

# THE STANDARD

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## MEDITATION

### Judas, The Praise Of Jehovah

"Now will I praise the Lord; therefore she called his name Judah."—Gen. 29:35b.

"My praise shall be of Thee in the great congregation."—Psalm 22:25a.

"Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver Him unto you? and they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.

And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master; and kissed Him."—Matt. 26:14-16, 49.

The praises of Jehovah: the ultimate and exclusive and exhaustive purpose of the Universe, of history and of the new world that is coming.

The praises of Jehovah: our ever present calling, whether we are good or evil, angel or devil, conscious or unconscious, no matter in what state or condition we may be: we always should praise the Lord!

The primitive root of the word "praise" is the throwing out of the hand!

With hands stretched out, with eyes looking upward, and singing in great jubilation and rejoicing, we should praise the Lord!

And because of His worth! He is to be praised continually, because He is worthy. It belongs to His Godhead and His Lordship that He has all the worth, all the virtue, all the majesty, honor and glory imaginable, and above our imagination.

And, finally, we should do so from out of the motive of purest love!

And that love should be absolutely exclusive. All

the love of our heart should be directed in praise and adoration to the glorious Godhead, Who revealed Himself as Jehovah: the Covenant God.

\* \* \* \*

The praise of Jehovah!

That is the meaning of the name: Judas!

The name Judas is a glorious name. I can think of no name more beautiful, more appropriate for the creature, made in the image of God.

We first hear of it in that sorrowful story of Leah and her struggles. By evil subtlety Laban had inflicted a woman upon Jacob whom he did not desire: he loved Rachel, not Leah. But Leah loved Jacob. In these few words you have the material for a struggle that is pitiful to behold. How Leah fought to obtain the love of her husband! We can tell by the names which she gives to her children: Reuben, Simeon, Levi! First, Reuben: Surely, the Lord hath looked upon my affliction; now therefore my husband will love me! Second, Simeon: Because the Lord hath heard that I was hated, He hath therefore given me this son also! Third, Levi (revealing the most pitiful phase of her struggles and suffering): Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have born him three sons!

But it was all to no avail: Jacob loved Rachel—more than poor Leah with her tender eyes, and heart that was God-fearing, more than the heart of Rachel.

Jacob did not turn to her with the desired love.

But all things work together for good unto those that love God, that are the called according to His good-pleasure. Leah has learned her lesson. When she again becomes pregnant and bears a son, she turns away from her husband and, stretching out her hand to heaven, exclaims: Judah! Oh Judah! Now I will praise the Lord!

The Hebrew Judah, and the transliterated Judas, are the names which give us our sweetest calling.

\* \* \* \*

In the deepest sense, this name should be given to God. I should say this different: the name Judah fits God in the absolute sense of the word. That is better, for it is true.

God is Judas, for He praises Himself from eternity to eternity.

Eternally God stretches forth His hand to Himself and expresses all the wonder of His glorious Being: it is the song of the praise of the Covenant Jehovah.

There is no one, and there shall be no one who so perfectly knows all the beauties, the glories and the virtues of the Godhead, as God Himself. He perfectly knows with a Divine Knowledge just how unutterably glorious He is in power, in wisdom, in strength and in goodness.

And what would be unutterable with us, is utterable in Him.

He rejoices in them and sings His eternal covenant song in cadences and melodies that cannot be imagined by us. For God is GOD!

Again: there is no one who can learn that song and sing it to perfection for there is no one who knows His infinite worth even as He Himself.

And yet there is the possibility to sing His song. Holy Scripture has told us.

The praises of Jehovah, our sweetest calling!

\* \* \* \*

First, we must point you to creation as it came from His holy hands in the morning of history.

All things declare the glory of God, especially the heavens. Psalm 19.

"The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard."

Attend also to Psalm 98 where we hear: "Let the floods clap their hands before the Lord for He cometh, for He cometh!"

And Isaiah 55 where we listen again to the song of praise: the very trees of the field shall clap their hands for they see the salvation of the Lord!

Can you not see the picture at the dawn of history?

Floods and hills and valleys and mountains; trees and herbs and grass and flowers; beasts and birds and fishes; all the forms, the colors, the sounds and the odours: they all unite harmoniously to sing their songs of praise to their Maker: a very pean of happiness and rejoicing. They found their calling: JUDAH! The praise of Jehovah-God!

Oh, Judah is beautiful!

And man, created in the image of God, stood in the midst of this beauteous scene and found his calling: he had to interpret all such singing, and from the motive of purest covenant love, return to God and sing intelligently of all the wonders of His Creator.

And he did for a little while.

For a little while his name was JUDAS: he praised God in the first paradise.

\* \* \* \*

But all things were perverted, horribly perverted through sin and evil, hard upon the finished picture in the garden of Eden.

Man fell. Now all is guilty and also corrupt, perverted, turned into its very opposite.

Man still evaluates God, but deems Him worthy of neglect, indifference, or mockery. They curse instead of blessing Him, who is the joy of the angels.

They do not love Him anymore; they hate Him with cruel hatred.

Oh yes, they will yet praise; they will stretch out the hand in utmost adoration and worship, but the object is man, creation, the horrors of sin and evil. Sometimes their glory is in their shame!

Man cannot deny his essence, his being: he must serve, love, adore, stretch forth his hand in obeysance, yearn for the object. But he lost his God, and now he will fashion his own god: it is the idol and its worship: abominable iniquity!

No praise, but its monstrous opposite, contrast, antithesis: he adores the creature in the place of the Creator.

\* \* \* \*

Anno dominus 33 we see a Judas, and we tremble.

It is the man whose fault it is that at this late date in history we would never think of baptizing our child with the name of Judas. When we call a man Judas we make his blood to boil with anger.

And yet the name is sweet, beautiful, full of the wisdom of God.

But Judas, the historical Judas, is a worthy son of his father the devil.

But let us remember that he is our representative in the drama which transpired anno dominus 33. Let us emphasize that. Do not look upon him to denounce him in self-righteous anger. He was a man with like passions as we have. He showed what we are capable of doing.

But let us see: how did he live his beautiful name? He certainly evaluated Jesus. He knew him. For three years he walked with Him and saw His works

and heard His glorious speech. He had a marvellous Man for a preacher.

And after all was said and done, he went to the chief priests and covenanted with them relative the price of His betrayal: a handful of silver. Praise is the stretching out of the hand in wonder. But he stretched out the hand to very filthy lucre.

According to his name he should praise God in Jesus Christ, the Lord. Listen to this Judas: Hail, Rabbi! Hail! what a beautiful word! Its root is to rejoice, to be glad. But in this instance his elation is caused by the knowledge of his abominable success.

The motive of his terrible action? It is not love, but foul hatred. And yet, it seems as though he loves Him. He embraced and kissed the Son of God! What depth of infamy! We can but shudder.

And he receives his reward. After Satan has used his tool, he casts it into the remorse of despair. Judas graps the rope and hangs himself. A fitting end of a son of the devil.

\* \* \* \*

And now look upon the Lord. Look strongly on Jesus, for He is the fulfillment of the name Judas.

You may say that He is the only Judas that is left on this sorry globe. We carry with us the nature of the pseudo-Judas.

But Jesus is the true and pure praiser of God.

He evaluated the Godhead aright in order to arrive at His proper worth. Listen to Him: It is my meat and drink to do His glorious will!

And His hands are ever aloft to express the wonder of the glorious Godhead. He prophesied of this ages before He came, in His prophets: "My praise shall be of Thee in the great congregation!" Psalm 22:25a.

But, o horrors, what terrible atmosphere surrounds this Judas! What agony and suffering is His lot! All the days of His flesh He must go with strong crying and tears to His Father in heaven, for He is made to bear the sins and the guilt of all the children of God. And the load that presses sore upon Him grows ever heavier. It grows so heavy that at last it presses the very blood through the pores of His blessed head. And the thick drops stain the soil of Gethsemane.

But He is the real, the only Judas.

When all the crying and groaning are translated in heavenly language you would see that His every expression is praise of God.

You will remember that the root meaning of the word "praise" is the stretching out of the hand, upward in wonder and adoration.

Well, you will find it with Jesus of Nazareth.

Ages before, He made David sing of it: With hands stretched out throughout the night, uncomforted I sought for light!

And he sank deeper and deeper, away into the abyss.

But, oh wonder, He will continue His praise of God.

Even in the bottommost bottom of hell, Jesus praises God! It is exactly because Jesus always praised God that you and I can be saved. It was the revelation of the love of obedience.

Adam had to praise God in the beauty of Paradise when everything was for him. But the second or last Adam stands on the nethermost bottom of hell, there to sing the praises of God. Listen to Him: My God! My God! In those few words you listen to praise of God the Father! He had never let go of God. Jesus is Judas indeed!

\* \* \* \*

And this is the everlasting Gospel: Jesus is Judas for you and for me and for all those that were foreknown in the foreknowledge of the love of God.

He stood in your room, my brother, and for you and in your stead he fulfilled the injunction: You shall praise Me as the highest Good!

And He is also a Judas in you.

Through the regenerating power of His Holy Ghost, and through the wonderworking power of His Word, He teaches you to praise God.

Oh yes, I know that we stammer, that we tremble as we sing, but sing we must and sing we will. If we would be silent the very stones in the street would sing God's praises.

From generation to generation, there are Judasses in the great congregation. They sing the song of adoration of God, our loving Father in Jesus Christ our Lord.

\* \* \* \*

Presently this dispensation and this world will pass away.

It will be the great catastrophe: all things must be purified in that last conflagration.

And then the setting will be recreated for the "great congregation".

And there, in that congregation, Jesus of Nazareth, but now the glorified Lord, will lead the singing.

And He will teach you and me to sing the song of the praise of God.

That, my brother, will be heaven.

It is the singing of the song of Moses and the Lamb.

Judas, the real meaning of Judas, shall be eternally fulfilled.

G. V.

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EDITOR: — Rev. H. Hoeksema.

**Contributing Editors:** — Rev. G. M. Ophoff, Rev. G. Vos, Rev. R. Veldman, Rev. H. Veldman, Rev. H. De Wolf, Rev. B. Kok, Rev. J. D. De Jong, Rev. A. Petter, Rev. C. Hanko, Rev. L. Vermeer, Rev. G. Lubbers, Rev. M. Gritters, Rev. J. A. Heys, Rev. W. Hofman.

Communications relative to contents should be addressed to REV. GERRIT VOS, Edgerton, Minnesota.

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**EDITORIALS****The Covenant Controversy**

3.

## THE COVENANT GOD

With this initial article I would begin a short critical survey of the position which the Liberated Churches in the Netherlands have taken with respect to the Covenant of Grace, and related matters, such as the question with whom God establishes His covenant, the promise, the children, or the heirs of the promise, the sign and seal of the covenant, the children's part, the question of "sanctified in Christ", etc.

In this article I would point out that if we are to arrive at a proper, correct understanding of the covenant and matters relating to it, we will have to study the Word of God as it teaches us that God in Himself is the Covenant God, apart from any relation which He may create between Himself and His creatures. Not to see this point, at least, not to *apply* this point in the views of many brethren, has led many of them to fatal mistakes in their conception of the covenant, etc.

At this juncture I would like to ask: How are we to arrive at any definite knowledge relative the truth of things, except we go to school with the living God, listen to Him as He expresses Himself anent such truths, so that we may arrive at a clear understanding of them!

Let us give you an example.

There is the truth of fatherhood.

Now if we are to approximate the truth of this concept, we will have to study the great FATHER, for after Him all fatherhood is named. Ephesians 3:14 and 15 read: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." Now, the word *family* in the text is in Greek *patria*, meaning ancestry, a line of fathers running back to some progenitor. It is a word that is directly derived from the word *pateer*, meaning *father*. Therefore, I do not say too much when I hold that if you are to study the idea of *father* and *fatherhood* you must study God the Father, of whom all other fatherhood is derived. We must never say: even as we are father of our children, so God is the great Father of His children, implying that the latter use of the idea fatherhood is merely a figurative use of the term, or a metaphorical way of speaking of fatherhood when applying it to the Godhead. No, exactly the reverse is true. God is the Father, really, essentially, and our fatherhood is derivative, relative.

Let us cite another example.

We have bridegrooms and brides among us. People marry and are given in marriage. And on the wedding day or night the multitude of guests gather in festive array in order to behold the beauteous bride who has prepared herself to meet her bridegroom. Presently the bridegroom takes the bride to his arms and it is given unto him to experience a delight that cannot be compared to any other joy on the face of the earth. We all know of that tender and wondrous relationship.

But we know from Holy Scripture that Christ is called the Bridegroom and that the Church is called the Bride. Also, that their wedding day is fast approaching. Yet, if we were to say: You see, Christ is *also* a Bridegroom, even as we have them among us, and the Church is *also* a bride, even as we have many brides among us; the same relationship we see and adore in the Lord Jesus Christ as one day He will take His bride to His bosom and be happy forever;—I say, if we were to speak thus we would really corrupt things, contradict Holy Scripture and miss the fundamental truth that *Jesus Christ is THE Bridegroom, and that the church is THE Bride!* All our marrying and giving in marriage is nothing but derivative, relative and a shadow and symbol of the real and fundamental in this relationship.

Now then, what I have said concerning the idea of fatherhood, bridegroom and bride is also true with respect to all things, and I would ask you kindly to take the word *all* in its most exhaustive and comprehensive sense.

Allow me to explain this point.

I mean that all things that are, creation, providence and history, the church and the entire new world and commonwealth that are coming, exhibit, reveal, show forth and manifest the Godhead in all His wonders, virtues, praises and glories.

It really is not necessary to prove this statement from Holy Scripture. Every Reformed theologian admits this truth. I would say that it is axiomatic, yes, even above the axiom. It is clearly revealed in the Bible. Attend, for instance to psalm 19, the well-known psalm that sings of the glories of God. The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth His handiwork. Or this: The invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead! Rom. 1.

And although we will never be able to exhaust this revealed knowledge of God, we may say that God did reveal Himself. He did show to us what kind of God He really is, and He has done this in His Self-revelation: the present and the coming world and the hosts thereof.

Let us now apply this tremendous truth to the matter at hand, the idea of the Covenant.

I think that the most fundamental mistake of the Liberated brethren is that they have not asked themselves the question: What is the Covenant? Had they done this, they would not have erred as much as they did. Failure to ask this question has led them to say many things about the covenant, especially about the children's part, but they have never arrived at a Biblically wholesome way of defining the mighty concept of the covenant.

They should have asked themselves this question: Since it is an accepted fact that all things are but a manifestation of the Godhead with respect to all things, what does the Word of God teach about our COVENANT GOD!

To put that question, and after careful study of the Word of God, to answer it, would supply us with the proper *given* for the solution of all related questions, such as the promise, the content of the promise, the objects of the promise, the sacraments, especially baptism, the children's part, the question of who is the heir or heirs, etc.

At this juncture I would like to point to a thought expressed by one of the most famous Holland theologians and dogmaticians, the late Dr. Herman Bavinck. This thought is a veritable gem, a brightly shining jewel in his wonderful work of Dogmatics.

Some of my readers have already guessed to what expression I referred above. You will find it in Dr. Bavinck's Dogmatics, vol. III, p. 222, where we read: "*The Pactum salutis reveals to us the relation and the life of the three Persons in the Divine Being as a covenant-life, as a life of the highest self-consciousness and of the highest liberty. Here, within the Divine Being, the Covenant has its full reality.*"

The last sentence in this striking expression I have placed in italics. And the reason is clear. The last sentence shows clearly what I had in mind when I said above that if we are to arrive at a correct evaluation and confession of any relationship or concept, we should study it in the Godhead, and see that what is derivative and relative in us, is essential and *full* in Him.

Applied to the concept of the Covenant it opens wonderful avenues of spiritual delight. But it also will set certain definite limits to our thinking, studying and confessing anent the concept of the covenant.

More about that later, in a different connection.

Yes, Dr. Bavinck was correct in the above-quoted statement. God is the Covenant God in Himself, apart from any relation to His creature. And this truth has been developed by our leaders for lo, these many years. But there has been very little appreciation of the work accomplished. It certainly did not make them very popular among the Reformed brethren, both here and abroad.

And the reason is clear.

Proceeding from the starting point as already postulated by Dr. Bavinck, they taught that God's covenant life is a life of wonderful harmony and peace, that, based upon the revealed truth of the Trinity in the Unity of the Godhead, God lives His life of the covenant in love and friendship, so that they are One in all their essential attributes and Three in their Personal properties :the Father living the One Divine life as Father, and generating the Son; the Son living the life of the One Godhead as Son, and willingly being generated by the Father; the Holy Spirit living the One life of the great Godhead, but as Holy Spirit, being spirated by both Father and son, in which Spirit both the Father and the Son find each other in indescribable love, unity and peace.

And all these things are revealed truth.

We will not be able in this short series to point out all the Biblical references that support this oft-stated view of our readers, but I do not think that it is necessary. The whole Word of God is full of the truths that God is love, and that His Son is the Word, the very Self-Expression of the Father, and that the Holy Spirit is the faithful Witness, searching the deep things of God, so that He may eternally bring Father to Son, and Son to Father, so that they may live their Tri-une life in Divine perfection everlastingly.

God is the Covenant God, indeed.

And this is our salvation: It hath pleased the living God to extend the roof of His Tabernacle over our heads. It hath pleased Him to take us up into the communion of His own Covenant-life, so that His own life might be reflected in us for ever and ever!

Of that boon I would write some more, even in all its phases.

But we will have to wait for later issues.

G. V.

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## OUR DOCTRINE

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### Our Covenant God

#### *God's Covenant with Man Unilateral*

Basically and fundamentally but two conceptions of the covenant of God with man are possible. It is either a means to an end or it is the end itself. Viewed as the former, it can be regarded as a promise, or an agreement, contract, or a way of salvation, or an alliance against Satan and all the powers of sin and darkness. Viewed as the end itself it is the highest to

which man can possibly attain. We are convinced that the latter conception is the Scriptural presentation. Thus far we have advanced considerable proof in support of this contention. We noted that the Word of God speaks of the covenant as an eternal covenant and that the Lord realizes it by writing His law into the hearts of His people. Moreover, it is clear from Holy Writ that Adam was created by God in covenant-relationship with Him and that therefore God's covenant with the first man could not possibly have been something incidental, something added after his creation. We also brought out that Adam, after violating the covenant, was restored into covenant-relationship with Jehovah and that the Lord did so by establishing enmity between the seed of the woman and that of the devil. Scripture, we saw, speaks of Enoch, Noah, and Abraham as the friends of God and Psalm 25:14 literally identifies the covenant with fellowship, intimate acquaintance with Jehovah. And finally the Word of God describes the eternal glory as God's tabernacle with man, and the Father's house with many mansions—and this is surely the idea of friendship and communion.

#### *God's Covenant with Man, Unilateral or Bilateral?*

Is the covenant of the Lord with man unilateral or bilateral? This is a very pertinent question. Must God's covenant with His people be regarded as unilateral ("monopleurisch")? Does it proceed solely from God? Is it established by the Lord alone? Or must it be viewed as bilateral, "two-sided", ("dupleurisch")? Does it proceed from God and man, and is it established jointly by God and man? Besides, must the covenant, also as far as its development, its operation and manifestation, is concerned, be regarded as unilateral or bilateral? Is it correct to say that God's covenant with man is unilateral in origin but bilateral in its operation and manifestation?

In this connection the question might also be asked: Should we speak of parties or parts in the covenant? We are probably all aware of the fact that our Baptism Form speaks of "parts" rather than "parties". But Professor Schilder, during his recent visit among us, made it clear that he preferred the term "parties" to the term "parts". The question, "Is God's covenant with man unilateral or bilateral"?, is therefore a pertinent question.

#### *God's Covenant with Man is Unilateral in its Establishment—The Reformed View.*

When we, in this connection, speak of the establishment of God's covenant, we refer to its origin, to the moment when it is established rather than to its continuous operation and manifestation. The continu-



ous operation of the covenant implies that it must be assumed and kept by man. To this continuous manifestation we do not refer at this time. To be sure, if the covenant is regarded as an agreement or an alliance, this would seem to indicate that two parties are necessary to establish such a covenant, inasmuch as at least two parties are required to make an agreement. Reformed thinking, however, has always emphasized the unilateral character of the establishment of God's covenant with His people.

First, our Reformed Confessions surely emphasize the unilateral character of the establishment of God's covenant in Christ Jesus. In answer to Question 74, "Are infants also to be baptized?", the Heidelberg Catechism answers that "they as well as the adult are included in the covenant and church of God". This answer is understandable only if the establishment of God's covenant be regarded as unilateral. Indeed, these children whereof the Catechism speaks in Lord's Day 27 did not enter the covenant of their own choice or agreement. The fact, therefore, that they as well as the adult are included in the covenant and the church of God emphasizes the unilateral character of this covenant. Also our Baptism Form stresses the unilateral character of the origin of God's covenant. We read in Part One: "Secondly, Holy Baptism witnesseth and sealeth unto us the washing away of our sins through Jesus Christ. Therefore we are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. For when we are baptized in the name of the Father, 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, 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. 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." This language of our Baptism Form cannot be understood in a bilateral sense of the word. Mind you, all these things are declared of children who are baptized. We read, do we not: "*For when we are baptized. . .*"

Reformed theologians of the past also have advocated this unilateral character of the Covenant. Prof. Bavinck writes in his "*Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*", Volume III, page 194 (we translate): "But also when

God and man conclude a covenant, the unilateral character naturally appears repeatedly upon the foreground; we are not dealing with two equal parties, but God is the Sovereign, Who enjoins His ordinances upon the creatures. . . . For, indeed, the covenant of God also imposed obligations upon those with whom it was concluded; obligations, namely, not as conditions for our entrance into the covenant. . . . but as the way upon which he who had been taken up in the covenant out of grace henceforth must walk." Other theologians, too, have expressed themselves likewise.

The late Prof. W. Heyns also emphasized the unilateral character of the covenant. However, according to him the essence of the covenant lay in the promise, the promise that God will be our God in Jesus Christ, the Lord. And this promise he interpreted as an offer, as a promise which the Lord simply extended to all. Hence, Heyns' unilateral conception of the covenant simply consisted herein that God, of His own sovereign will, extended this promise to everyone who received the sacrament of baptism. And, naturally, it depends upon us whether this covenant or promise will be realized in us. The Holy Spirit, then, *wills* to sanctify us. But we must *will* to be sanctified and accept this gracious promise of God.

#### *God's Covenant with Man Unilateral in its Establishment—Scriptural*

That God's covenant with man is unilateral is surely Scriptural. This is evident, first of all, from the very idea of the Covenant. We proceed now from the assumption that the covenant is essentially a relationship of friendship. Holy Writ surely teaches us throughout that we are by nature children of wrath and also of disobedience. As children of wrath we lie under condemnation, are estranged from the fellowship of God, and worthy of eternal death and desolation. As children of disobedience we are characterized wholly by disobedience, are devoid of all spiritual light and truth, are darkness in all our thinking and willing. As such we are not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be—Rom. 8:7. Hence, the relationship of friendship must surely be realized by God. We have no right to it. And we cannot merit the right to it. Besides, it is God alone Who can bring us into this relationship of friendship spiritually. We are enmity and darkness. We cannot love God. It is God alone Who can make us His friends and pour His love into our hearts and minds. The very idea of the covenant requires, therefore, that we maintain the principle that it is unilateral—God alone *must* and God *can* realize it.

This appears, secondly, from Scripture's account of the creation and existence of man in Paradise. Man was *created* in this covenant relationship. Scripture

does not speak of any agreement or contract between man and the living God. To this we have already called attention in previous articles.

Thirdly, that the establishment of the covenant must be regarded as unilateral also appears from God's dealings with man after the fall. The Lord sets *enmity* between His church and the seed of the devil. And enmity is, as we have already noted, the friendship of the Lord which renders the people of God His party over against the children of darkness. Notice also that God sets this enmity: "*I will set enmity between thee and the woman, thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise its heel.*" And this, we understand, applies not only to Eve but to all her seed, to all the people of God throughout the ages. Hence, Gen. 3:15 teaches us that our fighting the good fight of faith, our being the party of the living God, is not the result of an agreement or contract but exclusively the fruit of the irresistible grace of the living God.

Fourthly, this truth is clearly substantiated by various Scriptural passages. Notice, please, the personal pronoun "*I*" in the following quotations. "But with thee will *I* establish My covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives. . . . And *I*, behold, *I* establish My covenant with you, and with your seed after you; . . . And *I* will establish My covenant with you, neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, This is the token of the covenant which *I* make between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: *I* do set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between Me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when *I* bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: And *I* will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and *I* will look upon it, that *I* may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which *I* have established between Me and all flesh that is upon the earth."—Gen. 6:18; 9:9; 9:11-17. "And *I* will make thee exceeding fruitful, and *I* will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And *I* will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And *I* will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and *I* will be their God."—Gen. 17:6-8. "Behold, the days

come, saith the Lord, that *I* will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that *I* made with their fathers in the days that *I* took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, although *I* was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: But this shall be the covenant that *I* will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, *I* will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for *I* will forgive their iniquity, and *I* will remember their sin no more."—Jeremiah 31:31-34. "But now saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for *I* have redeemed thee, *I* have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine. . . . When thou passest through the waters, *I* will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. . . . For *I* am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: *I* gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. . . . Since thou wast precious in My sight, thou hast been honourable, and *I* have loved thee: therefore will *I* give men for thee, and people for thy life. . . . Fear not: for *I* am with thee: *I* will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; . . . *I* will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring My sons from far, and My daughters from the ends of the earth; . . . Even every one that is called by My name: for *I* have created him for My glory, *I* have formed him, yea, *I* have made him. . . . Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, and My servant whom *I* have chosen: that ye may know and believe Me, and understand that *I* am He: before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me. . . . *I*, even *I*, am the Lord; and beside Me there is no saviour. . . . *I* have declared, and have saved, and *I* have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, that *I* am God. . . . Yea, before the day was *I* am He; and there is none that can deliver out of My hand: *I* will work, and who shall let it? . . . *I* am the Lord, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King."—Isaiah 43:1-7, 10-13, 15. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."—Eph. 2:8-10. Notice also how God receives all the glory in the following beautiful passage, Psalm 89:1-18: "*I* will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever: with my mouth will *I* make known Thy faithfulness to all generations. For *I* have



said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: Thy faithfulness shalt Thou establish in the very heavens. I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn unto David My servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah. And the heavens shall praise Thy wonders, O Lord: Thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints. For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him. O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto Thee? or Thy faithfulness round about Thee? Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, Thou stillest them. Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain; Thou hast scattered thine enemies with Thy strong arm. The heavens are Thine, the earth also in Thine: as for the world and the fulness thereof, Thou hast founded them. The north and the south Thou hast created them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in Thy name. Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is Thy hand, and high is Thy right hand. Justice and judgment are the habitation of Thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before Thy face. Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance. In Thy Name shall they rejoice all the day: and in Thy righteousness shall they be exalted. For Thou art the glory of their strength: and in Thy favor our horn shall be exalted. For the Lord is our defence; and the Holy One of Israel is our King." And please note, finally how the unilateral aspect of salvation is emphasized in the first chapter of Paul's epistle to the Ephesians, whereof we quote but a few verses: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved. In Whom we have the redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace; Wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself, etc. etc.—verses 3-9. Indeed, this latter passage of the Word leaves little doubt as to the sovereign character of our salvation and the establishment of the Lord's covenant with His people.

Fifthly, and finally, that the establishment of God's covenant is unilateral is beautifully emphasized in Abraham's vision as recorded in Genesis 15. Accord-

ing to verse 7 the Lord had renewed His promise to Abraham that He would give him the land of Canaan for an inheritance. Upon Abraham's question, "Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?", the Lord had commanded him (verse 9) to take an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon. These animals Abraham had taken, had divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another. The birds, however, he had not divided. After the sun had gone down, we read, a deep sleep fell upon Abraham. During that sleep the Lord appeared unto him, and told him that his seed would be a stranger in a strange land, but that He would cause his seed to return out of that strange land with a great substance. To symbolize this renewal of His covenant with Abraham we read in verse 17: "And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces." The symbolism referred to in this passage in Genesis 15 was a ceremony usually carried out by two or more parties who concluded a covenant with one another. As such the symbolism was plain. The parties declared by means of this ceremony that they pledged faithfulness to one another and agreed that, if one or the other would prove to be unfaithful, the same would happen to him that had happened to those animals which had been slain. When such a covenant was concluded between men both parties would pass between the divided parts of the animals. Hence, the symbolism is striking as it appears in Genesis 15. Abraham is in a deep sleep. It is God alone Who passes through the midst of the animals. And in connection with this symbolism verse 18 declares: "In the same day the Lord *made a covenant* with Abraham, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates." It is therefore, not God and Abraham who conclude a covenant with one another. It is not the Lord and Abraham who enter into an agreement or a covenant with one another. It is God alone Who passes through the midst of the animals. Hence, the covenant of God with Abraham is of the Lord alone. God will cause the seed of Abraham to become a stranger in the strange land of Egypt. And God alone will cause the people of Israel to return out of the land of bondage. And God alone will give the land of Canaan unto that people for an inheritance. The promise but also the fulfillment of that promise is of Jehovah. The covenant is His. He takes us up into His covenant fellowship. The establishment of the Lord's covenant fellowship with His people is, therefore, strictly unilateral. To Him, to Him alone be all the glory.

(to be continued)

H. V.

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## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

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### David Is Afraid

As was explained, out of loyalty to David, Jonathan tells Saul the lie that David put into his friend's mouth. As we stated, he even added to it in order that Saul might be the more impressed by its validity as an excuse. Once more, these are Jonathan's words, "David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem and he said, Let me go, I pray thee; for our family has a sacrifice in the city; and my brother, he has commanded me to be there; and now, if I have found favor in thine eye's, let me go I pray thee, and see my brethren. Therefore he cometh not unto the king's table." As was said, David's purpose in putting this lie in his friend's mouth is to put Saul to a final test. He wants to determine for Himself whether the king is actually purposed to slay him, or whether Saul's past attempts on his life are to be attributed to the king's illness. But as was explained, the Lord over and over has made it plain to David that Saul does hate him and that he is indeed determined that he die. What is that madness of the king, by which he periodically is being visited, but hatred, envy and jealousy gone wild and running away with their victim? This is as plain as the day. It is plain also to David, certainly. And how many attempts has Saul already made on David's life! What can be more evident than that Saul really does want David dead! But David does not want it that way. And the reason is obvious. David at this juncture is unbelieving. And in his unbelief he imagines that with the king against him he actually walks on the brink of death. Does he not say to Jonathan, "There is but one step between me and death." This of course is not true. It cannot be true, as the Lord has sworn truth to David, so that, if Saul is to succeed in his attempt to slay David, he must first slay God. Thus, how little David really has to fear of Saul! But David can't see it that way at this time. He stands not in his faith. Accordingly, he flies back to Gibeah. He, himself, will test out the king. And of course he hopes against hope that the test will show that Saul is friendly, really means to do David no hurt; and that, therefore, the king's past attempts upon his life must be explained from his periodic attacks of madness; which attacks accordingly, would not in that case at all indicate how the king is inwardly disposed to the son of Jesse.

Considered by itself, the test to which David in co-operation with Jonathan puts Saul is clever; it is well calculated to bring into the clear light of day the hidden man in Saul. If the king, despite his periodic

attacks of madness, loves David, if he really means to do him no harm, which in view of all that has happened is impossible, the king will not in the least be provoked by his son-in-law's failure to make his appearance on the feast; and he will hear Jonathan out, and let the matter rest right there and then. But Saul hates David and wants him dead; he wanted him there on the feast in order to be able to slay the son of Jesse, though he knows of course that it is folly to expect his son-in-law. Such being Saul's plans, when he hears that David has run off to Bethlehem even with Jonathan's permission, his wrath knows no bounds. Hating David and suspecting Jonathan, he doesn't believe a thing of what the latter says; he brands the excuse a lie; which indeed it is. David is not in Bethlehem; he is in hiding somewhere in the near vicinity of Gibeah. Saul is certain about this, as appears from the way he replies to Jonathan. His anger is kindled against his son. These are the king's words to him: "Thou son of the perverse and rebellious, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion, and to the confusion of thine mother's nakedness? For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established in thine kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die."

"Thou son of the perverse and the rebellious. . . ." literally, "perverse one of rebellion." That Jonathan is in the sight of Saul. For he is on the side of David, whom Saul wishes to destroy as an aspirant to the throne, and therefore a rebel. And in the words, "Do not I know," Saul intimates that he is well aware of the friendship between his son and David, and regards this excuse as confirming his opinion. "Do not I know." A good paraphrase of these words of the king is this, "Think not that I am misled by this excuse. I want the son of Jesse dead; I intended killing him on the feast. Knowing my mind, thou didst permit him to absent himself; or, as thou sayest, to keep the feast with his kin in Bethlehem, though I doubt that he went hither." That this is the thrust of Saul's, "Do not I know," is proved by his commanding Jonathan to fetch David, that he may be slain.

But Saul knows still more; he knows, too, that Jonathan has chosen the son of Jesse to his own confusion. David, he means to say, aspires after the kingdom; he has his heart set on rule. He will be king by means fair or foul. For there is no fear of God before his eyes. Hence with that scheming, plotting upstart around Jonathan will never be established, nor will his kingdom, that is, his throne ever be secure, and the kingdom securely his. So, the thing to do is to rid the earth of the man, the sooner the better. Doesn't Jonathan understand? Let Jonathan then without delay fetch him to Saul; for, certainly, he must die. There can be no question about that.

But what has David done that gives Saul the right to pass on him a judgment so adverse? Saul does not know of a thing. All he knows is that David has been doing him only good. He killed the Philistine Goliath; and he has been fighting Philistines since then, almost without interruption as officer in Saul's army. So what is his fault? That precisely is what Jonathan has need of knowing. He puts the question to his father. These are his words to Saul, "Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done?" It can't be held against him, certainly, that the Lord appointed him to rule in Saul's stead. If Saul could point to but one false move of David! But he can't. Saul's inability to name the crime that is calling for David's death, should bring him to repentance. But instead it only feeds his wrath. In his unbridled rage, he grasps his javelin and casts it at his son to smite him. That is the king's reply to Jonathan's question, "Wherefore shall he be slain? What has he done?" Saul is a wicked man.

Saul has again revealed his disposition toward David, yet, certainly, no more fully than on previous occasions, as when he spake to Jonathan and to all his servants that they should kill David, 19:1. Shortly thereafter he sought to smite David to the wall with his javelin. David slipped away; and Saul sent messengers to his house to watch him and to slay him in the morning. David escaped; Saul pursued him to Naioth; and David would have died right there and then, had not the Lord rescued him out of the king's hand. What more could Saul do or say that would indicate that he is actually bent on David's destruction? Nothing at all. Hence, there was really no need of putting Saul to this test. David could just as well have saved himself and Jonathan the trouble. Had he done so, those lies would not have been told, and Jonathan would not have nearly paid with his life.

Jonathan's reactions to the king's assault and revelation of his disposition toward David must be noticed. Jonathan rises from the table in a fierce anger and eats no meat on this second day of the month. It is strange that he was not actually killed. Perhaps Saul had not actually hurled the spear, but only brandished it. The reason of Jonathan's great anger and of his not eating is the wrong done not to himself but to David, "because his father had done him—David—shame." Saul had called David a rebel, and on the ground of this charge—unproved not only but proved to be terribly false—wants him destroyed.

The following morning Jonathan goes out into the field at the time appointed with David. The lad is with him. He is instructed to run and retrieve the arrows that Jonathan will be shooting. The lad is off and Jonathan shoots the arrows further than the boy has run. According to the agreement with

David he cries to the boy, "Is not the arrow beyond thee?" It is a question that Jonathan uses in order to make it more certainly seem to the servant that he was practicing at a mark. And by three commands: "Make haste, stay not" uttered in rapid succession, he keeps the boy occupied with the business of finding the arrows, in order that he may not perchance see David, who is in hiding near by. The boy takes up the arrows, brings them to his master, and is none the wiser. Jonathan gives the lad his armory, and dismisses him with the command, "Go, carry them to the city."

As soon as the lad is gone, David leaves his hiding place. Meeting up with Jonathan, he bows low three times. They kiss each other and weep, the one with the other. David's grief is more excessive than that of his friend. Strong men weeping. And there is reason. A wicked king seeks the life of a man blameless and just. Still David does not keep his grief within bounds. Saul's treatment of him should not be the disturbing element in his life that he has allowed it to become. He morbidly broods over it to the exclusion from his mind of God's constant care over him. His grief springs largely from unbelief; and in so far it is sheer despair that leads him into ways of reckless deceit bearing the most fearful consequences. David is fundamentally a truly good man; he is one of the most lovable saints of all the scriptures. But like all God's people, he has his faults, the most serious of which is his readiness to take recourse to lying and deceit to bring relief to himself in difficult situations. Believers have only a beginning, and a small beginning at that, of true obedience. (How true this is)! And David is no exception. If his conversation during those trying days, be compared with that of his anti-type—the Lord Jesus Christ—during the years of His trial, how evident that David was only a shadow, a type, a pre-indication of the Christ and not the very Christ. The sacred writer, of course, does not gloss over David's sins; he brings them, one and all, into the clear light of day on the pages of his narrative. It only proves that God wrote the Bible and not men. Men are not honest. And therefore they can't write history. And they don't either. History will have to be written all over again. And it will be, too, by God Himself. And that will be history, good, reliable history! For God is absolutely honest. With Him there is no respect of persons. And therefore all truly honest men—honest by His mercy—love Him as they do—love Him in the love that He sheds abroad in their hearts.

David, to return to him, is overcome with grief. The text here reads, "And they kissed one another, and wept with one another, *until David exceeded.*" This last clause, the one in italics, must be rendered, "David did greatly,"—namely, wept violently aloud.

Of the two, he perhaps was capable of the stronger, the more violent, more vehement emotion. His great agitation of soul can, of course, be explained. It is indeed a terrible thing for a blameless and just man, such as David was, to be chased from one end of the land to another, as David now will be, by a godless and envious king, determined to destroy that man, if and when he once gets him in hand. And all that David may do, to prevent himself from being destroyed, is to continue placing himself beyond Saul's reach. He may not bring relief to himself in his trying situation by laying his hand on Saul. He must wait upon the Lord to remove Saul; in the meantime he must endure being persecuted. And he must believe that the crucible of affliction in which he finds himself, has been prepared for him by the Lord in His great love of His servant. And how good it was for David to be afflicted. How could the Lord through him have given to the church those psalms that form a part of our Bible had David not had that experience?

Jonathan must take leave of his weeping friend to avoid further exposing him to the danger of being seen. It is not unlikely that their parting ends another conversation between them of which the following words of Jonathan are only the conclusion, "Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed forever." "Go in peace. . . ." As coming from Jonathan the expression is meaningful. It means: Let God's peace fill thy heart, namely the peace that rises from the assurance within thee, put there by Him, that He is for thee in His love and will keep thee in thy way, so that thou wilt not perish by the hand of thy adversaries but wilt overcome. Jonathan, too, is deeply moved. This is indicated by the way the text of his last words reads in the original, "And of that which the both of us swore, we, in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and between thee, and between my seed and between thy seed forever. . . ." Jonathan does not complete his sentence, he being too deeply moved. But he rises and departs, and goes into the city. And David abides solitary. And upon him rests the ban of the king. Where will he go? To whom will he turn? He takes his journey and comes to Nob to Ahimelech the priest.

G. M. O.

### *SPECIAL NOTICE!*

Due to circumstances, Classis West will NOT meet in Edgerton, but in Hull, Iowa; on the 3rd of March, 1948. Delegates desiring lodging are urged to write the Rev. A. Cammenga, Hull, Iowa.

## THROUGH THE AGES

### Renaissance Popes

LEO X. (1513-1521)

Julius II, the warrior pope, was succeeded on the pontifical throne by Leo X. Born at Florence, Dec. 11, 1475, he was a scion of the famous house of de' Medici, his father being Lorenzo de' Medici, and Leo, whose original name was Giovanni, his second son. He was one of the few popes, the splendour of the family to which he belonged corresponded somewhat with that of the pontifical dignity.

The house of the Medici was an Italian noble family. It had acquired renown in Italian history through the large number of statesmen to which it gave birth and its generous patronage of essentially pagan letters and art. Originally an obscure family, it rose to power by such means as the world is wont to employ,—means that were persistently pursued from generation to generation. The origin of the family is unknown, as is the signification of the Medician arms—six red balls on a field of gold. The chronicles of Florence make mention of the name as early as the 12th century in connection with various public offices. Leo's father was the second of the great men bestowed upon Italy by the house of the Medici. He was a man of extraordinary literary talent, having studied letters from his earliest years under the guidance of the leading literari of the day. But he was more than this; he was also a ruler. His grandfather, Cosimo, had established his power in Florence by violence. He was followed on his captured seat of authority by his son Piero. At the latter's death five years later, Lorenzo, at the age of eighteen, seized the reins of the state with a firm grasp. He ruled as a tyrant; and to divert the minds of the people from the oppressions of his government, he incited them in his verses to festivities and lulled them to slumber by sensual enjoyments. His verses are often of a most revolting indecency, and these productions were sung by their author in the streets, in the midst of the people.

Such, then, was the abstraction of Leo; such was Lorenzo his father, surnamed Lorenzo the Magnificent. Every opportunity which family distinction, wealth, and learned tutors could give, Leo enjoyed. Already at the age of seven he was admitted to the clerical state. In this same year he received from the king of France the abbey of Fonte Dolce. It did not take long before he found himself in the possession of 27 appointments. At the age of fourteen he was made cardinal-deacon by the pope. On the occasion of his investment into the office, he received of his father a

letter full of fatherly counsel. Lorenzo reminded his son that Rome was a sink of corruption, and admonished him to lead a virtuous life. And verily, voluptuary though he was, Leo seems not to have exposed himself to the charge of unchasteness. But it is not likely that this was a virtue; it may have been forced upon him by nature.

At the time of his elevation to the papal chair, Leo was 37 years old. The festivities of his coronation cost 150,000 ducats. A procession of 250 abbots, bishops, and archbishops participated. Before his coronation he was required to promise to issue no brief for collecting money for the repair of St. Peter. Had he kept this pledge, the reformation might have been postponed for some time.

Leo, too, was a pontiff only in name. The spiritual mission of his office was not in all his thoughts. He was not concerned about the interests of true religion. In a letter he wrote to his brother shortly after his election occurs this statement, "Let us enjoy the papacy, for God has given it to us." These words from his pen well express his attitude. His love of pleasure was insatiable. He spent far too much time in hunting and fishing, though the chase was forbidden to the clergy by canonical law. He had a passion for the theatre, attending plays in the palaces of the cardinals and rich bankers. To modern performance of plays that he could enjoy young people in Florence a few decades ago were not admitted. These plays are that lascivious. Festivities of all sorts had the strongest attraction for Leo. He ordered his life as though the resources of the papal treasury were inexhaustible. Two years after he assumed the pontificate his annual income had risen to 600,000 ducats. And still he ran short, so that all sorts of means had to be adopted to increase the papal revenues. His court was the most luxurious in Europe. His love of art was the love of beauty divorced from spiritual grace; it was thus thoroughly pagan.

Yet withal he was notoriously pious. Three times a week he fasted. He ate no meat on Wednesday and Friday. He daily read his canonical prayers. And before every mass it was his custom to seek absolution from his confessor. Yet he turned the Vatican into a house of revelling and frivolity.

As was explained, the dream of Julius II, the warrior pope, had been an independent Italian kingdom and accordingly his one aim had been to expel all foreign domination from Italy. His success in this direction has been noticed. Leo's policy was to preserve the conquests which he had inherited from Julius II. But if Julius had resorted to military exploits to gain his end, Leo's weapons were diplomacy, duplicity and opportunism. To the practice of duplicity he stooped with his allies as well as with his enemies. Shortly after he ascended the pontifical throne the French made a deter-

mined effort to re-possess northern Italy whence they had been driven by Julius II. Leo made a treaty with Henry VIII of England, and the French were beaten by Henry and expelled from Italy by an army of Swiss.

The following will serve as an example of Leo's duplicity. He reached an agreement with the emperor of Germany, Maximilian, and Ferdinand king of Spain, according to which his brother, Julian de' Medici, should receive certain provinces in Italy. And he supported, did the pope, the armies of these allies with money. At the same time, faithless to the king of Spain, he was making arrangements with Venice to drive the Spaniards out of Italy.

Frances I, king of France, and the successor of Louis XII, was a young prince who lived only for military glory. His entire reign was dominated by the ambition of recovering in Italy the states from which the French had been driven out by Henry VIII of England and by the Swiss. With an army of 35,000 men, he marched into Italy and inflicted a disastrous defeat upon the Swiss mercenaries. Leo was now at the mercy of the king of France, and he was much perturbed. To one of his Venetian ambassadors he exclaimed, "We shall have to put ourselves into the hands of the king and cry for mercy." The ambassador replied, "The victory will not inure to your hurt or damage of the apostolic see. The French king is a son of the church." The pope saw the point. He immediately terminated his alliances with the German emperor and the Spaniards and went forth to welcome the victorious king of France. At Bologna they met. Frances uncovered his head, bowed three times to the ground, and kissed the pontiff's foot; but his demands were as severe as his posture was humble. An agreement was struck, according to which Leo yielded up the two Italian states Parma and Piacenza—but recently acquired by Julius, and conquered anew for the pope by Henry VIII and the Swiss.

In 1519 the German emperor, Maximilian died. In the election of a successor, Leo's diplomacy was again in evidence. The two aspirants to the imperial throne were Charles, king of Spain, and Francis. Though Leo wanted Francis and was secretly supporting him, he also entered into a secret agreement with Charles, so that both candidates believed that they had the pope on their side. Thus Leo had secured his position, no matter who might win in the election. When it became evident that Francis would lose, Leo openly sided with Charles, even rising to his support by a sum of 100,000 ducats. At the Reichstag of Worms, the Diet before which Luther appeared, Leo entered with Charles into an alliance against Francis. The newly chosen emperor agreed to drive the French out of Milan, Parma and Piacenza. In this he also was successful. But before the tidings of his achievement reached the pope, the latter died, Dec. 1, 1521.



The importance of the struggle that was begun by Luther's nailing of his theses to the door of the church at Wittenburg Leo did not understand. To him the reports that reached Rome conveyed only the impression of a dispute between the two monastic orders of which Luther and Tetzel were respectively the representatives. He declared Luther a man of genius and refused to interfere. But when Luther became very bold, and anyone could see that the new movement menaced the Roman See, Leo fulminated his bull of excommunication against Luther in 1520.

G. M. O.

## The Lord's Grace Sovereign

Turning to the epistle to the Romans, the ninth chapter, and thereof the 18th, 19th, and the first part of the 20th verse, we read, "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt then say to me, why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay, but o man, who art thou that repliest against God?"

Let us first concentrate on the statement, "And whom he will he hardeneth." Just what does it mean that God hardeneth whom He will harden? The statement has reference first of all to Pharaoh. The issue is precisely this: Is God's will, according to which he hardens Pharaoh and the Pharaohs of all time sovereignly determinative of their unbelief and thus not determined by it, so that in hardening these men, God does exactly what he chooses to do and not what wicked men by their unbelief compel him to do? If so, then God hardens the men, whom he will harden. On the other hand, if the Lord's will, according to which he hardens Pharaoh and the Pharaoh's of all time, is determined by their unbelief—an unbelief that God foresaw but could not determinately foreknow, so that God has no other choice but to harden them,—then in this case God is not hardening men whom he will harden, but men whom he must harden because they leave him no other choice. And if this were true, then Pharaoh's will and not God's will is sovereignly free, so that Pharaoh, should he so choose, could also will to obey God and thereby compel God to spare him.

But Paul says too, "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy." This statement has reference in the first instance to Jacob, the brother of the profane Esau. The issue here is this: Is God's will according to which he hath mercy on Jacob and the Jacobs—God's elect—sovereignly determinative of the faith of the Jacobs, and does this faith accordingly originates in God's will, His grace; so that in saving the Jacobs God does exactly what he chooses to do and not what the Jacobs by their willingness to be saved

determine what he shall do? If so, then God hath mercy on whom he will have mercy. But if, on the other hand, the Lord's will according to which he saved the Jacobs, is determined by the Jacob's willingness to believe,—a willingness that God foresaw but could not determinately foreknow, thus a willingness that originated not in God's will and grace but in the hearts of the Jacobs,—then, in this case, God does not save such men whom He will, but men whom he must save because they leave God no other choice. And if this were true, then not the will of God but the will of the Jacobs is sovereign and morally free, so that they could also choose not to believe in Christ, could thus resist God's grace and thereby make it impossible for God to save them.

Just what is truth here? It must be plain to all that everything depends on what is truth here. If God does not have mercy on the men on whom He will have mercy, if He does not harden whom He will harden, if the men whom God saves, He saves because they leave Him no choice but to save them, and if the men that He hardens, He does harden because He cannot do anything else with them, what then? Then the question is, whom God really would be saving and whom would He really be hardening, if He could only get His very own way with men? God doesn't tell us, and therefore nobody knows; and the Jacobs may question whether God really wants them in heaven; and it may be that those men whom God sentences unto eternal damnation, God would have chosen unto life, if only he could save them. The thought that God does not get his very own way with men, is too horrible to contemplate. The issues here are tremendous. Is God the Lord of man's heart or is man the lord of God's heart? Does God turn man's heart to do all His good pleasure or does man turn God's heart to do all man's good pleasure. Is God God or is man God? Is salvation out of works or out of grace. Can man resist God, His determinate will, His grace; or is God, His will, His grace, irresistible? Is God's will in the throne, or the will of man? Do God's believing people have a God who can save them to the uttermost in Christ Jesus for His name's sake; or is it actually possible that at any time they can fall from grace and sink back into all their death and sin and miseries, from which they were saved, even in sight of the gates of heaven, so that no believer can ever be certain whether or no he will enter in through those gates? If God does not save whom he will, thus if the only, and supreme and only deciding factor in man's salvation is the will of man and not the will of God, then, horrible to say, the latter is true; and moreover, then the saved ones in heaven, those who decided to persevere to the end, may sing their anthems of praise to themselves, and all that is due to God is a little credit for the assistance that he afforded them on their way to heaven.



It is really terrible if the Pharaohs and the Esaus are getting their way with God but not God with them; if the reins of God's moral government are in the hands of the wicked and not in the hands of God; for then it is not true that God can and does so restrain the devil and all our enemies, that without His will they cannot hurt us; then this is true, that the Pharaohs can hurt us as they choose with God standing idly by, unable to do anything about it. Then, woe unto God's people in Egypt.

So well may we ask, What is truth here? Well, this is truth, for God said it by the mouth of Paul, "Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will; and whom He will He hardeneth." This is truth and fact.

God hardeneth whom He will. The Esau and the Pharaoh are in God's hands; not God in theirs. And therefore the people of God are safe as the tenants of the hard and cruel Pharaoh. They are safe in Egypt, in the world, that opposes God and persecutes His people. And the Lord can keep them and save them out of Pharaoh's hand. For He hardeneth whom He will harden. He is the Lord God almighty, who doeth all His good-pleasure.

And so it is just as true that the Lord hath mercy on whom He will have mercy. He hath mercy on the Jacobs in heavy bondage in Egypt according to His will, not according to the good will and determination of the Jacobs to be saved. This cannot be. These Jacobs in Egypt, apart from God's grace in Christ, will not to be saved. They love Egypt. They love by nature their bondage. They lust after Egypt's flesh pots. Apart from Christ's grace, these Jacobs in Egypt are just as dead in sin as are the Esaus and the Pharaohs, just as profane, just as rebellious, perverse and defiant, hateful of God, and unable and unwilling to seek after God and to know God in love, unable and unwilling to utter the smallest and the faintest cry for Christ's God and His salvation. These Jacobs are by nature dead in sin. How then could there be in these Jacobs a will to be saved, the smallest and faintest desire to be saved, according to which God saves them. These Jacobs apart from God's grace in Christ are darkness, children of disobedience, and Satan is their spiritual father. But God, the God and Father of Christ, who hath mercy on whom He will have mercy, saves them, when He enters their hearts and lives by His redeeming grace, that these Jacobs cannot resist; if these Jacobs could resist God's grace, they would right now still be in Egypt, and in their bondage and not in Canaan, God's heaven and house. But these Jacobs are in heaven, set there by Christ, according to the good pleasure of Christ's God and thus also to the praise of His irresistible grace. And these Jacobs may be certain that the Lord wants them there, too, really wants them there; for He hath

mercy on whom He will have mercy. And He hath mercy only upon the Jacobs, not also upon the Pharaohs. God's mercy, His grace is not common. God's dealing with the Pharaohs of Egypt and the Jacobs in Egypt is flatly against this view, isn't it? Did God also save Pharaoh and his Pharaohs? Nay for this very purpose did He make Pharaoh to stand that He might make him to see His power and through the revelation of this power destroy him. And that was the only purpose that the Lord had with Pharaoh. Nowhere do we read in the Exodus narrative that the Lord loved Pharaoh too, and that in that love he was first purposed to save him.

Now you would think that everybody would believe and love this doctrine of Paul to the effect that God hath mercy on whom He will have mercy and that whom He will He hardeneth. But this is not the case. This doctrine of Paul has many opponents. In fact, absolutely nobody loves this doctrine of Paul, by nature. You do not; I do not. We all hate it to the man. So if you love this doctrine, be very humble. Do not exalt yourself above the Pharaohs, as if you were better than they, and as if God loves you because of some merit original with you. Do not boast therefore except in the cross of Christ. Because by nature, nobody loves this doctrine. We raise objections against it. And these objections are the same old objections—the objections that we have been raising against this doctrine of Paul from time memorial. Well the apostle deals with these objections of ours and the fact that he does so constitutes the absolute proof, that the doctrine that was just presented is actually of Paul and thus of God. To this opponent—and bear in mind, this opponent is you and I as we are by nature—Paul's God is insufferable. The idea that God should be that sovereign is to this opponent too provoking for words. He insists that there is, must be, unrighteousness with a God so absolutely sovereign. The apostle proposes his objection in the form of a question. What shall we then say? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid! exclaims the apostle. Then the apostle goes on to prove from the Old Testament scriptures that the Lord actually claims and does exercise this right and that therefore it is, must be, righteous as with God there can be no unrighteousness.

But this opponent will not be silenced. Approaching the matter from a different angle, he now raises the objection that Paul's doctrine of God is destructive, conceptionally, of human responsibility and that therefore there is still unrighteousness with Paul's God. Again the apostle proposes the objection in the form of a question, that this time he presents as put to him by the opponent, "Thou wilt then say unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will?" "Who hath resisted his will, his determinate will, according to which He hath mercy on whom He will and

hardeneth whom He will? Who hath resisted that will of God? Nobody hath and can, the opponent means to say. Is he correct? Absolutely so. No elect of God has ever resisted, can resist, God's grace, God's will to save him. And no Esau, no Pharaoh, has ever resisted God's will according to which He hardens him. It is according to God's will that the Pharaohs harden themselves, must harden, and do harden themselves. This precisely is Paul's doctrine. Well then, says this opponent to Paul, "Why doth God yet find fault? with the Pharaohs, he means. For who can resist His will? Let us notice that this opponent with whose objections Paul deals, is speaking against God. He criticizes, slanders, contradicts God to His face. That is what he does. This is evident from the first part of Paul's reply to this critic of God. Says the apostle to him, "Who art thou o man, that repliest against God." Just what is this critic of God saying against God anyway. He has the audacity to say to God in substance this, "O God, if it be true that thou hardenest the Pharaoh's according to thy will, if therefore they are disobedient and rebellious not according to their sovereign will so to be, but according to thy will, which alone is sovereign, so that the Pharaohs and the Esaus are wicked and perverse and rebellious because they must be, then the blame for what these Pharaohs are is wholly thine, O God, and they are blameless, wholly without fault, not accountable for their rebellion, so that it is thyself whom thou shouldest smite and destroy and not thine innocent victims. How atrocious thy doing, O God. How unrighteous thou art." So this opponent of Paul's doctrine, so you and I, as we are by nature, speak against God, just because we can't endure that He is so absolutely sovereign, can't stand it that He insists that He is God and that not we are God. This opponent contradicts God, God's word, testimony, concerning His blessed self. God says in His word, "I am righteous and holy God. I am light and in me there is no darkness at all. Also in hardening the Pharaohs according to my good pleasure and not according to theirs, thou beholdest my perfect work." But this opponent, contradicting God, says to Him, "Nay, God, what we behold in thy hardening whom thou wilt, is a shamefully unrighteous work of thine." God says in His word to this opponent, "Though the Pharaohs, as thou sayest, cannot resist my determined will, according to which I harden them, they do disobey my commands to let my people go and not to persecute them—commands through which I harden their hearts—disobey my commands do the Pharaohs with all their heart and mind and will and strength; and therefore I may and do hold them responsible, and accountable, find fault with them, and punish them for their disobedience. For the blame is all theirs." But this opponent, contradicting God, says to him, "True, God, Pharaoh disobeys thy commands to let the people

go with all his heart and as the rational willing subject of his rebellion and disobedience. But thou hardenest him according to thy determinate will that no man can resist, so that the blame is indeed thine." God says in His word to His opponent, "Though I harden whom I will, I am not the author and the fountain of Pharaoh's sin, of his disobedience and corruption. For I am holy God. My eyes are too pure to behold sin." Put this opponent, contradicting God, says to him, "As hardening Pharaoh's heart according to thy will, thou art indeed the author of sin."

So does this opponent of Paul's doctrine contradict God, the true God, the Lord of heaven and earth and the God of our salvation. Yet it must not be supposed that this opponent admits that he speaks against the true God. He insists that the God whom he speaks against is Paul's God, a God of Paul's own imagination. For, in uttering his contradictions, he is not facing heaven; but he is facing Paul. It is to Paul that he directs his discourse. This is evident from what Paul says, "Thou wilt then say unto me, Paul, why doth he find fault". It is Paul's God that he speaks against. He speaks to Paul about Paul's God. Though he actually contradicts the true God—Paul's God is the true God—it is nevertheless certain that he says that he would not contradict the true God for anything. He poses as the guardian of the righteousness of the true God. That is why he is so incensed at hearing Paul preach that God hardeneth whom He will. To hear this opponent of Paul's doctrine cavil with Paul about Paul's God, one would almost be led to believe that he is more concerned about the righteousness of God than God is Himself, if such a thing were possible. Yet he denies that God hardeneth whom He will and thus also denies that God hath mercy on whom He will have mercy. For it stands to reason that these two truths stand and fall together. The opponent of Paul denies the sovereign character of God's grace. He denies that God is God and insists that Pharaoh is God. Thus he changes the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto the corruptible creature. Paul rebukes this opponent with these words, "Who art thou o man, that repliest against God." The shame of it! the horror of it!

But one will say, this opponent of Paul seems to have a case nevertheless. God's hardening whom He will and at once holding the hardened ones responsible, finding fault with them, and punishing them as He did Pharaoh, when He destroyed him by the waters of the Red Sea,—it just isn't right. Who says it isn't right. Does God say that it isn't right? No, man says that it isn't right. Paul's opponent again has the floor. But let us consider that what man says about God does not count, has no value, must needs be a lie. What God says about himself to man, that alone is true, can be true. And He says that it is right. And that settles

the matter. Should we not want to understand what He does it always right because He does it? Should we want to measure God with our own yardstick of righteousness as willingly ignorant of the fact that God is His own standard of righteousness and the only standard of righteousness that man may apply to God? True, we deal here with a mystery. And the mystery is this: God's sovereignly hardening Pharaoh so, that all the blame is Pharaoh's and God is and remains blameless. But should we imagine that we can comprehend God as not understanding that He is the eternal mystery, the incomprehensible God, who dwelleth in a light unto which no man can approach? Let us not contradict God, but let us stand in awe of Him, worship and adore Him as the God of our salvation in Christ Jesus. Doing so we are saved by His irresistible grace and we taste that the Lord is good.

G. M. O.

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## SION'S ZANGEN

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### Eeuwige Goedertierenheid

(Psalm 103; Tweede Deel)

De hoofdgedachte van dezen psalm trachtten we uit te drukken in den titel: eeuwige goedertierenheid. We vonden die gedachte letterlijk in de verzen 17 en 18: "Maar de goedertierenheid des HEEREN is van eeuwigheid en tot eeuwigheid over degenen die Hem vreezen, en Zijne gerechtigheid aan kindskinderen; aan degenen die Zijn verbond houden, en die aan Zijne bevelen denken om die te doen."

Het begin van den psalm hebben we trachten te verklaren in het vorige opstel, en zagen dat de psalmist zijn ziel toesprak om God te loven, met een opsomming van de stof des lofs. 't Was overweldigend te zien hoe God Zijn volk zegent. Reden waarom de psalmist zichzelf en ons toeroept "geene van Zijn weldaden" te vergeten.

Nu gaan we verder. We zullen nog meer hooren van de goede daden Gods ten overstaan van de voorwerpen Zijner eeuwige goedertierenheid.

"De HEERE doet gerechtigheid en gerichtten allen dengenen die onderdrukt worden."

Gerechtigheid en gerichtten: die behooren bij elkaar. De eerste deugd is recht te zijn; de tweede, recht te doen in bepaalde zaken. De eerste is de vereischte voor een rechter; de tweede is het rechte spreken en handelen van den rechter.

Nu is God de Rechtvaardige, en daarom is Hij ook recht in Zijn richten. De geheele historie der menscheit is een kommentaar op deze woorden. En toch is

dit slechts zoo aanvankelijk. Alles roept om nog meer recht en gerichtten.

Doch aanvankelijk heeft God bewezen recht te zijn, en recht te richten.

Het volgende vers zal daar van spreken: "Hij heeft Mozes Zijne wegen bekend gemaakt, den kinderen Israel Zijne daden."

Ik denk hier direct aan twee getuigenissen uit het verre verleden. Eerst, die schoone historie van het staan van Mozes bij God in de spleet der rots; en, tweedens, dat fundamenteele vers in Deuteronomium 32, vers 4. En wat de gerichtten Gods aangaat, denken we direct aan de oordeelen Gods die uitgegoten werden over Egypte.

Ziet ge, God is rechtvaardig.

Dat wil zeggen, dat Hij in al Zijn denken, willen en leven steeds conform het hoogste goed is, en dat hoogste goed is Zijn Eigen Wezen. Alles wat God doet is goed. Dat is Zijn rechtvaardigheid.

En als Hij tegenover den mensch staat, dan uit zich die rechtvaardigheid Gods in "gerichtten". Leest het eerder genoemde vers van Deut. 32; nl. vers. 4: "Hij is de Rotssteen, wiens werk volkomen is, want alle Zijne wegen zijn gerichtten; God is waarheid en geen onrecht, rechtvaardig en recht is Hij."

Een vers om van te zingen. Daarin ligt al het heil van Gods volk opgesloten.

Want dat volk wordt in den tekst genoemd "die onderdrukt worden".

O, er is allerlei soort van onderdrukking onder menschenkinderen, en zeker ook wel onder de duivelen. En al die onderdrukking die verworpenen aangedaan wordt door verworpenen, zal God ook bezoeken met Zijn "gerichtten". Maar daar gaat het hier niet over. Het gaat hier in dit gezang over de zaligheid van Gods volk, over de groote goedertierenheid over degenen die Hem vreezen.

Dat is ook wel duidelijk overal in de Heilige Schrift.

Later, veel later, hooren we een Ouderling in den hemel zeggen: "Dezen zijn het die uit de groote verdrukking komen!"

En in den 44sten psalm hebben we geluisterd naar de klacht van een volk, dat stoute taal sprak in groote verdrukking. Ze durfden tegen God zeggen: "Dit alles is ons overkomen, nochtans hebben wij U niet vergeten, noch valschelijk gehandeld tegen Uw verbond!"

Er is een volk, dat door alle eeuwen heen grootelijks verdrukt wordt. En dat is het volk van God, de uitverkorenen ten eeuwigen leven. Zij zijn de dragers van het zaad, dat men zaaien zal van psalm 126. Er is een bijzondere reden waarom dat volk grootelijks verdrukt wordt. En die reden is, dat zij dragers zijn van het zaad der wedergeboorte. Johannes zou daar later van zeggen, dat die uit God geboren is, de zonde niet doet, want, zoo zegt die Schriftuur: "Zijn zaad blijft in hem, en hij kan niet zondigen; want hij is uit

God geboren."

Daar hebt ge de diepste reden voor hun verdrukking.

Dat volk, uit God geboren, en Zijn zaad in zich omdragend, wordt van alle zijden verdrukt.

Eerst, door Satan, die hen haat om Gods wil. Waar Satan ook maar het zaad Gods ziet, daar verdrukt hij dezulken. Want hij haat God.

Tweedens, de wereld die door Satan geïnspireerd wordt. De wereld haat Gods volk, ook naar Jezus' profetie.

Derdens, en dat is het smartelijkste van hun verdrukking: ze worden verdrukt door zichzelf. Wij, als kinderen Gods, lijden het meeste van ons booze vleesch, dat ons gevangen neemt, alzoo, dat wij meestal niet doen hetgeen we liefhebben. Rom. 7.

Daar gaat het over in den tekst.

Nu is God rechtvaardig en Hij doet gerichtten allen dengenen die onderdrukt worden.

Satan wordt nu, en uiteindelijk, vervloekt. Er komt een tijd (?) wanneer hij Gods volk nooit meer zal onderdrukken.

De wereld is veroordeeld toen ze Christus onderdrukt hebben, en aan het kruis genageld hebben. Straks zal het blijken in de openbaring van Gods gerichtten.

En ons vleesch, dat ons altijd onderdrukt en een schrijend lijden bezorgt, wordt bij den voortduur gedood en zal uiteindelijk geheel verdwijnen, en dan zal vervuld worden den juichkreet dien we hier zoo vaak uitstooten: 'k Zal eeuwig zingen van Gods goedertierenheid!

"Barmhartig en genadig is de HEERE, lankmoedig en groot van goedertierenheid."

De barmhartigheid is een van de schoonste deugden van het Goddelijk Wezen. Het is de liefde Gods zoo als zij zich uitstrekt in eeuwig erbarmen naar het object van die liefde zooals het voor tijd en wijle zich in ellende bevindt, met het zeker voornemen om dat object uit zijn ellende uiteindelijk te verlossen.

Heerlijke gedachte, als ik "omringt door tegenwoord, bezwijken moet!" Heerlijke, troostrijke gedachte in diepen nacht, als duivelen bespringen, de goddeloozen razen, en we in groote verzoeking onder komen te liggen. God denkt aan mij in Zijn barmhartigheid. Hij is bewogen over mij in oneindig erbarmen. Zijn rommelende ingewanden van ontferming zijn over mij ten goede: Zijn rechterhand zal redding geven.

En Hij is genadig!

De genade Gods is die deugd, waardoor Hij de Lieflijke is in Zichzelf, vol van aantrekkelijkheid en deugd, en waarin Hij Zich nederbuigt naar het object van Zijn oneindige liefde, om hen ook lieflijk en schoon en aantrekkelijk te maken.

Beschouwt ge nu dat object van Zijn liefde, zooals het in de historie zondig en schuldig werd, dan is de genade Gods de onverdiende en verbeurde gunst Gods

ten onzent, waarin Hij onze zonden vergeeft, ons vernieuwt naar het evenbeeld van Zijn Zoon en ons verhoogt in hemelsche hoogte daarboven bij God.

En de HEERE is ook lankmoedig, óók een deugd Gods.

Zij is die deugd Gods waardoor Hij Zich bedwingt om het goddelooze rot nog niet te verdoemen; het is de almachtige kracht Gods waardoor Hij het kan "staan", dat Zijn volk getreiterd en geplaagd, vermoord en verdrukt wordt, terwijl het schijnt alsof zij succes hebben. Het is de deugd van God waardoor Hij kan wachten met Zijn uiteindelijk oordeel, wanneer Hij zal brullen uit Sion en Zijne en onze vijanden zal verpletteren. In het Hebreeuwsch is het woord voor lankmoedigheid een tweevoudsvorm van ons woord "neus", ziende op de twee neusgaten waardoor God "ademt" in grooten toorn. En lankmoedigheid in dien figuurlijken zin, teekent ons God als staande met Zijn hand op Zijn neusgaten gedrukt, zoodat Hij nu nog Zijn groote woede "uitsnuift" tegen de goddeloozen en de duivelen. De oordeelsdag is dit, dat Hij dan die hand weg zal halen en dan zullen we het zien, dat Hij hen allen zal wegvagen in grooten toorn.

En Hij is groot van goedertierenheid.

De goedertierenheid Gods is die deugd, waardoor alles in Zijn oneindig Wezen gedrongen wordt, verlangt en zucht om ons goed te doen, goed te zijn, en ons te overladen met Zijne gunstbewijzen. Hij "tiert" van goedheid over de voorwerpen van Zijn liefde. Een mooie kommentaar op die deugd is wel psalm 68:10 (onberijmd), hetwelk zoo vaak gezongen wordt door de Kerk van Christus. Jezus sprak ervan, wanneer Hij zeide: Maar zoekt eerst het koninkrijk Gods en zijne gerechtigheid, en alle deze dingen zullen U toegeworpen worden. Ook als Paulus ons onderwijst en zegt, dat als Jezus ons deel is, zal Hij ons dan ook niet met Hem alle dingen schenken. Nog sterker, als Hij getuigt dat alles het onze is, en wij van Christus en Christus Gods is. En het meest sprekende voorbeeld is wel het getuigenis, dat de groote en vreeselijke God uiteindelijk Zichzelf aan ons zal schenken, als vervuld wordt het eens gesproken woord: God zal zijn alles en in allen.

En die deugd is eeuwig.

God heeft altijd aan U gedacht. Met eerbied zij het gezegd: Zoo oud als God is, zoo oud zijn Zijne gedachten en Zijne plannen om U te verrijken met het hoogste en heerlijkste goed. De profeten hebben het van verre gezien en hebben er om gejuichd. Hoe groot is het goed! zegt de psalmist ergens. Geen oog heeft het gezien, geen oor heeft het gehoord, en het is nimmer opgeklommen in het menschenhart wat God doen zal met en aan hen die Hem vreezen. Men heeft al voor eeuwen gestreden over de vraag: wat moeten we belijden van de twee naturen van Jezus. Dat komt vanwege het innige verband tusschen God en mensch,

den mensch Christus Jezus. God predikt daarmede hoe groot Zijn goedertierenheid is over Zijn volk. Ik zei zooveen, dat goedertierenheid die deugd is waardoor alles zich dringt in het Wezen om ons goed te doen en te zijn. Welnu, ge vindt die deugd ook in betrekkelijken zin bij het volk van God. En hebt ge het nooit bemerkt, dat als men iemand werkelijk liefheeft, dat men zichzelf zoo gaarne wil schenken aan het object? Dat heeft God gedaan, en wel zoo intiem en inniglijk, dat men moeite heeft met die naturen, die naturen van Jezus Christus. Jezus bad eens: "Ik in hen, en Gij in Mij; opdat zij volmaakt zijn in één!" Ziedaar het einde, het doel-einde van de eeuwige goedertierenheid!

Daarom: "Hij zal niet altoos twisten, nog eeuwiglijk den toorn behouden. Hij doet ons niet naar onze zonden, en vergeldt ons niet naar onze ongerechtigheden."

Wat lieflijke taal van goedertierenheid en genade!

Luistert naar de kommentaar van Jesaja: "Want Ik zal niet eeuwiglijk twisten, en Ik zal niet geduriglijk verbolgen zijn; want de geest zoude van voor Mijn aangezicht overstelpt worden, en de zielen die Ik gemaakt heb. Ik was verbolgen over de ongerechtigheid hunner gierigheid, en sloeg ze; Ik verborg Mij en was verbolgen; evenwel gingen zij afkeerig henen in den weg huns harten. Ik zie hunne wegen, en Ik zal ze genezen; en Ik zal ze geleiden, en hun vertroosting en wedergeven, namelijk aan hunne treurigen." En ook dit: "Voor een kleinen oogenblik heb ik u verlaten, maar met groote ontfermingen zal Ik u vergaderen; in een kleinen toorn heb Ik Mijn aangezicht van u een oogenblik verborgen, maar met eeuwige goedertierenheid zal Ik Mij uwer ontfermen, zegt de Heere uw Verlosser. Want dat zal Mij zijn als de wateren Noachs, toen Ik zwoer dat de wateren Noachs niet meer over de aarde zouden gaan: zóó heb Ik gezworen dat Ik niet meer op u toornen noch u schelden zal. Want bergen zullen wijken, en heuvelen wankelen, maar Mijne goedertierenheid zal van u niet wijken, en het verbond Mijns vredes zal niet wankelen, zegt de HEERE uw Ontfermer."

Moet, mag ik hier nog wat bij doen?

Verklaart het niet heel duidelijk het 9de en 10de vers van onzen huidige psalm?

Let er ook op, hoe tot tweemaal toe des HEEREN eeuwigen goedertierenheid genoemd werd in deze verklaring.

O ja, leest ook nog de bede van Mozes, den man van God. Ook hij getuigt van des Heeren toorn die over Zijn volk is vanwege onze zonde.

Maar daar komt een einde aan het zuchten, lijden en schreien vanwege de zonde die tegen onzen wil nog in ons over gebleven is. God zal ze wegnemen, en tot in alle eeuwigheid zult ge U baden in de stralingen der liefde Gods ten uwent: eeuwige goedertierenheid Gods!

G. V.

## IN HIS FEAR

### *How Do You Quote Scripture?*

No wonder, said one man discussing Scripture with another, no wonder the people turn away from the truth. The leaders turn away from the truth, and Scripture says: as priest so the people.

But, does Scripture really say that? The question is not whether there is truth in this statement, the question is whether this quotation is correct.

If you will refer to Hosea 4:9 you will discover that the quotation is not: as priest so the people, but it reads this way: "like people, like priest". Its equivalent you will find in Isa. 24:2 and both passages refer to the impartial judgment which God sends over people and priests alike. The people sinned and the priests ate up the sin of the people and therefore both of them merit judgment. When quoted this way it leaves a vastly different impression than when mis-quoted.

And how many people are there, who when they would quote the Jerusalem, Jerusalem text from Matt. 23, give it this way: Jerusalem, Jerusalem. . . how oft would I have gathered thee together as a hen gathers her chicks. . . but ye would not. You would perhaps quote it that way also. But it is not right. Jesus does not say that He would gather Jerusalem, but He says that he would gather "thy children". Not Jerusalem now but Jerusalem's children Christ would gather. And He did gather them, only Jerusalem resented it and crucified Him.

I recall one time a good old mother, who had grandsons in the recent world war, said to me that she was greatly comforted by that promise of God which said: when they fall upon the sword they shall not be wounded." A promise such as that meant so much to her she assured me. I was rather impressed by this quotation from Scripture, never having read it before. As soon as I reached my study I searched for this quotation. We found it in Joel 2:8. But to my and later also to her great surprise it appeared that these words refer exactly to the great army of destruction which God will send against apostate Zion. Therefore the text actually meant the very reverse of what this person thought it meant and therefore quoted it with a meaning it did not have.

At a funeral the minister sought to exhort his hearers with "prepare to meet thy God O Israel" (Hosea 4:12), that is, that men should get ready to stand in judgment before God. That is surely a scriptural and necessary admonition, but it could scarcely be elicited from this text. The text is a threatening of God against the impenitent Israel and an announcement that God will most certainly descend upon her in judgment, and they will meet the God of righteous wrath.

Who has not heard quoted "Wees niet al te rechtvaardig" (be not over much righteous, Eccl. 7:16). This quotation is frequently used to condemn the conduct of persons who seem to be overly pious. Or is it quoted to describe the Pharisee. But if you will study the text carefully you will discover that neither here, nor anywhere in Scripture for that matter, are we ever warned against being extremely righteous. We can never be too righteous, by faith. The quotation in question however warns against finding fault with God's treatment of righteous and wicked during this dispensation. And being righteous over much is alike to trying to set oneself up as being wiser than God in matters of justice during this dispensation. Then you arrive at a wholly different idea of what this quotation implies.

"Neither cast ye your pearls before swine", is a classic quotation people frequently use when they want to tell you not to bring the Word of God to profane people. In that case, however, Jesus did exactly what He warned His followers not to do, for He constantly confronted the profane Pharisees with the Holy Word of God. The text evidently is an admonition to His disciples not to do as the Pharisees do (Cf. the whole context of Matt. 7). They gave what was holy to the dogs, and thus they esteemed holy things lightly, so lightly in fact that they even made long prayers in order to be seen of men. If you pray long to be seen of men e.g., you are casting what is holy to the dogs.

And that "Ephraim is a cake half-baked" is almost become a proverbial quotation today. Yet the Bible says nothing of a cake half-baked, it says that Ephraim is a cake not turned. With the evident difference that in the misquotation one is lead to think of a poorly baked cake, but in the scriptural quotation God wants you to see that Ephraim is like a cake which stays long on the hot fire, unturned, and is consequently in the process of burning up, (Cf. Hosea 7:7-9).

#### *Torturing Scripture*

In such matters as those mentioned above we all err constantly. We may safely say that we christians do not do it with malicious intent. We have no foul purpose in mind when we sometimes mis-quote or mis-apply Scripture. That by no means makes it harmless, but at least it cannot be ranked with blasphemy.

It becomes devilish, however, if there is a design behind it. Then we get "wresting of Scripture" of which Peter speaks in II Pet. 3:16, where the word "wresting" literally means to put Scripture on the rack, torture it, stretch it, tear it apart and treat it at will. Or we get that against which Paul warns us in II Cor. 4:2 of handling the Word of God "deceitfully." Then it ranks with blasphemy.

Of this sort for instance were the Pharisees in Jesus' day who were experts at quoting Scripture, yet so that with their quotations they turned Scripture completely

upside down. They took what Moses said and quoted it so that it contradicted what Jesus said. Moses and Christ are one, when it comes to speaking the Word for Christ spoke through Moses. Yet the Pharisees knew how to quote Scripture so that it refuted Christ Himself. In the sermon on the Mount we notice that the Jewish lawyers were skillful in making verbatim quotations from the Old Testament. They quoted Moses in matters of divorce, taking oaths, taking vengeance, etc. Frequently they quote Moses verbatim, as e.g. "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" (Matt. 5:38—Lev. 24:20). But yet their verbatim quotations were errors and Jesus condemns them as wresters of Scripture. Over against their literal quotation of Lev. 24:20 Christ states: "But I say unto you that ye resist not evil". Christ is not in conflict with Moses, but the Doctors have quoted Scripture, using it as a vehicle for their own sinful thoughts.

It is possible therefore to quote Scripture accurately, as far as the letter goes, yet by our very quotation abuse Scripture. Example, the Pharisees.

Modernism, in all its schools of higher criticism engages in this sort of blasphemy. The more they quote Scripture the more they blaspheme.

But Satan is also an expert at quoting Scripture so that it contradicts itself. Liar that he is, you would expect him to insert a word or two when he quotes the Bible or change a word or two, but no, he quotes it substantially correct. This case is recorded in Matt. 4:6. Satan quotes Ps. 9:11-12, and except that he omits a clause he quotes accurately. Jesus, I believe, admits this also for Christ does not correct Him by saying: it is not so written. But if Jesus should follow the quotation as the devil gives it Jesus would be tempting His Father. What Satan did was to apply Scripture in a way in which it was never intended to be applied. Ps. 91:11-12 refers to God's loving care over the righteous, but Satan sought to make this text mean that Christ could let Himself drop from the pinnacle of the temple and not injure Himself. Satan's quotation of Scripture therefore constituted a temptation for Christ. If Christ had obeyed the word of Scripture, as the devil quoted it, Jesus would have tempted His Father in heaven.

See therefore how extremely important is our quoting of Scripture. Just because you quote Scripture is no guarantee that you are speaking the truth. Scripture is truth, but all men are by nature liars, and it is the climax of blasphemy to quote Scripture with the purpose of using it as an instrument to carry private notions.

Scripture is not the WORDS of God first but the WORD. Keep it in the singular and there is no danger that we will abuse it. Scripture is ONE, let us quote it as being the ONE WORD of God in all its parts.

M. G.



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## FROM HOLY WRIT

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### The Fear Of The Lord

One of the most common expressions we meet in Scripture are those wellknown words, "the fear of the Lord." It would prove impossible in one short article to quote all the passages, particularly in the Old Testament, where the expression appears. But a closer examination of a few of these passages proves as interesting as it is profitable.

There are various words used in the Hebrew original for 'fear'. The word 'yirah', which is most commonly used in reference to God, has the meaning of reverence and awe. The word 'pachad' is also used occasionally, which means dread or terror. The first word is used almost exclusively when speaking of the reverential fear of God that fills the heart of the righteous. When rarely it is used in speaking of the wicked, it stresses the awe that prostrates them before Him because of His power and divinity. The second word could better be translated as terror or dread. It is used for the righteous and the wicked alike. When referring to the righteous, it expresses their holy fear for the dreadful majesty of the Most High, which causes them to humble themselves in the dust before Him, acknowledging that He is holy and righteous. In the New Testament the word 'phobos' is used to express both the idea of reverence and of terror, and is also applied to wicked as well as to the righteous. Yet always with this marked difference that the **believer** fears with an upright fear, while the ungodly are filled with wicked, rebellious fear.

Although Scripture occasionally speaks of "the fear of God", the expression "fear of the Lord" is much more common. The Lord is none other than Jehovah, Who is the almighty, unchangeable, sovereign God, who has no need of men's hands to be worshipped by them, and who cannot possibly give His glory to any other. He is infinite in power, glorious in majesty, sovereign over all the earth, so that He works all things according to the purpose of His will, that they may serve in a most perfect way unto the glory of His Name. His fulness fills all things, His love is eternal, His goodness has no limitations. Holy and righteous is the Lord, the God of infinite perfections. He makes His people eternally blessed with the assurance, "I am thy God." For to know Him is nothing short of life eternal.

In speaking of the fear of the Lord, we realize at once that this fear has its origin in God Himself. The true and upright fear of the Lord is a gift of His grace. It is impossible for the sinner to possess that fear, for his heart is at enmity with God, so that he continually banishes God from all his thoughts. When the heart

is evil, the fear of the Lord is absent. As it is stated, for example, in Deut. 5:29, "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep My commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children forever!" Therefore Scripture teaches concerning the wicked that "there is no fear of God before their eyes." Ps. 36:1, Rom. 3:18. This passage from the Psalms, which is quoted in Romans, is especially significant. It proves beyond a doubt, that a godly fear is entirely strange to wicked men. They know nothing of it. But it does more. For the word that is used can well be translated as dread or terror. So that we can well read, that there is not even a dread of God before their eyes. They are not even filled with terror because of Him. They are not as much as afraid of Him. In the following verses the sinner is described as follows, "He flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful. The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise and to do good. He deviseth mischief upon his bed, he setteth himself in a way that is not good, he abhorreth not evil." This is entirely in harmony with the thought of Romans 1, where we are told that "they did not like to retain God in their knowledge," and as a result, "God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things that are not fitting." The sinner imagines that he can sin with impunity. He sins, and does not immediately experience the dire consequences. He becomes bolder and defies the living God. He proves that the unjust must become unjust still and the filthy must become filthy still, even until the measure of their iniquity is full.

But that does not mean that the wicked can ever succeed to entirely banish God from his thoughts. God makes His power and godhead known in all the works of His hands, but especially in His judgments. Nor does God leave Himself without witness in their hearts. In the old dispensation, the terror of the Lord fell repeatedly upon the heathen nation round about Israel. Think of the people of Jericho whose hearts melted within them when they heard of the mighty works of the God of Israel. Joshua 2:9-11. The same terror is felt whenever the Lord sends His visitations upon the earth. And the time is coming when the wicked will cry to the rocks to cover them from before the face of the living God. Also this is from the Lord, Who is mighty in power and glorious in majesty.

But the fear of the upright is a gift of His grace. It is the fruit of the operation of the Holy Spirit within the heart. This is expressed in so many words in Isaiah 11:2, 3, "And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither re-

prove after the hearing of His ears." Here the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of the fear of the Lord, who works that fear in the heart. The objection might be raised, that this passage has reference to Christ, since the first verse speaks of the Rod and the Branch that shall grow out of the root of Jesse. But even though this is true, what applies to Christ in this case, applies also to His people, who are filled with the same Spirit.

That fear of the Lord has its source in God, but it also has God as its object. It consists of reverence and awe before Him Who alone is worthy of the name of God. This is not the fear of a slave who shudders at the very thought of his master and trembles when he stands in his presence, so that he obeys him only because there is no escape. In that sense, the apostle John assures us, all fear is gone. For "there is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." I John 4:18. The Spirit of Christ is not the spirit of bondage again to fear, but is the Spirit of adoption, which causes us to cry, Abba, Father. Therefore the fear of the believer is the fear of sons and daughters, the holy awe and reverence that causes us to rejoice even as we tremble in His presence. The Psalmist says in Psalm 2:11. "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling." While Acts 9:31 states, "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." This fear comforts the heart, but at the same time fills it with a dread of sinning against the glorious majesty of the Most High. As we read in Psalm 119:120, "My flesh trembleth with fear of thee, and I am afraid of Thy judgments." That causes the believer to work out his salvation with fear and trembling, for God it is which worketh in him both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Phil. 2:13.

Therefore it follows, that the fear of God is more than a mere consciousness of awe and reverence before the face of God. It manifests itself in sanctification and true piety. The believer, whose heart is filled with holy fear, walks humbly before God and seeks to be well-pleasing to Him. He seeks the Lord with a perfect heart. From this aspect the book of Proverbs speaks repeatedly of this godly fear. Proverbs 1:7 calls the fear of the Lord the beginning of wisdom. Just because it is the beginning, the basic principle of all true wisdom, wicked men are fools who despise wisdom and instruction. They hate knowledge and do not choose the fear of the Lord. (1:29). On the other hand, "the fear of the Lord is to hate evil, for God hates pride and arrogancy, the evil way and the forward mouth." Prov. 8:13. "By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil." Prov. 16:6.

Also the Psalms speak of this fear as a holy walk

before God. Psalm 19:0, "The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether." Psalm 34:11, "Come, ye children, hearken unto me; and I will teach you the fear of the Lord."

Therefore also rulers must walk in fear. In David's last words, the man of God teaches us, "The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." 2 Sam. 23:3. While Jehoshaphat admonishes the chief of the fathers, "Thus shall ye do in the fear of the Lord, faithfully, and with a perfect heart."

Those who are privileged to possess this gift of grace must also experience the blessedness of it.

The first benefit derived from it is a true and abiding confidence in God. He who fears the Lord works out his salvation with fear and trembling. Which does not mean that he doubts all his days whether he will ultimately reach the goal of salvation for which he is striving. That would be the very opposite of the confidence that fills our hearts through godly fear. The believer knows that God works in him both to will and to do according to divine good pleasure. He is confident that the same God Who has begun a good work in him will also surely finish it in the day of Christ Jesus. That confidence is rooted in fear. For he can only marvel in awed wonder at that great and glorious work of salvation which is being wrought in him. And he knows that none other than God is busy with that mighty work in his heart. He worships his God in holy reverence. He trembles at the thought that his clumsy and sinful hands might in some way mar that work. "Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope and the uprightness of thy ways?" Job 4:6. "In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence: and his children have a place of refuge."

Moreover, the lasting benefit of this grace is none other than the blessedness of eternal life experienced already in this present time. Prov. 22:4 says, "By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honor, and life." According to the spiritual-ethical nature of this book of Proverbs, these riches and honor are not mere earthly benefits, but belong to the blessings of eternal life, which God bestows on those who fear Him. Therefore Isaiah 33:6 assures us, "And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the Lord is his treasure."

In conclusion, we can briefly sum this all up by saying, that the fear of the Lord is God's own gift of grace, whereby we experience the beauty of the Lord in awed wonder, which becomes evident in a holy walk, and fills us with confidence and peace unspeakable and full of glory unto the praise of our God.

C. H.

\* An informative article on this subject by the Rev. R. Veldman appears in the Standard Bearer, volume 22, number 4, page 20.

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## PERISCOPE

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*FLASH! . . . . Rev. Hoeksema Preaches!!*

We heard the good news here rather incidentally and felt it was worth passing on to our readers. According to word received from Bellflower, on Sunday evening, January 25, "dominie" mounted the pulpit and delivered his first sermon since he was stricken last June. Our informant told us that his correspondent wrote that "he was very lively".

That our beloved pastor and teacher continues to improve is also evident from the following note which appeared on the bulletin of the 1st church in Grand Rapids, on January 25:

"I have some real news to write you. I went in the ocean! You can imagine how I longed to do that. I did not try to swim much, however, because I was afraid of the breakers. But I was surprisingly steady on my feet. I believe I could easily swim.

"All in all, it shows that there is steady improvement. Yesterday I walked two miles without my cane; although for safety sake I had it with me—it took me fifty-five minutes. O, the Lord is good to me, above all expectations!

"Love to you all, especially to the sick.

Rev. H. Hoeksema."

*Missionary News. . . .*

Greetings from Lynden, Washington!!

Undoubtedly, many of our people will be surprised to know that we are in Lynden. For that reason it might be well, first of all, to explain how this came about. Perhaps, you will recall, that at the close of our last news article concerning our labors we included a paragraph entitled: What Next? We mentioned that we had written our various ministers and consistories asking for suggestions and information regarding possible future fields of activity. In answer to our request several replies were received which suggested that the Lynden, Washington area would be worth considering. It was pointed out that some former members of our churches had moved to this area and that there were others who would like to come if there were a protestant Reformed congregation here. Then, too, it is well known that there have always been some interested families who live in and around Lynden. Several years ago, the Rev. H. Hoeksema visited here and spoke to large audiences. A few years later the Rev. B. Kok, at that time our Home Missionary, spent a few weeks in Lynden and aroused added interest.

Since that time contact has been maintained with

these people through means of correspondence and distribution of our literature, especially *The Standard Bearer*. Then about two years ago The Reformed Witness Hour secured an outlet for its radio program in Bellingham, which is about 16 miles south-west of Lynden. This station, KROS, is now a 1000 watt station and, hence, can be clearly heard in this area. The response to the program was good and a comparatively large mailing list was built up.

At a recent meeting of the Mission Committee these things were brought to our attention. In the meantime our work in Byron Center seemed to be progressing towards organization. Our labors there, however, were more or less at a stand-still, pending the acquisition of a suitable place in which to meet. It appeared that there might be a possibility of acquiring a church and parsonage in Byron Center but it was also evident, that even if this property could be purchased, the negotiations and arrangements would take some time. And the possibility also existed that in case a suitable meeting place could not be found, no re-organization would occur in the near future.

The Mission Committee felt it wise, therefore, to send one of our missionaries to make a preliminary investigation of the Lynden area, in order that a decision might be reached which would be based on first-hand information and as a result of personal contact. Undersigned was delegated to journey to Lynden and spend some time there, while the Rev. Knott continues the work in Byron Center. At this writing we have no news of developments in Byron Center so must confine our report to the work here.

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We left Grand Rapids by car on Thursday, January 15. A howling blizzard was blowing snow in every direction and retarded our progress for the first few hundred miles along Lake Michigan. Since that time, according to the news, much more snow and cold have been the portion of the "Easterners" (one can hardly imagine it all as he looks out here on green fields and watches the hardy tulips and daffodils begin to raise their heads while the violets bloom in the door-yards). About supper time that night we arrived in Oskaloosa, Iowa, where we spent the week-end as guests of the Rev. and Mrs. J. Howerzyl. On Sunday it was our privilege to preach once, both in Oskaloosa and Pella. On each occasion an offering was received for the Mission Fund.

On Monday morning we left Oskaloosa and continued to Parkersburg, Iowa, the home of Mrs. Hofman's parents. From here we continued by train to the northwest while Mrs. Hofman returned to Grand Rapids, after visiting with her folks for a few days. The long journey to Lynden lasted from Tuesday noon until we arrived here on Friday noon; the last 16

miles from Bellingham via bus. So here we are in Lynden, Washington.

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Lynden is in the extreme north-western part of the state of Washington. It is about 14 miles inland from the Pacific ocean and 3 miles south of the Canadian border. The city, with a population of about 3000, as well as the surrounding country, lies in the valley of the Nooksack River. On three sides, (north, south and east) the valley is surrounded by the Cascade Range of the Rocky Mountains. Westward the valley opens up and gently slopes to the shores of the Pacific. Mt. Baker, whose snow-capped dome rises over 10,000 feet above sea-level, is clearly seen a distance of 45 miles to the south-east. Many other well known peaks, both in Canada and the U. S., are in plain sight. The weather is comparatively mild with light frost and some rain but seldom snow; though there is an abundance on the hills and mountains in the distance.

As we sit here and look around, the thoughts come to our mind: "how beautiful for situation", and, "as the hills round about Jerusalem". Besides the massive Rockies always strike one with awe. They too bring to mind the words of the Psalmist: "The firmament showeth Thy handiwork". And even more as one travels through them their towering majesty must necessarily humble one and cause him to wonder in awe before his God and utter: "What is man that Thou art mindful of him?"

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The physical and natural beauty of the Nooksack valley is not greatly marred but even somewhat enhanced, by its inhabitants; for it would indeed be a lonely place without its people. Lynden itself is a neat and clean little town with trim houses and yards. It is the center of a large trading-area and has many fine stores. One can almost see that this area is well-populated with thrifty Holland stock; there are over a thousand families of Dutch descent in this vicinity. Most of these live on comparatively small but well-kept dairy farms. This area is the great milk-shed for the larger cities on the coast. Besides milk, poultry and eggs and all kinds of fruit are important products.

There are several churches in Lynden. Three large Christian Reformed churches in town have an average of over 200 families each. There are also Christian Reformed churches in the smaller towns nearby. Besides these, one can find the Reformed, Baptist, Methodist and Catholic churches, as well as lesser groups such as the Gospel Hall and Christian Science. There is a Christian grade school and a splendid new Christian High School in Lynden. A few miles north of

town is another Christian grade school to serve those further removed.

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Our labor here, at present, is of a preliminary nature. We have contacted several families and find some enthused, some interested, and other willing to listen. Before we left Grand Rapids we had made arrangements with the Radio Committee to use the time of the Reformed Witness Hour on KVOS, if we so desired. We plan to speak over KVSO on Sundays, February 8 and 15, the Lord willing. In the meantime we are looking up and meeting the people who have written in or listen to the broadcast or who, in some other way have expressed interest. In this manner we will attempt to determine the possibilities of this area for future labor. At this writing, it would be too early to give a well-founded answer to that question.

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### *Striking Testimony. . . .*

In connection with the above we pass on an interesting experience. While looking up those on the mailing list of the Reformed Witness Hour, we came to the home of an elderly American woman, who had been receiving the message. She lives outside Lynden and attends a small Community Church near her home. When we knocked at her door she opened it and asked if we were the doctor. We replied that we were not the doctor but a minister and thereupon she invited us in and said they were expecting a veterinary since they had a sick cow.

While she talked she stated that she enjoyed the Radio messages but also readily admitted that since she was not Holland and, hence, due to her lack of training, she did not understand them too well. It became evident, however, that she was a Bible student. In the course of the conversation she revealed, that though she did not grasp the truth as we know and love it, she likes the note which our program strikes. She said that she did not at all agree with the tendency of the modern pulpit which claims that man is getting better and exhorts him to use his own will and power to extricate himself from sin and ruin. She herself was convinced that sin is developing fast and that the signs of the coming of Christ increase.

Overagainst such claims as the fact that men build great hospitals, etc., she understood that in it all they do not seek God's honor and glory but merely satisfaction of their own sinful pride. To me it was striking, and also heartening, that she could, independently as it were, and upon the basis of Scripture, so clearly testify to the truth as we know it. God's ways are indeed past finding out!

W. H.