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MEDITATIE

De Steen Met Zeven Oogen

Toen betuigde de Engel des Heeren Jozua, zeggende: Zoo zegt de Heere der heirscharen: Indien gij in Mijne wegen zult wandelen, en indien gij Mijne wacht zult waarnemen, zoo zult gij ook Mijn huis richten, en ook Mijne voorhoven bewaren; en Ik zal u wandelingen geven onder de gegenen, die hier staan. Hoor nu toe, Jozua, gij hoogepriester! gij en uwe vrienden, die voor uw aangezicht zitten, want zij zijn een wonderteeiken; want, ziet, Ik zal Mijn Knecht, de Spruite, doen komen. Want ziet, aangaande dien steen, welken Ik gelegd heb voor het aangezicht van Jozua, op dien eenen steen zullen zeven oogen wezen; ziet, Ik zal zijn graveerscl graveeren, spreekt de Heere der heirscharen, en Ik zal de ongerechtigheid dezes lands op eenen dag wegnemen. Te dien dage, spreekt de Heere der heirscharen, zult gijlieden een iegelijk zijnen naaste noodigen tot onder den wijnstok en tot onder den vijgeboom.

Zach. 3:6-10.

Hoe kan 't bestaan?

Die vraag moest wel opkomen bij den profeet, en straks ook bij Jozua den hoogepriester, bij verder nadenken over 't gezicht pas den ziener getoond.

De hoogepriester Israels was tegengestaan in 't gericht Gods door den verklager der broederen. De Satan had zijn veroordeeling en zijn afzetting uit het hoogepriesterambt geëischt. Hij had gewezen op Jozua's vuile kleederen en zich beroepen op het recht Gods.

En ziet nu, de Satan was gescholden, de Heere had Jozua's vuile kleederen van hem laten afnemen, hem

reine en sierlijke kleederen laten aantrekken, een vorstelijken priesterhoed op zijn hoofd laten zetten, en tot hem gezegd: "Ik heb uwe ongerechtigheid van u weggenomen!" Inplaats van verdoemenis was er rechtvaardigmaking; inplaats van afzetting was er verhooring gekomen! Israels hoogepriester had tegenover Satan het pleit gewonnen!

Doch hoe was het mogelijk?

Hoe kon dit alles in Gods gericht bestaan?

Die vuile hoogepriesterlijke kleederen waren dan toch maar werkelijkheid! Het hoogepriesterschap onder Israel was immers werkelijk door vele en vuile zonden verontreinigd. Hoe kon God dan naar recht den hoogepriester in zijn ambt handhaven en hem zelfs verhoogen?

Hoe kan 't bestaan?

En het antwoord komt in de woorden dezer meditatie.

't Woord Gods vergezelt, verklarend, het gezicht, dat Zacharia was getoond.

Alleen als teekenen, als wonderteekenen, konden Jozua en zijne priesters worden gehandhaafd. Teekenen waren ze van de Spruite, Dien de Heere zou verwekken, en van hetgeen de Heere door die Spruite tot stand zou brengen.

Die Spruite is Zijn Knecht!

Zijn Vriend-knecht bij uitnemendheid, staande in en voor Zijn Verbond, over 't gansche Huis, aan de spitse van Zijn volk.

In en door die Spruite zal de Heere een wonderlijken steen leggen, met zeven oogen, sierlijk gegraveerd door Goddelijke hand.

Gods Huis zal gebouwd worden.

De ongerechtigheid des lands zal op een dag worden weggenomen. En eeuwige vrede zal heerschen onder Gods volk.

In de Spruite zal 't bestaan!

Wonderlijke Steen!

De verbazing wekkend der toeschouwers, als hij van God gelegd wordt tot een hoofd des hoeks.

Door dezen steen wordt zeker allereerst in histo-

rischen zin bedoeld op den hoeksteen van den tweeden tempel. Op allerlei wijze is door verklaarders de vraag beantwoord, wat toch wel de beteekenis van dezen wonderlijken steen mag zijn. Sommigen zien in hem eenvoudig den hoeksteen van den tweeden tempel zonder meer; anderen verklaren hem als afbeeldend het koninkrijk Gods; weer anderen zien in hem een beeld van den steen, die de plaats innam van de ark des verbonds na de ballingschap; terwijl nog anderen meenen, dat er door bedoeld wordt een kostelijken steen in de borstlap van den hoogepriester. Doch naar de Schrift kan er geen twijfel aan bestaan, dat het allereerst de hoeksteen is van den tweeden tempel, echter niet zonder meer, maar zooals deze bewerkt zal worden, schoon en heerlijk, levend en sierlijk zal worden gemaakt door Goddelijk genadewonder, om eeuwiglijk te dienen als de uiterste Hoeksteen, waarop Gods eeuwig Huis zal worden gebouwd.

Immers wordt er van dezen steen gezegd, dat hij *gelegd* wordt. En alleen fundamentsteenen legt men. Meer nog. Er wordt van hem gezegd, dat de Heere hem reeds *gelegd had*, en dat wel voor het aangezicht van Jozua den hoogepriester. En dat wijst op een historisch feit in het verleden. De grond, het fundament van den tweeden tempel was reeds gelegd (Ezra 3), weliswaar door middel van de bouwlieden, maar toch als een werk des Heeren.

Maar deze hoeksteen zou heerlijk worden!

Het zal een wonderlijke steen worden, door Gods hand zelf gegraveerd, waarop zeven oogen zullen zijn. Daarom is deze Steen in profetischen zin de Christus, de uiterste Hoeksteen van Gods eeuwig Huis, Zijne Kerk. Zijn tabernakel bij de menschen, Zijn eeuwig vriendschapsverbond. Van dezen Steen hadden de Schriften immers reeds gesproken. Het is de steen, dien de bouwlieden verworpen hadden, maar geworden is tot een hoofd des hoeks, Ps. 118:22; het is tegelijkertijd de steen des aanstoots en de rots der ergernis, waarvan gesproken was in Jes. 8:14; de grondsteen in Sion, de beproefde steen, de kostelijke steen, die wel vast gegrondvest is, genoemd in Jes. 28:16. En deze steen is zeker Christus, zooals blijkt uit Matt. 21:42, Rom. 9:33, I Pet. 2:6. De steen door den Heere gelegd als de grondsteen van den tweeden tempel voor het aangezicht van Jozua, den hoogepriester, zou zijn eeuwige realizeering straks vinden in *de* uiterste Hoeksteen van Gods ewigen tabernakel!

Zeven oogen zullen dan op dezen steen zijn!

Het oog is beeld van licht, van waarachtige kennis, en daarom van leven. Het is beeld van physisch licht: de kaars des lichaams is het oog, waardoor het geheele lichaam verlicht wordt. Door het oog nemen we de wereld rondom ons waar. Het is beeld ook van natuurlijk licht, het licht der rede, des verstands, waardoor we ziende zien en de natuurlijke dingen verstaan. En het is beeld van geestelijk licht, de waarachtige, geestelijke kennis der liefde Gods, het eeuwige leven van

Gods vriendschapsverbond, waardoor we ingaan in de heilgeheimen Gods. Dit volle, rijke, eeuwige leven van Gods Verbond wordt hier bedoeld. Immers zijn er zeven oogen. En zeven is het getal van Gods verbond. Weliswaar is het ook symbool van de volmaking van Gods werk, van Zijn eeuwig koninkrijk, van de eeuwige sabbat, de ruste, die het loon is op de zesdaagse worsteling, en die er overblijft voor het volk van God. Het is dit als zes plus één. Maar het is ook drie plus vier, God en het schepsel, en als zoodanig is het getal zeven symbool van de gemeenschap van Gods eeuwig verbond, het waarachtige, eeuwige, vol'e, hemelsche leven!

Dat leven is in dezen Steen!

Want, als hier staat, dat er zeven oogen op dezen steen zijn, dan is de bedoeling, dat de oogen bij den steen zijn, in hem zijn. Ze zijn de oogen van den steen. Wel heeft men gemeend, dat de uitdrukking zoo verklaard moet worden, dat zeven oogen op den steen gericht zijn, naar hem zien. Doch in de eerste plaats pleit de beteekenis van de Hebreeuwsche prepositie hier gebruikt voor de verklaring, dat deze oogen bij den steen behooren. En in de tweede plaats heeft immers ook het Lam, dat staat als geslacht, naar Openb. 5:6, zeven oogen.

De Steen is dus de levende Christus, het vleeschgeworden Woord, die gestorven is en opgewekt in heerlijkheid, die verhoogd en verheerlijkt is aan de rechterhand des Vaders, die den Geest heeft ontvangen en de levendmakende Geest is geworden. . . .

De levende Hoeksteen van Gods levenden tempel!

Geworden tot een hoofd des hoeks!

Uitstralende door heel den tempel het volle leven Gods!

Wonderlijke steen!

God legt lezen steen!

Hij heeft hem gelegd voor het aangezicht van Jozua.

En Hij zal hem blijven leggen, sierlijk maken, graveeren met eigen hand, tot hij gansch volmaakt is.

En Hij doet dit in en door de Spruite, Zijnen Knecht, Dien Hij zal doen komen!

Van deze Spruite wist de profeet, had ook Jozua kennis; op Zijne komst hoopen ook de vromen onder Israel. Van Hem hadden de profeten vóór de ballingschap reeds gesproken. De Heere zou immers David een rechtvaardige Spruit verwekken, en Zijn Naam zou zijn: De Heere onze gerechtigheid, Jer. 23:5, 6; en Hij zou recht en gerechtigheid doen op de aarde, Jer. 33:15. Een Rijsje zou voortkomen uit den afgehouden tronk van Isaï, en een scheut zou uit. Zijne wortelen opschieten, Jes. 11:1, 2. Hij was geteekend als opgeschoten als een rijsje voor Zijn aangezicht en als een wortel uit een dorre aarde, Jes. 53:2.

En juist dit, dat het zóó voorspeld was, dat deze Spruite een *spruite* was, een rijsje, dat opschoot als een wortel uit een dorre aarde, was voor Gods volk uit

die dagen, toen er immers van Davids heerlijkheid schier niets was overgebleven, tot rijken troost!

't Leek ontzettend donker!

De vervulling der belofte scheen schier onmogelijk!

Maar immers, zoo luidde de profetie: een spruite, een rijsje, een wortel uit een dorre aarde, een rijsje uit een afgehouden tronk. Hij zou nog zeker komen, de Spruite Davids, de Heere onze gerechtigheid!

Dóór Hem zal deze sierlijke Steen gelegd worden tot een hoofd des hoeks van Gods levenden tempel. En Hij is ook Zelf de Steen! Immers is Hij de Knecht des Heeren, de Vriend Gods bij uitnemendheid, de Medewerker Gods in het bouwen van Gods Huis, en ook wordt Gods Huis in Hem en op Hem gebouwd!

God legt dezen Steen en maakt Hem sierlijk, en in het leggen en sierlijk maken van den Steen werkt Deze Zelf mede!

Zoo toch is het in Gods eeuwigen raad! De Drieëenige God, Vader, Zoon en Heilige Geest, verordineert den Zoon tot Hoofd en Borg en Middelaar, tot Vriendknecht van Jehova, om Gods Huis te bouwen, en om te worden de uiterste Hoeksteen, waarop het geheele gebouw zal worden opgetrokken, en Die het ook zal optrekken in den Naam des Heeren!

Zoo is het in den tijd!

De Heere maakt den Steen sierlijk en heerlijk, en dat door het werk van Zijnen Knecht. Hij doet dit door het Wonder der wonderen, de vleeschwording des Woords, want de Vader zendt den Zoon, en de Zoon neemt ons vleesch en bloed aan door den Geest! Hij doet dit door het kruis, want God doet alle onze ongerechtigheden op Hem aanloopen, en stort de violen van Zijn rechtvaardigen toorn over Hem uit aan 't vreeselijke kruis; en de Knecht des Heeren gaat vrijwilliglijk, in de gehoorzaamheid der liefde Gods, den dood in, zoekt om Gods wil de hel, daalt er in neder; en daar in de hel zegt Hij nog: "Het is Mijne spijs den wil des Vaders te doen"! God was in Christus de wereld met Zichzelf verzoenende. . . .

En 't werk gaat voort!

Het welbehagen des Heeren gaat door de hand van dezen Knecht gelukkiglijk voort!

God graveert den Steen, tot Hij gansch sierlijk is!

Want Hij wordt opgewekt in heerlijkheid! De zwakteit des vleeschs maakt plaats voor de kracht des Geestes. De gelijkheid des zondigen vleeschs wordt verwisseld met het heerlijke beeld des hemelschen. Het sterfelijke doet onsterfelijkheid aan, het verderfelijke onverderfelijkheid. . . .

En nog altijd graveert God voort aan den Steen!

Want Hij wordt opgenomen in de hoogste hemelen, wordt verhoogd boven alle macht en kracht en heerschappij, en allen naam, die genaamd wordt, in deze wereld en in de toekomst. . . .

En Hij wordt de levendmakende Geest!

Dan komt Hij in dien Geest weer, en wordt gelegd tot een Hoofd des hoeks!

De Steen met zeven oogen!

't Is geschied! En wij zien uit naar Zijn eindelijke openbaring in heerlijkheid!

Looft den Heere, mijne ziel!

Wees maar gerust, Jozua, en gij, zijne medepriesters!

Aarzel niet om de reine en sierlijke kleederen, door God in 't visioen u aangetrokken, te dragen!

't Kan wel bestaan!

Want gij zijt teekenen, wonderteekenen Gods, teekenen van de Spruite, van de Knecht des Heeren, Dien de Heere zal doen komen, en door Wien Hij Zijn wonderwerk, den Steen met zeven oogen zal volmaken! Draagt gerust uw reine kleederen, o, hoogepriester! Zet uw vorstelijke hoed niet af! Geloof maar gerust, dat de Heere den Satan in het gericht heeft gescholden, en dat gij gerechtvaardigd zijt, Immers die sierlijkheid en heerlijkheid, die reinheid en gerechtigheid, zijn niet de uwe, maar van den Steen met zeven oogen, en gij bezit ze slechts als wonderteekenen Gods!

Bedient gerust uw ambt, gij Jozua en uwe medepriesters!

Gij moogt des Heeren wacht waarnemen, Zijn huis richten, Zijne voorhoven bewaren, wanneer gij namelijk vrome priesters zijt, die in des Heeren wegen wandelen, en getrouw de wacht betrekken bij Zijn huis. Want de goddeloozen hebben hier niets aan, hebben geen vrede, zegt God, ook niet bij het schoonste visioen, en bij de rijkste beloften. Maar dient gij slechts als wonderteekenen der Spruite, teekenen voor heel het volk van het wonder der genade, de Steen met zeven oogen.

Totdat Hij komt!

Dan moogt ge ophouden teekenen te zijn!

Want dan komt de realizeering, én van Gods Huis, én van den Steen, én van het hoogepriesterschap, én van Gods eeuwig vriendschapsverbond! En dan zult ge in de heerlijkheid van dezen Steen deelen, niet meer als teekenen, maar als afschijnsels en toonbeelden van Zijne genade. Zijn sierlijkheid wordt dan eeuwiglijk uwe sierlijkheid, Zijne gerechtigheid uwe gerechtigheid, Zijn leven uw leven. Want Hij zal u wandelingen geven onder "degenen, die hier staan", onder de engelen, die thans uwe vuile kleederen hebben afgenomen, in 't heiligdom van Gods eeuwig Huis, de hemelsche gemeenschap der vriendschap. . . .

Op één dag is immers alle ongerechtigheid weggenomen!

En de eeuwige vrede is neergedaald op het Land, zoodat een iegelijk zijn naaste zal noodigen tot onder wijnstok en vijgeboom!

Het leven van den zevenoogigen Steen doorstraalt heel de nieuwe schepping!

De tabernakel Gods is bij de menschen!

O, eeuwige vrede!

H. H.

EDITORIALS

Zelfs In Dien Lompen Vorm

III.

Een volgende uitdrukking, die door de bekende twee Westersche heeren aan Ds. Zwier werd opgezonden en door dezen in "De Wachter" gepubliceerd, is: "De Heere doet aan al'en goed, ook als hij den goddelooze in de hel werpt".

Ds. Zwier is het eens met de heeren, die deze verklaring hem toezonden, dat, wie zoo spreekt, een ketter is van het ergste soort.

Hij ontkent, wat in bovenstaande verklaring uitgedrukt is.

Hij leert precies het tegenovergestelde.

Te zeggen, dat God den goddelooze in de hel werpt, is een vreeselijke leer verkondigen; en wie daar ook nog aan toevoegt, dat God, als Hij dat doet, ook nog goed doet, moet wel als een ketter van het zuiverste water worden verworpen. Zoo leert Zwier. En daartegenover leert hij, dat God allen menschen goedgunstig is, ook alle goddeloozen, dat Hij ze gaarne allen willen redden en tot bekeering leiden; dat, indien ze toch in de hel terecht komen, het resultaat van Gods pogingen niet aan Zijne bedoeling beantwoordt, en dat het daarom vreeselijk is te zeggen van dien allen goddeloozen goedertieren God, dat Hij den goddelooze in de hel werpt en hem daarin goed doet.

Nu zal ook bovenstaande uitdrukking wel een weinig verandering ondergaan zijn, sedert ze uit den mond van een onzer leeraren kwam. We herinneren ons, dat de heer Stuursma alleen haar eerst heeft opgeteekend, later de handteekening van zijn schoonzoon verkrijgend, en dat ze bovendien niet eerder dan ongeveer twee jaren nadat ze door den leeraar werd gebruikt door hem opgeschreven werd.

Ze zal dus wel een beetje verdraaid zijn. Wie weet, of de betrokken leeraar niet gezegd heeft: "De Heere doet altijd goed, ook als Hij den goddelooze in de hel werpt"? Of iets dergelijks. Eén woordje maakt soms zoo'n groot verschil.

Daarin ligt juist de kracht van zulk gelaster. En als "De Wachter" dan tien van zulke verdraaide uitdrukkingen in één adem noemt, dan kan Ds. Zwier daardoor best zijn doel bereiken en maken heel wat indruk. En dan doet hij domme en onnoozele menschen, die niet verder zien dan hun neus (in dit geval "De Wachter") lang is, aan hun vrienden schrijven: "och, wat verkondigen die Hoeksema's toch een vreeselijke leer!"

Maar ook maakt het groot verschil, zooa's ieder wel verstaat, of eene uitdrukking in haar verband gelaten

of uit haar verband gerukt wordt. En ik ben bezig om aan te toonen, dat er voor de door Ds. Zwier gepubliceerde verklaringen best een verband denkbaar is, waarin ze zelfs geen schijn van ketterij meer vertoonen.

Ik stel mij dan voor, dat ik de uitdrukking *zelfs in den lompen vorm*, waarin ze door Ds. Zwier werd aanbevolen, in het volgende verband zou kunnen bezigen.

"Mijne hoorders!

"De Heere is aan allen goed, en Zijne barmhertigheden zijn over al Zijne werken. Zoo leert ons de Schrift in Ps. 145:9.

"Wanneer vele verklaarders der Schrift, met name zij, die niets moeten hebben van de gereformeerde leer der souvereine predestinatie, dat woordje *allen* ontmoeten in Gods Woord, dan willen ze beslist niet weten van eenige beperking van het begrip daardoor aangeduid. Allen is nu eenmaal *allen*, zoo zeggen ze. Het maakt hun niet uit, of ge al opmerkt, dat de doorlopende leer der Schrift niet toelaat, dat ge overal maar dat woord verklaart als beteekende *alle menschen* hoofd voor hoofd en ziel voor ziel; ze geven er niet om, indien ge hun aantoon, dat het verband, waarin dit woordje voorkomt, gewoonlijk eene beperking eischt. Allen beteekent eenvoudig *alle menschen*. Als de Schrift leert, dat God wil, dat *alle* menschen zalig worden, dan verklaren ze dit woord alsof het in geen verband stond. Als de Schrift zegt, dat God lankmoedig is over *ons*, niet willende, dat eenigen verloren gaan, maar dat ze allen tot bekeering komen, dan rekenen ze noch met het verband, noch met de gedachte van den tekst, noch met dat woordje *ons*, maar verklaren ook hier het woord *allen*, als doelende op alle menschen zonder onderscheid.

"Zoo heb ik eens een beroemd Amerikaansch predikant hooren preeken over Joh. 12:32: "En Ik, zoo wanneer Ik van de aarde zal verhoogd zijn, zal hen al'en tot Mij trekken". Hij sprak voor een gemengd gehoor, waarvan hij wel kon vermoeden, niet alleen, dat er onder hen waren, die de gereformeerde leer beleden, maar ook, dat velen van hen wel bekwaam waren om de Schrift uit te leggen. Hij sprak van elf tot twaalf en om klokslag twaalf hield hij altijd op. Hij scheen lang te aarzelen, om zijn gedachten te geven over dat woordje *allen* in den tekst. Hij gevoelde misschien ook wel, dat de verklaring, die hij van dat woord bedoelde te geven, niet klopte met dat andere woordje *trekken*, dat ook in den tekst voorkomt. Wien Jezus *trekt*, wordt immers zeker behouden! Maar eindelijk, toen het niet ver meer van twaalf uur was, sprak hij ongeveer als volgt: "En nu maakt het mij niet uit, wat uw dogmatische beschouwing mag zijn, of ge Arminiaansch zijt of Calvinistisch, ik zal u ronduit zeggen, wat mijne verklaring is van dat wordeke *allen* in den tekst. Voor mij beteekent dit, dat alle menschen, die ooit geleefd hebben, thans leven, of nog zullen leven,

een kans zullen hebben om tot Jezus te komen'. Ge ziet, de man stond zóó op de onbepaalde beteekenis van het woordje *allen*, dat hij geheel vergat, dat de tekst ook leert, dat Jezus die allen tot Zich zal *trekken*. En dat is zeker geheel iets anders dan een kans om tot Hem te komen!

"Nu weet ge, dat de Synode der Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken, blijkens het doel, waartoe zij dit woord aanhaalt, den tekst in Ps. 145:9 op gelijksoortige wijze wil verklaard hebben. En ook zal het u niet ontgaan zijn, dat Ds. Zwier nog onlangs in "De Wachter", als een getrouw zoon zijner kerk, de synode van 1924 op dit voetspoor volgde. Als we lezen in dezen tekst: "De Heere is aan *allen* goed", dan moeten we, volgens Ds. Zwier, van dit woordje *allen* afblijven. We mogen het niet beperken. Het beteekent eenvoudig alle menschen! En zoo komen ze dan tot de voorstelling, dat er een zekere algemeene genade, goedertierenheid of gunste Gods is jegens alle menschen, en dat God in dit tijdelijke leven ook alle goddeloozen bemint en hen zegent in Zijne gunst.

"Nu zou er op zichzelf niets tegen zijn, om dit woordje allen in Ps. 145:9 in dien onbeprekten zin van alle menschen, hoofd voor hoofd en ziel voor ziel, ook alle verworpen goddeloozen inbegrepen, te verklaren, mits ge dan ook aan dat woordje *goed* een zin toekent, die bij dien algemeenen zin van het woord *allen* past. De Heere is goed in den volstrekten zin des woords. Hij is de volmaakte, het inbegrip van alle eeuwige volmaaktheden, de Heilige en Waarachtige, een Licht en in Hem is er gansch geen duisternis. *Goed* staat dan tegenover *slecht* of *verkeerd*. Zoo wordt het woord meermaalen in de Schrift gebezigd. In dien zin zegt de Heiland tot den rijken jongeling: 'wat noemt gij Mij goed? niemand is goed dan Eén, namelijk God'. En zelfs mogen we wel zeggen, dat dit altijd de onderliggende gedachte is, als de Schrift spreekt van Gods goedheid, En omdat God goed is in Zichzelven, daarom is Hij ook goed in al Zijn weg en werk. Hij doet alles goed. Nooit kan het van den Heere gezegd worden, dat Hij iets verkeerd doet. Hij doet het schepsel nimmer onrecht. Hij doet den rechtvaardige goed, als Hij hem de eeuwige zaligheid schenkt, en *Hij doet den goddelooze goed, ook als Hij hem in de hel werpt*. Menschen als Ds. Zwier en anderen, die de waarheid niet verstaan, vallen er wel over, als wij dit zoo strikt handhaven. Maar wie de Schrift verstaat heeft hier geen moeite mee.

"Doch dit is blijkbaar niet de beteekenis van Ps. 145:9. Als we daar lezen, dat de Heere allen goed doet, dan is de beteekenis blijkbaar, dat Hij in Zijn groote gunst allen zegent, en het goede schenkt. Dit is wel duidelijk uit het verband. Maar daarom heeft niemand dan ook het recht om bij het wordeke *allen* het woord *menschen* te voegen. Uit het tweede gedeelte van den tekst is wel duidelijk, dat dit niet de

bedoeling is. Daar toch staat: 'en Zijne barmhartigheden zijn over al Zijne werken'. En het eerste gedeelte van dit vers moet zeker in het licht van het tweede worden verklaard. De tekst heeft het oog op alle Gods *werken*. God is al Zijne schepselen goed, mensch en beest, boom en bloem en plant en 't groene kruid, etc. Maar dit wil nog volstrekt niet zeggen, dat ook de goddelooze daarin deelt. De Schrift leert ons overal juist het tegendeel. Het is dus volkomen in overeenstemming met de bedoeling van den tekst, en met de doorlopende leer der Schrift, wanneer we het woordje allen op Gods werken laten slaan in den organischen zin des woords, terwijl de goddeloozen buiten gesloten zijn."

De lezer zal toestemmen, dat alleen misverstand en dwaling over de uitdrukking kan vallen, zoo ze slechts in het rechte verband wordt gezet.

H. H.

Over De Twee Getuigen

Op mijn reis door het Westen ontving ik ook nog wat meer licht over de waarde van de getuigenissen, die zoo gretig door Ds. Zwier in "De Wachter" werden gepubliceerd, aangaande een tiental uitdrukkingen uit de prediking van een onzer leeraren.

We vernamen dan, dat er oorspronkelijk slechts één getuige was, namelijk de heer J. J. Stuursma.

Deze heer, gevraagd of hij de bedoelde uitdrukkingen aanstonds onder de preek had neergepend, antwoordde ontkennend. Hij had ze eerst ongeveer twee jaren later opgeschreven!

Daarna zond hij bedoelde uitdrukkingen, met zijn naam alleen ondergeteekend, naar Ds. Zwier.

Ik meen, dat Ds. Zwier toen hem gevraagd had, of hij er nog een getuige bij kon krijgen. Deze broeder gevoelde blijkbaar, dat hij in elk geval twee getuigen moest hebben, die hetzelfde zeiden.

En toen heeft de schoonzoon van den heer Stuursma ook maar zij naam gezet onder de door den schoonvader twee jaren na datum opgeteekende praatjes.

En dan schrijft Ds. Zwier: "in den mond van twee of drie getuigen zal alle woord bestaan"!

Als de toedracht der zaak anders is geweest, dan ik ze hierboven beschreef, laat men mij het maar weten.

Maar zou men ook nog den moed hebben, om den zegen des Heeren af te bidden of zulk gedoe?

H. H.

Een Waardig Discipel

Als men reist en mensen ontmoet, dan doet men soms wat op.

Zoo kreeg ik b.v. inzage van een brief, die door iemand uit Byron Center, Mich., geschreven was aan een vriend in Manhattan, waaruit ik het volgende hier over neem:

"Ik verblijd me. . . . (hier staat de naam van den geadresseerden vriend) dat u het wel eens was met mijn brief. Ik zal u trachten om mijne gedachten te openbaren aangaande uw kwestie, en ook nog trachten eenige gedachten ten beste te geven aangaande de algemeene genade. Ten eerste dan met die vraag voor de school. Als u denkt, dat de draagkracht groot genoeg is om zoo'n school te doen verrijzen, dan zou ik zeggen go ahead. Het bezwaar, dat u oppert, dat telt bij mij niet veel. Het is daar bij u al zoowat net zooals hier. De Hoeksema's zijn ver in de minderheid, dat is hier ook zoo. Nu denkt u, dat ze nog eens in de meerderheid zullen komen. Ik zie daar heelemaal geen gevaar voor. Dat gevaar bestaat wel in een kleine gemeente, doch niet in Manhattan gemeente, evenmin als hier in B. C. En waarom niet? vraagt ge. Wel, om de reden: Kok mag enkele huisgezinnen uit de gemeente scheuren, doch dan is hij gedaan. Het is een afstootelijke Godsdienst, die ze verkondigen. Ze zullen nooit mensen trekken van andere kerken. Al wat ze kunnen doen is uit elkaar scheuren. Ze trekken eerst eenigen van degenen, die zoo ernstig vroom zijn in hunne gedachten zoodat de leer van de Chr. Geref. Kerk was voor hun vroomheid niet toereikende. Hier zijn heel wat gezinnen weer terug gekomen. Die vernamen wel, dat de spijsze daar niet beter was en dat ze niet begrepen wat spijsze hun daar werd opgedischt. Als men nu zoo'n kerk heeft als Hoeksema in een groote stad als G. R. met al de Chr. Geref. Kerken, dan scheuren ze wat van al de gemeenten van die extra vroomen en dan hebben in den regel die gemeenten er geen spijt van dat zulke personen weggaan om de lieve vredes wil. Zoo'n kerk krijgt dan vanzelf heel wat aanhangers. Doch met al hun aanhangers konden ze nog geen baas worden in de Baxter St. School. Ze hebben het hard geprobeerd doch te vergeefs. Doch in zoo'n gemeente als de uwe bestaat dat bezwaar niet."

Een mooi staaltje van verdraaiing der geschiedenis. Wie de historie heeft meegemaakt, herinnert zich, dat

de zaak precies andersom is geschied. Wie weet niet meer, dat op zekere schoolvergadering van de overzij allerlei leden geworven waren, sommigen waarvan zelfs niet eens verantwoordelijk waren, velen waarvan tot op den huidigen dag nog niet hun lidmaatschaps-contributie betaald hebben, en die ook alleen maar voor die gelegenheid lid waren, alleen met het doel om de Protestantsche Gereformeerden te overstemmen? Wij hebben echter nooit zulk een poging gedaan, als bovenaangehaalde schrijver aan zijn vriend te Manhattan vertelt. Ik weet niet of de man in commissie liegt of dat hij maar wat uit zijn duim zuigt, maar een leugen is het zeker, wat hij schrijft.

Let verder op het volgende:

"Hoeksema probeert altijd de verborgen wil van God te verkondigen. Ze houden zich op hun manier vast aan de drie formulieren van eenigheid alhoewel die rechtstreeks ingaan tegen hunne leer. Daarin toch wordt verboden scheuringen aan te richten in kerkelijke en wereldlijke regeeringen. En dan zeggen die formulieren er bestaat een zekere goedgunstigheid Gods jegens alle mensen". . . .

Het is hieruit wel duidelijk, dat de man een "getrouw zoon" der kerk is. Onderzoeken doet hij niet. Hij neemt maar voor zoete koek aan, wat zijn kerk hem heeft geleerd. Zijn vriend in Manhattan moest hem echter toch eens vragen, waar onze formulieren van eenigheid leeren, dat er een zekere goedgunstigheid Gods is jegens alle mensen.

Verder:

"We hadden hier een familie die waren hun ook gevolgd. Later wordt een van hun kinderen erg ziek. Ze stuurden voor Ophoff om voor hun kind te bidden. Dat wilde hij niet doen om de reden dat hij niet wist of het kind uitverkoren was of verworpen. Die mensen waren toen gauw weer terug bij onze kerk. Ik had vroeger een oude oom die ging bij H. ter kerk. Nu had die oude man maar een zoon en dat is een soort van bom wat de Godsdienst betreft. H. zeide tegen die oude man: U moet niet meer voor uw zoon bidden, dat is een verworpene. Toen kwam de oude bij mij en vroeg wat ik doen? Ik zeide Oom laat nooit na voor je kind te bidden dat is het eenige wat we nog kunnen doen en waar onze troost ligt. De oude man stierf en ik was op de begrafenis en toen bad H. zelf voor de zoon nu wat denkt u daarvan. Stel u voor u belangt bij zoo'n gemeente en nu hebt u kinderen en nu moet u volgens H. gelooven dat God een of meer van uwe kinderen touw genoeg geeft om zich zelf op te hangen". . . .

Dit laatste heeft de man blijkbaar van Ds. Zwier geleerd, van wien hij een waardig discipel blijkt te zijn.

Overigens doen de verhaaltjes, die de man opdischt, denken aan soortgelijke anecdoten uit de geschiedenis van Hendrik De Cock. Ook van hem wist men allerlei vreemde dingen te verhalen, sommige waarvan als twee droppels water gelijken op hetgeen de man uit Byron Center zijn vriend in Manhattan meent te moeten mededeelen.

Dat er ook niet een enkel greintje van waarheid in zulke verhaaltjes schuilt, behoef ik zeker niet te zeggen.

Wie een beetje verstand heeft, begrijpt dat wel.

Verhaaltjes als bovenstaande getuigen evenzeer van verregaande domheid, als van gebrek aan waarheidsliefde.

Alleen maar haast ik mij, om dit even in ons blad op te nemen, voordat de man het in zijn hoofd krijgt, om zijn praatjes aan *De Wachter* op te zenden en dit blad er dan zijn zegel van echtheid op drukt.

H. H.

Getallen Symboliek

Over dit onderwerp werden we door een broeder verzocht iets te schrijven aan welk verzoek we bij dezen gaarne voldoen.

We maken allereerst een paar algemeene opmerkingen.

Als we spreken over de symboliek der getallen, dan gaan we daarbij uit van de gedachte, dat er in de getallen, zooals die in de schepping voorkomen en in de Heilige Schrift worden gebruikt, werkelijk een sprake Gods ligt, en dat er zulk een sprake Gods van die getallen tot ons uitgaat. Het is dus niet zoo, dat aan sommige getallen door de Schrift een bepaalde beteekenis wordt gehecht, zonder dat zulke beteekenis in die getallen inherent is. Integendeel, ook de getallen in hun verschillende combinaties en onderlinge betrekkingen behooren tot de schepping, waarvan de hemelen Gods eer vertellen en het uitspansel Zijner handen werk; ze spreken mede in den dag aan den dag, die overvloedige sprake uitstort, en in den nacht aan den nacht, die wetenschap toont. Ze zijn woorden Gods, Zijne gedachten ons spellend.

Doch er is meer.

Niet alleen zijn er in de getallen gedachten Gods en verkondigen ze met alle dingen Gods eer, maar ook gaat er van hen sprake uit in betrekking tot Gods eeuwig koninkrijk en verbond. Het aardsche is beeld

van het hemelsche, en de dingen geschieden door gelijkenissen. En ook in dat aardsche beeld van het hemelsche, in die aardsche sprake van de eeuwige dingen, hebben de getallen hun plaats.

Dit is het geval met alle dingen. Er ligt een sprake Gods in de kleuren. Wanneer we b.v. zeggen, dat rood de kleur is van toorn en gramschap, wit van reinheid en heiligheid, van heerlijkheid en overwinning, zwart van schaarste en honger, groen van de hope, blauw van getrouwheid, etc., dan is dat niet maar eene willekeurige verklaring van zulke kleuren onzerzijds, een beteekenis, die wij aan haar hechten, maar gaat deze sprake van die kleuren zelf uit. En zoo is het met de noten der muziek, met de verschillende verhoudingen en vormen, de rechte lijn, de rechthoek, het kwadraat, den kubus en de cirkel; met de sterren des hemels, zoowel als met zon en maan; met sneeuw en ijs, met stormwind en stilte, met donder en bliksem, met berg en dal, met zee en meer, met boom en plant, met het viervoetig en kruipend dier, met licht en duisternis. En zoo is het ook met de getallen. Alle dingen storten niet slechts overvloediglijk sprake uit, maar laten ook een sprake hooren, die verkondigt de dingen van Gods eeuwig koninkrijk Gods.

Bij de verklaring der getallen in hun symbolische beteekenis moeten we dan ook mede luisteren naar die sprake, die er van hen uitgaat.

Het spreekt wel vanzelf, dat we hierbij vooral ons moeten laten leiden door de sprake der Heilige Schrift. Door de zonde zijn we in het verstaan der sprake Gods in de schepping zeer beperkt. We hebben slechts enkele overblijfselen van "natuurlijk licht". En we zullen daarom ons moeten laten leiden door de Schrift, vooral als we de sprake der getallen willen verstaan aangaande de eeuwigen dingen van Gods verbond. Maar ook de Schrift zegt ons niet met zoovele woorden, wat hun beteekenis is. Ze gebruikt slechts verschillende getallen naar hun symbolische beteekenis op onderscheidene plaatsen en in verschillende verbanden. Willen we dus veilig gaan en niet in willekeurige uitlegging vervallen, dan zullen we die verschillende Schriftuurplaatsen met elkander moeten vergelijken, en daarbij tevens hebben te letten op dezelfde getallen, zooals ze in onze tegenwoordige wereld voorkomen. En ook dan dienen we de uiterste voorzichtigheid in acht te nemen, zullen we hetgeen slechts produkt was van onze fantasie niet voor resultaten van gezonde verklaring aanzien.

Niet alle getallen komen bij de behandeling van ons onderwerp in aanmerking. Het is vooral op de beteekenis van de getallen drie, vier, zes, zeven, tien en twaalf en verschillende deelen en combinaties dezer getallen, dat we hebben te letten.

Van deze is het getal tien misschien het eenvoudigste en ook het gemakkelijkst te verstaan. Tien is een rond getal, en welk getal ge er ook mee vermenig-

vuldigt, het produkt blijft altijd een rond getal. Het is het getal der volheid. In de Schrift komt het meer-malen in deze beteekenis voor. Er waren tien plagen over Egypte, de volle mate van Gods toorn en wrake over het diensthuis der zonde en de verdrukken van Gods volk. Er zijn tien geboden in de wet Gods, de openbaring van den vollen wil Gods voor ons godsdienstig en zedelijk leven in de wereld. Zoo waren er tien maal zeven jaren van ballingschap voor Israel in Babel, en spreekt de Schrift van tien maagden, tien talenten, tien steden, tien dagen van verdrukking voor de gemeente te Smyrna, van tien maal tien maal tien maal honderd vier en veertig, die met het Lam staan op den berg Sion, en van tien maal tien maal tien jaren, gedurende welke de Satan gebonden is. Altijd duidt het getal een volheid aan, een volle mate van iets bepaald door den wil Gods.

Drie is het "heilige" getal. Het is het getal der drie personen in de Goddelijke drievuldigheid, het getal der gemeenschap, van het leven van Vader, Zoon en Heiligen Geest.

In de Schrift komt het getal drie dikwijls voor als deel van het getal zeven. Zoo is het ook in de natuur. Denk maar aan de zeven kleuren van den regenboog, drie en vier, of aan de zeven noten der muziek, of ook aan de verdeeling der sterren in het zevengesternte. En in de Schrift hebt ge dezelfde verbinding in de zeven zegelen en zeven bazuinen en zeven violen, die zich telkens aan ons voordoen als eene verbinding van vier en drie.

En dit brengt ons als vanzelf tot het getal zeven. Dit komt voor, niet alleen als de verbinding van drie en vier, maar ook als de combinatie van zes en één. In het laatste geval is het de aanduiding van de volmaking van Gods koninkrijk in den dag van Christus. Het getal zes is het getal der aardsche schepping in haar ontwikkeling in den tijd, het aardsche zonder het hemelsche, de week zonder den sabbat, de arbeid zonder de ruste, de strijd zonder de overwinning, en daarom van het ijdele streven van den zondigen mensch, het getal des menschen in Openbaringen 13. Maar zes plus één duidt aan de voltooiing aller dingen in Gods eeuwig koninkrijk, de consummatie in den dag van Christus. Zeven dagen, zes plus één, moeten de kinderen Israels rondom Jericho marcheeren, en zeven priesters, dragende de ark, zullen op zeven bazuinen blazen; en op den zevenden dag moeten ze hetzelfde zevenmaal doen; dan valt de stad, de sleutel van het typische koninkrijk Gods, dat in het land Kanaan zou worden gevestigd, in de macht van Gods volk. De zeven zegelen en de zeven bazuinen van het boek der openbaringen komen ook voor als zes plus één, want het zevende zegel openbaart zich als zeven bazuinen, en de zevende buis wordt opgelost in de zeven violen. En in den weg van deze zegelen, bazuinen en violen, wordt Gods koninkrijk voltooid.

Als drie plus vier echter duidt het getal zeven de gemeenschap aan van God en Zijne wereld, de gemeenschap des verbonds. Vier is het kwadraat, het getal der wereld naar hare uitbreiding. Zooals zes het getal is, dat aanduidt de aardsche schepping naar hare uitgebreidheid de aardsche wereld in hare ontwikkeling in den tijd, zoo is vier het getal, dat de aardsche schepping naar hare uitgebreidheid aanduidt. Denk aan de vier winden en aan de vier hoeken der aarde. Zeven is de gemeenschap van God en wereld, daarom ook van God en Zijn volk, of ook de volheid van het leven der gemeenschap, zooals het in de Kerk heerscht en tot openbaring komt. Daarom zijn er zeven lampen op den kandelaar in het heilige des tempels, en zeven gouden kandelaren in Openbaringen 1. Daarom wordt de Geest van Christus, zooals Deze in de gemeente woont, aangeduid als de "zeven Geesten, die voor Zijnen troon zijn". En daarom zijn de zeven gemeenten van Klein Azië de vertegenwoordiging van heel de Kerk der Nieuwe bedeeing.

Twaalf is het product van drie en vier, zooals zeven de som der beide getallen is. In de heilige Schrift komt dit getal voor ter aanduiding van het aantal der verkorenen. Er zijn twaalf patriarchen en twaalf apostelen, twaalf plus twaalf ouderlingen rondom den troon in Openb. 4 etc. Uit elk der twaalf stammen worden twaalf duizend verzegeld naar Openb. 7, en in Openb. 14 lezen we van de twaalf maal twaalf duizend, die met het Lam staan op den berg Sion. Ook in de beschrijving van de afmetingen van het Nieuwe Jeruzalem in Openb. 21 speelt het getal twaalf een hoofdrol. Het is het getal der verkiezing, het getal, dat Gods volk aanduidt uit het oogpunt van zijn aantal.

Er zijn nog wel andere getallen, die symbolische beteekenis hebben, in de Heilige Schrift. Denk maar aan drie en een half, de helft van zeven, aan twee en veertig maanden en twaalf honderd en zestig dagen, aan de duizend jaren, dat de Satan gebonden is.

Doch de grondgetallen hebben we hier kortelijks trachten te bespreken.

En hiermede meen ik ook aan het verzoek van den broeder vrager te hebben voldaan.

H. H.

NOTICE

After this date please do not send your subscription for the "Reformatie" to R. Schaafsma. as he is no longer agent for that publication.

De Nederlandsche Synode

Het volgende berichtje knipten we uit "De Gereformeerde Kerkbode voor Drente en Overijsel":

DE SYNODE.

De Synode komt nu Maandag 15 dezer D.V. weer bijeen. Met name voor de zaak-Drachten en voor de zaak-Goossens. En ter afdoening van eenige zaken die waren blijven liggen.

De menings-verschillen blijven nog uitgesteld tot Augustus-September.

Eerder dan nu vergaderen kon niet. En om den winter en de koude. En omdat er ter voorbereiding — tot 't gereedmaken der rapporten — zoo ontzaglijk veel was te doen.

Dag en nacht is gewerkt.

Terwijl men 't niet tot later wilde uitstellen, om het belang dezer twee zaken dat dringt. En te Drachten en op Soemba moet er, zoo mogelijk, hoog noodig *rust* komen.

Mogen de Synodale beslissingen, die onder biddend opzien tot God genomen zullen worden, onder Zijn zegen daartoe medewerken.

En rijze van al onze kansels en uit al onze christelijke gezinnen en uit al onze harten het vurig gebed omhoog dat 't God believen moge met Zijn Geest en Waarheid tegenwoordig te zijn en te leiden in het rechte spoor!

Velen onzer lezers hebben herhaaldelijk gevraagd, of de synode der Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland nog niet weer samenkwam.

Daarom geven we dit bericht door.

Het is jammer, dat de Nederlandsche bladen zoo lang onder weg zijn. Het is waarschijnlijk, dat de synode ook reeds weer hare zittingen gesloten heeft, wanneer ons blad verschijnt.

Ook zal voor velen onzer lezers het bericht, dat ook thans de "menings-verschillen" nog niet zullen worden behandeld, wel een teleurstelling zijn. Daar hebben we het meeste belang bij.

We zullen maar wachten op "Augustus-September."

H. H.

The Kalamazoo Question

Originally it was not my purpose to write about the overture from the consistory of Hudsonville requesting that our churches approach the Protestant First Christian Reformed Church of Kalamazoo with a view to a possible reunion of that church with our churches.

In the first place, to rehearse the history that caused the separate existence of the Kalamazoo church is very distasteful to me. That part of our history that concerns our relation to this church recalls incidents that are far more corrupt and grievous than that which brought about our ejection from the Christian Reformed Churches. I believe that I would rather pass through an experience similar to that of 1924 a hundred times than that I would once more have to live through the history of 1925-26. Hence, if it could have been avoided I would not have broached this subject at all. I was even thankful that I did not have to attend the last classical meeting, so that I did not have to be present when all the dirt of that period was raked to the surface once more.

And, secondly, after the previous classical gathering adopted the overture from the Fuller Ave. consistory with regard to this matter, I trusted that the question would be considered in the proper light and decided accordingly.

But now there are several reasons why I may not keep silent.

There is, first of all, the fact that the classis did not carry out its own decision, and really sidetracked the matter as it was presented by the overture from Fuller Ave. This overture requested the classis to appoint a committee whose task it would be to bring before the attention of the classis all the historical data relative to the matter, in order that the question of approaching the Kalamazoo church might be discussed and determined in the light of that history. And I am informed by the Rev. Ophoff that this was not carried out. The committee did not bring all the historical data before the classis. And the classis decided the matter without having the proper light on the question.

Secondly, and in close connection with the preceding, the classis did reach a decision that can satisfy no one. If I am correctly informed its decision was that Kalamazoo must take the first step. This decision is not only tantamount to dodging the issue, but is also sinful. More about this presently.

In the third place, the Rev. J. De Jong of Hudsonville has been discussing this matter publicly in "Our Church News" and has been trying to present his conception of the matter to our people. And this is, of course, his right. We certainly should not limit or

DON'T WASTE TIME WORRYING—"Let us not give heed to gloomy and discouraging remarks; in the name of our great Commander, let us march on to battle and victory. "Be of good courage and let us behave ourselves valiantly, for our people and for the cities of our God; and let the Lord do that which is good in His sight." "

deny the right to anyone to discuss ecclesiastical matters in public if he so desires. But when one assumes the responsibility of leadership in so important a matter as the one under discussion, especially as editor of a paper, he ought to be doubly careful that he presents the matter correctly and in the right light. In this case it is paramount that the whole matter be viewed in the light of its history. And this is exactly what the pastor of Hudsonville failed to do. He ignored it entirely. I can understand that the history of this case does not concern him as deeply as it should, for the simple reason that he does not know it by experience. But this should have been all the more incentive for him to make a thorough study of the matter. If we may judge from his articles he failed to do this. And because of this his articles are leading us in the wrong direction.

And, therefore, loath though I may be to discuss this matter, I may not be silent.

The matter is very important for our churches. And those who are acquainted with the history of this case will understand me when I here declare that it would be morally impossible for me to follow our churches if a decision should be taken in the wrong direction.

Now, why should it be considered so important that all the historical data must be brought before the attention of our churches, whenever the question of approaching the Protestant First Christian Reformed Church of Kalamazoo is broached? First of all, because that history will clearly reveal that the Kalamazoo church has grievously sinned. And the sin of that church I do not hesitate to describe as consisting in this, *that with wicked intent and for personal reasons it deliberately attempted to destroy the cause of God as represented by our churches.*

You say: that is strong language?

I answer: it is none too strong. It expresses exactly what happened. I will not rehearse the history. Just recall what took place in Hull. Just refresh your memory on the history of our School. Just bring back to your memory what Kalamazoo tried to do with our Standard Bearer, how they deliberately forsook us, for no other reasons than personal ones, evidently hoping that the Rev. Ophoff and the undersigned would not be able to continue our publication. Just think of the meeting in Woodman Hall, Grand Rapids, followed by that in the Y. M. C. A. in Kalamazoo. But I will mention no more. Anyone may consult the records and be convinced that the language used above is none too strong.

I say advisedly that this is the sin of the *Kalamazoo church.*

You may, probably, be inclined to object that this was all the work of the pastor of that church and his nephews, and that you cannot blame his church for

this. But with this I cannot agree. The church is to blame. I am well aware of the fact that there are good men in Kalamazoo, that never did agree with the work of their pastor and consistory. I am not writing of individuals. But the church of Kalamazoo always maintained its pastor, and is just as guilty as he is. And, therefore, you cannot separate the two.

Secondly, it is important that this history is rehearsed before our people and churches, before they ever take a decision in this matter, because the older our churches become the more there will be both among the leaders and the people that are not acquainted by experience with this history. They must be instructed.

But, you ask, can we not let "bygones be bygones" and simply try to unite? Let us simply arrange a colloquy with Kalamazoo, to see what can be done to get together.

I receive the impression that the overture from Hudsonville has some such action in view. And "Our Church News" tries to persuade our people to follow in this direction.

To this we are strenuously opposed, for the simple reason that it is contrary to the Word of God, and for this reason harmful to our churches. The Scriptures do not teach us that we should let "bygones be bygones", but that we should *rebuke* him that sins against us. And what is true for individuals certainly holds for churches.

And this is also the reason why I consider the classical decision wrong.

Classis decided that Kalamazoo should take the first step. But this is contrary to Scripture. If your brother sins against you, *you* are the one that should take the first step and rebuke him.

Besides, it is not at all the question just now, who should take the first step. Why should we not take the first step in approaching Kalamazoo? There is no reasonable answer, and surely no Biblical answer to this question. But the paramount question at the present time ought to be put thus: *Are we justified before God to expose our churches once more to the same pernicious influence, the dangers of the spirit of personal ambition, envy, suspicion and disruption, to which they were exposed by Kalamazoo in 1925-26?*

Our churches certainly have the right to know that this shall never again be the case, before we can ever talk of reunion.

Any leadership that would ignore this question I do not consider safe for our churches to follow.

Our coming Synod will certainly have to consider this question.

May we, then, not approach Kalamazoo and take the first step?

I can see no possible objection to this, provided:

1. That our synod thoroughly review the history of the case.

2. That she bring the historical data to the attention of the church of Kalamazoo.

3. That she rebuke that church for its sin of having deliberately attempted to destroy the work of God as represented by our churches.

4. That she admonish that church to repent.

If in this way we gain that church we can talk about reunion, but not before.

There is no other way according to the Word of God. And no other way is safe for our churches.

The Rev. De Jong quotes from the overture of Fuller Ave. relative to the address the synod is to send to the synod of the Christian Reformed Churches, in order to defend his view of the Kalamazoo case.

But he only selects from that overture what suits him best. Had he quoted the entire overture it would have become plain that its intention is to follow the same line of approach to the Christian Reformed Churches as I advocated above with regard to the church of Kalamazoo.

We will first remind that church of the history of 1924, and rebuke her and admonish her to repent. Only then will we consider the matter of a colloquy and talk about the possibility of reunion.

And we may never do anything else with respect to Kalamazoo.

H. H.

Our Lecture Tour

A real joy it was to us that we might have the opportunity to make a tour through our churches in Iowa, Minnesota, Montana and California, and to speak for them in lectures and in the ministry of the Word. Almost all of our churches there are fields in which we used to labor for a shorter or longer period in the past, and are organized by us personally, so that the reader will readily understand that next to my own Fuller Ave. congregation I feel attached to them. And it was a very pleasurable experience to visit them and meet old friends. Besides, I had not visited the West for several years, and felt that I had so many things to say to them, that I looked forward to the opportunity to lecture and preach the Word to them.

The journey was a strenuous one.

In twenty six days we spoke twenty two times and travelled six thousand miles by auto, ourselves driving the car all the way. And when one travels from Grand Rapids over Iowa, Nebraska, Wyoming, Utah

and Nevada to California, and back from California, through Nevada, Utah, Idaho, Montana, South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, to Michigan, in April, he meets with all kinds of weather conditions, cold and heat, sunshine, rain and snow; and passes through rich farm country and bare deserts, makes his way over high mountains and through deep canyons, and travels along straight roads that are visible sometimes for twenty five miles ahead so that a speed of sixty five or seventy miles per hour may be considered quite safe, or slowly meanders around steep mountain sides, where it is advisable to restrain your ever-willing machine to a speed of twenty miles per hour. In south-eastern Iowa there were signs of spring and the weather was warm; in Sioux County it was rather gray and bleak and we had considerable rain and even snow; Nebraska was sunny and rather warm; in the mountains of Wyoming we passed through a little snow storm; as soon as we were on the other side of the Rockies the temperature was that of mid-summer; in the desert it was already rather hot; in California one could easily long for a swim in the Pacific, with temperatures around ninety five; on the sides of the road over the high mountains to West Yellowstone there were snow banks four or five feet high, though the road itself was plowed open and perfectly clean; through the very beautiful Galatin Canyon, through which we meandered for some eighty or ninety miles from West Yellowstone to Manhattan, we passed through a blizzard; in Montana, where the skies are supposed to be not cloudy all day, we had plenty of rain; through the mountains near Eozeman, Montana, we even had snow on the road, so that one had to drive with caution; in the Black Hills we passed through a rather thick mist, that made one hesitate to go ahead; all through South Dakota it poured; and as we passed through Iowa on our way back the skies gradually cleared off; and now, back in good old Michigan we had since our arrival a few days of blue skies and pleasant sunshine.

I know that my western brethren, who always boast of the clear skies and bright sunshine in the West, will laugh about this, but they are my witnesses that while I was with them I hardly saw the sun, and they may believe me when I solemnly testify that when I arrived in Michigan the sky was not cloudy all day!

This, of course, does not include sunny California, where, however, we had a thunderstorm!

On the first of April we departed from Grand Rapids for Oskaloosa, where we arrived shortly after three o'clock (Iowa time) in the afternoon. The distance from Grand Rapids to Oskaloosa and Pella is considerably shortened by straightening out of the roads, and is now only four hundred and seventy miles by my speedometer. That same evening I spoke in Pella, in the afternoon of the following day I delivered a lecture in Oskaloosa, and in the evening I addressed

a splendid gathering of young people of the two churches combined at a banquet. From there on the following day the way led to Sioux County and Edgerton, where we delivered several lectures and preached the Word three times on Sunday, April the seventh. On Monday morning, before sunrise, we quietly left the hospitable parsonage of Sioux Center in order to make the long journey to California. The added attraction of meeting our children in Bellflower made me step on the accelerator rather hard, and we covered the distance of eighteen hundred and thirty miles in three days, arriving at the home of our children in Bellflower Wednesday evening shortly after seven o'clock. With them we stayed a week. We lectured and preached in Redlands and Bellflower every day except Saturday; with the aid of the Rev. G. Vos we installed our son-in-law in the ministry of the Word in Bellflower, and we met old and new friends personally, so that for more than one reason to leave California was rather a strain on the heart-strings.

But I was scheduled to preach in Manhattan on Sunday, April the twenty first, and on Thursday, the eighteenth, we left for Montana. In Manhattan, where we arrived the following Saturday afternoon, we met a brand new Protestant Reformed Church, though many of its members were no strangers to us. A flourishing congregation is that of Manhattan, rather large in membership in comparison to the number of its families, the evil of birth-control evidently having made no inroads there. They built a very pretty church, a basement church, that in its steeple strives upward out of the ground, and in the beautiful auditorium of which you forget altogether that you are in a basement. We preached the Word there twice on Sunday, and on the following Monday and Tuesday evening we delivered two lectures. On Sunday morning the Rev. Kok announced that he had to decline the call extended to him by the church there, which was evidently to the great sorrow of the congregation, by whom our missionary is greatly beloved. However, we were thankful for his decision to continue his labors as missionary of our churches, and the Manhattan congregation realized that thus it was for the best. Let me say in passing, that whoever receives the next call from that church ought to consider it very seriously. Manhattan is in need of a good man, especially because it is a thousand miles from the nearest Protestant Reformed Church; and one who accepts that call will not be disappointed.

On our way back from Manhattan we delivered one more lecture in Edgerton, and on Friday we made the last stretch of eight hundred miles in one day, arriving at home at eleven o'clock at night.

A strenuous trip it was, but a joyful one, and I believe that the Lord made it a blessing, a blessing for me, and a blessing for the churches.

On the whole our churches are flourishing, our

ministers are faithful, and the blessing of the Lord is manifestly upon them and their flocks.

Very heartily we were received everywhere, by the brethren in the ministry and by all the people, for the which I hereby express my sincere gratitude.

The audiences were very good.

Some of our smallest churches are surprisingly active. Bellflower is thinking of building a parsonage, and if possible a church; and I would say to them: "go ahead, brethren!" and to our churches: "let us encourage and help them!" They are worthy of it, and they need it, for they already pay a heavy budget. Manhattan built a pretty church and paid for it in cash, without even asking for help. Edgerton, which is hardly to be classified anymore with the smallest churches (it counts twenty six families, I believe), built a most beautiful parsonage, is thinking of soon building a church, and would like to establish a Christian School of its own, something which is by far the most preferable wherever this is possible.

When you visit the Rev. Kok in his field of labor you are impressed with two facts. In the first place, I believe that the Lord gave us a man in him that is eminently fit for the work he is called to do. And in the second place it is quite evident that the work requires considerable self-denial and sacrifice on the part of both, our missionary and his wife, especially when they first enter upon a new field of labor. I think that our people may well remember this, and make mention of them in their prayers.

Finally: one who visits our churches and loves the truth they stand for, and beholds their activity and prosperity, the work of our ministers and officebearers, and remembers that it is only fifteen years ago that some of us were expelled from the fellowship of the Christian Reformed Churches, can only marvel and be filled with gratitude because of the truly great work the Lord has done for us!

His blessing be upon our churches!

H. H.

NOTICE

The Consistory of the First Prot. Ref. Church hereby notifies the churches that Synod will meet D. V., in the parlors of the Fuller Ave. Church at Grand Rapids, Michigan on May 22, 1940.

G. Stonehouse, Clerk.

NOTICE

On Tuesday evening, May 21, at 7:45 o'clock, Rev. Herman Hoeksema will preach a sermon in connection with of the Synod in Roosevelt Park Protestant Reformed Church.

The Inhabitant Of Zion

At sundry times and in divers manners I have heard a question asked which I here find in the 15th Psalm. Some put it this way: Where wilt you spend eternity?

I know, I know: the question put into that form usually comes from the corner of those that dilute the Gospel of God; they present the race to eternity as a game of chance; they emphasize the responsibility of man at the expense of God's Sovereign counsel. I know all that. But the question itself is not necessarily wrong. It may be a theme that is pregnant with meaning.

I find no fault asking this question of myself: where, o my soul, wilt thou spend eternity. And God be praised, I know the wonderful answer.

The question is a little different in the 15th Psalm. There we read in substance: Who is going to spend eternity in heaven? What kind of person must you be in order to fit into the heavenly scheme of things?

Oh what important question!

Notice also that the question here is asked of God.

That is very salutary; also very wisely done. It is really the only place where you may expect the right answer. No one knows who fits there but the Lord. After all is said and done, heaven is the place where God dwells and therefore He alone knows what kind of persons fit there.

It seems that the poet gets his answer from a meditation of God's virtues. He asks of the Lord: Lord, who fits there where Thou livest? And forthwith he finds the answer. In his heart and mind that is illumined by the light from above.

Let us attend unto the qualifications needed for heavenly sojourn and dwelling.

If I use the literal language of the Holy Spirit I hear first of all that we must have our walk in uprightness.

That means that in my heart and mind, with my mouth and feet, in my whole life I walk in the virtue of truth and light. For that's the meaning. To be upright means that I am what I say, that I appear according to what lives in my inmost heart. That I be honest throughout. Dat ik niet tegenval.

The upright are people that really like you when you may bask in their smile. Do they tell you that a certain matter is such and such, you may depend upon this matter to be so. There are no shadows and dark corners in their walk. The opposite of uprightness is that you have a curse in your heart and a smile on your face. When you say by the half-opened door: "Be sure and call again!" but when the door is shut: "Wel, dat hebben we weer gehad! The fools!"

No, but the upright may dwell in heaven with God and His angels.

Moreover, they work righteousness.

That means that you act, according to the will of God, that which is really good, salutary, lovely. Because that is the meaning of righteousness. It is the urge towards things that are comely. Thus it is with God: He wills Himself as the Highest Good.

To work righteousness is that in all your active life you steer towards God. You want to please Him in all your actions. You do not work unto men as men-pleasers, but you always ask: Lord, what would Thou have me do?

And he speaketh truth in his heart.

Have you ever listened to the talk of your heart? I assure you that it is a very wonderful pastime. You are going to learn a great deal about yourself when you do that. We all talk in our heart. Without words. They are the unheard whisperings, meditations, fancies, motives. They lurk there incessantly.

You see, we are confronted with a great deal. God, His Word, the world, our neighbor, ourselves, in short, everything. And the heart reacts. In any given circumstance there is the speech of the heart. There may be little time between the inaudible whisper in the heart and the spoken word: I assure you that there is no such thing as "involuntary speech", that is, speech without its fountain. We sometimes counsel people to "think before you speak". What we mean is: think *well* before you speak. In all other cases we have thought but not always as wisely as we ought to have done.

Well, those that will dwell in the holy hill Zion must think and speak truth in their heart. They must react to the object in the right way.

Ah! that's not so easy!

For there is the devil and our inborn evil.

And the devil is the father of the lie and by nature we are liars.

However, God whose name is Truth will only have those persons about Him who have Him in their heart. Even while they are in sorrow: 'k Denk aan U, o God, in 't klagen!

Or: My meditation of Him shall be sweet!

The people that will fit in heaven do not take slander on their tongue. That hurts. Slander is the lie united to the person of our neighbour. And we peddle this unity under the name of truth. We wrap up the good name of our neighbour in the detestable garment of falsehood and say: there you have his picture.

If you do that you cannot go to heaven. Because God never acts that way. We read in Scripture that everyone of us shall bear his own burden in the day of judgment. Permit me to use another metaphor: when God shall summon us before Him, each of us shall be clothed in a suit that shall belong to him. God always speaks the truth regarding His creatures.

And if you take a reproach against your neighbour

which you may have picked up somewhere, you cannot dwell with God.

God only knows how many reproaches there are against us. I say it with a deep sigh. Walk ever so carefully and yet you hurt one another, you make enemies, you get haters of your person. There are innumerable reproaches against us all. Neither are there persons lacking that will peddle them. Leave them alone! Always belittling? Yes, do not multiply the mudslingers! Their number is legion as it is. And God does not like you if you always are heaping abuse and contempt against the son of your mother. He will not have you in the palaces of the King.

As to verse 4a, I like the translation of the learned Delitzsch better than our version. According to him the next characteristic of the sojourner with God is displeased indeed, but with himself. He would have us read: "He who is displeasing in his own eyes, to be despised!" Yes, God loves the humble. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted, even to the heavens.

And if he notices that you fear God he will love you. He is a companion of those that fear God.

It happens that he has made a vow. It was to his own hurt. This he found out after the vow was made. You know, reader, from your own life's history that this happens sometimes. Well, the man approved of God, but listen:

"From his vow he will not waver
Though it bring him sad reward!"

For God's sake.

This same man may have a good deal of money; perhaps he was a small-time financier. This happens sometimes, although not often. At any rate, the man sojourning in God's tabernacle will not take excessive interest for his money. Usury is excessive interest. It is even possible that he will help a poor brother in distress without charging interest. He will treat every case on its own merits. And when he discloses his money coffers he will cast his eye to Him who owns all the gold and silver in the world.

It will happen that the innocent is caught in a trap of the wicked. These wicked have need at such times of confederates. They are ready even to lay out money, bribes, in order to have an open and shut case against the innocent.

But, my brother, do not worry over much: our sojourner with God will refuse the bribe against the innocent. He will: "And the innocent befriending".

The beautiful creature that doeth all these things shall not be moved unto all eternity. No, for he will dwell in the Secret Place of the Most High, abiding under the shadow of the Almighty.

My space is almost covered: I must hurry. Well, a few concluding remarks are enough.

There is just one man who fits this description. He is Jesus Christ the Lord. If you have plenty of time you ought to re-read what I have written about this

man and you will see that Jesus is the only man. We have all acted the very contrary of Psalm 15.

And I hear an echo of the fearful question of the disciples of Jesus: But who then can be saved?

The answer is also the Gospel everlasting: Jesus did all this *for* you and when you are regenerated and converted, He also does all the contents of the fifteenth Psalm *through* you.

That is the Gospel.

Jesus who lives in us makes us like unto the glorious image of the Son.

You just study the 15th Psalm as the day is long.

And we all, with an open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord!

And when that sanctifying process is completed, you will not recognize yourselves anymore. Your weeping will have an end. While your peace shall be as a river.

No, you will not recognize the erstwhile sinner in the glorious beauty of the sons and daughters of the Almighty.

But God will recognize you!

He will say: Come, ye blessed! Inherit the Kingdom.

Now you may *abide in My tabernacle; and now you may dwell in my holy hill!*

G. V.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

1905 — 1940

On May 17, the Lord willing, our dear parents

MR. I. KORHORN

and

MRS. H. KORHORN — Zylema

hope to commemorate their 35th wedding anniversary. We, their children extend to them our heartiest congratulations, and thank our heavenly Father that he has spared them for each other and for us.

In thankful remembrance do we acknowledge these blessings. It is our earnest prayer that the Lord will spare them for each other and us for many more years.

Their Grateful Children,

Mr. and Mrs. M. Veenstra

Mr. and Mrs. G. Korhorn

Mr. and Mrs. B. Korhorn

Mr. and Mrs. J. Kuiper

Henrietta Korhorn

Elizabeth Florence Korhorn

and fifteen Grandchildren.

Grand Rapids, Mich.

Holy Desire

Ps. 27:4.

One thing.

Remarkable, because man desires many things. He may seem satisfied with a few, but when he is asked about it will answer not one, but I will desire all things.

That is peculiar, when that little heart of ours can never be filled, even if we possess all things. Things that often are harmful, man wants. One thing to desire is to do away with all other things. When all is desired it means that man does not desire God. He depends upon the things as such. In daily life he craves for and seeks after the goods of this world. A great name or the abundance of riches will be his security in this life. He seeks his refuge in minute calculations, depending upon them. He seeks the help of others who must help him, in order that he may maintain himself. And he seeks all these without God, because God is not in all his thoughts.

O yes, he seeks also one thing and in all things one: MAN. Hence, he must be disappointed. For the things pass away and he passes away with them. How dreadful in the days of trouble, when all things are seemingly against us. Things as such cannot help and they are not peace-affording. You are not safe with them, especially not if you depend on and lean on them.

David speaks of his troubles in this Psalm. He speaks of the wicked who were encamped round about him. He speaks of the evil day, of armies and wars, of false witnesses, of men who rose up against him. It was the time of trouble, the time he looked for refuge, a place where he may hide himself against the storm.

One thing have I desired. The One and Only God is my rock and my hiding place. And that One is Jehovah, Unchangeable and ever faithful Covenant One. In Him David will trust, for He is Almighty, able and willing to protect, never failing, because there is no power besides Him. Who shall oppose God Almighty, the Father of His people, Who cares for them, because He loved them from before the foundation of the world?

Trouble and affliction are the means to drive us out to Him. It is often the hard way we must learn this truth. In the life of the Christian we often find the same earthly aspirations in that he seeks the things here below. He often depends upon them at the expense of seeking the One and only thing, God. He often concentrates on the things of the earth, until they are taken away from him and he finds himself alone, helpless, forsaken, enveloped in darkness. He

must learn the hard way in that these things must become more and more of no account. That they are obstacles in his relation with God and His service, if we seek after them and desire them. They may never be the purpose of life.

One thing have I desired and One thing I will seek after. And that one thing is God.

Is this perhaps a sickly mysticism? Speaking of his desire, the poet uses figurative language. I desire of the Lord one thing. My desire is to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life. And I desire to behold the Lord's beauty and to enquire in His temple. Did David mean to say, I desire to live in the tabernacle? Our answer is, no! This would be misplaced, because no one lived in the Temple of the Lord, nor in His tabernacle. The only one who lived there was the Lord Himself. Hence, we must not degrade this holy desire and make something earthly of it. The expression 'to dwell in the house of the Lord', is not a desire for an unbroken residence in the natural sense of the word. Neither is David seeking a certain well-known seclusion. He does not desire to live an idle life, giving himself to some so-called mystical contemplation. Nor may that be our desire. Some people have the foolish notion that to dwell with the Lord means, to forget all about the earthly duties as they must be performed in harmony with the Word of God. You will find them in town while they must be busy on their farm. You find them speaking about the spiritual (?) things, while they neglect their work, or, while they should be at work they prefer to sit at home to meditate (?).

But David does not know of such false pretences of worship. David was a very busy man and knew that he must perform the duties assigned unto him. That sort of religion is a waste.

No, David did not wish to separate himself from the rest of the world. He was the King of Israel and called to execute his kingly duties. He had to fight the battles of Jehovah. But David found in the typical expression of the Temple, the spiritual desire of his soul. God dwelt with His people, in that Jehovah dwelt in the tabernacle. In the Holy place, through the Priesthood, Jehovah received their sacrifices. And even the furniture of the Temple and tabernacle were a reminder of the fact that the Lord was their God. He dwelt with them, He provided for them, He was their light and salvation. And once each year the High Priest entered behind the veil to bring the sin-offering, to reconcile the people with God and in returning from the innermost sanctuary, he pronounced the blessing of the Lord in Jehovah's Name.

Hence, that Temple was a type to David of the blessed covenant communion. Preaching to him, God is the friend of His people, He loves them and blesses them and His people are His friends, they know and

love Him, they serve and walk with Him in His light.

To dwell in the house of the Lord means, to know God as the Only Rock of Salvation, who through sovereign grace forgives the sins of His people. Who sanctifies, glorifies them and leads and protects them over against all their enemies, no matter how mighty they may seem. David means to say, that God is my Rock and place of shelter.

This presupposes in the second place, that David knew Him to be *his* God. That he loved the Lord, believed in Him. And that, in connection with his troubles the Lord would take care of David and his enemies. Note how David makes this a personal desire. That *I* may dwell in the house of the Lord. That *I* may experience His nearness. Here, of course, David means that he may know that the Lord is near him. This implies, not that the Lord is not always near His people. He is always near them. But His people are not always near Him. Not aware of His presence, when they walk in sin and unbelief. Not near Him when they seek the things of the world. Not near Him when they place their trust in all kinds of things, but not in the Lord. Not near Him, when seemingly, the possession of earthly riches, their name, their money, their belongings, take their time and when they are quite well satisfied with them, living as if they are never going to die. No, but all the days of my life. That is, in all I do and wherever I find myself, I desire to dwell with the Lord and do His bidding. To dwell in His presence, consciously.

One thing. For what purpose? David answers: "To behold the beauty of the Lord". The Lord is beautiful. No, not for man as he is by nature. God is terrible for the sinner to behold. There is no kindness revealed to him and there cannot be a dwelling with the Lord in Covenant friendship relation. His divine holiness is a devouring fire, to those who seek all things except the Lord. But to His people the Lord is beautiful. Beautiful in that He is good and holy and righteous. As such He reveals Himself in and through Jesus Christ. That He cannot and will not have communion with sin and sinner, except when those sins are paid for and forgiven in the blood of His Son. Then and then alone, God looks good to man. Never before will anyone say, God is good. When the covenant relation is restored, man will admire God as the Highest good and will confess that God's virtues are perfect. They admire His love, grace, wisdom, His power and Majesty. He is beautiful in that He forgives their sins. And only in His Temple His people will see that.

One thing. But all the days of my life.

No, it does not mean, that this is so easy. Don't forget, by implication, we also have here a confession. The confession is, I have not always sought after one

thing. David, the man of knowledge of himself, knew how often he had sought after many things. Read his Psalms and one will find confession upon confession of his seeking of the many things, instead of the one. And his desires were not holy. Think of the numbering of the people, of his sin with Bathsheba, the killing of Uriah. We do not need to enumerate them all, for they are well known. But this confession is followed by the earnest desire to get rid of the many things and seek only one, the Lord. Opposites can never be reconciled. This was true of David. Notice, David does not say, I shall try, or I will do my best to enquire after God. Nay, *I will*, I will, not I wish. In this word we find the combination of prayer and work. David was such a man, that after he prayed he took action. A heartfelt confession will be the beginning of a tremendous struggle. A struggle that will be only possible in the way of prayer. On the other hand, after such prayers persistent actions will become manifest in one's life. The heart of David went out after one thing, the Lord. The life of David revealed it, that it was not merely vain talk.

David will seek after it. Seek to find, of course. But also that it is a confession of this other fact "God must give it". In the full realization of one's own unworthiness a man will be bold to say, I will enquire, that is, I will search after the one thing. Then he will, through prayer become bold in his confession and at the same time seek after with all his might. Moreover, this is not simply a statement of fact, nor a well-rounded out theory, but the expression of the feeling of the heart. The desire is here a need of life (*levensnood*), without which the seeking becomes a mere matter of speech. Or to say it a little different, David want to be sure of and to rejoice in God's presence and that at the expense of all other things. He wants God, because apart from God the other things have no value. And even while David was King, mighty and rich, yet the glory and wealth of his kingdom, the glory and honor given him, the victory over the enemies in their subjection to his rule, were nothing compared with God.

So it is always, for every one fearing the Lord. Continually they must be on their guard not to lose themselves in the things of the world. It is the common admonition throughout Scripture, not to seek the world and the things thereof. And it is also one of the most common sins of the Church to forget the warning that the world and the things thereof perish and shall pass away. Hence, this confession of the holy desire of David is at the same time the admonition to the Church "one thing must she desire of the Lord, His presence, to seek after His communion, to behold His beauty, all the days of her life and to enquire after it in His temple.

W. V.

Against The Day Of My Burying

Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.

John 12:3-8.

In the whole bearing and conduct of Jesus in and about Jericho there was much to indicate that some great crisis in His history was at hand. It does not surprise us to be told of the disciples believing "that the kingdom of God should immediately appear." It was because He knew that they were so misconceiving the future that lay before Him and them, that, either in the house of Zacheus, or afterwards on the way to Jerusalem. Jesus addressed to them the parable of the Pounds. He would have them know, and could they but have penetrated the meaning of that parable they would have seen, that so far from any such kingdom as they were dreaming of being about to be set up for them in Jerusalem, He was going through the dark avenue in Jerusalem. He was going through the dark avenue of death to another, to a far country, to receive the kingdom there, and after a long interval return; and that, so far from them being about to share the honors and rewards of a newly erected empire, they were to be left without a head, each man to occupy and to labor till He came again. Another parable, that of the laborers in the Vineyard, spoken but a day or two before, had an kindred object—was intended to check the too eager and ambitious thirst for the distinctions and recompences that the apostles imagined were on the eve of being dispensed. The addressing of two such parables as these to His disciples, with the specific object of rectifying what He knew to be their false ideas and expectations, the readiness with which He listened to the cry of the blind beggars by the wayside, and the interest that He took in the chief of the publicans, conspire to show how far from a mere narrow or selfish one was the interest with which Jesus looked forward to what was awaiting Him at Jerusalem. During the two days' journey through Peraea through Jericho to the holy city, His thoughts were often and absorbingly fixed upon His approaching sufferings and death, but it was not so much in their

isolated and personal as in their public and world-wide bearings and issues that He was contemplating them; nor had the contemplation any such effect as to make Him less attentive to the side of thought and feeling prevailing among His disciples, or less ready to be interested in those who, like Bartimeus and Zacheus, threw themselves in His way.

In coming down into the valley of the Jordan, Jesus had joined the large and growing stream of people from the north and east, passing up to the approaching Passover. There would be many Galileans among the group who had not seen Him now for many months, and who, if they had not heard of it before, must have heard now at Jericho of all that had happened at the two preceding feasts of Tabernacles and Dedication, of His last great miracle at Bethany, of the great excitement that had been created, and of the resolution of the Sanhedrin to put Him to death. And now He goes up to face these rulers, to throw Himself, as they fancy, upon the support of the people, to unfold the banner of a new kingdom, and call on all His followers to rally around it. His Galilean friends heartily go in with what they take to be His design; they find the people generally concurring in and disposed to further them. One can imagine what was thought and felt, and hoped and feared, by those who accompanied Jesus as He left Jericho. A few hours walks would now carry Him and them to the metropolis. It was Friday, the eighth day of their Jewish month Nisan. The next day was Saturday, their Jewish sabbath. On the Thursday following the lamb was to be slain, and the Passover festival commence. The great body of the travelers press on, to get into the town before the sun set, when the sabbath commences. Jesus and His disciples turn aside at Bethany, where the house of Martha and Mary and Lazarus stands open to receive them. Here in this peaceful retreat the next day is spent, a quiet sabbath for our Lord before entering on the turmoil of the next few days. The companions of His last day's journey have in the meantime passed into Jerusalem. It is already thronged with those who had come up from the country to purify themselves for the feast. With one and all the engrossing topic is Jesus of Nazareth. Gathering in the courts of the temple, they ask about Him, they hear what had occurred; they find that "both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that if any man knew where He was, he should show it, that they might take Him." What in the face of such an order, will Jesus do? "What think ye," they say to one another, "that He will not come to the feast?" But now they hear from the newly arrived from Jericho that He is coming, means to be at the feast, is already at Bethany. They hear that Lazarus, the man whom He so recently had raised from the dead, is also there. He may not have been there till now. He may have accompanied Jesus

to Ephraim, or chosen some other place of temporary retreat, for a bitter enmity had sprung up against him as well as against Jesus. "The chief priest had consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death, because that by reason of him many of the Jews believed on Jesus". Whether he had retired for a time or not, Lazarus is now at Bethany. Many, unable to restrain their curiosity, go out to the village, "not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also". It was but a short distance, not much more than the Sabbath-day's journeys. During this day, while Jesus and Lazarus are there together, many visitors go forth to feast their eyes upon the sight, and on returning to quicken the excitement among the multitude.

It was on the evening of the Saturday, when the Sabbath was over, and the next, the first day of the week, had begun, that they made Jesus a supper in the house of Simon, who once had been a leper, some near relative in all likelihood of the family of Lazarus, and Jesus sits at this feast between the one whom He had cured of his leprosy and the other whom He had raised from the dead. Martha serves. She had not so read the rebuke before administered to her as to believe that serving—the thing that she most liked, to which her disposition and her capabilities at once prompted her—was in itself unlawful or improper, that her only duty was to sit and listen. But she had so profited by the rebuke that, concerned that she is that all due care be taken that this feast be well got through, she turns now no jealous look upon her sister, leaves Mary without murmuring or reproach to do as she desires. And Mary seizes the opportunity now given. She has not now Jesus to herself. She cannot as in the privacy of her own dwelling, sit down at His feet to listen to the gracious words coming from His lips. But she has an alabaster phial of fragrant ointment—her costliest possession—one treasured up for some unknown but great occasion. That occasion has arrived. She gets it, brings it, approaches Jesus as He sits reclining at the table, pours part of its contents upon His head, and resolves that its whole contents shall be expended upon this office. She compresses the yielding material of which the phial was composed, breaks it, and pours the last drop of it upon His feet, flinging away the relics of the broken vessel, and wiping His feet with her hair. Kingly guests at royal banquets could not have had a costlier homage of the kind rendered to him. That Mary had in her possession so rich a treasure may be accepted as one of the many signs that her family was one of the wealthiest in the village. That she now took and spent the whole of it upon Jesus, was but a final expression of the fulness and the intensity of her devotion and love.

Held hidden behind the Saviour's reclining form, she might have remained unnoticed, but the fragrant odour rose and filled the house, and drew attention to

her deed. Cold and searching and jealous eyes are upon her, chiefly those of one who never had any cordial love to Jesus, who never had truly sympathized with the homage rendered Him, who held the bag, had got himself appointed keeper of the small purse they had in common, who already had been tampering with the trust, and greedily filching from the narrow stores committed to his care. Love, so ardent, consecration, so entire, sacrifice, so costly, as that of Mary, he could not appreciate. He disliked it, condemned it; it threw such a reproach by contrast upon his own feeling and conduct to Christ. And now to his envious, avaricious spirit it appears that he had good ground for censure. He had been watching the movements of Mary, had seen her bring forth the phial, had measured its size, had gauged the quantity, estimated the quality, and calculated the value of its contents. And now he turns to his fellow disciples, and whispers in their ears the indivious question, "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?" Three hundred pence, equal to the hire of a laborer for a whole year,—a sum capable of relieving many a child of poverty, or bringing relief to many a house of want. Had Judas got the money into his own hands, instead of being all lavished on this act of outward attention, had it been thrown into the common stock, it would have been upon the poor that it should have been spent. He would have managed that no small part of the money should have had a very different direction given to it. But it serves his mean malicious object to suggest that such might have been its destination. And by his craft, which has a show in it of a wise and thoughtful benevolence, he draws more than one of his fellow-apostles along with him, so that not loud but deep, the murmuring runs around the table, and they say to one another, "To what purpose is this waste? This ointment might have been sold for so much, and given to the poor."

Mary hears the murmuring, sees the eyes of one and another turned askance and condemningly upon her, shrinks under the distracting criticism of the Lord's own apostles, begins to wonder whether she may not have done something wrong, been guilty of a piece of extravagance which even Jesus may perhaps condemn. It had been hard for her before to bear the reproach of the twelve. But neither then nor now did she make an answer, offer any defense of herself. She did not need to. She had one to do that office for her far better that she could have done it for herself. Jesus is there to throw the mantle of His protection over her, to explain and to vindicate her deed. "Let her alone," He said, "why trouble ye the woman? she hath wrought a good work upon me." He might have singled out the first adverse criticiser of Mary's act, the suggester and propagator of the censorious judgment that was making its round of the table. Then and there he might expose the hollowness, the hypo-

crisy of the pretence about his caring for the poor, upon which the condemnation of Mary was based. And doing so, He might have made the others blush that they had given such ready ear to a speech that such a mean and malignant spirit had first broached. He did not do this, at least He said nothing that had any peculiar and exclusive reference to Judas. But there must have been something in our Lord's manner,—a look perhaps, such as He bent afterwards upon Peter in the judgment hall,—that let Judas know that before Jesus he stood a detected thief and hypocrite. And it was not to weep bitterly that he went forth from that supper, but with a spirit so galled and fretted that he took the earliest opportunity that occurred to him to commune with the chief priests and the temple guard as to how he might betray his Master, and deliver Him into their hands.

Loosing sight of him, let us return to Christ's defence of Mary. "She hath done a good work," he said, "a noble work, one not only far from censure, but worthy of all praise. She had done it unto Me, done it out of pure love—a love that will bring the best, the costliest thing she has, and think it no waste, but rather its fittest, worthiest application, to bestow it upon me." Upon that ground alone, upon His individual claims as compared with all others, Jesus might well have rested His vindication of Mary's act. Nay, might He not have taken the censure of her as a disparagement of Himself? All these His general claims,—which go to warrant the highest, costliest, most self-sacrificing services that an enthusiastic piet can render,—He in this instance is content to waive, fixing upon the peculiarity of His existing position and the specialty of the peculiar service that she had rendered, as supplying of themselves an ample justification of the deed that had been condemned. The claims of the poor had been set up, as if they stood opposed to any such expenditure of property as that made by Mary in the anointing of the Saviour. It was open to Christ to say that it was an altogether needless, false, injurious conflict thus sought to be stirred up,—as if to give to Him, to do anything for Him, were to take so much from the poor; as if no portion of the great fund of the church's wealth was available for any purely devout and religious purpose till all the wants of the poor were met and satisfied—the wants, be it remembered, of such a kind that though we supplied them all today, would emerge in some new form tomorrow—wants which it is impossible so to deal with as wholly permanently to relieve. He is no enlightened pleader for the poor who would represent them and their necessities as standing in the way of the indulgence of those warm impulses of love to Christ, out of which princely benefactions, as well as many a deed of heroic self-sacrifice, ceeping, disparaging,—has often even crept into the christian society, and men bearing the name of Jesus have often been ready, when

donations on behalf of some strictly religious enterprise were spoken of, to condemn them off-hand on the one ground, that it would have been much better had the money been bestowed upon the poor.

It is, however, as has already been said, upon somewhat narrower ground that Christ vindicates the act of Mary. It was one of such personal attention to Him as could be shown to Him only while He was present in the flesh. "The poor," said He, "ye have with you always, and whensoever ye will, ye may do them good, but me ye have not always." Further still, it was one that but chance only in all His earthly life could be shown to Jesus, for "in that she hath poured this ointment on Me, she is come beforehand to anoint My body for the burial." Had Mary any definite idea that she was doing beforehand what Joseph and Nicodemus would have no time and opportunity for doing, what the two other Mary's would go out to do to find on-y that the need for its being done was over and gone? It may be assuming too much for her to believe that with a clearer insight and a simpler faith in what Jesus had said than had been yet reached by any of the twelve, she anticipated the death and burial of her master was near at hand. But neither can we think that she acted without some vague presentiment that she was seizing upon a last opportunity, that the days of such intercourse with Jesus were drawing to an end. She knew the perils to which He would be exposed whenever He entered Jerusalem. She had heard Him speak of His approaching sufferings and death. To others the words might appear to be without meaning, or only to be allegorically interpreted, but the quick instinct of her deeper love had refused to regard them so, and they had filled her bosom with an infinite dread. The nearer the time for loosing, the more intense became the clinging to Him. Had she believed as the others around her did, had she looked forward to a speedy triumph of Jesus over all His enemies, and to the visible erection of His kingdom, would she have chosen the time she did for the anointing? Would she not have reserved to a more appropriate to the crowning of a new monarch than the preparing of a living body for the tomb? In speaking as He did, Jesus may have been only attributing to Mary a fuller understanding of and a simpler faith in His own prophetic utterances than that possessed at the time by any of His disciples. Such a conception of her state of mind would elevate Mary to a still higher pinnacle than that ordinarily assigned to her, and we can see no good reason for doubting that it was even so.

But it does not require that we should assign to her any such pre-eminence of faith. It was the intensity of the personal attachment to Jesus that her act expressed which drew down upon it the encomium of the Lord. Thus He had to say of it what He could say of so few single services of any of His followers—that

in it she did what she could, did all she could—in that direction there was not a step further that she could have taken. Of all like ways and forms of expressing attachment there was not a higher one that she could have chosen. Her whole heart of love went out in the act, and therefore Jesus said of it, “Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her,”—the one and only case in which Jesus ever spoke of the after earthly fame of any service rendered to Him, predicting for it such a wide-spread reputation and such an undying remembrance. Thus said Chrysostom, when discoursing upon this instance, “While the victories of many kings and generals are lost in silence, and many who have founded states and reduced nations to subjection, are not known by reputation or by name, the pouring of ointment by this woman is celebrated throughout the whole world. Time hath passed away, but the memory of the deed she did hath not waned away. But Persians and Indians and Scythians and Thracians, and the race of the Mauritanians, and they who inhabit the British Isles, publish abroad an act which was done in Judea privately in a house by a woman”. Fourteen hundred years have passed and gone, since in the great church of St. Sophia at Constantinople, Chrysostom uttered these words, referring to the British Isles, as one of the remotest places of the then known world. The centuries that have rolled by since then have witnessed many a revolution. Still wider and wider is the tale of Mary’s anointing of her master being told, the fragrance of the ointment spreading, yet loosing nothing of its sweetness, such fresh vitality, such self-preserving power, lodging in a simple act of pure and fervid love.

One single parting glance let us cast upon our Saviour as He presents Himself to our eye upon this occasion. He sits at a festive board. He is surrounded by men looking joyously forward to days and years of success and triumph. But He knows what they do not—that on that day of the week His body will be lying in the new-made sepulchre. And He accepts the anointing at Mary’s hand as preparing His body for the burial. He sits the invited guest of a man who had been a leper, surrounded in that village home by a few humble followers. With serene eye he looks down into the future, and abroad over the earth, and speaks of it as a thing of certainty that this Gospel—the Gospel of glad tidings of salvation in His name—was to be preached throughout the whole world. If it be true that Jesus thought and felt and spoke and acted as the Evangelists represent Him as having done that night, I do not need to say how vain the attempt to explain away His knowledge of the future, to reduce it to the dimensions of the highest human wisdom sagaciously anticipating what was afterwards to occur.

G. M. O.

I So Run

Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize. So run that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air; But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

I Cor. 9:24-27.

I so run, declared the apostle. He refers to the race set before him and his brethren by the Lord. To bring this race into sharp relief, he avails himself of a figure taken from the Greek game of running-match. There are in a purely formal sense certain points of convergence between the Christian race and the aforesaid Greek game. The Greek athlete ran with a view to obtaining a crown; so, too, the believer. During some months that preceded the race, the Greek athlete would be temperate in all things. The believer keeps under his body and brings it into subjection. Only one of all the athletes who participated, obtained the prize. Only some of those who run the Christian race obtain the crown.

This agreement however is purely formal. There is an essential difference between the Christian race and the race of the Greek athletes. He, of the latter, who gained the mastery, received a corruptible prize. The crown, which the believers obtain, is incorruptible. There is essential difference between this preliminary engagement of the Greek athlete—an engagement that consisted in keeping under his body—and the same action as done by the believer. It all means that the Christian race is the reality.

“I so run. . . .” Consider that the apostle was a minister of the gospel, the shepherd of sheep. With great boldness he can admonish his brethren, the sheep, to so run that they might obtain, as he so runs. So then, what we have to do with here is an admonition of a pastor who can say that he does the thing he bids his sheep to do, that he will to be bound by the word with which he comes to them. He is a shepherd, therefore, who can direct the minds of the sheep to his person and say, Do as I do. So run that ye may obtain. Let us now direct our attention to the manner of Paul’s running.

As has already been suggested, the apostle has before his eye the race, set before us by the Lord. What is this christian race? Wherein does the running consist? Can this race be known, singled out and defined? It surely can or how could it be run? This

race can be known as it is set before our eye by the Lord in His Word. It was the sacred writer of the Hebrews, who in the twelfth chapter of his epistle, admonished his readers to run this race. A careful study of the surroundings of this exhortation brings to light that this race is the aggregate of all that the child of grace experiences in this hostile world on account of his confessing the name of His Saviour and of his witnessing for the truth. This race, is a way or course of cross-bearing, of suffering with Christ and for the sake of His name, a way of trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, of bonds and imprisonment for some; for others of being stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword, of wandering about in sheepskins and goatskins, of being destitute, afflicted, tormented. For all it is a way of suffering. For it is a way of witnessing for the truth, of being strangers and pilgrims in the earth, of keeping His commandments. But for this reason it is also a way of walking with God, of walking in the light of His countenance, of fellowship with Him, of being kept by His power and thus a way of spiritual triumph. For consider that by faith the walls of Jerusalem fell down. By faith some in this course subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again; but—others were tortured. . . .

This then is the course set before us. Did Christ not say, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me? This cross is the symbol of suffering. We take it up and follow Him. Whither? To the Father's house through fire and water.

The running of this race consists in living in that particular place of this earth where the Lord stations us, from the principle of faith and in agreement with His Word. Every one occupies a place in this earthy, in the state, in society, in the church. The place of the minister of the Gospel in the congregation of Christ is that of the servant of the Word. And the will of God for him is that as constrained by love of Christ he declare the full counsel of God, properly divide the Word, take home to his own heart the truth he proclaims to others and thus crown his confession with a godly conversation. Doing so, he confesses Christ's name in the circle of his flock and thus runs the race that is set before him. The minister of the Gospel must know that for him, too, the only way that leads home is this course of cross-bearing. He, too, must suffer for the sake of the truth for which he witnesses. How could it be otherwise. Consider that he is pastor, keeper of the sheep entrusted into his care, that thus he is in duty bound to station himself at the head of his flock and run the race. He therefore leads the

way and is thus the first to encounter the thief who cometh to steal and to kill and to destroy. And if he be a good shepherd, he fleeth not when he sees the wolf coming, but holds his grounds and lays down, if need be, his life for the sheep.

It was with a view to this race or course and the running in it that the apostle wrote to his brethren at Corinth, Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? Of all those who run, there was one who first reached the goal. He only received the prize. The reason for the failure of the others was that they had not sufficiently exerted themselves. The race had proven too exacting. Some had dropped exhausted by the way. Others, losing heart, had voluntarily given up the strife. In a word, these others, for whatever reason, had not run properly, had not so run as to obtain.

With these failures before his eye, the apostle, passing in his mind from the figure to the reality, exhorted his brethren to so run that they might obtain. This exhortation must imply that not all who run in this true race, obtain. Someone may ask, is this possible? In view of the fact that all who run are children of God, must not all receive a crown? Would not failure on the part of anyone of these mean that an elect one perishes? But the saints persevere. Hence all obtain.

Now it is certain that all the elect receive a crown, which means that all these persevere to the end. There is a prize not merely for the lone runner, but for the many. And they all must obtain. Consider that the incorruptible prize forms the content of Christian hope, of the promise; that this hope, as an anchor of the soul, lies buried, so to say, in the unchangeable counsel of the Almighty. The crown was merited by Christ for all true Christian athletes. All without a single exception must therefore obtain. The crown is theirs. To it they have a right that cannot be disputed; for with Christ they were crucified, buried, risen and set in heaven where they were blessed with all spiritual blessings. This crown is theirs so that they run not to merit but to obtain. Their grant upon it is a gift of grace. And they run in the power of their Saviour.

But is there not danger of any of their number being destroyed by the wolves among whom they are sent before the race is run and the goal reached? Have no fear. Even the race is a gift of grace. It is one of the treasures merited; for unto them it is given in the behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him but also to suffer for His sake, having the same conflict. Hence no wolf may kill before the race is run; no wolf can kill before the goal is reached. For the power of the adversary is Christ's. Without His will, it cannot destroy. When the destroyer kills, the race has been run, the prize obtained and the

spiritual athlete is translated into a blessed eternity. It is utterly impossible for these not to so run that they obtain. However not all who run are true children of God. There are the sham athletes whose running is not true. Rightly considered they run not at all; neither are they truly in the race on the course that leadeth to the celestial city but on a way of corruption that ends in eternal night.

But seemingly they run. And as far as men can judge, they run well, like the Pharisees of Christ's day, who made long prayers, compassed sea and land to make one proselyte, cast their gifts in the treasury of the temple, payed tithe of mint, made clean the outside of the cup and the platter, built the tombs of the prophets. How well apparently some of these men at first do. They hear the word and anon with joy receive it. They say, Lord, Lord; prophesy in His name, in His name cast out devils, and do many wonderful works. They are enlightened, taste of the heavenly gift, are made partakers of the Holy Ghost, taste the good word of God and the powers of the world to come. And yet they obtain no crown; for they do not so run.

It was with these runners before his eye, that the apostle directed to his brethren the exhortation, Ye know that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize. Likewise they who run in the spiritual race run all, but only some receive the crown incorruptible. So run that ye may obtain. The apostle here addresses himself to the true children of God, the real spiritual athletes. These, as was said, must obtain. The certainty of this, however, does not render the exhortation with which we here have to do superfluous. These true athletes have need of this word. For though they must obtain, they can derive no comfort from this blessed necessity unless they know that they are truly Christ's. Will they know, they must so run; for it is only in combination with their hallowed efforts that the Spirit of God testifieth with their spirit that they are His children. Hence, they must so run would they have this assurance.

But even the true spiritual athlete does not always so run except in principle. For he has but a small beginning of the true obedience. Sin still worketh in his members. When the ego joins the principle of sin, the body of this death prevails and the race is not being properly run. This occurs. And though it is God who causes them to depart from His ways, for God doeth all things, yet are they held accountable for their defections. The admonition is thus needful and proper. The true athlete hears. As invigorated by grace he runs with new zeal.

So run therefore. The running must be properly done. It must be accompanied by a certain self-discipline and frame of mind and heart if it be properly done. What is this frame of mind? Wherein

does this self-discipline consist? And the answer of the apostle, I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection. . . .

I so run, not as uncertainly. . . . He who so runs is uncertain whether he would run at all. A firm resolve is lacking to him. His frame of heart is that of doubt. We know from ordinary life the behaviour of a man who walks or runs in this state of mind. The man is on his way, let us say, to the home of some friend and the journey is perilous. So he is undecided whether or not to pursue his way to the end. Hence his walking is sporadic. There is no spring to his step. His feet lag as if of lead. He slackens his pace. From his mouth proceed strange mutterings. His visage betokens a soul filled with reasonings. The man debates with himself. And the issue debated is whether or no the journey shall be continued. The man cannot make up his mind, so he finally comes to a complete standstill and lies down beside the way, a bundle of conflicting sentiments. The outcome is that he finally rises to his feet and makes for home. It is reasonable to assume that the behaviour of this man finds its explanation in the circumstance that the home of his friend did not sufficiently attract, that there were other interests that pulled at the strings of his heart, that this pull was so strong as to have completely broken down his morale; that mental state and moral condition which renders a man capable of endurance and of exhibiting courage in the presence of danger. This man walked as uncertainly and the sub-soil of his manner of conduct was his double mind.

So there are spiritual athletes who run as uncertainly. They are the people of whom James wrote, the double minded men, unstable in all their ways, the men with two faces and two hearts, who think it possible to serve two masters, not considering that only one of the masters can and is being actually loved. And the master loved is always mammon, the world. And the things upon which the affections are being set, are without exception the things on earth, not the things above. Rightly considered therefore they are men with only one heart, a heart whose treasure-house is this world. Is it to be wondered at that these men, though seemingly in the race, do not so run, that the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, so that they become unfruitful; that when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, they are offended and take to cover and at the first opportunity rush back into the world and return like a sow that was washed to their wallowing in the mire?

The apostle was not one of these. He walked as certainly. In this race, he exerted himself, bended every effort, strained every muscle. Forgetting those things which are behind, he reached forth unto those things

which are before and pressed toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. For he was a man with one heart and the affections of that heart were set on the crown. His treasure house was the sanctuary above. What things were gain to him—his having been circumcized the eighth day, his being of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, his being a Pharisee as touching the law, his being blameless as touching the righteousness which is in the law, yea, all things—he counted loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord for whom he suffered the loss of all things and did count them but dung, that he might win Christ. . . . if by any means he might know Him in the power of His resurrection of the dead. . . .

He ran as certainly; for he was decided. The one thing that had captivated his hallowed imagination was the crown. The only interests that pulled at his heart were the interests of God. The only treasure he possessed was in heaven. The only master he loved and served was Christ. There was a spring to his step. His feet had wings; for the reasonings of his heart were, I must so run that may obtain. So he ran with patience the race that was set before him, looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of his faith and considering that He for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despised the shame and was set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

The apostle so ran. Yet it must not be supposed that he was not a man of like passions as we, that there was not to him a *body of this death* with which to contend, that thus he was a saint of such near perfection that he fell completely outside our class. Sin also worked in his members. There was also to him a body that had to be kept under and brought into subjection. But the excellency of Paul the Christian consisted in this that with all the hallowed vigor that was his, he set himself against the man of sin in him. The reason he so ran and ran so well is that in the power of God and by the grace of his Christ he disciplined with ever increasing earnestness that body of his.

“But I keep my body under and bring it into service.” The *body* is not the same as the old man of sin, for the latter is not brought into service but must be put off; nor are we to think here of the flesh as it, too, must be mortified. However, the connection between the body that is to be brought into service and the old man of sin is so close that when the former is buffeted the latter is being put off. The body of which the apostle here speaks is the soul with its faculties together with the body and all its members through which the soul functions. The soul sees through the eye, hears through the ear and casts its thoughts in the framework of a human language through the physical organs of speech. Now the entire man, according to soul and body, is a slave to sin. In

all the members of this man sin operates, in the mind, will and affections. Through the physical organs of the soul sin attains to self-expression. Therefore it is written that the throat of man is an open sepulchre, that with his tongue he uses deceit, that the poison of asps is under the lips, that his mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, that his feet are swift to shed blood, that destruction and misery is in his way, that the way of peace he knows not, that there is no fear of God before his eye.

But the apostle keeps under his body and brings it into service. It means that he smites these members, his eye, his ear, his hand and his feet and his will, mind and affections whose organs these physical members are and thus through the smiting of these members mortifies his flesh, the old man of sin in him, with the result that sins grip weakens so that these members, as released, the whole man as to body and soul, are now set by the renewed person of the spiritual athlete as instruments of righteousness to God.

Wherein does this buffeting consist. Not certainly in literally smiting the ear, the foot and the ear, but it consists in saying to the eye when it would behold sin, to the ear when it would hearken unto the voice of sin, to the mouth when it would curse, to the tongue when it would sting, to the throat when it would emit the filth of that hidden sepulchre, to the feet when they would swiftly run to shed blood, *it shall not be*. It consists, this buffeting of the body, in the new man setting himself against and crushing the evil thought, desire, inclination and affection. But to this something must be added. Consider that, irrespective of how earnestly the spiritual athlete buffets his body, his complaint continues to be, For I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I know not. For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Such was the complaint of Paul. If there are holiest men, this is the kind of a saint that he was. This complaint of his is the evidence that he knew self: and this self-knowledge was the fruit of earnest heart-searchings. He knew his thoughts, his desires, the impulses of self, the motives from which actions spring. He was aware that his most hallowed thoughts, his loftiest desires, his noblest impulses and best motives were so contaminated with the contagion of sin, so mixed with the issues of the flesh. Knowing self as he did, it was a way with him to repent constantly in dust and ashes, to hide himself in his Saviour, to petition the Throne for power to carry on as spiritual athlete, to buffet ever more tellingly his body and to bring it into subjection. And we can imagine him resolving, “I will hear the work that Thou hast wrought, my eye will be continually upon Thee. My tongue shall declare thy righteousness and thy praise all the day. With my

feet I will walk in wisdom's ways. I will lift up my hand to Thy sanctuary. Thy righteousness will be the girdle of my loins. With thy gospel will I shod my feet. Hope will be my helmet, and righteousness my breastplate. So did the Spirit of Christ resolve through him.

We'll did Paul understand that Christ strove through him, that if his deliverance had to come forth from self, he was doomed, that his hope therefore was Christ. The same man therefore who complained, O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death? also joyed, I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This spiritual exercise, certainly, forms an important element in this buffeting of the body.

In the battle he waged with his body, Paul did not fight as one that beateth the air. So the children of the world fight. For, consider that, as has already been suggested, they, too, run in a race on a course that ends in eternal death. It is the course or way of sin, of worldly ambition, of a serving of the flesh and the devil, a way of worldly pleasure. The crown that they who run this course set before their eye is a crown corruptible; wealth, honor, earthly renown and the like. And how some of these children buffet their bodies, discipline self, that as runners they may be fit. As Paul says, they are temperate in all things, temperate in their eating, in their drinking, in all their enjoyments. How they steel themselves to curb their appetites. Knowing that they cannot achieve without the aid and goodwill of their fellow men, they bridle their tongues and their tempers and throw off any habit that stands between them and success. They are gentle, kind and engaging, liberal and big-hearted. They flatter, praise and conjole all in the attempt to work their way into the good graces of men. They adorn their visage with a permanent smile. How well they succeed, while achieving, in keeping under the body.

But they are ever beating the air. They love the very man they bind. Even in binding this man, they set their members as instruments of unrighteousness to self. Self they seek. In self they end. Se'f they exalt. Before self they prostrate themselves. For self is their god. They therefore do not, rightly considered, buffet the real self, the sinful self, the body of this death, the man of sin. This man they love. They thirst after righteousness and God. They do not therefore combat the real foe but for selfish reasons mere'y curb for a time a few of its accesses. They therefore beat the air.

Their combat is therefore vanity. All is vanity here: the course run, for the way of the ungodly will perish; the crown obtained, for the world and all that is out of the world will pass away; the running, for the course run is a way of death, a slippery place upon

which the Almighty casts them down into eternal destruction; the runners themselves, for all their thoughts are that there is no God.

But as to Paul, as to the true Christian athlete, it is the man of sin upon whom he rains his blows. His desire is to be delivered of this man, for he loves God and knows that only the pure of heart can see God. Hence, he sanctifies himself. He therefore beats not the air. For Christ who combats through him will deliver him from the body of death, when the course is run.

So run that ye may obtain—a crown incorruptible. Bring into subjection the body. It is reasonable that you do so. For you run in a race. Even the children of the world are temperate in all things to obtain a corruptible crown. Will we not buffet our bodies to obtain the incorruptible prize. Such is the apostle's reasoning.

I so run. . . . lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. The irony of this, should it occur. But it could not occur for Paul was Christ's. This he himself knew, because he so ran and thus made sure his calling and election.

G. M. O.

WE FOLLOW THEE

With enemies on ev'ry side,
We lean on thee, the Crucified;
Forsaking all on earth beside
We follow thee.

O Master, point thou out the way,
Nor suffer thou our steps to stray;
Then in that path that leads today
We follow thee.

Thou hast passed on before our face;
Thy footsteps on the way we trace;
O, keep us, aid us by thy grace:
We follow thee.

Whom have we in the heaven above,
Whom on this earth, save thee, to love?
Still in thy light we onward move;
We follow thee.

Keep time with God, await His call;
And step by step march boldly on;
And thus thou shalt not faint nor fall,
And thus shalt wear the victor's crown.