

# THE STANDARD

*Bearer*

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## MEDITATION

### Misplaatst Weenen

“En eene groote menigte van volk en van vrouwen volgde Hem, welke ook weenden en Hem beklagden. En Jezus Zich tot haar keerende, zeide: Gij dochters van Jeruzalem, weent niet over Mij, maar weent over uzelve en over uwe kinderen; want zie, daar komen dagen in welke men zeggen zal: Zalig zijn de onvruchtbaren, en de buiken die niet gebaard hebben, en de borsten die niet gezoogd hebben. Alsdan zullen zij beginnen te zeggen tot de bergen: Valt op ons; en tot de heuvelen: Bedekt ons! want indien zij dit doen aan het groene hout, wat zal aan het dorre geschieden?” Lucas 23:27-31.

Wij zijn op weg naar Hoofdschedelplaats, waar het Lam Gods ten finale geslacht zal worden, waar Hij de zonde der wereld tot het uiterste zal wegnemen.

Het past ons om sober te zijn hier. Voorzichtig. Er zijn diepten hier die niet gepeild kunnen worden, en afstanden die niet te meten zijn. Het neemt jaren van geheiligde aandacht om iets te zien van het drama der eeuwen, en ook dan stamelt een iegelijk mensch.

En toch moeten we het trachten in te denken hoe en hoeveel Jezus Christus, onze Heere, geleden heeft. Anders had Zijn Vader er niet voor gezorgd, dat ons het Woord nagelaten werd. Anders waren er niet de vele getuigen geweest. De Heere zorgt ervoor, dat bij elk stadium van Zijn lijden, verzoeking, smarten en angsten, de getuigen gereed staan, soms wakker gemaakt worden, om goed te zien, te onthouden, en straks te schrijven. Gij zult Mijne getuigen zijn! En aanstonds zal men zoeken naar mannen die getuigen zijn geweest van Jezus' omwandeling, lijden, sterven en verrijzenis. Nog weer later zal Lucas alle getuigen het verhoor afnemen, om dan trouwelijk te schrijven voor U en voor mij.

O ja, we zullen moeten hooren, en zien. Tot de goddeloozen toe, die met het Evangelie in aanraking komen, zal God vragen: 'Wat dunkt U van den Christus? En men moet zijn antwoord geven aangaande dien Man, die van Zichzelf gezegd had, dat Hij een wurm was en geen man.

De HEERE Heere zorgde er voor en zal er voor blijven zorgen, dat Zijn beeld onder ons bleef. Is het geen wonder dat die drie duizend manuscripten onder ons bleven?

Ze vertellen ons alles van Jezus, van Jezus!

\* \* \* \*

We zijn op weg naar Hoofdschedelplaats.

Ge zult er goed aan doen om dien heuvel in het oog te houden. Het zal ons gegeven worden om tot in eeuwigheid naar dien heuvel te staren, dat wil zeggen, de eeuwige editie ervan.

Op weg naar Hoofdschedelplaats. De plek op aarde, waar Gods gerechtigheid de vreeselijkste eischen stelde aan het Lam. En waar Hij die eischen inwilligde aan den Vader. 't Was alles zoo schoon, zoo heerlijk: dat recht, die gerechtigheid, die billijkheid Gods. Doch het kostte Hem lijden, tranen, bloed, onuitsprekelijke smarten.

Zooeven kwamen we door de poort heen, den landweg op, naar Golgotha.

Ik weet niet waarom de Romeinsche soldaten die Simon van Cyrene gedwongen hebben om Jezus' kruis achter Hem aan te dragen. Het werd ons niet verklaard. We kunnen, en hebben er wel naar gegist. Sommige gissingen klinken mooi.

Dit weten we voor zeker: het heeft diepe beteekenis: het kruis achter Jezus Christus aandragen. We zullen het moeten verbinden aan de vereichten tot discipelschap. Zeide Jezus niet, dat we Hem moesten volgen met het kruis op onze schouders?

In elk geval, ik ben op dit oogenblik niet geroepen, om over Simon's kruisdragen te schrijven. Ik noemde het slechts omdat die gebeurtenis voorafging aan de woorden die we kozen voor onze huidige meditatie.

Jezus raakte voor een kleine tijd Zijn kruis kwijt aan Simon.

Daar stompelt Hij verder op den weg.

Naar de plaats waar Hij den beker van den toorn Gods tot op den heffe zal drinken.

\* \* \* \*

Doch wat doet Jezus plotseling het moede en bebloede hoofd omwenden? Waarom staat er onlust en berisping op Zijn aangezicht te lezen?

Hij heeft een snikken en een klagen van vele vrouwen gehoord.

Er staat in het Evangelie, dat veel volks *en ook vele vrouwen Hem volgden*. Die Hem ook beklaagden en weenden.

Wat moeten we van dat snikken, weenen, klagen over Jezus denken?

Eerst dit: het was echt menschelijk voor die vrouwen om medelijdend te klagen en te weenen over Jezus. Het zou ons bevreemd hebben indien zij het niet gedaan hadden. Vooral daar in dat Oostersche land. Zelfs de mannen daar weenden gemakkelijk. Het Oostersch karakter der menschen is veel beweeglijker, veel gevoeliger, veel meer geneigd om de gedachten des harten te openbaren op het aangezicht, in het lachen, uitbundiglijk, of te tranen in groote smart. Een Westersch mensch zou nooit met David zeggen, dat hij zijn bed deed zwemmen van tranen.

En dan vrouwen!

De vrouw is van de twee de meest bewogene, het gemakkelijkst tot tranen te brengen, en het eerst geneigd om in groote aandoening van het gemoed, te klagen, luidkeels te weenen.

Er waren vrouwen in Israel die er een broodwinning van maakten om te weenen en te klagen. Ze hadden *verstand* van klagen.

En was er hier niet reden te over om grootelijks te weenen?

Deze vrouwen uit de stad hadden veel van Jezus gehoord. Het was nog maar eenige dagen geleden, dat al het volk uitgegoten was om Hem met eere en met jubelen de stad binnen te halen.

Ze hadden veel gehoord van Zijn wonderdaden, dat Hij het geheele land doorging om goed te doen. Ze wisten van dat groote wonder bij de grafkuil van Lazarus; ze wisten wat daar gebeurd was. Ze hadden het gehoord hoe Hij slechts één woord sprak en de blinden konden wederom zien, de lammen sprongen op van vreugde, de dooven hoorden en de stommen spraken weer. Ze zullen ook wel gehoord hebben, dat Hij de schare zoo wonderlijk gespijzigd had met slechts eenige brooden en visschen.

In elk geval, al het gerucht dat tot de ooren van Jeruzalem's dochters doorgedrongen was had getuigd van Zijn groote goedheid. Er was geen kwaad gerucht, want Jezus deed niet dan goed. Hij is de

eenigste mensch die zeggen kon: Wie Uwer overtuigt Mij van zonde? En het was in den afgeleopen nacht bewezen geworden, want men kwam met elkander overeen om *valsche* getuigen te summeeren.

O ja, er was reden te over om hier te weenen, te klagen.

Het was heel natuurlijk voor de dochters van Jeruzalem.

Die arme, arme man!

Die arme Jezus!

\* \* \* \*

Maar het was een vreeselijk lijden voor Jezus!

Het was een engel van Satan.

Het was een verzoeking voor Jezus om die warme sympathie te aanvaarden, dankbaar aan te nemen.

O, het is zoo zoet, als men medelijden ontvangt van zijn medemensch! Als we de tranen zien vloeien bij het zien van al ons verdriet; als we de bewogen stem hooren, die bevend ons toefluisterd: Ik heb zoo met je te doen! Het schijnt wel of het waar is, wat men zoo vaak zeide: Gedeelde smart is halve smart!

Maar voor Jezus is het een vreeselijke verzoeking.

Laat ons eens zien: Hij leed wel, maar het was niet voor Zichzelf, het was voor Zijn volk, dat Hij leed.

Hij leed wel, maar Zijn leed was een rechtvaardig lijden. De beker die aan Zijn mond gezet was kwam tot Hem van Vader, van den Almachtige, van den Rechter des hemels en der aarde, van den Rechter óók van Jezus. Daar mocht niet éenen druppel zweets af van al Zijn last en lijden. Jezus mocht Zich niet overgeven aan die zoete, bedwijnmelende sympathie der vrouwen.

Hij leed wel, maar het was een gewillig lijden. Hij had immers gezegd: Niemand neemt Mijn leven van Mij. Ik heb macht Mijn leven af te leggen, en om het weder op te nemen? Al het bloed, al het zweet, al de strieven moet ge zien, niet vanuit het oogpunt van het *lijdend voorwerp*, maar uit het oogpunt van het *onderwerp*! Jezus' en Godes taalkunde is hooger dan de onze.

Daarom: laat Mij Mijn smart *en* Mijn tranen en Mijn groote lijden, gij dochters van Jeruzalem. Het *mag niet verzacht worden*. Ik ben alles aan het accentueeren hier op weg naar ginschen heuvel. Het is Mij rechtvaardiglijk toegemeten van Mijn Vader. Houdt daarom op met de poging om de dingen te verdoezelen. Ik wil Mijn God blijven zien, Die al Zijn baren en golven over Mijn Hoofd doet gaan.

\* \* \* \*

Weent niet over Mij!

Wat zullen die vrouwen zich aan Hem geërgerd hebben!

Ik moet niet denken aan de woorden die sommigen van hen gesproken moeten hebben.

Wat een naar mensch toch! En we meenden het toch zoo goed. We hebben er ook nog een soort genot in.

Zijn er geen honderdduizende vrouwen in Amerika hier, die zoo gaarne naar de "matinee's" gaan om gezelligheid te zamen te schreien vanwege de tragiek der stukken die opgevoerd worden? Ik heb gelezen, dat met die neiging der vrouwen gerekend wordt te Hollywood.

Er kwam niet veel terecht van "that good cry" hetwelk zij zich voorgesteld hadden op den stoffigen landweg naar gindschen heuvel.

O neen! Indien ge naar Golgotha reist, moet ge die aandoeningen van Uw "medelijdend hart" thuis laten. Weent niet over Jezus!

De theologie van Jezus leerde Hem, dat Hij de schande verachtte, vanwege de heerlijkheid van het loon, dat Hem voorgesteld was. Jezus werkt, en dat is bloed en tranen en lijden, om loon. Dat mocht bij Hem, want Zijn werk was volmaakt. Zal men weenen om een volmaakt werk, dat ook nog wel de eeuwige heerlijkheid inluiden zal? Droogt Uw tranen die ge om Mij schreit. Ze zijn *misplaatst*!

\* \* \* \*

Weent niet over Mij!

Uw weenen en klagen is dom, vreeselijk, ook in verband met Uw eigen ontzettende toestand.

Weent over Uzelve en over Uwe kinderen!

Uw toestand is hachelijk, zóó hachelijk, dat Ik U onnatuurlijke dingen zal laten zeggen.

Ik zie dagen komen in de verten der tijden, dagen die zóó vreeselijk zijn voor U en voor Uwe kinderen, dat men in die dagen een onnatuurlijk spreekwoord zal opheffen en zeggen: Zalig zijn de onvruchtbaren, en de buiken die niet gebaard hebben, en de borsten die niet gezoogd hebben!

Dat zijn vreeselijke dingen! Stelt het U voor: men zal zalig spreken de vrouwen die nooit de moederweelde kenden! Als het zoo moet, dan staan de dingen op hun kop. Dit is natuurlijk: de *moeder* is zalig! De vrouw die kinderkens op haar schoot troetelt en lachend op haar kroost neerziet! De vrouw is zalig die zichzelf ziet vermenigvuldigd in haar kinderen, niet andersom toch? Wie spreekt een vrouw zalig die nooit de zalige klank van MOEDER! MOEDER! hoorde?

Past op! Het is Jezus die hier spreekt!

Jezus is een kenner van historie. Zelfs vooraleer ze historie wordt.

Hij sprak tot die vrouwen van zekere dagen die aan 't komen zijn. Het waren de dagen van de verwoesting van Jeruzalem. En Josephus heeft ons verhaald van die dagen. Toen ik het las heb ik gegruwd, en ook aan Jezus gedacht. Ik denk, dat vele dochters van Jeruzalem hetzelfde gedaan hebben.

Jezus sprak van dagen der wrake Gods.

En ja, dan zal men zeggen: een kinderlooze vrouw lijdt en blaast den adem uit. Dat is jammer; dat is aandoenlijk om het te zien, maar "het is oorlog!", wat zal men er verder van zeggen. Maar ziet nu op de hartverscheurende groep aan den anderen kant van de straat in Jeruzalem! Daar staat een moeder te schreeuwen, te gillen, te brullen, vanwege al haar leed. Ze heeft drie, vier uitgeteerde kindertjes bij zich. Ze ziet naar de stervende *steriele* overbuur, en noemt haar zalig.

Jezus' woorden komen altijd uit.

Er komen dagen.

\* \* \* \*

Alsdan zal men nog meer zeggen, en dan denk ik, dat Jezus over Jeruzalem heenziende, het einde van de wereld gezien heeft.

Hij ziet nog meer dagen, en in die dagen zal men nog meer onnatuurlijke dingen zeggen.

Men zal dan bidden tot bergen en heuvelen. En de inhoud van het gebed zal zijn: Komt, gij bergen; nadert toe, gij heuvelen, en bedekt ons, verplettert ons! We hebben dat veel liever dan te zien naar dien toornige, daar, dáár, op Zijn troon, en het toornige oog van dat Lam! Een afschuwelijk bidden van goddeloozen.

Dochters van Jeruzalem! Weent over die dagen, over die vrouwen, over die kindertjes van U, van Jeruzalem, dat de profeten van God gesteenigd heeft.

Want, Ik, Jezus, zal Mijn motie motiveren.

Hier is het: Ge ziet wat men gedaan heeft aan Mij, het Groene Hout, aan Mij, het Deugdenbeeld van God, want ziet, Ik ben *groen*. Ik ben de Boom des Levens.

Maar ik moet sterven den eeuwigen dood.

En gij?

Gij zijt het dorre, gij zijt dochters van een gruwelijke verbintenis. Uwe vaders zijn gehuwd met Satan, en met de hel hebben zij een voorzichtig verbond gemaakt.

Het resultaat?

Gij en Uwe kinderen zijt dor hout gelijk. Uw brand zal oplaaien tot in alle eeuwigheid.

Maar Ik ben het groene hout. Ik brand ook. Wat hitte doet Mij branden? Maar, O Wonder! Mijn branden is in de neusgaten van God een lieflijke reuke! Men zal elkander er over toeroepen in groote blijdschap in een ander Jeruzalem, het Jeruzalem dat boven is: de moeder van Mijn duur gekochte kerk.

Wij denken aan Noach: en God rook die lieflijke reuke.

En ook aan Paulus: Gode tot een welangename reuke!

Het is met groote beving dat wij het zeggen, maar het is waar: het brandende groene hout heeft groote lieflijkheid!

G. Vos.

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## EDITORIALS

### The Covenant Controversy

(4)

THE COVENANT GOD — continued

That the Triune God is the Covenant God in Himself, apart from any relation to His creature, is also evident from the fact that we repeatedly read in Scripture that He establishes *His* Covenant with men. Note that He says: "And I will establish *My* covenant between Me and thee, etc." Gen. 17:7.

If God condescends to establish covenant relation with us, we are drawn into the family life of the Trinity. To use figurative language, if God takes us up into His covenant, He draws the roof of His own dwelling over our heads, so that we may live in His house forever. Such is the meaning of the term MY COVENANT!

That this is so, becomes still clearer when we listen to Isaiah 54:10. There we read: "For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord who hath mercy on thee."

Attend that the former expression MY COVENANT is here further circumscribed as the Covenant of MY PEACE! That is the glory of the everlasting Gospel: we shall be partakers of the peace of God such as it is lived and experienced by God in the Divine Family of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Of course, we realize that we shall taste this peace of God's own life *as creatures* and in a *creaturely manner*. But we must see that God's own life is the covenant life, and all we receive is the reflection of that eternally perfect Divine Covenant life.

Furthermore, that the covenant which is established with us is God's own covenant life is evident from all those texts that speak of the covenant as an *everlasting* covenant. Inasmuch as we receive the same fellowship and communion of love and friendship as it is lived by God in His own covenant life in everlasting perfection, so does the Holy Ghost describe this boon as an *everlasting* blessing.

Moreover, this fundamental thought found its symbolic manifestation in the tabernacle and the temple. It is an undeniable fact that the tabernacle and the temple taught that God dwelled there between the cherubim. It was the house of God. God is a dwelling God. That is exactly the point which I have tried to make clear. That is also the very covenant idea. The idea of the house, the home, is sociability, loving

communion and intimate fellowship: here are embodied the very elements of the covenant. God is everlastingly at HOME with Himself, since He is One and also Three. God is His own Friend and He is very Love in Himself. And that is portrayed to us in the revelation of tabernacle and temple. It is the place where God dwells. That is the first and principal idea. And the Gospel is this that He calls from out of that HOME OF GOD until all His children come in through the veil and may dwell with Him everlastingly as His friends and His lovers. Only when we view the covenant from this point of view can we in a measure see the great beauty of a text as we find in I Cor. 15:28 "that God may be all and in all".

This view of the covenant is also found in John 17:23 where we read: "I in them and Thou in Me that they may be made perfect in one. . . ." God dwelling in Jesus Christ and this Christ with the living God in Himself, living in the hearts and minds of His disciples, so that God and man may be united in covenant love and friendship for ever and ever.

God is the Covenant God!

If that fundamental thought of Holy Writ illumines our minds and hearts in the study of all the other phases of the covenant, it will keep us from making all kinds of errors and mistakes, such as are also made by our Liberated brethren in the Netherlands.

But that which in my humble opinion clinches the matter, I find recorded in John 14:2, 3. There we read: "In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."

We note the following here:

First, that we have the same idea here as the speech of tabernacle and temple. Jesus speaks of His Father's House. It is the place where God dwells and where He lives His eternal life of wondrous harmony, peace and everblessed covenant communion.

Second, "Father" here is indeed the Triune God, the "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ", as we have it in other places. Jesus is here talking about His God and Father, in other words, He is speaking here as the Mediator and Redeemer, as is plain from the whole chapter, testifying of the Gospel truth that He is the Way to the Father's heart.

Third, that Jesus *IS* in that Home of God. Note that He speaks the comforting words to His Church: "That where *I am*, there you may be also." In passing, we would note here that Jesus, the Mediator, the Redeemer of His Church, has an abiding place in God's covenant communion. And that not from the point of view of His Godhead, but as is plain from the whole of John 14, as the human Christ. We will have occasion to refer to this again in another connection

in this series.

Fourth, that a place is being prepared for the Church in order to *dwell in God's Home!*

Fifth, that this Scripture finds its fulfilment in the final vision of John, the Divine, as recorded in Rev. 21:3, where we read: "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, *the tabernacle of God* is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." At this juncture I am not pointing to the blessedness of dwelling with God in wondrous covenant communion. We will discuss that later. I quote this text to direct your hallowed attention to the central idea of the covenant: the tabernacle of God. God is a dwelling God. He lives in a House which is His Home!

God is the Covenant God.

It is my conviction, based on God's Word, that this doctrine is so fundamental that in its hallowed contemplation we will spend eternity. The Tri-une God who is most blessed *in Himself!* For you to gaze at, to adore, to praise and glorify for evermore.

I say it with all reverence, but I believe that the very purpose of all things, the present universe, the creation, the fall, the redemption and unifying of all things in Christ Jesus, all of this and more is to *place the adorable Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Ghost on exhibition!*

Allow me to explain:

It certainly is not original with me when I hold that all, and I use this term now in its most exhaustive and comprehensive sense, that all things are so that God might reveal, manifest, show Himself in all the beauty of the Godhead. The only reason for the creation and recreation of the Universe is *theological*. You all admit this. I will quote just one Scripture: Rev. 4:11: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created." I might also call your attention to the same truth as we find it in Isaiah 48:10, 11; where we find this truth also, but now applied to the *recreation* of the Universe, the centre of which work is the redemption of His people: "Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction. *For Mine Own sake, even for Mine own sake, will I do it: for how should My Name be polluted? and I will not give My glory unto another.*"

Now then, I have tried to show that *all* the Scriptures which speak of the establishing of His covenant with Christ, or with men, be they the elect, as some have it, or the children of believers, as others will, emphasize that this blessed Gospel work of God is a manifestation of the *family-life* of God Triune Himself.

Yes, and even the appearance of Jesus Christ our

Lord, in His Person, suffering, death, resurrection and glorification, as the Head of redeemed mankind, must serve to show how wonderful is the *God of His Own Covenant!*

The two elements of the covenant are love and friendship. Note then how the love of God is continuously emphasized where the Lord Jesus appears. Paul calls our hallowed attention to the glorious truth that nothing, and then he enumerates an exhaustive list of things, that nothing "shall separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

And as for the manifestation of the Great Friend, we find also that in the Mediator, for He has told His Church through John, the Divine, that "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." The Friendship of God's own covenant life consists in this that the heart is revealed to the covenant companion, or companions. To open the heart to another is true friendship. And that is exactly what Jesus does to the church of God. He reveals the Father's heart.

Our fathers gave expression to this fundamental thought when they made us sing the versification of Psalm 23:

"O Merciful Father!

Affluent Fountain of blessings!

Eternally open Thy friendly heart unto us!"

And that is exactly what Jesus has done for us. In it He found the very purpose for His coming and suffering and death. His death is the breaking of the veil that hid the Father from us. But at His death the veil was rent, and henceforth we will see God, we will see that He is the ever faithful Covenant Jehovah in Himself.

Did not Jesus say that utter blessedness consisted in this that we would see God?

Dr. Bavinck was right.

In the Godhead, in the relationship between the Three Persons, the Covenant has its full reality.

But the confessing and the living of this fundamental thought of Holy Scripture will set certain definite limits to our further study, even as the same Scriptures show. And therefore it will not make the confessor of it very popular. For it militates against the natural tendencies of the heart of man, a tendency which John characterizes as "the pride of life".

You see, this view of the covenant which strikes at the heart and the root of a true, Scriptural Covenant conception, excludes many anthropological or Christological covenant conceptions; it correctly keeps particular what others would make common; it humbles man to his proper stature; but it also exalts God and glorifies Him to the highest heavens.

G. Vos.

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## OUR DOCTRINE

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### Our Covenant God

*God's Covenant, Unilateral and Unconditional.*

In our previous article we emphasized the unilateral character of the establishment or origin of God's covenant with His people. We noted that this monopoleuric, unilateral character of the origin of God's covenant has been advocated by Reformed theologians in the past. We also quoted freely from the Scriptures in support of the contention that God's covenant is of the Lord alone. We now purpose to continue where we left off.

*God's Covenant with Man Unilateral Throughout*

God's covenant with His people is not only unilateral in its establishment or origin, but it is unilateral throughout. Although Reformed theologians have usually maintained the establishment or origin of the covenant to be unilateral, they have also usually declared its operation and manifestation to be bilateral, two-sided. Upon this question Prof. H. Bavinck, in his "Gereformeerde Dogmatiek", writes as follows (III, 225): "Actually, in the covenant of grace, that is, in the gospel, which is the proclamation of the covenant of grace, there are no demands and no conditions. For God gives what He demands; Christ has finished all and has merited regeneration, faith and conversion for us; and the Holy Spirit applies them. But the covenant of grace does assume the form of a demand and a condition, to acknowledge man in his rational and moral nature, also to deal with him, although fallen, as created after God's image, in order that also upon this highest plane, . . . , he may be rendered responsible and inexcusable and enable him, consciously and freely, to enter into the covenant and break with sin. The covenant of grace is, therefore, surely unilateral, it proceeds from God; He has planned and established it. He maintains and realizes it; it is a work of God Triune and completed, finished among the three Persons mutually. But it is designed to become bilateral, to be assumed and kept by man, consciously and freewillingly, in the power of God. This is the will of God, which is revealed so clearly and beautifully in the covenant, that the work of grace may reflect itself in the human consciousness, and stimulate the will of man unto greater activity. The covenant of grace does not slay man, and it does not deal with him as a stock and block; but it lifts him up in his entirety, with all his faculties and powers, according to soul and body, for time and eternity; it completely encircles him, does not destroy his strength but de-

prives him of his impotence; does not destroy his will but liberates it from sin; does not deaden his consciousness but delivers it from the darkness; it recreates the entire man and causes him, renewed by grace, to love God and dedicate himself unto Him, freely and independently (*zelfstandiglijk*), with all his soul and spirit and body. The covenant of grace declares that God's honour and praise is realized not at the cost of but unto the benefit of man, and that God's glory celebrates its triumph in the recreation of the entire man, in his enlightened consciousness and restored freedom."

This is beautiful language, indeed! If this be the implication of the "bilateral" aspect of the covenant, who can object? But, why then should we speak of the "unilateral" and the "bilateral" aspects of the covenant, when it is God Who not only establishes the covenant but also maintains it, unconditionally? It is evident that Prof. Bavinck identifies the bilateral character of God's covenant with man with man's moral-rational calling in the covenant and this calling of man is due to the nature of the operation of the grace of God.

Also Prof. Berkhof, in his "Reformed Dogmatics", although maintaining the unilateral character of the covenant as far as its establishment is concerned, would maintain its bilateral, dipleuric character and asserts that a monopleuric covenant in the absolute sense of the word is really a contradiction (and this, I presume, is correct if we proceed from the idea that the covenant is essentially an agreement between two or more parties).

Nevertheless, we would rather maintain that God's covenant is unilateral throughout and therefore wholly unconditional. Professor Berkhof declares the covenant to be both, conditional and unconditional (pages 280-281 of his "Reformed Dogmatics"). On the one hand, he maintains its unconditional character. We read on page 280: "On the one hand the covenant is unconditional. There is in the covenant of grace no condition that can be considered as meritorious. The sinner is exhorted to repent and believe, but his faith and repentance do not in any way merit the blessings of the covenant. This must be maintained in opposition to both the Roman Catholic and the Arminian position. Neither is it conditional in the sense that man is expected to perform in his own strength what the covenant requires of him. In placing him before the demand of the covenant, we must always remind him of the fact that he can obtain the necessary strength for the performance of his duty only from God. In a sense it may be said that God Himself fulfills the condition in the elect. That which may be regarded as a condition in the covenant, is for those who are chosen unto everlasting life also a promise, and therefore a gift of

God. Finally, the covenant is not conditional in the sense that the reception of every separate blessing of the covenant is dependent on a condition. We may say that faith is the "*conditio sine qua non*" of justification, but the reception of faith itself in regeneration is not dependent on any condition, but only on the operation of the grace of God in Christ." However, if all this be true, why and how can one speak of the conditional aspect of the covenant? The professor declares in this paragraph, first of all, that nothing of man is meritorious. Never does man merit anything. Secondly, we are told that man can never perform anything in his own strength. Hence, of himself man cannot merit and he cannot perform anything. Thirdly, we are told that "in a sense it may be said that God Himself fulfills the condition in the elect." And, finally, to make the cycle complete, the professor declares that the reception of not a single blessing is dependent on a condition. Does it not, therefore, become rather difficult to understand how such a covenant relationship between the Lord and His own can also be conditional?

On the other hand, however, Prof. Berkhof would also maintain that the covenant is conditional. We read: "On the other hand the covenant may be called conditional. There is a sense in which the covenant is conditional. If we consider the basis of the covenant, it is clearly conditional on the suretyship of Jesus Christ. In order to introduce the covenant of grace, Christ had to, and actually did, meet the conditions originally laid down in the covenant of works, by His active and passive obedience. Again, it may be said that the covenant is conditional as far as the first entrance into the covenant as a real communion of life is concerned. This entrance is contingent on faith, a faith, however, which is itself a gift of God. When we speak of faith as a condition here, we naturally refer to faith as a spiritual activity of the mind. It is only through faith that we can obtain a conscious enjoyment of the blessings of the covenant. Our experimental knowledge of the covenant life is entirely dependent on the exercise of faith. He who does not live a life of faith is, as far as his consciousness is concerned, practically outside of the covenant. If in our purview we include not only the beginning, but also the gradual unfolding and completion of the covenant life, we may regard sanctification as a condition in addition to faith. Both are conditions, however, within the covenant". This none can dispute. It is surely true that the suretyship of Jesus Christ is basis for God's fellowship with us, that the justice of the Lord must be satisfied before we can again be received into Divine favour (Lord's Day 5). And it is actually true that to enjoy experimentally, experientially, consciously, the blessings of the covenant we must consciously enter into the covenant of faith. But

does this give us the right to speak of the covenant in a conditional sense? Faith itself is a gift of God. And we surely agree with the last sentence of the above quotation: "Both are conditions, however, *within the covenant*". How can something, which belongs to the covenant and constitutes essentially a part of that covenant, be a condition of that covenant? It must be plain, also from this paragraph, that God's covenant with man is not conditional. Man cannot merit anything. Man cannot do anything. Faith itself is a gift of God. Where, then, is the condition of the covenant?

We would therefore maintain the unilateral and unconditional character of the covenant throughout. We can surely subscribe to what Prof. Berkhof writes in the first paragraph on page 281: "Reformed Churches have often objected to the use of the word 'condition' in connection with the covenant of grace. This was largely due to a reaction against Arminianism, which employed the word 'condition' in an un-Scriptural sense, and therefore to a failure to discriminate properly." The undersigned frankly declares that he, too, is afraid of the word "condition" and wonders whether Prof. Berkhof discriminates properly inasmuch as he also believes in the Arminian "Three Points" of 1924 which teach us, e.g., that the gospel of salvation is offered to all the hearers of the gospel, that the "goodness of God would lead all men to repentance". It is well that we speak clearly. Terms, and the use of them, are very important. Wrong terms and ambiguous terms are exceedingly dangerous. We will have opportunity to call attention to this in a subsequent article. To be sure, we may speak of the covenant promises and of covenant obligations. These obligations, however, must not be understood in the sense that we must fulfil them before we can enter into the covenant relationship with the living God, but as the fruit of the grace of God in our hearts. Indeed, we must love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our strength, and with all our soul. We must believe in and on the Lord Jesus Christ unto salvation. We must hope unto the end. We must fight the good fight of faith that no man take our crown. Such is also the language of our Baptism Form: "Thirdly. Whereas in all covenants there are contained two parts: therefore are we by God through baptism, admonished of, and obliged unto new obedience, namely, that we cleave to this one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that we trust in Him, and love Him with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our mind, and with all our strength; that we forsake the world, crucify our old nature, and walk in a new and holy life." That such is our calling is not because our entrance into the covenant is dependant upon our action, but only because *God makes* us His covenant people, saves us as moral-rational beings, does not

destroy but saves us, causes us to will and to do in behalf of His good pleasure.—Phil. 2:12-13.

*God Establishes His Covenant and Maintains It Only Upon the Basis of Christ's Merits and Through the Grace of the Holy Spirit.*

That the covenant of God with man is unilateral throughout receives further emphasis when we view the development of the covenant in the light of Christ's merits and the work of the Holy Spirit. We may now ask ourselves the question: What is Christ's position in the covenant? This is an interesting question. Is Christ the Mediator or Surety or Head of the covenant? The words "Mediator" and "Head" occur frequently in Holy Writ. The word "Mediator" occurs in the following passages: 'Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made: and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.'—Gal. 3:19-20; "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus."—I Tim. 2:5; "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises."—Heb. 8:6; "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."—Heb. 9:15; "And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."—Heb. 12:14. And the word "Head" occurs in passages as the following: "And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the church, Which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."—Eph. 1:22-23; "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church; and He is the saviour of the body."—Eph. 5:23; "And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God."—Col. 2:19.

The word "Surety" occurs but once in Holy Writ, in Heb. 7:22: "By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament." The idea of the word "Surety" ('Borg' in the Holland) is plain. Christ is our Surety because He assumes our responsibilities to the law, is our guarantee before the Lord that our guilt is paid and that we are entitled to life everlasting. We need not at this time discuss the question whether Jesus is our Surety conditionally or unconditionally. This question, too, has been discussed in the past. If Christ be our Surety in the conditional sense, the idea would be that He undertakes to pay our guilt but the burden

of our guilt remains upon us until it have been paid. If Christ be our Surety in the unconditional sense of the word, the burden of our guilt is removed from us regardless whether or not He pays our debt. We understand, of course, that Jesus is our Surety in the unconditional sense of the word. Although the word "Surety" occurs but once in Holy Writ, its idea appears frequently in the Scriptures. That Christ alone is our guarantee before God and that He alone constitutes the basis of our assurance to draw nigh unto the throne of God's grace is taught everywhere in the Bible, as in Heb. 10:14-22: "For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Wherefore the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that He had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

We understand, of course, that those who speak of the covenant as an agreement or a contract, emphasize the use of the words "Mediator" and "Surety" and do not favor the use of the word "Head". According to their view the covenant is an agreement or a contract between the Lord and His people. Christ, then, stands outside of the covenant. He is the Mediator of the covenant, represents His people, intervenes between them and the Lord. Or, He is their Surety, the guarantee or basis of their assurance to draw nigh unto the Lord. But Jesus is not the Head of the covenant. To be the Head of the covenant would imply that He Himself belonged to that covenant, that He, therefore, Himself would be in need of salvation. Hence, with Christ the covenant is not established. Surely, He did or does not need salvation.

However, in the first place, Christ is surely our Surety. This is abundantly evident throughout Holy Writ. He alone constitutes the basis of our assurance to draw nigh unto the throne of God's grace. It is only because of Him that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Apart from Him we are yet in our sins. Because of Him, and of Him alone, our sins are forgiven, our guilt is paid, and we have the right to everlasting life. To quote the Word of God in support of this truth is surely not necessary.

Secondly, Jesus Christ is surely our Head. Our

Head He is, first of all, in the organic sense of the Word. He is our life and we live only in and through Him. "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone (the idea of 'corner stone' here is surely the same as 'Head'—H.V.); In Whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; In Whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."—Eph. 2:20-22. "Which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."—Eph. 1:23. "And He is the Head of the body, the church: Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell."—Col. 1:17-18. But Jesus is also our Head in the judicial, representative sense of the word. Christ dies because *He* must suffer and die. In Isaiah 53:4-6, 10 the thought is emphasized that *God* bruised and crushed Him because *our* sins were upon Him. This was a punitive act of God. And in Luke 12:50 we hear Him exclaim: "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straightened till it be accomplished!" And in the baptism of Jesus by the Baptist in the river Jordan, Christ assumes the cross and sets His face toward Jerusalem. The modernist proclaims a Christ who lives and is dead; the Scriptures proclaim a Christ who dies and lives forevermore. Fact is, Jesus is appointed the Head of the Covenant by the Triune God. And because of this Headship He assumes our guilt, our relation to the law, is therefore guilty Himself, must suffer and die. For Him the way into life and glory lay only through death and hell.

Thirdly, Christ is also our Mediator. This, we understand, does not mean that He appeases an avenging God. That Christ is our Mediator cannot mean that He stands between God and us, that He changes a God of hate into a God of love, and that in that sense He brings God and man together. Christ, we must remember, is the living God Himself. In Christ the living God is our Mediator. Besides, in Christ God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish but have everlasting life.—John 3:16. Christ, therefore, did not change a God of hate into a God of love, but, to the contrary, in Christ the unchangeable Jehovah reveals His eternal love to His people. Even so, and understood in that sense of the word, Christ is our Mediator. He surely represents us before the Lord. He is the eternal High Priest, Who enters for us into the Holy of holies, prays and makes continuous intercession for us. And we approach unto God through Him, have fellowship with the alone blessed Lord only through our Lord Jesus Christ, Who of God is made wisdom for us, righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

Hence, our covenant fellowship with God is established by Christ and in Christ. It is possible only through Christ. And it therefore lies in the very nature of the case that also for this reason God's covenant with His people must be regarded as monopoleuric, unilateral. To this we will call attention, the Lord willing, in our following article.

H. Veldman.

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## God Seeing The Blood

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We now turn to the 12th chapter of the Book of Exodus and thereof the 13th verse and read, "And the blood shall be unto you for a token upon the houses where ye are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you, to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt." The ninth plague of the three days darkness has come and gone. But, so it is again stated in chapter 11:27, "the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go." Then the word of the Lord came again to Pharaoh saying, "Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence; . . . The Lord then reveals to Moses that this night he will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt. Moses in turn communicates this revelation to Pharaoh and his servants. But Pharaoh's heart is hard, and he will not let the people go. Moses knew beforehand that such again would be Pharaoh's reaction; for the Lord has told him in these words, "Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you; that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt." Then the word of the Lord again comes to Moses and Aaron saying, "Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, in the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb. . . . a lamb for each house. . . . And ye shall keep it, that is, the lamb, up until the fourteenth day of the same month, and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. . . . For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the princes of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord". And this is followed by the words of my text. We realize, to be sure, that we have to do here with a symbol, type, with a picture, if you will. The blood on the side posts and on the upper door posts of each and every Israelitish dwelling, struck there by the occupants of these dwellings, in obedience to the Lord's command, betokens the blood of Christ, that He shed for the sins of His people: it signifies, does the blood on those posts,

the very life of Christ which He laid down for His sheep. Accordingly, in the ninth chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews one may read, "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing, which was a figure—mark you, which was a figure—for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience." Here it is literally stated that the first tabernacle of Moses—was a figure, and that therefore also the sacrifices offered therein—including the sacrifices by blood—were figures, pictures, prophetic types. Prophetic types of what? The answer is the 11th and 12th verses of the chapter from which I just quoted. These verses read, "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Here then it is taught that those animal sacrifices, or, speaking more definitely, that those lambs that were slain on the evening of Israel's departure from Egypt prefigured in their totality, Christ Jesus, the true lamb of God, who by His shed blood cleanses His people from all their sins. Wherefore also the apostle Peter, writing to the strangers scattered abroad, sayeth, "For as much as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversations, received by tradition from your fathers; but by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without spot or blemish.' ' And Paul, in his first epistle to the Corinthians admonishes the church in Corinth in this wise, "Purge out therefore the old leaven that we may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is slain for us."

Now just what is definitely the reality set forth in our text? It is this: Seeing the resurrected and glorified Christ, the lamb, as he has been slain, God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, will not destroy His people, covered with Christ's blood,—will not destroy His people with the wicked, when He comes in judgment over the world—He will not destroy them, but seeing the blood, the shed blood of Christ, will pass over them, deliver them from all their enemies, and bring them into the promised land of their abode, the heavenly Canaan, the new earth, where the tabernacle of God is with men.

But there is this question. Just why does God, seeing the blood, pass over His people, refrain from sweeping them into everlasting desolation with the wicked when He comes in judgment over the world? If it is a question of the sovereign reason of God's deciding to spare His people, the answer is not the

Lamb's blood upon His people. What would it mean were this true? It would mean that Christ is not the Christ of God but the Christ of man. It would mean, further, that man of himself can will to believe, and that the faith by which he lays hold on the Christ, that His blood may be upon him, is original with man and is thus not God's gift in him. But we know that the Christ is the Christ of God, God's very own provision. The very surroundings of my text brings this clearly out. The lamb whose shed blood God wanted to see on the door posts of those Israelitish dwellings is God's Lamb, His very own creature. The commands that it be slain; that the families in Israel strike its shed blood on the door posts of their dwellings; that they eat its flesh roasted with fire, eat it with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, and their staff in their hands; and eat it in haste, were all commands that originated with God, not with His people, and efficaciously spoken by Him in their hearts and on this account also obeyed and only on this account obeyed. Thus the entire institution with which we here deal, is in all its details and as to each and every rite connected with it, solely God's conception and creation. And thus it also speaks of things that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.

Christ is the Christ of God. Verily He is. He was ordained, appointed, sent of God the Father, not of man. He was qualified for His office by the Holy Ghost. The virgin of whom He was born as to His human nature was overshadowed by the Holy Spirit. He was as the tender plant and as a root out of a dry ground. The Spirit of *the Lord* rested 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 made him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. He is the only man who hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father. He was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. And in Him, God was reconciling the world—God's world, not man's world—to Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. And God raised him up to sit on His throne, gave Him all power in heaven and on earth, and set him a great highpriest over the house of God; and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He hath shed forth this on the Church. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then He also himself shall be subject unto Him that put all things under His feet, that God may be all in all. Verily, Christ is the Christ of God.

But Christ would still be the Christ of man were it true that man of himself can want to be saved and that the faith by which he appropriates the Christ is original with man and is not a gift of God in him.

Christ would still be the Christ of man were it true if God's will according to which he hardens the Pharaohs of all time, is determined by their unbelief—an unbelief that God foresaw but could not determinedly foreknow, so that God has no other choice but to destroy them. Christ would still be the Christ of man, man's servant over which man exercises a sovereign control, if God's will according to which He saves His people were determined by His people's willingness to believe—a willingness that God foresaw but could not determinedly foreknow—thus a willingness that originated not in God's will and grace but in the hearts of His people. But Christ is the Christ of God. Through Him, the Christ, God hardens whom He will, and hath mercy on whom He will have mercy. It cannot be otherwise. For God's believing people as well as the Esaus and the Pharaohs are by nature dead in sin. But God, the God and Father of Christ's God, who hath mercy on whom He will have mercy, saves them unto Himself. Christ is the Christ of God. This being true, it cannot be that the lamb's blood upon His people determines God's decision to pass them over. This cannot be. For according to the Scriptures, God hath mercy upon His people because He will have mercy upon them; and was eternally decided to have mercy upon them in Christ. And for the realization of this divine decree Christ is the means. This suggests the connection between the blood upon God's people and His passing them over. That blood upon them is the shed blood of a lamb—God's lamb—without blemish.

It is the blood that Christ shed in payment of the guilt, the moral debt, of all His people's transgressions of God's law in word, deed and thought of yesterday, today and tomorrow. That shed blood upon them fully and generously covers all their moral debt, covers their guilt in the sense not of concealing it before God but of cancelling it, so that it no longer exists and is thus as truly and actually cancelled as a poor man's debt in dollars and cents, is actually and truly covered and thus cancelled by the generous check of a friend ordering the bank to pay money equivalent to that debt. So then is the shed blood of Christ, the Christ Himself, as He has been slain, the payment of the guilt, the moral debt, of His people, thus their satisfaction, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. And, therefore, beholding the blood upon His people, the Christ as He has been slain, God sees no sin in His people. Their sins are covered, so that in Christ they are without blame and holy before God. For it pleased God to bruise Him and to put Him to grief for our iniquities and to make His soul an offering for sin. But there is now further this question: How could God lay the transgression of His people upon Christ and impute Christ's righteousness unto His people. Christ and His people are one, He being their head and they

His body, both judicially and organically, He, the Son of God incarnate. To this truth and fact the Scriptures give expression by saying that with Him, their Christ, His people were crucified, buried, raised from the dead, and set in heaven and blessed with all spiritual blessings. But this does not yet fully answer the questions how God could afflict and punish a man by himself innocent for the sins of men by themselves guilty. Christ is not a mere man; He is man and God, two natures, human and divine, united in one person, the person of the Son of God. This being true, it was very God Himself—God the Son, atoning the Sins of His people in His human nature.

God's passing over His people—its an amazing doing on the part of God. How can He pass that people over? It is a question that will not be quelled. For by themselves that people are worthy of being destroyed with the wicked. For by themselves they are just as dead in their sins as the others, just as guilty, just as hateful of God, just as contrary, perverse and rebellious. And God is righteous and holy God, with eyes too pure to behold sin. And yet He passes them over! The only solution is Christ, the Lamb, as He hath been slain. His blood covers their sins. Thus, in passing over His people, God passes over a people blameless and holy, not in themselves but in Christ. In loving His people, God loves a people blameless and holy not in themselves but in their Christ. In delivering His people from the bondage of sin and the power of Satan, He delivers a people blameless and holy not in themselves but in Christ. Its the only kind of people He can love, pass over, deliver and save unto Himself, namely, a people blameless and holy before Him not in themselves but in Christ. Hence, He chose them before the foundation of the world in Christ. Were there no Christ in His counsel, He could not have chosen them at all. For He cannot possess His people otherwise than in Christ. So don't say that God loves sinners and put a period here; but say that God loves His people, by nature undone and lost sinners to be sure, but blameless and holy in Christ. And being holy and righteous God, it is the only people whom He can love and bless and save, namely, that people whom He chose in Christ and upon whom He put Christ's blood; and it is the only people that He may love, and wants to love and save, and can love and save, that people that He eternally willed to possess in Christ. His very own righteousness and holiness forbids Him to save or desire or will to save anybody not belonging to this people. This precisely is the message of my text, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you."

But my text contains still another thought. Since God has chosen His people in Christ and put upon them Christ's blood, He also must save them. His own righteousness demands it. For it is a people covered by the blood, thus a people blameless and holy in Christ, a

people therefore in whom God can behold no sin. How could God, Christ's God not save such a people without denying Himself.

And let us in fine emphasize the fact and truth that God's people are clothed with the satisfaction and righteousness of Christ. Hence, not alone that their sins are no more, being cancelled by Christ's blood upon them, but in addition God's people are also immensely rich in Christ. For Christ's righteousness merited with God. It called for a reward, the reward of life everlasting. And therefore as vested with the imputed righteousness of Christ, this reward is theirs, too, in Christ. With Christ they heir a life of heavenly glory in God's heavenly house. Thus God not only passes His people over, refrains from destroying them with the wicked, but He also delivers them from their spiritual bondage and makes them to inherit the earth—the new earth, where His tabernacle is with them. So are God's people a redeemed people, a people bought with a price, bought from the bondage of sin and the devil, thus redeemed from God's own wrath, curse. For what is the spiritual bondage, and all the nameless sorrows that are the portion of men, but the operation of the curse of God in them?

G. M. Ophoff.

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## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

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### David Flees To Nob

David in co-operation with Jonathan has put Saul to a final test; and it has once more become evident that the king is truly determined to kill David, and that therefore His past attempts on the life of the son of Jesse, cannot be attributed to the attacks of madness by which the king is periodically being visited. Having been fully informed by Jonathan of Saul's reactions, David takes his journey and comes to Nob to Amelech the priest. Here at this time was the tabernacle. The position of Nob was near Jerusalem. Ahimelech is the same person with Ahiah (14:3); he was the son of Ahitub (22:9,20), the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, therefore great-grandson of Eli. The designation *priest* here is *highpriest*, as in 14:3.

David betakes himself to Nob not to find shelter and concealment with the priests, not even to inquire God's will concerning his further way, but to provide himself with arms and food for his continued flight to the Philistines, definitely to Achish, the king of Gath, as appears from the sequel. David is not alone; accompanying him are some faithful followers, which he now appoints "to such and such a place", that is,

leaves near by in order to speak privately with the highpriest. It is true that there is no mention of servants during and after David's interview with Jonathan, nor afterwards in his flight to Gath. But in Mark 11:25, 26, it is stated that there were men with David. "Have ye never read," said Christ to the Pharisees, "what David did, when he had need, and was an hungered, he, and they that were with him? How he went into the house of God. . . . and did eat the shewbread. . . . and gave also to them that were with him?" These servants may have joined themselves to David later on. This need not be considered strange. There must have been many others besides Jonathan to whom David had endeared himself by his slaying of the Philistine Goliath and by his other ventures of faith as captain in Saul's army. In view of this, it is not anything to be surprised at that David appears at Nob with some attendants. These faithful followers remained with him to the Philistine border.

It is only a desperate need of food and arms that can explain the action that David now takes. Arriving at Nob, he appoints his men some place at which to meet him, and goes alone to the highpriest. Seeing him, Ahimelech was afraid. "Why art thou alone, and no man with thee," says he to David. The priest evidently knows of Saul's hatred to David. His being alone doesn't look well to Ahimelech. Something dreadful must have happened. Just what, he has no idea. But he fears the worst. But just why is the priest afraid? Does he love David on account of the latter's achievements of faith? Has he, too, chosen David's side? Does he pity him in his distress? If the opportunity presents itself, will he help David to place himself beyond the reach of Saul's wrath? If so, the priest's fear proceeds from his concern for David. But Ahimelech is not afraid for David's sake. He thinks only of himself. He is concerned solely about his own well-being. He surmises that David flees from the wrath of Saul; and it has him worried. David has come to Nob; and as a result the city of priests is now under a cloud. At the moment he wishes that David were any place but in Nob.

That the priest is afraid for himself; that consequently he is capable of sending David on his way empty-handed, if his surmisings turn out to be correct, is plainly also David's conviction. He not only withholds from the priest the truth about himself, but in order to get Ahimelech to give him the needed food and arms, he thinks it necessary to quiet his apprehension by a double lie. Says he to Ahimelech, "The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know anything of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed my servants—David's own attendants—to such and such a place." David again

takes recourse to an atrocious lie to bring relief to himself in a difficult situation. As has already been made plain, he is not standing in his faith at this time. Without pausing to hear what Ahimelech might have to say in reply, David states his request; for he has haste and is eager. "Now what is under thine hand? give me five loaves of bread in mine hand, or what there is present."

The priest's fears have been quieted. It seems not to occur to him that David may be lying. If the son of Jesse goes about the king's business, the priest is only too willing and eager to grant the request. It so happens, however, that there is no common bread under his hand; the only bread he has is holy. It is bread that is laid up in the tabernacle, as the offering of the twelve tribes to the Lord, before His face, and thence called "Bread of presence shew-bread" (Exodus 25:30; 35:13; 39:36; 40:23). They had just been taken away to be replaced by fresh ones. This bread could be eaten only by the priests in the holy place (Lev. 29:8). There is then this difficulty. But to Ahimelech it is not insurmountable. For he wants David to have this bread. For the king has commanded him a business. He must be helped. So, if the young men have kept themselves at least from women, the bread is David's. Ahimelech correctly perceives that thereby the law of Levitical purity is satisfied, in as much as the circumstances justify the departure from the law concerning the eating of the shewbread. The eating of the holy bread was not absolutely forbidden to the laity in case of urgent necessity. Christ Himself justifies this divergence from the letter of the law on the ground that its observance would violate the inner spirit of the law, which is love to God and the neighbour. But such divergence is allowable only with respect to Israel's ceremonial precepts of the law. For they were destined to wax old and vanish away. But the ethical law of God—the law of the ten commandments—abideth forever. To this law there can be no exceptions ever.

David asserts that he and his men are pure in this regard. "Of a truth women have been kept from us about these three days, since I came out, and the vessels of the young men are holy. . . ." In the words "yesterday and the day before" David must refer to his three days' hiding in the field. By the *vessels of the young men* are doubtless to be understood the clothing with reference to Lev. 15:18, a text that bears on the defilement of garments by seminal discharge. The garments of David's men were clean. Or the word *vessel* may also refer to packs and sacks for the journey. Such articles as well as persons might become unclean, according to Lev. 11:32. As holy bread could be carried only in vessels that were levitically clean, David says that the sacks of the men were holy in starting, in order to assure the priest that

there is no legal objection to their taking the bread. David concludes with saying, "And the way is unholy, yea, but it will be sanctified this day by the vessel." This is a difficult statement. The thought conveyed probably is, "Though it is an unholy way that we go, namely, in performing the king's commission, it is today sanctified by the vessels." The priest gives David the hallowed bread.

There is still the question why David appointed his men to a certain place and goes alone to Nob. The reason he gives to the priest is fictitious. For he has no commandment of the king. It may be that he is afraid that his appearing in Nob as accompanied by his men would attract to himself too much attention.

Mention is now made of a servant of Saul, Doeg the Edomite. The purpose is to reveal the divine providence by which the lie, intended to conceal the position and flight of David, rather leads to the destruction of Nob and its inhabitants. A certain man of the servants of Saul is there that very day. This is stated first in order to show that though David wants to keep his way hidden from Saul, the latter receives information of his visit to this very place. David's lie must be exposed, and the sentence pronounced over Eli's house by Samuel executed in the destruction of Nob and the priests that dwell there. The text states that this servant of Saul was detained before the Lord. He is housed in the holy place for some religious or ceremonial purpose, and as committed to the custody of the priests, who ministered in the sanctuary. He may be a proselyte who just at this time is being received by circumcision into the commonwealth of Israel; or he may be fulfilling a vow as a proselyte of some years. There are still other possible explanations for his presence in the priestly city at this time. He may have been received for a purification offering or for suspected leprosy. His name was Doeg, an Edomite. He had probably joined himself to Saul in his war with Edom. He was "chiefest of the herdmen that belonged to Saul," thus ruler of Saul's herdmen. Such is his social position, which must have been a prominent one. For at that time the possession of herds was important as a family-power.

As to David, besides food, he needed arms. He had fled without arms. "For I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me", he says to the priest. The reason he gives is that the king's business required haste, literally *pressed*. He carries out to the end his pretence of the royal commission. "Is there not here under thine hand spear or sword?" he asks. The priest answers, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah, behold it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod." How it came hither is nowhere stated. David had

carried Goliath's armour to his tent (11:54). Afterward the sword was deposited in the sanctuary for safe-keeping. To protect it against dust, moisture, and rust, it was wrapped in a cloth and kept in the holy place. It being deposited here was a work of faith bearing witness to the fact that David's victory over the Philistine was the Lord's. The priest tells David that he may have the sword, if he wants it. "There is none like that; give it me." David placed great value on this sword for him. His saying, "there is none like it," undoubtedly has reference also to his deed of faith by which he had overcome an adversary from the point of view of nature invincible. The weapon therefore is holy. It promises new victories to David in the way of implicit trust in the Lord. As such David receives it.

Provided with arms and bread, David flees to Gath, to the Philistine king Achish. It is stated that he arose and fled *that day*. What it shows is that he stayed in Nob only long enough, not to consult the oracle—such is the meaning that some interpreters find in this notice—but only to procure arms and food. David seeks safety with the heathen not as commanded by the Lord but as following the dictates of his unbelief. "And David fled that day for fear of Saul. . . ." meaning that in leaving Nob he was still a fugitive, fleeing from the wrath of the king. David wants the Philistines to think that he has abandoned his subjection to Saul as his king and lord and has deserted to king Achish and into a foreign country.

The servants of Achish recognize the fugitive. It could be expected, for the time that had elapsed since his victorious combat with Goliath was too short. They seeing who he is, his appearance in their midst as a fugitive and deserter, astonishes them. For they remember what he has done for his country by that venture of faith. They introduce David into the presence of their master, and they say to him, "Is not this David the king of the land? Did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?" David's exploit had made on them a great impression in their idea concerning his position in his nation and country. They call him king of the land. David had appeared as such in taking up the challenge of Goliath. Afterwards as captain in Saul's army he had dealt them one telling blow after another. These exploits had thrown Saul entirely in the shade. This impression was deepened by their recollection of the song of triumph in which David had been honored above Saul. But are they afraid because they think that David came to them with evil intent, or are they overjoyed in their imagining that such a one as he has deserted to their country? The latter is the case, it would seem. For they lead David into the presence of Achish, meaning

pleasantly to surprise him with their find, it seems.

But David lays up the words of the servants in his heart, and is sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath. Whether he has reasons to be afraid, the text does not state. But his fear can be explained. He pursues a wrong course. Instead of making the Lord his expectation, he poses as a deserter to his people and country in order to gain the protection of the Philistine Achish against Saul. But he ponders the words of the servants; and he concludes that he has every reason to be afraid of Achish, without the king having said one word. But if he is afraid, why does he not leave Gath? Is he not free to go? Are they holding him captive? The text does not bring this out. It must be supposed, however, that he is free to return to his country, if he so chooses. But he dare not. He is a captive not of the Philistines but of his own fear. Doubtless he is afraid that, should he depart from their midst, they would not fail to conclude that he had come to them as a spy and not as a fugitive and a deserter. So what will he do? The way he sees it now, whether he remains or leaves, in either case he will be killed. What he should do is to depart as believing that no harm will befall him. He cannot be killed. For the Lord has sworn truth unto him. In his unbelief it occurs to him that, should he fain himself mad in their hands, the king will surely drive him from his presence, thinking him to be a harmless idiot. So he changes his behavior before them. He scrabbles on the doors of the gate, and lets his spittle fall down upon his beard. Observing him, Achish actually does conclude that the man is mad. "Lo," he says to his servants, "ye see the man is mad; wherefore then have ye brought him to me? Have I need of mad men, that ye have brought this fellow to play the mad man in my presence? shall this fellow come into my house?" The king may think that the madness of the man explains his deserting into their country. Be this as it may, David now thinks it safe for him to depart. He does so, and escapes to the cave Adullam, perhaps about sixteen miles south-west of Jerusalem, and twelve miles south-east of Gath.

Here his brethren and all his father's house come down thither to him. They go to him in his retreat at Adullam. They have reason to believe that Saul seeks also their lives. Saul looked upon them as sharers in David's presumed conspiracy against him. Along with his family an increasing number of other persons gathered about David. "Every one that was in distress, and every one that was discontented, and every one that was in debt, gathered themselves unto him". The number was about four hundred, but afterwards rose to six hundred. He became captain over them. He has now an army with him. How easy he now can make insurrection against Saul. But he is far from this. It is that much more evidence to Saul

that he seeks the life of a just man. But Saul refuses to be convinced.

G. M. Ophoff.

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## SION'S ZANGEN

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### Eeuwige Goedertierenheid

(Psalm 103; Derde Deel)

Tweemaal hebben we getracht om aan te toonen hoe groot, hoe wonderlijk de goedertierenheid Gods is, die in dezen psalm bezongen wordt. Het is een van de klassieke psalmen uit den bundel der liederen Sions. Gods volk mag hem gaarne zingen.

En het vers waarmee we nu beginnen moeten beschrijft de geweldigheid van die schoone deugd Gods. Goedertierenheid Gods is die deugd van het lieflijke Wezen, waarin Hij Zichzelven dringt om Zijn volk goed te doen, goed te zijn, zoodat Hij uiteindelijk dan ook Zichzelven geven zal aan het object: God zal zijn alles en in allen! Dat is het hart van Zijn goedertierenheid, en ook is het de hemel. Daarin is de staat der algeheele bevrediging. Dan wordt het eeuwiglijk stil, vredig, hemelsch rustig.

"Want zoo hoog de hemel is boven de aarde, is Zijne goedertierenheid geweldig over degenen die Hem vreezen."

Die Hem vreezen!

Daaraan kunt ge het kind Gods onderkennen. Eigenlijk is dat niet geheel correct: *in absoluto* kennen we elkander niet. Ik had moeten zeggen: daaraan kunnen we onszelf kennen. Want dat is zoo. O ja, ik weet wel, dat men in zekere kringen niet gaarne spreekt van "kenmerken". Doch als men hen aandachtig leest, dan kunnen zij het ook niet stellen zonder die "kenmerken". Ook zou ik willen vragen in alle bescheidenheid: als we niet mogen onderzoeken naar kenmerken, waarom zei Jezus dan tot Zijne discipelen: Zalig zijn die honger en dorsten naar de gerechtigheid; die treuren, die rein van hart zijn, enz.? Of ook, waarom zegt Johannes, door den Heiligen Geest: "Wij weten dat wij overgegaan zijn uit den dood in het leven, dewijl wij de broeders liefhebben"? We zouden kunnen voortgaan: het materiaal is rijk en vol van variatie.

Die Hem vreezen!

Ge weet wat dit beduidt. Het is niet de slaafsche vrees die in haar wezen niet anders is dan haat tegenover het voorwerp. Neen, de ware vreeze, de vreeze Gods, is rein; ze opent een fontein van heil, dat nooit vergaat. Haar dierbare leer verspreidt een straal van

billijkheid; daar z' alle onwaarheid haat. Ook is ze meerder waard, dan 't fijnste goud op aard'. Niets kan haar glans verdooven! Ze streeft in heilzaam zoet, tot streeling van 't gemoed, den honig ver te boven.

De Vreeze Gods!

Ze is het beginsel der wijsheid. Ze leert ons den rechten weg te kiezen naar 't Hart van God. Want wijsheid is het bewandelen van de rechte wegen tot het verkrijgen van 't hoogste doel, en dat is God te vinden met prijs en lof in 't diepe hart.

Vreest ge God?

Dan is Zijne goedertierenheid geweldig over U.

Hoe geweldig?

Zoo hoog de hemel is boven de aarde!

Dat zijn ontzettende afstanden. Hier moet ge bij Einstein te rade gaan. Maar 't hoeft niet. Zelfs met het naakte oog, in diepen nacht, kunt ge de verten zien, starende naar de fonkelende starren, die al maar schitteren in 't donker-blauwe zwerk. De afstanden zijn vreeselijk, als we luisteren naar astroloog en physiciest.

Ik denk, dat de zanger door den Heiligen Geest geleerd, die ontzettende afstanden van het heelal benut, omdat er niets grooter en hooger en breeder is dan 't luchtruim. En ook dan nog kunt, moogt ge er bij zeggen: en Zijne goedertierenheid is nog veel grooter en hooger dan de ontelbare lichtjaren van het luchtruim. Want zij is eeuwig en altoos. Dat staat óók in den Bijbel.

Denkt er even aan: God zal tot in eeuwigheid U goed zijn, U het goede werken, en in die goedigheid Gods, Zichzelven aan U *blijven* schenken.

Hier is een voorbeeld: "Zoo ver het Oosten is van het Westen, zóó ver doet Hij onze overtredingen van ons."

Och arme! Wat zal ik daar van zeggen? Ik heb, niet lang geleden, iets gelezen over die afstanden die er zijn tusschen "het Oosten en het Westen", en ik moet belijden, dat mijn verstand duizelt bij het hooren van die lichtjaren, die ontzaglijke afstanden.

En wat is de bedoeling dan van deze vergelijking? Wel, ik denk, dat de Heere met opzet, de grootste afstanden als een voorbeeld gebruikt, om ons te verzekeren, dat de zonden en overtredingen die ons zoo benauwen, nooit meer zullen terugkomen. Ge moet maar eens lezen hoeveel lichtjaren het neemt voor het licht van zekere ster om de aarde te bereiken, en dan voor de aandacht houden, dat achter die zekere ster nog meer diepten van ruimte zijn. Daarom ben ik verzekerd, dat de Heere hiermee bedoelt te zeggen, dat de overtredingen *nooit* meer terugkomen. En dat is goede Bijbelsche leer. De overtredingen zijn weg, uitgedelgd, weggedragen, in het eeuwig vergeetboek. Wees Johannes de Dooper niet op het Lam, dat de zonde der wereld *wegneemt*?

Zóó groot en hoog en geweldig is Gods goedertierenheid over die Hem vreezen, dat Uw zonde nooit meer gezien zal worden.

Is dat niet een onbeschrijflijk goed?

Let er toch op, dat als Uw zonde U blijft, ge om dier zonde wil weggeworpen zult worden tot in de diepten der hel. God zeide eens: De ziel die zondigt, zij zal sterven! Welnu, dat vreeselijk oordeel wordt niet uitgevoerd over U als ge Hem vreest. Dat vreezen van God is een bewijs, dat Jezus voor U gestorven is. Let er op, dat ik niet zeg, dat de vrees Gods de grond is van Uw zaligheid. Neen, maar zij bewijst, dat ge door Hem aangeraakt zijt met een genadige aanraking tot Uw eeuwig heil, want die God éénmaal zóó aanraakt moet naar den hemel. Die kan nooit verloren gaan. Dat is zuiver Evangelie.

Ga nu maar verder, en ge zult nog meer wonderen hooren.

Weer gaat het over een groot goed van die goedertierenheid. En ook weer voor "die Hem vreezen".

Die Hem vreezen!

Het zijn de wedergeborenen, wier leven van boven, van den hemel, doorgedrongen is tot in het bewuste leven, en die daar in het diepe hart vriend geworden zijn van God, hun lieven Vader. Voorheen waren ze vreemdelingen voor God en hun eigen hart. Doch toen "'k door God's Geest aan mijzelf werd ontdekt, toen werd in mijn ziele die *vreeze* gewekt!"

Nu dan, dat volk, die gelukkige menschen die in hun hart en leven de vreeze Gods omdragen, zijn in groote ellende, en dat vanwege hun "*Godvreezend leven!*" Dat zit zoo: zoo spoedig ge openbaart naar buiten, dat ge den Heere liefhebt, en daarom Zijn Naam uitdraagt in Uw leven en wandeling, zoo spoedig komen de Godhaters om U te benauwen. Als daar zijn: de Satan en zijn duivelen; de wereld en haar machten en geweldhebbers; en al de machten en krachten der zonde. Die allen benauwen Gods volk, om Gods wil. Luistert naar dat volk: ze zullen het U vertellen. Eerst door David en dan door Paulus, die Davids klacht gehoord heeft. "Om Uwentwil worden wij den ganschen dag gedood; wij zijn geacht als slachtschapen." Psalm 44 en Rom. 8.

Maar Gods goedertierenheid is geweldig over hen in die ellendige en benauwende toestanden. Want: "Gelijk zich een vader ontfermt over de kinderen, ontfermt Zich de HEERE over degenen die Hem vreezen."

Ge weet toch, dat ontfermen altijd in verband gezet wordt in Gods Woord met ellende en smart?

Gij allen die dit leest kent den berijmden vorm van deze gedachte, en ik zou U willen verzoeken om onze vaderen die den psalm op rijm gezet hebben niet hard te vallen, wanneer ge opmerkt, dat zij verder gegaan zijn dan het letterlijke woord hier. God zegt in dezen psalm, dat Hij Zich ontfermt over U, zoo als een

vader zich ontfermt over de kinderen. Maar de berijmers van den psalm zeggen: *Geen* vader sloeg met grooter mededoogen op 't teeder kroost ooit zijn ontfermende oogen, dan Israel's Heer op ieder die Hem vreest!

Ik zeg: val hen niet hard, want ik geloof, dat zij deze vrijheid hebben om het zoo te veranderen. Dat is een goede verandering. Of, eigenlijk is het geen verandering. Het is de juiste gedachte die verscholen ligt in den psalm. Alle ontferming van vaderen op aarde is slechts een flauwe schaduw van Gods ontferming.

De ontferming Gods!

Het is Zijn eeuwige liefde die in Hem bewogen wordt als Hij U ziet in bloed en tranen en in lijden. Ik heb opzettelijk die volgorde en die woorden gekozen. Het is een andere psalm die ze opgaf. Hun bloed, hun tranen, en hun lijden, zijn dierbaar in Zijn oog. O neen, Hij zal het nooit vergeten hoe ge klaagdet in Uw lijden in diepen nacht. God ontfermt Zich over U.

Ik had nog één element in die omschrijving van Gods ontferming moeten opnemen. Het is dit: Het is die liefde Gods over Zijn volk waarin Hij bewogen wordt over Uw lijden, *met het vaste voornemen om U uit al Uw lijden te verlossen!* Juist deze toevoeging is zoo troostelijk, als we in smart ter neder zitten. God zal uitkomst geven.

En wat is dan die groote ellende waarin we verkeeren?

Ik kan niet alles opnoemen, en daarom zal ik het hart van al onze ellende schetsen.

Voor al in den dag toen dit lied uitgedacht werd en op muziek gezet is, is hij zoo troostrijk voor het ware Israel geweest. Hun grootste smart was de zonde-schuld. Ge mookt ze afzonderlijk indenken. Zonde doet ons schuldig zijn. En schuld roept om straf. En als Gods volk zijn zonde ziet, dan is hij niet alleen in smart over die zonde die hem schuldig doet zijn, doch hij beseft, dat hij tegen den Liefhebber van zijn ziel zondigde. Dit, dit is het meest schrijnende van de ellende van Gds volk. Zij willen volmaakt zijn, en zij kunnen niet.

Dat ziet en hoort God. En dan ontfermt Hij Zich over U.

En het is dit: Hij neemt al Uw smart weg. Voorwerpelijk in de gave van den Christus. Onderwerpelijk door de gave van Christus' Geest die U omzet, reinigt, en uiteindelijk opwekt ten laatsten dage, om U als een reine maagd aan Uw Bruidegom voor te stellen.

Wonderlijke ontferming!

Eeuwige, geweldige goedertierenheid Gods!

Want Hij weet wat maaksel dat wij zijn, gedachtig zijnde dat wij stof zijn."

Zijt ge niet blijde, dat dit vers in den Bijbel staat,

en dat ge er van moogt zingen?

Wie van Gods volk heeft niet met innerlijke ontroering gezongen: "Hij weet wat van Zijn maaksel zij te wachten, hoe zwak van moed, hoe klein wij zijn van krachten, en dat wij stof, van jongsaf, zijn geweest!"

Zullen wij onszelf nu verontschuldigen, en ons achter dezen tekst verbergen, om gieriglijk allerlei zonden te bedrijven? Ik denk, dat als ge deze slangachtige vraag zoudt doen aan Paulus, hij zeggen zou: *Me génoito!* Dat zij verre! Gelijk een adder, werpt hij deze en dergelijke gedachten van zich.

Neen, maar wij worden getroost door de bemoedigende woorden Gods. De Heere weet het, dat wij de zonde, die nog tegen onzen wil in ons overgebleven is, haten met een vreeselijke haat. Daarom zijn er eigenlijk geen zoogenaamde *boezemzonden*. Het is vreeselijk om het te zeggen. Boezemzonden wil zeggen, dat gij sommige zonden *liefhebt*, en dat is niet waar. Door de genade die in onze harten woont heeft de Heere ons geleerd om *alle* zonden te haten, en ik denk, dat we de zoogenaamde boezemzonden nog meer haten dan de anderen.

Maar Hij gedenkt er aan, dat wij stof zijn, zwak van moed en klein van krachten. En dat troost en bemoedigt het kind van God.

Het is eigenaardig, maar alhoewel we elken dag,—wat zeg ik—elk oogenblik zondigen, en terwijl we weten, dat we het zullen blijven doen tot den laatsten snik op aarde, toch blijven we probeeren om volmaakt te leven. Zwak van moed? O ja. Klein van krachten? Zekerlijk, we stemmen het direkt toe. Maar we strijden om Hem welbehaaglijk te zijn. Er zit een rein beginsel in ons; zooeven hebben we er over geschreven: het is de vreeze Gods; en dat kleine beginsel is zóó sterk, dat het ons geheele leven beïnvloedt. Het wil volmaakt voor God leven, alhoewel we het hier nooit zullen benaderen.

En God weet het. En Hij zal, in Zijn eeuwige goedertierenheid, die honger eenmaal bevredigen. Straks ontvangen we de vleugelen van vrije beweging voor Zijn troon.

Daarnaar haakt en verlangt ons hart!

Het is heerlijk Zijn deugden te ervaren.

Geweldige, eeuwige goedertierenheid!

G. Vos.

## SPECIAL NOTICE

Classis West will meet, the Lord willing, on the 3rd of March, 1948. Not in Edgerton, as previously announced, but due to circumstances, in Hull, Iowa. Delegates who desire lodging are kindly requested to contact Rev. A. Cammenga, Hull, Iowa.

Rev. C. Hanko, S. C.

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## IN HIS FEAR

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### False Doctrine and The Fear Of The Lord

*Mutually Exclusive.*

One is sometimes astounded by the outward walk of those who hold to false doctrines. It is not at all a rare thing to find those who hold to Arminian doctrines to all appearances literally bubbling over with spiritual enthusiasm and denying themselves severely the things of the world. Those who peddle the heresy of the Russelites show a peculiar boldness to confess and testify before all others their belief. They dare to meet you in your own home and there to try to sell you their literature and doctrine. They show a far greater interest in a thorough training in Scripture memorization than those who hold to the Reformed truth. Those with the free will doctrine of salvation for all who hear the gospel and of a Jesus who pleads and begs because He wants to save all men head for head are willing to undergo severe hardships and deprivations to bring their message to foreign mission fields. Those who deny that God elected a definite number of *persons*, choosing the very individual by name, from before the foundation of the world and who deny the doctrine of total depravity are far more ready to part with their money for foreign mission activity or radio broadcasting than those who hold to the Scriptural truth that before they were born or had done good or evil, God loved Jacob and hated Esau and that Christ knows His sheep and that He lays down His life only for His sheep.

What shall we say of all this? Shall we say that this is the fear of the Lord? Shall we say that false doctrines tend much more to the fear of the Lord than does the truth? We dare not take that stand. Shall we then say that because of the fruit produced, we must not consider these to be false doctrines? By their fruit ye shall know them, Jesus once said. Does this fruit mean that the tree is good? Is it really good fruit?, could also be asked.

There should be no doubt left in our minds that false doctrines cannot produce the fear of the Lord. The lie can never point out to us the right way. It is the lie just exactly because it points in the wrong direction. A highway marker which has been twisted to point in the wrong direction can only lead you away from the destination you are seeking and for which goal you observed that marker. It is a false director just exactly because it points away from rather than unto your goal. So false doctrines are false just exactly because they give us the *wrong* picture, the *wrong*

idea, the *wrong* teaching and the *wrong* way of life.

If we walk in the fear of the Lord, we must never say that we got there by following a false doctrine. And if we are not walking in His fear, we may not say that this is due to the fact that we have a purer doctrine than those whose way to outward appearances is more in conformity with God's Word. That those with a purer manifestation of the truth walk in a more evil way than those who confess the lie is not due to that purer manifestation of the truth but rather to the failure of that person to live according to his confession. The Pharisees in Jesus' time outwardly performed what men called good works. They were even esteemed for their piety. Yet it was only hypocrisy and not at all the fear of the Lord. Now we do not mean to say that all those who hold any shade of the error are being hypocritical when they pray, worship and contribute to God's kingdom. We may not so judge. But we do say this, that if those who hold to any shade of the lie, who believe in any departure from the truth, no matter what the degree, perform truly good works which are pleasing in God's sight, then it must be the truth which they still possess which has led them in that way.

Yet this does not fully answer our original question. How is it that in Arminian circles, for example, you find more zeal and enthusiasm, at least to all outward appearances, than in those circles which hold to the truth of sovereign election and limited atonement? In the first place we wish to deny that this is true. We grant the fact that those who hold to Arminianism are very, very active in their church affairs and are ready to stand on the street corner and plead and beg with sinners. We grant that you can almost always find them ready to speak of spiritual things and speak in glowing terms of their love for their saviour. We are not afraid either to grant that they are full of missionary zeal for the unchurched. Their very doctrine instills them with that zeal and even brings it to fever pitch. As far as the things of emotionalism are concerned, they are all there. For Arminianism is a doctrine which plays upon the emotions. It pictures a Jesus who weepingly pleads and begs and must go away disappointed if you do not let Him come in. In that respect Jesus Himself was a very cold, phlegmatic preacher, for He states, "No man can come unto Me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him", John 6:44. There is no play upon the emotions there. One might almost accuse Jesus of throwing cold water upon the enthusiasm of those who listened to Him. And, of course, that text in Rev. 3:20 where Jesus is pictured as standing at the door and knocking, if you have read it in its content and not simply lifted it out of its place, you know that Jesus is standing at the door of the corrupt church at Laodicea which is not pleasing to Him anymore. It does not refresh Him

for it is neither cool nor hot but lukewarm. He is about to spew it out of His mouth, so loathsome is it to Him. But before He does so, He calls to His elect, regenerated people in His grace and calls them to open the door of the church in order to come out of it, and then Christ will come in and sup with him. Into that church He cannot come to sup with them. Surely nowhere in the text itself is there any play of emotionalism by Christ to plead for man to open the door. Be that all as it may, it is not strange that the Arminian doctrine appeals to those who are emotionally inclined. It was concocted just exactly to catch the fancy of such people. We must sharply distinguish between emotional enthusiasm pure and simple and the spiritual enthusiasm and joy which the truth works in God's people. But let us consider this question: where in Arminian circles is there that enthusiasm for Christian School instruction for their own covenant youth? They will undergo much to bring their messages to the foreign mission field, but they lack enthusiasm for their own children's spiritual education and well being. Where do you find among Arminian circles the catechetical training by the church to the youth in these doctrines? These things take spiritual enthusiasm! And look at the worldly amusements and practices they are willing to condone and practice! They are not strict in their walk of life in spite of their apparent enthusiasm to save the whole world for Jesus. They condone the lodge, worldly unions, the theatre, to mention a few things. And in as far as any church has Arminian tendencies and doctrines, it will continue in that way. Any enthusiasm which abides in one's soul by way of false doctrine cannot lead him in the way of real spiritual zeal for God's cause and precepts.

Nor is it difficult, to limit ourselves momentarily to Arminianism as we have begun to do, to understand this enthusiasm which Arminianism instills. If we believe that it is all up to man and that he can be persuaded to accept Christ by our work and we thereby receive another star in our crown and have made God's church larger and have added to the number of the elect thereby, then we can be filled with zeal and enthusiasm to strive to persuade everyone who comes our way. A doctrine which makes man something and attributes a little good to him so that he can at least will to be saved tickles man's fancy and pride, and it makes him feel like doing something.

Naturally we are not advocating or defending the position that we must not have spiritual enthusiasm and must not be eager to preach the gospel far and wide and put forth all our efforts in that direction. We are not advocating the fatalistic philosophy that since God elected definite persons by name and a definite number of these, we need not be so concerned, for God will see to it that these are all saved. Such fatal-

ism, though not the product of emotionalism and the false doctrine of Arminianism, is due simply to spiritual laziness and the fact that such a person does not really believe the Scriptural doctrine of election. False doctrine does not work in one the spiritual enthusiasm and zeal which pleases God, but the doctrines of Scripture do, and if we really believe these doctrines, we will grow in the fear of the Lord so that we are very diligent about our calling to preach the gospel everywhere and to witness of the truth in all that we do. John the Baptist was a man filled with zeal for the kingdom of heaven, the like of which cannot be found in the person of any Arminian preacher past or present, yet the Scriptures nowhere picture him as an emotionalistic pleading Arminian playing upon the emotions of his hearers. He did not plead with them to come before it is too late. He rebuked. He demanded repentance. He did not beg for it. "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come. Bring forth fruits therefore meet for repentance", is how he addressed to Scribes and Pharisees. He had zeal for God's kingdom. He had the truth, and he believed in election. His belief in election did not dampen his zeal or cause him to be fatalistic and lax. And if we are lax in missionary zeal it is not because with the mouth we confess the truth of election. It is because it is not deeply rooted in our hearts.

But that false doctrine can never lead us into the fear of the Lord ought to be plain from all the pages of Holy Writ as one follows the historical line laid down therein. When did the fear of the Lord cease? What brought about its termination? False doctrine. The devil brought the lie. And embracing that lie, man said in his heart that he was through with the Lord. He lost his respect, his awe and reverence for God and dared to disobey His command. And it was the Word of God, the Truth that brought him back again. God spoke to fallen man and showed him the way. By His Word and Spirit God restored in principle in fallen man the fear of the Lord.

Read the book of Judges. When Israel comes in contact with the false doctrines of the image worship of the false gods of the heathen round about them, they no longer live in the fear of the Lord. They forsake God. That same thing is true of the New Dispensation church. When it accepts false doctrines it accepts a way which leads away from the worship and service of God. When it preaches false doctrine, it tells its members to walk in a way which is not the fear of the Lord. Look at the Roman Catholic Church with its image and saint worship! What is there that is strict about the walk demanded of the members of this church. Divorce is strongly condemned and forbidden, but not for the sake of the fear of the Lord. It is forbidden for the sake of the fear lest the Roman

Catholic Church in the future be broken up and be of smaller membership. But I can go to Mass Sunday morning and play golf or go to the movie in the afternoon, when I accept the false doctrines of that church. False doctrines NEVER lead any one or even encourage anyone in the fear of the Lord.

There is another side we would like to consider next time. The fear of the Lord never promotes false doctrine either. More of this later.

J. A. Heys.

## FROM HOLY WRIT

### A God Unto Thee

One of the most unique and significant expressions in Scripture is the repeated statement, "I will be a God unto thee".

Lest we imagine that this simply refers to the fact that God is the sovereign Lord over all the earth, Who governs all things by the Word of His power and according to the purpose of His will, we do well to note at once, that this is a divine promise. It is the assurance that God gives to His covenant people in Christ, bestowing upon them all the blessings of salvation which He has prepared for them in Christ. All the blessedness of God's covenant is expressed in the simple words, "I will be a God unto thee".

#### *A Covenant God.*

When God established His covenant with Abraham, He says,

"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". Gen. 17:7.

And when Moses is sent to deliver Israel from the bondage of Egypt to bring them to the land that God had promised to Abraham, the Lord says to Israel:

"And I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you a God. And ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians". Ex. 6:7.

Therefore God is repeatedly called the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob. Often He is called the God of their fathers, or the God of Israel, (especially in the prophecy of Jeremiah); or He declares, "I am thy God, and ye are My people".

What is true of spiritual Israel in the old dispensa-

tion, is likewise true of the church of the new dispensation. God is also their God, for He spoke in prophecy through Jeremiah, saying,

"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 I will be their God, and they shall be My people". Jer. 31:33.

If there should be any doubt that this refers to the church of the new dispensation, this doubt is immediately removed as soon as we note that this prophecy is quoted in Heb. 10:16 as referring to the New Testament church.

In that sense God is also called "the God and Father of Jesus Christ," for Christ is the Head of His people in God's covenant, since God has chosen them in Him from eternity. Prophetically Psalm 89 states of Him,

"He shall cry unto Me, Thou art My Father, My God, and the Rock of My salvation. Also I will make Him My firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for Him for evermore, and My covenant shall stand fast with Him". Psalm 89:26-28.

No wonder that Ephesians 1:3, 4 declares,

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has 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 blameless before Him".

Only in Christ is God's covenant promise realized, so that God says to His people chosen and redeemed in Christ, "I will be a God unto thee".

#### *A Deliverer.*

A God must be able to deliver. He must be mighty to save. Our God must deliver us from the dominion of sin and death, and take us unto Himself in His covenant, if He is actually to be a God unto us. This idea is expressed repeatedly in Scripture. As, for example, when Jacob fled to Laban in order to preserve God's covenant from the destruction threatened by Esau,

"And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God". Gen. 28:20, 21.

When God gives His law to Israel at Sinai, He reminds them,

"I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage".

When Isaiah speaks with holy irony about the foolishness of Israel's worship, he says,

"He burneth part thereof in the fire. With part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied. Yea, he warmeth himself and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire. And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image; he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me, for thou art my god".

This sin is the more abominable, because Israel seeks deliverance from a vain idol before the face of the living God, Who alone is able to deliver. God maintains,

"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". Isaiah 43:11, 12.

The covenant God delivers His people from sin and destruction, to take them unto Himself as His people forever.

"Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions. But I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them. So shall they be My people, and I will be their God." Ezek. 37:23.

#### *A Covenant Fellowship.*

"I will be a God unto thee," expresses also a relation of covenant fellowship between God and His people. God is a God to them by dwelling among them. This is literally expressed in Ex. 29:45,

"And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God."

And also in Psalm 46:5, 7,

"God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved. God shall help her, and that right early. . . . The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah".

The prophet Zephaniah tells us that God dwells among His people because He loves them, rejoices in them with joy and with singing. Zeph. 3:17. Which must mean, that it is joy and blessedness for His people to experience that fellowship of God. They stand before His face, draw near to Him in worship, delight in His presence, rejoice in His blessedness and extol His praises in wonder and adoration. It is good for them to draw near to God.

John on Patmos sees the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared

as a bride adorned for her husband. And he hears a great voice out of heaven saying,

"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." Rev. 21:3.

The fulness of eternal salvation is expressed in the glorious promise.

"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall by my son." Rev. 21:7.

That, according to Hebrews 11:16 is God's self-vindication overagainst His people in this present world of sin and misery. There we meet the amazing statement,

"Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared for them a city."

This can only mean, that otherwise God might have good reason to be ashamed that He ever roused the hopes of His people with the promise that He would be their God. For what does He do for His people, as far as their earthly advantage is concerned? They are strangers upon the earth and aliens in the world. Often they go about as paupers, even though they are called princes. They fight a long and oftentimes wearisome battle against the powers of wickedness that beset them on every side. They are despised and mistreated. And they also must walk in the midst of suffering and death in this present time. Wicked men do not seem to suffer as they do. Yet, in spite of all that, God is not ashamed to be called their God. For the simple reason that He has prepared for them a city.

That city is heavenly, spiritual, eternal. It is the living fellowship with God and all the saints about the throne. All the suffering of this present time cannot weigh up against that glory that awaits them. They are absolutely sure that they will receive this blessed fellowship from their God, for He has prepared it for them. He never fails to accomplish all that He has set out to do. And His promises are sure; they never fail.

No wonder that God is not ashamed to be called the God of His people. The heavenly city He has prepared for them.

#### *A Calling to Holiness.*

It naturally follows that this promise carries with it a calling to holiness, obedience and fear.

"Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Deut. 6:4, 5.

"For I am the Lord that bringeth you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. Ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy." Lev. 11:45.

"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Micah 6:8.

From these various passages it becomes evident, that the calling to holiness follows upon God's work of grace in the heart, whereby God becomes our God. It is only possible to hear and to obey that calling through that work of grace in our hearts. It is the fruit of the establishment of God's covenant with us.

It is also a covenant obligation. God is the holy God, Who can have no fellowship with sin. He abhors sin and holds Himself afar from sinners. "Thy testimonies, Lord, in faithfulness excel; and holy must Thy servants be who in Thy temple dwell." Psalm 93.

And finally the most grievous sins are those committed in the sphere of God's covenant. It took a Judas to betray the Christ. It was a Peter who denied Him. Israel's sin is always spiritual adultery.

*"Thou Art My God."*

Finally, God's assurance, "I will be thy God," finds an echo in the heart of the believer, whereby he confesses: "Thou art my God.

The psalmist declares,

"O God, Thou art my God, early will I seek Thee, My soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see Thy power and Thy glory, so as I have seen Thee in the sanctuary." Ps. 63:1.

This same experience caused Christ to suffer "inexpressible anguish, pains, terrors and hellish agonies" on the cross, for He was forsaken of God, banished from before his face as an outcast from His covenant, cut off from the land of the living, until He cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

For our sins He suffered on the cross, to bring us to God, in order that this God may be our God forever and ever. God proves Himself to be our God by delivering us from all our woes, taking us into His fellowship, and giving grace to live in covenant friendship with Him. With the psalmist we learn to say,

"Thou art my God, I will exalt Thee. O give thanks unto the Lord, for His mercy endureth forever." Psalm 118:28.

We have touched on just a few of the almost innumerable passages that run all through Scripture. May it help us to realize that "blessed is that people whose God is Jehovah."

C. Hanko.

## PERISCOPE

*The Rev. Geo. Lubbers . . . .*

A few issues ago we informed our readers that the Rev. G. Lubbers of Randolph, Wisc., was suffering from undulant fever and was unable to perform his labors. We are now happy to be able to report that there is gradual improvement in the brother's condition. In a letter which we received recently, Rev. Lubbers stated that he had been able to enjoy attending some of the services again and was beginning to take up some of his pastoral work. If the Lord continues to lead him in the way of recovery, he hopes to be able to resume preaching for his congregation in the near future. Though his recovery is a slow process, Rev. Lubbers is able to rest in the grace which God has revealed to him. May we remember our brother and all the Lord's afflicted children in their distress.

## HOME MISSION NEWS

*Byron Center, Michigan . . . .*

The latest news from Byron Center stated that the work there seemed to be progressing towards organization. This had been postponed for a time due to difficulties encountered in finding a suitable meeting place for services. A possible solution appeared when it was learned that the property of the Reformed Church in Byron Center might be purchased. The Reformed Church there desires larger quarters to meet its needs and had appointed a committee to contact our people in Byron, to discuss the sale of their present Church and parsonage to our people. Hence, all those who were known to be interested in the organization of a Protestant Reformed Church in Byron Center were contacted by some of our men there, and a price was decided upon which was to be made as an offer to the Reformed people. The amount offered, however, was declined and the counter proposal of the Reformed group was considered to be too high and beyond the means of our people. Hence, these negotiations were discontinued.

Naturally, this was somewhat disheartening since no other suitable meeting place seemed available. Some suggested that organization be postponed indefinitely, until property was more available. In view of the situation a meeting was held on February 5 to discuss future procedure. After the chairman, the Rev. E. Knott, had presented various possibilities, a vote was taken and the group expressed that the great majority still favored organization in the near future if a meeting place could be found. It was also decided to hold another general meeting after a few weeks, during

which various possible places could be investigated and information be procured as to their availability and suitability. In the meantime the Rev. Knott has continued to labor in Byron Center and conducts preaching services there each Sunday afternoon.

*Lynden, Washington . . . .*

After spending the past four weeks in Lynden and vicinity we are able to make a few observations. During this time we have contacted several people here, either at their homes or in public meetings. In this way we have met both those who are friendly to our cause as well as those who are unfriendly or definitely opposed. Generally, however, those whom we have met have been willing to listen or express themselves in respect to our Churches and their history.

Except among those who have previously come into contact with our Churches, there is almost complete ignorance as to who we are and what is our origin and position. The name Protestant Reformed Churches is usually met with questioning remarks or blank looks. In fact, so general is this situation that we deemed it well to attempt to inform the general public of who, what, and why we are a separate group of Churches. On Sunday, February 8, we delivered a message entitled: The Protestant Reformed Churches, over radio station KVOS in Bellingham, which covers this area very well. The time was provided by the Reformed Witness Hour which broadcasts regularly here. The program had been widely advertized and according to indications a large audience heard the message. The following week we again used the radio to deliver a message entitled: The Goodness of God, which was a brief exposition of Nahum 1:7, 8.

However, the most striking thing is not that there is ignorance concerning us, but rather that there is so little knowledge of the very fundamentals of the Reformed faith and confessions. Time and again we have met people and attempted to speak of the differences which separate us, only to discover that many no longer understand or know the Reformed truth. The essential doctrines of predestination, total depravity, irresistible grace, etc., are unknown or even discredited. We recall, for example, the amazing statement of one individual. While discussing God's sovereign decree of predestination we quoted the Word of God from Romans 9:13: "As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated", and heard the almost unbelievable reply: "I don't see how a text like that can be in the Bible". It certainly grieves one to find such, among nominally Reformed people. It certainly points out the difficulties one will encounter in the proclamation of these Truths. Undoubtedly, the greatest obstacle will be this lack of knowledge of what is Reformed and Scriptural.

In the second place, and closely connected with the

preceding, there is a deadly apathy almost everywhere. Practically no one is interested anymore in making the fine and necessary distinctions as our fathers of Dordt instruct us. People are easily satisfied and consider that if one is only a member of some Church and reads his Bible his confession of principle is of minor importance and non-essential. It stands to reason, therefore, that many cannot understand why we should desire to labor here and what it can avail. The great majority are perfectly satisfied with the *status quo*, while many fear any agitation or disruption of the "peace". Generally, too, the opinion is expressed that there is no interest in our movement here and not much likelihood of the possibility of positive fruit. As one man said: "I don't think there will ever be a Protestant Reformed Church here and I hope not". Another politely informed us that we were wasting our time and money here.

Again in connection with the preceding, there is a marked superficiality. There is no apparent desire to study and investigate. Let everyone go his own way and leave each to determine the way he desires to go without disturbance, and as long as one is relatively religious it makes not a great deal of difference what our confession is; such seems quite a general attitude. If our memory serves correctly, it was a consistory member of one of the Churches here that stated it didn't make a great deal of difference to him if one was a Methodist or Baptist or whatever else, just so we go to Church and read the Bible. And why don't we go to the heathen, we could do so much more good amongst them?

It should be evident that there is a field here. In fact, it becomes increasingly clear that almost anywhere one can find a field for the heritage of the Reformed truth; it is practically gone and forgotten in our day. The question that undoubtedly remains in your mind, however, has also been asked time and again: do you expect to organize a congregation here. The reply can only be that that is not in our hands. Christ Himself gathers His own Church, through His Spirit and Word. Our calling, therefore, is to preach the Word testifying of its truth. And so doing to remember the words of Paul: "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you."

Positively our stay here has once again taught us to appreciate with gratitude our precious heritage of Reformed truth, which God in His grace has entrusted to our care. The Word alone can strengthen and nourish us; but about this we may write another time. We plan to leave Lynden soon and will have the opportunity to stop in Manhattan and at Classis West on our return East. The Lord willing, we plan to bring a message from the Word to our congregation at Manhattan, Montana, on Sunday, February 29.

Whether we will return to Lynden to labor more extensively will be determined by the Mission Committee in conjunction with the consistory of Fuller Ave. after we deliver a complete report upon our return.

*Inzake Eerherstel. . . Ds. A. C. Van Raalte. . .*

Hooggeachte Redactie:

Indertijd hebt u in uw orgaan opgenomen het verzoek, inzake "posthume rehabilitatie inzake Ds. A. C. Van Raalte", dat door Ds. P. Prins en ondergeteekende werd gericht aan de Gen. Synode van de N. H. Kerk.

Het antwoord, dat wij ontvingen, gaat in afschrift hierbij. Wilt u dat ook in uw orgaan opnemen? Bij voorbaat hartelijk dank!

w. g. Ds. F. Dresselhuis.

Onderwerp: Posthume rehabilitatie  
Ds. A. C. Van Raalte.

De Weleerwaarde Heer  
Ds. F. Dresselhuis,  
Gereformeerd predikant  
te O l d e b o o r n

De Generale Synode der Nederlandsche Hervormde Kerk heeft Uw verzoek d.d. 31 Mei jl. betreffende posthume rehabilitatie van Ds. A. C. Van Raalte met belangstelling overwogen.

Uwe motieven waarderende, meent zij de weg tot posthume rehabilitatie van personen niet te moeten inslaan, omdat het aldus beoordeelen van individuele gevallen te kort doet aan de groote beteekenis van het feit, dat de Ned. Hervormde Kerk onder de Werkorde van 1945 haar gezeg, dat een louter bestuurlijke karakter droeg, heeft doorbroken en een beter leidend beginsel in alle kerkelijk handelen gekozen heeft, n.l. de gehoorzaamheid aan de Heilige Schrift en het staan op de bodem der belijdenisgeschriften. Deze herziening in haar kerksregeering, hoe aanvankelijk ook, houdt toch in zich de krachtige rehabilitatie voor allen, voorzover zij door het formeele bestuurlijk gezag der Hervormde Kerk gedurende de jaren 1816-1945 zijn te kort gedaan bij hun strijd voor het herstel der Kerk.

Wat Ds. Van Raalte betreft: het komt de Generale Synode voor, dat het Provinciaal Kerkbestuur van Zuid-Holland in 1835-1837 moeilijk een ondertekening met reserves kon aanvaarden. Zij is echter tegenlijk van oordeel, dat rondom de zaak van Ds. Van Raalte, evenals helaas bij zoovele andere gevallen, door de Overheid en ook door de kerkelijke instanties wegen zijn gevolgd, die velen het pleiten voor het herstel onzer Kerk zeer hebben bemoeilijkt. Al betreurt de Generale Synode de weg, die Ds. Van Raalte meende te moeten gaan, toch acht zij zich gelukkig naar aanleiding van Uw verzoek in de gelegenheid te zijn in dit gedachtenisjaar ten aanzien van Ds. Van Raalte baanbrekend werk op kerkelijk en maatschappelijk

gebied in Amerika haar oprechte bewondering uit te spreken.

De Generale Synode wil dit antwoord op Uw verzoek niet besluiten zonder de bede, dat, naar haar opdracht, de gehoorzaamheid aan de Heilige Schrift en het staan op de bodem der belijdenisgeschriften de richtingsgevende kracht moge zijn, waardoor allen elkander mogen vinden die zoowel binnen als buiten de Hervormde Kerk het goede voor Christus' Kerk zoeken.

Namens het Moderamen van de  
Generale Synode:

w. g. W. A. Zeidner, Praeses

w. g. Landsman, Scriba.

W. Hofman.

#### 50th ANNIVERSARY

On February 16, 1948, our dear parents  
MR. FRED WINDEMULLER

AND

MRS. ANNA WINDEMULLER

commemorated their 50th Wedding Anniversary.

We, their grateful children, thank our Covenant God that it has been His will to spare them for each other and us these many years. Our prayer is that in their reclining years God's grace may richly dwell in them, and that they may have the Peace of God which passeth all understanding.

Mr. and Mrs. Herman Windemuller

Mr. and Mrs. Jake Kooienga

Mr. and Mrs. Everett Windemuller

Mr. and Mrs. Marlow Windemuller

Mr. and Mrs. James Windemuller

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Windemuller

Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Windemuller

28 Grandchildren

Holland, Michigan.

2 Great-grandchildren.

#### 35th ANNIVERSARY

On March 6, 1948, the Lord willing, our beloved parents,  
MR. and MRS. GERARD KOSTER  
hope to celebrate their 35th Wedding Anniversary.

We are indeed thankful to our Covenant God for sparing them these many years for each other and us, and it is our sincere prayer that the Lord may continue to bless them in His great love and mercy.

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Blanker

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Koster

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Koster

Mr. and Mrs. John Koster

Mr. and Mrs. William Koster

Andrew

Helen

Eleanore

Gerard Jr.

Grand Rapids, Michigan.

9 Grandchildren.