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MEDITATION

The Herald Of Daybreak

For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord; and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. Luke 1:15-17.

Watchman! what of the night?

The morning cometh, the morning cometh, cometh, cometh!

The morning! The dawn of a better day, of an eternal day, the sun of which shall set no more, of the day of righteousness and peace, of redemption and deliverance, of joy and eternal life! It cometh!

It cometh unto you, that fear my name! It cometh when the Sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in his wings! Then you shall see a great light, that now sit in darkness; then ye shall be comforted because of the night, and all tears shall be wiped away from your eyes. It cometh!

Thus sounded forth the word of promise in the old dispensation.

And they that feared the Lord heard, and believed, and hoped!

And again, with the longing of hope they would inquire:

Watchman! what of the night?

The night!

Awful night, growing ever darker as it advanced toward the break of day!

For dark, oppressively dark, it was in the land where the Sun of Righteousness with healing in his wings was expected to rise.

It was now four hundred years ago that the last watchman on the walls of Zion had responded to the anxious query of the children of the promise: It cometh, the morning cometh, the sun of righteousness shall rise unto you! Since then, the voice of the watchman had been silenced and it was only the memory of it that sustained the hope in the hearts of Zion's children. And the night had grown darker! And the realization of the promise of the coming day seemed more remote than ever, more impossible!

The cry for the dawn had become a plaintive sigh in the night!

Hopefully and rejoicing had the captive children of Zion returned from the rivers of Babylon, where their cruel foe had required of them an impossible song. But they had found no rest, and the promise of the coming day had not been fulfilled. Oppression and suffering had been their lot. The plaything of the nations they had been ever since the return. Antiochus Epiphanes, that mad type of the son of perdition, had mingled their blood with that of the sacrifices, and had well-nigh succeeded in extinguishing the nation and, with it, the light of hope. And the noble Maccabee, whom God had raised to send deliverance to His groaning people, had long since become corrupt and delivered the glory of Israel into the hands of the hard and greedy Roman. The sceptre had apparently departed from Judah. On David's throne sat that hated Idumean, Herod, who was all the worse because he was the Great; Herod, the Carnal, before whom no woman's honor was safe; Herod, the Jealous, cruel in his mad jealousy, before which no man's life was secure; king by the grace of Rome!

The glory had departed from Israel!

Splendid, indeed, and magnificent, even in comparison with the temple of Solomon's time, stood the Sanctuary in Jerusalem, it is marble and gold glittering in the bright sunshine of Palestine, but it was the splendor of a beautiful shell, great in the sense in which Herod was great, according to the standards of the flesh; great as was also the theatre that had been erected in its vicinity. Never

had the ark of the covenant been recovered from the Babylonian destruction, and a stone occupied its place in the most holy place. In its courts might be seen a motley crowd, Hellenists and Jews, crude Galileans and proud Judeans, white-robed priests and broad phylacteried Pharisees and profane Sadducees, a heterogeneous multitude, that came to sacrifice and to worship, to mock and to scoff, to dispute and to gossip, to meet friends and relatives, or to have their difference settled by the august body of the Sanhedrin

A strange mixture of utter worldliness and rigoristic legalism!

And there, in the court of the gentiles were also those that made of God's house a den of robbers and merchandise of the worshippers. There stood the tables of the money-changers; and there was the market for the sacrificial animals

Yet, thither would also resort they that feared the Lord, the Simeon's and Anna's, the children of Zion that hoped against hope for the dawning of the day!

Watchman! what of the night? The morning cometh, always cometh

But cometh through the darkest night!

Awful, oppressive night!

Zacharias and Elisabeth!

Blessed names in times of darkness and encircling gloom!

Testimonies of faith concerning the faithfulness and immutable grace of Jehovah! Did not these very names testify that both were of the generations of those that feared the Lord and hoped for His salvation? Or does it not speak of that faith, which is an evidence of things unseen and clings to the Invisible, when one names his son Zacharias, Jehovah remembereth, in times when it appears that God has forgotten to be kind; when one calls his daughter Elisabeth, my God is my oath, in a period when the promises of the Almighty seem to fail?

In the hill country of Judah (was it in Hebron?) they lived, and waited.

Waited and prayed!

Prayed for a son, for they were childless, though in late years this prayer had died in their hearts. They were now both well stricken in years, and according to all human experience and expectations it must have become evident that the Lord was not pleased to grant them this petition.

And prayed for the realization of Israel's hope, for they were both righteous and walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord.

United they were by a common faith.

My God is my oath! The promise is sure!

God remembereth! The morning cometh!

Blessed names!

Zacharias!

The Lord remembereth!

Waiting, praying, believing, hoping, looking for the break of day in the enveloping darkness!

Nor waiting in vain, for presently his prayer would be answered by Him Who quickeneth the dead and calleth the things that are not as if they were!

't Was the course of Abbia's turn to minister in the sanctuary, and to that course belonged the gray-haired Zacharias. Many times he had obeyed the summons and hastened in company with a multitude of priests to the Holy City, there to minister unto the Lord. For, although no less than twenty-four divisions of the priesthood had been instituted by Israel's great king of old, and these different courses had been restored and maintained after the return from Babylon, yet each course was summoned to work in the sanctuary at least twice a year. And a well-known figure this pious son of Aaron of more than three score years had become to the worshippers in Jehovah's house.

Yet, even so, a unique honor was bestowed upon him as again he had obeyed the summons and in the dusk of early dawn presented himself for the ministration.

For, as the different functions had been apportioned by lot among the many priests of his course, the third lot had pointed to him as the one, who was to enter into the holy place and burn incense before Jehovah on the golden altar, a distinction so rare and unique, that only once in a lifetime it was bestowed on one, and ever after he was accounted "rich".

Thankful and rejoicing the aged priest enters into the holy place, where already the lamps on the seven-armed candlestick had been trimmed, and the coals upon the altar had been laid, ready to consume the incense and make it rise as a sweet-smelling savor to the throne of grace. He stands before the altar, on the left of which stands the table of shewbread, while on the right the seven-armed altar spreads a shimmering light in the darkness. He prays; for the people; for Israel's hope and salvation; for the coming of the promised day; meanwhile mingling the smoke of the incense with his priestly intercessions. Now he will return to the prostrate worshippers in the court, to spread his hands in priestly benediction upon them and bless them in the name of Jehovah!

Then, he stops, amazed, spell-bound, troubled and fearful

Who is that shining figure that suddenly appears between the altar and the candlestick?

A messenger of joy; Gabriel, that standeth before God, whose special function it appears to be to bring good tidings of great joy, of the salvation of Jehovah to His praying saints. And he speaks:

Fear not, Zacharias! Jehovah remembereth! Thy prayer is heard! Thy prayer of long ago and the prayer of the present. Thy wife shall bear a son! And thou shalt call his name John! Thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth!

Fear not! Rejoice!

Jehovah remembereth, indeed! By thy God thou mayest swear thine oath!

And thy son shall be called John!

The Lord is gracious!

Herald of the dawn!

No, he shall not be the dawn, but he shall be witness of it!

While all the prophets that were before him cried out to Zion's citizens that the morning was coming, always coming; this son of Zacharias shall be great, greater than all, in that he might stretch out his hand and pointing to the break of day might witness: The morning is come! The Sun of righteousness has risen! The night at last is past!

For, great he shall be in the sight of the Lord. Greater than all the Herods shall this child of grace be, for in the sight of the Lord, not in the mere appraisal of men, he shall be great. And what is greatness unless it be of the Lord, according to His standard, and by His judgment? What is all the glory and greatness of the world compared with the greatness that is of the Kingdom and covenant of Jehovah?

He shall be great, yet not the Great One! Witness of the Light, yet not the Light. Friend of the Bridegroom, yet not himself the Bridegroom. He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb, yet not without measure. He shall come, neither eating nor drinking, for he shall not be able to overcome the world, even though he goeth before Him in the strength and spirit of Elijah. In his isolation shall be his strength, until He, that cometh eating and drinking, shall have finished the battle and shall have overcome. The voice crying in the wilderness! A great voice, greater than all that cried before him, yet, even so, still in the wilderness!

He shall be great!

Great in the kingdom of God!

Great because of his divinely ordained position! Great, because of the glorious calling he shall have to fulfill. For, his shall be the calling to link the new to the old, to prepare the old for the new, to prepare a people for the Lord!

His shall be the glory that he may be instrumental to turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord, their God!

And thus he shall turn the hearts of the fathers unto the children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just!

Indeed, so it must be, when the morning is come!

Then shall be the time, when the hearts of the fathers must be turned to the children, for old things shall pass away and all things shall become new. There shall be new wine that must be put in new bottles. For, surely, the angel Gabriel does not stand beside the altar to announce that the son of Zacharias shall settle family quarrels and reconcile fathers to children, but that he shall serve to unite them in the same faith. Nor, indeed, does he signify that the hearts of the children shall be returned to the faith of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, for it is the heart of the fathers that is turned, not that of the children. Nor must the children return to the fathers, but the fathers must turn to the faith of the children, the old must turn to the new, for the night will turn into day, the law will make place for the liberty of the children of God in the Spirit

The heart of true Israel must be turned into the heart of the Church of the new dispensation!

And thus the disobedient, those that would not recognize the light of day even at dawn, that would be inclined to prefer the law to freedom, the bondage of Jerusalem's children to the liberty of the Spirit, form to essence, shadows to reality, the temple to the Church, earthly glittering to heavenly glory, the daily sacrifices to the blood of atonement,—those he would turn to the wisdom, the prudence, the insight into the things of the Kingdom of God, that is the gift of the just, righteous in the blood of Jesus Christ, their Lord!

He shall be great!

For, though himself of the night, and destined to die before the Sun of righteousness had fully risen in the glory of the resurrection, he shall point to the glimmering horizon!

He shall lead the children of the promise to the light of day!

Herald of daybreak!

Zacharias!

Jehovah remembereth!

Waiting, praying, believing, hoping!

Yet, now the realization is come and his prayer is heard, now the dawn of the better day is beginning to glimmer, not ready to appropriate the object of his faith and hope!

Whereby shall I know this?

O, thou of little faith! The time of signs is past. And presently they that shall still seek a sign, that shall refuse to enter into the Kingdom upon the preaching of John and of Him that is greater than John, shall receive no other sign than that of Jonah, the prophet! Why askest thou a sign, now the night is passing and day breaking? I am Gabriel, that standeth before God!

Dumb shalt thou be!

Thou shalt not speak these glad tidings, till the day that all these things shall be accomplished.

For, in the dispensation of faith, only he that believeth shall confess with the mouth!

And shall be saved!

H. H.

EDITORIALS

Natuur En Genade

Broeder G. Van Beek van Kalamazoo, die mede een wakend oog houdt over al wat in Nederland of ten onzent geleverd wordt over de kwestie der Gemeene Gratie en daarmee verband houdende onderwerpen, was zoo vriendelijk om ons het hiervolgende uitknipsel toe te zenden uit de *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant*:

“Conferentie A.-R. partij.

Een inleiding van Prof. Grosheide.

“Gistermorgen is in hotel Witte Brug in Den Haag een conferentie aangevangen van het Centraal Comité van anti-revolutionaire kiesvereenigingen. Na een kort openingswoord van den voorzitter van het Centraal Comité, den heer J. Schouten, heeft Prof. Dr. F. W. Grosheide, uit Amsterdam gesproken over het onderwerp: Natuur en Genade.

“Spr. ving aan met er op te wijzen, dat het oude vraagstuk van de betrekking tusschen natuur en genade door het optreden van Barth en Brunner opnieuw belang heeft gekregen. Bij Barth en Brunner, zeide spr. wordt een dualisme gevonden, dat principieel te veroordeelen is en dat voor de praktijk van het staatkundig leven geen oplossing geeft. Om tot het juiste inzicht te komen van de beteekenis, die natuur en genade hebben voor het staatkundig leven, moet uitgegaan worden van het feit, dat we geen andere natuur kennen, dan een, waarin Gods genade werkt. De anti-revolutionaire partij staat volgens haar beginsel op het standpunt, dat ook voor het staatkundig leven de natuur bij het licht van Gods Woord geraadpleegd moet worden. De fout van enkele hedendaagsche politieke partijen, die zich zeggen te plaatsen op den grondslag van Gods Woord, is, volgens spr., dat ze voor het minst in de praktijk, hetgeen uit de natuur kan worden afgeleid óf te hoog stellen óf verwaarloozen.

“In de middagvergadering is er over dit referaat gediscussieerd.”

Nu valt het uiteraard moeilijk om uit een kort verslag als boven weer gegeven met zekerheid af te leiden, precies wat de spreker eigenlijk heeft gezegd.

Men zou kunnen wenschen op zulk eene vergadering tegenwoordig te zijn geweest. In elk geval zou het der moeite waard zijn, het referaat woordelijk te lezen, om het dan in bijzonderheden te bespreken.

Het is reeds van belang, dat het “oude vraagstuk” van de betrekking van natuur en genade opnieuw de aandacht trekt en onderwerp van bespreking kan zijn in eene vergadering als van dit Centraal Comité in Nederland.

Het is onze aandacht niet ontgaan, dat ook mannen als van Vollenhoven, Dooyeweerd en Schilder ditzelfde onderwerp zoo nu en dan ter sprake brengen.

En het kon wel zijn, dat al is dit vraagstuk ook nog zoo oud, het laatste woord er nog niet over gezegd is, en het ook wel om andere redenen weer de belangstelling kan opwekken, dan die welke Dr. Grosheide ontleende aan het optreden van Barth en Brunner.

En indien dit oude vraagstuk metterdaad eens weer belang zou inboezemen en men zich er ernstig in het licht der Openbaring op zou willen indenken, dan is het niet onmogelijk, dat men nog dualisme zou kunnen ontdekken daar, waar men meende de beste en zuivere oplossing van dit vraagstuk te hebben gevonden.

Ik bedoel in *De Gemeene Gratie* van Dr. A. Kuyper.

Het is bekend, dat in dit werk de hooggeleerde schrijver juist alle dualisme en anabaptisme bedoelt en meent te bestrijden. Herhaaldelijk spreekt hij het uit, dat juist de ontkenning der gemeene genade onvermijdelijk tot dualisme moet leiden, en dat alleen, wie eenmaal het licht der gemeene gratie heeft gezien, natuur en genade in haar zuivere betrekking tot elkander kan vatten en voorstellen. En het is ook bekend, dat de toestand langen tijd zoo was, dat iemand voor bijna waanzinnig werd aangezien, die meende dit te moeten ontkennen, die den euvelen moed had, om staande te houden, dat men juist het dualisme schept en de antithese verliest, indien men vasthoudt aan de door en door on-Schriftuurlijke leer der gemeene gratie. Ik meen, dat die tijd zoo langzamerhand voorbij is gegaan. Men begint althans weer over “vraagstukken” te spreken, die reeds lang opgelost waren, en wier oplossing onder ons immers volkomene zekerheid had verkregen. En dat geeft moed. Er is niets verlammerender en gevaarlijker, dan de geest, die een zeker groot man, als is hij nog zoo groot, tot wetenschappelijke paus wil verheffen, zoodat het “papa dixit” een dooddoener is voor ieder, die nog wil bespreken, wat hij reeds, immers finaal, heeft afgedaan. En het is een voor mij verblijdend teken, dat men althans nog weer wil in bespreking brengen zulke oude problemen als dat van de betrekking tusschen natuur en genade.

En dan, ik herhaal het, zou het wel kunnen, dat men tot de ontdekking kwam, dat de leer der gemeene gratie ons juist leidt in 't spoor van een hopeloos dualisme van Schepping en Herschepping, van Natuur en Genade.

Maar dan zal men de dingen tot op den grond toe moeten onderzoeken, en dat opnieuw.

Men zal dan, zooals men in Nederland zegt, moeten uitgaan van een juiste probleem-stelling.

Het zal noodzakelijk zijn, dat we ons zuiver reenschap geven, van wat te verstaan zij door "natuur" en wat daaronder te begrijpen is. En het zal evenzeer eisch zijn, dat we een zuiver Schriftuurlijke, uit den oneindigen God Zelf afgeleide omschrijving geven van het begrip "genade", zoodat we niet meer "hocus-pocussen" kunnen door een Latijnschen term te bezigen inplaats van een Nederlandsch woord en door dien term ten slotte heel iets anders in te voeren, dan door dien term wordt gedekt.

En dan is het niet onmogelijk, dat ook in referaten, als waarvan we het persverslag boven weergaven, en door ernstige mannen als Dr. Grosheide de dingen eenigszins anders zullen worden gezegd.

We zullen dan zeker geen dualistische voorstelling huldigen van de betrekking van "natuur" tot "genade".

Ook zullen we het niet voorstellen, alsof in deze bedee-ling heel de "natuur" door genade is veranderd. Veeleer zullen we dan de "natuur" gaan leeren zien als het door Gods voorzienigheid onderhouden en geregeerde werkterrein, waarop en waardoor Gods Verbond zich handhaaft en ontwikkelt langs de antithetische lijnen van zonde en genade. Daartoe biedt de "natuur" het tooneel, en alle middelen en gaven en krachten en talenten. En we zullen dan ook niet meer precies zóó zeggen, wat Dr. Grosheide zeide: "dat we geen andere natuur kennen, dan een, waarin de genade werkt."

Dan zullen we, zonder in dualisme te vervallen, ook het beweren wijzigen, dat we de natuur moeten raadplegen voor het staatkundig leven.

Zelfs zal dan de A.-R. partij een andere beschouwing moeten ontwikkelen over het staatkundig leven, zelfs dat in Nederland. De blik wordt dan anders op Nederland en Oranje en op koningen, die regeeren bij de "gratie Gods."

Misschien vindt men dan voor "de practijk" van het staatkundig leven niet zoo gemakkelijk een "oplossing".

Doch de tijd komt, en is blijkbaar niet zoo ver meer, dat ernstige geloovigen door den drang der omstandigheden gedwongen zullen worden, om te erkennen, dat ook de oplossing, die uitgaat van de leer der gemeene gratie, toch geen oplossing in christelijken zin is.

Immers ook naar de eigen theorie zelve wordt de gemeene gratie straks ingetrokken.

Dit moet wel, omdat men anders in 't geheel geen "oplossing" voor de geschiedenis vinden kan.

Maar als die tijd komt, en wie zegt ons, dat hij er niet reeds is? — dan valt ook de "oplossing" voor de practijk van het staatkundig leven, die op de leer der gemeene gratie rust en die geen andere natuur kent, dan een, waarin de genade werkt.

H.H.

Meer Teekenen Van Leven?

Van denzelfden broeder uit Kalamazoo ontvingen we later het hier volgende verslag uit de N. R. Crt.: (7 Nov. 1935)

Crietieke spanningen in de Gereformeerde theologie.

Gisteren heeft Dr. O. Noordmans van I aren, voor de theologische faculteitsvereniging aan de Vrije Universiteit te Amsterdam, over bovengenoemd onderwerp gesproken. Hij ging uit van de algemeene verlegenheid waar in wij kerkelijk en theologisch verkeeren. De vragen, die ons met elementair geweld worden gesteld, rusten in de nooit op te lossen spanning: de tweeërlei taak der kerk: prediking van het Evangelie en ordening van het leven. Deze moeilijkheden dwingen ons tot hernieuwde exegese waarbij het literair-historische wijken moet, om het pneumatische, allegorische, theologische, en de dingen weer in nieuw verband komen te staan. We zien weer, dat de bijbel in de eerste plaats een troostboek is en dat de bijbel een boek is, om uit te preeken.

Een zelfde gang van zaken zal zich voordoen moeten in onze dogmatiek. Staat het kruis genoeg in het middelpunt? Bestaat er geen gevaar, dat wij ons van het kruis naar de schepping wenden en niet omgekeerd?

Als voorbeeld koos spr. de plaats der algemeene genade. Men kan deze zien als genadige terughouding der zonde, doch ook meer positief als begin van een cultuurfilosofie. Terwijl bij Kuiper, die steeds een onbeschermd kant had in de richting van Kohlbrugge en Gunning, telkens de gebedshouding weer terug keert, ontlaadt iemand als Dr. Schilder de algemeene genade van haar negatieve beteekenis en laadt ze positief. Algemeene genade wordt hier algemeene roeping. De kribbe is slechts schijnbaar acultureel.

Meer nadruk dient thans gelegd te worden op de negatieve zijde der algemeene genade. Een nieuw geheel zal pas in de eeuwigheid oprijzen, hier hebben wij slechts troost en onderpand. Daardoor komt de betrekking tusschen een natuurlijke theologie en openbaring weer aan de orde. De algemeene openbaring was eertijds de brug, waarlangs de heiden in de kerk kwam, thans is zij de loopplank waarop de christen de kerk verlaat. Deze methode heeft haar dienst gedaan, zij kan gaan.

Wij moeten weer scherper terugvallen op de schrift en het woordkarakter daarvan.

De beloften Gods zijn ons niet zakelijk, maar in 't Woord gegeven. Loco rei in verso acquiescimus (Calvijn). Daarom kunnen ook christelijke beginselen de plaats van het gepredikte woord niet vervangen.

In de gedachtenwisseling van dit referaat merkte Prof. Dr. F. W. Grosheide op, dat bij Paulus niet het kruis in het middelpunt staat, maar de opstanding van den verhoogden Heiland. Daardoor komt de kerk toch in een andere verhouding te staan tegenover de wereld, zij kan beschikken over de schatten van Egypte, zooals de kerkvaders zeiden.

In zijn beantwoording der gestelde vragen merkte Dr. Noordmans nog op, dat de wereld der opstanding geen wereld is aan deze zijde van het graf, maar een wereld, die wast en toeneemt onder de critiek der parousie. Er is steeds aarzeling bij het spreken over de verhouding van kruis en opstanding, ook bij de kerkvaders, daar deze verhouding dialectisch is.

Zoo de Heere wil hopen wij in een volgen nummer onze opmerkingen te maken over het bovenstaande.

Thans plaatsen we het ten bewijze voor hetgeen we boven schreven, dat oude vraagstukken, die volkomen zekerheid schenen te hebben, toch nog weer vraagstukken worden; en ook onder Gereformeerde theologen in Nederland weer wrijving en spanning kunnen veroorzaken.

Dat is verblijdend.

Laat ons hopen, dat er uit deze wrijving iets goeds mag worden geboren. H.H.

De Christen, De Kerk En De Oorlog

Er zijn pacifisten, die het standpunt innemen, dat oorlog *per se* altijd zonde is.

Tot hen behoort ook B. J. Mulder, te oordeelen naar zijn artikel "The Church and Peace" in de *Calvin Forum* van Oct. 1935. "To begin with, the Church is writing a new definition for sin. This does not mean that men have not and do not know what sin is. Neither does it mean that the Church has not stood out against sin. But sin has been regarded as an individual problem. We dwell so much upon sin in the individual that we are prone to forget that sin may also be social. *And war presents a social composite of all the great sins.* (ik onderstreep, H.H.)." En even verder: "In the ethical standard of the Old Testament, God said: 'Thou shalt not kill'. And Jesus re-emphasized the teaching in the New Testament, in His Mount Sermon, looking, indeed, beneath actuality into purposes and motives. May the State declare wholesale aggressive killing? Rather let the Church keep clear of the whole nefarious business, and preach mightily against this social composite of all the great sins, always remembering that these sins are more deadly in their social consequences than in the individual. If the Church ever hesitates, let us ask, Do these sins square with the character and teaching of Jesus Christ?"

Oorlog is dus een samenstelling van alle zonden!

Nu zal het met de Heilige Schrift in de hand niet wel te verdedigen zijn, dat oorlog *per se*, onder alle omstandigheden en overal, voor elke overheid, zonde moet worden geacht.

Dit zal alleen kunnen, als men eerst het gezag der Heilige Schrift door menselijke spitsvondigheden weg redeneert, zooals P. G. Berkhout dat deed in de *Calvin Forum* van Mei, 1935.

Hij toch beweert, dat een beroep op het Oude Testament niet geldig is, dat er namelijk in de oude bedeeeling veel toegelaten werd, dat in de nieuwe bedeeeling als zonde te veroordeelen is. "Christians will refer to Scripture to corroborate their point of view that we must fight whenever the government tells us to do so. But we should be very careful. Even the devil can quote Scripture for this purpose. *There is much in Scripture that has merely historical and pedagogical but not normative value* (ik onderstreep, H.H.). As far as the Old Testament is concerned we should notice that the *lex talionis*, the law of retaliation, of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, prevalent in those days, is incorporated in the law of Moses. Jesus Himself renounced this law. And I am sure that if the writers of the New Testament were living today they would not so readily write that we must be subject to the higher powers in regard to the imperialistic wars of today. We must not forget that we are living in a different age."

Nu maakt Berkhout hier de zelfde fout, die Mulder boven maakt, dat hij namelijk de geestelijke wet van het Koninkrijk Gods, die de onderlinge verhouding en het leven der onderdanen van het Koninkrijk beheerscht, zonder meer wil toepassen op de overheid, die het zwaard draagt.

Mulder beroept zich op het zesde gebod, "Gij zult niet doodslaan" en beschouwt dan den oorlog als een moord op groote schaal. Naar dezelfde wijze van toepassing is ook de doodstraf veroordeeld, die echter door God Zelf is ingesteld. We moeten hier niet vergeten, dat als twee hetzelfde doen, het daarom nog niet hetzelfde is. Als een individueel burger het zwaard trekt, dan doet hij dat wederrechtelijk, en doodt hij met dat zwaard, dan is zijn dooden moord, overtreding van het zesde gebod. Maar als God de overheid het zwaard in de hand geeft en de overheid doodt daarmee, dan is dat geen moord, en ook niet *per se* zonde.

En Berkhout beroept zich op het afschaffen van de *lex talionis*, de wet der wedervergelding. Maar hij doet dat met dezelfde verkeerde toepassing. Immers geldt die wet van wedervergelding in het geheel niet voor de burgers van het koninkrijk Gods. Veeleer is daar de wet: vergeef zeventig maal zeven keer. Indien iemand u op de rechterwang slaat, keer hem ook de linker toe. Doch de overheid draagt immers niet het zwaard in het koninkrijk Gods, maar in de wereld, die in het booze ligt. Het

is hare roeping de goeden te beschermen en de kwaden te straffen. En dan zal er zeker geen zuiverder strafrecht kunnen worden gevonden, veel zuiverder dan ons strafrecht met zijn gevangenissen en verbeteringsgestichten, dan dat van de wet van Mozes: oog om oog en tand om tand. Ook hier geldt het dus, dat als twee hetzelfde doen, ze daarom nog niet hetzelfde doen.

Maar bovendien, wat blijft er van een beroep op de Schrift over, als we met Berkhout eerst vaststellen, dat veel in het Oude Testament geen normatieve waarde heeft? Wie zal ons dan zeggen, wat wel en wat geen normatieve waarde bezit? Als het waar is, dat in de oude bedeeeling gepermitteerd is, en ook in het Nieuwe Testament door de vingers gezien wordt, wat toch werkelijk zonde is en voor ons ook zonde moet worden, eilieve, waarom zouden we ons dan nog beroepen op de Heilige Schrift? Berkhout is overtuigd, dat de apostelen anders zouden geschreven hebben, indien ze vandaag hadden geleefd. Welnu, dan houden we immers niets over dan Berkhout's overtuiging! En als ik dan overtuigd ben, dat ze juist zoo zouden hebben geschreven, als ze destijds deden, dan zijn we even ver.

De zaak is natuurlijk, dat niet de apostelen hun overtuiging en opinie schreven, maar dat door hen de Heilige Geest ons het Woord Gods schonk.

En dat Woord Gods heeft normatieve waarde.

En Berkhout kan het niet uitruilen voor zijn overtuiging.

Doch, indien we van het standpunt uitgaan, dat de Schrift Gods Woord is, dan zal het niet wel te verdedigen zijn, dat oorlog *per se* en altijd zonde is.

Aan de overheid is het zwaard zeker niet gegeven als een papepel, om de onderdanen te voeren, of als een maatstok om de onderdanen te leeren zingen en in de maat te houden, maar in laatster instantie wel terdege om te doden. En met dit zwaard is de overheid ook geroepen om in den naam des Allerhoogsten en naar Zijnen wil oorlog te voeren.

David streed de oorlogen des Heeren. Het gaat zeker niet aan, om hiervan te maken, dat God zijn goddeloos doen door de vingers zag. Als oorlog altijd zonde is, dan beteekent dit woord niets minder, dan dat David de zonden des Heeren uitvoerde! En dat is godslaterlijk.

Ook is het niet waar, dat het Nieuwe Testament in dit opzicht een andere sprake doet hooren.

Als de soldaten tot Johannes den Dooper komen met de vraag, wat zij moeten doen, dan antwoordt hij hun niet, dat ze hun goddeloos bedrijf moeten vaarwel zeggen, maar dat ze iemand overlast zouden doen, niemand het zijne zouden ontvreemden met bedrog, en vergenoegd zouden zijn met hunne bezoldiging. Door dit laatste gaf hij hun dus feitelijk den raad om in dienst te blijven. Een volk den Heere toeberaid kon dus ook worden vergaderd uit de krijgslieden.

Het was van een hoofdman over honderd, dat de Heiland getuigde, dat Hij zelfs in Israel niet zulk een groot geloof had gevonden.

En het was alweer een hoofdman over honderd in het Romeinsche leger, die "godzalig was en vreezende God", die gedurgelijk biddende was en die een eerstelling uit de heidenen werd in het koninkrijk der hemelen.

De vreeze Gods is dus niet *per se* in conflict met den dienst in het leger.

Men versta ons niet verkeerd.

Het is verre van ons om te beweren, dat de oorlog altijd te rechtvaardigen is. Dat hij nooit zonde is.

Wij springen niet in de bres voor de oorlogen der wereld.

Evenmin als wij uitgaan van de overtuiging, dat de overheid *per se* regeert bij de gratie Gods.

Ook bedoelen we niet te verdedigen, dat het nimmer de roeping der Kerk is, alsmede de roeping van de individueelen Christen om haar en zijn protest te laten hooren tegen het oorlog-verklaren en oorlogvoeren van de hooge overheid.

Dat is thans niet de kwestie.

De vraag is of de oorlog als zoodanig te veroordeelen is.

En die vraag moet allereerst worden beantwoord.

Immers, indien oorlog altijd en *per se* zonde is, dan is de vraag van de verhouding der Kerk en des Christens tot den oorlog een zeer eenvoudige. Het is dan de roeping der Kerk om dit te verkondigen. En het is de roeping van den Christen om ten allen tijd en onder alle omstandigheden te weigeren om mede te strijden in den oorlog.

De zaak zou dan hiermede voor goed beslist zijn.

Het moet toch duidelijk zijn, dat de Christen nooit geroepen kan zijn om te zondigen, noch op eigen initiatief, noch op bevel der hooge overheid.

Doch zoo eenvoudig is de vraag niet.

Want we zullen in het licht der Heilige Schrift hebben te handhaven, niet slechts, dat oorlog niet altijd zonde is, geen zonde is *per se*, maar ook, dat de overheid onder gegevene omstandigheden geroepen kan zijn, om het zwaard aan te gorden ten strijde, om oorlog te voeren en zou zondigen en aan hare roeping ontrouw zou zijn, indien ze geen oorlog voerde.

Dit moet eerst vast staan.

H.H.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Curatorium of the Theological School of our Protestant Reformed Churches, will meet in regular session Tuesday, January 7, 1936, at 3:30 p. m. sharp, in one of the class rooms of the Fuller Avenue Protestant Reformed Church.

L. Vermeer, Secr.

SINAI

Sinai, as was said (in the article preceding) stands in Scripture for law, curse and doom. There at Sinai, the symbols of judgment and wrath—the thunders and lightnings, the blazing and quaking mount, the smoke thereof that ascended as the smoke of a furnace, the trumpet that sounded long—threatened and terrified. And the speech that rises from these symbols is, ‘The Lord God is a consuming fire. Woe unto the transgressor of His law!’ The children of Israel therefore have reason to tremble. For the devouring fire holds them at arms length, shuts to them the door of His sanctuary (they are warned to take heed to themselves that they go not up into the mount or even touch it) and thus serves them notice that they are a people of unclean lips, worthy of being consumed. But so we wrote, of this they seem to have no adequate understanding. So the law (Israel’s schoolmaster unto Christ) entered in,—the law, through which knowledge of sin is. And it was in the reprobate Israel especially, so I wrote, that sin, taking occasion by the commandment, boldly wrought, came into full power, completely enthroned itself, openly and publicly taunted God, corrupted His service, persecuted His prophets and ended with crucifying the Lord of glory. So God had decreed. Before Christ could come to render by the travail of His soul, the sanctuary of God accessible to His people, sin through the commandment had to become exceedingly sinful that Israel might understand that by itself it was doomed and cursed and thus utterly lost and might clearly perceive that if the permanency of the covenant depended upon its willingness and ability to keep the commandments of God, the covenant was doomed to distinction and the promises of God would never be fulfilled. This was one of the reasons (there were besides this one still other reasons to be considered in the sequence) why the law entered in.

That at Sinai the covenant was affixed to the law and made to repose, so to say, upon the resolve of Israel to keep covenant fidelity is evident enough. No sooner were the people of Israel camped before the mount then the Lord bade Moses to tell them that if they would obey His voice indeed and keep His covenant, then they should be a peculiar treasure unto Him above all people . . . After the promulgation of the ten commandments, Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people and said, “Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.” Then there are the statements found in the apostle Paul’s epistles—statements that have already been quoted.

So then, the law entered in indeed to train the church unto Christ. And the law was eminently capable of performing this service as through it is knowledge of sin. This subject, however, must be given fuller treatment than it has thus far received, if Sinai is to rise before our mind in its full significance. If no more could be said of the law than that through it the knowledge of sin is, it

could not be explained how that the law could actually be to the church the schoolmaster unto Christ. If the law will train unto Christ it must do more than lay down for a man a mere precept “Thou shalt not kill” and “Thou shalt not steal”. It must in addition also require of a man that he walk with his whole heart according to the rule laid down and by so doing establish his own righteousness that he may live. It must, further, promise the obedient life and beget life for him. But it must also pronounce the disobedient accursed and by its curse drive him into hell. This the law must do if it will serve as a schoolmaster to Christ. It must hold out to every man death and life and say, ‘Choose ye’. It must bless the just and pursue with its curse the unjust all the days of their life and beget them an eternal doom. A law not threatening with death, not cursing, not blessing, is rightly considered, no law. That the function of the law is as here described is evident. Said the Lord, “Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments; which if a man do, he shall live in them; I am the Lord.” Lev. 18:5. Think further of the blessing for obedience and the curses for disobedience enumerated in the chapters 28 and 29 of the Book of Deuteronomy. If Israel will hearken unto the voice of the Lord, blessing shall come upon him and overtake him. Blessed shall he be in the city and in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of his body and the fruit of his ground, of his cattle, the increase of his kine, and the flocks of his sheep. Blessed shall be his basket and his store. Blessed shall he be when he comes in and when he goes out. The Lord shall cause his enemies that rise up against him to be smitten before his face: they shall come out against him one way, and flee before him seven ways. The Lord shall command the blessings upon him in his storehouses, and in all that he sets his hand unto; and the Lord shall bless him in the land which He giveth him. The Lord shall establish him an holy people unto Himself, as He hath sworn unto him, if he shall keep the commandments of the Lord his God, and walk in His ways. And all the people of the earth shall see that he is called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of him. And the Lord shall make him plenteous in goods, in the fruit of his body and in the fruit of his cattle, and in the fruit of his ground, and in the land which the Lord sware unto the fathers to give him. The Lord shall open unto him His good treasure, the heaven to give him rain unto the land in his season, and to bless all the work of his hand: and he shall lend unto many nations, and he shall not borrow. And the Lord shall make him the head and not the tail; and he shall be above only and not beneath; if he hearken unto the commandments of the Lord his God, which He commands him this day, to observe and to do them, and shall not go aside from any of the words which the Lord commanded him this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them. Deut. 28:1-14.

But it shall come to pass, if Israel will not hearken unto the voice of the Lord his God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which He the Lord commands him this day; that all the following curses shall come upon him, and overtake him: Cursed shall he be in the city and in the field. Cursed shall be his basket and his store. Cursed shall be fruit of his body, and the fruit of his hand, the increase of his kine, and the flocks of his sheep. Cursed shall he be when he comes in and when he goes out. The Lord shall send upon him cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that he sets his hand unto for to do, until he be destroyed, and until he perish quickly; because of the wickedness of his doings, whereby he has forsaken the Lord. The Lord shall make the pestilence cleave unto him, until He has consumed him from off the land, whither he goes to possess it. The Lord shall smite him with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue him until he perish. And the heaven that is over him shall be brass, and the earth that is under him shall be iron. And the Lord shall make the rain of his land powder and dust; from heaven it shall come down upon him until he be destroyed. The Lord shall cause him to be smitten before his enemies. Then shall he go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them; and shall be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth. And his carcase shall be meat unto the fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth, and no man shall fray them away. The Lord will smite him with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof he cannot be healed. The Lord shall smite him with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart: and he shall grope at noonday as the blind gropeth in the darkness, and he shall not prosper in his ways; and he shall be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save him. He shall betroth a wife and another man shall lie with her. He shall build a house but another shall dwell therein. He shall plant a vineyard, but the grapes thereof shall be gathered by another. His ox shall be slain before his eyes and he shall not eat thereof. His ass shall be violently taken away from before his face, and shall not be restored to him. His sheep shall be given unto his enemies and he shall have none to rescue him. His sons and daughters shall be given unto another people, and his eyes shall look, and fail with longing for them all the day long: and there shall be no might in his hand. The fruit of his land and all his labours, shall a nation that he knows not eat up; and he shall be only oppressed and crushed away; so that he shall be mad for the sight of his eyes which he shall see.

These are merely a part of the curses uttered by the law. How the law threatened! In what unspeakable woe it was to plunge the sinful nation! All its dreadful threatenings materialized. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment boldly wrought. From the very be-

ginning of its national existence and throughout all the ages that followed, Israel rose up and went a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land and thus forsook God and broke His covenant that He had made with them concerning all His words—the law. And Sinai's curse went forth. It stalked through the land. And destruction and misery was in its way. It consumed the godless out of God's country. It crushed to earth the nation, and by its billows the remnant was swept into exile. The implication of this is not that Jehovah cursed His elect people. How could He? Yet this people was *by itself* under Sinai's curse, and therefore the fire of divine wrath in judgment enveloped also them. All had sinned and come short of the glory of God. And how the curses of the law came upon the sinful people, pursued and overtook them until they were destroyed! They were made to serve their enemies that the Lord sent against them in hunger and in thirst, in nakedness and in want of all things. The enemy ate the fruit of their cattle and the fruit of their land until it was destroyed. He left not to them either corn, wine or oil or the increase of kine or flocks of sheep. He besieged them in all their gates until their high and fenced walls came down. And they ate the fruit of their own body, the flesh of their sons and daughters, in the siege and the straitness wherewith their enemies distressed them. And the tender and delicate woman among them, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye was evil toward the husband of her bosom and toward her son and toward her daughter and toward her young one that came out from between her feet, and toward her children which she bore; for she ate them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith the enemy distressed them in their gates. And the Lord made their plagues wonderful and the plagues of their seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses. Moreover, He brought them all the diseases of the Egyptians which they were afraid of; and they clave unto them. Also every sickness and every plague, which was not written in the book of the law, them also did the Lord bring upon them, until they were destroyed. And they were left few in number, whereas they were as the stars in heaven for multitude; because they would not obey the voice of the Lord their God. And it came to pass as the Lord had rejoiced over them to do them good, and to multiply them; so the Lord rejoiced over them to destroy them, and to bring them to nought; and they were plucked from off the land whither they went to possess it. And the Lord scattered them among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there they served other gods, which neither they nor their fathers had known, even wood and stone. And among these nations they find no ease, neither does the sole of their foot have rest: but the Lord gives them a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind, and their life hangs in doubt before them; and they

fear day and night, and have none assurance of their life

How all this unutterable grief that overtook the nation betokens that the fire of divine indignation, responding to the call of the law's curses, had leaped forth and swept the land. The curse had already begun to claim its victims while Israel was still standing in the shadow of Sinai. For even then and from then on sin abounded and the motions of sin, which were by the law, worked in the nation to bring forth fruit unto death. And as these motions gained in accumulative strength, the blows of the Almighty increased in number and in violence. How was the sinful nation stricken! From the sole of the foot, even unto the head there was no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and purifying sores that had not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. Isa. 1:6. How evident that the letter of the law, without the Spirit, killeth, worketh wrath and begets for a man under it nothing but sorrow and doom! Well might Paul speak of the service of the law as the ministration of death. For *death* was written over the entire page of Israel history. Yet not only death, but also mercy and grace. The ministration of death, written and engraved in stones was also glorious . . . 11 Col. 3:7.

As to the true church, the remnant according to the election, how well it understood that the nation had become the object of divine displeasure and was being consumed by a fire that went out from God's presence. And it would utter prayers such as this, "For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled. Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance. For all our days are passed away in thy wrath . . ." Ps. 90. It was as the spokesman of the remnant that Jeremiah, lamenting the misery of Jerusalem, complained, "How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in His anger, and cast down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Israel, and remembered not his footstool in the day of his anger: The Lord hath swallowed up all the habitations of Jacob and hath not pitied: he hath thrown down in his wrath the strong holds of the daughter of Judah . . . He hath cut off in his fierce anger all the horn's of Israel: he hath drawn back his right hand from before the enemy, and he burned against Jacob like a flaming fire, which devour-eth around about. He hath bent his bow like an enemy: he stood with his right hand as an adversary, and slew all that were pleasant to the eye in the tabernacle of the daughter of Zion: he poured out his fury like fire. The Lord was an enemy: he hath swallowed up Israel, he hath swallowed up all her palaces: he hath destroyed her strongholds, and hath increased in the daughter of Judah mourning and lamentation. . . ."

What we here listen to is not an outburst of a rebellious spirit but the outpourings of a spokesman of Zion who as taught by grace understands and confesses that the woe that overtakes him and his people is the weight

of divine wrath and that this weight now crushes because he and his people have sinned, transgressed the commandments of God. Harken unto this prayer of his, "The Lord is righteous; for I have rebelled against his commandment: hear I pray you, all people, and behold my sorrow: my virgin and my young men are gone into captivity. I called for my lovers but they deceived me: my priests and mine elders gave up the ghost in the city, while they sought their meat to relieve their souls. Behold, O Lord; for I am in distress: my bowels are troubled; mine heart is turned within me; for I have grievously rebelled. . . . Lam. 1:18-20.

How evident that the church to whose complaint we here listen was under the law! By the law's curse it was being overtaken; and under the weight of God's anger it was bowed down. So it had to be. Before Christ could come to take away the sins of His people by the bearing of the full burden of this wrath, the weight of that burden had first to be felt for centuries by the church, Zion had first to be covered with a cloud in His anger for a season and the stronghold of the daughter of Zion thrown down in His wrath, that Jacob, as harassed by the fire of His jealousy, might learn to stretch out his hands to Him, the promised Christ, as man's only hope and to love and yearn for His appearance. So by the law was the church schooled unto Christ.

Enough has not been said however. It must not be supposed that the church as soon as it began to be harassed by the law, immediately fixed its eye *directly* upon Christ. This it could not as it had Him not as the direct object of its vision. What the church especially took hold of also when smitten by the curses of the law and when overtaken by the woe that the law as transgressed begot is what may be said to form the very core of the promise: "I am thy God and thou art my people now and forever." In the crises of Israel's history the true people of God appear in scripture as making their refuge in the shadow of God's wings and as praying that He be merciful unto them as their soul trusts in Him. So prayed the Psalmist David: "The God of my mercy shall prevent me: God shall let me see my desire upon mine enemies . . . I will abide in thy tabernacle forever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings . . . Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me . . . Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters. Let not the waterflow overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me. Hear me? O Lord; for thy lovingkindness is good: turn into me according to the multitude of thy mercies . . ." Psalms 59:10, 16; 69:114-16. And when Judah was gone into captivity and the beauty of Zion was departed, the church lifted up its head and by the mouth of the prophet Jeremiah was empowered to declare, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every

morning: great is thy faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his mouth. He sitteth alone and keepeth silence because he hath borne it upon him. He putteth his mouth in the dust; if so be there may be hope. He giveth his cheek to him that smitteth him; he is filled full of reproach. For the Lord will not cast off for ever. But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he does not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men. . .” Lam. 3:24-31.

So did the Old Testament church pray. What these prayers show is that in days of stress the saints of old would lay hold on Him who said, “I am thy God. Call on me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.” Ps. 50:15. And the Lord did bring deliverance in every crisis, so that the promise was repeatedly fulfilled on a low, typical plain. Three such major deliverances were the flood, the Exodus and the return of the exiled church from Babylon. Besides these, the Old Testament scriptures make mention of several minor deliverances. In the second book of Judges we have a brief summary of the course of events in Israel from the death of Joshua to the appearance of David on the stage of sacred history. Joshua died. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Balaam. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them . . . Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges to deliver them. But when the judge was dead, they returned and corrupted themselves. The three events that form the circle here presented are apostasy, judgment, deliverance. And this circle continued to return to the end. But this, too, was of the Lord, as all things are. It was through the repeated return of this round of events, that the Lord was repeatedly in every new crisis directing the mind of His people to a deliverance to be brought near. The result was that the church finally arrived at the entrance of the New Testament in a state of lively expectancy, with a mind prepared to be directed by the Spirit to the salvation that God wrought through Christ. Thus in explaining how the church was schooled to Christ, regard must also be had to this returning circle of apostasy, judgment and deliverance.

It is to be considered, however, that the church had to be schooled not merely to Christ’s salvation (to the reality, the true deliverance) but to the very person of Christ as well. So from the beginning, the salvation promised was brought forward as a boon to be effected by the Lord God through a deliverer raised up from among men. So in the first announcement of salvation to come, as made in the garden of Eden after the fall. It was the *seed of the woman* that was to crush the head of the ser-

pent, gain the ascendancy over the malice of the adversary. This seed is Christ and He appears in the course of centuries in every typical saviour that the Lord raised up. He was set before the eye of the nation in Israel’s godfearing theocratic kings, and in the priests who made atonement for sin. He was brought forward in Jacob’s prophesy as the lion’s whelp and the Shiloh. From the prophetic discourses of Isaiah he finally emerges as the servant of Jehovah, the rod of the stem of Jesse, upon whom the Spirit of the Lord was to rest upon, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might and knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. He thus will be quick of understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears. With righteousness He shall judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins. Is. 11:1-14. The same prophet sees Him as a root out of a dry ground, without form and comeliness, despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, with whose stripes we are healed. In the discourse of this same prophet he rises before our eye as One upon whose shoulders the government shall be and as one whose name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The prince of Peace. Thus though born of a woman He is more than man. He is God.

Consider in this connection the promises made to David. The Lord will set up his seed after him, which shall proceed out of his bowels and will establish his kingdom. And He, this seed, shall build a house for the Lord’s name, and the Lord will establish the throne of His kingdom forever. This seed is Solomon and in the final instance Christ. And in the discourse of Amos the promised salvation was to be brought near through the restoration of the tabernacle of David. The Lord will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen and close up its breaches. He will raise up his ruins and build it as in the days of old: that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all of the heathen, which are called by His name.

Even the very place—Bethlehem Ephrathah—where the Deliverer was to be born, was revealed. Though Bethlehem was little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of it should He come forth unto the Lord that was to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth had been from of old, from everlasting. Micah 5:2.

So was Christ ever casting across the path of His church His shadow. His prefigurations—the priest that made atonement for sin, and the theocratic king through whom deliverance would come — were ever before the eyes of His people. But we notice that when the night was darkest and the church was about to be swept into Exile

by the billows of His anger, prophets arose who actually pointed their finger directly at Christ. The result was that, as was said, the church finally stood on the sill of the door of the gospel period with its hope fixed upon God's Saviour to come. He whose name was to be The everlasting Father and The Mighty God was no prefiguration but the very Christ Himself.

So then, what worked together for the training of the church unto Christ, was the law by which knowledge of sin is; the law's curses by which the sinful nation was pursued; the fire of His wrath by which it was enveloped; the types in general (rightly considered, the church itself in its pain and sorrow and death was a type of Christ); the typical deliverers raised up in the crises of Israel's history — deliverers whose appearance made it plain that salvation came and was to come through a saviour, a son of man; the promise realized and at once remaining unfulfilled; the hope seen and the hope deferred; and finally the directing of the attention of the church directly to Christ and His salvation, then when the night was darkest. What the Lord taught His people to do is to cleave to the promise and to live in the future. And as the gloom deepened this future in the discourses of the latter prophets took on new brightness and glory. Not the law by itself but the law as added to the promise is the schoolmaster to Christ.

How well the church knew at the time of the advent of Christ, that deliverance was nigh and that this deliverance was to be worked by a Saviour of God born of a woman. Friend and foe alike were aware of this. The chief priests and scribes could tell Herod where Christ was to be born. They said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judah: for thus it is written by the prophets. But Simeon took Christ up in his arms and blessed God.

That the law was the schoolmaster to Christ does not mean that before Christ came, the church was contemplating Him as the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, as the priest who by the travail of His sould would redeem them from all their iniquities, as the man of sorrows, acquainted with grief and by Whose stripes they would be healed. Of this the church at that juncture had no understanding. That the law had served as the schoolmaster to Christ means that through the law (that cursed and thus called for the nation's doom) in conjunction with the promise the Lord had worked in the bosom of His church the proper expectancy and yearning for salvation. Now salvation, it is true, was being contemplated almost exclusively as deliverance from foreign oppression. This, however, can be explained. Rightly considered it could not very well be otherwise. In the past, salvation had assumed this form. When they forsook Him, His wrath would burn against them. And the token of this was that the adversary would prevail in their borders. But as often as they would return to Him, He would receive and forgive them and free

them from the foreign yoke. This would be to them the token that they walked in the light of His countenance.

That the church approached the gospel age in the conviction that the expected salvation was to consist in them being freed from the yoke of the Roman, must not be taken to indicate that it was not troubled (I speak now of the true Israel) about its sins. It was, certainly. What was hoped for is a saviour through whom the Lord would once more deliver His people and delivering them once again provide them with the evidence that He was their God. This hope as such was not carnal. What the church lacked was insight into the mysteries of God. Its hope therefore was completely blasted by the spectacle of the crucified Christ. The cross amazed them. And the empty tomb perplexed them. Yet the law in conjunction with the promise had done its work at least in part.

Then when yearning was deep and hope lively, and when expectation ran high, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law. Upon Him therefore the full burden of God's wrath was rolled. And that burden He bore and so delivered them under the law from the law and its curse, that they might receive the adoption of sons. And because they were sons, God (on the day of Pentecost) sent forth the Spirit of the Son into their hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Then when the Spirit was poured out, the veil fell from the eyes of the church and it saw the Saviour as He is. Then the law could also complete its work by driving it, the church, into the arms of the Saviour whom it now knew and contemplated as the Christ who by His suffering and death had redeemed it from the law and curse and doom eternal and joined it to Himself.

Thus, so I wrote, the juridical tie by which the believer by nature was bound by the law has been dissolved. His husband is Christ. And thus to the God and Father of Christ he brings forth fruit.

So, though delivered from the law, the delight of the believer is nevertheless and for that very reason in the law. It cannot be otherwise as the law is the expression of the will of the God and Father of Christ. Not to delight in the law of Christ is to walk in the counsel of the ungodly. But of this, so I wrote, the believer is no more capable as in Christ He is a new creature. The believer belongs according to body and soul to Christ who redeemed Him. It is therefore Christ who now says to Him, love me and obey me. And the obedience of the believer is the flowering of the righteous of Christ in him.

Never therefore should it be said, that those in Christ are under the law. They under the law are eternally doomed.

Yet there are still questions that call for an answer. Was not the church in the Old Dispensation already the adopted son of God? The statements that Israel was under the law, that sin abounded and that the billows of God's wrath passed over the nation so that the church

had reason to complain, "We are consumed by the wrath" raises questions such as these: Does sin not still abound *in the church*. Is not Christ today being crucified and put to open shame by the apostate church? Is it then not as true today as ever that the wrath of God burns against the church? Has not every believer as much reason as the believers of the Old Dispensation to complain, "We are being consumed by Thy wrath and troubled by Thy anger?" Is the believer today not being plagued all the day long and chastened every morning? Are we, too, not in heaviness through manifold temptations? What then is the actual difference between the condition of the New Testament church and that of the old? Another question is: If the church of the Old Testament had not sufficient insight in the mysteries of God to know that it was saved from all its sin by the suffering and death of the Christ to come, How could believers of that day be saved? What conception did the church of that day have of forgiveness of sin? Did it have any conception of the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith of Christ? These are matters that will be dealt with in following articles.

G.M.O.

Regarding Our Proposition

This time I am glad to announce that a sufficient number of readers have sent in their order for a book on the History of Our Churches to warrant its publication.

Of course, this does not mean that no more orders will be welcome. The number of copies to be printed will naturally depend upon the number of orders we receive now.

In the meantime, those that did order must have a little patience, for the first part of the book will have to be rewritten, and this I must do in my "spare time" which is not very plentiful. I hope to work at it as fast as I can.

May I ask all our ministers and those interested to send pictures of our churches, in as far as they have not appeared in the Standard Bearer? Pictures of "church and parsonage" will be welcome. Also pictures of former meeting places, like the town halls in Sioux County, for instance, and if possible, I should like to receive a picture of Spoelman's barn in Hudsonville.

Please, co-operate by sending in this material as soon as convenient.

H. H.

Dear Editor in Chief: In the Standard Bearer, issue of Nov. 15, 1935, appears a speech of Rev. A. Petter. In the beginning he draws a conclusion like this: "Unless our children receive Christian Instruction they cannot be saved". Although I read the speech over and over again, it is not clear to me as yet. May I therefore ask Rev. Petter for a Biblical and basic answer in regard to his conclusion?

A. F.

De Vastigheid Des Verbonds

Tot dusver zagen we, dat over het algemeen het wezen des verbonds in het verleden doorgaans werd gezocht in een bepaald gesloten verdrag, een vrijwillig aangegane overeenkomst tusschen twee of meer partijen. Dr. Kuiper Sr. vindt daarbij de noodzakelijkheid voor zulk een verbondssluiting in de omstandigheid, dat er boven de verbondspartijen geen hogere macht staat. "Hieruit ziet dus een ieder, dat verbondssluiting alleen dan denkbaar is, alleen dan te pas komt, als er geen hogere macht aanwezig is, die tot het doen van recht kan noodzaken. In dat geval toch zou er zonder verbond eenvoudig een volkomen ontstentenis ontstaan van order en veiligheid en maatschappelijk welvaren. Er zou dan maar één recht, het recht van den sterkste heerschen. Een iegelijk zou op zijn zwaard leven. Het zou één moorden en rooven overal worden. Om nu dat schrikkelijk kwaad te voorkomen sluit men over en weer verbonden. D.w.z. men voert zelf een vast recht in; een recht, dat steunt op de eer van het woord en de trouw van het karakter; en het is aldus dat de goedgezinden uit plichtbesef en de kwaadgezinden uit nooddwang het middel vinden, om rust en veiligheid te scheppen om zich heen. Maar zóó komt aan dien rechteloozen toestand geen einde, of zoodra er weer een geregeld bestuur optreedt, en een landswet geldt en de overtreder gestraft wordt, raakt de verbondssluiting weer in onbruik. Waartoe toch zou men zelf recht maken, indien er, zonder ons toedoen, reeds een recht boven ons is, dat voor onze veiligheid waakt? Het blijft dus bij wat we in den aanvang stelden: waar boven meerderen, die saam leven moeten, nog een andere macht staat, komt geen verbond tepas. Maar ook, staat er een andere macht boven hen, dan is het verbond noodzakelijk, het verbond de eenige grondslag waarop men handelen kan, het verbond de levensvorm die met volstrekte noodwendigheid komen moet." (Uit het Woord, V,13).

Hieruit verklaart hij dan verder ook de verbondssluiting tusschen de drie Personen in de Goddelijke Drie-eenheid. "En omdat nu Vader, Zoon en Heilige Geest elkanders gelijken zijn, en er geen boven deze Drie staande denkbaar is, zoo volgt hieruit, dat dus ook de onderlinge betrekking tusschen deze drie Personen in het Goddelijk Wezen rusten moet op het wederzijdsche woord, op wederzijdsche wilsverklaring, op evangelieke Wezensluiting, en dus den vorm moet dragen en het karakter moet bezitten van een Verbond." (idem, p.14,15.) Zoo wordt dus de idee van een vrijwillig contract ook toegepast op het verbondsleven van den Drieëenigen God.

We zagen verder, dat het verbond werd beschouwd als een middel tot een zeker doel, een weg tot het bereiken van een zekere bestemming, in het geval van Gods verbond met den mensch, een middel tot behoud der uitverkorenen, een weg tot de zaligheid. Het is niet zelf doel. Het is niet zelf de hoogste zaligheid. Het is de wijze, waarop, de weg waarlangs de zaligheid der uitverkorenen

tot stand komt. Daarom wordt dan ook het verbond der verlossing voorgesteld als een overeenkomst tusschen Vader en Zoon of tusschen de drie Personen in het Goddelijke Wezen, om de uitverkorenen te redden. In nauw verband hiermede zagen we tevens, dat dit verbond der verlossing dan ook wordt voorgesteld als logisch volgend op den raad der predestinatie. De uitverkorenen zijn er, naar Gods raad, reeds. En het verbond der verlossing is de overeenkomst om die uitverkorenen te redden en te zaligen. De raad der predestinatie, het besluit schep-ping en val betreffende, hetzij men de orde zich infra-lapsarisch of supra-lapsarisch denkt, gaan aan het verbond der verlossing of den raad des vredes vooraf. We zagen echter ook, dat de teksten in de Heilige Schrift, waarop men zich bij deze voorstelling van den raad des vredes beroept, zonder uitzondering zien, niet op een verbond binnen de Goddelijke Drieëenheid, maar op een verbond tusschen God Drieëinig en Zijn Knecht, Christus naar Zijne menschenlijke natuur en staande aan de spitse der uitverkorenen. Bij deze bewijsvoering is het dan ook geen wonder, dat men in dit verbond eigenlijk geen plaats kon vinden voor den Heiligen Geest, noch ook, dat men ten slotte het verbond des vredes met het genadeverbond begon te vereenzelvigen. Het verbond toch, dat God met Christus en Zijne uitverkorene Kerk opricht is niet het Verbond des vredes, maar het genadeverbond.

Anders wordt echter de voorstelling van het verbond der verlossing, indien, in de eerste plaats, het wezen en de idee des Verbonds niet gevonden wordt in een contract of verdrag, een vrijwillige overeenkomst, die eerst door een wilsdaad tot stand komt, maar als eene levende, spontane betrekking en gemeenschap, een gemeenschap der vriendschap, die voortvloeit uit den aard en de verhouding der verbondspartijen. Zoo toch schreef ondergeteekende over het wezen des verbonds in The Banner van 10 en 17 April, 1919. Zoo wil het ook Ds. H. Danhof: "Het verbond rust in de Heilige Drieëenheid. God is de God des verbonds. Hij is zulks niet slechts naar den raad des willens in Zijne relatie tot het scheppel, maar allereerst in Zichzelf, krachtens eigene natuur. Het 'innergottliche Leben' is een vriendschapsverbond tusschen Vader, Zoon en Heiligen Geest. Dat goddelijke liefdelieven is dan verder de grondslag voor alle verbonds-betrekking Schepper en scheppel en de scheppelen onderling. De absolute verbondsgedachte ligt verborgen in het huishoudelijke leven van de heilige Drieëenheid". (De Idee van het Genadeverbond, pp. 18, 19). Dan toch is het verbond geen bijkomstige betrekking, maar behoort het tot het wezen van de verhouding der verbondspartijen. En in de tweede plaats, in nauw verband met deze beschouwing over het wezen des verbonds, moet de voorstelling van het verbond der verlossing ook gewijzigd worden, zoodra we het verbond voorstellen, niet als middel tot een te bereiken doel, als een weg ter zaligheid, maar als het einddoel zelf, als het allerhoogste, dat ooit door het scheppel te bereiken is: niet als een weg ten leven.

maar als het leven zelf, niet als voorwaarde, maar als het wezen der religie, niet als middel ter zaligheid, maar als de allerhoogste zaligheid zelf. Dan toch kan ook het verbond der verlossing of de raad des vredes niet zijn een middel tot redding der uitverkorenen, doch moet het worden voorgesteld als het alle besluiten Gods beheerschende besluit aangaande het einddoel aller dingen, dat God Zich eeuwiglijk heeft voorgesteld. Inplaats van het besluit Gods aangaande den weg ter zaligheid, wordt het dan de raad Gods in betrekking tot de allerhoogste realisering dier zaligheid; inplaats van een decreet het middel betreffende wordt het verbond des vredes dan het besluit Gods aangaande het doel. En inplaats van een ondergeschikte en laatste plaats in de orde van Gods besluiten, zal dan aan het verbond der verlossing een hoofdplaats, de eerste plaats moeten worden toegekend in Gods eeuwig decreet.

De vraag is dus of de Heilige Schrift leert, dat het wezen des verbonds is een overeenkomst of eene levende betrekking van vriendschap; en of het verbond wordt voorgesteld als middel of als einddoel, als weg of als het eigenlijk wezen der religie en der zaligheid.

Ter beantwoording van deze vragen is het eisch, dat we uitgaan van hetgeen de Heilige Schrift ons leert aangaande het Zijn en het leven van den oneindigen God Zelf. Achter alle zijn en worden, achter alle verhouding en betrekking toch der scheppelen onderling en tot den Schepper, ligt het eeuwig besluit des Allerhoogsten. Gode zijn alle Zijne werken van eeuwigheid bekend. Alles bestaat en wordt alleen naar Zijn eeuwig wil. Maar het decreet is niet het laatste. Achter het decreet staat de oneindige en alleen zalige en zelfgenoegzame God Zelf. Het decreet is de besluitende God. En zooals de oorzaak aller dingen in God's besluit ligt, zoo ligt het motief van het besluit in God's wezen en leven. Het besluit is Zijn welbehagen. Het is volkomen souverain. Het werd bepaald noch gemotiveerd door iets buiten God. En Hij heeft alle dingen gemaakt om Zijns Zelfs wil, ook den goddelooze tot den dag des kwaads. Niemand heeft Hem raad gegeven. Niemand heeft Hem onderricht. Niets heeft Hem paal of perk gesteld. In Zijn eeuwig besluit is God de volkomen souveraine en absoluut vrijmachtige. Hij neemt altijd redenen uit Zichzelf. En die redenen bewegen zich altijd om het eenigst doel aller dingen: de Zelf-openbaring en Zelf-verheerlijking van den alleen goeden God. Daarom is het dan ook altijd eisch, dat we van de dingen teruggaan op het decreet en van het decreet op hetgeen de Heilige Schrift ons leert aangaande den eeuwig God Zelf. Want uit Zijn Wezen is alleen het wezen van alle scheppel te verklaren, niet in pantheïstischen zin, maar naar den raad Zijns willens. Zoo zal ook uit Hem het wezen des verbonds moeten worden bepaald, en dan naar den raad des vredes, het eeuwige willen Gods de relatie betreffende van het scheppel tot Hem.

Nu leert ons de Heilige Schrift, dat God is een God des verbonds. Hij is dat, niet allereerst en niet allerméest

krachtens eenige relatie, waarin Hij tot het schepsel staat, maar in Zichzelven. God *wordt* niet. Hij is de eeuwige, algenoegzame en zelfgenoegzame God. Hij is al, wat Hij is, eeuwiglijk en onveranderlijk. Het schepsel brengt Hem niets toe, dat Hij niet eeuwiglijk in Zichzelven bezit; doet Hem niets zijn, dat Hij niet eeuwiglijk in Zichzelven is. Het schepsel mag Zijne deugden weerspiegelen, verkondigen en genieten, doch kan ze niet vermeederen of in hare werking verhoogen; het kan Zijn leven, naar de mate van het schepsel, deelen en smaken en daarin zalig zijn, maar het kan dat leven niet verrijken. Zoo is het ook met het verbond. Het is eeuwiglijk Godes. Het is in Hem eeuwiglijk volmaakt. Hij is de God des Verbonds in Zichzelven. En Hij is de Verbonds-God, ook niet krachtens een wilsbesluit, verdrag of overeenkomst, doch krachtens Zijn God-Zijn. Hij is toch wel de Eéne, en er is geen God naast Hem, boven Hem of onder Hem, maar Hij is niet de Eenzame. Ware God louter Eén, dan zou Hij niet de levende God zijn, die in Zichzelf de Volzalige is. Een God, Die *alleen* is, kent niet en lieft niet, leeft niet en is niet zalig, is een koude, starre, doode abstractie. Maar God is in Wezen één en in Personen drie, Vader, Zoon en Heilige Geest. En als de Drieëenige God is Hij de levende God, Die het oneindig volmaakte verbondsleven in Zichzelven leeft.

Het Drieëng Zijn Gods leert ons immers in de eerste plaats, niet slechts, dat de drie Goddelijke Personen wezenlijk elkander volkomen *gelijk* zijn, maar dat ze Wezens-één zijn. Er zijn immers geen drie, elkander volkomen gelijke Goddelijke Wezens, maar God is één. Hij is één in wezen en natuur, één in verstand en wil, één in al Zijn wezenzeigenschappen en deugden, één in oneindige volmaaktheid. Er zijn geen drie Goddelijke wezens, naturen, verstanden en willen, wijsheden en machten, in alles volkomen aan elkander gelijk, maar overigens van elkander gescheiden. Ware dit het geval, het ware denkbaar, dat het verbond zou kunnen bestaan in een overeenkomst tusschen deze drie, elkander wezenlijk gelijke, onderscheidene Goddelijke personen, die geen hoogere macht boven Zich hebben en daarom Hunne onderlinge betrekking tot elkander door een vrijwillig verdrag of wilsbesluit bepalen. Doch zoo is het niet. Vader, Zoon en Heilige Geest zijn wezenlijk gelijk omdat ze wezenséén zijn. Ze leven, denken, willen, bewegen Zich en leven allen in en door het ééne Goddelijke Wezen, in de ééne Goddelijke natuur, van eeuwigheid tot eeuwigheid ongedeeld en ongescheiden. In de tweede plaats leert ons het Drieëng Zijn Gods, dat de drie Personen bij die wezens-eenheid toch persoonlijk onderscheiden zijn, en ieder op Zijn eigenaardig persoonlijke wijze in het Goddelijk Wezen het oneindige, volle Goddelijke leven leeft. Er is Goddelijke verscheidenheid bij wezenlijke eenheid. De Vader is eeuwig Vader, nooit Zoon en nooit Heilige Geest. De Zoon is eeuwiglijk Zoon, nooit Vader en nooit Heilige Geest. De Geest is eeuwiglijk Spiritus, nooit Vader en nooit Zoon. De

Vader genereert eeuwiglijk den Zoon, de Zoon wordt eeuwiglijk van den Vader gegenereerd, de Heilige Geest gaat eeuwiglijk uit van den Vader tot den Zoon, van den Zoon tot den Vader. De Vader is Vader des Zoons en Spireerder van den Geest des Vaders; de Zoon is de Zoon des Vaders en de Spireerder van den Geest des Zoons; De Heilige Geest is Geest des Vaders en des Zoons en onderzoekt de diepten Gods. De Vader is God als Vader, denkt en wil, leeft en lieft als Vader; de Zoon is God als Zoon, denkt en wil, leeft en lieft als Zoon; de Heilige Geest is God als Geest, denkt en wil, leeft en lieft als Geest. Er is dus in God niet slechts wezens-eenheid en persoonlijke onderscheiding, zoodat de Personen wezenlijk aan elkander zijn verbonden, ongedeeld en ongescheiden, maar deze Drie staan ook in persoonlijke levensbetrekking tot elkander door generatie en spiratie. De drieëenheid is een volkomen drieheid, een volheid van volmaakt Goddelijk leven. In de drieheid der Personen leeft God volkomenlijk, is Hij de volmaakt Zelfgenoegzame. Geen vierde Persoon ware denkbaar; geen der Personen kan worden weg gedacht. De Vader geeft eeuwiglijk aan den Zoon het leven te hebben in Zichzelven, stelt Hem eeuwiglijk vóór Zich als het uitgedrukte Beeld Zijner zelfstandigheid en het afschijnsel Zijner heerlijkheid; de Zoon staat eeuwiglijk met het aangezicht naar den Vader, is in den schoot des Vaders en is de uitdrukking van de volle, Goddelijke heerlijkheid des Vaders, het eeuwige Woord; de Geest gaat eeuwiglijk uit van den Vader tot den Zoon, en keert als Geest des Zoons tot den Vader weder. De Vader kent Zichzelven door den Zoon in den Geest; de Zoon kent den Vader door Zichzelven in den Geest; de Geest kent den Vader door den Zoon in Zichzelven. En zoo is er een eeuwige stroom van Goddelijke liefdeleven, uit den Vader door den Zoon, in den Geest tot den Vader wederkeerend. Drie zijn er, die getuigen in den hemel, de Vader, het Woord en de Heilige Geest, en deze Drie zijn Eén!

En dat Goddelijke Drievuldigheids-leven is het leven des verbonds.

Want in de eeuwige en oneindige sfeer van de Goddelijke wezens-eenheid leven de Drie Personen in onafgebroken en nooit te verbreken, meest volmaakte en eeuwig volkomen gemeenschap met elkander. Het is een leven van eeuwige en volmaakte kennis, van een volkomen ingaan in elkanders leven, van een volmaakt verstaan van elkander. In de Goddelijke huishouding zijn geen geheimen. Nooit denkt of wil de Vader, wat de Zoon en de Heilige Geest niet denken of willen. Het is een leven van de meest volmaakte liefde, waarin de drie Personen van de Goddelijke Drievuldigheid elkander eeuwiglijk zoeken en vinden, eeuwiglijk in Goddelijke harmonie met den band der oneindige volmaaktheid aan elkander zijn verbonden. Nergens is er scheiding, nergens disharmonie in het Goddelijke leven der vriendschap. En daarom is God in Zichzelven de Volzalige. Daarom is Hij de volmaakt Zelfgenoegzame, die geen behoefte heeft om van

menschenhanden gediend te worden, Wien niemand iets kan toebrengen, uit Wien en door Wien en tot Wien alle dingen zijn, en Die alle dingen heeft gemaakt om Zich zelfs wille. En daarom is Hij ook van eeuwigheid tot eeuwigheid de God des Verbonds, Die het eeuwige archetypische verbondsleven in Zichzelf leeft. Het leven der Goddelijke Drieënheid is een leven van de intiemste gemeenschap der vriendschap.

Indien we ons de zaak des verbonds echter zoo voorstellen, indien het verbondsleven in God zulk een leven der allerhoogste vriendschap, de aller-intiemste gemeenschap, der allerdiepste kennis en der aller-innigste liefde is, dan volgt er in de eerste plaats uit, dat het wezen des verbonds nooit kan worden gezocht in een verdrag of overeenkomst. Bij volmaakte gemeenschap en levensharmonie, bij een eeuwig volmaakt kennen van elkander, bij de aller volmaaktste liefde en eenheid past geen verdragssluiting, komt geen sluiten van een overeenkomst meer tepas. Daar is alles geest en leven. Het Verbond is met den Drieënigen God Zelf gegeven. Het welt in eeuwige spontaneiteit uit het Goddelijke Wezen op en realiseert Zich met volmaakt Goddelijke bewustheid in de drie Personen. God kent en wil Zichzelf, mint en zoekt Zichzelf eeuwiglijk als Verbonds-God. Het Verbond is de band van God aan Zichzelf; het lieven Gods van Zichzelf; het eeuwige Goddelijke lichtleven. Doch indien dit zoo is in God, dan geldt dit ook van het verbond als betrekking tusschen God en mensch. Immers zijn alle dingen alleen uit God, door Hem en tot Hem. Ook de verbondsbetrekking kan nooit ander zijn dan een ectypische afspiegeling van het verbondsleven in God Zelf. Indien het wezen des Verbonds in God de gemeenschap der vriendschap is, dan is dit ook het wezen des verbonds tusschen God en den mensch. Indien deze gemeenschap der vriendschap in God rust in de volkomene wezensgelijkheid en wezens-eenheid bij persoonlijke onderscheiding, dan moet ook het verbond tusschen God en den mensch, als gemeenschap der vriendschap van den Oneindige met den eindigen mensch, rusten in eene creatuurlijke gelijkheid aan God bij den mensch, bij persoonlijke onderscheiding. Indien deze gemeenschap der vriendschap inhoudt een volmaakt kennen van elkander in de Goddelijke Drieënheid, dan moet ook het verbondsleven bij den mensch daarin bestaan, dat God Zichzelf aan Hem openbaart, Zichzelf doet kennen aan Zijn schepsel-vriend, hem Zijn Goddelijke geheimen mededeelt, met hem spreekt als een vriend met zijn vriend, met hem wandelt, eet en drinkt, met hem onder één dak woont. Indien het verbondsleven in God daarin bestaat, dat de drie Personen der Heilige Drievuldigheid verbonden zijn in den band der volmaakte liefde, dan moet ook de verbondsbetrekking tusschen God en den mensch daardoor ontstaan, dat God Zijn hart openstelt voor den mensch. Dan is het leven des verbonds het eeuwige leven zelf. Want dit is het eeuwige leven, dat zij u kennen, den eenigen en waarachtigen God en Jezus Christus, Dien Gij

gezonden hebt! Gij in Mij en Ik in hen, opdat ze volmaakt zijn in Eén. En ook: Gods verborgen omgang vinden zielen, daar Zijn vrees in woont; 't heilgeheim wordt aan Zijn vrienden, naar Zijn vreeverbond getoond. Dan is het verbond ook het wezen der religie, het allerhoogste goed, het edelste, dat den mensch ooit kan worden geschonken uit genade, de allerhoogste zaligheid! Het wezen des verbonds is geen verdrag, geen overeenkomst, hetzij ge zulk een overeenkomst monopleurisch of dupleurisch denkt. Het is die betrekking der intiemste gemeenschap der vriendschap, waarin God Zijn eigen Verbondsleven weerspiegelt in Zijn verhouding tot het schepsel, aan dat schepsel dat leven schenkt en doet smaken, en alzoo dat schepsel doet kennen en erkennen, dat Hij 't allerhoogste goed is, en de overvloeiende Fontein aller goeden!

En nog eens weer, als we zoo ons het eigenlijk wezen des verbonds mogen voorstellen, dan is het verbond ook geen weg tot een zeker einde, geen middel tot het bereiken van een zeker doel, geen wijze, waarop we zalig worden; dan is het Verbond zelf doel, zelf einde, zelf de eeuwige zaligheid, waarop alles aanloopt en moet aanloopen. Dan gaat het altijd en in alle dingen en overal om Gods Verbond en daarin om God Zelf. Dan beheerscht de verbonds-idee heel Gods raad. En dan concentreert zich heel de geschiedenis juist om de allerhoogst-realizeering van dat verbond Gods. Daar gaat het om in schepping en herschepping. Daar gaat het om in den val, in zonde en genade, in de vleeschwording des Woords, in het kruis en in de opstanding, in de vereeniging aller dingen in hemel en op aarde in Immanuel, God met ons. Om Gods Verbond gaat dan de worsteling der eeuwen en om Gods Verbond gaat het in de Voleinding. En de idee van dat Verbond Gods beheerscht alle bestaan en alle leven en alle betrekking der schepselen tot God en der schepselen onderling. Zoo allesbeheerschend is de verbondsgedachte, dat het metterdaad niet onmogelijk zijn zou, om een complete dogmatiek te schrijven uit het oogpunt des Verbonds. Geen weg en middel, maar eindbestemming en alles beheerschend doel is het verbond Gods.

Dat deze verbondsbeschouwing ook wijziging zal moeten aanbrengen in de gangbare beschouwing van het verbond der verlossing of den raad des vredes, zal nu reeds duidelijk zijn. Wie eenmaal deze schoone en alles beheerschende verbondsgedachte heeft gevat, of liever, wie onder de begeestering van deze van geest en leven tintelende verbondsgedachte is gekomen, zal niet veel aantrekkelijks vinden in de spitsvondige en dor scholastieke voorstelling van het verbond des vredes, die den Vader een verdrag laat sluiten met den Zoon, een verdrag, waarbij dan Vader en Zoon elkander over en weer voorwaard en eischen stellen; eene voorstelling, waarbij men weet voor den Heiligen Geest. Wie eenmaal de levende dan eigenlijk, zocals we hebben aangetoond, geen plaats verbondsgedachte der Heilige Schrift heeft leeren ver-

staan, die weet, die is spontaan overtuigd, dat het bij den eeuwigen God juist nooit zijn kan en nooit kan toegaan, zooals het bij die beschouwing van den raad des vredes wordt voorgesteld.

Doch daarover straks.

Eerst hopen we nog verder aan te toonen, dat ook afgedacht van de afleiding, die we voor de idee des verbonds met recht meenden te mogen maken uit de geopenbaarde waarheid van het Drieëenig bestaan Gods, de Schrift ons overal deze voorstelling van het Verbond aan de hand doet.

H.H.

The Office Of Elders

The final duty belonging to the office of elders now to be considered is family-visiting.

The Roman Catholic church has the Confession (biecht). The sheep confesses his sins not in the sight but in the hearing of the priest. And the priest absolves him, if penitent.

The Reformed churches rejected this institution and inaugurated in its room family-visiting. The Confessional is objectional. The priest brings himself forward as one who in the capacity of the viceregent of Christ has power, right, to forgive sin. What we here have to do with is one of Rome's errors. No man ever lived who had this right. One who forgives sin, must be capable of examining the heart to know whether the confession is real. God only knows the heart. It lies not within the province of a mere man therefore to forgive sin, to infallibly pronounce a confessor absolved. Yet this power the priest claims for himself. What the priest or rather the shepherd must do is to preach that the penitent do have forgiveness of sin through the blood of Christ. But this is something quite different from absolving an individual.

Family-visiting has fallen in disrepute. Serious objections are being raised against this institution. It is too mechanical, it is said. The same questions are asked year after year and put to all the families visited. But this asking of the same questions does not make house-visiting mechanical. What does it that the elders have not their heart in this work. The same questions will not draw out the same answers. It is true that every sheep has the same fundamental needs. But every sheep has needs peculiar to him. Conditions of life vary. Experiences differ. The one is in the need of comfort, the other of instruction, a third of admonition. To know what is needed, inquiry must be made in every case after the health of the soul. Then, too, the questions need not be the same.

It is objected further that family-visiting is a most difficult task and thus requires a pastor with exceptional gift to perform it. True, the task is difficult, but so are all duties belonging to the office of elders. To none of these duties the shepherd is equal of himself. It is not true that family-visiting is distinct from the other tasks

belonging to the office, requires a man exceptionally gifted. Yet it is true that it is a task for which all the elders are not equally well qualified. But this is true of every other duty belonging to the office. There are diversities of gifts. To one, says the apostle, is given the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge, to another faith . . .

Another objection raised to family-visiting is that it calls into being an unbearable contrast, to wit, that of Bishop and of those supervised. Our only answer need be that this contrast is found in scripture. The Lord gave unto his church pastors also called in scripture rulers, elders and bishops.

It is objected further that the persons to be visited are notified beforehand and thus prepare themselves for the visit so that the elders find them at their best. This criticism hardly deserves a reply. That the family visited sets its house in order and make itself presentable is what can be expected. There can be no objection to this. But in this way, it is said, the true state of affairs remain hidden. What therefore they who are opposed to family visiting recommend as a substitute is the so-called occasional visit by the pastor alone. The pastor drops in on his members without first notifying them of his coming and thus takes them by surprise. Where this method is in use, the pastor, it is said, really learns to know his sheep. But of knowledge so gained there is no need. What is needed is a knowledge of the inner life of the family. Besides it is not right for the elders or pastor to unawares intrude upon the privacy of the homes with the express view of catching members off guard, so to say. The pastor is no spy. The members could with full propriety refuse to see him.

Another objection advanced against family-visiting is that it smacks too much of the Roman inquisition. What right, it is asked, have elders to pry their way into the privacy of the soul life of the members by a rigid quiz. To this may be replied that the purpose of family visiting is not wring from unwilling members confessions or to roughly force a way into the sanctum of their soul. The sole purpose of the pastor is to gain some knowledge of the spiritual well-being of his sheep in order to make it possible for himself to administer the word to the particular sheep as his condition may dictate. If the sheep does not spontaneously begin to speak of himself after being moderately encouraged, that is the end of the matter.

Then there is the objection of Rome that family visiting is too public. All members of the family are present. Each one hears what the other says. It may be that in some instances, family visiting does not allow the required privacy. If there be such a member of the family who has need of communicating with his pastor in the absence of the others, that need can easily be met. When spiritual life is normal, no greater privacy is needed than that which the institution of family visiting provides.

Family-visiting has positive advantages. It is official and systematic. Not so the occasional visit. The pastor is accompanied by an elder so that the family is visited by two pastors. All the families are visited. With the occasional visit, the pastor not only comes alone but often in vain as he is not being expected.

Family-visiting is based on scripture. Christ is the good shepherd who shepherds and cares for His sheep, who gave His life for His sheep. He preached not only for the multitude, but dealt also with the individual. He conversed with the Samaritan woman, comforted the penitent woman who was a sinner, sought out the weeping Mary, reinstated the fallen Peter in his office. So, too, the disciples, they preached where ever they had opportunity in public and in private houses. The apostle Paul exhorts the office bearers at Ephesus, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. Acts 20:19,21. On the ground of the command of Christ and according to the example of the apostles, it is the task of the bishops of the church to care for the congregation as a whole but also for the individual sheep. Wrote Paul to the Thessalonians, "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak . . .

The Reformed churches from the beginning emphasized the necessity of family-visiting. They desired that the word be brought to the houses unto all men in order that the congregation might reveal itself as a holy brotherhood and the members might submit to order and discipline. The office must see to it that all work worthily of their calling. For this reason Calvin in his Confession of Geneva, admonished the ministers to feed the flock of God. In the Church Order of 1581 the task of the ministers of the gospel was said to consist also in visiting with the elders the families. Bullinger in his second Helvetic Confession defined the calling of the ministers as consisting not only in the ministering of the Word and the Sacraments but also in teaching the ignorant and in exhorting those who come to a stand-still on the way to press on, further in comforting and strengthening the faint-hearted and in protecting them against the wiles of satan, in exhorting sinners, in calling the wayward back to repentance, in raising up the fallen, in answering the opposers of true doctrine, in visiting the sick and those sorely tempted. The articles of Wezel 1568 regard family-visiting as a duty belonging to the office of ministers and to the office of Elders. On the synods of Emden (1571, art. 25) and of Dordrecht (1574), family-visiting was regarded as being the work of both the minister and the elder.

The rule seemed to be that family-visiting was done by the minister and the elder. It is not advisable that the minister alone perform this work. In large congregations the minister cannot perform all the family-visiting, on account of his many other tasks.

Respecting the time when family-visiting shall be done, art. 23 says that it shall be done before and after every Lord's Supper, thus four times a year. This was the rule in the beginning. This custom fell into disuse. The rule became the visiting of families once a year. G.M.O.

DEPENDENCE, Spiritual

To keep the lamp alive,
With oil we fill the bowl;
'Tis water makes the willow thrive,
And grace that feeds the soul.

The Lord's unsparing hand
Supplies the living stream;
It is not at our own command,
But still derived from Him.

Beware of Peter's word,
Nor confidently say,
"I never will deny thee, Lord,"
But, "Grant I never may."

Man's wisdom is to seek
His strength in God alone;
And e'en an angel would be weak
Who trusted in his own.

Retreat beneath His wings,
And in His grace confide;
This more exalts the King of kings
Than all your works beside.

Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

—Phil. iv. 6.

We tell Thee of our care,
Of the sore burden, pressing day by day,
And in the light and pity of Thy face,
The burden melts away.

We breathe our secret wish,
The importunate longing which no man may see;
We ask it humbly, or, more restful still,
We leave it all to Thee.

Susan Coolidge.

The Place Of Doctrine In The Christian School ★

The home, the school and the Church have sometimes been called the triple alliance for the purpose of instructing and training the children of the covenant. And not improperly so. For, it cannot be denied that all three are of great importance in the education of our children. None of them can be missed, none of them can afford to be negligent in performing its part in this significant task, without causing a gap in the training of the child. Nor can it be gainsaid that there should be unity and co-operation between these different agencies as each accomplishes its own part in this work. The training of the child should be systematic, must be one in principle, especially from a religious viewpoint. And as each of the different agencies accomplishes its part the instruction of the child should be one whole, preparing him for life in all its different departments in a general and elementary way. For this reason it is not improper to designate home, school and church as a triple alliance with a view to the education of the covenant children.

The question arises: in this important work of instructing our children what particular part must be assigned to each. It may be admitted that to a certain extent, their several callings are quite similar. All three aim, not only at instructing but also at training the child. The principle of instruction is the same, whether the home, the school or the church is the agency; it must always be the fear of the Lord. Yet, it can easily be seen that although their calling is in general the same and the several parts, the home, the school and the church perform similar, yet they are also distinct. They are related, but they are not identical. They may inevitably overlap somewhat, they are not mere repetitions and reduplications of one another. Hence, the question: what is the several calling of each of these agencies to educate the covenant-child?

It is not the purpose of this present lecture to answer this question in all its implications. Yet, my subject is related to it. In order to answer the question what may be the proper place of doctrine in the Christian School I must needs deal somewhat with the relation of the School to the Church as agencies for the training of our children. And I will try to develop especially three aspects of my subject.

1. The School and its calling.
2. The proper place of doctrine in it.
3. The way to afford doctrine its proper place.

1. The school is, no doubt, to be considered as an extension of the home as an agency for the training of the child. We are all agreed that the duty of bringing

up the children rests primarily and principally upon the shoulders of the parents. To them Scripture assigns the task. They are the most natural educators of their own children. They are in a position to know them in their different characters and dispositions better than anyone else. They, especially the mother, are with their children from their very entrance into the world. And they love them as no others can possibly love them. They are the exclusive instructors of their children during the first few years of their life, and long before they go to school they have laid the foundation for their future training. And if we make a distinction between the task of the home and that of the school and the church, we may probably say, that the part of training the children, of bringing them up of doing what is called in the Holland, very suggestive term: "opvoeding" belongs especially to the home, while both school and church emphasize rather the part of instruction. The two cannot be separated, to be sure. All instruction must needs also be training. And training cannot be divorced from instruction. But if a distinction is made, we may surely say that the home is especially the institution for training, the school and the church are agencies for instructing the children of the covenant.

The school is, undoubtedly born out of practical necessity. It is not an institution that is given with creation as is the home; neither is it a specially instituted body as in the Church; it is man-made. Yet, although this is true, it cannot be said that it was quite mechanically imposed on life. It rather arose quite spontaneously from the development of life in general. Time, was, especially among Israel, when the parents shouldered the task of instructing and training their children alone. Life was still simple. And because of this fact few demands were made of the instruction of the young. And these demands could readily be met by the parents. But as life developed, became more complicated in its various departments, more was demanded of that training that was supposed to prepare the child to take his place in life. And the parents had neither the time nor the ability to finish the task of educating their children. It is out of such conditions that the school arose. Parents banded together, employed someone of ability and character to educate their children in those knowledges of those subjects which they could not possibly teach themselves, and which must nevertheless be taught to prepare the child for its place in society. From which it follows, in the first place, that the school is an extension of the home, an institution controlled properly by the parents. The state may be interested that its citizens do not remain illiterate but are properly instructed; the church may have the calling to watch that her children receive such instruction is in harmony with the pledge made by the parents at the occasion of baptism; both may, therefore, have a certain interest in the school; but they do

not control the school. The school is not an institution of the church, nor of the state, but of the parents. And the latter are primarily responsible before God for the instruction they receive even though it is not given by them personally. And, in the second place, it follows that the purpose of school-instruction is chiefly to instruct the children in those subjects the knowledge of which is essential to prepare them for their place in society in general. In this respect the calling and purpose of the school differs from those of the Church. The Church has its origin in grace, the school in nature; the Church is heavenly, the school is earthly; the Church is the guardian of spiritual things, the school is the custodian of temporal matters; the Church aims at the growth in the knowledge and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the school at the development in the knowledge of earthly relations; the church purposes to prepare its seed for their place in the Kingdom of God, the school has the calling to prepare its pupils for their place in this present world.

If this distinction is correct, we will also be ready to define what is really a Christian School in the true, reformed sense of the word. Indeed, the proper conception of the idea of the Christian School depends upon our view of life in general. If it is our view that things natural and spiritual, things heavenly and earthly, things of the kingdom of heaven and the affairs of this present world have nothing to do with each other, if we separate them, it is quite impossible to see the necessity of Christian Instruction in the school; and if we still prefer the Christian School to the Public School it must be from the practical principle that our children can never receive too much instruction in the Scriptures and that the time which the Church is able to devote to the education of its seed is necessarily limited. In that case we will look upon the school, if not as an institution of the Church, nevertheless as an institution that can be very helpful to the Church in indoctrinating the children of the covenant. And the school will naturally be an institution which is in every respect like the school of the state, except for the Christian atmosphere that is created by opening and closing with prayer, the singing of a Christian hymn and the instruction in Biblical History, perhaps, even in the Catechism. The Christian School in that case is a school that has assumed part of the task that properly belongs to the Church.

Quite different, however, will be our conception of what a Christian School ought to be if we understand that the natural and the spiritual cannot and may never be separated, but that in every department of his life in the world the Christian has the calling of living from the subjective principle of the life of regeneration and according to the objective standard of the Word of God. Religion, the Christian religion is not something that is added to life, but it is a power, a living power, a living

power that purposes to permeate all of life. The Christian is called to be a Christian always and everywhere. It is his confession that with body and soul and in life and in death he is not his own, but belongs to his faithful Savior Jesus Christ. And, therefore, with body and soul, with mind and will, in society and the state as well as in the Church He serves the Lord. Personally and in the home, in the relation of parent and child, of man and wife, in business and industry, as servant or as master, or magistrate or as subject, it is his calling to serve the Lord Christ. But if this is true, it must also be evident that a Christian School is not merely a copy of the public school except for the addition of some Biblical instruction, and religious exercises, but that it purposes to be Christian thruout, Christian in all its instruction and training of the child. The principle of the fear of the Lord must permeate all the instruction and discipline and life of the school that is really Christian. A Christian School must be Christian as a School!

2. If this view of the Christian school is correct, it should not be difficult to arrive at a correct conception of the proper place of doctrine in such a school. When I speak of doctrine I mean Reformed Doctrine, because I am speaking of our own Christian Schools. It is sometimes emphatically advocated that the Christian character of our schools must be made as general as possible. We should not really speak of Reformed Schools, but rather emphasize that our schools purpose to be generally Christian. But this is a mistake. It is quite impossible to be generally Christian, without sacrificing all the salient doctrines of Christianity. One cannot be an Arminian and a Reformed believer at the same time. He cannot be Reformed, Lutheran, Baptist and Methodist all at once. If he would, nevertheless, be generally Christian in his teaching in the sense that he would avoid all such points of doctrine that causes the different branches of the Christian Church to differ from one-another, so that his Christian instruction would be the largest common denominator of all Christian beliefs, education would necessarily become quite vague and colorless. And, therefore, I cannot conceive of Christian doctrine that is not specific. And in the concrete a Christian School must be Christian in the specific sense of the word. Its Christian character must be representative of the specific belief of the parents that support and sponsor the school, that is, in our case, Reformed. When, therefore, I speak of doctrine in this connection I mean specifically Reformed doctrine.

And, then, I wish to say, first of all, that it cannot be conceived of as the proper task of the school, even of the Christian School, to teach Reformed doctrine, to include Reformed doctrine as one of the branches of its curriculum. This certainly is the task of the Church. To watch over the flock, to preserve soundness of doctrine, to develop the truth as it is revealed in Scripture, to

establish what is to be considered as accepted truth, to express this in her confessions, to maintain it in opposition to all error, and to instruct all her members, believers and their children in the truth as it is in Jesus,—that is the proper task of the Church as instituted, that is, through her officebearers, particularly through the ministry of the Word. For this purpose Christ instituted the offices, for the well-being of the Church, for the upbuilding of the saints, for their growth in the knowledge of the truth, that they might not be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. This calling, therefore, is inseparably connected with the office. It cannot be delegated to the school, for our Christian School is no Church-school. The teacher is no officebearer, nor does he labor under the direct supervision of and as appointee of the Consistory. And not only is this calling connected with the office and, therefore, with the Church institute, but the latter is also the proper agency for instruction in doctrine from the viewpoint of ability to teach it. We believe in a thoroughly trained ministry, in order that our ministers may be able to instruct in all the counsel of God. Instruction in doctrine is the proper domain of the ministers of the Word. For they are specifically prepared. This is not true of the teacher in the school. And, therefore, I maintain that the place of doctrine in the Christian School cannot be that of a subject in the curriculum. This the Church does in preaching and teaching, from the pulpit and in Catechism. And never can the Christian School take the place of Catechetical Instruction. There may be no objection to the subject of Biblical History; there is surely no objection to the direct reading of Scripture in the Christian School. But its task cannot be and should never be delegated to it, to instruct in doctrine directly. And if the Church offers proper catechetical instruction and the coming generation is nevertheless ignorant of the Reformed truth, the blame ought not to be laid at door of the Christian School, but the accusing finger must be pointed at children or parents, at young men and women that have been negligent in attendance and in properly preparing for catechism-work.

However, this does not mean that doctrine, Reformed doctrine, has no place in the Christian School. On the contrary, it has properly a very important place. Its place is basic to all its instruction and training, to all its school-life and discipline. The school must not teach Reformed doctrine, but it must apply the principles of Reformed doctrine to all its teaching. All its instruction must be Reformed instruction. The school, therefore, receives its doctrinal principles, upon which all its instruction must be based, in harmony with which all its teaching must be offered, from the Church. It applies them. It stands to reason that there is difference of degree in which these principles can be applied to differ-

ent subjects. But in a greater or smaller degree these principles must be manifest in all the instruction given. How important this place of doctrine is will be evident if I only draw a few general lines and show with respect to some of the subjects taught what this application of Reformed principles would mean. Let us take the subject of history. In the first place it will be very evident that it will make a world of difference whether this subject is taught according to the philosophy of evolution or in harmony with the Biblical doctrines of creation and the fall of man. The same historic facts appear in each instance in a wholly different light. But further it will also be evident that there is a wide difference between the Arminian view that man is the maker of his own destiny and the Reformed view that all things are but the unfolding of the eternal counsel of God, and that all creatures even the rational moral beings must certainly execute that counsel. It will make a world of difference whether the one or the other principle is applied to and permeates all the teaching of history. Take another example, the subject of civics. It will be seen, that it makes an important difference, whether the subject of magistrates, the state and its power and calling, is taught from the viewpoint of revolutionary unbelief or from the Christian viewpoint of authority and obedience for God's sake. But even apart from this general difference, it can easily be discerned that it is by no means indifferent, whether the subject is taught from the viewpoint of common grace or from the viewpoint of the antithesis. In the one case one would consider a government consisting of godless magistrates Christian because they rule by the common grace of God; in the other one would maintain that we must strive for Christian men to rule over us. Take the subject social science. What a difference the application of Reformed doctrine makes for such important subjects as the relation of man and wife, parent and child; authority and obedience, divorce, birth control, employer and employee, labor conditions and relations, strikes and uprisings and similar subjects. And thus it is with every subject taught in the school, physiology and geography, yea, even reading and writing and arithmetic.

And not only is this true of the subjects that are being taught in the Christian School, it is equally true of the life and discipline in the schoolroom. The opening and closing prayers certainly must be reformed. The songs that are sung and learned by heart may never be in conflict with the principles of the Reformed faith, but ought to be expressive of it. The teacher must certainly consider his children as covenant-children and in all his instruction, attitude and discipline it must become evident that he bears this in mind and that he aims at the development of the perfect man of God, thoroughly furnished unto all good works as far as his life in this world is concerned. And even in its programs, given outside

of the schoolroom proper, the school must become manifest as based upon the reformed truth. In one word, the place of doctrine, of Reformed doctrine in the Christian School is basic. It determines the religious character of all the instruction and life and discipline in the school!

3. If such is the ideal of Christian School, if that should be the place of doctrine in it, it is very evident that we have not reached the ideal as yet. Yet, that is not the saddest aspect of the whole situation. It is far worse, that it cannot be said that there is a serious strife after the realization of that ideal. The present situation is that we have schools that offer some Biblical instruction, instruction in Biblical history that is largely doctrinal and belongs to the task of the Church. Special textbooks in mimeographed form have recently seen the light, guides for teachers and pupils that are based upon the common grace conception thruout. We have schools that open and close with prayer and that are given to the singing of hymns, by no means always Reformed in contents. But we do not have schools that are based upon Reformed principles. There is room for the question: what ought to be done, what is necessary in order to strive for the ideal?

I will begin with the people that sponsor and control and support the school. They must first of all be Reformed, not only in name, but according to their deepest conviction. After all, the school is the institution of the parents. Its standard can hardly be expected to be higher than that of the parents themselves. If we do not remain a Reformed people, we shall not attain to the ideal of truly Christian Schools in which Reformed doctrine lies at the basis of all instruction. In that case the cause of Christian Instruction is a hopeless one. And, therefore, we must have a truly Reformed people that support and control the school, a people that clearly understand what a Christian School ought to be and that want it, and wanting it will not rest until the ideal is attained. This truly Reformed people must form the school society and must elect from its midst a school board that is in harmony with the principles and ideals of the society. This I consider the strength of the Christian School, its very backbone.

In the second place, we must have thoroughly Reformed teachers. The teacher is the heart of the school. It is he, not only, that must give the instruction, it is also he that must chiefly be instrumental in making the school what it ought to be, in causing us to reach the ideal. He must not merely be an able scholar and an accomplished teacher, so that he is thoroughly acquainted with the subjects he is required to teach, but he must also be able to apply the Reformed truth to all the different subjects in which he instructs. He above all must be thoroughly convinced of its truth, must carry the truth in

his heart and love it. Only love of the Reformed truth will inspire him not to be satisfied with conditions as they are but to strive for the ideal.

In the third place we are in need of teachers that will make it their life's task not only to teach, but to bring the Christian School to its proper level. Teaching has too often been looked upon as a stepping stone. Comparatively few have given their life to their profession thus far. Yet this is necessary. In the first place because the experienced teacher is certainly the best. Experience trains him for the task and all the while makes him more fit for the work. In the second place, because experience will cause him to become more thoroughly acquainted with the real needs of a truly Christian School. In the third place, because it is not merely the work of a Christian School teacher to teach, but also to supply the school gradually with text books that can be used in the schoolroom, in which the principles of reformed truth are applied to the subjects to be taught. One who gives himself to teaching for a few years has neither the experience nor the ambition to accomplish this work. We are in need of men and women that will make teaching their life's work.

But once more, we must have a thoroughly Reformed people to strive for this ideal. Without them all the other factors cannot be had. And the doctrinal level of the school will not be higher than that of the people that support it. If, then, we are a truly Reformed people it is possible to strive in the direction of the ideal Christian School; if not the cause of Christian Instruction is utterly hopeless!

H. H.

*Lecture delivered before a meeting of the Christian School Benevolent Association of Fuller Ave. Prot. Ref. Church, Grand Rapids, Mich.

IN MEMORIAM

Den 15den November ontsliep, zeer zachtken, in haar Heiland onze geliefde Echtgenoot, Moeder, Grootmoeder, en Over-grootmoeder

FREDERIKA ELHART

in den gezegenden ouderdom van 70 jaar, en 8 maanden.

Onze harten zijn zeer bedroefd, maar wij treuren niet als die geen hoop hebben, want wij gelooven dat zij is heengegaan naar de hemelsche woningen, en nu bij haar Heiland is, op wien zij vertrouwde voor haar zaligheid. Wij koesteren een stille hoop van een zalig wederzien.

Mr. Tjerk Elhart
Mr. en Mrs. Joe Langerak
Mr. en Mrs. Roy Koeze
Mr. en Mrs. Jacob VanderVeer
Mr. en Mrs. Bernard Elhart
Kleinkinderen

Ingezonden

Geachte redacteur:

In de Standard-Bearer van 1 Nov. 1935 onder het opschrift "Nog Iets Over De Gemeene Gratie", las ik in het laatste gedeelte van Kremer's antwoord over de algemeene genade een geheel andere gedachte dan u dat hebt gedaan, blijkens uw antwoord of bezwaar.

Ik lees daar: "En dat men dan gelijk in Amerika kwam tot een sterke positie etc. is begrijpelijk. Af te keuren is natuurlijk, dat men met het badwater", etc.

Ik las dat geheel anders en wel zoo: "Anderzijds is het in de praktijk soms zoo, dat de wereldzin van een *Christen-hart meer* oog heeft voor de algemeen genade dan voor de zaligmakende genade; en dan vindt zulk een wereldzin in de gemeene gratie een brug om te komen tot wat men gaarne wil, een wereldgelijkvormig leven."

Nu rekende ik alzo. Kremer wil niet de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk alhier beschuldigen, dat ze nu zoo wil, maar zooals ik het las, scheen het mij toch toe, dat hij (Kremer) daar toch wel ietwat het oog op gevestigd had. En dat wel omdat hij zegt: "En dat men dan, gelijk in Amerika, kwam tot een sterke positie . . . is begrijpelijk".

Nu dan, daar zijn volgens Kremer dus redenen, waarom wij als Protestantsche Gereformeerden de leer der algemeene genade bestrijden, omdat ze aanleiding geeft tot wereldgelijkvormigheid en deze verdedigt en beschermt.

Ik kan het mis hebben. Dan zij dat zoo.

Nog een vraag.

Men speelt nogal wat met het woord "genade". En in den regel heet het dan, dat genade is onverdiende gunst. Maar ik lees in Lukas 2 het laatste vers: "En Jezus nam toe in wijsheid en groote en in genade bij God en mensen". Maar als genade in één zin dan onverdiende gunst is, wat beteekent het hier dan? Toch zeker geen onverdiende gunst.

Broedergroetend,

H. Van Putten.

Note: Ik weet niet, waarin ik Kremer verkeerd verstaan heb. Hij bedoelt natuurlijk, dat men misbruik kan maken van de leer der gemeene gratie, ofschoon die leer op zichzelf volkomen Schriftuurlijk is. Dat wil men hier ook wel toestemmen. Waarschuwde niet de Synode van 1924 tegen dit gevaar? Wij zijn echter van overtuiging, dat die leer zelf valsch is en onvermijdelijk leidt tot verflauwing der grenzen.

Genade beteekent niet op zichzelf onverdiende gunst. De grondbeteekenis is schoonheid, bevalligheid. In Lukas 2 beteekent het woord eenvoudig gunst, aangenaam-zijn bij God en mensen.

H.H.

IK WEET HET NIET

Gij vraagt mij: Hoe 'k mijn hart aan Jezus gaf?
Ik weet het niet.

Die weg schijnt mij verborgen als het graf.
Maar 't is geschied!

Ik voelde dat deze aarde mij bedroeg;
Dat ze in haar heerlijkste uren mij beloog;
En toen—toen heb ik midden uit d' ellend'
Tot HEM mijn hart in smeking toegewend.

Ik weet het niet
Hoe alles is geschied,
Maar 'k weet gewis
Dat Hij mijn dierb're Heiland is.

Gij vraagt: wanneer ik uit het graf der zond'
Ben opgestaan?

De dag en 't uur, waarop ik vrede vond, zijn mij ontgaan.
'k Was zeker gansch verlaten en alleen,
In dikke duisternis, waarin geen sterre scheen.
Toen kwam HIJZELF, en door Zijn aangezicht.
Werd alles in mijn hart verheugd en licht!

Ik weet het niet
Wanneer het is geschied,
Maar 'k weet gewis
Dat Hij sinds alles voor mij is.

Gij vraagt mij waar ik mijn Heiland heb ontmoet?
Die plaats verzwond

Mij uit d' herinnering, zoodat haar mijn voet
Niet wedervond.

Misschien vond Hij 't beter, dat 'k niet meer
Dat heilig oord aanschouwde, opdat de HEER'
Mij alles werd, opdat geen plekje op aard
Mij hinderen zou in 't opzien hemelwaart.

Ik weet het niet
Waar alles is geschied,
Maar 'k weet gewis
Dat Hij tot mij gekomen is!

Gij vraagt: Waarom 'k mijn hart den Heiland gaf?
Dat weet ik goed.

Hij nam mij zelf de zondeboeien af
En schonk mij moed.

Ik had geen rust, geen vreugd, geen hoop, geen kracht. . .
Toen hoorde 'k van een Lam, aan 't kruis geslacht.
Op Golgotha heb ik HEM aangeschouwd
En heel mijn toekomst Jezus toevertrouwd.
Toen was mijn hart
Verlost van smart,
Bevrijd door 't dierbaar Lam
Dat al mijn schulden op zich nam.

Nu ga 'k mijn pelgrimsreis gemoedigd voort.
Nog meenge traan

Ontvliedt mijn oog, maar 't zalig oord
Kan niet m' ontgaan.

Straks wischt Hij mij de laatste tranen af,
Mijn Vriend, mijn Koning, die mij 't leven gaf,
Die mij in dit Mesech zoo getrouw bewaart
Dat zonde, dood noch oordeel mij vervaart.

Ik weet het niet
Wat verder nog geschiedt . . .
Dit is gewis:

Dat mijn Immanuel mijn eeuw'ge blijdschap is!
DR. J. H. GUNNING.

An Infant

It is with great pleasure that we at this time desire to announce that by January 1, 1936 Deo Volente, a little paper will make its appearance into your homes. This little paper is of great significance for the future of our Denominational life. The enterprise, although its appearance will be small, will be the culmination, the results, the fruit of arduous and difficult labor.

This paper is for the Sunday Schools of our churches, although other Sunday Schools not of our denomination are invited to use this paper also. This paper will substitute the Instructor which up to the present has been constantly used in our circles. It is evident that with the Instructor the International Lesson System has been abolished. This paper will contain the explanation of a new system of Sunday School lessons. The Lesson System has been adopted by the Board of the Protestant Reformed Sunday School Teachers' Association and bears the approval of all the teachers' staffs and consistories involved.

With the introduction of this New Lesson System the purpose of the Sunday School in our midst will be somewhat modified also. The Board certainly appreciates the advice given and the suggestions made by Rev. H. Hoeksema as to the purpose of the Sunday School.

In harmony with suggestion offered the Board has labored.* The Sunday School Lesson will purpose to cover the entire Bible in about seven or eight years time. The stories will be taken in a chronological order. Every other quarter however the Old Testament stories will be changed to a series of New Testament stories. The purpose of this is evident. The teacher's and the child's interest will be maintained.

The children of the older classes will be requested to memorize at least two Bible texts every week. These texts have been carefully chosen in harmony with the lesson taught. In other words the children will learn from eighty to one hundred texts annually and the texts will be interpretative with the lesson. Besides in our quarterly review there will be two review lessons given. One will review the lessons covered, the other will review the texts and the lessons together. The child will get a better conception of Scripture as a whole; it will make him well acquainted in the Bible; it will lay a foundation for real Scripture knowledge.

The question probably will be asked, "Why a New Lesson System? Was the International System out of date?" We would be glad to answer these questions then in an other article. We may state that it has taken the Board of this Association at least more than two years of hard labor, although sometimes discouraging, to get this far. We readily admit that our Lesson System is no where near in a state of perfection. A graded

lesson system would be far more ideal. The next best is what the Board of this Association has tried to do.

Our own Lesson System with our own men writing the explanation is certainly far more ideal and desirable. We believe it to be a privilege and a duty toward God that we should maintain our distinctiveness in the education of the covenant youth of our Denomination. Our "Raisson d' Etre"—the reason for our Denominational existence depends upon this maintenance. Besides should we fail at this time and should we allow our covenant youth to be contaminated with the trash of modernism as propagated by outside elements, the time might come that we would experience God's wrath upon us for not having utilized the golden opportunities afforded us. In God's strength we hope to continue.

We desire your kind and courteous criticism upon our work, but we hope that instead of frustrating the honest endeavours of the Board and the Sunday School Teachers that you will support our cause with your prayers, sympathy and criticisms. We hope to benefit by your suggestions and improve our paper. Permit us to ask you, "Please, do give the infant a hearty welcome and give it nourishment that it may not starve for lack of interest and for want of sympathy."

In name of the Board of the above mentioned organization.
A. C. Boerkoel.

*Nevertheless, it is not quite true that my advice has been followed. I cannot be persuaded that there is modernism in the *system* of the International Lessons. Hence, my advice was to begin by writing our own explanations by our own men of those lessons. I would be in favor of a graded system, if this were possible. If this is not possible I see little advantage in a new cycle of lessons. And the lessons of the proposed schedule are, in my opinion too much like those of the Catechism. We will get mere repetition. And, surely, it is not the calling of the Sunday School to give catechetical instruction.

I write this, not to interfere with the work of the board, but to be clearly understood and in justice to myself.
H. H.

Show me Thy ways, O Lord; teach me Thy Paths.—Ps. xxv. 4.

When we cannot see our way,
Let us trust and still obey;
He who bids us forward go,
Cannot fail the way to show.
Though the sea be deep and wide,
Though a passage seem denied;
Fearless let us still proceed,
Since the Lord vouchsafes to lead.

Anon.

That which is often asked of God, is not so much His will and way, as His approval of our way.