. In the aircraft industries, in the shipyards, in key defense industries, major strikes were called by labor leaders. Such a slowing up of production has forced the government to step in and either enforce arbitration or even take over and run the plants. The public also has become indignant with the labor unions and its leaders. Much of the trouble is due to the hatred between the two major and rival unions, the CIO and AFL, who both seek the upperhand in control of labor. The struggle is also for the closed shop. The latest strike of importance was that of the workers of the "Captive" coal mines. John L. Lewis, the leader of the UMW, is the one who is defying President Roosevelt, who asked that work continue at the captive coal mines pending settlement of the dispute. In the *Newsweek* John L. Lewis is described as "a hardheaded survivor of two decades of bitter and bloody battles within his own union." It is also stated that he was unabashed when President Wilson in 1919 called a threatened coal walkout "unjustifiable" and "unlawful" and 400,000 men quit the coal pits on Nov. 1 of that Year. In the *Daily News* of Los Angeles, the editor says, after giving a history of Lewis' activity in the past decades, "By this time, however, it had become apparent that Lewis' chief interest was the welfare of Lewis." The differences are now not at all about wages and hours but about the closed shop and control.

It is plain that the unions and their leaders are just as this leader, concerned about their own control and power irrespective of the interests of others. When they strike for the closed shop it ought to become plain to us that we are absolutely in the wrong to be a member of such an organization which uses such force, a strike, to gain its objective by force, the closed shop.

L. D.

IN MEMORIAM

The consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, hereby wishes to express its heartfelt sympathy to our brother consistory member, Deacon A. Vos in the loss of his father

YSBRANT VOS

May the Lord of all Grace comfort the brother in this his bereavement.

The Consistory of the First Prot. Ref. Church,
H. Hoeksema, Pres.
G. Stonehouse, Clerk