

Open Windows. No Twenty-four

Our world believes it can manage quite well without God. We can do much for ourselves. Who needs God? He has become an outmoded myth. Science, technology and "pure reason" have become the new gods of our times. Modern life, as someone said, has become "a world without windows." When the windows to the invisible world are shut tight the pursuits of this life, as down-to-earth as farming, politics, business and entertainment are all seen from the perspective of this world. The only reality is what can be seen and touched. Christians have also become infected by this mentality. Os Guinness observes that this explains why so many Christian believers are atheists unawares. They function without practical recourse to the supernatural. How real is God for us? Is the invisible world as real for us as the visible? Does its reality make a difference in our daily lives? Like Hamlet's friend, many of us need Shakespeare's reminder, "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy." When we have our windows open toward heaven, the heavenly glimpses we receive give us a different outlook on earth. When we read the writings of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Amos, we immediately notice that these prophets were in touch with heaven but also had a powerful political role in their nation. The letters of the apostles Paul and James aren't only about prayer and our heavenly destiny but also about fair wages for workers and the relationship between employers and employees. Heavenly minded Christians know there is no neutrality in life. We are either for or against the Lord. There is nothing in between. Heaven always sees what we are doing. Recently, I had the opportunity to read two forceful and moving articles written by Dr. K. Schilder shortly after the German invasion of Holland. They were trumpet calls to action, arousing the Reformed community to oppose the deadly anti-Christian Nazi ideology. In his June 14, 1940 article, he notes that the angels of God and the Church, bought with Jesus' blood, and Christ Himself will see how people will respond to the Nazis. And he concludes his article with the prayer: "Lord, let us live, live. Let us live with a free conscience. And take away our sins, for they are great - our sins of speaking and no less of remaining silent." In his famous article of June 21, entitled "Out of the Bomb Shelter and Into Uniform," Schilder warns against the real danger of the gradual spiritual infection of the Dutch nation with a false Nazi ideology, of a gradual change from physical to spiritual disarmament. And he pleads with the Dutch to get out of their bomb shelters and put on the uniform. This was not a call to take up arms but a summons to spiritual warfare. Because Schilder had his windows open toward heaven, he opposed the evils of Nazism with his powerful pen. In our secular times with its predominance of liberalism and even the rise of neo-Nazism, we too are called to "test the spirits to see whether they are from God" (1 John 4:1).