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MEDITATIE

De Strijd Is Des Heeren

Als Ik Mij Juda zal gespannen, en Ik Efraïm den boog gevuld zal hebben; en Ik uwe kinderen, o Sion! zal verwekt hebben tegen uwe kinderen, o Griekenland! en u gesteld zal hebben als het zwaard van eenen held. En de Heere zal over hen lieden verschijnen, etc.

Zach. 9:13-15.

Altijd is de strijd des Heeren!

Ook al is het, dat de kerk in de wereld door dien strijd zelf "de strijdende kerk" is, blijft de strijd toch Godes.

En daarom is het zoo eeuwig zeker, maar daarom dan ook volstrekt alleen, dat de kerk in haren strijd de overwinning, de besliste en volkomene overwinning zal behalen.

Dubbel, zoo was de belofte (vs. 12), zal Ik u wedergeven. En dit hield zeker niet slechts in, dat ze uit den kuil, waarin geen water is, zouden worden uitgelingen, dat ze bevrijd zouden worden uit de overmacht en verdrukking der vijanden, terwijl voorts die vijanden vrijuit zouden gaan; maar het wilde ook zeggen, dat ze, teruggekeerd zijnde tot de sterkte, den strijd des Heeren zouden strijden ten einde toe, in dien strijd de volkomene overwinning over hunne vijanden, over de booze wereldmacht zouden zien, en door de wrake over hen volkomen en openlijk zouden worden gerechtvaardigd. Het leed Gods volk aangedaan, de verdrukking, waarmede de booze wereldmacht hen had verdrukt, het bloed, dat door de vijanden van Gods zaak was gestort,—dit alles was niet in een hoek geschied. Integendeel, een schouwspel voor heel de wereld was God's volk geweest. Hun verlossing kon en mocht ook in het geheim niet geschieden. In het publiek, voor het oog der gansche schepping, moet het openbaar

worden, dat hun zaak de zaak is van den Zone Gods, die alleen de overwinning mag hebben!

Die strijd is de strijd des Heeren!

Maar dien strijd strijdt Hij in de wereld door het volk, dat van Zijn partij is.

Hij Zelf bereidt hen tot dien strijd, maakt hen als tot de wapenen, waarmede Hij strijdt.

Hij Zelf stelt hen in slagorde tegenover de wereldmacht.

Hij Zelf strijdt voor hen en door hen in den strijd.

Hij beschut hen, zoodat ze niets hebben te vreezen.

En Hij geeft hun de overwinning!

Gods wapenen zijn Zijn volk!

Zoo immers wordt hier gesproken van Juda en Efraïm.

Zeker, ook hier wordt allereerst bedoeld het volk Israel, want immers de profetie beziet den strijd des Heeren uit het oogpunt van het moment der profetische verkondiging: den tijd na de ballingschap.

En in den strijd, waarvan hier gesproken wordt, is heel Gods volk vereenigd. Het is niet alleen Juda, die den strijd des Heeren strijdt, maar ook Efraïm. Nooit was de afscheuring der tien stemmen, van Efraïm, door den Heere erkend als gewettigd. Was het niet eene scheiding van Juda, van het huis van David, van Christus? Maar hier zijn Juda en Efraïm vereenigd. Reeds vóór de ballingschap hadden zich elementen uit de tien stammen bij Juda gevoegd, en met Juda waren ze naar het land der vaderen teruggekeerd. Maar, ofschoon de strijd des Heeren hier bezien wordt uit het oogpunt van dien tijd, toch ziet ook dit woord der profetie, zooals alle profetie, vooruit op de nieuwe bedeeling tot het einde der eeuwen toe.

De strijd is immers een strijd aller eeuwen.

De vormen, die deze strijd aanneemt, mogen veranderen; de slagorden mogen verschillend worden gesteld; verschillende wapenen mogen in dien strijd worden gehanteerd,—altijd is het dezelfde strijd des Heeren de eeuwen door.

En in dien strijd wordt hier Gods volk voorgesteld als Zijne wapenen, die Hij hanteert! Immers wordt

Juda hier voorgesteld als de boog, door den Heere gespannen, en Hij vult den boog (zet den pijl er op) met Efilāim; want dit is de letterlijke beteekenis van den tekst. En bovendien stelt Hij immers Zijn volk als het zwaard van eenen held. Zijn volk is dus Zijn wapentuig. En dit mag zeker niet zoo worden verstaan, dat in den strijd des Heeren dat volk lijdelijk is als doode instrumenten. Integendeel, ook als pijl en boog en zwaard in de hand des Heeren blijven ze bewuste, redelijk-zedelijke instrumenten, die den strijd des Heeren strijden met geheel hun verstand en geheel hunnen wil en geheel hun hart en alle hunne krachten. Ze zijn zeer gewillig op den dag Zijner heirkraft. Maar het is wel de bedoeling van den tekst om zeer nadrukkelijk te zeggen, dat de strijd altijd des Heeren is en blijft. Slechts als medewerkers Gods, door Hem geformeerd, door Hem geroepen, door Hem ook gehanteerd in den strijd, kunnen wij strijden.

Gods wapenen zijn wij!

Letterlijk ziet de tekst blijkbaar op den tijd der Makkabeeën, toen de strijd des Heeren, zooals zoo dikwijls in de oude bedeeeling, toen God Zijne kerk als eene natie temidden der wereldvolkeren stelde, den vorm aannam van een werkelijken oorlog tegen de wereldmacht van het Grieksch-Macedonische rijk. Toen spande God den boog en zette den schicht er op, toen bereidde Hij Zijn volk in letterlijken zin als het zwaard van een held, niet alleen door hen in physischen zin te bekwamen tot den strijd, maar ook door hun geloofsmoed en geloofskracht daartoe te schenken.

Centraal vond dit woord zijne vervulling in Christus. Hij is Gods boog en Gods pijl, door Hem gespannen en door Hem gevuld, Gods zwaard, het zwaard als van eenen held, die volkomen tot den strijd bereid is. Want Hij streed den strijd des Heeren ten einde toe, zoo zelfs, dat de strijd door Hem ook langs de geheele linie beslist werd, en de overwinning door Hem werd behaald. En Hij werd tot dien strijd gevormd, geroepen en bereid door den levenden God, den "God en Vader van onzen Heere Jezus Christus". Hij verordeneerde Hem tot dezen strijd vóór de grondlegging der wereld, en stelde Hem aan de spitse van de slagorden des Heeren. Hij zond Hem in de volheid des tijds in de wereld, om geheel alleen den vijand te ontmoeten. Hij bereidde Hem in den schoot van Maria, en formeerde Hem om Immanuel, God met ons, te kunnen zijn. Hij opende Zijn oor en Zijnen mond om getuige te zijn van den levenden God, en Hij maakte Hem gewillig en bekwaam om Knecht des Heeren te zijn, om Zich te vernederen tot in den dood, ja, den dood des kruises! Hij gaf Hem de volkomene overwinning, toen Hij Hem uit de dooden opwekte, en Hem eer en heerlijkheid gaf aan Zijne rechterhand!

Gods zwaard als van eenen held!

Maar nog altijd wordt dit woord vervuld, ook in de nieuwe bedeeiding. Want ook de Kerk in Christus is

Gods pijl en boog en Gods zwaard, als van eenen held. Hij heeft haar verkoren, geroepen, gevormd, door Zijn Geest en Woord, door wedergeboorte en roeping, door geloof en inwoning en heiliging, om den strijd des Heeren te strijden. En Hij voorziet hen van, en maakt dat ze aandoen, de volle wapenrusting Gods, en Hij doet hen strijden den goeden strijd des geloofs tot het einde toe!

De strijd is de Heeren!

En Hij stelt ook de slagorde!

Zoo immers staat het in den tekst: "en Ik uwe kinderen, o Sion! zal verwekt hebben tegen uwe kinderen, o Griekenland! en u gesteld zal hebben als het zwaard van eenen held."

Ook hier is bedoeld, allereerst, de Grieksch-Macedonische wereldmacht, en de booze wereldmacht onder de Seleuciden, maar dan toch weer als tijdelijke vertegenwoordiging en openbaring van de antichristelijke wereldmacht, zooals deze altijd in de wereld is, en zooals ze vooral ook tegen het einde der eeuwen tot openbaring zal komen.

Maar God stelt de slagorde. De strijd is geheel Zijn strijd.

't Moge anders schijnen in de historie. Uit wereldsch oogpunt is het immers altijd zoo, dat de wereldmacht aanvallende partij is. Zij doet Gods volk den strijd aan. Zij haat en smaadt, zij verdrukt en vervolgt, zij tergt en vermoordt de kerk des levenden Gods en gunt haar geen plaats in het midden der wereld. En zij valt aan op den Christus Zelf, bindt Hem, beschimt en geeselt Hem, hangt Hem aan het schandhout en werpt Hem de wereld uit.

In de werkelijkheid is het echter anders.

De positieve partij, de eenige partij, de alles beslissende partij is de partij des levenden Gods, vertegenwoordigd door den Christus en Zijne kerk in de wereld. Haar zijn alle dingen beloofd. Zij is erfgenaam der wereld. Zij valt op die wereld aan, ontzegt haar alle recht, overwint haar. . . .

En rust niet tot alle dingen harer zijn!

De strijd is Gods!

Godes alleen!

Godes *blijft* de strijd!

Ook in dezen zin, dat Hij Zelf den strijd strijdt, ook al is het dóór Zijne kerk in Christus. En strijdend dóór Zijn volk bewaart Hij hen in den strijd door Zijne almogende kracht.

Hij verschijnt immers over en aan Zijn volk: "De Heere zal over henlieden verschijnen, en Zijne pijlen zullen uitvaren gelijk de bliksem; en de Heere HEERE zal met de bazuin blazen, en Hij zal voorttreden met stormen uit het zuiden. De Heere der heirscharen zal hen beschutten. . . .

Ach, wat zou het in dezen strijd al baten, zoo het volk al aandeed de volle wapenrusting Gods, en met in-

spanning van alle krachten worstelde, indien de Heere zelf niet streed Zijne eigen strijd? Niet door kracht, noch door geweld, maar door Mijnen Geest! Wat beteekende Israel in de oude bedeeling tegenover de machten der wereld rondom haar, zoo God Zelf niet aan de spitse trad en voor haar en met haar ten strijde trok? En wat zou de Kerk der nieuwe bedeeling toch vermogen tegenover de machten der duisternis, indien God de Heere niet werkt? De kerk kan prediken, het Woord bedienen, getuigen, waken, worstelen, maar wat beteekent dit getuigenis, ook al is het volkomenlijk naar de Schrift en dus in dien zin het Woord Gods, zoo God Zelf Zijn eigen Woord niet spreekt en door Zijn Geest de prediking maakt tot een machtwoord? Wie zal Gods Huis bouwen, als God niet bouwt? Wie zal Gods kerk vergaderen, als Hij niet vergadert? Wie zal de wereld overwinnen, als Hij Zelf niet de overwinning geeft?

't Is alles ijdel!

Nimmer beteekent ons werk ook maar het allergeingste, zoo God Zelf niet Zijn eigen werk daardoor doet!

Maar Hij treedt aan de spitse! Hij is, als aan de spitse tredend in den strijd des Heeren, over Zijn volk verschenen, als den God hunner zaligheden, den God des Verbonds, van Wiens partij zij zijn, in Christus Jezus, den oversten Leidsman en Voleinder huns geloofs, Die leed en streed en overwon, die opstond uit de dooden, en gezeten is aan de rechterhand der kracht Gods, het Hoofd boven alle dingen, staande aan de spitse van de legerscharen des Heeren HEEREN.

Hij blaast met de bazuin. En dit wil zeker zeggen, dat Hij Zijn volk ten strijde roept. Hij roept door Zijn Woord, hen vormend tot Zijne legerscharen, hen opwekkend om aan te doen de volle wapenrusting Gods, en om te strijden den goeden strijd des geloofs, opdat niemand hunne kroon neme; hen bemoedigend door hun oog te vestigen op de zekere overwinning, op de kroon des levens, die hij ontvangen zal, die getrouw is tot den dood. En Hij roept door Zijnen Geest, krachtdadiglijk, onwederstandelijk, Zijn roepend Woord ingang doende vinden in het diepe hart, trekkend, gehoorzaamheid wekkend. Maar dat Hij blaast met de bazuin, wil ook zeggen, dat Hij Zelf aan de spitse is getreden en door Zijn volk Zijn eigen strijd strijdt. . .

Hij doet immers Zijne pijlen uitvaren als de bliksem!

Snel, zeker, onwederstandelijk!

En eerst door Zijn eigen strijden wordt de krijg der kerk in de wereld tot een wereldoverwinnenden strijdt. En in den strijd beschut Hij de Zijnen!

Zij worden bewaard in de kracht Gods, zoo leert ons de Schrift. En die kracht Gods, waarin zij worden bewaard, is eene almachtige kracht. Godes is alle kracht en macht en heerschappij, ook die des vijands, zoodat ook de macht der wereld zich niet kan roeren

tegen Zijnen wil en zonder Zijne kracht!

Ze worden bewaard door het geloof, zoodat die kracht Gods, waarin ze bewaard worden, niet buiten hen om gaat, maar door hen heen, zoodat ze zichzelve in den strijd vastklemmen aan den levenden God, als ziende den Onzienlijken.

Ze worden zoo bewaard, dat de vijand hen noch overwinnen, noch beschadigen kan! O, zeker, hij mag hen doen lijden naar het vleesch; doch uit het oogpunt van den strijd moet dit slechts dienen tot hun versterking!

En in den strijd en tot deze beschutting van Zijn volk, staan alle dingen Hem, den Heere der heirscharen ten dienste.

Hij treedt immers voort met stormen uit het zuiden, de zwaarste stormen, die ooit woedden.

En die stormen vertegenwoordigen hier alle dingen in de wereld, alle schepselen, zooals ze moeten medewerken ten goede voor Zijne zaak en Zijn volk, en tegen den vijand. . . .

De machtige HEERE der heirscharen, de God der gansche aarde, in Christus, staat aan de spitse!

De strijd is den Heeren!

Zijner is daarom ook de overwinning!

En die overwinning is beide zeker en volkomen!

En in den dag der overwinning zal Gods volk daarin ingaan, blijde en verheugd, omdat Gods recht volkomen is geopenbaard!

Nog altijd stelt de tekst het voor als de overwinning in een letterlijken oorlog, behaald door boog en spies en zwaard. "Zij zullen eten, nadat zij de slingerstenen zullen te ondergebracht hebben; zij zullen ook drinken, en een gedruisch maken als de wijn; en zij zullen vervuld worden, gelijk het bekken, gelijk de hoeken des altaars."

Hier, zoo meenen sommigen, is een wreede Oud Testamentische wraak-theologie aan het woord!

Er kan immers geen twijfel aan bestaan, of die "slingerstenen" zijn hier de vijanden, waarschijnlijk zoo genoemd, omdat ze als slingerstenen in de slingers van Gods volk zullen worden weggeslingerd. En als hier gesproken wordt van eten en drinken en vol worden als het bekken en als de hoeken des altaars, dan wil dat zeggen, dat men het vleesch der vijanden zal eten, en het bloed der vijanden zal drinken: men zal vreugde bedrijven over hun volkomen ondergang! In uiteindelijke zin: vreugdebedrijf over den eeuwigen ondergang der vijanden!

Doch, ofschoon de vorm hier metterdaad wordt verklaard door het standpunt der profetie in de oude bedeeling, de werkelijkheid blijft: Gods volk bedrijft vreugde over de eeuwige verwoesting der vijanden!

Het gaat immers om God, Zijne zaak, Zijn recht, Zijn eer!

Zijne eeuwige overwinning!

H. H.

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EDITORIALS

Revival Of The Common Grace Discussion?

According to a review in the *Calvin Forum* the theory of Common Grace was given an airing in a meeting of the Calvinistic Philosophical Club, held at Westminster Theological Seminary on October 8, 1941. Dr. C. Van Til, who had recently returned from spending a sabbatic year in truly sabbatic Redlands, California, was the speaker. And his subject was supposed to have been: the bearing of common grace on non-theistic thinking. But the time was too limited to do justice to the whole theme, hence he discussed the question of "common grace" proper. He divided his subject into four parts: 1. Methodology. 2. Kuyper on Common Grace. 3. The Common Grace Controversy. 4. Suggestions for Solution of the Problem. We would like to have a copy of Dr. Van Til's speech, in order that we might review it and take part in this interesting discussion through the *Standard Bearer*. Cannot Dr. Van Til or someone else supply us with a copy?

In the meantime several points in the review of the speech we found rather striking. The reviewer writes: "Particularly pertinent was Dr. Van Til's contention that Common Grace must not be viewed as an isolated problem. Rather, it must be regarded as one aspect, an important aspect, of the whole problem of the philosophy of history." Some such contention we made years ago in "Van Zonde en Genade", though I personally would rather prefer different terms and not speak of "the philosophy of history" and of "looking the Absolute in the face" in our present life in this world. Just see "Van Zonde en Genade" p. 169ff. And let me remind the reader of the following from my speech in the Pantlind: "The problem of so-called common grace concerns the question of God's attitude over against and influence upon the whole of created things in their mutual connection and development in time, in connection and in harmony with God's counsel in general, predestination with election and reprobation, the realization of God's eternal covenant, grace and sin, favor and wrath, creation and redemption, Adam and Christ, and it inquires into the place and calling of God's people in and over against the world. Viewed thus it is a question of great importance with respect to both, doctrine and life". I do not mean to suggest that Dr. Van Til in his speech before the Calvinistic Philosophy Club agreed with this definition of the problem, but I do mean to bring out that when he

CONTENTS

	Page
MEDITATIE —	
DE STRIJD IS DES HEEREN	97
Rev. H. Hoeksema.	
EDITORIALS —	
REVIVAL OF THE COMMON GRACE DISCUSSION?.....	100
HOW IS THE GOLD BECOME DIM!	101
Rev. H. Hoeksema.	
THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE —	
AN EXPOSITION OF THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM	103
Rev. H. Hoeksema.	
ELIJAH AND ELISHA—A COMPARISON	106
Rev. G. M. Ophoff.	
THE REFORMATION AND THE RENAISSANCE	110
Rev. G. M. Ophoff	
EEN LIED DER LIEFDE	112
Rev. G. Vos.	
GIJ WEET ALLE DINGEN	114
Rev. W. Verhil	
MAKING FRIENDS'	117
Rev. P. Vis	
CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINE IN EDUCATION	119
Rev. A. Cammenga	

emphasized the fact that the problem of common grace must not be viewed as an isolated problem, he reiterated what we said years ago. In so far, at least, he agrees with us.

Another interesting point that drew our attention in the review of Dr. Van Til's speech was that "*De Gemeene Gratie*, Kuyper's *chef d'oeuvre*, next came up for a thorough overhauling". Well a thorough overhauling" of this work of Dr. Kuyper's can also be found in "Van Zonde en Genade" pp. 85-168. In fact, I consider it questionable whether anyone can give *De Gemeene Gratie* a more thorough overhauling. It is, of course, possible to differ with the contents of our critical evaluation of Kuypers work, to give it another overhauling. But it seems to me, that this could hardly be done without giving a criticism of the overhauling we gave that "chef d'oeuvre" of Kuyper's. And I am wondering whether Dr. Van Til took the trouble to do this. Interesting it is, too, to notice that an "overhauling of Kuyper's *De Gemeene Gratie* is quite possible in 1941, although it was considered presumptuous in 1922-24. That it can be done now, that the work can even be criticized, and that such criticism can meet with evident favor, I consider a change for the better. We are advancing.

Especially did Dr. Van Til subject to his critical analysis, according to the reviewer, Dr. Kuyper's conception of "spheres" of life, of different "territories or dimensions", and of his "realm-between" in which "God's people must vie with the children of the world for the glory of the world." The reviewer writes: "Dr. Van Til searchingly analyzed Kuyper's language on these matters, language which inescapably appears to teach that there is a 'neutral area' which Christians and non-Christians have in common and in which God can be glorified by both." Also to this point we called attention repeatedly. Only, we think that it is also inescapable for anyone who teaches common grace to create such a "neutral realm" or sphere. And we never saw any "solution" of the problem of common grace that avoids creating such a common ground of operation for the Church and the world.

In making his suggestions for a possible solution of the problem the speaker stated that we must think *concretely* on the problem, and that such elements as "the glorious absoluteness and self-consistency of God, the utter sinfulness of man" must be fully honored, while the question of "realms" or "territories" "demands thorough re-examination".

Needless to say that we are all interested in this discussion. And once again, I would kindly ask Dr. Van Til whether he could not let me have a copy of his address. Then we can more fruitfully discuss it than on the basis of a mere review.

H. H.

How Is The Gold Become Dim!

Of this exclamation of the lamenting prophet we were reminded when we read the answer by Prof. L. Berkhof in *The Banner* of Oct. 31, 1941, to a question by a member of the Christian Reformed Churches concerning the censurableness of a Church member's belonging to the C.I.O. The standpoint of the reply is that membership of the C.I.O. and, of course, of any worldly union is a relative matter: one may belong to such organizations, but it is better, because it is less dangerous, not to belong to them! And when we compared this weak and colorless reply to what the same professor said and wrote in 1916, we naturally were reminded of the text from Lamentations 4:1: "How is the gold become dim".

But let us get the details.

The question asked was, whether the statement in the Form for the Lord's Supper, that "all who seek to raise discord, sects and mutiny in Church or State" should abstain from the Supper of the Lord, does not apply to members of the C.I.O. "inasmuch as this organization is doing just that". To this the professor replies, first, that "if members of our Church who belong to the C.I.O. make themselves *practically* guilty of such sins, the injunction, of course, applies to them as well as to anyone else". This seems to be a mere commonplace, a truism. The professor seems to intend to say here, that the statement from the Form for the Lord's Supper, applies to anyone that makes himself guilty of those sins, whether he is member of the C.I.O. or not: it applies even to members of the C.I.O.! But he feels that this does not really answer the question. And so, he comes to the point: is one *practically* guilty of raising discord and mutiny if the C.I.O. does "just that", merely by being a member of that organization? Here the professor makes a distinction between communal and individual responsibility and guilt. It is the professor's view that communal guilt is incurred by a member of the C.I.O. only if the officers of that union or of any union "initiate, abet, and actively seek to raise mutiny in Church or State" without protest on the part of such member. It seems that the professor thinks that it does not matter what the membership or a large part of the membership of the C.I.O. does, as long as it is not initiated or abetted by its officers. Well, in that case such a member must protest, and if his protest is in vain, he ought to leave the organization. Evidently, the professor is of the opinion that it is possible to be a member of the C.I.O. without doing violence to one's Christian conscience. This is weak and colorless enough. He evidently believes in the principle of "neutral" organizations. For, if neutrality is impossible in the sphere of labor, it is sin to join the C.I.O. Not so according to Prof. Berkhof. But he makes the matter still worse. Evidently afraid

that the reader might draw the conclusion that such "communal guilt" of a member that fails to protest against the evil doings of the C.I.O. is censurable in the Christian Reformed Churches, he hastens to add: "This does not mean, however, that their guilt is necessarily just as great in the case of such corporate action, as it would be if they were personally guilty of the sins committed." In other words, it is the opinion of Prof. Berkhof that discipline does not have to be applied even if a member of the Christian Reformed Churches belongs to the C.I.O., that organization raises discord and mutiny in Church or State, and that member does not even protest! The professor closes by saying that he is not sufficiently acquainted with the C.I.O. to pass judgment on it; he does not want to be understood as condemning that organization. But "on the whole it would seem to me that our Christian people would do best, if at all possible (sic!), to steer clear of it in view of the dangers to which membership in it exposes them."

Conclusion: 1. Membership of the C.I.O. is not sinful: join if you cannot avoid it (i.e. let the bread question decide). 2. If the C.I.O. does something wrong you must protest, i.e. if it does something evil officially. 3. Even if you don't protest and condone all the C.I.O. does, you need not become subject to discipline. 4. One of the leaders in the Christian Reformed Churches has not taken the trouble to find out whether the C.I.O. is to be condemned. 5. But for danger's sake (not for principle's sake, of course) it is better not to belong to the C.I.O.

This is the opinion of Professor L. Berkhof in 1941.

How different it was in 1916! Then he said and wrote: "Finally the question arises: What should our Christian laborers do in view of the *anti-christian character* (I underscore, H.H.) of the general labor unions? Shall we say that they ought to join the existing organizations and attempt to reform them? From what we said in the foregoing you can easily infer that we do not intend to give any such advice. It is our firm conviction that the idea of such reformation is purely illusory, for it would not merely mean the correction of a few abuses, but a radical change in the essential character of the whole labor movement". (*The Christian Laborer in the Industrial Struggle*, p. 29).

What a difference! How well Professor Berkhof at that time knew that the labor unions were anti-Christian! Today, he does not even know the C.I.O. well enough to pass judgment on it! How well he was convinced that attempts at reformations of the union are illusory! Today he advises the laborers to join and protest! How positive is his language in the above quotation: he has no intention to give any such advice. He has a "firm conviction" on the matter! The general labor unions would need a radical change

in their essential character! That is language we can understand! But listen how he talks today: "This does not mean, however, that their guilt is *necessarily as great*", etc. He is *not sufficiently acquainted* with the C.I.O. to pass judgment on it. He is not greatly in love with it, he writes! On the whole it would seem to him that our Christian people would do best if at all possible to steer clear of the C.I.O. in view of the dangers to which they expose themselves! O, really, it made me sick at heart when I read it!

Let me quote from the stronger Berkhof once more: "Conditions being as they are, we can only come to the conclusion that our Christian laborers must organize separately, if they feel constrained to take an active part in the industrial struggle. We say this advisedly, notwithstanding the position recently defended in one of our Church papers, that a Christian may join 'an organization in the sphere of natural life that does not officially name the Word of God, and is therefore neutral in religion'. For our contention is that the general labor unions are not neutral and cannot, strictly speaking, be neutral".

And further:

"Now, as we already pointed out, the spirit that actually expresses itself in the unions is prevaillingly a spirit of unbelief. . . . In the main unions are frankly revolutionary and humanitarian, and consequently do not believe in objective norms. And as we already pointed out, they have but slight regard for righteousness and personal liberty. Hence we repeat that we should have Christian labor unions". (idem, pp. 29, 30).

And well I remember the beautiful close of that lecture, which I here quote:

"In their (the Christian unions) struggle they should not place their reliance on strikes and boycotts and the closed shop, those short-cut revolutionary methods, but on collective bargaining, joint agreement, arbitration, and efforts at better legislation. And if in this way of doing their Christian duty, of regulating their life by their Christian principles, they meet with derision and opposition and even personal loss, they have the blessed assurance that it is the cross of Christ that is resting on them, which they as consistent Christians cannot and do not desire to escape. Strong in the sense of doing the will of God they will then press on, ever mindful of the words of the Saviour: 'But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you'."

All this is now forsaken by Prof. Berkhof. He has now himself taken the position he condemns above, at that time taken by the Rev. J. Groen. Wholly he repudiates his former stand! His stand today is determined by utilitarian principles.

God's people will have to struggle on without him!
How is the gold become dim! H. H.

The Triple Knowledge

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

IV.

LORD'S DAY III

Qu. 6. Did God then create man so wicked and perverse?

A. By no means; but God created man good and after his own image, in true righteousness and holiness, that he might rightly know God his Creator, heartily love him and live with him in eternal happiness to glorify and praise him.

Qu. 7. Whence then proceeds this depravity of human nature?

A. From the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in Paradise; hence our nature is become so corrupt, that we are all conceived and born in sin.

Qu. 8. Are we then so corrupt that we are wholly incapable of doing any good and inclined to all evil?

A. Indeed we are; except we are regenerated by the Spirit of God.

1,

After The Image Of God.

The text as it is found in our psalter of this third Lord's Day gives a good translation of the original German. The English version made in the name and by the direction of the German Reformed Church, to which we referred before, differs from ours in a few minor details. The most important of these is, perhaps, the insertion of "that is" in the answer to the sixth question between "his own image" and "in true righteousness and holiness". This is in accord with the original German text: *Nein: sondern Gott hat den Menschen gut und nach seinen Ebenbild erschaffen, das ist, in wahrhafter Gerechtigkeit und Heiligkeit*". And the insertion is not without significance as it serves to express clearly and definitely that, according to the Heidelberg Catechism, the image of God consisted in the original integrity of man's nature. We may also note that the German text of question eight is very emphatic on total depravity: "*Sind wir aber dermassen verderbt, das wir ganz und gar untüchtig sind zu einigem Guten und geneigt zu allem Bösen?*" This the English version authorized by the Synod of the German Reformed Church of the United States mentioned above renders rather weakly: "But are we so de-

praved that we are wholly unapt to any good, and prone to all evil?"

As to the contents of this third Lord's Day, it first traces the origin of the depravity of our human nature; and, secondly, it describes the extent or degree of that depravity. The contents, therefore, are very important. Many fundamental questions are implied in this Lord's Day, which ought to be discussed rather thoroughly and answered as clearly and definitely as possible. A line drawn in the wrong direction at this point is bound to have a disastrous effect upon the entire system of doctrine. And it is, therefore, expedient for the preacher that expounds the truth implied in this chapter of the Catechism, to take his time and proceed carefully. Rather than to scan the surface of the doctrine, he can better devote two or three sermons to a discussion of its contents.

Our instructor introduces the subject matter here by a bold question: "Did God then create man so wicked and perverse?" I say bold, because it broaches the problem of sin and evil with relation to God, the problem of the theodicy. Or rather, the question introduces one aspect of this problem. How can there be evil in the world in view of the truth that God is God, and that He is good? God is surely sovereign. To attribute independent existence to the forces of sin and evil is to deny that sovereignty of God. He is the Almighty, and He certainly could have created a world, in which sin had no place and could not find entrance. And not only is He the almighty Creator of all things, "who of nothing made heaven and earth", who calls the things that are not as if they were, but He is also the sole and supreme Governor, without Whose will nothing ever happens, and Who, therefore, could surely have prevented evil to make inroads into His creation. But this is not all. God is not only the absolute Sovereign, Who hath done whatsoever hath pleased Him, but He is also just and wise and good. He is a light and there is no darkness in Him. Evil cannot dwell with Him. He is too pure of eyes than to behold evil. How, then, can the presence of evil be explained? Such is the general problem of the theodicy, i.e. of the justification of God in connection with the fact of sin and evil in the world.

And various answers have been given to this question. Some have tried to solve the problem by postulating a separate source of sin and evil, next to God, the Creator and Ruler of the Universe. The material from which this world is formed is inherently evil; hence, when God created the world it was inevitable that evil should express and reveal itself. However, God is combating the forces of iniquity and death, and will surely overcome them in the end. Or, sin has its ultimate origin and explanation in the sovereign, free will of the moral creatures, angels and men. When God created a moral being, it was inevitable that He

should leave the destiny of the world to a large extent in his hands. Whether he should remain in his state of integrity in which he was created or choose against God, righteousness and truth and thus introduce evil into God's handiwork, was entirely contingent upon the sovereign choice of his will. God had nothing to do with it, neither did He control it. And thus the ultimate source of all the evil, sin and suffering and death, is the devil. This dualistic solution of the problem is really no solution at all. Rather does it remove the difficulty and destroy the problem by denying the sovereignty of the Most High in relation to the forces of darkness. Others, realizing that the existence of evil cannot very well be entirely separated from the will and sovereignty of God, have tried to go a step further, rather carefully feeling their way, and explain that evil is in the world by God's permissive will. They dare not say that God willed the entrance of evil into His creation, for it seems to them that this would be tantamount to making God the author of sin, which they justly abhor. On the other hand, they try to maintain God's sovereignty as far as possible, realizing that independent existence cannot be ascribed to the powers of darkness and death. And they flatter themselves that they have found an answer which is satisfactory in the view expressed by the term "God's permissive will." However, it should be apparent at once, that this conception fails to maintain the sovereignty of God, while it does not succeed to avoid what is, from their viewpoint, the error of making God the author of sin. For, on the one hand, the term "permission" presupposes that there is a power outside of the one who permits, that can operate independently from the latter. With application to the subject under discussion, it means that there was some power of evil that had energy to work apart from God and outside of Him. The operation of this power God might have prevented, but He chose not to do so; instead He permitted that power to do its evil work. In so far, then, the view expressed by the term "permissive will" is dualistic, denies the sovereignty of God. On the other hand, it does not succeed in explaining how God can be said to have no responsibility for the presence of evil in the world. If a child is on the verge of drowning, and I have but to put out my hand and grab it in order to save it, but I choose not to do this, but permit it to drown, am I not virtually as responsible for the child's death, as if I had actually thrown it into the water? If I know that down the track along which a train is speeding there is a washout and a bridge was destroyed, and I have the opportunity to flash a danger signal to the engineer, but I choose not to do so, but permit the train to rush to its certain doom, am I not responsible for the crash and its results? And if God could have prevented the entrance of evil into the world through the restraining of the pride of the devil and

the preservation of Adam in first paradise (as, no doubt, it must be granted that He could have done), but He willed to permit it, does this "permissive will" theory explain how God is not the author of sin any more than the view that God willed it? It ought to be evident to all that it does not.

Now, strictly speaking, the Catechism does not introduce this problem in all its implications; it refers to only one aspect of it: is God the *Creator* of evil? It is, therefore, not necessary to go into the problem here. But we wish to make a few remarks about it, nevertheless. First of all, it ought to be emphasized that we cannot and may not and need not call God before the bar of our human judgment in order to determine whether He can be justified in His work or not. We cannot, for He is God, the Holy One of Israel, the incomparable One: by whom or what shall we liken God, or what standard of judgment could we possibly apply to Him? He is absolute goodness in Himself. We may not, for He alone is Judge of heaven and earth, and to call Him before the tribunal of our human judgment would be the height of presumption: "who art thou, o man, that answerest against God?" And we need not, for God justifies Himself. He justifies Himself in the cross of Jesus Christ, in the consciences of His people through faith, and in the consciences of all men; and He will justify Himself, i.e. He will clearly reveal that He is the absolute Sovereign and at the same time absolutely righteous and just, in the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God. Hence, *we* do not have to solve the problem. The only question that remains for us to answer is: what does God reveal of Himself with respect to His relation of sin and evil in the world? And then, two truths seem to be very clear in the Scriptures: that God is strictly sovereign also in relation to sin and suffering; and that He rules in righteousness and judges in equity, that He is a light and there is no darkness in Him at all. This is not the place to quote texts in proof of these two statements; but they can easily be furnished. God hates sin, yet it is here, not by His permission, but according to the will of His sovereign counsel and by His own providence. And it must serve His purpose. Sin and evil always have been and always will be strictly subject to Him. Also with regard to it, He hath done whatsoever he hath pleased. So that we understand the Scriptures to teach us this: Without ever becoming the author of sin and evil, and without ever taking pleasure in iniquity, yea, so, that He always hates sin and judges it to condemnation, God has nevertheless willed that sin should enter into the world to serve His own holy purpose.

And this is in full agreement with the teaching of our Catechism in as far as it broaches this question: "Did God then create man so wicked and perverse?"

By no means; but God created man good and after His own image, in true righteousness and holiness, that he might rightly know God his Creator, heartily love Him and live with Him in eternal happiness to glorify and praise Him." Bold though the question may be, it follows here naturally enough. The last answer in the preceding Lord's Day stated that we are "so wicked and perverse" that we are wholly contrary to the law of God, so that, while it demands that we love God above all and our neighbour as ourselves, we hate Him and one another. And the Catechism had stated that this hatred of God and of our neighbour is not a matter of a sinful *deed* only, nor does it arise from a sinful *habit* we have formed, but that it arises from the perversity and wickedness of our *nature*. We are *by nature* prone to hate God and the neighbour! But we did not make our own nature! How, then, is it so corrupt? What was more natural than to put the question in this form: "Did God create man so wicked and perverse?"

And the answer is an emphatic denial: "by no means." And this is followed by a statement concerning man's original state as he came from the hand of his Creator: "God created man good and after his own image." He created man *good*. In this connection this means: without corruption and sin; and, positively, so that man could reach the purpose of his existence in relation to God and to all things. And this goodness of man in the state of his original integrity consisted in this, that he was made after the image of God. The question is: what does this mean? What is implied in the image of God?

The general meaning of the phrase "image of God" is clear enough. It signifies that man was so created that there was a creaturely likeness of God in him, that there was a reflection of the perfections of God in man. Thus we must understand the statement of Scripture in Gen. 1:26: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." About the interpretation that would read this text as if it intended to make a distinction between "image" and "likeness" in such a way that "image" refers to the body while "likeness" refers to the soul of man, we need not say much. This distinction is rather arbitrary. It is much more natural to understand that "likeness" is meant as a further definition of "image", so that the text means: "let us make man in our image in such a way that the image is also a likeness". All images are not likenesses. There are images that only represent the objects for which they stand. Thus, for instance, the images of the cherubim in the holy of holies were representative images, but not necessarily meant to be likenesses of spiritual beings. But man is so made in the image of God, that the image is also a likeness, so that his very nature reflects some of God's own perfections. There is a creaturely likeness of God

in man.

Of more importance, however, is the question: just what belongs to this image of God in man? And this question is not always answered in the same way. Augustine, too, made a distinction between "image" and "likeness" and explained that the former consisted especially in the knowledge of the truth, while the latter implied the love of virtue. Later, during the time of Scholasticism, the image was explained as referring to mere natural attributes of the soul, such as reason and knowledge, intellect and will; while likeness was a spiritual, ethical concept including, righteousness and holiness and true spiritual knowledge of God. This led later to the Roman Catholic distinction between man as he is *naturally* good, and man with the *additional* gift of the likeness of God, according to which he is able to seek the higher, spiritual things of God. Man, therefore, can lose the image of God and still be *naturally* good, although he is no longer able to perform spiritual works. Others identified image and likeness, and taught that the image of God included both natural endowments, such as man's rational and moral nature, his conscience and will, his freedom and "immortality", and man's original righteousness and holiness, his conformity to the will of God. Some even went to the extreme, especially among the Greek theologians, of letting the image of God consist exclusively in the natural gifts of his rational and moral nature. Remonstrants and Socinians identified the image of God in man with the dominion God gave him over all the earthly creation. The Reformers, it seems, were inclined to limit the image of God to man's original integrity, his true knowledge of God, righteousness and holiness. Especially Lutheran theologians are very explicit on this point. They deny that the "rational soul" of man as such is part of the image of God. And they argue that man's reason and will as such cannot be lost, while plainly, according to the Bible, man lost the image of God, whence it follows that the former cannot belong to that image that was lost. It is sometimes suggested that Calvin included more in the image of God than what belonged to Adam's original rectitude, because he speaks of the image as being nearly wiped out after the fall: "prope deleta". But this is, to say the least, very doubtful. For, in his Institutes, Book I, cap. XV, par. 4 he writes as follows: "However, it appears that no complete definition is as yet given of that image, unless it be set forth more clearly in which faculties man excels by which he must be considered a mirror of the glory of God. Now this can be known better from no other source than from the restoration of the corrupt nature. (Id vero non aliunde melius quam ex reparatione corruptae naturae cognosci potest)". And later in the same paragraph Calvin refers to the contents of this restored image by quoting from Col. 3:10 and Eph.

4:24, and he explains: "Whence it appears what Paul comprehends chiefly under the image of God. In the first place he mentions knowledge (*Priore loco agnitionem ponit*), and further true righteousness and holiness (*altero autem sinceram iustitiam et sanctitatem*); whence we gather that in the beginning the image of God was conspicuous by the light of the mind, the rectitude of the heart and the soundness of all the parts (*unde colligimus initio in luce mentis, in cordis rectitudine, partiumque omnium sanitate conspicuam fuisse Dei imaginem.*") And as concerns the "prope deleta" (well-nigh wiped out), the phrase occurs in the following sentence: "since then the image of God consists in the original excellency of the human nature (*integra naturae humanae praestantia*), which shone forth in Adam before the fall, afterwards however is so corrupted and nearly wiped out, (*vitiata et prope deleta*), that in the ruins there is nothing left than what is confused, mutilated and infected by filth (*ut nihil ex ruina nisi confusum, mutilum, labeque infectum supersit*)" etc. Calvin may have taught that the image of God was not entirely wiped out through the fall, but he certainly tells us here in the strongest language that what is left is nothing but miserable ruins and corruption. And that also man's body and his rational soul as such belongs to this image cannot be found in the Institutes.

Later Reformed theologians, however, made a distinction, that has found a way into the Reformed Churches through preaching and instruction, and is rather generally accepted as belonging to Reformed doctrine. I am referring, of course, to the distinction between the image of God in a wider and in a narrower sense. To the former then belong man's rationality and morality and immortality; to the latter his true knowledge of God, righteousness and holiness; the former implies all that distinguishes man from the lower animals, the latter is his original state of righteousness. The latter was lost through the fall; the former, however, was retained. Man still possesses the image of God in a wider sense, though he no more possesses his original integrity.

How is to be judged of this distinction?

H. H.

NOTHING SHALL OFFEND THEM

"Great peace have they which love thy law,
And nothing shall offend them";
Thy goodness and Thy mercy too,
Shall constantly attend them.
They have no fear when swelling tides
Of evil rage around them;
They know in whom they have believed,
And nothing shall confound them,

Elijah and Elisha, A Comparison

In this writing a comparison is drawn between these two prophets of God as to their task, character, and significance for the church.

The two form a class by themselves. They stand alone among the great prophets of the Old Dispensation. They did not, as the school of prophets to which Isaiah belonged, predict the exile of Judah or the permanent dispersion of the ten tribes. This was not their task. Their prophetic labors concerned their present. Speaking generally, their task was to witness for Jehovah against the wicked in the land *through word and deed, miracles and judgments*. They proved through signs and wonders that not Baal but that *Jehovah is the God* in order that the apostate nation, engaged in filling its measure of iniquity, might be without excuse in the day of the Lord's vengeance by which the ten tribes were soon to be overtaken. The specific task of Elijah was to set on foot a movement that would result in the uprooting and destruction of the Baal worship in Israel and the extinction of Ahab's house. The *definite* task of Elisha was to continue this movement until these results be obtained. With Elijah and Elisha a new period in Israel's prophecy is ushered in. It is now plainly revealed that the nation in its totality will be destroyed, and that in the remnant the nucleus will be saved, and that this salvation is to be realized through judgment. Let us make good these statements.

On the accession of Ahab, the kingdom of Israel was steeped in idolatry. Jeroboam had set up golden calves for a political end, but Ahab built a temple to Baal, the sun-God, the chief deity of the Phoenicians, and erected an altar therein for pagan sacrifices, thus renouncing Jehovah as the supreme and only God. The established religion was now idolatry in its most hideous form; it was the worship of the powers of nature, under the supervision of Jezebel, the Phoenician wife of the king—a woman guilty of every vice and completely dominating her husband. Jeroboam's sin had been great; but, according to Scripture, the sin of Ahab was greater.

To please his wife, Ahab added to his royal residence a summer resort called Jezreel. It was of great beauty. It contained within its grounds an ivory palace of great splendor. Amid its gardens and parks and all the luxuries then known, the king and queen and attendant nobles abandoned themselves to the pleasures of sin.

The queen was an incarnation of pride and sensuality. Besides, she was a religious persecutor of the first rank. She was wholly devoted to promoting the ends of her pagan worship. She feasted at her own table at Jezreel, four hundred priests of Baal, besides

four hundred and fifty others at Samaria. The few prophets of God in the kingdom hid themselves in caves and in deserts to escape her murderous fury.

The fearful apostacy of Israel, which had been on the increase for sixty years under wicked kings, had now reached a point which called for special divine judgments. So God sent a prophet,—a prophet such as had not appeared in Israel since Samuel; more august, more terrible than he; indeed the most unique and imposing character in Israel's history.

Almost nothing is known of the early history of Elijah. The Bible simply speaks of him as "The Tishbite",—one of the inhabitants of Gilead, at the east of Jordan. He evidently was a man accustomed to a wild and solitary life. He was clothed with a mantle of sheepskin or hair-cloth, and carried in his hand a rugged staff. His first appearance was marked and extraordinary. Suddenly and unannounced he stands before Ahab, and abruptly delivers his awful message. He was an apparition calculated to strike with terror the boldest of kings. He makes no set speech, he offers no apology, he disdains all forms and ceremonies; he does not even render the customary homage. He utters only a few words, preceded by an oath: "As Jehovah the God of Israel liveth, there shall not be dew nor rain these years but according to my word." What arrogance before a king! Elijah, an utterly unknown man, in a sheepskin mantle, apparently a peasant, dares to utter a curse on the land without even deigning to give a reason. But the conscience of Ahab was telling him that he could not with impunity introduce idolatry in Israel.

"But according to my word. . . ." The utterance of the prophet rings with conviction. It is fraught with power. The prophet knows whereof he speaks. But how does he know? He has prayed—so James tells us—that it might not rain for a space of three years—prayed according to the revealed will, pronouncements of God. Speaking through His servant Moses, the Lord had said to Israel, encamped in the wilderness, that if His people will hearken unto His voice, blessings shall come upon them. Among the many blessings mentioned is also that of copious rain in season, "And the Lord shall make him (Israel) plenteous in goods. . . . in the fruit of his cattle, and in the fruit of his ground, and in the land which He sware unto the fathers to give him. The Lord shall open unto him His good treasure, the heaven to give rain unto the land in his season, and to bless all the work of his hand."

But on the other hand, "it shall come to pass, if Israel will not hearken unto the voice of the Lord his God. . . . the heaven that is over him shall be brass, and the earth that is under him shall be iron. And the Lord shall make the rain of his land powder for

dust; from heaven it shall come down upon him until he be destroyed."

So the Lord had spoken. And so the prophet has now prayed—prayed that it might not rain, that the heaven that is over the apostate nation might be brass, and the earth that is under them might be iron for want of rain. So the prophet has prayed. For the people have forsaken the Lord and are using His gifts in the service of Baal. Let then the hand of the Lord be upon them, as He has spoken, that as chastized, they may forsake their abominations and return to God. But if they be unwilling, let them perish. So Elijah prayed. For he is a righteous man. The zeal of God's house—the house that the wicked in the land have destroyed—consumed him.

Elijah mysteriously disappears from the royal presence as suddenly as he had entered it, and no one knows whither he has fled. So the Lord will have it, "Get thee hence,—such is now His word to the prophet—and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan." Amid the clefts and the rocks that mark the deep valley, does the man of God hide himself from his persecutors. He does not escape to his native deserts, but remains near the capital in which Ahab reigns, in a deeply secluded spot, where he quenches his thirst from the waters of the brook, and eats the food which the ravens deposit amid the cliffs. For this most undaunted man in Israel must live on until his task—the uprooting and the destruction of the worship of Baal—is completed.

It is now the rainy season in Canaan. Rain is confidently expected. But no rain falls. The streams from the mountains are dried up; the land, long parched by the summer sun, becomes like dust and ashes. Even the sheltered brook failed, from which Elijah drinks. The Lord therefore sends him to the last place in which his enemies will naturally search for him, even to the city of Phœnicia, where the worship of Baal is the religion of the land. There the Lord has commanded a woman to sustain him. He raises the woman's son, and she exclaims that now she knows that he is a man of God and that the word of the Lord in his mouth is truth.

Meanwhile the abnormal drought and consequent famine continues. People and king are reduced to despair. So dried up are the wells and exhausted the cisterns that even the king's household begins to suffer, and it is feared that the horses of the royal stable will perish. In his dire need the king himself sets forth from his palace to seek vegetation and water in the valleys, while Obediah, the governor of the house and a secret worshipper of Jehovah, is sent in an opposite direction for a like purpose. On his way Obediah meets Elijah, who has come forth from his retreat in obedience to the word of the Lord that has come to him in the third year of the famine, saying,

"Go shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth." Having been informed of Elijah's arrival by his servant, Ahab goes forth to meet him. Once in his presence, he addresses the prophet as the author of national calamities, "Art thou he who troubleth Israel?" Elijah fearlessly replies, "I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house, in that thou hast forsaken the commandments of Jehovah, and hast followed Baalim." Without first making mention of the rain that was about to be sent, he orders the king to assemble all his people, together with the eight hundred and fifty priests of Baal, at Mount Carmel.

The representatives of the whole nation are now assembled at Mount Carmel, with their idolatrous priests. The prophet appears in their midst. He addresses the people, who, though they have no firm convictions, are not yet hopelessly sunk into the idolatry of their rulers. "How long", cries the preacher, with a loud voice, "halt ye between two opinions? If Jehovah be God, follow him; but if Baal be God, then follow him." The people answer not a word. He reminds the people that he stands alone in opposition to eight hundred and fifty idolatrous priests under the protection of the king and queen. He proposes to test their claims in comparison with his. Let them call on the name of their gods, and he will call on the name of Jehovah: and the God that answers by fire for the consumption of the sacrificial bullock on the altar, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken. The priests of Baal call on the name of their God from morning even until noon, but there is no answer. They leap upon the altar, and, as provoked by Elijah's grim sarcasms—"Cry with a loud voice!" said he, yea, louder, yet louder! For he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awaked—they cry aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushes out upon them. But the fire does not descend. Elijah alone is calm, as he stands by the ruins of an ancient altar. With his own hands he takes twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of Israel, builds with them an altar, makes a trench around the altar which he fills with water, cuts a bullock in pieces and lays it on the wood, and then offers this prayer up to the God of his fathers, "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, o Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their hearts back again." The fire of the Lord now falls, and consumes the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licks up the water that is in the trench. And when the people see, they fall on their faces and cry aloud, "Jehovah, he is the God!

Jehovah, he is the God!" At the command of Elijah, the prophets of Baal were slain. His triumph is complete. He has performed his task, which was precisely this: to assert through action the majesty of God and to prove to the apostate nation the power of Jehovah and thus to provide it with the clearest evidence that Jehovah is God in Israel, and that being God, and none else, He will consume the sinners out of the land and save His people for His name's sake. Such, certainly, was the speech that rose from the divine fire falling from heaven and consuming both the sacrifice and the water by which it was drenched.

Elijah is now threatened by Jezebel and flees to Beersheba. In the wilderness, being weary of life, and desiring therefore to die, he is confronted by an angel. His strength and courage return to him. In agreement with his task, which was not merely to announce and predict judgment but to actually reveal (instrumentally) the wrath of God from heaven over the apostate nation, he is sent by the Lord to anoint Hazael, the scourge of Israel; Jehu, who was to exterminate the house of Ahab; and Elisha, whose task it was to be to follow in Elijah's footsteps, his work, to continue the movement which he had begun,—the movement that resulted in the complete destruction of the worship of Baal. Accordingly, Elisha, not (Elijah) actually anoints Jehu, the exterminator of Ahab's house and the slayer of the Baal priests that had not died on Mount Carmel by the sword of Elijah. And through Hazael, whom he also anoints, he—Elisha—scourges the sinful nation, makes it to actually suffer the curse of the Law, the wrath of Jehovah, on account of its apostacy.

As was said, these two prophets stand alone. Essentially their task is one. As to Elijah, he not merely announced the judgments of God but actually called them down upon the northern kingdom, sent them upon this people through prayer. Of all the prophets, Elijah is the only one who prayed for the actual and immediate operation of the curse of the law in the people's fields. And of all the prophets, Elisha is the only one by whose appointment a pagan was set on the throne of a pagan state, that as the agent of God he might scourge God's people. I now have reference to Elijah's anointing Hazael king over Syria.

And herein precisely lies the significance of Elijah and Elisha. He of all the prophets, vindicated the law, the majesty of Jehovah, through his making the curse of the law *actual* in the life of the apostate nation and through his following the penitent with its blessing. This explains his presence on the mount of transfiguration. His presence there was a declaration to the effect that the curse of the law had to be born—born by one who could so bear it as to free men from it; that salvation could come only in the way of right and

through judgment and with all the demands of the law fully satisfied.

But there is also a difference to be noticed between Elijah and Elisha. As to the former, his being taken up by a fiery chariot into heaven, bespeaks his surpassing greatness as a prophet. His person was august and remarkable. He lived alone in solitary companionship with God. Seldom did he appear in public.

As to Elisha, he was the son of a farmer. After Elijah had gone to heaven, he became a man of the city and had a house in Samaria. He dwelt in the midst of his people and thus rendered his person accessible to them. If Elijah is stern and severe, he is gentle and affectionate. He send away his enemies—the Assyrian nobles—as satisfied with bread. When he beholds Hazael and is mindful of what his people will have to suffer at the hands of this man, whom he must anoint king, he bursts into tears. His influence extended far beyond the borders of Israel. Benhadad in sickness sent to him to be healed. Elisha, too, was stern. Yet it is not amiss to say, that in his doings especially the mercy and compassion of God shown forth,—yet certainly, also His righteousness and justice—and that Elijah, through his labors and manner of life, showed forth the avenging righteousness of God—yet also his mercy. One of the most remarkable doings of Elisha was his sending away his captives—the Syrian genera's—as satisfied with bread. He here translated into action the teaching of Christ, "Love your enemies. . . . and ye shall be sons of the Most High: for He is kind toward the unthankful and evil."

Though there were these differences, the task of each had so much in common with that of the other as to justify our saying that they were one and the same. Both through the wonders which they instrumentally wrought were the preachers of the truth that Jehovah is God, not Baal, not men's idols, but Jehovah. The one outstanding doing of Elijah's entire career—his calling down from heaven through prayer the fire of God that consumed the burnt offering—was calculated to drive home this truth. And all the wonders wrought by Elisha signified the same truth. As healed by the waters of the Jordan, Naaman, standing before Elisha exclaimed, "Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel." And if Jehovah is God then it must follow that he through whom Jehovah wrought was His prophet, that thus there was a prophet of God in Israel. Both wanted men to know this. "Let it be known," so Elijah prayed, "that thou art God in Israel and that I am thy prophet, and that I have done all these things at thy word." Said Elisha to the king of Israel, "Let him—Naaman—come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel." There had to be conclusive evidences of this,

firstly in order that the apostates, they who refused to repent and turn to God and His prophet, to know his will and to seek his salvation, might be without excuse; and secondly that in those evil days there might be for God's people a place of refuge. And the days were evil, also during the time of Elisha. There was draught in the land then too, lasting not three but seven years.

Yet, as was said, of the two Elijah was the sterner. Especially he was the prophet of judgment. The theophany at Horeb—the great and strong wind that rent the mountains, the earthquake and the fire, the symbols of divine judgment and wrath—were indicative of the means by which he would turn the hearts of his people to God. He appears, and the judgments of God are proclaimed as with a voice of thunder. In him burns the fire of divine zeal, and still there is in this fire also the glow of love. Elisha is less foreboding. Elijah preaches that God is righteous. Without detracting from this in the least. Elisha shows, through his miracles of healing, that God is also gracious. The work of both forms one divine work.

Finally, though Elijah was the greater, it was he, and not Elisha, who sank to the lowest depths of despondancy, on account of the apparent failure of his great zeal to bear fruit. When Elijah heard that Jezebel had ordered him killed, he was greatly discouraged. The boldness of the woman completely unnerved him. This can be explained. Having been provided with the evidence that Jehovah and not Baal is God, the people had returned to the Lord. Their slaying the priests of Baal was to the prophet certain indication that their courage had revived and that they are now filled with new boldness. He felt certain that the queen had arrived at a similar conclusion and that she would therefore understand that unless she desist from persecuting God's prophets, her life was now in peril. But the queen in her furore determines to make away with Elijah. She sends forth her henchmen to apprehend him. And the people, who had so recently shouted "Jehovah is God" do nothing about it. Was there not one true prophet among them ready to defy the queen? Apparently not. In his gloom, which was profound, the prophet complains, "and I, even I only am left; and they seek my life to take it away." But the Lord replies that he had left him a remnant—the seven thousand—all the knees which had not bowed unto Baal. This remnant cannot otherwise be saved than through judgment. Therefore it shall come to pass "that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay", mark you, Elisha.

Now this contrast of flowering faith and profoundest gloom was seen only in Elijah.

The Reformation And The Renaissance

The Reformation proper was a spiritual movement, that stood for an action that consisted in exalting the Holy Scriptures as the sole infallible source of doctrine and truth. According to the literal meaning of the word, the Renaissance was a re-birth. It is needful to ask of what it was the re-birth. Some use the term to denote the entrance of the European nations upon a fresh state of energy in general. Others use the term to signify only revival of natural intellectual activities that were stimulated by the recovery of the ancient, pagan, learning and culture of the Graeco-Roman world, and its application to the arts and literatures of the people of this modern world. The former definition of Renaissance makes it denote the whole change which came over Europe at the close of the Middle Ages, also that represented by the Reformation. The other confines it to what is known as the Revival of Learning, by which is meant that new zeal for the pagan, classical literature, learning and art which sprang up in Italy toward the close of the Middle Ages. This is correct. The term must be applied only to this literature and learning. Yet, the Revival of Learning must be regarded as a function of that energy that brought this modern civilization with its new and pagan conceptions of religion and science, with its manifold inventions and discoveries. The Reformation, however, must be separated from it. Of it the Reformation was no product. The two movements differed. They differed as to the time which each occupied. Each movement had its own fore-runners. They differed further as to essence, nature and aim.

The time which each occupied.

Taken within its broadest limits, the period of the Protestant Reformation is identical with the period that makes the transition from the Middle (800-1517) to the Modern Era (1517 to the present). Taken within its narrowest limits, it may be regarded as commencing in the year 1517 and as attaining to a certain consummation in the year 1545. In the former year, Luther, through his publication of his theses, initiated that direct and open renunciation of medieval heretical doctrine that forms one of the elements in the Reformation. In the latter year, the council of Trent again sanctioned and proclaimed that doctrine and thereby erected an inseparable barrier between Rome and the churches of the Reformation. From that time on each communion possessed its distinctive organization and creed, and the struggle that followed attempted to bring about on the part of each the extinction of the opposed form of faith. In Germany this struggle was formally ended by the peace of

Augsburg (1555); in Switzerland by the death of Calvin in 1564; in France the outward progress was checked by the massacre on the eve of St. Bartholomew (1572); in Bohemia a final solution was found only with the battle of the White Hill in 1620. These dates may be taken as the formal consummation of the Reformation in the countries specified. In England the movement was decided by the proclamation of William III, Stadholder of the Netherlands, and Mary, as joint sovereigns of England in 1688. With the "Peace of Westphalia" the period of the Reformation on the continent of Europe may be considered closed. With this *peace* the German Calvinists secured full rights. With the Lutherans they were regarded as one party over against the Catholics.

As to the Renaissance, so the Reformation, it cannot be confined within strict limits of time. The several nations that bore their share in it, did so at different epochs. England was still medieval when Italy had socially and mentally entered on the modern stadium. The Renaissance must be viewed as an internal development—development of sin and the lie—whereby the depraved spiritual energies latent in the Middle Ages grew into actuality and formed a mental habit of the modern world. The process began in Italy, and gradually extended to the utmost bounds of Europe, producing similar results in every nation and establishing a common worldly, pagan civilization and culture. There are dates which can be selected as the starting point of the Renaissance. The first is the year 1453, when Constantinople fell into the hands of the Turks. The shadow of what had been the Eastern Empire now passed suddenly away. At the same time the Holy Roman Empire and the papacy suffered great moral emfeeblement. It became evident that the old order of society had seen its day. There were forces at work in state and church which substituted a confederation of rival European states for the earlier ideal of a universal monarchy, and separate religious constitutions for the previous Catholic unity. And there was nothing to check these forces. The fall of Constantinople caused a great migration of Greek scholars to the West. So many of the exiles took up their residence in Italy, that it was as if Greece had migrated to Italy. These fugitives brought with them many manuscripts unknown to Western scholars. The new learning was gladly received by secular and spiritual potentates alike.

A second date of importance for the Renaissance were the years 1492-1500. In these years the leading nations of Europe began to strive among one another for the possession of Italy, and learned meanwhile that culture which Italy had perfected. In these years the secularization of the Papacy was completed by Alexander VI. The same period was marked by the discovery of America and the exploration of the Indian

Sea. It also witnessed the defusion of knowledge through printing and the invention of gunpowder, and the revolution of cosmology which resulted from the Copernican discovery. Thus the half century between 1450 and 1500 may be termed the culminating point of the Renaissance.

A third decisive date was the year 1527. In this year took place the sack of Rome. It closed the Renaissance for Italy,—the land where it had found its commencement.

Each movement had its forerunners.

The forerunners of the Reformation were Wycliff in England and John Huss in Bohemia. As translated into action the doctrines of both would spell the overthrow of Roman hierarchy. Both insisted that the sole infallible source of doctrine is Scripture, and that in any and all disputes about truth and moral the question in the final analysis is not, What sayeth the pontiff of Rome or the councils or the doctors in the church, but what sayeth the Scriptures. The striving of both was to lead God's people back to the Scriptures and to bring them under the authority of Holy Writ. Both preached that the pope cannot forgive sin but can only proclaim forgiveness to the penitent. Both attacked the corruption among clergy and laity alike. Both declared that the church needs no visible head (meaning the pope), that Christ guides His church without such monsters of supreme heads by means of His true disciples scattered through all the world. Both maintained that the pope rules not by immutable and divine right, and that the true church is the community of the elect only.

The forerunner of the Renaissance was Dante. He was born in Florence in 1265. He was exiled in 1302 and died in 1321 at Ravenna. His tomb there is a place of pilgrimage today. It was during the years of his exile that he wrote his great poem, the Divine Comedy. It is an epitome of the life and thought of the church of the Middle Ages. Still he is regarded as having been in a profound sense a prophet of the new age which was approaching. He had a strong feeling for classical antiquity. He speaks lovingly of Virgil as his master and teacher. His attitude towards Graeco-Roman culture was modern as is evident from his free use of the works of the classical, that is, pagan writers.

But the first and the greatest of humanists is Petrarch. His enthusiasm for the ancient writers bordered on worship. His enthusiasm for the classical authors was contagious. He started a movement that could not be checked.

Each movement had its birthplace.

The birthplace of the Reformation was a monastery in Germany. Rightly considered, its birthplace was the heart of a child of God, disquieted on account of his sins and wanting to know how he could be just

before God. The Renaissance had its beginning in Italy for the reason that here in the great Italian city-republics there was nourished a pagan political, intellectual, and artistic life like that of the pagan cities of ancient Greece. Florence became a second Athens. A second circumstance that contributed to make Italy the birthplace of the Renaissance was the fact that in Italy the break between the old pagan civilization of the Graeco-Roman world and Italy was not so complete as it was in other countries of Western Europe. The Italians were closer in language and in blood to the old Romans than were the others nations. The cities themselves were remnants of the old Empire.

(To be continued)

G. M. O.

ANOTHER GOSPEL

"Another gospel!" Why will men

With cunning sleight and hardihood
Pervert, distort, and mutilate

"The gospel of the grace of God"?
They, "thieves and robbers", one and all,

His gospel, shunning to obey,
Would seek an entrance to the fold
By climbing "up some other way".

"Themselves professing to be wise",

As with "great swelling words" they speak,
"The way of peace they have not known"—
God keeps His kingdom for the meek!
Their noisy boastings are in vain;
They build their hopes on treach'rous sand;
Their trust is in a spider's web;
They in the judgment shall not stand.

"Another gospel"—not the true,

Which tells of God's redeeming grace
In yielding up His Son to die—
The Sinless in the sinner's place—
Lead captive our captivity,
Remake His image fair,
Bring "immortality to light"—
What gospel could with this compare?

"Another gospel"? There's but one!

In earth or heaven, one only name
Whereby dead souls may live again,
The blood-bought gift of pardon claim.
O glorious gospel! Speed thee on
In hearts aflame, on tireless feet,
Till all men everywhere have heard—
Until His Body is complete,

Een Lied Der Liefde

(Psalm 45, Tweede Deel)

We zagen, dat het een lied was der liefde, van de liefde Gods.

Die eeuwige liefde is geopenbaard in den Zoon: Hij wordt hier God genoemd. "Daarom heeft U, o God, Uw God gezalfd met vreugdeolie. . . ."

We hebben Hem gezien, dien Jezus van Nazareth, in al Zijn schoonheid, rijdende voorspoediglijk op het Woord der Waarheid. Hij was veel schooner dan de menschenkinderen. Genade is op Zijn lippen uitgestort. Als Hij Zijn zwaard aan de heup gordde hoorden we voorts van vreeselijke dingen verhalen. Vreeselijk, want er zit de eeuwigheid in dien strijd. Het was een eeuwige toorn Gods over de zonde en het was een eeuwige dood dien Hij overwinnen moest.

Doch Hij rijdt voorspoediglijk. Er komt, er kwam een zege die de keelen zal doen orgelen tot in eeuwigheid.

Het laatst wat we tot nog toe zagen was de Koningin, staande aan de rechterhand van Jezus.

En dat is de Kerk van God van alle eeuwen.

Voor die Koningin heeft deze psalm nog een woord.

Hoor, o Dochter! en zie, en neig Uw oor!

We hebben dien tekst eens bepreekt ter gelegenheid van een tweetal jongedochteren die voor de geheele gemeente het goede geloof beleden.

De tekst veronderstelt een rede en een schoon, verrukkelijk schouwspel.

O, als we maar hooren kunnen en zien! Er is zoo overstelpend veel te zien en te hooren. Er is een schouwspel hetwelk door de dingen en door het Woord geschiedt, dat de Engelen Gods doet zingen tot in eeuwigheid. Het schouwspel namelijk van de voorgaande verzen. De boodschap van den overwinnenden Vorst Gods. Het is al het schoone dat God openbaarde van Zichzelf en dat is Jezus. En Hij roept en roept en roept! Hoor dan, o Dochter, en zie!

Van nature is er niemand die acht slaat op de boodschap Gods en het Kruis, het heerlijke Kruis van Golgotha. Van nature zien we niet "Jezus met eere en heerlijkheid gekroond, de held van Psalm 45."

Van nature liggen we in de duisternis ter neder en luisteren naar de boodschap, de leugenen van Satan. Van nature schouwen we naar de afzichtelijke dingen der zonde die in Gods Woord gruwelen heeten.

En al die leugens en al die afzichtelijke, afschuwelijke dingen zijn de dingen van ons vader's huis.

Ja, er is een huis van onzen natuurlijken vader.

Dat is het samenleven, het wonen van, het thuisvoelen in het goddelooze. De bouwer was Adam. De architect was Satan. De stijl is helsch.

Staan we dan eindelijk in 't volle licht van een ander Huis dan komt de roepstem tot ons: "Vergeet uw volk en uws vaders huis!" Dat duurt dan alle dagen. Elken morgen komt de stemme van den Held tot ons: Vergeet uw volk; vergeet uws vaders huis! Wiens hart duister is komt niet tot de hemelsche gezelligheid van dat andere Huis, hetwelk Jezus bouwde en oprichtte op Zijn bloed. Doch wiens hart herboren is en bekeerd tot God mag gaarne die opwekkende stem hooren. Zij mijmeren er over: Hij wekt mij alle morgens.

We moeten vergeten.

Vergeeten is iets heel vreeselijks. Voor wien vergat bestaat het ding niet meer. Vergeeten is vreeselijk als het ding goed is. Zoo kan men God vergeten. Dan is onze naam: Godvergetenen. Alle hunne gedachten zijn dan dat er geen God is.

Doch hier in dezen psalm worden we opgeroepen om ons vroeger volk en om onzes natuurlijken vaders huis te vergeten. En dat mag en dat moet.

Geliefden! elken dag wordt ge geroepen om de haat Gods te vergeten, om nooit meer te denken aan het lasteren van den Allerhoogsten. Die den Naam des Heeren noemt sta af van ongerechtigheid! Vergeet het goddelooze volk. Keer ze den rug toe en ondervindt de kracht der genade die spreekt: "In de vergadering der boosdoeners kom ik niet!" Verlaat stad Verderf en spoedt U naar de stad des grooten Konings.

Op dien weg liggen de hemelsche tafereelen waarheen ge moet staren met een oog van verangende liefde. Op dien weg staan de wegwijzers van des Heeren Woord. Daar is de Bijbel, niet als letter die doot, doch als het Woord Gods dat God eigendommelijk spreekt. Hij zal U morgen wekken. Ja, ge zult wel geduriglijk bestraft worden, zelfs elken morgen met Asaph, doch het is groote zaligheid om door God berispt te worden. Zelfs het schelden Gods is zaligheid. O Heere, straf mij, doch te midden des toorns, o gedenk des ontfermens!

Doet ge dat, geliefde lezer, zoo zal de Koning lust hebben aan uw schoonheid: dewijl Hij uw Heer is, zoo buig U voor Hem neder!

O, dat klinkt zoo wonderlijk, zoo vreemd. Lust hebben aan *mijn* schoonheid? Hoe zit dat? Hoe kan dat?

't Ligt in dat verlaten van Uws vaders huis en in dat vergeten van Uw volk. 't Zit in dat buigen voor God in verplettering des geestes en in 't breken van Uw hart. God heeft berispt en gescholden: zoo veel van dat oude volk en van dat oude huis openbaarde zich in Uw leven. En toen heeft God gescholden op U. Ook hebt ge het veelmalen gehoord. Hij oordeelde over U en Zijn oordeel donderde U in de ooren, neen, het klonk in 't diepe hart.

In al die dingen was er de liefde Gods in 't harte.

En toen ge beseftet, dat ge tegen zulk een lieflijk God gezondigd had en toen ge het oog van bestraffende liefde van Jezus U zaagt doorboren, toen is Uw hart langzaam aan aan 't breken gegaan. Toen gingt gij buigen voor God. Toen hebt ge U dagelijks bekeerd in rouw en tranen. Toen was daar die klacht, die bittere, bittere klacht: O God, wees mij, de zondaar, genadig!

Dat breken, dat verpletterd zijn, dat zuchten der berouw hebbende liefde, die ootmoed en deemoed en dat tranend staren naar den troon is Uw schoonheid. Toen heeft Jakob overwonnen. Hij gedroeg zich vorstelijk met God in den strijd van den Jabbok. Hij overwon met weenen en smekingën.

Dan zegt God: Wend Uw oog van Mij af, mijn duive! Dan zegt Jezus: Wees welgemoed mijn dochter, uwe zonden zijn U vergeven. Dan heeft de hoer achter Jezus aan stillekens geweend en met haar tranen Zijn voeten gewasschen. Simon mag voorts vloeken, doch Jezus heeft een welgevallen aan die hoer, die geen hoer meer bleef. Ze is de Koningin, gekleed in 't fijnste goud van Ophir. 't Zijn de rechtvaardigmakingen der heiligen, verdiend door Jezus en geschonken door 't geloof.

O, ik mag symbolisch spreken en 't U aanzeggen: al dat zuchten, al die liefde Gods in 't verlangende hart, al dat buigen terwijl 't herte brak—'t zijn al de gestikte kleederen der jonkvrouw; zoo werd immers des Konings dochter geheel verheerlijkt inwendig? Hare kleeding was dan voorts van gouden borduursel. Al die gestalten van ware bekeering is de schoonheid van Koning Jezus, op 't kruis verdiend, door den Geest geschonken. Door die kleeding zijt ge inwendig zóó schoon, dat de Heiland eens zeide: Er zal blijdschap zijn in den hemel over slechts één zondaar zoo hij zich bekeerde, meer dan over de negen-en-negentig. . . .

Mag dat gebeuren, dan is alles wel met die Koningin. Alles zal voorts zich uitputten om die Schoone te dienen, opdat zij haar Koning dienen.

De dochter van Tyrus, de rijke stad van koophandel, de rijken onder het volk zullen haar aangezicht met geschenk smeeën. De hemel en de aarde zullen zich opmaken om de kerk te dienen. Alle deze dingen zijn tegen mij, zeide Jakob. Doch het is niet waar. Alle dingen werken mede ten goede. Alles dient tot de openbaring van steeds hoogere schoonheid van de Kerke Christi.

Welaan dan. De Koning zagen we geheel heerlijk en vol van majesteit. Ook was er de Bruid, de Kerk, de Koningin. Zij is door de genade schoon geworden. Nu zal ze dan ook tot den Koning geleid worden. Er komt een groote bruiloft. Er is een stoet van staatsdochteren rondom haar. 't Is de kerk uit het oogpunt van de individueele belijders. De schare die niemand tellen kan wordt steeds tot den Koning geleid.

En die stoet klimt den berg des Heeren op onder het gezang en het gerei. 't Is net als in de gelijkenis van den verloren zoon. Kwam hij thuis, zoo werd 't gemeste kalf geslacht. Die oude morrende zoon hoorde het gezang en het gerei en moest makkend vragen wat dat toch wel zij. En 't antwoord zal voor eeuwig zijn: Deze schoone was dood en leelijk, doch zij heeft haar oude volk en 's vaders natuurlijk huis vergeten. Ze is getooid geworden met 't lieflijke der deemoed en ootmoed. Ze ziet nu de ware verhoudingen: ze geeft hulde aan haar Goddelijken Gemaal. En ze is op reis naar 't vaderland daarboven.

Nu kan 't niet anders, nu moet zij zingen en galmen van heilgenot. Ze gaat al zingende naar den hemel. Ze wordt tot den Koning geleid met blijdschap en verheuging. Ze gaan voortdurend in in 't paleis van den Koning. De een voor en de ander na. Ze zingen op hun sterfbed en met breekende oogen hoorden het de geliefden: Ik ga naar Jezus! En terwijl 't doodzweet van hun aanzicht leekt, zongen we: 'k Zal eeuwig zingen van Gods goedertierenheer!

Och, de vaderen hebben ons verlaten: Eliah is niet meer onder ons en Jesaja is in den hemel; Jakob heeft zijn tranen gedroogd en David is de zoetste zanger van hemelsche kooren. We zouden zoo gaarne eens praten met Petrus en Johannes en Paulus. Doch ze zijn weg, ver weg. De vaderen hebben hun plaats, die ze voor een wijle vervulden onder ons, verlaten. God heeft al die vaders weggeraapt.

Zullen we hierover weenen?

Neen toch. Want in de plaats van uwe vaders zullen uwe zonen zijn. Ge zult ze stellen over de gansche aarde tot vorsten.

Wat is die Koningin rijk geworden. Zelf is ze een dochter des Konings, vers 14; ze staat aan de rechterzijde van Jezus en is Koningin, vers 10; en hier zegt ons de tekst, dat haar kinderen vorsten zullen zijn. Een kind van God, de bruid van Jezus en kinderen voortbrengen op wier slapen de vorstenkroon rust. Wat onvergelykelijke rijkdom vervult de Kerk van Christus!

In de plaats van Jesaja is Uw zoon, mijn broeder; Uwe kinderen mogen vorsten Gods geheeten, mijn zuster! De zusters onder ons mogen zalig worden in 't baren van kinderen. Zulke rijkdom was nimmer in 't oude diensthuis der zonde.

Zoo viert de kerk hare triumpfen. Over de gansche aarde wordt de kerk van Christus ge-institueerd verklaard. Oude professoren en groote leiders van de kerk zijn gestorven. Doch Uwe kinderen werden getrokken, veranderd, omgezet en met heerlijkheid bekleed. Sommigen onder ons mochten zich tooien met het kleed der Reformatoren. Zijn Uwe zonen niet onder de Vorsten van Juda?

En over de gansche aarde. 't Zal zelfs zóó schoon worden, dat de kennisse Gods een nieuwe aarde be-

dekken zal, gelijk de wateren den bodem der zee bedekken. Ook zult ge zeggen: deze en die is dáár geboren! Zouden dan de speellieden achterblijven en de zangers zich verstoppen? We zullen jubelen uit een overstelpt hart.

De psalmist is rustig geworden. 't Perkament dat bedekt is geworden met zijn lied der liefde is bijna voltooid. Hij werd stil met de rustige stilte des vredes.

't Kan wel zijn, dat hij de tolk is van den grooten Koning, van den Held met Zijn zwaard, Zijn victorie. Misschien is het laatste vers een uiting van den gelukkigen Gemaal die Zijn bruid aanschouwt met een oog van teedere liefde.

Als dat zoo is, dan spreekt Hij dat vers uit als een belofte tot Zijn Eigen God en Vader. Dan zegt Hij: Vader in den Hemel: Ik zal Uwen naam doen gedenken van elk geslacht tot geslacht!

O, we hebben Jezus begrepen: Zulk een eindelijk spreken is het einde, het doel van allen godsdienst: De lof des Heeren.

Tevens is het de zaligheid van den mensch die naar Gods beeld geschapen werd. O, als ik maar aan mijn God mag denken den ganschen dag; als ik maar aan God mag denken in de nacht waken. Als ik Hem maar met mij mag hebben in mijn smart en ellende, doch ook in mijn vreugde en blijdschap. Als ik maar mag wandelen met God. Dan ben ik zalig.

Aan God gedenken? Door Jezus werken voor mij, en door mij? Dan ben ik zalig zelfs in mijn bitterlijk weenen. Zult ge ooit vergeten hoe David zong: 'k Denk aan U, o God! in 't klagen—uit den landstreek der Jordaan!?

Wij allen, wij zullen naar God gaan en aan Hem denken totdat geen maan meer schijnt. Aan God denkende komen we uit de groote verdrukking met een ziel die vermoeid is, een geest die verbrijzelde en een hart dat brak. Doch geen nood: de tranen mogen U uit de oogen geperst worden—Hij zal ze afwisschen. De wolk die Uw oog verduisterde wordt door de liefdevolle hand van God weggestreken. En op dat voor hoofd wordt gegrift eeuwige blijdschap. Jes. 36:10.

En wat volgt dan?

Hoe kunt ge dat vragen. Als Jezus ons aan God doet denken van elk geslacht en tot geslacht, dan kan het niet anders, dan zult ge God loven eeuwiglijk en altoos. Als ge aan God denkt denkt ge immers aan Zijn volmaakte deugden? 'k Noem er maar één: Zijn onbegrijpelijke liefde tot mij, de ellendigste aller zondaren! Zouden we dan niet zingen en verblijd zijn? Zouden we dan niet loven den naam van onzen Vader?

Dat is het einde van den psalm, dat is het einde van elke uiting der genade, opwellend uit 't diepste hart.

Dat is de hemel, daarboven bij God!

G. V.

Gij Weet Alle Dingen

I Joh. 2:20, 27a.

De gemeente van onzen Heere Jezus Christus is de zalving van den Heilige deelachtig. Zij heeft dus die zalving als een geestelijk heilsbezit. De vraag is, wat is het eigenlijke van de zalving?

Het zalven staat in nauw verband met het ambt. We zien alreeds de zalving toegediend aan Koningen, Priesters en soms ook aan Profeten in de Oude Be-deeling. De daad der zalving bestond hierin, dat iemand uit het volk werd afgezonderd, om in een speciaal werk bezig te zijn. Door deze terzijde stelling tot het ambt, werd dan aan zoo iemand een hooge en bijzondere macht geschonken.

Met het oog daarop werd hij dan ook met sierlijke kleederen omhangen, werd hem, benevens het purpergewaad, ook nog een kroon op het hoofd gezet. En bij die schoone kleedij werd dan nog gevoegd het gieten van den zalfolie, heerlijk van geur en schoon van glans, op het hoofd en over de kleederen van hem die gezalfd werd. Als het ware, de geheele persoon onderging, zij het dan op symbolische wijze, een transformatie.

Negatief beduide dit, dat de gezalfde persoon in zichzelf geen heerlijkheid, geen bevoegdheid, noch bekwaamheid bezat, tot den dienst en den taak, waartoe hij geroepen werd. Dat desnietegenstaande, de Heere hem echter riep en hem op een bepaalde plaats, voor een bepaalde taak, temidden van Zijn volk en hen ten behoeve wilde gebruiken. Tot dat einde werden zelfs de goddelooze koningen geroepen, denk slechts aan den eersten Koning van Israel, Saul.

Positief lag er in de zalving, naar de idee, de aanstelling tot het ambt en de bevoegdheid, zoowel als de bekwaamheid, om in den Naam des Heeren ambteliijk op te treden en dus ambtswerk te kunnen verrichten. Het was, in tegenstelling met wat Dr. Kuyper wil, niet iets dat een overblijfsel was van de oorspronkelijke scheppingsidee, maar een speciale opdracht, voor een speciaal volk, waartoe de ambtsdrager geroepen werd, door God Zelf. Hierdoor al'een is het te verstaan, dat ook Israel gehoorzaamheid schuldig bleef, ook al vreesde de Koning God niet. Daaruit is ook de zalving van den Koning Saul te verklaren. Men meent, (alles wordt tenslotte onderworpen aan het leerstuk der gemeene gratie) dat Saul een schoon begin had, nadat hij tot Koning over Israel was uitgeroepen. De man was zoo vervuld van zijn eigen onwaardigheid (moet natuurlijk onbekwaamheid zijn), dat hij zich achter de vaten verscholen had. Was hij nu zoo doorgestaan, dan was alles wel terecht gekomen, hij ware dan een goed koning geworden en zou Gods gunst, in plaats van den vloek, hebben genoten. Daar is natuurlijk absoluut niets van aan, want ge vindt

voor deze voorstelling geen enkele grond in de Heilige Schrift. Saul is juist het geschikte voorbeeld, hoe iemand, die gansch onbekwaam is tot de taak waartoe hij geroepen werd, toch door den Heere werd geroepen en door Hem van het noodige voorzien, om over Israel te regeeren. Let er slechts op hoe het ambt van Koning, bij Saul niet paste, in geen enkel opzicht. Niet uit geestelijk oogpunt, want hij had aangaande Samuel in het geheel geen kennis, noch ook uit natuurlijk oogpunt, dat is uit het oogpunt van moed en tact, ontbrak hem de eerste vereischte om het Koningschap op zich te nemen en zich behoorlijk van zijn taak te kwijten. Het ambt paste bij hem in het geheel niet. Hij zelf wist dat maar al te goed en de vrees bekruipt hem, dat dit wel zeer spoedig tot openbaring zal komen. Wegschuilen en zich verbergen is, dan ook in dit geval, maar het beste. Na de zalving echter wordt de Geest vaardig over hem en ontvangt Saul al de eigenschappen en gaven, die noodig waren om over Israel te regeeren. Ambtelijke bekwaamheid en bevoegdheid werden hem geschonken en de zalving was er dan ook de bevestiging van.

Deze Oud Testamentische zalving vindt haar eindpunt en volle verwerkelijking in de zalving van den Zoon, Die door den Heere gezalfd is van eeuwigheid. "Ik toch heb Mijnen koning gezalfd over Sion, den berg Mijner heiligheid". Van eeuwigheid is in den Raad des Heeren, de Middelaar de Gezalfde Gods.

Gods Zoon, maar dan als de Middelaar in ons vleesch en bloed, is van God verordineerd en met den Heiligen Geest gezalfd tot onzen hoogsten Profeet, eenigen Priester en eeuwigen Koning.

Dat houdt allereerst in, dat de Ambtsdrager bij uitnemendheid iets ontvangt en in den weg der gehoorzaamheid Zijn ambt bedient, waardoor Hij van de Oud Testamentische ambtsdragers onderscheiden is.

Het verschil tusschen de Oud Testamentische ambtsdragers en den Christus, dat de Symbolische zalving (met olie) bij den laatsten wegvalt, omdat Christus den Geest zelve ontvangt zonder mate. Alle drie zijden van het Ambt, Profeet, Priester en Koning, zijn dan ook in Hem volkomen.

Hij spreekt altijd Gods Woord. Hij wijdt Zich altijd den Heere en de Majesteit van het koningschap is in Vorst Messias eeuwig.

Als Hoofd der Gemeente heeft Hij dan ook, als resultaat van den arbeid Zijner ziel, de Geest ontvangen. Dien Hij uitzendt in Zijn lichaam. En de Geest blijft eeuwig in de gemeente wonen.

Hij is in haar uitgestort en vindt in haar Zijn arbeidsveld. Als de Heilige verbindt Hij op mystieke wijze het Hoofd aan het lichaam, zoowel als de leden onderling. Daarom is Hij dan ook de grootste gave, het schoonste bezit der heiligen. Dit kan nader omschreven worden, als de gave des Geestes waardoor er

een heiligende werking in al de heiligen voortdurend aanwezig is.

Die Geest van Christus wordt in de Schrift met verschillende namen genoemd. Hij is de groote Parakleet, Die tot ons spreekt, de gemeente troost, Die voor haar spreekt, bidt en haar heiligt. Hij is de Geest der Kennis, der Wijsheid, de Geest der Waarheid.

Zijn eerste werk is, dat der wedergeboorte. Hij zet het *ik* in Gods volk om, zoodat in plaats van den dood, het leven te voorschijn treedt. Dat is allereerst de groote hoofzaak, die dan ook verder de oorzaak is, van al hetgeen in de kinderen Gods tot stand wordt gebracht. Het Ik zelf wordt vernieuwd, zoodat het op een andere wijze gaat werken, anders *denkt*, anders *wil*, *begeert*, en *doet*.

Als de Trooster spreekt Hij dan tot mij, zoowel als voor mij en in nauw verband hiermede, leidt Hij de gemeente in alle Waarheid in. Hij schenkt dan ook verlichte oogen des verstands, zoodat *ik* Christus ken en belijd als mijn Heer en mijn God. En door Christus leidt Hij mij tot God, tot Gods Verbond der gemeenschap, zoodat dikwijls de kennis te wonderbaar is. Daartoe bedient Hij Zich in hoofzaak van het Woord, hetzij dat dit Woord wordt gelezen in de woning, of gepredikt in den eeredienst, in de gemeenschap der heiligen en het gebruik der Sacramenten—het is de Geest, Die de menigerlei middelen gebruikt, waardoor er opbouw en wasdom mogelijk is.

In nauw verband hiermede, doet Hij de gemeente dan ook alle dingen zien *bij het licht van Gods Woord*.

Dat nu, kan niemand u leeren, zelfs de geleerdste en meest gevierde prediker bezit die macht niet. Goed verstaan, *zóó* bezien is het waar, dat de gemeente geen leeraar van noode heeft, alsof zoude deze in staat zijn, het geestelijk goed der genade uit Christus haar te schenken. Neen, duizendmaal neen!! Schoon het tegelijkertijd waar blijft, dat de Geest den dienaar, den dienst des Woord en het geheel der genademiddelen wil gebruiken, tot den bloei van het lichaam van Christus, *en de gemeente daar aan bindt*.

Hieruit volgt, dat het daarom ook zeer zeker waar is, dat de wereld de gemeente niet leeren kan. Johannes wijst, in nauw verband met de anti-christen, die van hen uitgingen, daarop. Het lijdt immers geen twijfel, dat zij voor hun heengaan getracht hebben, hun valsche leer, aangaande den Christus, ingang te doen vinden in de gemeente? Doch dit gelukte niet. De gemeente bezit de potentie, de macht en het vermogen, om alle dingen te beoordeelen bij het licht der Goddelijke Waarheid. Hoe geslepen de valsche leer zich ook moge voordoen en hoe schijnbaar die leer ook op de Waarheid moge gelijken, doordat de Geest het uit het Woord onderwijst, haar gestadiglijk zalft, zij zijn in staat, om alle dingen te beoordeelen en de

juiste conclusie te trekken—beide, voor leer en leven.

Centraal beoordeelen zij alle dingen in het licht aangaande de belijdenis van den Christus en Zijn werk. Van God en Zijn Verbond en het werk des Geestes. Van wat Waarheid en leugen is. En nimmer kan dat Geestes-werk door eenig schepsel verbroken worden.

Meer nog.

Die Geest blijft hen gestadig onderwijzen, zoodat de gemeente hoe langer hoe meer ziet. De Kerk werpt zich tenslotte met alle levensvragen op het onwankelbaar getuigenis des Woords. Haar kan geen wereldsche wijsheid bekoren. Daar, in het Woord, ligt voor haar de vastheid in de beoordeeling van alle dingen. Daaruit heeft zij geleerd, om met en in alles, bij God te beginnen. En zij leert aldus zien, dat Hij het is, Die alles werkt in en door Christus, naar Zijn eeuwig Raadsbesluit. Daaruit heeft zij ook geleerd en neemt in die kennis hoe langer hoe meer toe, dat, zooals alle dingen uit en door Hem zijn, ook alle dingen zich richten op Hem, waarom dan ook Zijner de heerlijkheid en de kracht zijn tot in alle eeuwigheid. Ga nu maar eens rondom u zien, gemeente van Christus of er in de wereld iets of iemand is, die u leeren kan. Wat van beneden is, richt zich nooit naar boven, wat van de aarde is, blijft altijd in het aardse en vergankelijke hangen, het kan tot den Eeuwige niet opklommen. En wat uit de duisternis is, kan nooit u brengen tot het licht. Alles is ook in dezen absoluut, of men het wil of niet.

Daarom, en daarom alleen, kan niemand u leeren en zult gij er dan ook nooit de noodzakelijkheid van gevoelen. Veeleer huivert de gemeente, als men haar wil wijs maken, dat zij, voor de waarachtige kennis, de wereld van noode heeft.

Gelijk we zagen, de heiligen hebben den Heilige, die hen zalft, als een heiligend bezit. Hij onderwijst en kan alleen onderwijzen. Doch dit bezit is ook blijvend van duur.

Hij *blijft* in u.

Daarom is er in u een onafgebroken, zoowel als een onderhoudende, werking van den Geest van Christus Jezus. Die Geest, schoon Hij wel bedroefd kan worden, gaat nooit meer uit u weg. Het eens begonnen werk wordt onafgebroken voortgezet. Hij maakt ons hoe langer hoe meer profeten, die Gods Woord spreken, liefhebben, bewaren, uitdragen naar buiten en dat in tegenstelling met het woord van menschen, den duivel en de wereld. Hij maakt de kinderen Gods hoe langer hoe meer priesters, die den Heere en Zijn zaak gewijd zijn, alle dingen in Zijn dienst stellend en zich met alle dingen den Heere heiligen. Het wordt hoe langer hoe meer een volk dat wandelt in goede werken, jagende naar de volmaaktheid. En zij worden dan ook hoe langer hoe meer koningen, over wien de duivel en in wien de zonde niet langer meer heerschen, als

een ongebroken macht, uitzien met een heilig verlangen naar den dag, wanneer hun Hoofd zal terugkeeren en zij met Hem zullen regeeren over de werken van Gods handen: de nieuwe hemel en de nieuwe aarde, waarin gerechtigheid wonen zal.

Zij nemen toe in kennis, groeien in de heiligmaking en heerschen over de zonde, door de genade des Geestes.

Dat beteekent dan ook, dat die zalving des Geestes, die in hen blijft, daarom ook een werking is, die naar haar karakter vrijmakend is. Het is een vrijmakende werking, want de ware vrijheid, mogelijk alleen door den band des Geestes, wordt gekenmerkt, doordat de gemeente gebracht wordt onder de gehoorzaamheid van Jezus Christus, dat is, de gebondenheid aan het Woord Gods alleen. Dat alleen is de ware vrijheid. Steeds wordt zij door die zalving meer en meer verlost van de zonde en haar trekkingen, rijker in de kennis en in de genade, sterker in haar willen en denken en begeeren, machtiger in haar overwinnen van de zonde.

Hoe lang?

Totdat de Heilige den Heiligen volkomen geheilgd heeft.

Totdat de volmaaktheid bereikt is.

Nu nog het Woord, de Ambten, de Bediening, de Sacramenten—straks volkomen in het eeuwige koninkrijk, als God zal zijn alles en in allen.

W. V.

UNDERNEATH

I need not fear, since One is with me

Who can quiet all alarms;

I need not fear, for underneath me

Are "the everlasting arms."

Always the arms are there, outreaching,

Strong to succor and uphold,

And, should I fall, would bear me upward,

In their warm embrace enfold.

What comfort does this thought afford me!

What assurance, to believe,

When my frail arms can hold no longer,

His are waiting to receive!

Eternal God, Thou art my refuge!

Mine is now the rest of faith,

For whatsoever can befall me,

Thy strong arms are underneath.

Making Friends

Such is the brief topic assigned to me for this essay. However, though the topic is brief, it is pregnant with meaning. For "making friends" is a beautiful activity but also a very difficult art.

To see this it is necessary that we have a correct conception of what constitutes a true friend. Who is our true friend? What characterizes him? First of all he resembles us. In a sense he is our equal. There is affinity between him and us. For, "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" Amos 3:3. And this affinity between us and our friend is not merely psychological, but above all spiritual. Spiritually we live out of the same principle, we fight the same enemy and we have the same goal.

Moreover, our true friend also loves us. For of Jonathan a genuine friend of David, we read, "Jonathan loved David as his own soul". Friendship without love is inconceivable. And this love of our friend does not consist merely in this, that he feels attached to us and has a certain affection for us, but it is a spiritual bond which reveals itself in that he seeks our highest good, which is heaven. Never is he that seeks our downfall our friend, regardless whether he does such intentionally or unintentionally. Everyone that seeks our ruin and helps us along on the road to destruction is always our enemy. Our friend is only he that has as his goal our eternal good.

Finally, our friend reveals to us edifying thoughts out of a pure heart. For again we read that God, Who is the Friend of His people, reveals to them His secrets. Gen. 19:17, 18; Ps. 25:14. Thus it is also with our human friend. To us he makes known the thoughts of his heart which he would reveal to none other. And these thoughts which he reveals to us are of an edifying nature. They are not vain, filthy and evil, for then they would be detrimental to our soul and he would not be our friend. But they are thoughts which proceed from a heart that is pure and, therefore, by them we are greatly benefited.

Since the nature of a true friend is such, it is evident that to have such friends is an invaluable privilege and a power for good in our lives. For such friends we have a crying need. However, according to our subject, if we are to have such friends, they must first be "made". This suggests that we live in an unfriendly world, a world in which we have no friends by virtue of our natural birth. And such is very truly the case, by nature you and I stand without a friend in the world. And not only are others not friends in regard to us, but neither are we friends in regard to others. By nature we are enemies of God and enemies of one another.

I know, it does not always seem that way, but such,

nevertheless, is reality. For it is true there are many ungodly men that are capable of giving us a friendly smile and a warm reception, and that seek our co-operation in the different spheres of life. Apparently they have our advancement at heart. And frequently they also appear eager to become intimate with us and to reveal to us the secrets and thoughts of their hearts. Seemingly they are our friends. But, even so, we must not be misled, the appearance of things is often very deceiving. Our highest good the natural men will never seek. To do so never enters his mind, for of it he is an enemy. He seeks only himself, everywhere and always. Hence, though outwardly he pretends to be seeking our good, inwardly he is seeking self. And of this he can never rid himself. Moreover, even though he is willing to confide in us and make known to us the plans and secrets of his heart, his doing so can only be an evil influence in our life, for his heart is evil, filled with enmity. Therefore that which proceeds from his heart must needs create an unhealthy atmosphere for our souls. The conclusion can, therefore, not be escaped, by nature we are friendless. Friends, to be sure, must be made.

How can this be accomplished? Only in one way. This does not mean, however, that the attempt is never made to establish a friendship in any other way. Fact is, also the ungodly has his own peculiar conception of a friend and the manner in which this friend must be made. He, also, seeks a friend, though it is true, he does not seek a true friend. The reason is evident. Man was originally created a Covenant creature, in the image of God, in order that he might live in fellowship with God and his neighbour. To this life of fellowship his entire being was adapted. Because of this, also natural man seeks companionship. It is true, of course, the Fall has greatly changed his nature, but not in such a way that man became an independent creature desiring to live alone. Rather it left him in a formal sense a friend-seeking creature, but it made him blind for the value and need of a true friend, so that instead of seeking friendship in the sphere of light with God and the righteous he seeks it in the sphere of darkness with Satan and men of unrighteousness. But the company of others he must seek. That lies in his very nature. Moreover, the natural man also realizes that to exist and maintain himself he is in need of others. It is his desire to enjoy life, to increase his goods and to make himself a name. If this desire is to be realized, however, he must not live independently, for he is in need of the help of others. Hence, realizing this and feeling to home only in the company of the ungodly, he seeks to establish a friendship with men of darkness.

But the world strives to accomplish this in a foolish and evil way, for in their attempt to make friends they refuse to reckon with God. As in all

things, so also in their striving for friendship, the world refuses to confess that salvation is from God alone. It is their desire to make friends without God and without Christ. Therefore they ignore the fact that, so long as man has enmity in his heart, it is impossible to make friends and that this heart can be changed only by the grace of God. The result is that with war in their hearts they set out to make friends in their own strength. But they soon discover that, if they are to be successful to any extent, the enmity in man's heart must be restrained and concealed. Hence, in the attempt to curb this enmity, they use various artificial means, and in the effort to hide it, they display a false smile, they pretend to bless, and they boast that they seek their neighbour's good.

Because of this deceiving outward appearance, natural man oft succeeds in temporarily establishing so-called friendships, societies and various organizations. Yet, even so, his friend-making must be appraised as being a total failure, for these friendships often are not lasting. They are bonds uniting self-seeking men, therefore as soon as this selfishness comes to the fore, these friendships suffer shipwreck. And the result is more enmity and divorce, murder and war. Moreover, these friendships of the world, even while they last, are but a sham. True friendship is characterized by love, but enmity characterizes the friendship of the world, for each seeks his own advancement and unto that end the cooperation of his neighbour. Hence, the fiery heart of friendship is lacking in the friendships of the world. Lastly, these friendships have an evil influence and so become a means unto death. In these various friendships natural man is given the opportunity to reveal the evil and corruption of his wicked heart. This he does and so contaminates the life of his neighbour. Thus the friendships of the world become a means to advance man on the road to eternal doom. Hence, the necessity that Israel dwell alone.

It is evident, therefore, that the world's way of making friends is deceiving. What may then be the true way? How may we be successful? If we are ever to succeed at all, it is first of all necessary, that another friend first make a friend of us. By nature, we ourselves are enemies and, so long as enmity reigns in our hearts, we are incapable of even desiring to make others our friends, this enmity must first be dethroned and replaced by love. This we ourselves are not able to do, another friend must do it for us, and the only Friend able to do it is God. He first, as our Friend, must make us His friend, before we can make others our friends. But for that same reason, if we are to make others our friends, God must first make them friends also by dethroning the enmity in their

hearts, for also they by nature are enemies. Except God do such, all effort on our part to make them our friends will be in vain. God does this by His Spirit and Word.

This work of God has as its fruit that in principle we love one another, we seek one another's eternal good and it is our delight, to exchange with one another, edifying thoughts out of pure hearts. In principle it becomes our desires to have and to make true friends. This does not mean, however, that thus perfection has been attained, and that, henceforth, we shall always be perfect friends. Rather the contrary is the case. Fact is, only in principle has enmity been dethroned and replaced by love. And with this small principle of love in our hearts we live in a world which offers us our old friendship at the expense of the new. Hence, if by the grace of God we are not on our guard, so that we live out of the new principle of love and walk in the light, we will not experience the joy of the fellowship of saints. In the measure that we are unfaithful enmity and disorder shall be found among us. Therefore we must fight against the old principle of enmity, in ourselves, in our friend, in the world; and we must walk in the light out of the principle of love. And our weapons? They must not be our own, but God's, namely, His Word and Spirit.

And the outcome? Will this way of making friends prove successful? It will not, so far as making friends with the world is concerned. For if we seek to make friends in this way only, the ungodly will reveal themselves as being our enemies. They will hate and despise us and possibly even persecute us. Is our method then not deceptive? No, this proves that it is right. For we live in a world in which God has willed and placed the antithesis. Hence, when the children of light walk in the light, the children of darkness always reveal themselves as being darkness. Therefore, since this way of making friends will also bear this fruit, we have the assurance that it is God's way, and God's way is always right. But the positive fruit will be that we will be united in a bond of true fellowship with the people of God. Disorder will then decrease among us and we will enjoy a sweet foretaste of the perfect fellowship of saints. And, what is even more, we will enjoy the favor of our God, for where love abides the Lord commends His blessing.

P. V.

BEFORE I SLEEP TONIGHT

Before I sleep tonight,
 I must review the day—
 If I have erred in any wise,
 For God's forgiveness pray;
 I must be clean in His pure sight
 Before I sleep tonight.

Christian Discipline In Education

It is with some diffidence that I undertake the task of discussing the question of discipline in the field of education. For this subject is the most serious, the most comprehensive in its range, of all the problems of education. Discipline is by far the most important element in the education of our children. We can conceive of a school without buildings, without equipment, without books; but we cannot conceive of a true school without discipline. Besides, these are days when we are not only told that the problem of discipline has been completely and finally solved, but one is laughed at when mentioning discipline, particularly when we extend the connotation of the word to its severest terms.

We live in days of so-called "self-expression" which practically eliminates all discipline. The child may express himself as he sees fit and reap the bitter or the sweet of his actions, which in turn is disciplinary. Absolute authority is definitely unknown and positively unwanted. They, on the other hand, who may as yet still cherish the idea of authority, exercise some form of discipline following the so-called "Mode of Appeal to Personal Interest", or the more modern "Mode of Social Consciousness", which at best are purely humanitarian, and at heart are governed by the evil motive of self-gratification.

Christian discipline, on the other hand, may not and can never be motivated by selfish or humanitarian interests. It is in no sense related first of all to man, but to Christ, for it is CHRISTIAN discipline, and through Him to God, as will become evident in the discussion of this subject. From the outset it is well to bear in mind that the motive and purpose, the very heart of all that which is Christian is GOD. Therefore, the motive and purpose of all Christian discipline, too, is God.

In treating Christian Discipline in Education it is pertinent to the subject, to understand with some degree of exactness just where education stands as a force in the world. In other words, the nature and extent of school's authority can only be determined by the relation of the school to the child, to the home, the church, the world, and above all to God. More simple still, what is the purpose of the school? Upon this point depends the whole question of school authority, and this authority determines school discipline, for the latter is rooted in and empowered by the former. Hence, the relation of the school to God and man determines its discipline.

The educators of the public school system unhesitatingly teach that the school finds its authority in the state, or government. If asked, what then is the state, the answer is: "It is, an economical device by

which men unite to effect certain desirable ends, an organization seeking the advantage of its members." Therefore, F. M. Morehouse writes in his book, *The Discipline of the School*, quote: "it, (the state) has taken over the business of formal education from the home. . . . because the state can do the work more effectively and more economically. . . . and we call this department of the state the School System." Properly speaking, the public school is a part of the state. Further, he goes on to say: "Therefore the parents have no inherent right whatever to dictate to the school what its methods shall be. Teachers are responsible, not to the parents, but directly to the state."

From this reasoning of Francis Morehouse we may easily conclude what he establishes as the *purpose* of the school. We read in the same book, quote: "This world of the school is organized by society for the benefit of the children, that they may be able to benefit society in turn, and be themselves happier for what they learn there. The teachers are in the school for the purpose of helping them to become intelligent, happy, helpful. All that makes boys and girls intelligent, happy and helpful in the school is *right*, and therefore *permissible*." (I underscore, A. C.)

How thoroughly unchristian, how absolutely contrary to all Scripture is this reasoning. First of all this conception of government is unscriptural. At this time let it be a sufficient reminder that, "there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." Rom. 13). The rulers are no servants of society, but of God, to Him they are responsible. This error of the author of said book naturally leads to the second fallacy, namely, that the source of authority is vested in society, the majority of mankind, the greatest number of sinful men. This philosophy is, of course, rooted in: "ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil". Thus man dictates what is right and what is wrong, and usurps the throne of God who alone is sovereign, who alone is the source of all authority. Such faulty reasoning can only mean that all discipline in such school systems is thoroughly wicked, no matter which mode they may choose to adopt.

How diverse in character will Christian discipline be to that of the world when educating the child. The christian cannot and will not concede the school, the education of his child to the state. He maintains the school as a branch of the home, for the child does not belong to the state but to the parent. Since the child is of father and mother, they alone are responsible for its education.

According to christian principles this responsibility of the parent can in no wise be transferred to other shoulders. This shifting of responsibility is impossible because the parent is not *sovereign* owner of the

child. In the truest sense of the word the child is God's child, His sovereign property. Therefore the relation of the parent to God and to the child is that of stewardship. Hence, God gives His children to the care and keeping, to the education and training of the parent, who in turn is always responsible, not to the state, but to God.

In giving these children to earthly parents God causes the child to become a part of the world, a unit of His creation, of which Scripture testifies: "The Lord hath made all things for Himself". Hence, the relation of these children to all things, as well as the relation of all things to these children is the honor and glory of our Sovereign God. Therefore, the relation of the parent to the child, and that of the school thru the parent, is one grand relation of glory and eternal praise to God. This is quite a different story than: "This world of the school is organized by society for the benefit of the children, that they may benefit society in turn."

The responsibility, as well as the right and power which God gave to the parent to train the child, and thus promote the glory of God, is all expressed in that meaningful and beautiful word, "authority". This word is derived from the noun, "auctor", signifying one whose duty it is to promote the growth and prosperity of a certain cause. Our word, "auctioneer" is derived from the same word, denoting one who must promote the increase of bids on property. Hence, from this we glean that one in authority is a person who has the legal and rightful power to promote the prosperity of a cause by means of command. Such a person has a four-fold duty: firstly, he must see to it that the cause is brought under way; secondly, he must assign to everyone related to that cause his or her specific duty; thirdly, he must call the last named into account; finally, he must reward the faithful and punish the unfaithful.

This discharge of duties, on the part of the one in authority, is called, "discipline". The root of this word literally means, to teach, to instruct, to order. From the root of this word, too, the noun, disciple, is derived, denoting one who is taught or receives instruction. When we extend the connotation of the word discipline to its severest terms it denotes control which is gained by enforcing obedience and order by means of chastisement. These duties of authority or discipline, relative to the child, God has laid upon the parent and upon the parent only.

When speaking of christian discipline in education we do not mean that the authority of the parent at home is transferred to the teacher in school. Authority is not transferable. In school, too, it is still the parent who has authority, but here he exercises it through the teacher. Hence, the teacher is responsible to the parent, and through the parent to God.

For the teacher this means that she may not conduct her school on the basis of appealing to the personal interest of the child, nor by making the child conscious of his social obligations. Neither may she permit the child to express himself in words or actions as he sees fit and leave the results of these actions become disciplinary. But she must hold before the child his divine calling in relation to God, to man and all things. She must prompt the child to learn and realize the seriousness of this calling. She must equip him so that he may be able to discharge his duties faithfully. She must demand that the child accept this teaching and be disposed to being so taught. She must call him into account for his performance of these duties and faithfully reward or punish him, as the case may demand.

This task of the teacher is not an easy one. Were the child one of a pure, holy nature her duties would be simplified, then her teaching would merely assume the form of leadership and guidance. But now the child she deals with is one conceived and born in sin, perverse by nature, hating God and His laws. The result is that the teacher will always again collide with the child's obstinacy. Because this obstinacy is sin the teacher may not compromise, but demand obedience and compel the child to obey. Never may she use the hit-or-miss method, whereby she casts about aimlessly, trying first one remedy and then another, in the vague hope that she may find one pleasing to the child. She may use but one method and that only, namely, "thus saith the Lord".

This does not infer that the teacher be cruel or harsh and inculcate fear into the child. When a child is frightened into obedience two evils have occurred: the child has lost sight of true obedience and the teacher has lost love to anger. But it does mean that in true christian love to the child, which is the bond of perfectness, she hold before him, with firm resolve and determination, the keeping of God's law, for, "His commandments are not grievous and in keeping them there is a great reward".

A. C.

LORD, WRITE THY LAW

Lord, write Thy law upon my heart
 In letters deeply graven,
 So Thy great peace shall e'er be mine,
 And greater peace of heaven.