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MEDITATIE

Met Heerlijkheid en Eer Gekroond

> Maar wij zien Jezus, met heerlijkheid en eer gekroond, Die een weinig minder dan de engelen geworden was, vanwege het lijden des doods, opdat Hij door de genade Gods voor allen den dood smaken zou.
>
> Hebr. 2:9.

Maar wij zien Jezus!

Hem zien we reeds met heerlijkheid en eer gekroond!

En in die heerlijkheid en eer van Jezus, onzen Heere, ons Hoofd, onzen Goël, Die voor ons allen het lijden des doods heeft ondergaan en den dood gesmaakt, zien wij reeds de centrale vervulling van het Goddelijke Woord der rijke belofte, door de eeuwen heen den erfgenamen der belofte bezworen!

Wij zien nog niet alles.

Het Woord heeft nog niet zijn eindelijke vervulling bereikt.

Want immers heeft dat Woord ergens van den mensch betuigd, dat God hem onder alle schepselen gedenkt, dat Hij des menschen zoon bezoekt; dat Hij hem wel een weinig minder gemaakt heeft dan de engelen, maar in Zijn eeuwig welbehagen hem met eer en heerlijkheid heeft gekroond en over al de werken Zijner handen, in hemel en op aarde heeft gesteld; dat Hij alle dingen zijnen voeten heeft onderworpen, zoodat niets uitgelaten is, dat hem niet onderworpen zou zijn! Nooit te overschatten rijkdom van heerlijkheid en eer heeft dat Goddelijke Woord den erfgenamen beloofd!

Dat zien wij nog niet.

Nog altijd zien wij den mensch, een weinig minder dan de engelen. Hij bezit nog niet die heerlijkheid en eer en heerscht nog niet over alle de werken van Gods handen.

En toch zien we veel meer van de vervulling der belofte dan ooit tevoren gezien werd.

Want Jezus is gekomen en, evenals de kinderen, een weinig minder geworden dan de engelen.

En Hij heeft het lijden des doods gedragen. En Hij heeft voor allen den dood gesmaakt.

En Hij is opgestaan in heerlijkheid!

Opgevaren is Hij in de hoogte!

Met heerlijkheid en eer gekroond zien wij Hem!

Hem, des menschen Zoon!

Met heerlijkheid en eer gekroond!

Hij, de Zoon des menschen, die een weinig minder geworden was dan de engelen!

Want Hij had het vleesch en bloed der kinderen aangenomen en was in alles den broederen gelijk geworden.

Hij was niet den broederen gelijk. Hij is niet, afgedacht van die vrijwillige aanname van het vleesch en bloed der kinderen, een weinig minder dan de engelen. Hij is van eeuwigheid tot eeuwigheid in de gestaltenis Gods. Hij is God uit God, te prijzen tot in der eeuwigheid, Heer des hemels en der aarde, Souverein in Zichzelven, oneindig hoog boven alle macht en kracht, nooit te vergelijken met mensch of engel, de Heerlijke, de Geheel Andere, GOD! . . . .

Maar Hij *werd!*

Wonder der wonderen, God *wordt!*

De Eeuwig Zijnde wordt! De Eeuwige komt in den tijd! De Oneindige gaat in het eindige in! De Heer van hemel en aarde wordt een weinig minder dan de engelen.

De Zijnde wordt en blijft toch de Zijnde! De Eeuwige gaat in den tijd in en blijft toch de Eeuwige! De Onveranderlijke God wordt veranderlijk mensch, kind des tijds, Zoon des menschen, en blijft toch de Onveranderlijke. De Heer, Die knecht wordt, is toch nog eeuwig de Heere; en als Hij de gestaltenis eens dienstknechts aangenomen heeft is Hij toch eeuwiglijk in de

de gestaltenis Gods. De hemelen scheuren en de Zoon daalt op aarde neder, maar is toch eeuwiglijk in den boezem des Vaders. God wordt een weinig minder dan de engelen en is toch GOD! Hij wordt ons gelijk en is toch de Geheel Andere! Wonder der wonderen! Groot is de verborgenheid der godzaligheid, God is geopenbaard in het vleesch! . . . .

Want daarin toch, dat Hij vleesch werd, is Hij een weinig minder geworden dan de engelen!

Niet in Zijn lijden.

Niet in Zijn smaken van onzen dood.

In dat lijden is Hij immers niet een *weinig* minder dan de engelen, maar de minste onder de minsten van Gods schepselen, nog minder dan de allerminste op deez' aard! Dan is Hij de onwaardigste onder de menschen, de verguisde onder de verguisden, de misdadiger onder de misdadigers, de gansch verachte, vertrapte, de uitgeworpene, de Paria! Dan is Hij ingegaan in de benedenste deelen der aarde; dan wordt Hij in 't bangste oogenblik Zijns lijdens de van God verlatene. 't Zou meer dan spot zijn om dat vreeselijk lijden aan te duiden, te kenschetsen als een weinig minder worden dan de engelen!

Neen, maar in Zijn vleeschwording werd Hij een weinig minder dan de engelen.

Een weinig minder dan de engelen, minder in heerlijkheid en macht en eer, minder zooals de aarde minder is dan de hemel, minder omdat de mensch niet ziet het aangezicht des Vaders, die in de hemelen is, werd de mensch geschapen. Wel had ook hij eer en heerlijkheid. Wel was hij koning, bekleed met macht en heerschappij over de aardsche schepping. Wel was hij geformeerd naar den beelde Gods en was hij er op aangelegd om veel grooter en meerder te worden dan de engelen. Wel was het zijne bestemming, naar het wonderlijke welbehagen des Heeren, om gezet te worden over de werken van Gods handen in hemel en op aarde. Maar die bestemming had hij bij zijne schepping niet bereikt. Die bestemming zou hij eerst bereiken na een diepen weg van zonde en dood en lijden, en dat niet uit zichzelven, maar in Jezus, den God zijner volkomene zaligheid! En toen de Zoon het vleesch en bloed der kinderen aannam, in alles hun gelijk werd uitgenomen de zonde, werd ook Hij een weinig minder dan de engelen.

En dien Jezus zien wij thans, in de nieuwe bedeeling, met heerlijkheid en eer gekroond.

Zoo gekroond, niet in Zijne eeuwige, goddelijke natuur, maar in dat vleesch en bloed der kinderen, waarin Hij een weinig minder geworden is dan de engelen. Gekroond, niet als de Zone Gods. Hoe zou toch de eeuwige Zoon Gods in de eeuwige Goddelijke natuur, gekroond kunnen worden? Wie zou Hem kronen, die alleen macht heeft om te kronen? Wie zou Hem met heerlijkheid en eer bekleeden, Wiens alleen alle heerlijkheid en eer is? Neen, maar gekroond als de Zoon des menschen, naar Zijne menschelijke natuur. De Zoon Gods wordt in het vleesch der kinderen een weinig minder dan de engelen; en diezelfde Zoon wordt in het vleesch met heerlijkheid en eer gekroond en gezet verre boven alle macht en kracht en heerschappij en allen naam, die genaamd wordt, niet alleen in deze wereld, maar ook in de toekomende!

Met heerlijkheid wordt Hij gekroond! En heerlijkheid is de uitstraling der deugden van Hem, Die alleen heerlijk is! En als de Zoon in het vleesch met heerlijkheid wordt gekroond, dan worden Hem in de menschelijke natuur, naar lichaam en ziel krachten en gaven, macht en deugden geschonken, die de Goddelijke deugden in hemelschen glans door Zijne menschelijke natuur reflecteeren. De Goddelijke Zoon Gods straalt door de Zoon des menschen heen!

Gekroond wordt Hij met eer. Want onder alle schepselen neemt Hij de hoogste positie in aan de rechterhand des Vaders en alle knie moet voor Hem zich buigen en alle tong moet Hem de eere toebrengen, dat Hij de Heer is!

Met heerlijkheid en eer wordt Hij *gekroond*. Gekroond, niet als met een koningskroon, maar als met een kroon der eere!

Want heerlijkheid en eere sieren Hem eeuwiglijk als een kroon der overwinning!

Hem is gegeven alle macht in hemel en op aarde!

Hij is gezet tot een Hoofd boven alle dingen!

Het hoofd der aarde viel in het eerste Paradijs en werd een knecht des duivels.

Het hoofd des hemels viel in Satan, die in opgeblazenheid zijn eigene plaats verliet.

Beider hoofdschap is thans vereenigd in Jezus, de Knecht des Heeren!

Hij is gekroond met heerlijkheid en eer!

Alles moet Hem eeren!

Hem, des menschen Zoon!

Gekroond werd Hij!

Gekroond met heerlijkheid en eer!

Want die heerlijkheid en die eer waren Zijn loon, dat Hem van den Vader was beloofd van voor de grondlegging der wereld. Een loon, dat in rijkdom van heerlijkheid in overeenstemming is met de diepte der ellende, waarin Hij Zich om 's Vaders wil en voor de broederen stortte.

Vrijwilliglijk toch werd Hij, Die de Heere is van alles, een weinig minder dan de engelen.

Vrijwilliglijk werd Hij, Die eeuwiglijk in de gestaltenis Gods is, den broederen, Hem van den Vader gegeven, in alles gelijk. De Heere des hemels werd aardsche Knecht des Heeren!

Maar ook zoo is alles niet gezegd.

Niet omdat Hij een weinig minder geworden is dan de engelen, niet slechts omdat Hij het vleesch en bloed der kinderen aannam, werd Hij met eer en heerlijkheid gekroond, maar "vanwege het lijden des doods". Zoo

toch moet hier het Goddelijke Woord worden gelezen. Niet: Hij werd een weinig minder dan de engelen vanwege het lijden des doods; maar: met heerlijkheid en eer is Hij gekroond vanwege het lijden des doods. Zoo is het de bedoeling der Schrift hier. En zoo getuigt de Schrift het steeds. Zijn heerlijkheid en eer zijn Zijn Middelaarsloon op den arbeid Zijner ziel. Want, ofschoon Hij in de gestaltenis Gods was en eeuwiglijk is, ofschoon Hij ook in de gestaltenis Gods is naar Zijne Goddelijke natuur, als Hij op aarde wandelt en arbeidt als de Knecht des Heeren, toch kwam het geen oogenblik in Hem op, om naar Zijne menschelijke natuur gelijkheid met God te rooven, of als een ding, dat te rooven is, te beschouwen. Hij was en bleef Knecht des Heeren. Schoon Hij in alles verzocht werd, schoon de Satan bij Hem aandrong om die gelijkheid met God te rooven, Hij bleef onderworpen en gehoorzaam ten einde toe. Schoon het voor Hem, als den Knecht des Heeren, door de diepte moest, door den dood des kruises, schoon Hij als de Knecht des Heeren geroepen werd om Zichzelven te offeren op het altaar der liefde Gods, zooals dat, om der zonde wil, stond op den bodem der hel, toch aarzelde Hij niet, om in die diepte in te gaan, om Zichzelven te vernederen, ja, te vernietigen, en gansch uitgeledigd, het offer der gehoorzaamheid voor de zonde te brengen, dat Gods gerechtigheid eischte . . . .

De ijver van Gods Huis verteerde Hem! Het was Zijn spijze om den wil des Vaders te doen, ook als die wil Hem leidde door de bange diepte der hel!

Zoo leed Hij het lijden des doods!

Hij smaakte den dood, zooals niemand Hem kon smaken!

Want wel was Hij een weinig minder gemaakt dan de engelen, en wel was Hij in alles den broederen gelijk geworden, uitgenomen de zonde; en wel was het in het vleesch, in Zijne menschelijke natuur, dat Hij den dood smaakte; maar dat neemt niet weg, dat het toch de Persoon des Zoons was, Die in die menschelijke natuur den dood smaakte!

De verborgenheid der godzaligheid is groot!

God is geopenbaard in het vleesch!

De Zoon Gods, God uit God, Immanuel, heeft onzen dood gesmaakt aan het vloekhout!

Hij heeft dien dood *gesmaakt!* Hij is niet maar gestorven aan het kruis, maar aan het hout des kruises heeft Hij den dood gesmaakt in al zijn bange volheid van ellende, is Hij ingegaan in die bange diepte, waarin Hij van God verlaten was!

Hij heeft den dood gesmaakt vrijwilliglijk, vrij, om 's Vaders wil, omdat de ijver van Gods Huis Hem verteerde, omdat Hij wilde den wil doen Desgenen, Die Hem gezonden had.

Het smaken des doods was bij Hem een daad! Zijn lijdende gehoorzaamheid is ook dadelijk!

Het was een offer der liefde!

En Zijn offer was volmaakt, omdat het gebracht werd in de reine gehoorzaamheid der liefde; en het was volkomen, omdat Hij den dood zóó vol-smaakte, dat de eeuwige toorn Gods in Zijn offer voor eeuwig werd opgezwolgen.

In één moment leed Hij de toorn der eeuwigheid!

Daarom heeft God Hem ook uitermate verhoogd; zoo hoog verhoogd als Hij Zichzelven diep vernederde!

Met heerlijkheid en eer heeft God Hem gekroond!

Het is alles loon voor den arbeid Zijner ziel!

Naar Gods welbehagen.

Wij zien Jezus!

Ja, door het geloof en in het licht van het Goddelijk getuigenis, zien wij Hem, als de centrale vervulling van het Goddelijke Woord der belofte, dat des menschen zoon, die een weinig minder gemaakt was dan de engelen, met heerlijkheid en eer gekroond zou worden, zoodat hem alle dingen in hemel en op aarde onderworpen zouden zijn!

Neen, wij zien nog niet alles!

Wij zien nog niet, dat ons alle dingen onderworpen zijn.

Maar wij zien toch Jezus!

En in de heerlijkheid en eer van Jezus, Die verhoogd werd aan de rechterhand des Vaders, zien wij toch onze eer en heerlijkheid, zien wij door het geloof de eindelijke vervulling der belofte! Zijne heerlijkheid en eer zijn de heerlijkheid en eer der gemeente!

Van ieder der Zijnen!

Immers, Hij heeft den dood gesmaakt voor allen! Sterker nog staat het er in het oorspronkelijke: opdat Hij voor *ieder* den dood smaken zou! Voor allen en voor ieder en een iegelijk in het bijzonder! Er is niemand uitgesloten, voor wien Hij den dood niet gesmaakt heeft. De zaligheid is voor ieder een voldongen feit! Niet, dat spreekt wel vanzelf, en dat is bovendien uit heel de Schrift wel overvloedig duidelijk, alsof Hij den dood zou gesmaakt hebben voor ieder *mensch*. Dan toch werden ook alle menschen zekerlijk zalig. Neen, het allen en een ieder betreft ook hier Zijnen broederen, dengenen, die Hem van den Vader gegeven zijn, de verkorenen van voor de grondlegging der wereld. Voor hen, ten behoeve van hen smaakte Hij den dood!

Opdat zij zouden deelen in Zijne heerlijkheid en eer!

Zijne opstanding is hunne opstanding, gelijk als Zijn dood hun dood is.

Zijne verhooging is hunne verhooging, want zij zijn met Hem gezet in den hemel, gelijk als zij door Zijnen Geest ook Zijn hemelsch leven reeds in beginsel deelachtig zijn geworden.

Daarom zien zij Jezus, met eer en heerlijkheid gekroond.

De centrale realiseering hunner groote zaligheid!

Bereid om geopenbaard te worden!

In Zijnen dag!

H. H.

EDITORIALS

De Graven der Profeten Opbouwen

We zouden een vergelijking maken tusschen de zaak Machen, over wiens veroordeeling de leiders der Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken zoo ten hoogste verontwaardigd zijn, en onze zaak, zooals die in 1924 werd afgehandeld.

Uit verschillende oogpunten laat zulk een vergelijking zich gemakkelijk treffen.

We kunnen haar maken uit het oogpunt van den materieelen rechtsgrond van de veroordeeling van Dr. Machen en der onze. De vraag is dan: afgedacht nu van de vraag of er verzet in 't spel was tegen de "kerkelijke autoriteiten" ja dan neen, waren er leerstellige of zedelijke gronden voor de veroordeeling van Dr. Machen door de commissie van de presbytery New Brunswick; en waren er zulke gronden voor onze afzetting in 1924?

Het ééne antwoord op deze dubbele vraag moet zijn: beslist niet!

Met de zaak van Dr. Machen staat het zoo, dat hij in den strijd tusschen de modernen en fundamentalisten in de Presbyterische Kerk aan de zijde der laatsten stond en zich een strijder betoonde voor de waarheid van Gods Woord. Hij was overtuigd, dat de kerken, waarin hij een naam en een plaats had, afweken van de waarheid van de Schrift en van de belijdenis, die ze als grondslag aanvaardden. En in die overtuiging twisttte hij met moeder. De strijd liep in de Presbyterische Kerken niet over specifiek Gereformeerde waarheden. Of hierover een strijd zelfs denkbaar ware in die kerken, mag met recht worden betwijfeld. Men week daar reeds veel te ver af. Het werd noodzakelijk om over breeder beginselen te strijden, zooals de werkelijke en eeuwige Godheid van Christus, het plaatsvervangend karakter van Jezus' lijden, de opstanding van Christus en de wederkomst ten oordeel. En in dien strijd stond Dr. Machen op den grondslag van Gods Woord en der belijdenis zijner kerken.

In dit opzicht is de strijd, dien Dr. Machen streed dus gelijk aan den strijd, dien wij streden in de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken vóór 1924.

't Is waar, de laatsten waren niet zoover afgeweken als de Presbyterische Kerken, ofschoon de worsteling, die noodig bleek om de zaak Janssen tot een bevredigende beslissing te leiden, wel toonde, hoe hachelijk het er eigenlijk bij stond. Maar ofschoon men zich nog lang niet zoover van het centrum der waarheid had voortbewogen als thans het geval is met de Presbyterische Kerken van ons land, men bewoog zich in dezelfde richting. De strijd ontspon zich en trok zich samen op het stuk der genade Gods. Het liep over de vraag of die genade souverein-particulier is dan wel algemeen. En in nauw verband met deze hoofdvraag werd gestreden over de kwestie of de natuurlijke mensch het goede kon doen, dan wel totaal verdorven was. En wie begint af te wijken op deze stukken der waarheid, beweegt zich in de richting van het modernisme.

In dezen strijd stonden wij voor de handhaving der waarheid van Gods Woord en der Gereformeerde belijdenis. Haars ondanks moest de synode van 1924 dit getuigenis ons meegeven.

Er was dus geen grond voor de veroordeeling van Dr. Machen. Hij heeft gelijk. De kerken hebben ongelijk, ook als straks de General Assembly het stempel harer goedkeuring zal zetten op zijne veroordeeling. En evenmin was er grond voor de afzetting der ambtsdragers, die door de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in 1924 uit hunne ambten zijn ontzet.

In dit opzicht hebben de leiders der Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken gelijk, als ze met verontwaardiging schrijven over de veroordeeling van den Presbyterischen broeder.

Hierop hebben we geen kritiek.

Alleen maar kenmerken ze zich als doode-profetengraven-versierders, als ze niet terzelfder tijd belijdenis doen van eigen zonden, in 1924 bedreven. Het is hier een geval van den pot, die den ketel verwijt, dat hij zwart is, al is hij zelf ook nog zoo zwart. Zelfs zeggen we niet teveel, als we beweren, dat het een geval is van balk en splinter.

Het wonderbaarlijke van zulke gevallen is altijd, dat men voorbij of dwars door den balk den splinter in 's broeders ook nog zien kan.

Maar: "gij, die een ander leert, leert gij uzelven niet?"

Doch ge merkt op, dat Dr. Machen niet is veroordeeld om zijne leer, maar om zijn verzet tegen de "Wettige autoriteiten der Kerk"!

't Is waar.

En dit biedt ons een tweede oogpunt van vergelijking tusschen de zaak Machen en onze zaak.

Want opmerkelijk is immers, dat ook wij zijn ontzet uit onze ambten door de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in 1924 omdat we ons niet wilden onderwerpen aan de "wettige kerkelijke autoriteiten".

Dat is treffend!

En toch ook weer zeer verklaarbaar. Als er geen materieele grond is voor afzetting en men wil toch veroordeelen, dan kiezen de "wettige autoriteiten der kerk" positie, officieel positie, tegenover het standpunt van den te veroordeelen broeder. Dat standpunt der "kerkelijke autoriteiten" beslist dan voortaan, wat verzet zal heeten. En zoo is het niet te ontkomen. De broeder, die veroordeeld moet worden staat tegenover de "kerkelijke autoriteiten" en als hij zich niet onder-

werpt, wordt hij straks uitgeworpen, niet om de leer, maar om verzet tegen de "autoriteiten"!

't Is een vicieuze cirkel!

Wat zijn autoriteiten?

Eenvoudig menschen, die op een van God verordineerde positie staan, waarin ze de roeping en het gezag hebben om te oordeelen. Ze zitten op den stoel van Mozes!

En *wie* zijn die autoriteiten?

Dat hangt er maar van af. In geval van een kerkelijk lichaam wordt dit eenvoudig door de meerderheid beslist! En als nu die meerderheid niet deugt, afwijkt, den verkeerden weg wil bewandelen, het kwade zoekt? Wat dan? Och, dan is de "kerkelijke autoriteit" in verkeerde handen. En als ge dan het goede zoekt en ge verzet u tegen die "kerkelijke autoriteiten", dan wordt ge opgehangen.

Zoo was 't met Luther, met de Cock, met Kuyper.

Zoo was 't met den Heiland Zelf!

Ge ziet dus, dat het wezenlijk nog niets zegt, als uw vonnis luidt, dat ge zijt uitgeworpen, omdat ge u verzettet tegen de "kerkelijke autoriteiten".

Er is eenvoudig niets tegen te doen.

Alleen het laatste oordeel, dat ook over die "kerkelijke autoriteiten" zal gaan, moet straks beslissen.

Doch nu maakt het nog wel graad-verschil, hoe ernstig dat verzet tegen die autoriteiten was, op grond waarvan iemand veroordeeld wordt.

En als we daarop vergelijkenderwijze letten in de zaak Machen en onze zaak, dan, voorwaar, mag met recht gezegd worden, dat de Christelijke Gereformeerde leiders, die zoo verontwaardigd zich toonen over de veroordeeling van Dr. Machen, dwars door den balk in eigen oog den splinter in 's broeders oog ontwaren!

Want hoe groot was dan Dr. Machen's schuld ten opzichte van die autoriteiten in vergelijking van de onze!

Hij scheidde zich af van de school der kerken, om aan een eigen, zelfstandige inrichting, binnen den kring der kerken, jonge mannen op te leiden tot den dienst des Woords! Zooiets hebben wij nimmer in ons hoofd gehaald, tot we afgezet waren.

Hij was lid van een onafhankelijke zendingscommissie, die protesteerend stond en handelde tegenover den zendingsarbeid zooals de "kerkelijke autoriteiten" die meenden te moeten verrichten! Zulk een brutale houding hebben wij nimmer durven aannemen tegenover de "autoriteiten der kerk", zoolang als ze autoriteit over ons meenden te hebben!

Hij weigerde om van deze daden van verzet terug te komen, ook toen hem zulks, althans ten opzichte van die onafhankelijke zendingscommissie, uitdrukkelijk was geboden!

En hij bestookte eigen kerk door middel van eigen blad.

En waarin bestond ons verzet?

Eenvoudig daarin, dat wij weigerden onze leerstellige instemming te betuigen met drie door de synode aangenomen punten! En we weigerden om te beloven, dat we over die drie valsche leerstellingen zouden zwijgen! Dat was ons verzet tegen de "wettige autoriteiten" der kerk! Daarom zijn we afgezet, predikanten, ouderlingen en diakenen!

En nu zijn de zonen dier kerken, die ons afzetten, verontwaardigd, niet om hetgeen ze zelf deden, maar omdat de Presbyterische kerkelijke autoriteiten het veel ernstiger verzet van Dr. Machen niet wilden dulden!

Is 't niet om uit te schreeuwen?

Ziet ge niet, hoe men bezig is een kransje te fabriceeren voor het graf van Dr. Machen en te zeggen: "indien Dr. Machen zulke dingen in onze kerken had gedaan, wij zouden geen deel gehad hebben in zijne kerkelijke vermoording?"

Maar hij moest het eens aangedurfd hebben, om in de Christelijke Gereformeerde kerken een eigen school te stichten, een onafhankelijke zendingsboard te organiseeren, een eigen blad uit te geven om de zonden van moeder bloot te leggen!

Ziet ge 't niet?

Men bouwt de graven der profeten!

Men versiert de monumenten der rechtvaardigen!

Maar, nog eens weer, ge merkt op, dat Dr. Machen in 't geheel geen gelegenheid werd gegeven om zich te verdedigen?

't Is waar. De commissie sneed alle poging om achter de eenmaal genomen besluiten der General Assembly terug te grijpen, den pas af. In zoover had hij geen gelegenheid om zich te verdedigen.

't Is weer dezelfde vicieuze cirkel.

Kerkrechtelijk had die commissie immers volkomen gelijk! De synode had gesproken. En het spreken dier synode had immers beslist wat als kerkelijk autoritatief zou gelden!

Het komt er dus maar weer op aan, *wie* de kerkelijke autoriteiten zijn. Het maakt groot verschil of David dan wel Achab op den troon zit! En 't is toch dezelfde "autoriteit"! Gratie is nu eenmaal niet gemeen, ook niet bij autoriteiten, die bij de "gratie" Gods heeten te regeeren. Dit laatste doen ze nu eenmaal niet allen.

Zoo was 't ook in de zaak Machen. De Auburn Confirmation was daar nu eenmaal. Het stempel der afkeuring stond nu eenmaal op die onafhankelijke "board" der zending. Het Princeton Seminarium had nu eenmaal de kerkelijke goedkeuring. Dat was altemaal "kerkelijke autoriteit". Achter die autoriteit teruggrijpen mocht niet. Dat kon de commissie ook niet toelaten. Als Dr. Machen zich wilde verdedigen, dan moest hij niet aantoonen, dat er iets haperde aan de "kerkelijke autoriteit", want daar hapert nu een-

maal officieel nooit iets aan. Maar hij moest bewijzen, dat hij zich niet tegen de wettige autoriteiten der kerk had verzet!

Dit laatste kon hij niet.

Om de eenvoudige redenen, dat hij zich wel had verzet!

De vicieuze cirkel!

Maar veroordeeld, zegt ge, zonder, dat hij gelegenheid kreeg zich te verdedigen? Eilieve, zijt ge daarover verontwaardigd? En ge denkt er niet aan om verontwaardigd te zijn over hetgeen in 1924 geschiedde?

O tempora, o mores!

Hoe was het dan met onze zaak?

Op de vergadering der Classis Grand Rapids East, die in 1924 vóór de synode werd gehouden, mochten we ons niet verantwoorden en mocht er niet over de leerstellige materie onzer zaak worden gesproken, omdat het eigenlijk een zaak voor de synode was.

Op de synode werden we niet geroepen ons te verantwoorden, ofschoon men het dag aan dag over ons had. Met alle moeite kregen we eenmaal verlof om te spreken in onze eigene zaak en werd het ons verder ook op ons dringend verzoek finaal geweigerd.

En op de na-synodale vergadering der classis kon er over de leerstellige materie onzer zaak niet meer worden gedelibereerd, omdat de synode immers reeds gesproken had!

We zaten in den vicieuzen cirkel der kerkelijke autoriteit! We moesten eenvoudig de Drie Punten teekenen. Dat wilden we niet. Verzet was onvermijdelijk.

En spreekt gij, die zelf aldus gehandeld hebt, nu over Dr. Machen's zaak met verontwaardiging, omdat hem de kans om zich te verdedigen ontnomen werd?

Ziet ge dan niet, dat ge uzelven het voorwerp van uwe verontwaardiging dient te maken, eer ge nog spreekt over de zaak Machen?

Eerst de balk, dan de splinter!

Dr. Machen is bijna vermoord.

En reeds houwt men grafzerkjes.

En men maakt kransjes om aanstonds zijn graf te versieren, als hij gestorven zijn zal.

En men zegt: indien wij geleefd hadden ten tijde onzer vaderen, wij zouden aan dien moord geen deel gehad hebben.

En men getuigt tegen zichzelven.

Door kransjes en zerkjes, die teekenen zijn van eigengerechtigheid!

H. H.

On Bibles and Bible Reading

The last time we wrote on this subject we tried to make plain what is meant by the perspicuity of Holy Writ.

Simply expressed it signifies that the Bible is an open book to every believer in the fellowship of the Church as the body of Christ.

It does not mean that there are no mysteries in Scripture, or that all of Scripture is easily and without serious effort understood.

Nor does it imply that every believer is able to and ought to interpret Scripture by himself, individualistically, without heeding the guiding of the Holy Spirit in the Church organically and throughout the ages.

And it does not despise the instituted offices, which Christ gave to the Church for its well-being.

But it emphasizes, first of all, that the Church is not the institute, that it is not the clergy, but that it is the body of Christ, the gathering of believers and their children on earth.

It maintains, secondly, that the Spirit of Christ, Who is the Author and also the Interpreter of Scripture, is not given to the officebearers only, to lead them in all the truth, but that the whole Church, that all believers have the unction of the Holy One and that they have no need that anyone teach them, because they have the Word and they know the truth.

And, therefore, it signifies, lastly, that to every member in the fellowship of that organism of the Church the Bible is an open book. All have the right to interpret Scripture. All have the calling to explain the Word of God. All are able to read Holy Writ. And ultimately it is never the word of man, even though he should interpret the Bible by that word, but only the Word of God that has authority for the believer in Christ Jesus.

The maintenance of the truth of the perspicuity of Scripture gives no place to the devil of hierarchy.

It will readily be seen that this truth involves responsibilities for all the members of the Church.

The doctrine that the Church is the clergy, that there is an official body of priests, culminating in an infallible pope who speaks the last word with respect to the interpretation of Holy Writ, is much more pleasing to the flesh, involves practically no obligations, no responsibilities for the general membership of the Church. All the members need is implicit faith in the Church, that is the clergy, that is the pope. When that Church has spoken the end of all investigation and of all argument is reached. That Church relieves you of all responsibility to think and to study. It thinks for you, it studies for you. You simply accept her declarations. If you are attacked you appeal to the declarations of the Church. If you are in doubt, you rest on her infallible authority. To the flesh the hierarchical system is, indeed, much more pleasing than the Protestant faith that maintains the perspicuity of the Scriptures.

Besides, in the Romish system there is practically no danger that the outward unity of the Church in the world is disintegrated. The Romish Church points with

pride to its unity throughout the ages and among all nations, in contrast with the hopeless disharmony and disintegration that has characterized the churches of the Protestant faith since the days of the Reformation. And she bases upon this universal unity of the Catholic Church a strong argument against the truth and validity of the principle of the Reformation. Is not the unity of the Church one of her chief distinguishing marks? Where, then, is that unity among Protestants? It is hopelessly lost. It is found in the Romish Church only. And it may, indeed, be granted that it is much easier to maintain an outward bond of unity within a Church that is based on the hierarchical system in which one man speaks the last infallible word. However, this does not prove that the unity of the Roman Catholic Church is real, inner, spiritual, essential, Scriptural. It is not really a unity of believers at all, that binds the members of the Catholic Church, but a unity of the clergy, ultimately of the pope, the agreement of one man with himself!

It does, however, show that the doctrine of the perspicuity of Scripture is much more difficult in practice (as is always the case with the truth in this world) than the Romish view, and that it lays heavy burdens of responsibility upon the shoulders of believers in general.

First of all, it implies that not only the officebearers but all believers are responsible for the maintenance of the truth of the Word of God, both in their own consciousness and within the Church in the world. Not the officebearers preach and teach, but the Church, through its officebearers preaches, instructs, establishes the truth. Officially the office of believers functions through the instituted offices. Not only the minister and elders are responsible for the doctrine that is proclaimed from the pulpit and taught in catechism class and Sunday-school, but the entire Church is. Not only the delegates to Classis or Synod are responsible for their decisions and declarations, but the whole Church must feel its responsibility for these decisions. All believers are responsible before God for the maintenance of the truth of His Word!

It follows that on all rests the obligation to watch, and not only on the officebearers.

True it is, that on the latter rests the responsibility to watch in a special sense over the whole flock as well as over themselves. It is through the instituted offices that the Church functions, preaches and teaches, excercises discipline and opens and shuts the doors of the kingdom of heaven.

But this does not remove, this rather emphasizes the calling of all believers to watch, lest false doctrine should be introduced into the Church of Christ. They are called to watch over themselves, to watch over one-another in love, to instruct and admonish one-another that they may abide in the truth; to watch even over the officebearers and their official work, that no strange doctrine may be proclaimed from the pulpit nor taught in the catechism classes, nor established and adopted by the broader gatherings. And they undoubtedly have ultimately the power and calling to depose their own officebearers, the power of Reformation, if in no other way false doctrine can be kept outside of the gates of Zion.

However, if this obligation to watch rests on all, it will also be selfevident that on all is placed the responsibility of diligently studying the Scriptures, not in individualistic conceit, but in the fellowship of the Church.

The whole Church, all believers, must diligently seek the instruction, for themselves and for their children, that is offered them through the Church institute in preaching and teaching, in order that they may be thoroughly founded in the truth.

All believers must constantly compare this instruction with the only authority, the Word of God, so that their knowledge of doctrine may be true knowledge of the Word of God.

They do this individually, by reading and searching the Scriptures. As individual believers that insist on the perspicuity of Holy Writ, we should be thoroughly acquainted with the contents of the Bible.

They do this as families, when they read the Bible in their homes and discuss what is being read.

They do this through means of the various societies in the Church, whose chief purpose should always be to study the Word of God.

This diligent study of the Word of God is essential on the basis of the perspicuity of Scripture.

If it is neglected one of two things will happen: the Church will fall back into the hierarchical system, or it will become a prey to the spirit of sectarianism and modernism.

The first occurs, when believers fail to attend to their own and their children's instruction, gradually wean away from the knowledge of the truth, lose their power to watch, and leave the task of watching over the truth wholly to the officebearers. Gradually they will look upon the latter as a special caste, take for granted that whatever they declare is certainly to be accepted as the truth, and follow them blindly wherever they lead.

The second occurs, when believers neglect the instruction of themselves and their children, then fall a prey to some seducing spirit and begin to propagate their false doctrine, form a group and separate themselves from the Church in their ignorance.

The first finds its illustration in the attitude of the majority of the members in the Christian Reformed Church, when they accepted the Three Points, declared and adopted by the synod of 1924, took for granted that they must be true, because the synod had spoken and received them as their own faith, even though they are not even acquainted with their contents, still less

able to judge of their validity in the light of Scripture and the Reformed Confessions!

But also the second case is frequently realized in our day. How often it occurs that in their youth members of the Church neglect their own instruction, fail to attend catechism, to investigate and study the truth for themselves, so that they are ignorant of the truth when they reach the years of discretion, then meet with some sect that denies election, infant baptism, the covenant or some other fundamental part of the truth, become a prey to false doctrine, and enthusiastically propagate this heresy, because they are ignorant of the truth!

And, therefore, the truth of the perspicuity of Scripture above all imposes on all the obligation to search the Scriptures diligently!

H. H.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Curatorium of the Protestant Reformed Theological School will meet, D. V., June 4, in the Prot. Ref. church at Orange City, Iowa, at 1:30 P. M. **instead of 3:30 as previous meetings.**

Students desiring admission to the School, will be expected at this meeting with the following:

a. A certificate of membership in a Protestant Reformed Church.

b. A recommendation of their consistory, as to ability and general qualifications.

L. Vermeer, Sec'y.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Graduation exercises of our Theological School will be held on the evening of Tuesday, June 4, at 7:45, in the Orange City Protestant Reformed Church.

The following program will be rendered:

a. A speech by graduate A. Petter in the English language on: "The Minister's Task As Exegete".

b. A speech by graduate J. Kooistra, in the Holland language on: "De Bedienaar des Woords op den Kansel".

c. An address by the Rector of our School, Rev. H. Hoeksema. Topic not yet known.

d. A couple of musical numbers.

e. Presentation of Diplomas.

All those interested are cordially invited to be present.

The Curatorium,
L. Vermeer, Sec'y.

By the Strength of the Lord's Hand

A notion of the great signification of the act of the Lord consisting in His bringing the people out from Egypt may be gained from the circumstance that the month to which belonged the day on which the house of bondage has been quitted is made the first month in the calendar in token that the salvation He wrought brought them into being as a nation. And how insistent He is that His bringing them out from bondage be an event that they keep in mind perpetually, rehearse repeatedly in the audience of their children and thus cause it to live forever on in the memory of the generations to come! The event is affixed to and symbolized by three services that as often as they will be kept will bring the Israelitish father under the necessity of reciting the events from which these services sprang. There is the service of the Passover that they shall observe for an ordinance to them and to their sons forever. And it shall come to pass, when they be come to the land which the Iord will give them, according as He has promised, that they shall keep this service. And when their children shall say unto them, What mean ye by this service? that they shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses.

Then there is the service of the unleavened bread. It shall be when the Lord shall bring them into the land which He sware unto their fathers to give them that the entire week of which the day on which the Lord brought them out of the house of bondage in the beginning they shall eat unleavened bread. Seven days shall they eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast unto the Lord. Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with them, neither with them in all their quarters. And they shall shew their sons in that day, saying, "This is done because of that which the Lord did unto me when I come forth out of Egypt."

It, the service of the unleavened bread, shall be for a sign unto the Israelite upon his hand, and for a memorial between his eyes, that the Lord's law may be in his mouth: for with a strong hand hath the Lord brought him out of Egypt. He shall therefore keep this ordinance in his season from year to year.

Finally, there is the ordinance that requires of the Israelite that he set apart unto the Lord all that opens the matrix, and every firstling that cometh of a beast which he has; the males shall be the Lord's. Every-firstling of an ass he shall redeem with a lamb; and if he will not redeem it, then he shall break his neck. All the firstborn of man among his children shall he redeem. Here again follows (Ex, 13), "And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of

hand the Lord brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage: And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the Lord slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast: therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the firstborn of my children I redeem. And it shall be for a token upon thine hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes: for by strength of hand the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt."

How the Lord stressed that His work of redemption should not be forgotten! How impossible He made it for His people to forget! But why should He be so insistent that the knowledge of what He wrought abide? If this knowledge fades into oblivion, Israel in his generations, will of necessity cease to praise. But Israel belongs to the Lord, is thus obliged to walk in the way of the covenant in his generations and to declare the glories of his Redeemer.

But on what ground can Jehovah demand of Israel that it exists for Him, know, adore and praise Him. On the ground that He brought Israel out from bondage, But how must Israel know God? He must know Him to the exclusion of all other gods. It means that God's claim upon Israel is absolute and that the work of His bringing Israel out from bondage — the work upon which this claim reposes — must be as exclusively His as this claim is absolute.

Thus in commanding Israel that he keep in remembrance His salvation, the Lord was at once declaring with great emphasis that He only and none other brought Israel out from Egypt. Let us now inquire after the meaning of this.

Now that the Lord actually brought Israel out from bondage must mean that this work of His consisted in something more than shewing signs among the Egyptians, than turning their waters into blood, slaying their fish, bringing frogs in abundance and diverse sorts of flies and lice in their coasts, giving them hail and flaming fire, smiting their vines, bringing locusts in their coasts, smiting all the firstborn and causing the waters of the Red sea to return to their strength. To maintain that the bringing out from bondage was an action on the part of the Lord that consisted exclusively in the showing of these signs is impious and absurd. Bringing Israel out from bondage was a task that actually consisted of all the events and occurrences recorded in the record of the Exodus. Upon the stage of the history of this deliverance, several actors appear. There is the oppressed people of God, groaning in Egypt's ovens; Pharaoh driving by the lash the children of Israel to their task; the taskmasters, co-operating with Pharaoh in keeping Israel in subjection; the sooth-sayers, opposing the speech emitted by the signs of God; Moses and Aaron, declaring as the agents of the Almighty the decree; the oppressed people as freed following Moses out from the bondage; Pharaoh and his host pursuing and rushing to his doom; the delivered hosts of the Lord singing His praises on the banks of the sea; the elements through which the Almighty operates and lays His stripes upon Pharaoh and his people. What a dramatic structure! What unity of dramatic action! How the separate scenes contribute to the final result: the salvation of Israel and the destruction of the Egyptian host! So it is. But do not fail to observe and confess — the matter is plainly stated in the sacred record as we shall see — that the sole sovereign factor in all this action is the will of God. The various actors without a single exception are His agents so that of the history here made, He is the sole sovereign subject. He doeth all these things. Rightly considered, bringing Israel out from bondage, is a work of His that consists in all this action.

Let us concentrate on this matter. That exercise of divine power in the realm of the physical creation, the Lord's showing His signs among the Egyptians, is but a phase or part of the work of bringing Israel out of bondage. There is much more to be done. The hearts of the Egyptians must be turned to hate God's people and to deal subtilly with them. The plagues must be sent on Pharaoh's heart and upon the hearts of his servants. Pharaoh must be hardened and prepared for judgment and at once be terrorized into thrusting Israel out of his country. Thereupon he must be made to venture into the deep to be drowned. As to the children of Israel, they must be prepared for salvation. Their affections must be turned from Egypt and set upon the things of Canaan. Who is to do all this, God or man, Pharaoh, Israel? If man, then God has but a very small part in the work of deliverance, a part that consists exclusively in His exercising His power in the realm of the physical cosmos. Now to maintain that this is all that God is capable of is to conceive of Him as being without dominion and rule in man's heart and of man as occupying His place in the moral world-order. But this conception (the conception of the Pelagian) is as impossible as impious and unscriptural. It raises questions that cannot be answered and renders everything uncertain. Let us show this. The time is now at hand for the Lord to fulfil His promise made unto the fathers and to bring Israel out from Egypt into the promised land. But before the children of Israel will set out for Canaan, their affections must be disengaged from their beloved nest in Goshen. This change of heart is to be effected by the stirring up of this nest through tribulation. But consider that if God does not reign in man's heart, He finds Himself under the necessity of patiently waiting until the Egyptians in their sovereign good pleasure resolve to enslave God's people in their attempt to offset the danger of an insurrection. And this divine patience must in turn be exercised in the uncertain hope that the people of Israel again in their sovereign good pleasure will resolve to rally about Moses and sove-

reignly choose to permit him to lead them forth as the servant of Jehovah. But now if Jehovah is such a God, what guarantee is there to him that Pharaoh will resort to oppression as the means of keeping Israel in his country? No guarantee whatever. Pharaoh may decide upon another and a wiser means for gaining his ends. Fact is that the means adopted are amazingly foolish. And what assurance is there to the Lord, if He be such a God, that Israel as afflicted will resolve to quit Egypt for Canaan? None whatever. If man is supreme master of his soul, if in his choosing and resolving he as to his will is not being held by the controlling and directing strength of God's hand, God has no way of knowing how man in a given circumstance will react, except he be known to always react in precisely the same way, which he does not. How uncertain on the basis of this view everything becomes for God, how halting His tread through the ages, how amazingly incomplete and utterly useless to Him His decrees that were eternally with Him and according to which He thought to work all things. How the view, I here appose, robs God of His sovereignty! If the Lord can do no more than show signs, if the sole sphere in which He is God is the physical cosmos, if He is capable of exercising His power in this sphere only, not He but Pharaoh and Israel brought Israel out from bondage with God co-operating as their servant and the credit for the deliverance belongs not to the Lord but to Pharaoh and Israel: to Pharaoh for resolving by himself to stand aside and permit Israel to leave his country and thereupon to enter the deep to permit God to drown him in His sea; and to Israel for resolving by himself to set out for Canaan under the leadership of Moses after Pharaoh according to his sovereign good pleasure deigned to release upon Israel his hold. But what do the plagues actually contribute to the deliverance, if Pharaoh himself sends them upon his heart — which he does if God has not the dominion in the moral world-order, if the heart of man is not in His hands — and if he can also choose, if he so resolves, not to be awed by them? Absolutely nothing. Consider therefore that if the view here opposed be the accepted one, we are driven to conclude that God has no part in the salvation of Israel at all.

The view that the supreme master of the heart is man's will, is also as can be expected strongly contradicted by experience. Man fears, is angry, loves, hates, weeps and rejoices not by choice but often inspite of himself. His conscious likes and dislikes spring not from decisions that are the fruitage of deliberation but are aroused — by what he sees and hears and encounters. And even what he chooses to do is determined, shaped, by countless moral, physical and psychical, inward and outward necessities over which he has not the slightest say and under which he is brought by the Almighty. Pharaoh certainly does not choose to be terrorized by the strokes of God. He chooses however to contempt God and to revile His people. But, being dead through sin, he can choose to do nothing else.

The view that the supreme master of the heart is the will of man is to be loathed as God-degrading and destructive of all true piety. God only is God. The entire task of delivering Israel is His. *He* brings His people out of bondage. To this task He alone is supremely equal as He has the dominion also in man's heart. It is He therefore Who turns the hearts of the Egyptians to hate His people, and hating them, to oppress them in their ovens, to strangle their infant males and drown them in the river. He so binds tribulations on the hearts of Israel's children that they turn their thoughts on Him and await His salvation. He hardens Pharaoh, sends His plagues upon his heart, humbles him, terrorizes him into thrusting Israel out of his land, turns his heart to pursue the departing hosts into the deep. He brings Israel out from bondage, not Pharaoh, not Israel. In this work there is nothing of man. The task is exclusively God's.

That the hearts of the Egyptians and also of His people are in His hands, is expressly taught by the sacred record of the Exodus and by the prophets who extole and eulogize this work of God in song. In Ps. 105, we come upon a passage that reads, "He (namely God) turned their hearts to hate his people, to deal subtilly with his servants" (Ps. 105:25). To Pharaoh the Lord said by the mouth of Moses, "For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people: that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth" (Ex. 9:14). Then there is the notice, "When thou goest to return (the Lord is here speaking to Moses) into Egypt, see that thou do all these wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go" (Ex. 4:21).

That God has the dominion in the moral world-order is a truth that runs through Scripture from the one of its covers to the other. He puts enmity between the serpent and the woman and between the serpent's brood and the woman's seed (Gen. 3:15). He filled Bezaleel and Hur with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge . . . . (Ex. 35:30). He will send a faintness into the hearts of His disobedient people in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword (Lev. 26:36). He gives unto Israel, scattered among the nations, a trembling heart, failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind (Deut. 28:65). It was of the Lord to harden the hearts of the Canaanites, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly (Jos. 11:20). When Saul turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart (I Sam. 10:9). When he went home there went with him a band of men whose

heart the Lord had touched (I Sam. 10:26). He gave unto Solomon a wise and understanding heart . . . . (I Kings 3:12). The hand of the Lord was to give the people of Judah one heart to do the commandment of the king . . . . (I Chron. 30:12). The Lord taketh away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth . . (Job 12:34). He fashioneth the hearts of the inhabitants of the earth alike; . . . (Ps. 33:15). He makes His people to err from His ways and hardens their hearts from His fear (Isa. 63:17). He gives unto His people a heart to know Him (Jer. 24:7). He puts His law in their inward parts and writes it in their hearts (Jer. 31:33). The Lord moved David against Israel to say, Go, number Israel and Judah (II Sam. 24:1).

The Lord delivered the apostatizing Israel into the hands of spoilers and sold them into the hands of their enemies round about. *He raised* up Judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them (Ju. 2:14, 16). The Assyrian rises before our eye in the prophesy of Isaiah as the rod of His anger, as the ax with which He heweth and the saw that He shaketh (Isa. 10). He calls a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth His counsel from a far country (Isa. 46:10).

Of the life (spiritual) and hallowed dispositions of His people, of their desire for Him and their will to walk in the way of His covenant, He is the author, fountain, creator. By nature dead in sin, they are born of God, quickened together with Christ, raised up together and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. They are saved by grace through faith; and that not of them: it is God's gift. Not of works, lest any man should boast. His workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that they should walk in them (Eph. 2). He works in them both to will and to do of His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13).

That God's reign in the moral world-order is absolute, that His will is the sole supreme factor in all moral action of the rational creature, must follow from the fact that He is God, that being God, He is man's Creator and Sustainer — Creator also of that spiritual organism Scripture calls the church — in Him do we live, move and have our being (Acts 17:28); it must follow from the fact of the sovereignty of His counsel. And His counsel stands, and He will do all His pleasure. He has spoken it and will also bring it to pass. He has purposed it and will do it (Isa. 46).

How a man, visualizing the human will as the god who brings Israel out from bondage, can believe, and earnestly and even with fevency insist that he prostrates himself before the God of Scripture, is a conundrum. If the one outstanding argument of Scripture is not that He is God and that there is none else, words have no meaning.

That the task of leading Israel out from bondage belonged exclusively to the Lord is a fact which the latter prophets gave expression to in the strongest and most tender language. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him. How this imagery from the mouth of God sets Israel before our eye as a people who went out from Egypt because He set up His kingdom of light (I speak now of the spiritual Israel) in His son's heart, irresistibly called him, made him sensible of his plight, kept him in His (God's) power, ruled and led this son by His Spirit and His word and thus brought him out.

There was both a physical outward and a spiritual aspect to Israel's redemption. There was the being delivered from a physical oppression and a being brought in a good earthly land and the being freed from the spiritual adversary Satan, who, as operating through Pharaoh, had forced himself between the church and God. All certainly desired to be delivered from the lash of the Egyptian taskmaster. But only the spiritual Israel could will to be freed from the dominion of the devil and to inherit the land of unhampered communion with God. The will to be freed from this dominion and to be brought into a land where the tabernacle of God was with men, sprang from the life of regeneration. Of this good will He was the Creator. But He also turned the hearts of the carnal Israel to desire the deliverance as to its outward phase, so that the redemption as to both its phases in His work. But it was this deliverance in its spiritual aspect that the Lord again had before His eye when He said by the mouth of Hosea, "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; . . . I drew them with chords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and laid meat unto them" (Hos. 11:1-4).

Say not therefore that the Lord proffered Israel His redemption, offered them liberty, invited to free them and that Israel of himself agreed to accept the proffered boon, so that the first impulse under which he (Israel) acted was of him and that God's part of the task consisted merely in strengthening this impulse and in showing His signs among the Egyptians that the latter might of themselves choose to be terrorized by His plagues and so terrorized (what nonsense!) choose to let the people go. But say that the very first impulse under which Israel acted was of God, that the will in them to respond to the call to go out from bondage and be freed was worked by Him, that He therefore brought them out. God does not offer but demands, He being God. And what He demands of His people, He gives.

Finally, it is exactly because God reigns supreme in the hearts of the wicked, that He as referring to Pharaoh could say by the mouth of Paul, "Even for this purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show

my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth." The meaning of this saying is plain, 'For this purpose have I caused thee to stand, to harden thy heart, to place thy *nay* over against My *yea* that I might have opportunity for humbling thee in the dust by sending my plagues upon thy heart and terrorizing thee into confessing that I am God in the midst of the earth and into thrusting my people in thy fear from thee and thereupon by bringing thee into the deep to be destroyed. Through the exercise of this My power in thee, I deliver my people that they may know and praise me. So in this doing of mine, the glory of My name will shine forth, in thy humbling and destruction and in the salvation of my people against whom thou exalteth thyself. And my name will be declared throughout all the earth by the redeemed who taste that I am good. What then is that doing from which the glory of His name shines forth. It is the doing that consists in humbling to the depths of the abyss and thus in destroying all violence which He causes to exalt itself against Him and by so destroying and humbling deliver His people from its power. And of this He is capable because He is God and none else.

G. M. O.

THE PROPOSED PLAN

Dear Editor:—

The discussion on the proposed plan certainly is interesting. And I also would send in a letter. I think it a fine paper and would not like to have a change. We who understand the English language better would like more English but that would not be fair to our older people.

It certainly is a paper we can read and derive much for our spiritual life. And are always instructed in our Reformed truths, as this is most necessary for young and old. Why should we have a change? And be in danger of having this crowded out gradually if all the other is added.

Mrs. J. Kooienga

Grand Rapids, Mich.

Dear Editor:—

Am writing you in response to your request for letters. It was with much regret that I read that our Standard Bearer has seen its day. Kindly list me with those who are not in favor of the proposed plan.

My reasons are, first, that we do not wish our paper to be on the order of The Banner, because we need to defend our church views in regard to our history.

It is my prayer that we may ever seek the good of Zion in regard to our paper. If possible I would like to have more English writing for our young people.

S. H.

Grand Rapids, Mich.

De Smart Gods

Daar zijn van die vreemde teksten in Gods Woord.

Dat zijn teksten die spreken van een vermoeien des Heeren; die getuigen van het schier onverklaarbare, dat God Zich ontzetten kan, dat Hij smart heeft aan Zijn hart, dat Hem iets berouwt.

Al heel vroeg in den morgen der historie, ziet de Heere neer op het drukke gedoe der menschenkinderen en hooren we het uit Zijn mond, dat het menschdom zijn weg verdierf en dat wel in zulk een mate, dat de geheele aarde vervuld was met wrevel. En tusschen twee haakjes mag hier wel opgemerkt worden, dat die wrevel niet verklaard moet, als zou het, als 't ware, een beestenboel geweest zijn. Het menschenleven voor den vloed was maar geen liederlijke herrie, geen algemeene chaos, ruwe boel of iets dergelijks, want dien indruk laat Gods Woord zekerlijk niet bij hen, die aandachtig alle plaatsen opslaan in het Woord, welke spreken van die periode. Gods Woord legt er zelfs nadruk op, dat alles zijn geordenden gang ging. Let er maar eens op hoe er een parallel getrokken wordt tusschen dat leven der wereld vóór den vloed en het leven der wereld vlak voor de komst van Jezus op de wolken des hemels. Alles gaat juist zijn geordenden gang: ze aten en ze dronken; ze waren trouwende en ten huwelijk uitgevende, tot op den dag, dat Noach in den ark ging en God ze allen verdierf. Dat beeld spreekt niet van herrie en chaos, van een beestenboel of revolutie, doch van een welgeordende "commonwealth". Ik denk ze waren heel netjes en fatsoenlijk. En zoo zullen ze heel netjes zijn in den laatsten dag.

Neen, als we er iets van verstaan willen van wat het zeggen wil, dat God smart heeft aan Zijn hart, dan moeten we niet allereerst letten op den mensch zooals hij zich gedraagt tegenover den mensch, doch op dienzelfden mensch zooals hij zich gedraagt tegenover den Allerhoogste.

De wrevel der aarde en de smart Gods zijn onlosmakelijk aan elkaar verbonden.

De wrevel der aarde is smartelijk voor Gods hart, omdat die aarde wrevelig is tegen God.

Want God wordt vermoeid daardoor, wordt in Zichzelven ontzet, en rouwt.

Nu heeft men wel getracht om dit vreemde in Gods Openbaring te verklaren door te spreken van een *anthropomorphisme,* een vreemd woord, dat letterlijk beteekent: menschvormig. Die verklaring wil dan, dat in al die plaatsen eenvoudiglijk menschelijke harttochten aan God toegeschreven worden, doch die verklaring heeft eigenlijk ten gevolg, dat er van de smart Gods en Zijn rouwen niets meer overblijft. Dan ontzet Hij Zichzelf niet; ook wordt Hij dan ook niet vermoeid door onze zonden. Het is maar zoo'n menschelijke spreekwijze, die op God overgebracht wordt. Het netto resultaat is dan, dat het niet waar is.

Doch de vraag blijft: wat *zeggen* die teksten ons dan aangaande God?

Daar staat maar niet slechts, dat God smart heeft, doch er staat nog wel met nadruk bij, dat Hij smart heeft aan Zijn hart!

Laat ons allereerst op mogen merken, dat het niet in onze bedoeling ligt om het feit te loochenen, dat er in de Openbaring Gods, die spreekt van God Zelf, geen element van *anthropomorphisme* ligt. Dat te loochenen ware onzin. God heeft geen armen of voeten, oogen of ooren. Evenwel, toestemmende dat God geen lichaamsdeelen heeft, omdat Hij een Geest, of beter gezegd, Geest is; toch leeren al die teksten niet, dat God *niet* wandelt, ziet of hoort, is 't wel? Daarover zegt God: "Zou de Die het oor plant, niet hooren; zoude Die het oog formeert, niet aanschouwen?" (Ps. 94:9).

Let wel, we stemmen toe, dat als er sprake is van het oor Gods, we hier te doen hebben met een *anthropomorphe* dat is, menschvormige, uitdrukking, doch daarmede wordt niet weggeredeneerd, dat God in die teksten openbaart, dat Hij hoort!

Doch pas dit nu eens toe op die uitdrukkingen, die spreken van een smart Gods, van een vermoeien en een Zich ontzetten van God. Dan moogt ge wel spreken van een menschvormige uitdrukking, als ge er maar voor oppast dat ge toch iets overhoudt. En zie, dat geschiedt niet altijd. We zouden voorbeelden kunnen aanhalen uit Bijbelverklaringen, die, als ze dan klaar zijn met verklaren, letterlijk niets overhouden van de smart Gods. En dat mag niet.

Nu hopen we er ons voor te wachten met gepaste bescheidenheid, om den indruk te geven, alsof wij dit diepe stuk nu eens in een ommezien zullen uitleggen, want dat ware krankzinnige hoogmoed. Doch we zullen trachten, om aan de hand van Gods Woord, er iets van te zeggen, dat allicht meerderen tot hulp kan strekken in het nadenken van de gedachten Gods, ons in het Woord, dat Heilig is, geopenbaard. Dat hopen we te doen in twee artikelen.

En dan zullen we moeten spreken, achtereenvolgens, van de antithese, het beeld Gods en het Heilige Wezen. Misschien komen we dan ietwat verder.

Als we een klein beetje licht zullen verspreiden over deze zaak, zullen we allereerst moeten spreken van de antithese. Dat is noodzaak. Zoo licht toch komt men tot de conclusie, dat er in het Paradijs een ongeluk geschiedde, toen de mensch luisterde naar den duivel en van God afviel. God dan neerziende op de ontredderde massa heeft smart aan Zijn hart. Hij had het toch zoo mooi geschapen en ziet, het ligt alles uiteengescheurd. Soortgelijke verklaringen moeten met wortel en tak er uit. Ze is eenvoudig goddeloos. Dan verliest ge den Almachtigen God. De macht van den duivel om zijn goddelooze en liegende tong te roeren in het verleiden van Eva is ook van God. En naar Zijn raad valt de mensch. Dat staat vast. Paulus redeneert zelfs over het feit van den val heen als hij zegt, dat de Goddelijke Pottenbakker uit denzelfden klomp het eene vat maakt ter eere en het andere ter oneere.

God heeft Zichzelf willen openbaren hoe en wat Hij is; doch ook hoe en wat Hij niet is. Daarom de antithese. Daarom de duivel en de goddelooze; daarom de eeuwige verdoemenis. Als ge die allen niet verklaren wilt uit God, zijt ge een ongelukkig mensch, die zekerlijk rondwandelt met een onrustig hart. Dan kan ik ook niet begrijpen hoe ge ooit naar den hemel durft te gaan. Dan kunnen er misschien nog veel vreeselijker dingen gebeuren in de eeuwiglange toekomst der eeuwen eeuwigheid. Neen, alles moet uit God verklaard. Dat doet de Schrift.

God wil de zonde en den wrevel, den duivel en goddelooze, zegt Gods Woord om Zijn toorn te bewijzen en Zijn macht bekend te maken. Daarom verwekt Hij ook Farao, als type van den duivel, in Egypte. Het gaat alles om God. Daar legt ook Salomo nadruk op, door Goddelijke aanspraak vermaand zijnde, als hij zegt: "De Heere heeft alles gewrocht om Zijns Zelfs wil, ja ook den goddelooze tot den dag des kwaads." Dus ook de goddelooze met den dag der hel zijn er om God. Ze moeten er toe dienen om te openbaren hoe God *niet* is. Zij moeten er toe dienen om te bewijzen hoe God toornt tegen de zonde. Dat zegt Paulus in Romeinen 9.

Dat moest vaststaan in ons denken tot in de kleinste bijzonderheden. Om niet in het oneindige uit te weiden, zullen we een Bijbelsch voorbeeld aanhalen. Toen David vluchtte voor het aangezicht van zijn zoon, was er een duivelskind, Simeï, die uitging en David vloekte. En als een van David's knechten hem wilde ombrengen, zeide David: "Ja, laat hij vloeken; want de Heere toch heeft tot hem gezegd: Vloek David; wie zoude dan zeggen: Waarom hebt gij alzoo gedaan?" Merkt het toch op, dat daar het zondige vloeken vastgelegd wordt aan het radend spreken Gods. En zoo is het met alle dingen, die betrekking hebben op de zonde van menschen en van duivelen. Denk slechts aan het aanporren van David om het volk te tellen: het wordt in Gods Woord toegeschreven aan beide God en den duivel. En werd Job niet van God door den duivel getuchtigd?

Als straks in den tweeden dood alle duivelen en goddeloozen tot in oneindige rampzaligheid kermen; en alle engelen Gods met Gods uitverkorenen in een vernieuwde schepping galmen van gelukzaligheid, zullen die twee openbaringen het ons vertellen, dat God de liefde mint en de goddeloosheid haat.

Dat alles is uit God. De wrevel der goddeloosheid en de trouw van de Sionieten moeten te zamen God dienen ten einde toe. Hoe en wat God is en hoe en wat God niet is. Hij, in goddelijke almacht, beheerscht beide en brengt ze door Zijn voorzienigheid tot hun einde. Eigenlijk één openbaring die moet dienen om ons het Deugdenbeeld te toonen van den Eénen vreeselijken God.

We voegen hier nog twee opmerkingen aan toe, ter voorkoming van misverstand.

In de eerste plaats, zuige hier niemand uit, dat we het voorstellen, alsof we openbaring van zonde en de openbaring van genade nevenschikkend aan elkaar verbonden zijn. In een klein artikel kan met niet alles zeggen. Men moet wel eenigszins beknopt zijn. Het gaat om het hoofdthema, dat men zich voorstelt te ontwikkelen. We willen wat zeggen van de smart Gods. En toonden hierboven aan, dat het niet opgaat om het te verklaren uit het zoogenaamde ongeluk der zonde. Dat God een antithetisch God is. Dat ook de wrevel, dien God smartte aan Zijn hart, uit God verklaard moet worden.

Neen, de zonde en de genade zijn niet nevengeschikt. Staan niet als co-ordinaten naast elkaar. De zonde moet dienen om de genade te openbaren. Dat is, om ook hier niet te ver af te dwalen, overduidelijk uit 't Kruis. God openbaart Zijn onbegrijpelijke liefde juist door middel van de goddelooze kruisiging van Jezus. En naar Zijn raad moeten Herodes en Pilatus, Judas en de Joden daartoe dienen. Het verband is daarom niet nevenschikkend maar onderschikkend. De verwerping dient de verkiezing. Zoo kan Salomo zeggen, dat de goddelooze een rantsoen is voor den rechtvaardige, en de trouwelooze voor den oprechte. En vindt ge dezelfde gedachte bij Jesaja als hij zegt: "Van toen af, dat gij kostelijk geweest zijt in Mijne oogen, zijt gij verheerlijkt geweest, en Ik heb u lief gehad; daarom heb Ik menschen in uwe plaats gegeven en volken in plaats van uwe ziel." Daar is onderschikkend verband dus. Het goddelooze rot en alle de duivelen zijn het steigerwerk rondom het gebouw van Gods gunstbewijzen en ze moeten dienen tot voltooing van datzelfde gebouw.

Dat zij allereerst opgemerkt.

Ten tweede, zij opgemerkt, dat ofschoon alle goddeloozen en duivelen er zijn om God in hun tieren van woede tegen God en Zijn Gezalfde, ze toch verantwoordelijk zijn voor hun helsch gedoe. Dat moest ook zonder ik het zeg hier duidelijk zijn. Dat we het toch zeggen, is omdat men krom wil denken desnietaltemin. Het goddelooze hart zegt altijd weer: Wat klaagt Hij dan nog? Want wie heeft Zijn almachtige wil dan wederstaan? Als God Zich dan wil verheerlijken in mijn goddeloosheid, hoe word ik nog als een kwaaddoener geoordeeld? Wel, ons hart zal het antwoord geven. De Heilige Geest gaat ook nu rond en overtuigd van zonde en snoert het hart. Het komt er wel niet uit, doch het schuldige hart roept den blos der schaamte soms op de konen. En alle strafoefeningen van alle volken en rassen zijn een luid getuigenis, dat de mensch schuldig staat voor God. Een ieder is in zijn binnenste bewust van zijn verantwoordelijkheid.

't Wil hem nog duidelijker worden als hij met de duivelen voor Gods rechterstoel gedaagd staan zal. Dan zal niemand meer zeggen: Wat klaagt Hij dan nog? Dan zal de ellendigste duivel nog zeggen: Geen wonder dat Hij smart heeft, vermoeid is, Zich ontzet en rouwde over de goddeloosheid! Intusschen, zullen ze verlangend blikken naar de splijtende rotsen en waggelende bergen en in plaats van naar God te zien, hetgeen ze dan niet kunnen en mogen, zullen ze bidden tot die verbrijzelende bergen: Och, dat ge op ons vielt, want o het Oog is zoo vreeselijk! De uiting van die smart is voor ons de hel der vuurvlammen!

Wee mij, ik verga!

G. V.

EEN NOODKREET

Lang heb ik gewacht om ook mijn gedachten uit te spreken aangaande het plan tot verandering van de Standard Bearer. Bij mij rijst de vraag: Is dat nu verstandig? Is daar nu wijsheid in? Of is het zoo, dat wij den tijd genaderd zijn, waarvan Jezus heeft voorspeld: "en zij vielen allen in slaap"? Matth. 25. En daarom dan ook een noodkreet.

Laat de Standard Bearer blijven zooals zij nu is: een Theologisch Tijdschrift. Een tijdschrift waarin men terugvindt de aloude beproefde waarheid der Heilige Schriften; waarin de Christus der Schriften weder aan ons verkondigd wordt in al den vollen Goddelijken rijkdom.

Ook ons jonge volk heeft dit noodig en daarom laat af van verandering. Laat toch zonder verwijl af. Laat af van het verzwakken en van het vertroebelen der wateren, het verwerpen en verbasteren. Wij hebben al genoeg van die verzwakte en verwaterde tijdschriften, die zich als vertegenwoordigers van een geloovige wetenschap en hunne opstellen als een getuigenis voor den Christus der Schriften laten aandienen, maar die de kracht ervan verzaken. En nog meer reden van verbazing is er in het droeve feit, dat zulke vroompratende bestrijding en verdraaiing van de Heilige Schrift en den Christus der Schriften zelfs in zich Gereformeerd noemende bladen en gezinnen met waardeering ontvangen, in plaats dat een luid gekerm van gewonde liefde tot den Heere Jezus opsteeg en men eere voor den Heiland opeischte en de alarmklok geluid tot oproep van het Christenvolk tegen zulk bedriegelijk en verleidend geschrijf.

Daarom niet zoo met onze Standard Bearer.

De verandering ruikt naar verzwakking en verwatering. Blijft ons geven vaste kost: de eeuwige waarheid en de ontwikkeling derzelve op het voetspoor onzer vaderen. Bij deze dingen leeft men.

Thys Feenstra Jr.

Redlands, California

Den Geest te bezitten is veel; maar vervuld te zijn van den Heiligen Geest is meer.

Shining Lights

> Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.
>
> Matt. 5:16.

This verse is a continuation and application of the immediate preceding verses. We called your attention to them in a former article. The main thought expressed in them, we saw, is that the church of our Lord Jesus Christ *is* the light of the world. That is, hers is the knowledge, revelation, truth, illumination given unto her through the operation of the Holy Spirit. Endowed with these spiritual properties she is able to discern between right and wrong. She is surrounded by darkness, foolishness and ignorance being in the midst of the world. That world does not know the truth and does not live the life of light — the life that is in harmony with the Word of God. All the ills of our present world must be explained from this point of view that the world lives from the principle of darkness, the principle of sin and corruption. And although the demand of God's Word is and always will remain that every man is duty bound to acknowledge his foolishness and to renounce his wisdom, no man is capacitated to do so, unless the light is given him.

No, it is not true that man seeks after the truth or fountain of life, turning to Him who is light and in whom there is no darkness. For if one is seeking earnestly after the truth it is because the life of light is operating in him and he shall surely receive it consciously. On the other hand, man as he is by nature, does not seek after the truth, after God, and does not conduct himself with propriety when the demand of God's word comes to him, but he will oppose that very demand with all his will and mind for he delights in darkness and he prefers his natural status above anything else. Hence, as he is, he may not and cannot and will not live the life of light and reveal it in his works. There is absolutely nothing ambiguous in this statement unless we deny the fundamental teaching of Scripture that man is dead in sin and totally depraved, filled with corruption. No, not so that he does not possess a will and mind and desires for than he would no longer be a man. He remains a willing creature but he never wills God, he does not think after God and he will in all his actions say there is no God. God is not in all his thoughts. Neither does he desire or long after God. He himself is god and he desires all things apart from the living God.

Therefore he does not understand his relation toward God nor his relation toward the world and the things thereof.

In the midst of that ignorance and foolishness of the world the church is called upon to let its light shine. That is, let truth and wisdom and knowledge be revealed and become manifest in the midst of darkness. Do not misinterpret the text as though it reads that the church must give light to the world. Gramatically this interpretation (verse 14) is impossible for then the imperative should have been used while we have here simply the indicative, a statement of fact. Ye *are* the light of the world and because ye are My command is: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

That the light can be extinguished is, needless to say, not implied in this text. Salvation is never based upon such unstable grounds that it is simply left to man to decide whether or not he shall retain the light which is given him through the life that is from above. Neither is it implied in the admonition: 'Let your light shine.' Arminianism does not find any help to maintain itself from this text.

The Savior charges His church (the believers) to let its light shine. The very nature and purpose of light is to shine. It must radiate and there is no choice as to whether or not it can do anything else. This is also plain from the illustration in the preceding verse. When you light a candle, you put it in a place that it may answer its purpose. I have kindled you and given you a place that your light may be seen. I made you a new creation, a peculiar gathering endowed with that knowledge and truth, that heavenly wisdom so that you are and reveal the antithesis in the midst of that foolish, ignorant world that is enveloped in darkness. For darkness is on every side and in every sphere of life.

The light that is given to the church for a very definite purpose. You must make known the truth over against the lie. Be not afraid to let your light shine. To have the light means first of all to possess the truth as a matter of conviction. The conviction as the result of the new life of the Spirit in you. In the second place, as a conviction that demands expression. We say sometimes that we have the truth, but we had better turn it around into a question applying to ourselves: did the truth take hold of us? We mean as a deep felt experience of the purifying power that has the force in it to come out for it and manifest itself. While the criterion applied for such experience is nothing less than the Word of God. All earnest conviction demands expression and is characterized with the tendency to become bolder and stronger. The more the Christian reveals himself as a child of light the stronger he will manifest himself as time passes on and that much better he will be fortified against the onslaught of his adversaries.

Moreover, the source from whence this light came and the purpose for which it was given calls for exactly that one thing, namely, to let it shine. This

light, knowledge, truth, wisdom, is never one's own. When the church appears in the world that lieth in darkness she is admonished not to be afraid but to let it be known to that world that indeed she *is* light. She must testify come what may. The tendency today is to make a favorable impression upon that world, to play nicely along with her. When we read how the church called after our Lord Jesus Christ prides itself that she is recognized by the world, that the world does not consider her a backnumber, all because the principles laid down in the Word are left in the classroom, pulpit and pews, that she has attained to the level of worldly wisdom, it is about time to be alarmed and also about time that she examine herself very rigidly and try to find out whether the light is hid. After all twilight is not light and any mixture between light and darkness is always abominable in the sight of God. Do we infer then that we must remain 'met een boekje in een hoekje?' That we are distinguished from the world because we walk in the midst of her with a long face or appear with an inferiority complex? God forbid!

The purpose of the admonition makes this impossible. Your Father who is in heaven must be glorified, therefore let your light shine! As to the intention and final aim it must radiate for His sake. Even as daily strength and duties were not given to us in order that we may use them as we see fit, so also the light was given that it may shine forth. No one has the light to hide it either because he became spiritually lazy or entangled in the things of this present time.

This admonition is further emphasized by the adverb so, which refers back to the metaphor. Let it so shine, let it become conspicuous as a candle placed upon a candlestick. The Lord did not place His church in some far off corner of the earth but in the midst of the world He placed her, that the world may see her for the sake of the light.

The light must shine that men may see your good works. It appears as though the Savior identified light and works. But light and works must not be taken as if they are the one and the same thing. Light itself as to the idea can be conceived of without works. We said in a former article that the light as such is the illumination of the Holy Spirit as the work of God Triune through our Lord Jesus Christ in the inner man, whereby truth, knowledge and certainty are imparted. The influx of that life is the influx of His power in us through which our mind and will direct and guide our actions. Of course, not apart from Him but in close connection with Him and in constant study of His Word given to us that we may know His good and perfect will and act accordingly. Hence, the light is not confined to our innermost being. True it is, we are often inconsistent. We hide the light and it often looks as if there is no light in us. Especially when all seems to be against us and the flesh must be crucified, or when the world flatters us or sets itself over against the church as a devouring lion.

And what are these works? Not necessarily the works of a religious nature, such as are done in the midst of the church. Good works could be defined as all the actions which we perform be they ever so small. Works that proceed from a true faith and are performed according to the law of God and are done to His glory. Whatever He prepared for us from day to day in the so-called big things as in the small or insignificant things.

Together that they are the works of light in the midst of the world and in the calling whatever that calling may be. That therefore they reveal the truth as the revelation of the knowledge that does all things for God's sake. Let your works be characterized by the light and let the light be seen! So that in the works the inner man becomes manifest.

In the sight of men. No, not you, but your good works. It is very well possible that we are seen even while the works appear to be good. Think of the Pharisee in the temple and on the streetcorner. That surely is not the light that shines, but the darkness of the old man of sin, a satisfying of the pride of the flesh to covet honour and glory for self. Better not let man see them for those works the world also performs. Nay, but the good works. The works that are done in humility and in the fear of the Lord. When such works are performed in the sight of men the citizen of the Kingdom and his relation toward God are revealed. Very beautifully this relation is expressed in 'your Father who is in heaven'. It demands that the Christian reveals himself as as child of his heavenly Father. He must be an imitator, a follower of Him. If he is your Father, give Him His honour. Be obedient through love. It is expected of children that they reflect the life of their parents. They do resemble in some way their parents, it is expected of them. Thus it is with God's children. They are created for that purpose in order that they may declare His virtues. Over against the father of darkness and his offspring stands the Father of light with His children. They must look and act like Father.

If on the one hand the power of that light has moulded the character of the child of God so that it is evident in his conduct, the Lord now procedes to point to the highest purpose of it all. Man must see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Some expositors try to infer that the specific works mentioned here are confined to the work of the ministry or as the specific work of mission as done by the early church. This view however limits the text as to

its scope and procedes from the idea that the church as well as the individual member has but one calling namely, to win souls for the Kingdom. It is the well-known phrase of present-day Christendom. Every time a sinner is brought into the church God is glorified. In other words the converts see the good works done by you and the result of it is that God receives glory. For God's glory *we* must convert sinners. Is it not plain that this explanation is pregnant with heresy? To mention just one, this view presents the matter as though the glorification of our heavenly Father depends upon the work of His children and as though the conversion of a sinner is entirely the work of man. Besides, this view is rooted in a false conception of God's church and Kingdom. The church and Kingdom depend upon a certain action in time and is not the realization of God's counsel and His sovereign good pleasure. Do we then make light of the conversion of sinners? We do not! We admit that every time a sinner is converted, or rather when conversion is witnessed from day to day our Father is glorified by such a convert and conversion as the work of His grace.

Moreover, the text does not single out the ministry of the Word as the good work whereby God is glorified. Works mentioned here include all the good works of all God's children and to exclude any of them cannot be defended by the contents of this text. The tense of the verb as used here may be the beginning of an action, the whole of it or the result. We take is to be the latter, so that it is not confined to time. That is, when the good works are seen by men, whether they be converted or not, the result cannot be anything else than the glorification of our heavenly Father. His children rejoice in them now for they are a manifestation of His grace and loving kindness. The good works are a testimony of what He gave to His people. His grace is manifested in them. The cause of their good works is that He prepared them from before the foundation of the world. And He also prepare the children through His Son Jesus Christ who led them out of darkness into His marvelous light so that they can walk in these good works.

That shall be their eternal song of victory to ascribe glory to Him alone. In other words in those that are saved, all the light they received and the works they performed were of Him alone.

Shall those that are lost also glorify Him? In the great day of judgment every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. They shall never be able to deny His light in the good works of His children, while at the same time they seal their own condemnation. They never walked in the light although in their innermost being they were convinced of its beauty. But they refused to acknowledge this fact openly. Yet they shall not keep silent in their eternal suffering and in the outer darkness they will always acknowledge that in God there is no darkness and in the good works of His children the light indeed did radiate.

Therefore, let your light shine and your Father in heaven shall be glorified now and in the eternal morning.

W. V.

THE PROPOSED PLAN

Geachte Redacteur:—

Daar u de lezers van onze Standard Bearer verzocht hebt om hunne gedachten te geven aangaande het voorgestelde plan om ons blad te veranderen, dacht ik het niet overbodig om ook enkele letteren te schrijven dienaangaande, om geplaatst te worden in ons blad.

Volgens mijn inzicht zou deze verandering ongewenscht zijn en een stap in de verkeerde richting. De tijd kenmerkt zich door verandering op schier alle gebied, beide in kerk en in wereld, in business en in politiek. Overal roept men voor verandering. En zoo roept men ook ten opzichte van de S. B. En alhoewel alle verandering niet verkeerd is, toch is het mijne opinie aangaande ons blad, dat men het zooveel mogelijk in zijne tegenwoordige vorm en inhoud, moet behouden.

Volgens sommigen (en dit is nog wel de grootste reden om te veranderen) is de Standard Bearer niet gepast voor onze jongelui. De stof is te zwaar en te diep, en ook zijn de stukken te lang. Nu is het mijne overtuiging dat wij niet naar de smaak van de jongelui moeten doen. Wil men verhaaltjes dan kan men die nog overal krijgen. Maar ik tel mij ook onder het jonge volk, en mijns inziens, is de St. Bearer een gepast blad, voor ons als jong volk. Want immers, als er een ware begeerte bij ons als jongelui is om in de wegen van onzen God te wandelen, en zijn geboden te betrachten, dan vinden wij ook een behagen om goddelijke zaken te bestudeeren, en om in de kennis der waarheid toe te nemen. Met de verandering zal mijn kennis zeker niet toenemen, maar minder worden, want geen blad heeft mij zoo vooruit doen gaan als de Standard Bearer sinds 1924. En als ik de oudere kinderen Gods vraag, dan zeggen ze het ook, dat ons blad het eenigste is, waarin uiteen gezet wordt de eenvoudige waarheid Gods op een schriftuurlijke wijze.

Hopende dat de verandering niet doorgaat, en dat wel om der jongelui wil, dank ik U voor de plaatsing, en verblijf heilbiddend, de uwe

Peter Zylstra

Hull, Iowa

God openbaart Zijn gedachten niet "aan de wijzen en de verstandigen," maar aan de "kinderkens".

The Niceties of the World

Small wonder that the horrible theory of common grace finds its devotees by the thousands in the Church of Jesus Christ.

It cannot be denied that the world of our day abounds in the niceties of life. And that in every sphere.

Things are so very delicate; it seems as though the life of man in its totality shall abound in refinement; there is a deliciousness in living that is studied, is superabundant!

You just wait! We are on the right track. Selfishness, sickness, war and pestilences shall be subdued among the children of men. Laws of nature are being studied and we shall be masters indeed of creation. Utopia is coming.

And coming events cast their shadow before.

Even now "all the world wondered".

Its root is man and the wisdom and innate goodness of man.

It is clear when we notice the conviction of man regarding man in its infancy. Education has changed radically. Set the child in beautiful surroundings from its birth. Hang the walls of your nursery with roseate paintings of birds and of flowers. Tread softly, speak softly. By all means, do not argue. Allow the little darlings to express themselves to their utmost desires. In their schoolbooks we read of the soft and delicate fairy.

The child is tomorrow in all its brightness. We still bear the shackles of antiquitarian and ugly yesterday. Segregate yourselves from the hope of the future. We are beyond hope, but youth shall have its day. They are the harbingers of complete fulfilment.

But the brats continue to fight over their games of marble and the top.

We notice it in the world of elocution, the world of the spoken word.

Listen to the radio speeches and it shall strike you that we are growing ever more refined in our language. All severe corners are polished off and there is a nicety in speech that will sooth and soften: cursing and ranting is so extremely vulgar: "Do not swear while in here: for there are ladies present!"

Around the tables of Geneva the diplomats purr and in cadences soft they flatter and promise, they smile and beam on their fellows. It is all so extremely nice.

But the snake is in the heart: poison of asps in their vessels.

It is also in the customs and manners of living.

Civilization has its day.

Life grows ever more luxuriant, more beautiful every day. The drunkard and the imbecile are locked behind doors of steel: our face grows nicer day by day. All things are regulated and unfold according to studied routine. Life shall be nice, that's all. There shall be a balance between work and play and sleep: the day of the slave and his driver are gone forever. And all the world shall wonder after the beast.

For beast it is. It comes from the abyss.

By all means the church shall be maintained. "You are such a wondrous agent for the uplift of the community! Will you not join us next Tuesday? We shall have a pow-wow, a tea party of the local W. C. T. U. We depend on your nice co-operation! We are all so extremely nice!" And they have their thousands of pow-wows throughout the land. Our pastor attended too. With hands outspread, fingertops touching, while his benign countenance beams of goodwill and benevolence.

Sure, the devil wants the church maintained. A wonderful agent to further his diabolical scheme for the delusion of the masses. How can the Christ be dethroned without the church? How can Anti-christ come without the frock that dilutes the Gospel of Christ.

It is all so nice in this present world of ours.

Small wonder that many of the church that know not, see in the niceties of the nice worldlings a positive goodness that is a source of glee to the heavens.

But I would plead with you for the truth that is once delivered unto the saints.

In the midst of all that nice civilization, we hear the thundering word of God: Indeed, the revelation of that power has two horns like unto the Lamb of God, but it speaketh like the dragon, the devil.

Even in our own day, and that in ever increasing measure, the heavenly evaluation of the nice world is this: every imagination of the thoughts of their heart is only evil continually.

It ought to be clear that this is so, but for the sake of emphasis we shall point it out: all the revelation of the niceties of the world are evil because it is nice without God. And then the so-called niceties are abominable before God.

You see, the world has found out that there is something fundamentally wrong with itself. They experience the curse of God. They notice that curse in all the relations existing in the world. They cannot, neither will they shut their eyes to these verities around them abounding on every side. Death and its causes are too clearly manifested. So also the selfishness and the hatred among man. The world indeed has eyes for the ugliness of life.

And of course there is no rest, no peace in their hearts either. Inexpressible is the suffering of the human heart. And even though they are blind for the real, theological cause of this curse and its results, they notice the good-enough causes. And then they forthwith set themselves to correct, to educate themselves and others. They begin to fight these good-enough causes.

To mention one instance. They notice the suffering because of manifold deception and lying in business.

And they fight it. And the results are that you find thriving businesses that abound in formal honesty. They have studied this curse of deception among man and they have remedied it. They have saved themselves from this curse and its results of bitter disappointment and subsequent revenge.

The niceties of the world is the salvation of man by man. In its human wisdom and ingenuity. The customer is always right. They always make good. And they do what they promise. And their guarantee can be relied upon. And the result is satisfied customers and the seller a millionaire. Here you have human salvation with its heaven.

No common grace in this?

Then you are as blind as a bat. Do you not see this salvation and blessedness on every hand? And through the various Chambers of Commerce we will conquer every curse of the lie and misrepresentation so that heaven shall be to the buyer.

And thus it is with all relations of our present day civilization. Utopia is coming.

But, beloved, it is evil throughout.

For it is a wicked salvation of man, for man and by man. Higher than the earth it does not shine.

Do you not see that all endeavour to remove the just curse of God without the Cross of Jesus is abominable in the sight of God? And for that very reason the Lord does not recognize it. But calls it the revelation of the beast.

The curse is a just curse.

The world has justly deserved to suffer. To suffer now and to suffer infinitely worse in hell. Sin is no joke. Sin is lawlessness. And we may not endeavour to remove that curse without the Cross of Jesus.

All the curse of all God's own people was placed on Jesus. And He carried it away. And it shall never return. And since the curse is gone for God's people there is no more curse for them in the world. All things are working for their good. Even death and suffering work unto them a superabounding weight of glory. In this life and in the life to come.

Therefore all real improvement and all Christian civilization stands in the sign of Golgotha.

Do you not see that all endeavour to remove that awful curse of God, while they call Jesus a curse, is abominable in God's holy sight?

When the world cleans itself outwardly, its heart is filled with hatred or indifference toward God. When they appoint their committees and organize drives of purity of morals and what have you, they crucify Christ anew and make Him to an open shame.

God calls it evil. For all the imagination of their thoughts is only evil continually.

And shall we then call it good? God forbid.

Nay, but we shall, by God's own grace, preach the Christ.

And that Christ is nice. All the real niceties are in the Church of Jesus Christ. For God and His Christ only are beautiful. And we are now and shall be beautiful. Without spot or wrinkle shall we stand before His Face eternally.

And we shall indeed endeavour to make all things nice. But we will endeavour to do this only in the name of Jesus. It is the command of God. We may not use any other means. And, secondly, it is no use to endeavour to do it in other ways. It is the only really effective way.

Try all you please to make the world nice and clean with human methods. You will never succeed. When you have educated and polished the worldling, you have nothing but an educated and polished child of the devil, who hates God and His Christ.

But preach Christ. And the result will be that organically the world is saved. And becomes nice in God's sight.

The niceties of the world are called horrible in the age-old Bible.

The niceties of the Church are rubies and diamonds. They are the firstfruits of the nice world that is coming. The world that shall be refined like gold that cometh forth from the crucible of God's redeeming grace. The crucible of Golgotha.

They are the niceties of the Kingdom.

The beauties of common grace?

Get another soul. That one is blind.

"Except ye be born again, ye cannot see the Kingdom of God!"

Nor its glories.

"Hier weidt mijn ziel met een verwonderend oog!"

G. V.

IN MEMORIAM

Waar het den Heere in Zijne Goddelijke wijsheid behaagde onzen geliefden leeraar, Ds. B. Kok, en Mrs. B. Veltkamp, zuster van onzen leeraar, in rouw te dompelen, daar op den 20sten April 1935, hunne geliefde moeder,

MRS BENA KOK,

op den leeftijd van 65 jaren na een langdurig lijden door den dood hun werd ontnomen, wenscht de kerkeraad bij dezen zijne hartelijke deelneming te betuigen aan Ds. Kok en gezin, alsmede Mr. en Mrs. B. Veltkamp en gezin, en bidt dat de Heere balsem moge gieten in de wonde geslagen en dat Hij hun trooste door Zijn Woord en Geest.

Namens den kerkeraad van Roosevelt Park, Grand Rapids,

Peter Dykema, Scriba

Wij krijgen alleen een begrip van de onmetelijkheid van de zonde door de onmetelijkheid van de genade.

Our Reconciliation To Our Neighbour

Contribution

Every one who desires to be reconciled to God, must of necessity endeavor to reconcile himself to his neighbour; because God takes the injury which is offered to man, as offered to himself; and the damage done to man as done to himself. When therefore, any one offends both God and man he connot be restored to the favor of God, before he is reconciled to man his neighbour; for having offended them both he must also be reconciled to both, which is expressly attested by Christ himself: "If thou bring thy gift to the altar and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift".

It will be needful, therefore, to say some thing further of the love of God and of our neighbour, and how impossible it is to separate the one from the other; and again, that this reconciliation so joined together, proves the true source of brotherly love and effection; which the beloved disciple hath expressed as follows: "If a man say I love God and hateth his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, that he that loveth God, love his brother also." So utterly impossible is it, that the love of God should subsist without the love of our neighbour. Hence also it follows further, that he who truly and unfriendly loves God, will also embrace his neighbour with the same sincere affection. And again, if the love we profess to bear to God, be hypocritical and false; then the love with which we seem to love our neighbour, will rise no higher than its principle, but prove false likewise. Therefore, the love of our neighbour is the test of our love of God, by the right application of which, the truth or falsehood of that love will easily be discovered.

This consideration gives us a true insight into the love of our neighbour, and that brotherly reconciliation which ought to attend it. There is a twofold object given by God to man, to which all the actions of his life are constantly to tend; namely, the love of God, and of our neighbour. Into this, all our endeavours ought finally to be resolved, and we ought to make a daily progress in this holy exercise; since we are to this very end, created, redeemed, and sanctified. In a word, Christ himself is the one and only scope in which all our actions ought to centre. Now the more we approach to love, the more we approach to Christ, and to the practice of his unblameable life.

For this very end God was made man, or the Word was made flesh, that he might set before our eyes a most lovely, and living image of his infinite love and kindness, and that from hence it might appear, that God was Love itself; love in his own immense, incomprehensible, and unsearchable essence; and that man, by viewing so amiable an object of love, as is displayed in Christ Jesus, might be transformed into the same image day by day.

Futhermore, as in Christ, God and man united together by an indissoluble tie, so the love of God is so closely connected with the love of our neighbour, that it cannot exist without it. Nay, the love of God and of our neighbour can be no more disjoined or put asunder, than the divine and human nature in Christ. And as he who injures the humanity of Christ cannot but affront his divinity also; so he who offends man, is in like manner guilty of offending the infinite God himself.

We will illustrate what has been said, by a comparison derived from nature. When a circle is made, and from its centre a number of lines are drawn to the circumference, all these lines, though ever so distant in the circumference, meet together in the point, which is in the middle. Here they are all united in one, and all flow into one, be they ever so wide asunder, yea, even directly opposite one to the other. Not one of all the lines, let their number be ever so great, can be broken from the rest, without losing its communication with the center itself, wherein they all meet. So God is a point, or a centre, whose circumference is everywhere, and which, in a manner, extends itself to all men upon earth. Whoever presumes to break off the lines of his love from his neighbour, must in like manner disjoin and break them off from God at the same time. And as all these lines cohere and concur in the centre, and therein mutually affect one another, so is there a sort of central sympathy, and a fellow, as it were, of the sufferings of our neighbour, provided we be but all united in God, the great center of all good Christians.

The truth of what has been said, is forcibly illustrated in the history of Job. When the news was brought him, that his temporal goods were destroyed, it appears that he quietly bore the loss of them without giving any great sign of discontent at the appointments of Providence. He still continued to bless the Lord, and freely to own, that he who had given him his property, had also a right to take it away whenever he pleased. But when he was told, that he had also lost his children, then indeed it went to his heart: then he "arose and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground and worshipped." So let every true Christian act when he hears of the calamity of his neighbour; (here represented by the children of Job) knowing that he ought more to be affected with the misery of his neighbour, than with the loss of all his worldly substance. For it is the property of true love, to be moved with the miseries of other men more than with our own losses. O happy men! if they would live together in mutual love and affection! Then frauds would cease, then injuries would be known no

more, nor would there be any complaint of unjust ways, or of underhand dealings.

In order that this might be more deeply impressed on the heart, God was pleased to create but *one* man in the beginning, together with Eve, who was soon after brought forth. This was done, that all mankind springing up from one original stock, and, as it were from one root, might all unite in mutual kindness, and brotherly affection with one another. This, I say, is the reason why God did not create a multitude of men in the beginning, but only one; whereas he created many beasts, trees, and herbs at once.

The love which God commands us to pursue, is of that agreeable nature, and of that incomparable sweetness, that it does not in the least burden either a man's soul or body. Nay, it renders the mind easy under every event, is most agreeable to our very nature, and in every respect attended with a quiet and blessed life. But if the same God who has enjoined thee to love thy neighbour, had commanded thee to hate him, thou wouldest then have had cause to complain of hard usage, and of a far heavier burden than that which love can possibly impose upon thee. For the spirit of hatred and revenge is a tormenter of the soul, and a daily grief and vexation to those that are enslaved by it. On the contrary, love refreshes the whole man; and is so far from weakening or destroying body or soul (which is the common effect of hatred and envy), that it is a great preserver of both, and exhilarates them by the healing influence which it carries with it. In a word, to those that love God it is a pleasure to love their neighbour also; but those who do not love God, will think it a hard and difficult task to embrace their neighbour with brotherly love. But if thy depraved nature still find it a hard task to love thy neighbour, then consider how hard it will be to be banished for ever from the presence of God, and to endure the pangs of hell to all eternity. Wretched is the man, who makes so sad a choice as to prefer hell-torments to a friendly reconciliation. Our own experience would soon convince us, if we made the trial, that as by faith we enjoy solid peace with God, (as the Apostle assures us;) so by Christian love and reconciliation, we enjoy peace with men, together with much ease and tranquility of heart; whereas, on the contrary, a mind full of rancour and malice frets itself, and has no other reward to expect, than the lashes of an unruly conscience.

The sum of all is this: every virtue rewards its followers with peace of conscience, and serenity of mind; and every vice punishes those that commit it with the recompence they deserve. Every virtue exalts those that practice it; and every vice covers its slaves with shame and ignominy. With regard to the order and method by which we are to proceed in working out a sound reconciliation with our offended neighbour, the Scripture is explicit. The terms of reconciliation are these: 1st, the offender is to ask pardon of the person whom he has offended; 2nd, He is faithfully to restore that of which he has defrauded his neighbour; that is, he ought to return not only the principal, but also the fifth part over and above it; 3rd, If there be none to receive it, he is then to offer it unto the Lord himself.

This restitution of things unlawfully taken away, is commanded in such strong and expressive words, as to make it absolutely necessary for furthering an unfeigned repentance. St. Augustine has thus expressed his mind on this subject: "The sin is not remitted, unless the thing unlawfully taken away be restored." "When the thing that is taken away may be restored, and is not, there is no true, but a feigned repentance."

And truly, it is the property of unfeigned repentance to condemn all earthly things, and count them as dung in respect of that abounding grace which is bestowed upon a penitent sinner. Of this we have a glorious instance in Zaccheus, and in his conversion to God; who has had however but very few followers in this degenerate age. Sound conversion to God cleanses the heart, and purifies the conscience, by faith in Christ; it breakes the power of sin, and by influencing a man to restore such things as are wrongfully detained, not only clears the heart before God, but also the outward conduct in the eye of the world. For in the heart and conscience a man is a thief before God, as long as he keeps anything back that is taken away, however he may cease to steal hereafter. Therefore, in order that repentance may prove true, and the conscience be freed from guilt, all possible restitution is to be made; or if a man be not able to make full restitution, he ought fervently to implore the Lord, that he himself, in his stead, would restore the things taken from his neighbour, or that which may be better.

Since a sinner is thus bound in a twofold respect to God and to his neighbour, in order that his repentance may be full and efficacious, it is required that both be satisfied. God does not accept any man's repentance, unless he be first reconciled to his neighbour. Therefore, it is to no purpose if thou shouldest say unto God: "Merciful God, I confess I have offended and injured my neighbour; I have damaged him by wicked gain and fraud; and have dealt so with him, as I would not that another should deal with me; which iniquity I humbly intreat thee, O Lord, to pardon for thy dear Son's sake". Be not deceived: God will not be mocked! He repeals thy prayer, and saith: "Restore first that which with fraud and usury thou has taken from thy neighbour, and then thy pardon shall be ready". Not as if a man merited the pardon of God by this restitution; this is a debt due to his neighbour, and how can he pretend to merit anything by that restitution which he is so engaged to make, and which the law of God expressly enjoins? For thus hath the Lord commanded: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." "For with

the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again."

The same truth is confirmed by the following Scriptures: "Leave thy gift (oblation, sacrifice) before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled (as the law hath prescribed) to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." "Cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, said the Lord: Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." And again, by the same evangelical Prophet the Lord thus reasons: "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to untie the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee, the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward." All these Scriptures, with one consent, proclaim this great truth, — that God will not accept the repentance of any man, or hear his prayer, or regard his alms and oblations, unless he be first reconciled to his neighbour, and make him all the restitution that is in his power.

M. J. P.

BEKENDMAKING

Classis-vergadering staat, D. V., te worden gehouden Woensdag, 5 Juni, 1935, om negen uur in den voormiddag in de Protestantsche Gereformeerde Kerk te Orange City, Iowa.

M. Vander Vennen, S. C.

Wij mogen het nu nog niet begrijpen, maar de dag zal komen, dat wij de beproeving een van Gods meest gezegende engelen zullen noemen, "uit genade tot dienst om dergenen wil, die de zaligheid beërven zullen." Doordat er wolken zijn, komt de boog aan den aardschen hemel. Wel is de blauwe hemel en het goud van de ondergaande zon lieflijker voor het oog. Maar wat zoude er van de aarde worden, indien er niet van tijd tot tijd donkere wolken over kwamen, om herleving en verfrissching te geven aan hare kwijnende planten? Is het anders gesteld met de ziel? Gewis, de wolke van smart is noodig. Elk harer droppelen draagt een bewijs van liefde met zich.

Our Church Order

The Christian School

The Consistories shall see to it that there are good Christian schools in which the parents have their children instructed according to the demands of the covenant (Art. 21).

The closing paragraph of my former article on this subject (an article that appeared in *The Standard Bearer* for Feb. 1, 1935) was comprised of several questions that will now be answered under the two sub-titles: The Christian School, its task and aim; and How the relation between the school, church and the home is to be conceived of.

The Christian school is an institution for the instruction of the covenant seed. What is its specific aim in distinction from that of the church? To so labor with the child that eventually it can take its place in the organism of this earthy as one who possesses the mental and spiritual equipment it needs to be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. To so define the aim of the school is to reason that this institution also must exist for God. The aim of the church on the other hand is to so labor with the child that as a living member of the body of Christ (I speak now of the elect covenant seed) it eventually will properly function in its allotted place in the organism of the church, and in that place be established, grow in knowledge and in grace and thus together with all the believers come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. The school labors with the child with a view to the earthy, the earthy pursuits of life; the church with a view to the heavenly. The school trains the child to walk in the way of the covenant in that place in this earthy in which it eventually establishes itself. The church is exclusively an institution of salvation. To the church therefore were given the means of grace.

With each of these aims goes a corresponding task. The exclusive task of the church as institution is to preach the Word, through the special office, as the official messenger, ambassador of Christ, to proclaim direct the promise of redemption to its children; to shut by the word it proclaims — the word of the prophets and the apostles — the kingdom to the carnal seed; to explain the promise, the gospel, the word,direct the minds of the believers and their seed to its content, that they may behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, see the heavenly and see it as the grand consummation of all the history that God makes; further to bring this word in closest contact with the life and experience of the believers. And finally, it is the task of the church to proclaim to believers the law as the instrument for the awakening of the consciousness of sin and as a rule of faith. The law spreads itself over

the whole of man's existence, touches his life at every point. In the law is therefore found a rebuke for every sin, for the sin of every individual.

Such then is the exclusive task of the church. It knows nothing but Christ and Him crucified. It is the only institution that was brought into being for the exclusive purpose of witnessing for the truth as it is in Christ. And through its witnessing Christ out of the whole human race gathers His church chosen to everlasting life so that the temple of God is in process of being build. And the labor that the church through the special office as its organ expends on the covenant seed is done solely with a view to the completion and perfection of the temple. Thus the church, whereas to it was given the task of preaching the word, must insist that believers permit it to indoctrinate their seed.

What now is the task of the home and its instrument the school. Does the Christian home have a task differing from that of the church. It does, yet in performing its task, it necessarily contributes ultimately to the same result to which the church contributes, to wit, the coming of the kingdom of God in the hearts of His chosen seed. He that is not with Christ is against Him: and he that gathereth not with Him scattereth. The home must be for Christ and gather with Him. There can therefore be no essential difference as to ultimate aim between the task of the home and that of the church. Both institutions must labor in a positive sense for the promotion of the interests of the kingdom. Yet the task of the church is not that of the home. The parent and the teacher certainly are not sent by Christ to preach the word, to handle as the organs of the church the keys of the kingdom and to administer the sacraments. The home in conjunction with the school is not the mother of believers.

The task of the home, of the parent can best be defined as a training of the child in the way he should go (Prov. 22:6), which is the way of the covenant. This Scripture is commonly explained thus: Train the child according to, in agreement with, his adaptibility, aptitude, readiness in learning. But the second member of this Scripture, which reads, "and when he is old, he shall not depart from it," leaves no doubt that the word way signifies an objective course of life in which the child must be made to walk. But now the labor which the church expends upon the child can also be defined as a training up a child in his way, so that we still have on our hand the question what the training of the child by the parent consists in and how this training differs from the labor expended on the child by the church. The training the child receives in the home (and in the school) is in a sense broader. The elements comprising it are the following:

1) Feeding the child with the word of God. A training that lacks this element is thoroughly pagan. Instruction, to be Christian must root in the fear of the Lord. In the book of Deut. we come upon exhortations directed to parents that read, "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy son's sons; especially the day that thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb, when the Lord said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children." And again, "And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest in the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up . . . (Deut. 3:9, 19; 6:7). And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What means these testimonies . . . . Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand . . . . (Deut. 6:20).

These injunctions, so I wrote in a former article, turn on the words of Jehovah. These words, precepts, that mass of legislation, promulgated by Jehovah through Moses — the civial, ceremonial and moral law of the ten commandments together with the mighty works that Jehovah had wrought in behalf of His people, formed the content of the instruction that had to be given.

The question will be asked whether today this feeding the child with the word of God forms one of the elements of the training of the child by the parent (and the schoolmaster). It does certainly. Such will be our answer unless we take the stand that the command directed to the Israelitish parent — the command, "teach them thy sons," is no longer in force. But this stand is an impossible one. The command is still in force and must be kept. Parents are still in duty bound to "teach them thy sons". We are not unmindful of the fact that in the Old Testament dispensation the Israelitish people formed one vast congregation with headquarters at Jerusalem where the priest performed the service, that this religious center was the only place on earth where the believer through the officiating priest communed with Jehovah, that thus in that epoch there were in the strict sense no local congregations each with its own pastor and teacher, that therefore the local brotherhood was the family, so that the task of feeding the soul of the child with the word was made to devolve exclusively upon the parent. Today the child has several tutors.

It is the task of the pastor of the local brotherhood to which the parents belong, to imbue the child with the word of God. But did the coming of the pastor and teacher free the parent of the obligation of teaching their children diligently what their eyes have seen? Surely no. But is not the preaching of the word the

exclusive task of the church, of the special office (the office of pastor and teacher) instituted in the organism of the church? It is. However, the feeding of the soul of the child with the word is no preaching of the gospel. This latter engagement consists in the pastor and teacher directing as the official ambassador of Christ, the word of God, the promise of redemption, to His church. The gospel may be preached only by the church through its special office. The conclusive proof of this is that He, Christ, gave some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

The gospel, the promise may be given by the ambassador of Christ to the church only. Upon the church only may the blessing be laid. For the church only has the promise, it being the bride of Christ, while He purchased it by His own precious blood. The church therefore is the only corporation that He blesses. Now the only organization on earth to which we can point and say, behold the church, is that institution of which some are pastors and teachers. It is seen only as often as believers assemble with their officebearers for public worship. These matters were fully explained in an article appearing in The Standard Bearer for Jan. 15, 1934. Does now the circumstance that the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments were affixed to the special office relieve the parent from the obligation of making the training of his children also consist in feeding their souls with the word? Certainly not. The love of Christ will constrain him, the parent (parents) to say to his sons and daughters, "Know the Lord," to praise His name in the audience of the child, to teach his sons all the statutes of the King, to declare all the judgments of the Lord, to rejoice in the way of His testimonies in the presense of the sons, that they forget now Him word. The view that Christ gave some pastors and teachers with a view to freeing the parent from the obligation of confessing His name in the audience of their children and in the audience of men in general is intollerable and flatly contradicted by Scripture. The New Testament scriptures bring believers under the necessity of supervising each other's walk, to restore in meekness the brother overtaken with a fault, to comfort and edify one another with the word. The same obligation rests with its full weight upon parents. Training that does not consist of instruction, admonition, warning, rebuke and comfort derived from Scripture, and permeated with the principles of religion contained in Holy Writ, is thoroughly pagan. So then, one of the elements of the training of the child by the parent is feeding the child with the word. The only mental food upon which the soul of the child can thrive is the word.

The training of the child by the parent is comprised of still another element, to wit, of technical, natural knowledge. As I wrote in a former article, parents intuitively know as instructed by the Lord that it is their duty to impart this knowledge. They instinctively feel that their children should be taught how to read and to write. Be prepared for some honorable earthly pursuit. That the daughter should be taught how to manage a home. The original article XXI (of the Church Order) reads, "De kerkeraden zullen alomme toezien, dat er goede schoolmeesters zijn, die niet alleen de kinderen leeren lezen, schrijven, spraken en vrije kunsten, maar ook dezelve in de godzaligheid en in den Catechismus onderwijzen."

From this article it appears that the fathers of Dordt were mindful of the fact that the training of the child by the parent, (the school) consists of the two elements brought forward in this writing. The article as revised makes no mention of the "vrije kunsten, lezen, schrijven en spraken". It merely asserts that there shall be good Christian schools in which the parents have their children instructed according to the demands of the covenant.

G. M. O.

(To be continued)

INFINITE GRACE

Infinite grace; and can it be
That heav'ns supreme should stoop so low?
To visit one so vile as I;
One who has been his bitterest foe!

Can holiness and wisdom join,
With truth, with justice, and with grace,
To make eternal blessings mine,
And sin, with all its guilt, erase?

O love! beyond conception great,
That form'd the vast, stupendous plan!
Where all divine perfections meet
To reconcile rebellious man!

There wisdom shines in fullest blaze,
And justice all her rights maintains!
Astonish'd angels stoop to gaze,
While mercy o'er the guilty reigns.

Yes, mercy reigns, and justice too;
In Christ harmoniously they meet;
He paid to justice all her due,
And now he fills the mercy-seat.

Such are the wonders of our God,
And such the amazing depths of grace;
To save from wrath's vindictive rod,
The chosen sons of Adam's race.

With grateful songs, then let our souls
Surround our gracious Father's throne;
And all between the distant poles
His truth and mercy ever own.