

# THE STANDARD *Bearer* A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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## MEDITATION

### Heart Searching

*Search me, O God, and know my heart:  
try me, and know my thoughts: And see if  
there be any wicked way in me, and lead me  
in the way everlasting.*

*Psalms 139:23, 24.*

Profound supplication!

Cry of perfect agreement with, and of wholehearted surrender to the ever searching, constantly trying God!

Search me, O God! . . . .

The prayer is the ultimate outcome, the inevitable final result of the poet's consciousness of the presence of that God Whose knowledge is dear, extremely precious, yet far too wonderful for him.

In the light of the whole psalm, this cry for heart searching judgment by the Most High might appear rather paradoxical. For is not the whole psalm the expression of an amazed consciousness of the presence of God as a Searcher of the hearts and the reins? Is not its theme expressed in the positive statement of the first verse: "O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me"? Why, then, if the poet is so profoundly conscious of the fact that the Most High *does* search him, and know him, should he conclude his adoration of Jehovah with this prayer for searching?

Yet, though it may seem paradoxical to pray for what God is already and constantly performing within us, the two are in perfect harmony, and the prayer is only the inevitable outcome of the poet's consciousness of Jehovah's searching presence.

Deeply conscious, conscious with fear and trembling, with wonderment and utter amazement, the poet was of this overpowering, soul-overwhelming Presence.

Of this he had sung in the rest of the Psalm. God searched him, and knew him. And from this search-

ing and trying and knowing and judging God there is no escape. He besets us on all sides. He is near us every moment. He knows our every move. He watches closely our every act. He knows our downsitting and our uprising, our thoughts He understands afar off, even before they rise up into our consciousness. Our path He compasses, and with all our ways He is acquainted. Before a word leaves our lips, He knows it. He surrounds us, is before us and behind, below and above, in heaven and in hell: from His presence there is no escape. On the wings of the morning we cannot flee from Him, to the uttermost parts of the earth we may take our flight, but even there we meet Him. The deepest darkness cannot cover us from before His face; in His presence the night shines as the day. Even when we were made, when we were quite wonderfully and curiously wrought, before our substance was fashioned, He was present with us, and His searching eye watched over the process of our formation. . . .

How wonderful is that Presence!

How amazing is the thought of His penetrating search of us!

Spell-bound, wholly and awfully charmed, the poet had stood in that marvellous Presence. Something of the awe He had felt, which the seraphim experience that stand in the presence of His glorious Majesty, and cover their faces with their wings as they cry out: Holy, holy, holy! . . . .

Yet, while he had stood in the Presence, and had experienced the penetration of those searching eyes of the Judge of heaven and earth, something more than mere awe had filled his soul, something else than mere fear had caused his inmost being to tremble. He feared Him, yes, but with the fear of love. He had not wanted to flee, but to remain. His awful experience of the Presence was not like that of the ungodly, who, at the sight of Him that sitteth on the throne cry out: to the mountains and rocks: "Fall on us, and hide us!" On the contrary, marvellously sweet was the Presence to him; wonderfully precious were the thoughts of Him to his soul. . . .

Still more.

While trembling in awe in the consciousness of His holiness, and of His penetrating search, the poet had felt a bond of friendship with that glorious Holy One.

He knew himself to be in His covenant!

He would be of His party! He would agree with Him, take His side, even in His searching judgment of himself!

He feels himself wholly in harmony with that searching, trying, judging Presence, that besets him on every side.

And he longs, with a profound yearning, to be in harmony with Him, to be like Him, to be righteous as He is righteous, to be holy as He is holy, to dwell in the light as He dwells in the light; and thus to know Him, to dwell in His house, to see His face, to taste that He is good. . . .

In that longing He willingly submits himself to His judgment, gives himself completely over to the search of those penetrating eyes, in order that he, too, may know himself, condemn himself, cast himself upon His mercy, be delivered from that evil way, and be guided by Him in the way everlasting!

Thus the consciousness of His Presence presses from his heart this marvellous prayer.

Search me, O God!

I know that Thou always dost search me, but now I long to be searched!

Know my heart!

I know that Thou dost constantly know my inmost being, but now I deeply yearn to be known!

Try me, and know my thoughts, which I know thou provest even before I am aware of them!

See if there be any wicked way in me! For I would condemn it with Thee, and long to be delivered, O my God!

And lead me in the everlasting way!

Marvellous prayer!

**Bold request!**

For the poet asks nothing less than that He, before Whom nothing is hid, Who proves the reins and the heart, may cause the searching and trying light of His just judgment to penetrate even into the depth of his existence!

Nothing in him must remain hid.

Such is the meaning of the word search. It signifies to bore through, to penetrate even to the bottom. Hence, the poet speaks of the thoughts, that lie behind the outward appearance: know my thoughts, that is, my inner life, my plans and purposes, my desires and aspirations, my imaginations and reasonings, my inclinations and the motives of all my actions. And so, too, he makes mention of his heart, that center of his whole existence from a spiritual-ethical viewpoint.

Search me, bore through the surface of my life, penetrate into the depths of my existence, until Thou know my very heart, whence are the issues of life!

Let nothing remain uncovered!

Let me be utterly exposed before Thy face, O my God!

And what is more, thus exposed in his inmost being, he desires to be evaluated, to be tried, to be judged, by the Holy One!

Try me!

And know me! Know my thoughts! Know my heart!

He voluntarily puts himself on trial before the tribunal of the only Judge of heaven and earth. Try me! He implores the Holy One to apply to him the touchstone of His own righteousness, His perfect law. He beseeches his God to compare him, his nature, his heart, his thoughts, his inmost inclinations and desires and motives, as well as the words of his mouth and all his walk and conversation, with the holy law of love. Fully aware that Jehovah can and will be satisfied with nothing less than complete harmony of the whole man with His own righteous will, the will that we shall love Him with all our heart and mind and soul and strength, and that the Holy One is too pure of eyes even to behold iniquity, he takes his position before the tribunal of the Most High, and prays: try me!

And know me, my thoughts, my inmost heart!

He asks to be evaluated, to be known by God as to the ethical value of his inner life.

Know me! Determine what I am! Express a verdict as to my righteousness or unrighteousness! He desires to hear that verdict, to know himself in the light of God's own judgment over him.

Nor is this prayer a mere abstraction, or a mystical desire that God may directly reveal Himself and speak to him, and cause the light of His righteousness to expose the inner recesses of his heart. On the contrary, it is a prayer that is heard whenever the child of God submits himself to the infallible judgment of the Word of God, as contained in the Holy Scriptures, and God's own Spirit applies that Word to his heart. Standing before, and beholding himself in the mirror of the perfect law of liberty, his prayer is heard indeed: Try me, and know my thoughts and my heart!

But how is this possible?

Is not this prayer too audacious? Is it not an act of utter rashness to invoke the judgment of God upon us?

What motivates the poet? What gives him this boldness to beseech the righteous Judge of all to search him to the depth of his being, try him, and express His righteous judgment upon him? Does he, perhaps, pray in the assurance of his own righteousness? Does he feel that he may freely present himself before Him that searches the hearts and the reins, confident that

He will find nothing that is worthy of condemnation? But no, such a spirit of self-righteousness were quite contrary to the profound knowledge of and reverence for the Most High that is expressed in the entire psalm. Besides, does not the poet speak the wicked way the Lord may find within him? Rather is it thus that, in the light of the searching Presence, he has already examined himself, that this examination of self yielded the result of the knowledge of many sins of which he is conscious; and that now, realizing that his trial of himself is very imperfect, considering that in the depth of his heart there are other "wicked ways" of which he is not even conscious, he implores the Most High for more light, for more thorough searching of the heart, for a clearer and more penetrating exposure of the hidden sins within.

Bold prayer, indeed, for a sinful man!

But it is the boldness, not of self-righteousness, nor of the rashness of blind ignorance, but of faith!

It is the boldness of confidence of faith in Christ!

But for Him this supplication would be utterly impossible. Or shall a man, that is a sinner, invoke upon himself the judgment of Him Who is consuming fire? Shall he not rather call upon the rocks to fall on him, and to the mountains to cover him?

But in Christ this prayer is possible.

In Him we may be confident that we shall not come into condemnation! He is the revelation of the God of our salvation. He took upon Himself all our sins, all our iniquities, all our condemnation. And for them He offered the perfect obedience of love. And there, in the darkness of desolation, He, too, cried unto His God, and prayed: "Search me, O my God; try me, and know my thoughts and my heart; and see if there be in me, as I offer Myself a sacrifice for the sins of my people, any wicked way in me!" . . .

And He was answered in the resurrection!

No wicked way was found in Him. His sacrifice was perfect, without blemish.

He was justified before the tribunal of God, justified, that is, as the Head of all His own.

And they were for ever justified in Him! He was raised for our justification!

And He was exalted at the right hand of God, and was given the Spirit of promise. And in that Spirit He dwells in all His own, calling them out of darkness into the marvellous light of the God of our salvation, bestowing upon them the adoption unto children, the forgiveness of sins, eternal righteousness. . . .

In that Spirit they have confidence to pray: Search me, O God!

In that Spirit they know that with God there is forgiveness that He may be feared.

And longing to obtain that forgiveness, to obtain it ever again, to taste of its sweetness ever more deeply, they have boldness to place themselves willingly before

the tribunal of the God of grace in Christ Jesus their Lord, praying for His searching judgment.

Bold supplication, indeed!

But it is the boldness of faith!

Through Jesus Christ our Lord!

And lead me! . . . .

To be sure, also the desire expressed in the last part of this prayer, motivates the poet.

It is not only the consciousness of forgiveness, and the desire to drink of the blessed fountain of redemption more deeply, that causes him to implore his God to search him, to try him, to know his thoughts and his heart. He longs to be delivered from every evil way, and to be guided in the way everlasting.

How could it be different?

Is not the faith in the Lord Jesus by which we long for, and pray for, and are confident of forgiveness, rooted in the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, the love wherewith He loved us even unto the death of His Son? And do we not, through that love wherewith He loved us first, also love Him? How, then, can this faith, rooted in love, and operating through the love of God, ever be satisfied with forgiveness alone? How can it ever rest until the perfect deliverance from all the power and dominion of sin shall have been accomplished, and we shall be like Him, to dwell in His tabernacle for ever, and to see Him face to face?

Hence: "see if there be any wicked way in me," the way of an idol, the secret inclination to follow after vanity, to deny the living God, to serve the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life!

Discover that evil tendency in me, not merely in order that I may have forgiveness, but that I may know it, fight it, be delivered from it by Thy grace!

And lead me in the way everlasting!

That is the way of the righteousness of the kingdom of heaven. Everlasting because it is the way of the righteousness of Christ, through His death and resurrection, into the everlasting light of the tabernacle of God with men!

I am weak and helpless, prone to wander!

Lead me, O my God!

H. H.

## BLADVULLING

De kwitantie in het laatje is geruststellend, maar de kwitantie in het hart nog meer.

\* \* \* \*

"God kan den trots der menschen door een nietigen zaadkorrel bespotten. Er is geen wijsheid er is geen verstand en er is geen raad tegen den Heere!"

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## EDITORIALS

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### The Banner Is Not To The Point

In *The Banner* of Jan. 4, 1946, the editor reflects upon some of my statements in the last issue of our paper, relative to his, the editor's, attitude to and evaluation of the controversy and schism in the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands.

Judging by his language, I got the impression that the editor was rather roiled.

He informs his readers, most of whom do not read the *Standard Bearer*, so that they cannot check up on the Rev. Kuiper's statements, that my article is "characterized in the main by sophistic reasoning." In fact, according to the editor, much that I wrote about the schism in the Netherlands is characterized by "adroit but specious reasoning."

Such statements are, of course, unanswerable. They reflect a certain emotional state of mind on the part of the editor, rather than presenting any argument that can be analyzed and answered. If the editor of *The Banner* cannot brook criticism, becomes peeved when it is pointed out to him that he is in error, so that he must resort to vituperation, I can only feel sorry for him.

Fact is, nevertheless, that the editor of *The Banner* frequently rushes into print without having sufficiently informed himself about the matter he discusses; and that he often shows that he is incompetent or unwilling to see the point.

As soon as the news reached him that Dr. Schilder was suspended, and before he knew anything about the matter, he drew the conclusion that it was all about Schilder and common grace, and he condemned Dr. Schilder and virtually reminded his readers that he "had told them so." When it became evident that he had been mistaken, he never acknowledged his error, but merely began a discussion of the actual controversy and schism in The Netherlands.

But even now, one wonders whether the Rev. Kuiper takes the trouble sufficiently to inform himself about the matter; whether he possesses sufficient sources of information, and, if he does, whether he studies them carefully and thoroughly.

He writes about Utrecht 1905 and Utrecht 1942 in one breath, as if they are quite the same. They are not. *The Banner* does not see the point here.

He writes about the Conclusions of Utrecht 1905 as if they simply adopted the theory of presupposed or presumptive regeneration. They never were meant to

do this, and they do not. *The Banner* fails to see the point here.

He wrote in a recent issue of *The Banner* that I stated definitely that Utrecht (whether 1905 or 1942 is not clear) makes the presumption of regeneration the ground of baptism. I never did. *The Banner* failed to see the point.

And thus *The Banner* failed to see the point in the statements I made in the last *Standard Bearer*, to which the editor of *The Banner* replies in the issue of Jan. 4.

The point was this.

The Synodical churches of the Netherlands made their decisions concerning the covenant *binding*. They tolerate no other view in their fellowship. They suspend and depose those that teach the Heynsian conception. If the Christian Reformed Churches ("Church" says the Rev. H. J. Kuiper; to me, however, they are just Churches) adopt the same position as the Synodical Churches in the Netherlands, and become sister-churches with them to the exclusion of the Liberated Churches, they thereby depose Heyns and all that teach and preach his view.

This point was not obscure but very plain and emphatic in the article on which the Rev. Kuiper reflects. Yet, he failed to see the point.

For what does he reply?

First this (and the italics are his own): "*the peculiar covenant view of Prof. Heyns is not the official stand of the Christian Reformed Church on the covenant.*"

"This is the answer," writes the Rev. H. J. Kuiper, referring to the above.

But is it? Did I write that the Christian Reformed Churches ever adopted Heyns's view of the covenant, or any view about the covenant? I did not. How then can the above be an answer to what I wrote? It is not. *The Banner* missed the point.

In order to answer the point I raised, the editor should have written: *The Christian Reformed Church (es) repudiated and condemned the view of Heyns and do not permit its teaching in their communion.* But this he could not write because this was never done.

The only other answer to my statements the editor of *The Banner* offers is the following:

But there is something else which the editor of *The Standard Bearer* has blandly ignored, though he could not have forgotten it. *Our Church has taken an official stand on the covenant which is contrary to that propounded by Prof. W. Heyns.* We refer to the Conclusions of Utrecht, 1905, which were adopted by our Church in 1908. These Conclusions teach that the children of the covenant, as well as their confessing parents, are to be regarded and dealt with as regenerated. ac-

cording to the judgment of love. However, that judgment, according to these Conclusions, must be relinquished in the case of the children when in later years they show themselves to be indifferent. And, of course, the same applies to the adult confessing members of the Church.

The editor of *The Standard Bearer* knows all this. How then can he say that our Church, which has adopted the Conclusions of Utrecht, should take sides with the so-called liberated churches of Dr. Schilder, which have rejected what those Conclusions teach on the subject of the covenant?

To this I reply:

1. That one can only stand aghast as he reads the statement that I "blandly ignored" the fact that the Christian Reformed Churches adopted the Conclusions of Utrecht. Does not the editor read? I made a good deal of those Conclusions. That the Christian Reformed Churches, in 1908, adopted them I expressly stated. How, then, can the Rev. Kuiper here state that I blandly ignored them?

2. That these Conclusions were never meant to be an official dogma of the theory of presumptive regeneration. If that had been their original intention they would never have been adopted in 1905. They were meant as a compromise. The result is that they are full of contradictions. Yes, they do teach that all baptized children must be considered as regenerated until the opposite appears. But they also teach that they are not all regenerated, and that even the elect children are not necessarily regenerated before baptism. And, not as a definite official view of the covenant, to the exclusion of all others, but as a compromise statement they were meant also when they were adopted by the synod of the Christian Reformed Churches in 1908. If the editor of *The Banner* will investigate this matter, he will find that the *Acta* of that Synod bear me out on this point.

3. The Conclusions of Utrecht are not, and were never meant (by the Synod of Muskegon, 1908) to be contrary to the view of Heyns, as the editor of *The Banner* contends. That they are not is plain from their contents. Heyns subscribed to them too. And that they were never meant to be contrary to Heyns, is evident, first of all, from the majority report of the committee that advised that Synod to adopt these Conclusions, and which was adopted in full. This report plainly states "b. That also among us there is difference of opinion regarding these points. c. These conclusions meet with general agreement and are therefore adapted to preserve peace and unity." Art. 58. And that they were never meant to be an official expression *contrary to Heyns* should be evident from the fact that



the same Synod of 1908 appointed Heyns for the chair of Practical Theology almost unanimously for life. He had 53 of the 55 votes. And he taught in the Theological School of the Christian Reformed Churches for almost twenty years after that.

Must I understand the editor of *The Banner* to mean that the Christian Reformed Churches condemn a man's view, and then appoint him as professor for life, and permit him to teach that condemned view at every possible opportunity, as Prof. Heyns did?

..*The Banner* missed the point.

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How badly the editor of *The Banner* is informed as to the historical side of the present trouble in the Netherlands is revealed in all he writes on the subject; and that, because of this lack of correct historical information he has a distorted view of the entire situation, he shows in the above paragraph in which he states that the Conclusions of Utrecht teach a view of the covenant that is contrary to that of the late professor Heyns.

This remark of the editor's clearly reveals that he has the same distorted view of the history of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands that led up to Utrecht 1905, the "Conclusions", and the pacification that followed 1905 and of which the "Conclusions" were the cause.

The editor clearly labors under the impression that, in the controversy of the years immediately preceding 1905, the Synod of that year simply adopted, as far as the question of the covenant was concerned, the theory of presumptive or presupposed regeneration, expressed thereby a view that was opposed to the aggrieved and protesting A-brethren of that time, and took the side of the B-brethren by adopting a view, in part at least, that was favored by them, and whose chief exponent was Dr. A. Kuiper Sr. If this were not his conception of that history, he would not have written that The Christian Reformed Churches in 1908, by adopting the Conclusions of Utrecht, expressed themselves contrary to Heyns. Yet, the editor is mistaken. He is not acquainted with the historical facts. Hence, he has a distorted view of the whole matter.

Let me, to render this discussion plain to our readers, briefly recall the history of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands of those years.

The Secession from the "Hervormde Kerk" took place under Henry De Cock in 1834.

The "Doleantie", virtually another secession from the "Hervormde Kerk", occurred in 1886, under the leadership of Dr. A. Kuiper Sr.

In 1892 these two groups were synodically united, although they did not agree in detail on all matters of doctrine. I say "synodically", because, in many places,

these Synodically united churches remained locally quite distinct, and even separated, and became known as Gereformeerde Kerken A and B. The A-group consisted of the men of the Secession, the B-group of those of the "Doleantie".

The questions that separated them concerned the problems of *Supra* and *Infra*, (the B-men were *supra*, the A-men were *infra*), eternal justification, immediate or mediate regeneration (B and A-views respectively), presupposed regeneration in connection with infant baptism, besides the burning question of the relation of Theology to the Sciences, between the Church and Theology, and between the Free University and the Theological School in Kampen.

After the union of 1892 Dr. Kuiper continued to propagate his views on all these questions, especially, as far as the present question about the covenant is concerned, emphasizing that sacraments seal internal grace, that therefore this must also be true in infant baptism, and that, therefore, in baptism the faith (as a faculty or power) or regeneration of infants is presupposed. *This is meant by presupposed or presumptive regeneration* (not what the Rev. H. J. Kuiper presents as that view), even apart from the question whether this presupposed regeneration is the *ground* of baptism.

Many of the A-brethren were worried and aggrieved because of this propagation of a view which they considered to be contrary to Scripture and the Confessions. They raised their voices against it. Outstanding in this controversy were men like the well-known Prof. L. Lindeboom of Kampen, and the Rev. T. Bos of Bedum. The latter raised his voice against the allegedly dangerous views in "De Wachter", first organized and published in 1902, of which he, the Rev. Bos, was editor for many years, in fact till his death in 1916. And it must be remembered that with this group must be classified men like the Rev. Hulst, Prof. Hemkes, Ten Hoor, and Heyns.

The result was that the objections of these A-brethren were brought officially to the attention of the Synod of Utrecht, 1905. And the result of the deliberations of this synod are the well-known "Conclusions of Utrecht".

Now, what is the main contents and nature of these Conclusions?

Were they contrary to the aggrieved A-brethren, as the editor of *The Banner* makes his readers believe? Did they, on the question that concerns us at present, condemn the view of the A-brethren, and sustain that of the B-brethren? Did they really adopt the theory of presupposed regeneration?

This is the contention of the editor of *The Banner*.

But this is so utterly unhistorical, so contrary to all the facts in the case, as well as to the contents of the Conclusions themselves, and so fundamental an

error that the editor of *The Banner* is not in a position to see the true implication of the present schism in The Netherlands, and will not be able to furnish his readers with true and correct information, unless he first rectifies this error.

Due to his distorted view of the history of and around Utrecht 1905, the editor of *The Banner* briefly argues thus: *Because the Christian Reformed Churches (Church, according to him) adopted the Conclusions of Utrecht, they must reject the position of the Liberated Churches, and become sister-churches of the Synodical Churches.*

But the moment he sees the history and meaning of Utrecht 1905 he will have to argue exactly in the opposite direction: *their stand on the basis of the Conclusions of Utrecht will, in all honesty, compel the Christian Reformed Churches to establish correspondence with the Reformed Churches (maintaining Art. 31, D.K.O.), i.e. the Liberated Churches.*

To substantiate this I will review the historical facts in the case.

H. H.

## The Liberated Churches In The Netherlands

When we speak of the covenant-view of the liberated churches, we must constantly bear in mind, that there is no officially adopted dogma with them on this point.

By their covenant conception we mean the view that is consistently presented by their leaders, such as Prof. Greydanus, C. Vonk, R. Bremmer, Joh. Francke, P. Jasperse, H. J. Schilder, and others. However, they so unanimously present the same view, and that, too, in opposition to the view adopted by the synodical churches, that it is safe to speak of the covenant conception of the liberated churches, just as if it were an officially accepted dogma with them, provided we remember that no particular covenant conception is binding, in their fellowship, for the officebearers and members.

Their view, then, may be briefly characterized as follows:

1. They seek certainty, assurance. The "presupposition" or "presumption" of the synodical view they reject. On the basis of the view adopted by the Synod of 1942, they say, there is no assurance possible. For the covenant, according to 1942, is established only with the elect. I must, therefore, first know that I am elect, before I can have the assurance that I belong to God's covenant. The best one can do, on this basis,

with respect to the covenant children, is to presume or suppose that they are really in the covenant. There is no assurance. Hence, the liberated churches, emphatically reject this whole conception. They want no distinction between an "external" and "internal" covenant, or between being *really* and *not really* in the covenant. They refuse to speak of suppositions and presumptions. They seek objective certainty. And this certainty with respect to the covenant of God they find in the promise: I will be your God and the God of your seed. This promise I may accept. It is sure. It can never fail. On it I may rely. It is a sure basis of certainty and personal assurance of faith.

2. They also want to assert something positive about all the children of the covenant, i.e. all the children of believing parents, all that are baptized. And again, they appeal to the promise of God. The promise is for all the children of believers. In the promise God bequeaths all the blessings of the covenant upon all that are baptized. He gives to all the right to be saved. I may, therefore, say to them all: you are very really in the covenant. You have the right to accept the promise.

3. Hence, the promise is *conditional*. It is contingent for its fulfillment upon the faith of those that are baptized. They must believe the promise, fulfill their covenant obligations, their "part" of the covenant of God. If they fail in this, the blessings of the covenant do not actually come in their possession. Instead they fall under the terrible covenant wrath and vengeance of God.

To this view I offer the following objections.

1. It does not establish the certainty of which it boasts, i.e. the objective certainty that, according to the promise of God, all that are baptized are really in the covenant and have a God-given right to its blessings. For:

a. Either the *conditional promise to all* is a promise the condition of which must be and is *fulfilled by God*. In that case all baptized children are actually saved. It is, of course, the Reformed view that all "conditions" of the covenant, all "conditions" unto salvation are fulfilled by God Himself. If, therefore, we say that our actually receiving the blessings of the covenant is conditioned by faith on our part, we must hasten to add that God Himself gives us the faith. You may also express it this way: the fulfillment of the condition *is included in the promise*. If the brethren of the liberated churches understand the "conditional promise" in this Reformed sense, and insist on it, they must be consistent enough to teach that all baptized children are actually saved. God promises to all the blessings of the covenant. He promises to all His grace and

Spirit. He promises to all the lively faith whereby they become partakers of the blessings of the covenant. The promise of God is sure. Hence, all baptized children are surely saved. The sign and seal of this they receive in baptism. If the brethren would be thus consistent, they would, indeed, arrive at certainty for all, but it would be a mere theoretical assurance, always contradicted by the fact that many baptized children are not saved.

b. Or, if they dare not thus consistently carry out their conception (and they do not), and still insist that the conditional (in the Reformed sense) promise is for all that are baptized, they make God a liar. God promises to establish His covenant with all the baptized children. He gives them a right to all the covenant blessings. He promises that He will give them all His Spirit and grace, and the faith whereby they become partakers of the covenant. Yet, He does not fulfill His promise to all, but only to the elect. In that case, they make God a liar, and all their talk of certainty is put to shame.

c. Or, if they will not subscribe to either of the above alternatives (and they will not), the *conditional promise to all* is a promise the condition of which the *baptized children themselves* must and are able to fulfill. That is the position of Heyns, as we have shown. The distinction between baptized children and others is that the former receive sufficient grace to accept the covenant, to bring forth fruits of faith and repentance, although they can still refuse to do this. That is the position of the *Remonstrants*. It is Pelagianism applied to the covenant. But, of course, even so, least of all so, there is no certainty. For in that case, the covenant is made contingent upon the will of the sinner. And that means that it has become impossible of realization.

Now, I am well aware that the brethren of the liberated churches reject also this last position. They repudiate the indictment of remonstrantism. They emphatically state that God must fulfill all the conditions.

Yet, I wish to remark, first of all, that I cannot conceive of a fourth alternative. Nor did I meet, in any of the writings of the brethren of the liberated churches, even an attempt to offer an explanation of this problem. To me it appears that the above alternatives are exhaustive. If they can conceive of a fourth possible explanation of the dilemma that the promise of God is for all, while it is not fulfilled to all, it is up to them to state it clearly.

Secondly, if they are accused of Remonstrantism, they have only themselves to blame. Although I gladly accept that they reject the view of the Remonstrants, it is, nevertheless, true that they expose themselves to this indictment. They do this especially when, in the expository part of the Baptism Form as to God's "part"

in the covenant, they separate the work of the Father and of the Son from that of the Holy Spirit. Heyns does the same thing. It is pointed out that, in regard to the "part" of God the Father and of God the Son, the language of the Baptism Form is positive: "God the Father witnesseth and sealeth unto us, that he *doth make* an eternal covenant of grace with us, and adopts us for his children and heirs, and therefore will provide us with every good thing, and avert all evil or turn it to our profit. And when we are baptized in the name of the Son, God the Son sealeth unto us, that he *doth* wash us in his blood from all our sins, incorporating us into the fellowship of his death and resurrection, so that we are freed from all our sins, and accounted righteous before God." But, thus it is pointed out, when that same Baptism Form speaks of the work of the Holy Ghost, of His "part" in the covenant, the language becomes contingent: "In like manner, when we are baptized in the name of the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost assures us, by this holy sacrament, that he *will* dwell in us, and sanctify us to be members of Christ, applying unto us, that which we have in Christ, namely the washing away of our sins, and the daily renewing of our lives, till we shall finally be presented without spot or wrinkle among the assembly of the elect in life eternal."

You see, they pointed out, the "part" of God the Father and of God the Son is presented as absolutely and objectively sure: in both instances the word *doth* is used; but the "part" of God the Holy Spirit is presented as conditional and contingent: He *will* dwell in us, etc. In the former, the *bequest*, the objective *right* to the blessings of the covenant is stated; and this is sure to all. In the latter, however, the actual application of the benefits of the covenant is mentioned; and this is not sure at all: it is presented as conditional. The last sentence must be completed as follows: "He will dwell in us, etc. . . . if we fulfill our "part" of the covenant, and walk in faith and obedience before God."

Now, this interpretation of the Baptism Form is, of course, wide open to criticism. How is it possible thus to separate the work of the Father and of the Son from that of the Holy Spirit? If the Father promises, "witnesseth and sealeth unto us," that He makes an eternal covenant of grace with us, and adopts us for His children and heirs, and will provide us with every good thing, etc., does He not assure us that He will and does so in His Son and by His Spirit? And when the Son "witnesseth and sealeth unto us," that He washes us in His blood, incorporates us into the fellowship of His death and resurrection, so that we are free from sin and righteous before God, does He not assure us that He will do so of the Father and through the Spirit? Moreover, when the Holy Spirit assures us that He will dwell in us, and sanctify us, and apply unto us all we have in Christ, does He not mean that He



will make His dwelling with us *efficaciously*, of the Father and the Son, not because we fulfill any conditions, nor after we have fulfilled them, but before we can do anything to be received into God's covenant and to receive any of its benefits?

More might be said against this interpretation of our Baptism Form.

However, the one thing I wish to point out in this connection is that the brethren of the liberated churches, by adopting this Heynsian interpretation, lay themselves wide open to the indictment of Remonstrantism. By thus making separation between the work of the Spirit and of the Father and the Son, they strongly suggest that God is willing to save all the baptized children, but that the realization of this will to save depends on something they must do. And this is Remonstrantism.

2. This view is in conflict with the plain language of our Baptism Form.

The truth of this statement is already evident from what we quoted of that Form above. That expository part of the Form establishes the whole of God's covenant and all its benefits as absolutely sure unto the "children of the promise." God's part of the covenant is that He realizes it completely, objectively and subjectively, both as to its objective establishment and as to its subjective application. God assures the "children of the promise," that He establishes His covenant with them, that He adopts them, that He forgives their sins and justifies them, that He delivers them and sanctifies them, that He preserves and glorifies them. This is absolutely *unconditional*. No condition whatever is mentioned in this part. Fact is, that if there were a condition attached to this, the covenant could never be realized, and that entire expository part of the Baptism Form would be made vain. But God's work is never conditional. And the language of the Baptism Form is as positive and unconditional as it possibly could be. The mere fact that the future tense is used in connection with the work of the Holy Ghost (He *will* dwell in us) does no more make this work contingent and conditional than when the same tense is used with respect to the work of the Father (He *will* provide us with every good thing); it merely denotes that God the Holy Spirit will surely fulfill this promise in the future, i.e. all our life long, as well as in the present.

To be sure, the Baptism Form makes mention of our "part" in the covenant, that "we by God through baptism (are) admonished of, and obliged unto new obedience, namely, that we cleave to this one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that we trust in him, and love him with all our hearts, and with all our souls, and with all our mind, and with all our strength; that we forsake the world, crucify our old nature, and walk in a new and holy life." But this part is not presented as a condition for the part of God which we must ful-

fill before, and in order that God will fulfill His part, but as the new obligation of love which follows upon and from God's part. And only when and after God has fulfilled His "part" of the covenant, can we begin to fulfill ours.

Moreover, it would appear that the language of the first question that is asked of the parents who present their children for baptism is equally positive. "Whether you acknowledge, that our children are conceived and born in sin, and therefore are subject to all miseries, yea, to condemnation itself; yet that they are sanctified in Christ, and therefore, as members of his Church ought to be baptized?"

It seems quite impossible to me to interpret this "sanctified in Christ" as referring to a certain objective, ecclesiastical holiness, as, for instance, the priests of the old dispensation were holy (consecrated in their office) unto the Lord, regardless of their own ethical, spiritual sanctification; or as even the vessels of the temple were holy unto Jehovah; and as all Israel are separated from the nations and holy unto God. For, first of all, the New Testament knows of no such objective holiness, not even in I Cor. 7:14. In the second place, the question of the Form speaks of being "sanctified *in Christ*." And the only sanctification in Christ of which Scripture knows is real, spiritual, ethical deliverance from the power and the dominion of sin, the inner cleansing of the heart. Thirdly, the contrast in the question leads to the same conclusion: it is either or, one is still (as also our children are by nature) "in sin, and therefore subject to all miseries, yea, to condemnation itself, or he is "sanctified in Christ," that is, according to the contrast, no longer in sin, etc.

If it should be objected, that, in that case, the Baptism Form requires of the parents the confession that all our children are, at the moment of baptism, already regenerated, we deny this. The question is not: "Whether you acknowledge that . . . this child is here and now sanctified in Christ," but: "Whether you acknowledge that 'our children' are sanctified in Christ" an expression which is to be understood in the organic sense, without applying it to each baptized child; while the expression that they "are sanctified" may well be understood that before God, in virtue of the promise, they are holy in Christ, without containing any reference as to the time when this sanctification is to be applied to them. I believe that this way of speaking is thoroughly biblical.

Moreover, consider what is said in the thanksgiving of this Form of Baptism: "we thank and praise thee, that Thou hast forgiven us, and our children, all our sins, through the blood of thy beloved Son Jesus Christ, and received us through thy Holy Spirit as members of thine only begotten Son, and adopted us to be thy children, and sealed and confirmed the same unto us by holy baptism."

Here, at least, it becomes abundantly evident, that the Baptism Form does not intend to make a distinction and separation between the work of the Father and the Son and that of the Holy Spirit, and between the "bequest" and the application. Even if the forgiveness of sins, and the adoption of children, might be understood in that objective sense, the expression: "and received us *through thy Holy Spirit* as members of thine only begotten Son," certainly cannot possibly be exegeted in this same way.

We conclude, therefore, that the view that all the children of believing parents are equally in the covenant in virtue of a conditional promise, is in conflict with the plain language of our Baptism Form.

3. Finally, we believe that this view is also in conflict with the plain teaching of Scripture.

However, the motivation of this statement must wait till our next issue, D.V.

H. H.

## THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

### An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

Part Two.

Of Man's Redemption

Lord's Day XVIII

2.

The Presence Of The Ascended Lord.

"Christ," so the Catechism instructs us, "in sight of His disciples, was taken up from earth into heaven."

This does not mean that the disciples on mount Olivet could, with their earthly eyes, behold the heaven of glory, and see the Lord enter into it. What they did see was that He was taken up from them, as a sign to them that He departed from them to see them no more, "and a cloud received him out of their sight." The meaning is, evidently, not that they saw Him ascend up all the way into the clouds, but that, as soon as He was taken up from them, some such cloud as had enveloped Him on the mount of transfiguration hid Him from their gaze.

Heaven is "above."

Hence, to assure them that He ascended up into the heaven of glory, the sign of His being taken up from the earth was given the disciples.

But, although the heaven of heavens is a definite place, and not a mere abstraction or condition, it differs from the earth. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven. With our present bodies we could not enter into heaven, nor live its life. Our earthly eyes cannot behold it. And the gaze of the disciples, though earnestly directed toward the firmament, after their Lord had been taken up from them, could not follow Him into the heaven of glory. A cloud received Him out of their sight.

Hence, it is idle, too, to speculate about the definite location of this heaven of glory in the present universe. It is true that the Scriptures speak of it as "high" and even present it as "the highest." Whether, however, this means that the glorious abode of the exalted Christ, and of the redeemed saints, and the holy angels, is above and beyond the starry heavens, as is often supposed, is a matter of speculation rather than of revelation. There may well be an element of symbolism in the language of the Bible when it speaks of the highest heavens. At all events, we dare not speak of the distance of this glorious heaven from the earth in terms of our earthly laws of space and time. Those that study the starry heavens inform us that the most distant of the heavenly bodies are millions and even billions of miles distant from our earth; and there is no reason to doubt their calculations. If, then, we would pursue the same line of figuring, and apply it to the distance of the heaven of heavens, and to the ascension of our Lord, it would lead us to the conclusion that the Lord, after He was taken up from the mount of Olives in the sight of the disciples, had to travel millions upon millions of miles before He reached His destination. It would also mean that the holy angels, whenever they make their appearance on the earth, have to travel the same distance. And, finally, it would imply that, when the earthly house of this our tabernacle is dissolved, we would still have to make a long journey before we would arrive in the "building of God," the "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

The trouble with this line of reasoning and calculation is, of course, that we think earthly of heavenly things, and that we try to apply our earthly laws of space and time to relations that are heavenly.

Wherever, as far as its definite location is concerned, we conceive the heaven of glory to be, whether we think of it as above and beyond the firmament, or whether we conceive of it as interpenetrating our world, as surrounding us on all sides, though we cannot see it; we may never think of it as far away in the earthly sense of the word, so that there is no contact between heaven and earth, and as if it actually would have to take a long time to reach it.

When Christ was taken up from the earth on the mount of Olives, He was at once in glory, in the highest

heavens. The transition took place in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. Proof of this is the fact that at the same moment, while the amazed disciples were still staring into heaven, two angels from that same heaven of glory stood by them to announce that their common Lord had been taken up from them into heaven, and would so come again.

This heaven of heavens is a part of God's original creation. The statement of Gen. 1:1: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," must include the heaven of glory.

And, even as the earth, so the heaven of glory has a history.

Originally, it was the abode of the holy angels, the spiritual principalities and powers and dominions; perhaps, with Satan as their chief, not, of course, as Satan, but as the most glorious and powerful of the heavenly spirits. But a break occurred in the heavenly world. The chief ruler of the heavenly principalities, together with a large number of his fellow angels, stumbled in his pride, rebelled against the Most High, and became irrevocably the enemy and opponent of God. God's election and reprobation made separation between the heavenly spirits, and the matter was at once decided.

After Satan had directed his attention to man, the king of the earthly creation, and seduced him to violate God's covenant; and God had maintained His covenant in the line of the elect among men, putting enmity between the woman and the serpent and their respective seed, heaven is also made the abode of the "spirits of just men made perfect," of the Church triumphant. In the old dispensation, before the coming of Christ, this glorified Church in heavenly places, though ever increasing in numbers, was saved in hope. It appears that Satan still had access to heaven, and acted as the accuser of the brethren. The promise was not yet realized, and with the saints on earth they looked forward in hope to its fulfillment. However, in the fulness of time, Christ came, brought the sacrifice of reconciliation, realized the justification of all the saints, was raised from the dead, and ascended up on high, leading captivity captive. For heaven and its inhabitants this ascension of Christ was of great significance. It was the end of the war in heaven, the Devil was permanently cast out, and the great voice is heard in heaven: "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto death. Therefore rejoice ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them." Rev. 12:10-12.

However, even thus the history of the heaven of

heavens and a new earth, also the heaven of heavens shall be changed. For it is the good pleasure of God to unite all things in heaven and on earth into one glorious creation with Christ as the head over all, the glorious kingdom of heaven that is to be realized in the day of Christ.

Into that heaven Christ ascended forty days after His resurrection from the dead.

It was the Son of God, but in His human nature, Who thus ascended. The Catechism reminds us of this in answer to the question, whether Christ is no more with us, and will be with us even unto the end of the world as He promised: "Christ is very man and very God; with respect to His human nature, he is no more on earth."

All the changes that took place in Christ, and which we denote by the various "degrees" in His states of humiliation and exaltation, have reference only to His human nature, and yet always so that it is the Person of the Son of God, inseparably united with the human nature, that is the Subject of all these changes and experiences. It is the Person of the Son of God that humbles Himself when He assumes the form of a servant in the likeness of sinful flesh, yet so that in the divine nature He remains unchanged. It is the Person of the Son of God that suffers the agony of Gethsemane, that is delivered into the hands of sinners, that is nailed to the accursed tree, that lays down His life, descending even into the depth of hell, to offer the perfect sacrifice of atonement; yet, He suffers all this in His human nature. It is the Person of the Son of God that is buried as to the body, while His spirit is in paradise; for even in death this Person was never separated from the human nature. It is the same Person of the Son of God that is raised from the dead, and that ascended up on high into the heaven of glory; but again, this glorification has reference only to His human nature.

The ascension, therefore, does not mean a change in His divine nature. The Godhead is immutable. Moreover, time and place do not exist for God. He is the eternal and infinite One. As the Catechism reminds us in the forty eighth answer: "the Godhead is illimitable and omnipresent." To speak of a change of place with regard to Christ's divine nature would be absurd. God is immanent in all things, yet, as the transcendent One. He fills all things, yet He is far above the world. He can neither descend nor ascend.

Nor does the confession that Christ locally ascended into heaven, and that, therefore, he is not ubiquitous according to His human nature, imply that the human nature is separated from the divine. With an argument that is not free from scholastic ingenuity, the Catechism answers this possible objection in the words: "Not at all, for since the Godhead is illimitable and omnipresent, it must necessarily follow that the same

is beyond the limits of the human nature he assumed, and yet is nevertheless in his human nature, and remains personally united to it." The form of this answer is, no doubt, occasioned by the nature of the objection: "if his human nature is not present, wherever his Godhead is, are not then these two natures in Christ separated from one another?" The objection suggested by this question is foolish. And the Catechism answers accordingly: since the divine nature is omnipresent, the human nature of Christ can never be separated from it, no matter where it goes or whither it moves. The real point of the answer, however, is in the last part: remains personally united to it." The union of the two natures in Christ is not such that they merge into each other, so that the human nature partakes of the attributes of the divine: it is a personal union. In the Person of the Son of God the two natures in Christ are inseparably united. Surely, this personal union cannot be affected or destroyed by any change in the human nature. The human nature was not separated from the divine, when the Lord sojourned among us in the form of a servant. Nor did His ascension into heaven, though it implied a definite change of place, cause such a separation.

Nor does the ascension of our Lord into heaven imply that, in no sense of the word, He is present with us, who are on the earth.

According to His human nature he is no longer on the earth.

That is, as far as the nature, the attributes, and the limits of His humanity are concerned, He is not with us.

He is not omnipresent.

He was with us once, when He was like us. Then we could meet Him, see Him in His earthly appearance, touch Him, speak to Him, have earthly fellowship with Him. It was this earthly association which the Magdalene, perhaps intended to continue, when she met her Lord and recognized Him in the garden of Joseph, and the Lord warned her: "Touch me not, for I have not yet ascended!"

But now He is with us no more. In the flesh we know Him no more. With our earthly eye we see Him no more, nor dare we imagine that we see His bodily presence in the signs of the broken bread and the wine that is poured out at His table. All earthly associations are severed. As far as His human nature as such is concerned, He is definitely departed from us. In the sight of His disciples He was taken up!

However, this does not mean that He is not with us even unto the end of the world, as He promised us.

Although earthly connections of space and time are broken, and although earthly associations with Jesus exist no more, He is still with us. In fact, He is with us in a far higher and intimate sense than He ever was with His disciples during His earthly sojourn. We

must not utter the desire that Jesus might still be on the earth. To His disciples He said: It is profitable for you that I go away.

This new presence of the ascended Lord the catechism describes in the words: "with respect to Godhead, majesty, grace and spirit, he is at no time absent from us."

H. H.

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## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

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### Ruth

When Naomi went forth out of the place in Moab, her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, went with her. It seems that Orpah so well as Ruth set out with the intention to return with their mother-in-law to Judah. The text reads, "And they—the three of them—went on the way to return to the land of Judah." And again, "And they—Orpah and Ruth—said unto her, 'Surely, we will return with thee unto thy people.' Thus spake also Orpah. Hence, she, too, must be urged to return to her people. And how insistent Naomi was that the both of them do as she advised. "Go, return each of you to her mother's house;" she said to them, "the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead and with me. The Lord grant you that ye find rest, each of you in the house of her husband." And once more, "Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have an husband also tonight, and should also bear sons; would you tarry for them till they are grown? Would you stay for them from having husbands? Nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me."

It must not be supposed that the design of these words was to put them to a test that she hoped and expected that they would endure. These words hid not her true feelings. She meant precisely what she said. They must by all means return. That is what she wanted them to do. This is plain. After the departure of Orpah, she once more turned to Ruth and said to her, "Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister-in-law. Ruth replies and then we read, "When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking to her." In a word,

she perceived that she could not rid herself of Ruth. Despite all her remonstrances, this daughter was adamant. Said she to Naomi, "Do not entreat, urge, assail me with petitions, to leave thee or to turn from following thee. . . ." That precisely was what Naomi did, so much so that Ruth became impatient with her mother-in-law. "Do not urge me. Be silent. Thy entreaties avail not. For I am determined. Whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried." It is a matter of life or death unto her. For she even swears by Jehovah, the God of Israel. "The Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me." Naomi perceived now that it was useless to oppose her. Yet, it is plain that Naomi remained reluctant. For instead of breaking forth in praise at the hearing of that confession, instead of speaking words of comfort and encouragement, she was mute, and mother and daughter continue their journey to God's country in silence. Naomi yielded because she understood that it would be folly to oppose a resistance so determined as that of Ruth. Yet Naomi had listened to the good confession, the thrust of which is easily to be discerned. It is this. "I will abide with thee, my mother, now and ever. And so will I abide with thy people and with thy God. For thou art mine and I am thine. And thy people and thy God are mine, and I am theirs and His. I love thee my mother. And I love thy people and thy God. For thou and thy people and thy God are one." There is, to be sure, a world of thought shut up in this confession of the Moabitess. It forms the nucleus of our whole Christian faith, God's gift to Ruth. She was a new creature in Christ, and thus dead to Moab, to the pleasures of Moab which were the pleasures of sin, and to Moab's idols—dead to all these and alive to God. She had heard about God—Israel's God. And when she married into that Israelitish family, she heard still more about Him. And she had seen something of His glory as reflected in Naomi, and had received in her heart His testimony that He was hers and she His. It was Him after whom her heart was yearning.

But Naomi did not understand. She could not believe that this Moabitess was truly seeking after God. She would fain have it so. For she loved the woman as her own soul. And the tie was spiritual. Parting with her was too painful for words. But Ruth was a heathen. And the promise of God was unto Abraham and his seed. And it was the dispensation of shadows. God had yet to send His Son into death for the sins of His people, and so the blessings of Abraham had not yet come to the Gentiles. For one like Ruth, there could be no hope, and no future in Canaan. God nor His people wanted one like her. She was shut out of His mercy. Naomi tells them with all possible tender-

ness. "Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have a husband. And if I should have a husband. . . and bear sons, would you tarry for them? No indeed. That would be folly. They perceived the meaning back of these words. There were no husbands for them in Israel, for they were heathen. Her sons had taken wives from the daughters of Moab but against the law of Israel. Hearing and fully comprehending, Orpah kissed her mother-in-law and immediately set out for Moab, returning to her people and to her gods. Her attachment for her mother-in-law was strong but not that strong. For her love of Naomi was purely natural. As to its essence, it was a carnal self-love. It was the kind of love of which Christ spake, when he said, "If ye love those who love you, what more do you than sinners. The prospect of being joined in marriage to another Israelitish man appealed to her. For her experience had been that the Israelites made good husbands. The likes of them were not to be found in Moab. She could sacrifice the pleasures of sin in Moab and Moab's people and gods for such a husband. But with this prospect gone, she went back to her people. And she found it not too difficult to part with her mother-in-law, in fact not difficult at all. For spiritually Naomi was a child of the light and Orpah was a child of darkness, being a heathen. And Naomi's telling her that she was wholly objectionable to God's people in Canaan, because of her being a heathen had only injured her pride, and filled her with resentment toward Naomi. For, despite her tears and ostentations of affection for her mother-in-law, she was a heathen, devoid of grace.

But Ruth clave to her mother-in-law. For she wanted God. For she was possessed of God. And she therefore wanted His people and also Naomi. Gladly would she spend the rest of her days in widowhood and in a state of abject poverty, if she might only have God. And she forsook Moab and all that Moab represented, and went to God in Canaan. Nothing could deter her, not even the consideration that the blessings of Abraham were only for Israel. That she knew was sound teaching. But she also knew that God was calling her into His sanctuary. Her perplexity was great, but not so great that it was not surmounted by her faith. Great was her faith. And therefore great was her determination that nothing should deter her or discourage her. "Cease urging me to leave thee. . . . Then she left off speaking unto her." And well she might. But she was still doubtful, was Naomi. Ruth belongs in that category of Old Testament worthies who took the kingdom of God by storm. And what a remarkable example she is of the irresistible operation of God's grace.

If Naomi was still doubtful, she was now made to see that Ruth was accepted of God. Ruth had attached herself to a poor widow, in dire need and . . .



on the bounty of the rich. That was the necessity under which her choice had brought her. But she was content. For she dwelt among God's people. And she had Naomi as her constant companion. Thus she had gotten her way. She was with God's people. Her heart was glad. She felt confident that God, to whom she knew that she belonged, would take care of her. But she did not sit still. She gains permission of Naomi to go to the field and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight she should find grace. The Lord directed her feet to the fields of Boaz, who bestows upon her signal favors and speaks to her words such as she as yet had heard from no one, not even from Naomi. Boaz was assured that she was accepted of God. Her doings was indicative of that. He considers all that she did for Naomi. He considers how she left her father and mother, and the land of her birth, and was come unto a people which she knew not heretofore. She had come to trust under the wings of the Lord God of Israel. Considering all this he blesses her. Says he to her, "The Lord recompense thy work and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel under whose wings thou art come to rest." And Ruth was comforted. Boaz' words were to her the words of God. She gave expression to her gratitude in these words, "For thou hast comforted me and hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens."

G. M. O.

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## THROUGH THE AGES

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### The First Degradation Of The Papacy

As was observed, however deserving of criticism the popes of the Middle Ages may be, what cannot be said of them is, that they were lacking ingenuity to devise ways and means for legitimatizing their false position in the eyes of men. As we said, what perhaps must be regarded as the outstanding example of such papal ingenuity was the appearance of the Pseudo-Isidor in the middle of the ninth century. As was said, this code of ecclesiastical laws—for such it was—turned out to be, on examination, the greatest fraud known in the history of church literature. As was explained, the aim of the book was not to present to the age new doctrines but to trace back the false claims of the papacy from the ninth to the early centuries in order

that they might have the authority of antiquity. The spurious decretals of the book, though pure inventions of the ninth century, were affixed by their unknown author to the names of popes of the second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries. As at the time of its appearance, the book was received as genuine. The popes, pointing to its decretals, canons, and letters, could now say that all the ideas inhering in the papal system are traceable, through the unbroken succession of popes, to Clement, the immediate successor of Peter (the apostle) in the papal throne. Certain it is, that by no other instrument was the power of the papacy so raised and strengthened as by this amazing fraud. It was this book that gained for the claims of the papacy the acknowledgement of men. As has been stated more than once in previous articles, the papacy was laying claim to supreme headship over all things in Church and state. It maintained that it lay within its power to give and withhold kingdoms and to appoint and depose its kings as their sovereign lord. That the papacy claimed and still claims for itself *this* authority is plainly stated in a little book that I recently acquired. It is entitled "Religion Of The Plain Man", and was written by Father R. H. Benson. The chapter on "The Petrine Claims" begins with the well known words of Christ to Peter, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven," Matt. 16:19. The author explains this scripture. "Now here", says he, "is a very extraordinary sentence. . . . It appears certainly as if to Peter were committed the keys themselves, and to the others—the other apostles—only their occasional use. This is a far more emphatic sentence, and addressed to one man only; whatever the others received afterwards, he received also with them; and he seems to receive something more besides by this unique commission. Now this commission, whatever it was, may have died with Peter; it is possible. Let me first see whether there is any on earth who claim it." The author in his imagination now puts to the heads of the various Protestant denominations, in the form of a question, what he conceives to be a fair paraphrase of the passage (Christ's words to Peter).

"Do any of you," he asks, "claim all that this sentence involves? Do you claim to hold the keys of the kingdom of heaven? . . . Do you claim to unlock or lock heaven at your will with, of course, God's assistance? Do you claim, what is corollary to this, that all men who wish to enter heaven must, in some sense, make application to you for admittance. In other words, do you claim universal jurisdiction over the entire world, kings, governments, republics? Do you claim then, any of you, that you are lord of the world, father of princes and kings; that your lightest words require attention, and that your heavier sentences bind the conscience; that heaven and earth move with your

movements (for all this is involved, it seems to me, in some sense, in those awful words of Christ); that, to sum up plainly, He who has the government upon His shoulders, has put the insignia of His kingdom into your hands; that He who is Himself the door, has given you the key?"

To these questions the author puts into the mouth of the heads of the various protestant denomination the following answer, "A thousand times, No! Who is this that speaketh blasphemies? There is no such power on earth! You are derogating from Christ's honor. It is He who has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers; if He is the door, He is wide open, and His people enter in through Him alone. Man can do no more than point through Him who is the way, to Him who is the door, for they are both one."

Hereupon the author has the pope of Rome answer, "I claim it," claim what the heads of the various protestant denominations disclaim, to wit, jurisdiction over the entire world, kings, governments, republics, as the lord of the world and the father of princes and kings. This, according to our author (who writes as a spokesman of the papacy), is what Christ's words to Peter involve. However, jurisdiction over the kings of the earth does not accrue from key power. If a king is a member of Christ's church, he can be excommunicated not as a civil magistrate but as a member of the church. In his capacity of ruler, he is not subject to the key power with which Christ vested the ruling and teaching ministry. Hence, he cannot be deposed in his office by this power. On the other hand, the pastors in the church, in their capacity of pastors, are not subject to the magisterial power of the temporal rulers. They are subject to this power but only in their capacity of citizens of the state. The church has her own sphere of operation, which is the church. Under Christ, the state is the supreme judicial authority in its sphere. Neither the church nor the state may lord it over each other. They may not encroach upon each other's domain. Not the pope but Christ is the King of kings and as such the head over all things in the church. There is not a vestige of proof in the Scriptures, that Christ appointed the pope His vice-gerent in state and church, making him to be the prince of the whole church and the lord of the world. Such a conception is strange to Holy Writ. It was conceived in the colossal pride of men who lusted after power. In their heart the idea arose. The Scriptures teach the separation of church and state in the sense that each limit itself in its operation to its own sphere. The two come together in Christ by whose authority the rulers both in church and state rule. Hence, the kings of the earth shall be wise, and the judges instructed. They shall serve Christ with fear, rejoice with trembling, love, favor, and protect His church. They shall kiss the Son, lest *He be angry*, and they perish from the

way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Ps. 2.

Yet, as we have seen, it was on that unscriptural idea of papal power that the papacy consciously began to rule as early as 440 in the person of Leo The Great. But, as already has been observed, the first pope to carry out the idea with more than common success was Gregory VII, the dates of whose pontificate are 1073-1085, and whose reign we shall next consider. But we must first look at the history that the papacy made in the two and a quarter centuries that intervened between the beginning of this Gregory's pontificate—1073—and the death of the pope last treated—Gregory IV, who died in 844. In these 229 years the papal throne was occupied by fifty five popes. With few exceptions they were ordinary and even wicked men, whose brief careers were blackened by the darkest crimes and ended in deposition, prison and murder. The one shining exception was Nicolas I, who died in 867. The consensus of opinion among historians is, that he is the only great pope between Gregory I (died 604) and Gregory VII. Certain it is, that he was not a criminal as were most of the occupants of the papal chair in the tenth and eleventh centuries. He served the cause of justice, but, as the instrument through which he acted was the usurped authority of the papacy, it is a question whether, in his zeal, he was constrained by the love of Christ. What also must be held against him is, that, to legitimize his actions, he freely quoted from that greatest of all frauds in the history of ecclesiastical literature—The Pseudo Isidorian Decretals. Also in his thought the pope is the ruler of the whole church and of the world. He was able to make good this claim in two notable cases. The first was that of Teutberga, the divorced wife of Lothair II, king of Lorraine. The injured lady appealed to Nicolas, who annulled the sanctioning decisions of synods, and deposed the archbishops, who had supported the king. The latter he threatened with excommunication, if the lawful wife was not taken back and the concubine, who had taken her place put away. The king finally yielded. The second case is that of the deposition of Rothad, bishop of Soissons, by Hincmar, the powerful archbishop of Rheims. Nicolas reinstated Rothad and Hincmar yielded to the pope. Nicolas also attempted to extend his authority over the Eastern Church, but in this he failed miserably. The uncle of the emperor in Constantinople was Bardas, a man who lived in sin. Ignatius, patriarch of Constantinople, refused him the Lord's supper, and was deposed. Photius, one of the most learned men of his age, was chosen his successor. Ignatius appealed to Nicolas, who sent delegates to Constantinople to investigate the case. They were bribed to approve Photius. The pope annulled their action, upheld Ignatius, and declared Photius deposed. The latter in turn called a synod in Constantinople, which, under his leadership, condemned the pope.

Photius now set forth, in an Encyclical Letter, all the objections of the Greek church to the Latin. He accused the Latins of corrupting the creed by the addition of the filioque, charged them with heresy for fasting on Saturdays, demanding priestly celibacy, and confining confirmation to the bishops. By this action the ill feeling that already existed between East and West was intensified, which resulted, in 1054, in the complete and permanent separation of the two churches.

Nicolas, being a strong pope, was able to maintain himself in his false position with considerable success. But even within twenty-five years after his death began that long stretch of papal degradation already referred to. From 888 to 896 three petty kings or dukes—Berenger, Guido, and Arnulf—contended with one another for the possession of Italy. During this time when a new pope had to be elected—there was need of this no less than four times—each of these dukes, working through his party in Rome, strove to control the election in favor of his candidate for the papal throne. The winning pope would then place upon the head of the duke, to whom he was indebted for his election, the imperial crown. It means that at this time the popes were the creations of these dukes. The feeling between the rival candidates for the papal office was bitter, as is apparent from the following gruesome incidents. Stephen VII, the creation of the party of Guido, caused the corpse of his predecessor, Formosus, to be dug up, dressed in pontifical robes, arraigned in a mock trial, condemned and deposed, stripped of his garments, fearfully mutilated, beheaded, and cast into the Tiber. But when the party of Berengar again gained the ascendancy, Stephen VII was cast into prison and murdered. In the half century that followed, the papacy sank even to lower depths. Leo V (died 903) was pope less than two months, when he was cast into prison by Christopher, one of his chaplains. The following year this Christopher, who usurped his place, was deposed and driven from Rome by Sergius III, who became pope in 895, and who soiled the papal throne with every vice. He lived in illicit intercourse with the elder Theodora, a bold woman of high rank and low character. She had two daughters, Marozia and Theodora, famed for their beauty and wealth. Both prostitutes, they filled the chair of the pope with their lovers and bastards. The love of Theodora the elder was also shared by pope John X. She gave him the Archbishopric of Ravenna, and made him pope in 915. Marozia and her lover, Alberic I, overthrew this pope and had him smothered to death in prison. Thereupon she raised three of her own creatures successively to the papal chair—Leo VI, Stephen VII, and finally John XI, her own bastard son of twenty one years. Another of her sons, Alberic, jealous of his brother John, the pope, cast him and their mother

into prison. Alberic's son was then elected pope as John XII, when only eighteen years of age. This took place in 954. The reign of this John was characterized by the most shocking immoralities. He was charged by a Roman synod with almost every species of crimes. Among the charges lodged against him were, that he had mutilated a priest, that he had set houses on fire, that he had committed homicide and adultery, had violated virgins and widows, lived with his father's mistress, converted the pontifical palace into a brothel, and drank to the health of the devil. When the emperor Otho demanded that these accusations be proven, the bishops replied that they were that well known as not to be in the need of proof. It is telling, that before the synod conveyed, John XII fled from Rome with as much of the treasury of St. Peter as he could carry. The synod deposed him as a monster of iniquity, and Leo VII was elected in his stead.

A remark is in order here. This was not the only degradation of the papacy. As we shall see, it was followed by several others in the centuries that followed. How, in the light of all this history, the Roman Catholic church has the courage to maintain the infallibility of its popes, is a mystery. She cannot maintain this doctrine with respect to the good popes only. All must be infallible or none can be. For if even one pope were not infallible, the papal institution should cease to exist, and if it did, it could be doubted with reason whether it ever existed. But the Roman clergy has an answer to this. Father Benson, from whose work we have already quoted, put this language in the mouth of the papacy, "I am a sinful man like him from whom my title is descended (reference here is to the apostle Peter). I have passions, weakness and temptations as he had. I have no immunity from sin, no safeguard against falling beyond that which may be found in the mercy of my God and the prayers of my people. (Notice the teaching here. It is that it is possible for the true believer to fall from grace. G.M.O.). I may deny my Lord as some say that Liberius did; I may err in my private faith as John XXII did; I may falter, or give an obscure answer as Honorius did. Yet I claim it, and I bear the keys below my purple crown to show that I bear them in my hand. In the strength of Him who called me Peter, I am not afraid to use them. I may err in all else, but not in that for which I am set; what I bind is bound in heaven; what I loose is loosed in heaven. For to me it was said through Peter; and though a hundred popes are gone, Peter stands here still. . . . I claim it, I, Pius the Tenth, alias Peter. Does any dispute it with me?" . . . "When I say that the pope is infallible, I mean that the pope cannot err when, as shepherd and teacher of all Christians, he defines a doctrine concerning faith or morals, to be held by the whole church." So far the author. Now it is true, that the apostle Peter, the Christian,

the infallible pastor Peter, was a man with many infirmities, as are all God's believing people. But Peter the Christian, the infallible pastor Peter was, as a regenerated child of God, not a profane man, a monster of iniquity, revelling in sin. The other apostles were not profane men. Nor were Daniel and Isaiah and the other prophets, who wrote and spake infallibly in communicating to the church the mind and will of God, profane men. In all those four thousand years that God through them was preparing for us His Bible, there was not one profane man among them. But a surprising number of popes were profane men, judging from the fruit that they bore. Fact is, that between the close of the ninth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries there were few popes who were not profane. Is it now conceivable, in the light of the Scriptures, that God after the death of the last apostle would continue the apostolic office in long unbroken successions of profane men? That would have to be considered strange.

The synod that had deposed John XII was attended, as has already been intimated, by king Otho I, justly surnamed the Great (936-973). The dynasty of Charles the Great had ended with the death of Louis the Child. During the joint reigns of Charles' incapable successors the empire that he had built disintegrated and, due to the growth of Feudalism, Germany had divided into tribal states, ruled by tribal dukes. On her frontiers, she was being threatened by the barbarian Danes, Slavonians, and Hungarians. There was dire need of a strong ruler to establish order. This need was met by Otho I. He was the son and successor of the able Henry the Fowler, dupe of Saxony, who already had defeated the Danes, the Slavonians, and the Hungarians on the frontier, and had thus removed the worst perils of Germany. The useful work was continued by Otho. He not only wholly subdued the barbarians on the frontier, but in addition went far in consolidating Germany. But his lust of power was too great to allow him to confine his work to his own country. In 951 he crossed the Alps and made himself master of Northern Italy. In 961 he was again in Italy now in response to a cry for help on the part of the worthless pope John XII, who was being hard pressed by Berengar II. The king promised to return to the papacy all the lost territories granted by Pepin and Charles the Great and so the pope obligingly crowned him emperor and gave him the oath of Allegiance. So was the papacy again rescued, this time from the tyranny of political factions in Rome as headed by Roman nobles,—rescued it was but only to pass once more under the jurisdiction of a foreign power. History had repeated itself.

The perfidious pope John XII had no intentions of subjecting himself to Otho. When Otho had departed, the pope entered into conspiracy with those same nobles from whom he had been rescued and rebelled

against his master. The master quickly returned. He convened a synod, which, as we have seen, deposed John XII, and chose Leo VII. But after the king's departure, John XII returned and actually got the upper hand. He seized his antagonists; he cut off the hand of one, the nose, the finger, and the tongue of others. Eventually his life was brought to an end by the vengeance of a man whose wife he had seduced. And also of this pope—John XII—we are asked to believe that he was appointed by Heaven as an infallible mediator of Christ and His Church!

G. M. O.

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## IN HIS FEAR

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### Furnished Unto All Good Works

In a previous article we brought out that the elect, the christian, the believer is 'the man of God'. And on the basis of Scripture God is our God and the God of our seed, hence, the church must proceed from the fact that in the covenant child she is dealing with 'the man of God'. And this 'man of God' must be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. This is according to Scripture, and specifically so stated in II Timothy 3:17.

The complete furnishing of the covenant child, of 'the man of God', is of course a task for which not only the Church is responsible. This is first of all the responsibility of the covenant parents. And also the christian school as an instrument of the parent, has a very vital calling here and a great responsibility. Besides, as the covenant child grows older, and as his responsibility increases, he himself takes a very active, conscious, and determined part in this 'furnishing'. But all this does not take away the fact that also the church has a very vital and important task to fulfill in the furnishing of the man of God. And at present we wish to deal first of all with the work, task and responsibility of the church in completely furnishing the man of God.

That the church has a vital task here and that even for her own interest she should take a very active part in 'furnishing', is self evident and that for several reasons, three of which I like to mention at present.

In the first place the church is a spiritual institution. The school may prepare one with a view to his earthly life here on earth, train him for 'works' in general, for a particular vocation, the church deals directly with Scripture and spiritual matters. The

church deals with the citizens of the kingdom of God, with the elect according to the promise, with the believers, the regenerated, called, justified, sanctified people of God. And the 'good works' to which the covenant child is to be thoroughly furnished are works that are spiritually-ethically good, God pleasing, they are in harmony with the law of God, bear the stamp of His approval. Now, if the former is true, and it is, then it stands to reason that the church is very well equipped to share in the task of furnishing the man of God. Yea, it can be expected that the Church has a lion share in this task.

To the foregoing should be added that the covenant seed belongs to the church. Our children in due time do not become members of the church, they *are* members, they are born into the church, even though it is true that for a number of years they are really minors and immature church members. Nevertheless they are in a very real sense members of the church, of the body, and the grown up man in the church is the child who came to maturity. This being the case the church is vitally interested in her own members, they are part of her, they belong to the body, are members of the institution. Hence, love for her own seed and love for her own wellbeing forms the basis for a two-fold motive on the part of the church to do her utmost and do her particular share in the 'furnishing' of her seed.

In the third place the church has a direct divine obligation here. We might quote a number of texts to prove this point, but let me remind you of the basic truth that this divine obligation follows from the fact of our covenant relation to God. We and our seed belong to God. And the church must 'feed the lambs'. Paul urges the bishops of Ephesus to 'take heed' unto *all* the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made them overseers. (Acts 20:28).

All the foregoing, and we could easily add to these reasons, makes it very plain that the church has a very vital task in and calling toward the furnishing of the man of God.

What now does it mean to thoroughly furnish the man of God. Is the idea that the church, on her part and as far as her calling goes, must make the man of God perfect? (Perfect understood in the ethical sense of the word, moral perfection?) That could not very well be and besides that would be impossible. No amount of education, instruction, training can make a person perfect in that sense. Many educators claim that education and training will make a child morally better. However, the reality of life and the facts of cold statistics prove different. If more education and training would make for true righteousness and lead toward perfection, our own country would approximate this ideal as closely as any other country. However, you can read it in your dealy papers and the statistics

of law enforcement agencies prove it that as a nation we are quite lawless. And according to the authorities there is at present even a special 'crimewave'. Well, the church never claimed to be able to instill moral righteousness into its covenant seed, how much less then could the world ever expect to make one perfect by the process of mere education and training.

No, but the 'man of God' must be made perfect in the sense of being 'thoroughly furnished'. And the latter expresses the idea of fully equipped, able and capable to perform that for which one is furnished. A machine is perfect, thoroughly furnished, when it is capable of performing the task for which it was made. All the component parts function so smoothly that the entire machine works, runs, performs its task for which it was made.

In the same sense the 'man of God' is thoroughly furnished when he is able to perform the work, the task, for which he is called. In other words he is thoroughly furnished when he can think, live, walk, talk, act, react as a 'man of God'. And the man of God must be furnished unto *all* good works.

That brings up the question: "What are good works, what is the standard for good works, are good works some special kind of works?" It stands to reason the world can not answer these questions for us. Neither can the world give us the standard for good works. The worldly standard for good works is the standard of men, and that standard is very inadequate, very unreliable, and does not subject itself to the Word of God. Hence, only the Word, God Himself can tell us what good works are. And according to God's standard good works are works that are in harmony with the law of God, out of the principle of faith and done to the glory of God. The foregoing also implies that good works are not some 'special' works which are occasionally performed by the man of God (although they are included) but *all* his works, live in harmony with God's law, live out of the principle of faith, live to the honor and glory of God. He must do that as preacher or teacher, but also as farmer and shopkeeper, as boss and as employee, as housewife and office-worker, etc. etc. Always and everywhere and in every sphere of life he must perform good works, his works must be ethically good, they must bear the stamp of God's divine approval.

And he must be 'furnished' unto these good works, he must be instructed, trained, educated with a view to being able to perform good works.—Of course, this process is never finished in this life and the good works of the man of God are good works in principle, sin always cleaveth unto him even in his most holy actions.—nevertheless, his works must be good works as described above. And for this (and of course we are mainly thinking now of the covenant child) he must be trained, equipped, so that when he grows to physical



and spiritual maturity he must know what constitutes a good work, what is required of him, and how he must perform good works.

And that brings up one more question in this connection, and that question is: "What belongs to this complete furnishing of the man of God, when can it be said that he is furnished, equipped to do all good works?" We might mention a number of things, but let me emphasize just a few. To the complete furnishing belongs first of all that the 'man of God' knows the *will* of God. For how can he do the will of God unless he knows it? And without thorough knowledge of God's will he is ill equipped to do that will. In the second place he must possess the power of spiritual discernment, he must be spiritually keen, alert. He must so thoroughly know the truth and the will of God and be so spiritually sensitive that in any given situation there is found by him the proper evaluation, view, conception, reaction. For the man of God carries about the old man of sin and he lives in a hostile, shrewd, oft-times deceiving and subtle world, and always in a world of darkness. And he must be able to distinguish at all times and in every situation of life the light from the darkness. Now in order to do this he must be spiritually keen, to put in it a Holland phrase and express it in Reformed terms: "Hij moet goede Gereformeerde voelhorens hebben."

And in the third place to be completely furnished also implies that he must have the spiritual ability, strength, courage, stamina, to fight the battle of faith. He must be of strong will and determination, he must know how to use the right weapons at the right time.

All this, and we might mention several more things, belongs to the equipment which the man of God needs to perform all good works. And he acquires these things over a process of years, they just don't come over night. That takes time, study, training, education. And the church has a vital part in the all important task of thus furnishing the man of God.

How the church does and must quit herself of this task we expect to discuss in a following article.

J. D. J.

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## FROM HOLY WRIT

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(Ephesians 1:6-10)

In our former writing on Ephesians 1:6-10 we took notice of the implications of two very important elements in verse 7. These two are: 1. What we must understand by "the redemption in His blood" and "the

forgiveness of transgressions". 2. How these two elements are mutually related in the text and in Scripture in general.

We must now proceed in our discussion. We will still be studying verse 7. There are still two elements here that call for further study. The first element is, that the benefit of redemption *is ours in the Beloved*. And the second is, that this is ours in the Beloved *according to the riches of God's grace*.

It can scarcely be gainsaid, that there is an inherent relationship between these two elements. Hardly is the truth of the matter thus, that *we have redemption in the Beloved*—and that it is *also* according to God's grace. The latter surely is included in the former. This, we trust, will become evident in the course of this essay.

However, let us first try to see the implication of these elements separately.

To begin with the former, we might ask: who is the *Beloved*? The phrase "in the Beloved" occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. Taken by itself it might be taken to mean: the one who is loved by the people of God. Thus we read in I Peter 1:8: "Whom having not seen ye love", where "whom" refers to Christ. But this is hardly the case here. In the first place all of Scripture emphasizes that our redemption has nothing to do with our love for God. Thus I John 3:9, 10. "Herein is the love of God manifested amongst us, that God sent His Only Begotten Son into the world, in order that we might be saved through Him. In this is *the love*, not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son a propitiation for our sins." It is therefore quite clear that God's love is always first. It is basic and it always precedes redemption. It is a rather common expression, but nonetheless fundamental heresy, that God was reconciled to us in Christ. That is never true in Scripture, and, what is more important in this connection, we do not read in II Cor. 5:19 that God was reconciled to us. What do we read? This: God was in Christ reconciling the world (kosmos) unto Himself. The Cosmos was reconciled to God, and not God to the Cosmos. The latter is the Pelagian, heathenish conception of God. Nay, God manifested and demonstrated His great love to us when we were yet sinners. **HE REDEEMED US.** He paid the ransom price!

The term "the Beloved" cannot, therefore, be merely a name given Christ because of our love for Him. To be sure, this latter is not excluded. We love God and His Christ. We love God because He loves us in the "Beloved". And surely not our love for God is here on the foreground in the aforementioned sense, but God's great love for us. Is it here not joined with the redemption that is ours, the forgiveness of transgressions, and "the riches of His grace"?

But what clinches it all is what we read in the

parallel passage in Col. 1:13, 14, which reads: "Who hath delivered us out of the authority of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the *Son of His love*, in whom we have the redemption, the forgiveness of sins." The "Beloved" is the Son of God's love. This is very clear from this quotation.

Of this "Beloved" this passage in Col. 1:15-21 has quite a good deal to say. We will quote it in full. "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature. For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him; For He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence. For it hath pleased (the Father) that in Him all the fulness should dwell. And having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, by Him, I say, whether they be things in heaven or things on earth. And you being in times alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled."

To give a complete exposition of the quoted passage would lead us too far from our contemplated course of thought. We will, therefore, call attention to the elements, which it contains, in as far as it is relevant to our discussion.

Apart from the fact that we learn that "the Beloved" the "Son of God's love" we also learn some of the implications of this love of God for His Son. It is the love of God for His Son which wills Him to be the Preeminent One in all things. In creation, in the resurrection from the dead, in His Headship of the Church and over all things. From this we see that in the work of our redemption Christ is not merely the means to an end, nor is He the means merely of restoring what Satan has spoiled. He is most clearly and emphatically the chief consideration of all God's thoughts both in creation and recreation; and then so, that the latter determines the former. And in each part the Son, the Son in the flesh is the "Beloved", so that God would have the fulness to dwell in Him. He is the Head! Head as the Beloved!

Viewed in this light "the Beloved" becomes for us richer in meaning, fully worthy of our sanctified consideration. Once more we look at the text and ask: what does it mean, that we have redemption and forgiveness of transgressions *in Him, in the Beloved*. Certainly this "in" implies more than mere "in connection with Christ", somehow related to Him. It suggests the figures of speech which Scripture employs. In John 15:1ff. our relation to Christ is pictured under the figure of the "vine and the branches". Says Christ: Without me ye can do nothing. The branch must re-

main in the Vine to be fruitful and to live. Here in this epistle the apostle employs the figure of the Head and the body. Compare verses 22, 23 where we read: "And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."

From the above quotation we would draw two conclusions, with regard to "*in the Beloved*".

The first is that we are clearly taught here that the "we" and "us" and "our" in these verses 3-14 are not to be limited to a few Christians in Ephesus of Asia Minor with Paul included, but must refer to the entire elect church of God as chosen by Him before the foundation of the world, having been foreordained unto the adoption of sons through Jesus Christ. The apostle is speaking of the entire church of God organically united with Christ her Head by faith, and legally represented by Him. This church is complete, *a fulness. The fulness of Him that filleth all in all.* The church both of the Old and of the New dispensation. This latter is clear from such passages as Eph. 2:13 where the apostle includes the prophetic "far" and "near", Jew and Gentile respectively, as also from chapter 3:6 where mention is made of the Gentiles becoming fellow-hiers of the same promises with the Jews. The church that is gathered during the entire history of the world, is here viewed as one Body! And this body is the "we" that have the redemption in the Beloved.

Secondly, that this Church, this "we" (the apostle is still singing) have this redemption in the Beloved means: only in the Beloved. Not for one minute apart from Him, not now nor in the ages to come. In Him, but only in Him, is the church Christ's fulness, have we "every spiritual blessing in heavenly places".

That in this particular passage amongst all these spiritual blessing just these blessings, to wit, "the redemption in His blood" and "forgiveness of transgressions" are mentioned, and thus the legal aspect is placed on the foreground is, however, very significant. And being significant worthy of being read and understood.

But just what is the great significance of Paul's having placed this legal aspect on the foreground. We believe that this legal aspect is closely related with the "*riches of God's grace*" and, that in the "Beloved". This "Beloved" is the Son of God's love, who according to the Divine good-pleasure should be in all things the preeminent one. But this Preeminence is exactly His Preeminence in God's work in Recreation. In this work the "Beloved One" is indeed the Last Adam, the lifegiving Spirit. His greatness is exactly, that He comes into this world under sin and death, and that out of many offences, transgressions, He brings unto justification and life. Now death is first of all a legal question. It is the wages of sin; the fulfillment of the penalty announced to Adam in advance, "the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Gen. 2:16,

17. And this legal element is first; it touches the righteousness, the justice of God. And for the guilty sinner, dead in trespasses and sins, death is the curse, the maintenance of all God's virtues.

The elect are indeed elected to be holy and without blemish. But it is a great heresy to say, that God, without reconciliation through the payment of the "ransom price" could bring the elect to this holiness in love. Thus it is not even in His council of foreordination. We are to be sons of adoption, (vs. 5) but then exactly such adopted sons through Jesus Christ", that is, "through the coming of the Beloved Son of God in the flesh. Thus God loved the world and the redeemed children in His counsel, and, thus it is worked out, realized in Him in time.

Viewing the matter thus, and the text requires this interpretation, we see that what we received in the coming of the Beloved Son of God in the flesh is a redemptive work; He came to seek and to save the lost, to save His people from their sins. All that the Father gave Him should come to Him.

Thus in the "beloved" history is *redemptive* in character. That we *have* this redemption in His blood means that we are not a just people, but a justified people; not a holy people, but a sanctified people; not a glorious people, but a glorified people. Sons, yes; but sons by *adoption*. Rich we are but because we have been made rich with heavenly grace in the Beloved.

This is placed emphatically on the foreground. And this riches of redemption we have in the Beloved. Therefore according to the RICHES of His grace. God sent His Own Son; Him He did not spare. Of this fact the believing church often sings in joyful confession. However, merely singing of it does not give us a conception of its implication.

Just a few remarks, therefore, about the phrase "according to the riches of His grace". It should be observed that "grace" in the very nature of its being "rich" is made the *standard*, the measuring rod of our redemption. Our redemption in the Beloved must exactly demonstrate the *riches* of grace. Of this phrase A. T. Robertson in his "Word Pictures In The New Testament" makes the following comment. "A thoroughly Pauline phrase, riches of kindness (Rom. 2:4) riches of glory (Col. 1:27; Eph. 3:16), riches of fulness of understanding (Col. 2:7) riches of Christ (Eph. 3:8) and in Eph. 2:7 the surpassing riches of grace."

Human language is not able to convey all that is contained in this riches. For this grace is at once "surpassing all knowledge". Yet, we would call attention to the following in the phrase under consideration.

1. It is quite clear that, to somewhat approach the idea of the *riches* of grace, we will first need to understand what *grace* is. To begin with, grace is undoubtedly a virtue, an attribute, a perfection of God. It is

one of His ethical perfections. God *is* His virtues. All His virtues are one. He is simple, and this simplicity of God is something Scripture always emphasizes. And our redemption in the Beloved is the manifestation, revelation, and magnification of this ethical perfection of God.

2. This ethical perfection called "grace" is then that virtue whereby God is altogether divinely lovely and adorable because He is perfect, the Highest Good. And this adorableness God would reveal exactly in "redeeming us in the Beloved". In the Cross of Calvary the riches of grace is manifested, and, that emphatically, over against the guilty sinner who contradicts and denies the perfection of God in His essence and revelation.

3. It, therefore, lies in the very nature of the *riches* of grace, that all merit and work of merit of man are excluded by "grace". God is the God of all grace, exactly in our redemption. This grace is rich in our redemption in its simplicity. This grace is love, mercy and longsuffering; it is almighty, unchangeable and omnipresent. It is strong where we are changeable, life-giving while we are dead, pure while we are filthy. Yea, where sin abounds grace does *much more* abound.

4. To forever demonstrate the riches of His grace God has freely given us redemption in the Beloved Son, in Whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily.

I repeat: words cannot adequately convey this riches. But I know that God's people know what I've attempted to explain, for out of His fulness have we all received, yea, grace for grace!

G. L.

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## PERISCOPE

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### NETHERLAND YOUTH CONGRESS

We noticed that the youthful brethren and sisters in The Netherland Churches are very active. In the past they have been noted for their strong organizational work, and today it appears that it is no different. It appears that in Nov. 15 and 16 of the past year, the great Federation of Youth of the Reformed Churches met in official gathering in the city of Amersfoort. This organization was also split wide open by the division in the "Reformed" Churches in the Netherlands. To quote a reporter attending the meetings (I translate, L. V.): "It was in a spirit of tenseness that we gathered

as delegates of our Reformed Youth Societies, who stand under supervision of the Reformed Churches (article 31). Also now, as a result of the ecclesiastical strife of our days, there is also the sharp battle going on in regard to the Reformed basis of our youth-work. Many of us have perceived that we no longer can work together with those who have forsaken the old basis. Therefore we have separated first and thereafter we came together again in our own "youth congress", in order to further work upon the old basis". It is plain from this that also the various organizations, such as their equivalent to our Federation of Young People's Societies, have experienced the split of the churches. The liberated churches of whom Dr. K. Schilder and Dr. Greydanus are the leaders, have now also organized their own youth congress.

At the first convention of this Youth congress of the liberated churches some very interesting topics were introduced by various speakers and discussed by the delegates present. In the morning session of Nov. 15th, after the opening, a Rev. Vink introduced the subject of: "The Organizational Building of our Own Youth". He discussed the desirability of having separate young ladies and young men's organizations (th young ladies voted in favor of separate organizations). The Rev. Vink strongly advocated independent initiative of our own youth, to develop their own leadership, something very lacking in the past. And the characteristic feature of our societies must be not a mere hollow discussion of principles, but a study of ALL that the Lord commands us. That being the basis of each local society, he further urged that each society have strong representation in the district league of societies (the league again delegate to and organize as a national Youth congress or Federation).

In the evening session a Rev. Vogel gave a speech on: "Methodics" in which he discussed the various and best methods of studying Scripture or the various truths of Scripture, in our societies. He stated that the viewpoint must always be God's covenant, for this constitutes the very reason of existence of our young people societies. But he emphasized that the object of our study may not be the young men or young women, but God Himself in all His revelation. At the close of the address the Rev. Vogel gave the following little sketch for study-subjects:

- A. The Scriptures:
  - 1. The Bible as such.
  - 2. The Biblical History.
- B. The Church.
  - 1. History of the Church.
  - 2. Confessions of the Church.
  - 3. Institution and task of the Church.
- C. The various other Subjects:
  - 1. The Home or Family.

2. The State.

3. The Community (Maatschappij).

After a lively discussion of the foregoing, the third speaker of the convention was introduced, n.l. Prof. Holwerda, who spoke on: "The task of the Church with respect to her Youth in our Day". After picturing the great necessity of church leadership for the youth in the post-war period, the speaker emphasized that during the German occupation the Church gave practically no leadership to the youth. Instead it met many times in official gatherings which only resulted in splitting the churches. He emphasized that the liberated churches must face the task of being a mother to the youth of the covenant and her primary work lay in bringing the unadulterated word to that covenant youth. He denounced sensationalism in the treatment of the youth by the Church, and brought home that "*continual reformation*" must be its aim. Thus far the report.

A few remarks may be in order. First we noted that a considerable number of ministers and also professors attended these youth gatherings, and also took part in the discussions. This is commendable for it reveals interest in the youth of God's covenant. Secondly, it is to be noted that the youth of the Netherlands Churches take part not only but also choose sides in the church strife going on. Also that is commendable. They discuss the questions that are being debated. We recall in 1924 in the Federation meeting held in Holland, Mich., that the subject of Common Grace, the burning question in the churches of that time, was a subject not to mentioned. We would urge the young people societies of the Christian Reformed Churches even now to study and discuss and hold debates with our Protestant Reformed young people societies. It would be very fruitful for all concerned. Whoever refuses discussion of fundamental, reveals their weakness. And finally we note the fine subject material discussed at these youth congresses in old Holland. Whether they had a banquet to close the sessions, as we in America have, was not stated in the report. Perhaps they are too poor. Perhaps they do not favor them. But we hope the youth of the Netherlands may come to know and confess the truth of our Sovereign God. That is all important.

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#### TRANSLATION OF "E VOTO"

We read the following call for aid in a recent Banner: "The committee appointed by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church for the Translation of Dutch Theology would like to hear from anyone who would like to offer his services for the work of translating Dr. Abraham Kuyper's "E Voto Dordraceno". Address the secretary, Rev. Leonard Verduin, 218 N.

Division, Ann Arbor, Mich." As our readers will know "E Voto Dordraceno" is the four volume work of Dr. A. Kuyper on the Heidelberg Catechism. It is a work that is rather extensively used, or rather HAS been used in the past, when most theologians could still work with the Holland language. But seeing the number of those still able to use the Holland language is gradually diminishing, this famous work on the Catechism is more and more being neglected. Seeing also that it is still the practice in the Chr. Ref. Churches to preach from the Heidelberg Catechism every Sunday, we presume the lack of an adequate work on this part of our confessions, is very much being felt. Therefore the Synod has appointed a committee to translate the old standard Holland works and desires also "E Voto" to be translated into the English.

*We Recommend:*

Whereas there is evidently a great need for a thorough work or exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism especially for the younger theologians,

Whereas your rather able book reviewer in the Banner, Dr. Hendriksen, has come across a work on the Heidelberg Catechism that is at present being written, and which he can highly praise and recommend to the reading public also,

Whereas you undoubtedly desire something that is very thoroughly Reformed and also expositional.

That your committee no longer look around for an able man to translate that large work of "E Voto" written by Dr. A. Kuyper, but instead that you recommend to your Synod and thus also to the theologians in your Churches, as well as the reading public, that they buy the very good and thoroughly Reformed "Exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism" written by Prof. Herman Hoeksema, prof. of Dogmatics at the Theological School of the Prot. Ref. Churches. The entire work is not yet finished. Two volumes have come off the press, thus far covering the first ten Lord's Days. The third is about to be presented to the public. And the entire set will be obtainable long before you could ever get "E Voto" translated and published. Besides you would have a more practical, scholarly and Reformed Exposition of the Catechism.

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### WHAT A WORLD

During the war our government was filling the minds of the people with the poisonous propaganda that we are fighting aggression, and that people "everywhere may have a voice in establishing their own form of government". That is supposed to be Democracy. Let us look through our periscope and see what we can see concerning all this.

It has just been officially announced by Great

Britain that it will be her official policy "to move in whatever reinforcements are necessary to restore order and GUARANTEE DUTCH SOVEREIGNTY IN THE EAST INDIES." Mind you, this is all being done despite the fact that the East Indies peoples desire to have their independence from Dutch rule and as former Pres. Roosevelt promised: "that peoples everywhere may have a voice in establishing their own form of government". But the British will see to it that Dutch Sovereignty continues. Also the Dutch will bring in thousands of her troops to suppress the independence movement. That is all supposed to be "Free Government" and "Democracy". And here is the answer of the people of Java and Sumatra, as broadcast over the radio station in Soerabaja: "The Dutch are boasting that they soon will bring in thousands of soldiers. What of it? We are determined to annihilate them, even if we have to poison them to death. We have 70 million behind us. It is an easy task for us to get rid of 100,000 or 200,000 enemies by poison". Such is the sorry state of affairs with the Dutch. First the Dutch government sought Allied aid in liberating her own country from German rule, and now that same government tries to suppress the liberating forces in the Dutch East Indies.

The same situation appears in the other Asian countries, India with her 350,000,000 peoples is seething with unrest and the determination to free himself from the bondage of England. Indo-China is seeking freedom from the French rule and much blood has already been shed in that country in her striving after "Democracy". The Malayan states ask: "why have we been freed from Japan, in order again to be shackled to great Britain?" The Chinese have been told by England to vacate her own rightful city of Hongkong, because it must remain under control of Imperialist Britain. America and Russia will share a protectorate over Korea for five years, in order thereafter to grant her independence. And so it goes on. Where is the promise of "Freedom" held out to these Asiatic peoples during the Jap occupation? Is it a wonder that the yellow and brown races on the four corners of the earth, are waking up to the fact that the white peoples are playing but a game? Is it a wonder that already many are predicting that those peoples will arise in indignation and cast off their yoke and make war with the whites? And lest we forget, it is foretold us in Scripture that Satan will be allowed to deceive those very nations, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

In Europe we see also this same farce of "Democracy". Yugoslavia may vote, but with only one slate of candidates, selected by the dictator Tito. No free elections at all. And mind you that country was "liberated" from the German Dictator. The "Big Three" of Russia, England, and America, are



gether and decide how this and that country shall be ruled. O what a farce is being made of the term "freedom". That for which we condemned Germany during the war, is now being practiced by us and company. Mass deportation of peoples from their homes and farms to places assigned them by the Allies. Whole countries gobbled up and annexed by force. Where the "Democracies" believe so strongly in free expression, today we see thousands of books in Germany burned in public. The purges of Dictator Hitler were denounced as most cruel and resorting to the savagery of the middle ages. Yes, but today we also believe in purging, only now in the name of "Democracy". Yesterday we denounced "aggression" and Aggressors as the chief sin we are fighting against. Today we approve (at least by silent consent) to the greatest aggression ever witnessed in history. Look at Russia. It seems as though the "black pot is accusing the black kettle that it is black."

We conclude by saying: WHAT A WORLD. A world that is opposed to itself. A house that is divided against itself. And such a house of course can never stand. A world that has many wise and prudent men, and who are lauded (even by the church) as men filled with wisdom. But the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God. And God proves this right along. He is making the wisdom of the world at this very moment look very foolish indeed. God is revealing that all the so-called noble and pious talk of the world concerning "justice" and "right" and "mercy" is but so much mockery. The justice of the world is always injustice and her right is always wrong and her "mercy" is always cruel. That is what we see when looking through the periscope of God's Word. O yes, we also see more. We see that THE KINGDOM of which the christian is a citizen, is NOT OF THIS WORLD. Rather it is the kingdom of God wherein righteousness alone dwells. In that Kingdom, there is true freedom, true freedom of expression to declare the virtues of our God, and true independence from corrupt and sinful man. In 1946 let us seek first THAT kingdom of righteousness, and all other things will be added unto us.

L. V.

## LECTURE

By the Rev. H. Hoeksema

*Subject:* Children of the Promise.

*Date:* Thursday, February 7, 1946.

*Place:* Gospel Hall, South Park and W. Vine Streets, Kalamazoo, Mich.

## Ingezonden

Aan de Redacteur van de Standard Bearer:

Geachte Ds. Hoeksema:

Wil U het volgend schrijven van mij plaatsen in den Standard Bearer? Bij voorbaat mijne dank.

Daar mij gevraagd werd van broeders uit de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken, waarom ik, lid van de gemeente van Ds. Danhof, niet ben meegegaan naar de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken, begeer ik op deze wijze daarvan rekenschap te geven. Hier volgt dan ook een afschrift van hetgeen ondergeteekende gezonden heeft aan den kerkeraad van de nieuwe "Grace Christian Reformed Church", voorheen de Protesteerende Eerste Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken, waarvan Ds. H. Danhof leeraar was.

"Aan den Kerkeraad der Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk, voorheen de Protesteerende Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk.

Dec. 13, 1945.

Geachte Kerkeraad:

Daar de Protesteerende Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk zich heeft aangesloten bij de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken, geef ik bij dezen kennis dat ik niet de vrijmoedigheid heb om mee te gaan naar de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken.

Daar de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken, in 1924, Drie Punten aan de Belijdenis hebben toegevoegd, alhoewel zij uitspreken dat ze waarheid zijn en daarom uit de Heilige Schrift en de Belijdenisschriften genomen zijn; en daar het mijne belijdenis is dat de Drie Punten van 1924 niet de waarheid zijn omdat ze dingen van God en van den mensch zeggen die niet waar zijn, noem ik dit een ont-heiligen van God.

De Protesteerende Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk had de zuivere waarheid. Maar zij is afgefallen.

Hoogachtend,  
John Menninga."

In het licht van datgene wat ik belijd de waarheid te zijn, hoe zou ik dit kunnen leeren en voorstaan in de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken? Ik zou dan, voorwaar, een valsche belijder zijn in de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken.

John Menninga,  
Kalamazoo, Michigan.